

Solution-Building Block 1

Family Action Plan

Objective:

The goal of this lesson is to engage the family in preparing for the potential crisis of a client's relapse. The family will prepare a family checklist.

Materials:

1. Pen or pencil
2. Handout 1a: A Family Action Plan
3. Handout 1b: How to Use the Family Action Plan

Motivating Activity:

1. Using the metaphor of a hurricane, discuss together the concept of *tracking a storm*.
2. Discuss together how the family would prepare for a coming storm. Include the following concepts:
 - a. The family would gather supplies, place shutters on the windows, watch and chart the storm.
 - b. If the family does nothing but wait until the storm hits, it may then be too late to protect the home and the family.
 - c. Discuss with the family how they would map or track the storm's approach. What are the signs of a pending storm?
 - d. Discuss with the family how a storm sometimes hits very quickly and other times fizzles out.
 - e. Talk about what needs to happen for the family to feel safe.

Procedure:

1. Relate the metaphor of *a hurricane* to the need for hospitalization in a family with a parent diagnosed with a mental illness:
 - a. How can the family prepare for a storm?
 - b. What are the storm's signals and how can the family recognize them?
 - c. How can family members be a resource for the client?
 - d. How can the parent let children know they will be provided for when the parent is hospitalized?
2. Prepare the Family Action Plan with the family. This checklist should include and involve every member of the family.

- a. What will the family have to do as a unit to prepare for a storm?
- b. What will each family member's jobs be?
- c. Who will contact outside resources and services?
- d. Who will make sure the children are cared for?
- e. How will the family know when they are prepared?
- f. How will they know when to update the plan?

Culminating Activity:

Review and reinforce each aspect of the checklist with the family. Confirm that everyone understands their specific role in the Family Action Plan. Discuss with the family how they would know when to utilize this plan.

Follow-Up Activities:

1. Encourage the family to recognize that we are sometimes told to prepare because the *Big Storm* could be coming. Have the family consider:
 - a. That it must be difficult to live with this concern.
 - b. How the family can place that concern "on the shelf" where it will be available if it is needed, just like a hurricane-tracking map.
 - c. They can, and need to, go on with their lives.
2. Review and discuss this lesson's handout material with the family.

The _____ Family Action Plan

1. Ways we are already prepared:

2. What more we need to do:

3. Each person has a job:

4. Safety plan:

5. Contact person (outside resources):

6. When to update:

How To Use The Family Action Plan

1. Keep your Family Action Plan in a location that is handy for all family members.
2. Review the procedure the family needs to follow if they feel the need to begin *tracking a storm*.
3. Make sure each family member knows their job.
4. Discuss the Family Action Plan at family council meetings on a monthly basis.
5. Update the Family Action Plan regularly.

Family Sign Here: