V. TOOLS TO HELP

1. GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWING THE PERSON WITH MENTAL ILLNESS AND THEIR FAMILY

Learning about what the person thinks of the illness is very important. Information about her past will also help you decide what to do next.

When interviewing anyone, it is important to be relaxed and informal. Reading a list of questions will not help the person give you information.

You might need to have 2 or 3 informal talks before you get all the information that is needed.

Questions for the Person With Mental Illness

If the person with mental illness will answer questions and you can understand what their answers mean, the following questions are helpful in deciding what you can do:

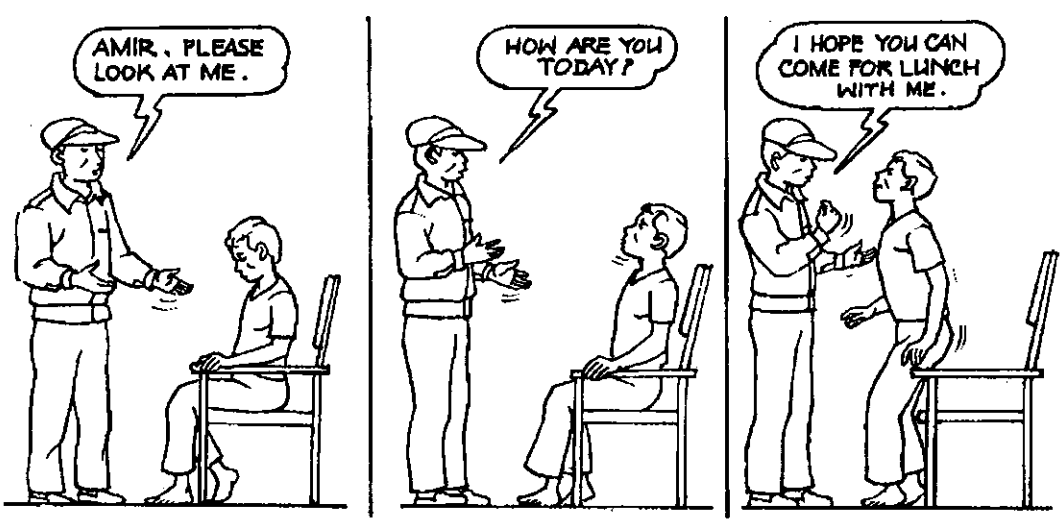
It is not always necessary to ask each of these questions to each person or to ask them in order. The questions are a guide only.

- What are your main concerns or worries ?
- What is it that you can not do now ?
- What would you like to do ?
- What did you enjoy doing the most before you became ill ?
- What do you think is making you ill ?
- Why do you think you are sick at this time ?
- What makes you feel better ?
- What makes you feel worse ?
- What do you think will help ?
- What things did you do well in the past ?
- What activities do you do to help the family ?
- What makes you feel safe and happy ?

Spending time with the person and asking him questions in a friendly way gives him time to know you and to understand you are trying to help. Being with the person and just making conversation is as important as getting the answers to all the questions.

INFO CBR Things to Remember When Talking to a Person With Serious Mental Illness:

- Ask only one question at a time and wait for the person to answer.
- Do not argue with a person with mental illness.
- Watch the person's eyes, if they quickly look at you and then look away, they probably heard you.
- If they do not answer after a minute, ask them to nod their head or signal that they understood (raise their eyebrows). Sometimes you must repeat the question many time to get a form of response.
- If they nod "yes", ask them if they would like to talk to you at another time.
- Sometime you must visit a number of times before the person can answer with words.
- If the person is trying to answer but has difficulty understanding the questions, stop the interview. Try to talk about something that you both can see near by like a cat or goat in the yard or the plants in the garden.



Some Questions for the Family

Often the person with mental illness is too ill to give you background information about themselves. Family members are the best source of information about a person with severe mental illness. However, when possible, as much information as possible should come from the person with severe mental illness themselves.

Ask the family members about the person's daily routine and life before they became ill. Some information that is helpful to know is:

- What did the person spend most of her time doing ?
- What type of work did she do ? Did she have a paid job ?
- What school grades did she finish ?
- How active is she in family events and discussion ?
- Has she had strange behaviour before ?

Because the family often are the best people to help a person with mental illness , you should find out what key family members think about the illness, for example husband or wife, parents, or older children.

- What do you think is making her ill ?
- Why do you think her problems happened at this time ?
- What makes her feel better ?
- What makes her feel worse ?
- What do you think will help ?

Other information that might help is

- What does the community say caused the strange behaviour ?
- If you need help, who in the family or community would you ask ?

Some persons have been ill many times over many years. Ask the family what activity the person with a mental illness did when they were well in the last 12 months.

It is also important to find out what help the person has had if she has been ill in the past.

2. CHECKLIST ABOUT SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS

Many people have strange behaviour or do things that are different from other people in the family and community. Strange behaviour does not always mean the person is mentally ill. (see page 8 for review).

When a person is mentally ill, his or her strange behaviour causes problems with routine activities like eating, meeting with friends, and working. The strange behaviour causes her to be very upset, to change the way she talks and acts with other people. The family notice a big change and are worried.

One of the things that the CBR worker must do is to help the person and the family decide if the strange behaviour might be caused by mental illness.

The simple checklist below can help.

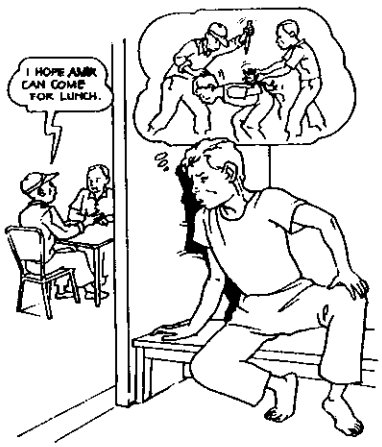
First, talk with the person and her family and observe her behaviour. Then read each of the sentences below. If the answer is YES to one or more of them, the person should be sent to the doctor or the Health Center.

	Y	N
Danger of hurting others (person is very violent)		
Wants to hurt or kill self (suicidal)		
Several weeks without bathing, changing clothes or eating regularly		
Speaks in way that does not make sense--others do not understand what they say		
Has not spoken or responded to others for many days		
Has strange thoughts and experiences (hears voices) that no one else around them has		
Can no longer follow routine activities like cooking, eating, meeting with family		
Stops going to work or school or has major difficulties at work or school		
Family is worried that the person is very different than usual		

3. QUICK REFERENCE FOR HELPING THE VERY UPSET PERSON

The information below gives some ways to help a person who is very upset or has very difficult behaviour. The first thing to do is to find a doctor or staff from a health center. But often the doctor is far away or not able to come, and the family and community need to take action immediately.

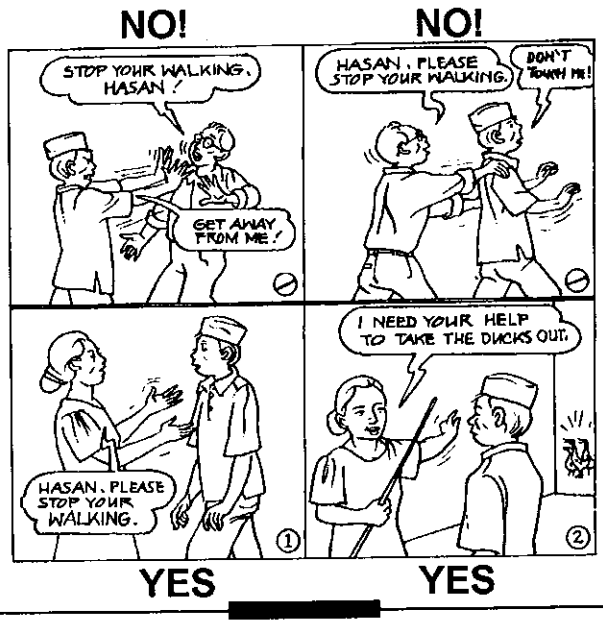
A. UNFRIENDLY, SUSPICIOUS OF OTHERS, THINKS OTHERS WANT TO HARM THEM, OVERLY WATCHFUL OF WHAT IS GOING ON AROUND THEM, HAS IDEAS WHICH ARE NOT REAL.



1) Do not argue with the person about their ideas or thoughts or try to prove them wrong.
2) Change to a concrete topic that is not related to strange thinking- avoid politics and religious subjects.
3) Be friendly and accepting. Do not get angry with the person.
4) Do not whisper or talk secretly when the person is in the same room or near by.
5) Do not talk or do things behind the person's back.

B. RESTLESS, CONSTANTLY WALKING BACK AND FORTH BUT GOING NOWHERE, OR VERY EXCITED MOVING AROUND QUICKLY BUT WITH OUT A REASON

1) Do not try to hold on to the person.
2) Call to them and get their attention.
3) Firmly but without anger, ask them to come to you.
4) Tell them their behaviour is upsetting you and you would like them to stop.
5) Try to get them to help you with a simple activity.



C. AVOIDS PEOPLE AND WON'T LET OTHERS COME NEAR

1) Approach the person slowly and in a friendly manner. Stop in front of them but at a distance and greet them in the usual way.
2) Talk to them first about things you both can see, e.g. Is that chair comfortable?
3) If they answer, continue with simple talk telling them that their family is worried.
4) if the person stops talking, try again to get them to answer. If they become restless, thank them and leave.
5) Repeat this simple talk during the day (2-3 times) or the next day until they allow you to come near and talk to you about how they are feeling.
6) Have the family members continue with their daily activities near the person so that they can see one another.
7) Family members should continue to talk to the person even if they do not answer and make sure the person receives food and drink.

D. AGGRESSIVE, BULLYING BEHAVIOUR, SUDDENLY WILL STRIKE OUT OR HIT THINGS OR OTHER PEOPLE

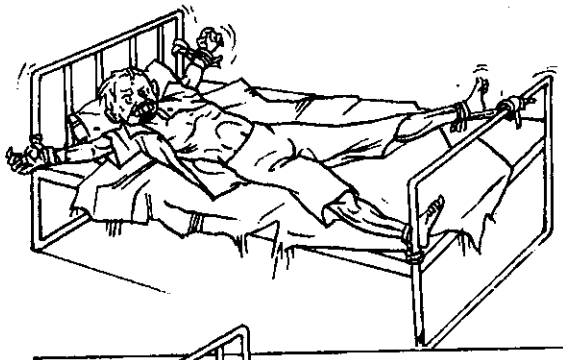
1) Stay calm and do not show that you are frightened but quickly call or go for help.
2) Speak in a firm loud voice: "I would like you to stop".
3) Remember that the person doesn't always know what they are saying or doing.
4) Give the person an activity which requires them to use their energy like: playing football or loading large bags of rice.
5) Do not let them use tools that are sharp or that can be used as a club.
6) Instruct other persons not to argue with the person and to stay away till they calm down.
7) When the person is calm, talk to them about their behaviour. Are they able to tell when these strange behaviours are about to come? Make suggestions about more activities they can do which will help the feelings disappear.

E. VIOLENT AND ATTACKING OTHER PEOPLE OR HARMING THEMSELVES. TALKING TO THE PERSON DOES NOT STOP THE BEHAVIOUR
DOCTOR IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR A LONG TIME

1) The person should be restrained by strong cloth or leather strips at his wrist and ankles in a bed in a quiet area.
2) Someone should be with them all the time till the doctor arrives.
3) The person should regularly be given small amounts of water.
4) The person will need to go for hospital treatment for a period of time.

Physical restraints may be used ONLY IN AN EMERGENCY and only until a doctor can give an injection or the person be taken to hospital.

NO !



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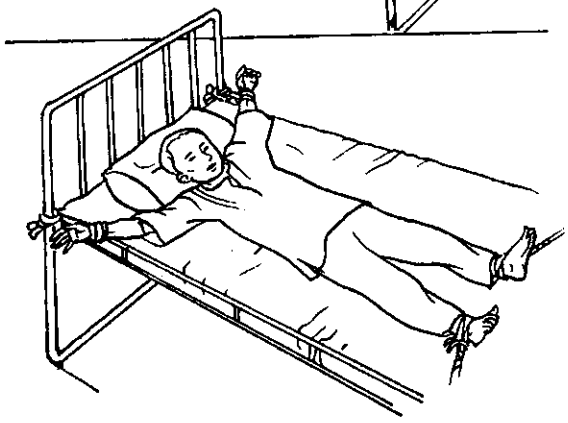

4. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMMUNITY AND FAMILY EDUCATION

The questionnaire can be used for community or family education about mental illness. It can be used when taking to one person only or in a group discussion or meeting.

The questionnaire is a good way to start off a discussion, making the education session more informal and relaxed. When they answer the questions, try to get family or community members to discuss people they know or have seen with mental illness. Often asking the question "Why do you think that?" will prompt people to talk about their experiences.
The questionnaire can be read out loud or filled out by each family or community member on their own and then discussed in a group. The CBR worker can also read out the questions one by one and have the group discuss the answer.

What Do You Think About Mental Illness

Check whether you think each of the statements is completely TRUE, completely FALSE, or it MAY BE, true in some cases and false in others.

	True	May be	False
1. If you are cursed by someone you can become mentally ill.			
2. Mental illness often runs in families.			
3. People who are mentally ill always have trouble learning.			
4. Mental illness can be caused by taking drugs and alcohol.			
5. People who have stress always become mentally ill.			
6. Visiting a spiritual leader like an imam or priest can help a person with mental illness.			
7. People with mental illness should be kept at home so that they will not bother others.			
8. Once a person has been mentally ill, the illness will come back again.			
9. All mentally ill people can be helped with medicine.			
10. People with cerebral palsy are mentally ill.			
11. Most old people get mental illness.			
12. Children do not get mental illness.			
13. People who have mental illness have weak personalities.			

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