

Family Partnership

GRN CSB is committed to involving the families of persons who receive services whenever possible. The participation of the family is valuable because it helps the staff to better understand the needs of the loved one. Certainly, the family also wants to know what to expect from the people and programs that provide treatment and other services.

Typically, when someone comes into GRN for help, the staff try to learn all as much as possible about that person from his or her own report and from the family, other agencies, and whomever else that may have information which would help in the treatment process. In order for this to occur, the individual signs a form that authorizes GRN staff to speak with others concerning specific aspects of that individual's well being. Sometimes, for reasons of privacy or because of symptoms of the mental illness, the consumer may not allow GRN to speak with the family and to involve them as a valuable resource. During the course of treatment, the consumer is encouraged to reconsider their decision to include the family and often he or she then often decides to do so. Without the permission of the consumer, however, GRN staff are unable to even acknowledge that the person is receiving treatment. GRN staff are permitted to **receive** information from family members, regardless of a signed release of information.

Once the consumer has given permission to speak to the family, communication may occur in various ways depending on psychiatric needs and preferences of the consumer. These ways include phone contact, family sessions or meetings, or receiving written information from the family. If a family member requests a meeting, the counselor first will discuss this with the consumer, and then schedule a time that is convenient for all as soon as possible.

At times, the family may want to discuss the progress or problems of their loved one directly with the psychiatrist. While we would like to accommodate this request, doctor time is a limited resource that is targeted to work directly with the consumer. Information that the family wants the doctor to know or questions can be shared with the counselor who will pass it along to the psychiatrist.

If, for any reason, the family is not satisfied with the level of communication concerning their loved one's condition, the family is encouraged to first speak with the counselor or service coordinator to give him or her an opportunity to answer any questions or to resolve any problems. After that, the supervisor should be contacted, if unaddressed concerns continue. In the event that the supervisor's response did not include enough information or was not timely, the Center Director can be contacted for further clarification. When these staff are unavailable or if the family continues to want a better understanding or a resolution, the Director of that Service should be called. Depending on the consumer's primary service, this may be either the Director of Gwinnett Centers and Psychosocial Rehabilitation, the Director of Crisis Stabilization and Extended Residential Treatment for Drugs and Alcohol or the Director of Community Housing.

In addition, the outpatient centers offer **family orientation groups** at no charge once a week to more fully describe GRN services and to "walk people through" the system. Anyone is welcome and it is an opportunity to have general questions addressed. The staff at the GRN central Access number will provide details about this group.

Our goal is to assist your loved one in benefiting from the treatment and rehabilitation that they receive through GRN and to connect them with other needed services. We view the family as a very important resource in this process.