

Probate Court of Jefferson County

Sherry C. Friday, Judge of Probate

Alan L. King, Judge of Probate

Recommendations to Family and Friends of Individuals under an *Involuntary Commitment Petition*

When your family member or friend is discharged from the local hospital, Bryce or the VA Hospital in Tuscaloosa, there are some things you can do to help with their recovery and continued treatment.

1. ENCOURAGE YOUR FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND TO FILL THEIR PRESCRIPTIONS AND TO TAKE THEIR MEDICATIONS AS PRESCRIBED.

It is important that your family member or friend take their medications as prescribed to control the symptoms of their mental illness. Mental disorders are lifelong illnesses that are treated by taking proper medications and following the recommendations of a psychiatrist and the treatment team. Mental illnesses are as treatable, and sometimes more treatable, than some major medical conditions, such as heart disease and diabetes. If a person with a mental illness stops taking their medications, they will re-experience symptoms of their mental illness, which may develop into a medical emergency. If you want to help your family member or friend lead a safe and stable life, help them obtain and take their medications as prescribed.

2. ENCOURAGE YOUR FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND NOT TO USE ILLEGAL DRUGS OR ALCOHOL. OR, ABUSE THEIR PRESCRIBED MEDICATION.

Alcohol and other illegal drugs can interfere with prescribed medications and can have very serious side effects. Use of alcohol and other drugs can also increase a person's risk for violent behavior and suicide. '

3. TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN HELPING YOUR FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND KEEP THEIR MENTAL HEALTH APPOINTMENTS.

Visiting a psychiatrist and other mental health professionals is also an important part of recovery and continued treatment for an individual with a mental illness. A psychiatrist or other mental health professional can help an individual regulate their medication, reduce the side effects of the medication and provide counseling and other types of therapy.