



Check your practice: Recovery-Oriented Mental Health and Addiction Care in the Patient's Medical Home

Best Advice Guide: Quick Reference

Family physicians are one of the first points of contact with the health care system and play a critical role in providing primary care and care coordination to individuals experiencing a range of mental health and addiction (MH&A) issues.

Supporting mental health is about more than reducing or managing symptoms. It is about helping patients live satisfying, hopeful, and contributing lives, even when there are ongoing limitations caused by MH&A issues. Recovery is a personal and self-determined journey toward well-being, with every person having their own set of unique experiences and needs. While family physicians may not be able to address every aspect of a person's recovery journey, they play an integral role in diagnosing and treating both physical and mental illness. Family physicians can help foster hope, and facilitate choice and access to a range of appropriate treatments, in addition to promoting health and well-being across the lifespan.



Consider the following tips for your practice:



- **Use strengths-based language when communicating with patients** to combat stigma and create safe spaces where they feel comfortable discussing their treatment and care goals



- **Facilitate patient choice and shared decision making in your practice** by co-developing personal care plans with patients



- **Involve—where appropriate and with permission—families, friends, and community members in care plans.** Family caregivers play a critical part supporting patients and can be included in appointments and in the development of treatment plans.



- **Enhance your clinics' operations to better accommodate patients with MH&A issues:**
 - Add a sign in your office stating that discussing MH&A issues is part of your role as a physician
 - Offer a check-in form or standardized intake form inclusive of questions on mental health
 - Support your colleagues in changing their learned behaviours to create a stigma-free environment



- **Provide mental health- and addiction-related education and training opportunities for yourself and all staff in your practice and ensure training involves people with lived experience.** Engaging in learning opportunities can increase your own comfort with, and knowledge of, recovery-oriented practices.



- **Become familiar with community supports and services and connect and refer your patients** by developing a resource list



- **Where possible and appropriate, address co-occurring mental and physical health issues by integrating screening, treatments, and supports:** Routinely include one or two questions about mental health and addiction issues in various appointments with patients to help normalize mental health check-ins in practice and reduce stigma.



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For more information on providing recovery-oriented mental health and addiction care in the **Patient's Medical Home**, and for details about resources available to you, please refer to the **Best Advice guide: Recovery-Oriented Mental Health and Addiction Care in the Patient's Medical Home**.

<http://patientsmedicalhome.ca>

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