

Monthly Check-Ins with the Family

It is critical for the client, relatives, and the treatment team to continue to be able to share information. Planned monthly contacts provide a forum for this information sharing, as well as providing an opportunity to assess how the family is faring. Meetings should be held in person the first year, with both the relatives and the client participating; however, it is preferable to have the meeting on the phone rather than missing it for a month. After the first year, if the client is doing well, phone check-ins with relatives may suffice. Participants should be called two days in advance to remind them of the face-to-face meetings. Typical monthly contact meetings would last for 45 minutes. As the participants raise issues, the family clinician reviews appropriate educational material, gives advice and guidance, or helps problem-solves to resolve concerns. If formal decision-making or problem-solving might benefit the family, the family clinician can also integrate these tools from the *Family Consultation to Solve Problems and Make Decisions* section of the manual. The family clinician also reminds families, as appropriate, that as clients progress through NAVIGATE, discharge to other treatment is a typical outcome and keeps the long-term focus on moving towards the client and family being as fully integrated into the “non-mental-health” community as possible.

Introduction, Alliance Building, and Agenda Setting (5 Minutes)

Regardless of the main focus of this session, it begins with utilizing the alliance building techniques presented previously and setting the session agenda. In the alliance building stage, the family clinician greets participants warmly and asks how each person’s week went, particularly emphasizing “any urgent issues that might get in the way of the work today.” The goal is to be engaging, but not to be deterred by other issues, unless they are critical. The agenda for the session includes:

- 1) Review of client’s current status.
- 2) Discussion of client’s goals and relevant progress and ways family can help with goals.
- 3) Review of client’s participation in treatment program.
- 4) Monitoring early warning signs.
- 5) Progress/concerns noted by family

“It’s good to see you all again. The session will run about 45 minutes, and I want to get a clear sense of how XXX is doing in his recovery and answer any questions you have and address any concerns. Any crises or urgent issues we need to address before we begin?”

Review Of Client Status (10 Mins)

Here, the clinician prompts the client and family to discuss the client’s current status. It is important to engage both the client and the relatives in the discussion and identify opportunities to review any of the educational material, as relevant. This is especially important if the relatives are critical of the client.

(To Client) *"XXX, so how have things been going for you over the past month? What has been going well? Any problems? Any symptoms or issues troubling you? How has it been going with the medication? I know it can be hard to keep it all straight—how many times have you missed it in the last couple of weeks?"*

"How have things been going for you with your family? How have you all been getting along? Have you been seeing any friends? What about drugs or alcohol?"

(To Relatives) *"How has XXX been doing? What has been going well? What kinds of improvement have you noted? Any problems? Anything you are worried about? Any concerns on your end?"*

Discussion Of Client Goals And Progress, Including Possibilities For Family Assistance (10 Mins)

Here, the clinician prompts the client to discuss his/her treatment goals as well as progress on the goals. It is important to engage both the client and the relatives in the discussion, and to look for opportunities where clinical knowledge and skills can be integrated into family life.

(To Client) *"XXX, remind us all again what goals you have been working on in the IRT program? How have you been progressing on them? Anything you are proud of? Any problems working on the goals? Have you needed support people for these goals? Has your family been helping? Do you need help from your family?"*

(To Relatives) *"What have you noticed about XXX's work on these goals? Anything come to mind? Any way you have been able to help?"*

Review Of Client Participation In The Treatment Program, Including Discussion Of Next Steps And Length Of Time In Program (5 Mins)

The objective of this part of the session is to encourage the client to continue to participate in treatment and to evaluate the family's attitudes towards treatment participation. Any obstacles to participation are addressed.

So, "XXX, how has it been going for you here at the program? Have you been making your appointments? Who are you working with now? Any difficulties with transportation to the clinic or getting there on time? What are you doing in the IRT program? Anything happening with work or school?"

(To Relatives) *"What has been going well about XXX coming to the treatment program? How are you feeling about that? Any concerns?"*

(To All) *"You all have been with the program for XX months now—how do you think it is going overall? Any thoughts about how long you might want to continue? Have any of you talked at all about how long you might want to be continuing with us in NAVIGATE?"*