

# **Psychiatric Advance Directives: How to Create Crisis Plans and Rally Your Community in Times of Need**

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# What Are Psychiatric Advance Directives?

- The medical field considers them “legal documents that are used to declare personal preferences and instructions for future mental health treatments when patients cannot give informed consent”.
- “Mad Maps” by The Icarus Project are “documents we create for ourselves as reminders of our goals, what is important to us, our personal signs of struggle, and our strategies for self-determined well-being”
- “T-Maps” by Sascha DuBrul are “transformative mutual aid practices [...] used as a guide for navigating challenging times and communicating with important people in your life”

# Lived Experience

- At 17, after having flashbacks of childhood abuse and incest and later losing my best friend to suicide, I saw a psychiatrist and was diagnosed.
  - Are these labels helpful? Is it my brain or my environment?
- Struggled with catatonia and dissociation
- Recently began to experience “psychosis”



# Things to Think About:



1. How do you feel when you're well?
2. What signs indicate that you are unable to make certain decisions for yourself and would need your advance directive implemented?
3. Who would you like and not like to be part of your treatment plans and decisions? Do you want to appoint an agent to help implement your plan and make decisions in times of crisis?
4. What treatment types and facilities are you open to and not open to?
5. What do you want and not want from your supporters?
6. What are some things you want to do for yourself?

(Adapted from "Navigating Crisis Handout" and [www.mentalhealthrecovery.com](http://www.mentalhealthrecovery.com))

# Legal Documents

- Look up state regulations and necessary forms needed to have your wishes legally honored.
  - [www.nrc-pad.org/state-by-state](http://www.nrc-pad.org/state-by-state)
  - <http://www.nrc-pad.org/images/stories/PDFs/nyprs%20pad%20booklet%20form%20and%20card-1.pdf>
- Find a template
  - [www.bazelon.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket+lcYbjgw\\_nVY%3D&tabid=226](http://www.bazelon.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket+lcYbjgw_nVY%3D&tabid=226)
  - [www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/consumer\\_affairs/resources/docs/advanced\\_directive.pdf](http://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/consumer_affairs/resources/docs/advanced_directive.pdf)
- If the state allows, decide what rights to give your agent(s)
- Have it signed by you, your agent(s) and 2 witnesses

# Community Documents

- Goal is to tell your community how they can best support you
- Be specific about your needs and desires during different states
  - When I feel \_\_\_\_, and behave \_\_\_\_ I would like you to \_\_\_\_
  - When I am \_\_\_\_, I would/would not like you to \_\_\_\_.
- Determine how you want to remind your friends/your friends to remind you about your advance directive in times of crisis
  - Code wor



# Patterns of Behavior

- One way of cataloging and organizing information for your community:

Mild	Moderate	Severe
Difficulty waking up/getting out of bed, ordering sushi and watching Sex in the City	Dissociation, nothing feels significant, lack of feeling/coldness	Trauma flashbacks
Feeling 'stuck' or 'lost' as though no activity is fully satisfying or not connected to my intuition	Anxiety/fear at nothing in particular	Slowness or halting of thoughts/ catatonia or inability to move
Canceling plans or creating too many plans that I lose myself	Intense desire to train hop or visit a bridge	Panic attacks/dread/feeling like I'm going to die
Not eating well or sleeping well	Uncontrollable racing thoughts that I can't shut off/fixation on a social issue that disturbs my sleep/daily routine	Seeing or hearing 'beings' or things that others cannot/ feeling my soul is gone

# Cycles/Sequences

## Crisis Sequence

Indifference and  
Dissociation

Indecision/pacing/feeling  
there's no safe place to  
go

Sense of urgency or  
panic: "I need to go  
home now"

Feeling a "pit" in tummy  
or "cracking" in my brain

Crying, screaming,  
hearing /seeing things  
others can't

Catatonia/trance/straying  
from consensus reality

## Monthly/Annual Cycles

1-2 weeks before  
menstruation:  
dissociation, depression,  
isolating

December-February:  
'hibernation mode'

October: Trauma  
flashbacks

February: mourning  
period



# Alternative Treatment Centers

- Decide at what times it would be necessary to be hospitalized and what you want to try before being checked in:

## Peace Village

A donation based retreat center that offer workshops and space for silence and reflection

## Parachute NYC

Offers free home-based treatment and crisis respite that includes peer-based support

## Wholeness Center

Uses a holistic and integrative approach to combine psychiatry with nutrition, naturopathic medicine, mind/body therapies, bio feedback, acupuncture.

## Downstate Medical Center

Known to have a progressive psychiatric unit. Specializes in research on Schizophrenia

# Don't Forget

- Food allergies
- Medicines/Herbal remedies/Vitamins
- Who should be notified/not notified in crises
- Treatments you do/do not consent to
- Duration and Revocation of Advance Directive



# How to Talk About Your Choices

- Show them how you interpret and understand what's going on with you.
  - What are the primary factors?
  - What language do you use?
- Explore differences between wants and needs
- Discuss Politics
- Accept that some supporters may not agree with you
- Make sure your supporters take care of their needs too!

**Thank You!**

**Find me at:  
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