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SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

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What is family intervention?

Family intervention includes family members in therapeutic sessions with the goal of improving all family members' mental health and understanding of the disorder. This type of intervention aims to enhance the capacity of both patients and their families for problem solving and illness management. Family interventions have a focus on providing information about the disorder, and emphasizing instructions for medication and treatment adherence. Therapeutic sessions can also involve cognitive behavioural interventions to improve problem solving and communication skills and to reduce familial expressed emotion.

What is the evidence for family intervention?

High quality evidence suggests all types of family intervention reduces relapse rates when compared to standard care, regardless of intervention type and criteria for relapse. Higher levels of effectiveness of family therapy is associated with more intervention sessions and results are strongest after one year post treatment. High quality evidence also suggests family psychoeducation (conveying information about the disorder and promoting better coping) can reduce relapse rates, high expressed emotion in the family, the number of days in hospital, and improve relatives' knowledge of the disorder and patients' social functioning. In the longer term (up to 2 years follow up) family psychoeducation can improve patients' general psychopathology when compared to other non-specific treatments. Moderate quality evidence suggests family intervention improves family coping and understanding, and improves patients' quality of life. Group family intervention may be more effective than standard care at reducing family burden. Moderate to low quality evidence suggests mutual support groups for caregivers may improve families' and patients' knowledge about mental illness and coping strategies, and reduce stress and burden.

For further information see the technical table



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NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.

Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.

Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.

While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about schizophrenia or its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.

HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

We are able to make significant advances due to the generosity of countless people. Your donation allows us to continue to work towards transforming lives. For information on how you can support our research, phone **1300 888 019** or make a secure donation at neura.edu.au/donate/schizophrenia.

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