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March 9, 2009

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Dear Family Member:

PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL SERIES BEGINS FOR FAMILIES IN APRIL

Families caring for and concerned about their loved ones who have a mental illness, need a lot of information to be able to effectively help both their loved ones and themselves. Families have found it helpful to understand the different types of mental illness, as well as the symptoms and the medications that are used to treat them. Families need to know what mental health programs are out there, what entitlements and benefits are available, and how to obtain them. They need to know about housing, estate planning, and services like Integrated Case Management Services (ICMS), Programs for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT) and the new Collaborative Justice Services (CJS). Families need to understand how to fight for the rights of those with mental illness, advocate for their loved ones with inpatient units, outpatient treatment programs as well as with managed care companies. They need to know about how to deal with substance abuse issues that might complicate their loved one's mental illness and treatment.

Most of all, families need to know they are not alone, and can get help in coping with the tremendous burden they feel in the 24 hours a day, 365 days a year job, of caring for their loved ones. Families need to know they are doing everything they can to insure their loved ones can live and function not just for now, but long after they are no longer around.

This is why we feel the need to continue our PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL series for families and have designed an eight -week curriculum.

When does the group begin?

This eight-week series begins Wednesday, April 15, 2009 to June 3, 2009 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Where does this series meet?

UBHC (University Behavioral Health Center) room B1425
183 South Orange Avenue
Newark, NJ

How often does the group meet?

Once every week for eight – weeks.

Do I have to come to every session?

No, but while attendance is not mandatory to every session, regular attendance is suggested in order to help families receive the maximum benefit from the series.

Is there a cost or fee?

No, this series is completely free with no cost.

How do I sign up?

You simply need to call our office. We are the Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS), a program of the Mental Health Association of Essex County. Please call and ask for Judi Fiederer at 973-509-9777 to register.

Where do I park?

There is ample off street parking in front of the building.

Who will be the family educators?

In addition to the mental health professionals on staff at the IFSS, special guest speakers, and most importantly, other family members will appear as guest speakers when they have expertise on a particular subject area or topic that is being discussed. Presentations will use multimedia to convey information to family members.

Who should attend, who can I bring to these groups?

Any family member or friend who wants to come is welcome.

I can't make this series now, but when will it be offered again?

Our IFSS program will offer this seven-week PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL series several times throughout the year in several different locations throughout Essex County. You will be notified by mail well in advance of future training.

Sincerely,

Marvin Gorsky, LCSW
Senior Director of Children's, Counseling
and Family Services

