

Making the Most of Your Time with Your Doctor

Brought to you by Value Behavioral Health-PA

You might not have a lot of time during your appointment with your doctor. It can help to plan ahead for any visits. Here are some tips for effective visits with your doctor.

- ◆ **COME PREPARED.** Note your symptoms, including when you have them. Write out questions you want to ask, and either make a list of all medications and dosages you take (including over the counter drugs, herbal supplements, vitamins, etc.), or bring your medications with you.
- ◆ **ASK QUESTIONS.** Raise all of your concerns. You have a right to information about your diagnosis and treatment. Make sure you understand what your doctor says and why the treatment works.
- ◆ **BE HONEST.** Telling the truth about how you're feeling helps your healthcare providers treat your problem. Talking openly with your doctor is important to getting good care. Your doctor can't help you when he or she doesn't know about the problem even if it seems unimportant or embarrassing.
- ◆ **DISCUSS SIDE EFFECTS.** If you are being prescribed an antipsychotic or other medication, it is important to discuss with your doctor the benefits and side effects you may be experiencing.
- ◆ **TAKE NOTES.** To help you remember the doctor's instructions, write them down. It also helps to bring along a friend or family member to take notes and listen to the doctor.
- ◆ **CHECK YOUR DOCTOR'S AVAILABILITY.** Find out your doctor's availability and what you should do if you have problems between visits.
- ◆ **FOLLOW UP WITH YOUR DOCTOR.** If you have concerns about your treatment, side effects, or your recovery, talk to your doctor. Your doctor may refer you to another mental healthcare provider.
- ◆ **PREPARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR CARE.** If you have instructions about what to do if you become so sick you can't make directions, give a copy to your doctor. These instructions are called **ADVANCED DIRECTIVES**. If you have a Crisis Plan or Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), you may want to share it with your doctor.
- ◆ **TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT YOUR RECOVERY PROCESS.** Let your doctor know what else is going on in your life that may be helping or hurting you in your recovery. Talk about where you want to be in your recovery.

