

# **PROGRESS THROUGH CARING;** *Families of the Mentally Ill*

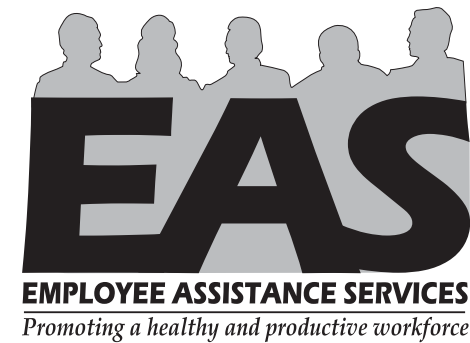
Caring for a family member who is mentally ill can be frustrating and confusing. Mental illness brings with it unique problems such as long-term care, numerous psychiatric treatments and inadequate independent living skills.

## COPE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS IN YOUR FAMILY

1. Educate your family on the symptoms and misconceptions of chronic mental illness.
2. Develop an understanding of the treatment process including evaluation and long-term care issues.
3. Establish routines which maximize opportunities for success.
4. Enhance both verbal and non-verbal communication skills to reinforce an atmosphere of care.
5. Express your thoughts and feelings - join a support group such as the Alliance for the Mentally Ill.
6. Take care of yourself. Find time to relax. Exercise regularly. Eat well-balanced meals.
7. Develop realistic expectations regarding behavior and capabilities.

Family involvement and contact in all phases of care play a large part in ensuring success. With your help and patience, your family can learn to function well and to draw closer for support.

*For more information on mental illness, contact:*



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