

Anthem of

Hope

Getting Help for Adult Children with Mental Illness

In Nebraska, parents cannot direct an adult child's healthcare (even if the child still uses your insurance). But there are things you can do to try to get them help, even if they don't recognize they need it.

Take Care of Yourself: Do this first. This is so important, we created a separate tip sheet just for this.

Recognize You Have "Mom Brain" or "Dad Brain." You love your kid and you may dismiss bad experiences and red flags. Keep a diary and re-read it when something troubling happens. What patterns are emerging?

Communicate with Doctors: You CAN provide information to your child's doctors and therapists, even though they cannot talk with you (due to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) privacy laws). Leave a voicemail or send an email. They appreciate the information.

Waivers of HIPAA and FERPA Privacy Laws: Your child may refuse to sign a waiver for you, but agree if the doctor asks. Similarly, colleges may not give out information due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) but waivers are available.

Well-Being Checks: You can call the police (or college campus security) to ask for a "well-being check" of your adult child. If they are a danger to themselves or others, police officers can take steps to intervene.
psychiatric issues.

When Calling The Police For Help: With someone having a mental health crisis, ask for a "C.I.T. Officer." Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) officers have training on how to handle a mental health crisis. Tell the dispatcher AND the responding officers that this is a mental health situation, even if no CIT officer is available. Also, in the Omaha metro area, you can request the Mobile Crisis Intervention Team which can respond with police officers to mental health situations to try to get people help and avoid jail.

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Board of Mental Health (BOMH): A petition can be filed in Douglas County, Nebraska, if someone needs to be involuntarily hospitalized. The BOMH petition must show the person is a danger to themselves or others.

Legal Guardianship: A court can grant a parent temporary or permanent guardianship of an adult child if they are unable to make decisions and take care of their own needs; this includes mental illness or chronic drug abuse.

Emergency Room: If you need to take someone in Omaha to an Emergency Room for a mental health crisis and you have time to decide which one, consider the University of Nebraska Medical Center or Immanuel Hospital which are more specialized in psychiatric issues.

Emergency Information: Maintain a list of your loved one's medications, diagnoses, and insurance information in your wallet. Also, keep the names and numbers of your loved one's doctors and therapists on your phone.

Important: No one person or source of information will have all the information you need. And this document was written by one mom who doesn't have all the answers - but who wants you to know that there are way to get help!