

- Know the drugs the person is taking that is when should they be taken and if necessary supervise the medication to ensure that the person takes them as directed
- Know when they are expected to go for the next check up
- Keep the medical/clinic cards safely as well as their clinic number in case the other card gets lost
- When the person is unable to take medications unsupervised and has to be supervised by the caregiver never reduce or increase the amount given by the health worker without first asking for advice from the health worker
- Never stop the medication without the health workers advice
- If the person refuses to take medication find out why and try to persuade the person but do not force them. If they refuse contact the nearest health facility for help
- Be on alert symptoms of relapse for example unusual changes in behaviors, moody, unusual laughter etc

- Marked changes in sleeping patterns; If these are observed with no obvious cause take the person to the nearest health even if the review date is far.

Remember

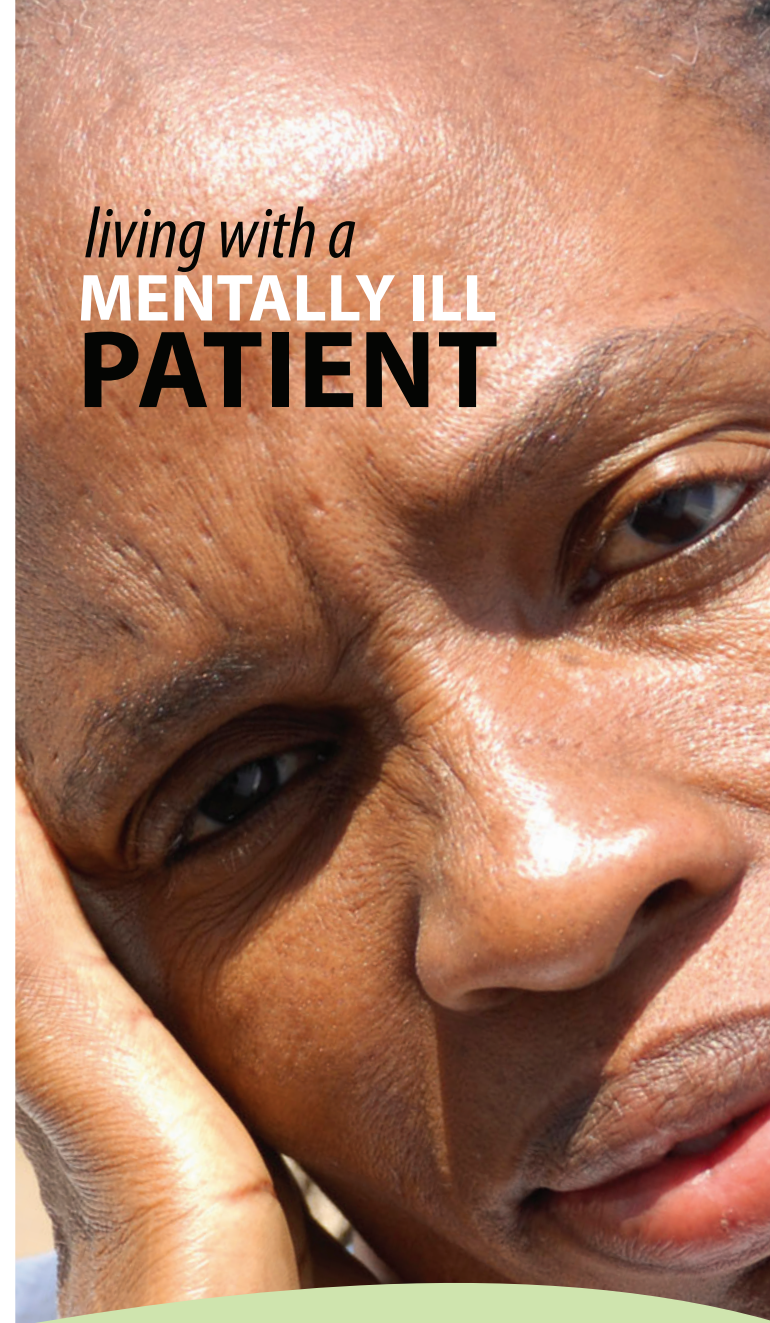
Taking care of the mentally ill person is like caring for a chronically/terminally ill person which can be stressful, if you feel stressed talk to the health worker or counsellor to assist you.



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

Produced by
Mental Health Services Division
in conjunction with Health Promotion
and Education Division,
Department of Public Health, Gaborone,
Republic of Botswana,
design: Communication & Media Production Unit
© September 2008

living with a **MENTALLY ILL PATIENT**



*What caretakers
Need to know*

Introduction:

A lot of people think of mentally ill people as being violent, however the truth is that very few of the mentally ill people are violent.

There are many types of mental illness and not all mentally ill people behave or act the same way.

Most of them are able to work and live normally with other people. A few of them may show signs of disturbance and become descriptive. Some of the mentally ill people may not be able to take care of themselves properly, therefore need support from family members or community.

This booklet is to assist caregivers and community members with information on how to best care for mentally ill people.

Living positively with mentally ill people.

A mentally ill person has emotions like any other person, which means that they can be happy, angry or get annoyed just like anybody. It does not mean that whenever a mentally ill person is angry or argumentative is because of their illness

If you live with a mentally ill person you need to listen to them just as you would do with other people. Avoid dismissing their thought under the pretence that, they are mentally ill so they cannot say any sensible thing.

Do not ignore the mentally ill person, treat them with love and respect just as you would like yourself to be treated.

Things to avoid

- Do not try to do everything for the mentally ill person, let them participate in activities they can manage
- Do not place unnecessary restrictions on their activities like going out with friends, going to social functions etc.

- Do not keep on reminding them of their illness
- Avoid using statements like *'you are sick don't do that'* they need their freedom too.

Things to encourage

- Maintaining good personal hygiene
- Taking part in productive activities
- Making use of their productive time
- Taking part in family activities
- Waking up on time and taking their meals on time
- Taking responsibility to remind caregivers about their medication

Important hints to look at when caring for mentally ill people

- If in doubt as to what activities a mentally ill person can participate in, contact the nearest health worker for advice
- As a caregiver it is important to know what condition the person is being treated for
- Meet and talk with the health worker treating the person and know where to get help in case there is a problem