

# DISCHARGE PLANNING

Disability Rights Louisiana (DRLA) is a statewide non-profit agency providing **FREE** legal services, advocacy, and other supports to children, adults, and seniors with disabilities.

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## **WHAT DOES "DISCHARGE" MEAN UNDER LOUISIANA MENTAL HEALTH LAW?**

'Discharge' means full or conditional release from a treatment facility.

## **WHO AND WHAT DETERMINES WHEN I AM READY FOR DISCHARGE?**

Every resident of a treatment facility not under criminal commitment should be discharged when his or her condition improves or changes to the extent that treatment at that facility is no longer necessary or appropriate. The chief executive officer of the facility and/or your physician, with input from your treatment team, may determine when you should be discharged. Residents of a treatment facility under criminal commitment shall be discharged upon order of the committing court.

## **CAN I HELP PLAN MY DISCHARGE?**

Yes. You have the right to make requests and recommendations, and to agree or disagree in part or whole in the formation of your discharge plan.

## **WHEN SHOULD DISCHARGE PLANNING BEGIN?**

At the time of admission, the admitting physician or treatment team should discuss discharge options with you.

## **WHAT IF MY INITIAL DISCHARGE OPTIONS CHANGE DURING HOSPITALIZATION?**

Discharge plans must be reviewed and updated at intervals of 30 days throughout the hospitalization as part of treatment plan reviews.

## **WHO PARTICIPATES IN DEVELOPING MY DISCHARGE PLAN?**

You and an interdisciplinary treatment team which may consist of:

- Your treating physician
- Your social worker
- A registered nurse
- An education specialist (for minors only)

The team may also include a psychologist, your occupational therapist, your physical therapist, a nutritionist, and a speech/language, recreation, art, or music therapist.

In addition, you may invite persons of your choice, including, but not limited to, family members, your attorney, or your advocate.

### **WILL I HAVE ASSISTANCE IN FINDING A PLACE TO LIVE WHEN I AM DISCHARGED?**

Yes. Your social worker should assist you in locating an appropriate place to live. This should begin immediately after your admission so that when you are ready to be discharged, you will have definite living arrangements.

### **WHAT SHOULD I LOOK FOR IN A GOOD DISCHARGE PLAN?**

- Living Arrangements: own home/apartment, home with family, supervised apartment, public housing, group home
- Public Assistance/income: SSI, food stamps, disability benefits, return to work
- Mental Health Follow-up: local mental health center, private psychiatrist/psychologist, case management
- Support Groups: day program, group meetings
- Other Health Concerns: private physician, public clinic

### **WHAT CAN I DO IF I DISAGREE WITH ANY AREA OF MY DISCHARGE PLAN?**

First, you should express your concerns to your social worker and treatment team. If you are still not satisfied, you may contact a Client Advocate at Disability Rights Louisiana (see below).

If you need help or have questions about Disability Rights Louisiana, call or visit us online:

**TOLL-FREE: 1-800-960-7705 (Voice or Via Relay)**  
**8325 Oak St. • New Orleans, LA 70118**

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