



*Before,  
During, & After  
a Psychiatric Hold  
or Hospitalization  
Checklists*

**BEAM**

BLACK EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH  
COLLECTIVE

# Before a Psychiatric Hold or Hospitalization Checklists

## Before a Crisis or Hospitalization

If your loved one or family member has designated you as part of their support team and have consented to you having access to their health information, below is a list of items to consider.

### Prepare Legal & Communication Protections

- ☐ Be aware that psychiatric holds and “grave disability” assessments are highly subjective
- ☐ Challenge assumptions rooted in racial bias and remember that coercive psychiatric systems often affect Black patients differently and disproportionately
- ☐ Create a Psychiatric Advance Directive (PAD) at [nrc-pad.org](http://nrc-pad.org)
- ☐ Document preferred medications, hospitals, and treatment preferences
- ☐ Talk to your loved one about signing a Release of Information (ROI) and designate a trusted person
- ☐ Talk to your loved one about completing a HIPAA release form to specify exactly which family members can receive medical updates and what information stays private
- ☐ Ensure trusted friends, family members and/or providers can communicate with the treatment team

### Build Community-Based Supports

- ☐ Explore other care options when possible
- ☐ Find community-centered programs that support healing, wellness, and community care
- ☐ Build relationships with trusted mental health providers

# During a Psychiatric Hold or Hospitalization Checklists

## Documentation & Accountability

### Create a Written Advocacy Record

**Write a 2–3 page advocacy document for the medical chart.**

Include:

- ☐ Home support systems
- ☐ Medication lists and insurance
- ☐ Family involvement
- ☐ Existing providers
- ☐ Reasons your loved one can thrive outside the hospital
- ☐ Strengths, goals, and wellness indicators
- ☐ Detailed discharge/support plan

### Share Critical Information With Providers

- ☐ Medication history
- ☐ Diagnoses & known triggers
- ☐ Allergens
- ☐ Additional care information



Project LETS is a national grassroots organization and movement led by and for folks with lived experience of mental illness/madness, Disability, trauma, & neurodivergence.



[Scan the QR code or click here](#) to view their crisis safety plan tool that we recommend.

# Before a Psychiatric Hold or Hospitalization Checklists

## Documentation & Accountability

### Review the Discharge Plan

- ☐ Confirm medication supply
- ☐ Confirm follow-up appointments
- ☐ Clarify treatment recommendations
- ☐ Ask where your loved one is expected to go after discharge
- ☐ Understand what insurance, county, or state services cover
- ☐ Request referrals to outpatient programs or peer respite programs if needed

### Explore Alternative & Community-Based Supports

- ☐ Research peer respite centers
- ☐ Explore survivor-led support groups
- ☐ Identify Black-led healing spaces
- ☐ Connect with legal aid and patients' rights advocates
- ☐ Explore mutual aid and culturally rooted wellness spaces
- ☐ Consider outpatient programs that are low-pressure and trauma-informed

### Legal & Advocacy Supports

- ☐ Learn about Olmstead rights (right to live in community settings)
- ☐ Advocate against unnecessary institutionalization
- ☐ Contact disability rights organizations if discharge is delayed unfairly
- ☐ Push for placement in community settings instead of institutional care

# During a Psychiatric Hold or Hospitalization Checklists

## During A 5150/5250 Hold or Hospitalization

### Know Your Rights:

- ☐ Ask for a Patient's Rights Advocate
- ☐ Prepare evidence showing why continued detention is unnecessary
- ☐ Document available housing, treatment, and family supports
- ☐ Ask about outpatient and less punitive treatment options
- ☐ Request community-based restoration programs

### Stay Present

- ☐ Visit the hospital as often as possible and call daily
- ☐ Ask to speak with the treatment team
- ☐ Learn visitation and phone-call procedures
- ☐ Show the facility that family/community support exists

### Monitor Treatment Conditions

Ask your loved one:

- ☐ Are people listening to you and treating you well?
- ☐ Do you feel safe?
- ☐ Are you overly medicated?
- ☐ Are you getting meaningful help?
- ☐ How often are you awake during the day?
- ☐ Are restraints or forced medications being used?

# After a Psychiatric Hold or Hospitalization Checklists

## Emotional Support & Community Care

### Support Your Loved One

- ☐ Listen without judgment
- ☐ Validate their experiences in the hospital
- ☐ Avoid shaming or gossiping about hospitalization
- ☐ Connect them with peer support
- ☐ Address trauma from hospitalization
- ☐ Focus on healing, dignity, and empowerment

### Support Yourself as a Caregiver

- ☐ Seek therapy or emotional support
- ☐ Address your own fear, anxiety, and trauma
- ☐ Build a support system for yourself
- ☐ Practice compassion and patience
- ☐ Ask for help when overwhelmed

### Develop a Long-Term Community Care Plan

- ☐ Create a written support plan with your loved one
- ☐ Share the plan with trusted supporters
- ☐ Coordinate care responsibilities
- ☐ Identify emergency contacts and support roles
- ☐ Revisit and update the plan regularly





*Aftercare  
And Re-entry  
Checklists*

# Aftercare & Re-entry Support Checklists

## Immediate Aftercare & Repair

### Acknowledge Harm & Trauma

- ☐ Validate that the hospitalization experience may have been traumatic
- ☐ Reassure your loved one that systemic failures are not their fault
- ☐ Avoid framing your loved one as “broken” or solely responsible for recovery
- ☐ Normalize emotional reactions like fear, anger, shame, exhaustion, or distrust
- ☐ If applicable, seek emotional support to process guilt related to initiating hospitalization

### Activate the Support System

- ☐ Organize family and community support
- ☐ Coordinate practical and emotional care responsibilities
- ☐ Make sure your loved one knows people are advocating for them
- ☐ Connect them with trusted friends or favorite people
- ☐ Identify safe people your loved one feels comfortable around





# Aftercare & Re-entry Support Checklists

## Returning Home

### Create a Safe & Supportive Environment

- ☐ Create a calm, low-sensory environment
- ☐ Avoid overwhelming schedules or social gatherings
- ☐ Provide comforting foods, activities, and familiar items
- ☐ Allow time for rest and decompression
- ☐ Remove triggering or conflict-heavy environments when possible
- ☐ Respect your loved one's need for space and quiet

### Rebuild Dignity & Agency

- ☐ Empower your loved one to make choices about their routine and care
- ☐ Let them guide decisions whenever possible
- ☐ Avoid controlling or overly monitoring behaviors
- ☐ Focus on restoring autonomy and bodily agency
- ☐ Avoid shaming language or gossiping about hospitalization

### Pace the Transition Slowly

- ☐ Avoid overloading them with appointments and tasks
- ☐ Introduce supports gradually
- ☐ Remember that recovery does not need to happen immediately
- ☐ Prioritize emotional safety over intensive treatment
- ☐ Plan recovery over months rather than days

## Aftercare & Re-entry Support Checklists

# Understanding Post-Hospitalization Experiences

### Prepare for Common Reactions

- ☐ Expect exhaustion, irritability, or emotional overwhelm
- ☐ Understand your loved one may feel emotionally activated or reactive
- ☐ Be aware of possible insomnia or disrupted sleep
- ☐ Avoid comments about weight or appearance changes
- ☐ Recognize that medications may affect personality or behavior
- ☐ Understand your loved one may feel hypervigilant or unsafe

### Respond with Compassion

- ☐ Validate fears, anxiety, and emotional pain
- ☐ Speak gently and avoid dismissive comments
- ☐ Give grace during moments of frustration or escalation
- ☐ Prioritize emotional safety and trust-building



# Aftercare & Re-entry Support Checklists

## Medication Support

### Support Medication Transparency & Choice

- ☐ Help your loved one understand what medications they are taking
- ☐ Ask your loved one what type of side effects they are experiencing
- ☐ Ask providers about medication side effects
- ☐ Support collaborative medication decisions
- ☐ Collaborate with your loved one about medication
- ☐ Do not stop medications abruptly without medical guidance
- ☐ Seek community herbalists support for side effects, especially doctors or psychiatrists who have an herbalism background
- ☐ Be mindful and research, and get medical insight on potential interactions

### Find Supportive Providers

- ☐ Ensure your loved one feels heard in treatment decisions
- ☐ Locate a culturally competent psychiatrist
- ☐ Arrange follow-up medication management
- ☐ Create a plan for medication transitions or step-downs if appropriate



# Aftercare & Re-entry Support Checklists

## Healing & Recovery Supports

### Encourage Peer & Community Healing

- ☐ Connect your loved one with community groups with people with the same or similar experiences or conditions
- ☐ Explore survivor-led healing spaces
- ☐ Consider Emotional Emancipation Healing Circles
- ☐ Encourage strengths-based recovery approaches
- ☐ Support activities that rebuild confidence and meaning

### Focus on Strengths, Not Deficits

- ☐ Highlight strengths, skills, and goals
- ☐ Avoid constant symptom-monitoring
- ☐ Support your loved one's personal aspirations
- ☐ Encourage autonomy and self-awareness



## Aftercare & Re-entry Support Checklists

# Family & Caregiver Support

### Caregiver Self-Care

- ☐ Seek therapy or emotional support for yourself
- ☐ Build your own support network
- ☐ Ask for help when overwhelmed
- ☐ Reflect on biases and beliefs about mental illness and hospitalization
- ☐ Practice compassion, patience, and flexibility

### Practical Caregiver Support

- ☐ Help coordinate transportation if needed
- ☐ Assist with appointments or accessing services
- ☐ Help your loved one access housing or financial supports
- ☐ Create a safety plan with trusted providers and supports

## Aftercare & Re-entry Support Checklists

# Long-Term Advocacy & System Change

### Build Ongoing Advocacy

- ☐ Organize family advocacy efforts
- ☐ Participate in survivor-led or community advocacy groups
- ☐ Request chart reviews if harm occurred
- ☐ Explore legal aid when rights are violated
- ☐ Support policy and systems change efforts
- ☐ Build alternatives to carceral psychiatric systems

# Aftercare & Re-entry Support Checklists

## Key Things To Remember

*Recovery is not linear.*

*Rest can be more healing than intensive intervention.*

*Safety looks different for survivors and caregivers.*

*Healing should happen at the loved one's pace.*

*Maintaining dignity, autonomy, and connection is critical.*

*Compassion and validation are essential tools for healing.*



These checklists are a part of  
*What I Wish My People Had Known,*  
*The Psychiatric Green Book:*  
*A Guide for Black Folks.*

To access the full book, visit  
[beam.community/green-book](https://beam.community/green-book).

