

PatientsLikeMe Mood Conditions Community on Inpatient Therapy

Introduction

The Patient Voice series by PatientsLikeMe is a collection of wisdom, sentiments and experiences shared by patients regarding some of the most pertinent issues they face today. The first of the series, The Patient Voice on Inpatient Therapy highlights top themes from discussions of more than 10,000 members of the [PatientsLikeMe Mood Conditions Community](#) regarding their experiences with hospitalization. This document is not medical advice. It represents the voices and understanding of real patients sharing their wisdom about a very real topic. Thank you to all who continue to share your experiences and make it possible for patients like you to learn more and live better!

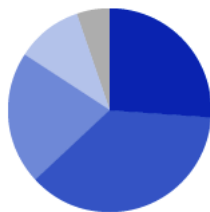


How can I use this document to benefit me?

We know that you don't want to disrupt your life with inpatient therapy or hospitalization. However, since PatientsLikeMe has hundreds of members who have been through this before, we thought compiling their tips and advice may help you make the most of your [inpatient therapy](#) AND plan for life after discharge. Many people have negative experiences with hospitalization, but for others, it's a positive step to a new beginning. This document summarizes our patients' positive experiences to help you learn what worked for patients like you during this important time, taking you one step closer to maximizing your learning and healing process.

Efficacy (Effect based on reason taken)

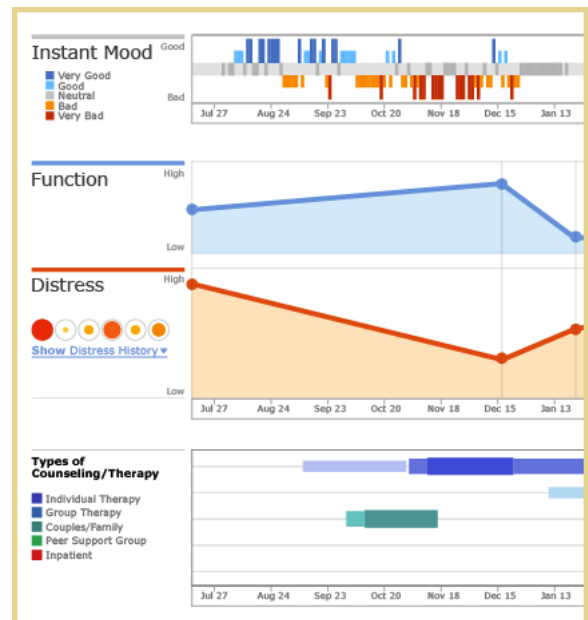
Major	26%
Moderate	37%
Slight	21%
None	11%
Can't Tell	5%



Efficacy of [Inpatient Therapy](#) as rated by our Mood Conditions Community members

More About PatientsLikeMe

PatientsLikeMe is a free online community for patients with life-changing conditions, including mood conditions such as depression, anxiety, bipolar, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Members share real-world experiences and health outcomes to learn more about themselves and help others. **Not a member? [Join today!](#)**



A Mood Conditions Community Patient Profile

Want to plan ahead? [See our patient tips on page 4.](#)

Patient Tips for Inpatient Therapy

Among the forum discussions by members of the [PatientsLikeMe Mood Conditions Community](#), the following are the top four themes being shared by patients who had a positive inpatient experience.

1. Set clear expectations/goals

Of the PatientsLikeMe members who reported having a positive inpatient experience, many say they found it helpful to define what they hoped to achieve during hospitalization.

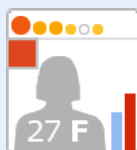
Patients Say: Ask Yourself...

- ▶ What is the goal for my time in inpatient therapy?
- ▶ Am I here to be stabilized and then immediately released? To learn skills? To take a break?
- ▶ Do I need my medication adjusted? If so, do I have a list of the medications I'm taking and their side effects?
- ▶ What criteria will I need to meet to be released?

Patient Experiences



"Four out of the six times I've been hospitalized, I've been thrown into it with no knowledge of where I would be going or what my treatment was going to be like when I got there. Sometimes I got the help I needed and left with my mood much improved, and sometimes I got burned really badly." - Mood Patient



"With inpatient hospitalization you also get treatment for any other health problems that you may have - and they are reported to your psychiatrist." - Mood Patient

PatientsLikeMe Facts

In a recent member survey, **almost half (48%) of respondents said information from PatientsLikeMe has made it moderately or significantly easier to communicate with their health care provider.** Try printing out your PatientsLikeMe [Doctor Visit Sheet](#) before your next visit or inpatient therapy. It's an easy way to list all your medications and dosages so your provider can cross-reference them with what's been happening with you.

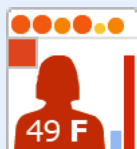
2. Develop new coping skills

With 1600+ PatientsLikeMe members using “[therapy](#)” as a treatment for their mood condition, there are often discussions related to the development of new coping skills. This is also a major theme among those who have had a positive inpatient experience, with specific dialogue regarding learning new coping skills during their hospitalization and strategies for dealing with stress and other triggers later on.

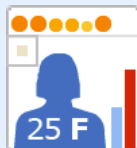
Patients Say: Ask Yourself...

- ▶ What types of therapy (individual and group, art and music, etc.) are available to me?
- ▶ Are there any tools to help me remember what I'm learning (e.g., journals, worksheets, etc.)?
- ▶ What new skills can I practice while I'm in inpatient therapy?
- ▶ How will the new skills I learn help me in the real world?

Patient Experiences



"I learned coping skills that I badly needed."
- Mood Patient



"When receiving inpatient treatment, they taught me tons of coping techniques, which in the moment of the [self-injury] impulse are very helpful and have gotten my [sic] through a lot of tough times." - Mood Patient



PatientsLikeMe Facts

Many of our community members find PatientsLikeMe to be a helpful place for support, with **74% of members surveyed saying the site "helps me cope better with problems in my life."** Through our [forum](#), and one-on-one private messaging, you can connect with others to find that support and share the tips you have.

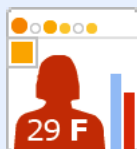
3. Coordinate care with your outside therapist/health care team

During and after hospitalization, coordination of care with their own personal psychiatrist, therapist or doctor was another contributing factor to a positive experience for PatientsLikeMe members. For those patients who didn't have that relationship prior to hospitalization, many reported developing therapeutic relationships during their stay that continued after their release.

Patients Say: Ask Yourself...

- ▶ Will my current therapist see me while I'm getting inpatient care? If not, will the hospital contact my therapist to coordinate care?
- ▶ Can I develop a new relationship that will continue after discharge?

Patient Experiences



"I finally found a therapist I thought I really worked well during an inpatient stay, and I stayed with her for about five years." - Mood Patient

4. Create a transition plan

Patient members of our Mood Conditions Community say planning your transition back to the stresses of every day life is just as important as your actual time in the hospital. Successful planning for this transition may reduce the need for future hospitalization. Many members recommend making a schedule of how you will spend your days at home to provide structure as you move from your inpatient program back to everyday life.

Patients Say: Ask Yourself...

- ▶ What kind of support will be in place when I leave? Support groups? Intensive outpatient programs?
- ▶ What will my schedule look like when I return home?
- ▶ How will I explain my absence to family, friends and colleagues?

Patient Experiences



“Something that I found to be really important was maintaining a structured schedule each and every day. That was the most helpful thing for me and really makes a difference as to how I feel. As long as my days are structured, I am more stable. The less structure I have, the more unstable I become.” - Mood Patient



PatientsLikeMe Facts

We surveyed members of the Mood Conditions Community, and **approximately 1 in 5 (22%) respondents “feel they needed less inpatient care as a result of using PatientsLikeMe.”** 25% of members think about harming themselves less as a result of using the site.

Patient Tips Regarding Advance Planning

PatientsLikeMe members cite the following questions as helpful in guiding them to think about inpatient hospitalization before it becomes a necessity.

- ▶ Do you know what inpatient facilities your insurance covers?
- ▶ Where does your doctor have admitting privileges? Is there only one choice in your area, or are there multiple? If you have a choice, can you learn about the benefits and drawbacks to each (distance, costs, patient experiences, etc.)?
- ▶ What are the differences between being committed voluntarily or involuntarily?
- ▶ Should you pack an emergency bag so you don't have to think about what to bring in the event of a crisis? Members recommend:
 - A change of clothes (no drawstrings)
 - Journal
 - Toothbrush, toothpaste
 - Washcloth, soap, deodorant
 - Protein bars or some other healthy snack

Where do I go from here?

PatientsLikeMe hopes this report provides you with valuable perspective and insight on the inpatient therapy experience as told by you, the patient. The report and attached worksheet are intended to help you prepare for, and get the most out of, the inpatient therapy experience. Be sure to check back with us for more from The Patient Voice series. Not a PatientsLikeMe member? [Join the conversation](#) to make a difference in the lives of patients like you.

Patients Say: Ask Yourself...

(A worksheet)

What is the goal for my time in inpatient therapy?

Am I here to be stabilized and then immediately released? To learn skills? To take a break?

Do I need my medication adjusted? If so, do I have a list of the medications I'm taking and their side effects?

What criteria will I need to meet to be released?

What types of therapy (individual and group, art and music, etc.) are available to me?

Are there any tools to help me remember what I'm learning (e.g., journals, worksheets, etc.)?

What new skills can I practice while I'm in inpatient therapy?

How will the new skills I learn help me in the real world?

Will my current therapist see me while I'm getting inpatient care? If not, will the hospital contact my therapist to coordinate care?

Can I develop a new relationship that will continue after discharge?

What kind of support will be in place when I leave? Support groups? Intensive outpatient programs?

What will my schedule look like when I return home?

How will I explain my absence to family, friends and colleagues?