

MENTAL HEALTH AND GUARDIANSHIP



When a person has serious mental health symptoms, it can be incredibly hard on them and their family and friends. Family and friends often want to do whatever they can to ensure that person's safety and to get them into mental health treatment.

Can a guardian make mental health decisions for someone in need?

People often look to guardianship for the ability to place a person into a psychiatric treatment program or to make decisions regarding their psychiatric medications because the person in need is refusing to accept treatment or medication voluntarily.

However, a guardian can **never** make involuntary treatment or medication decisions for someone. That means that even if you become a guardian, you cannot force a person into psychiatric treatment programs or force them to take psychiatric medication against their will.

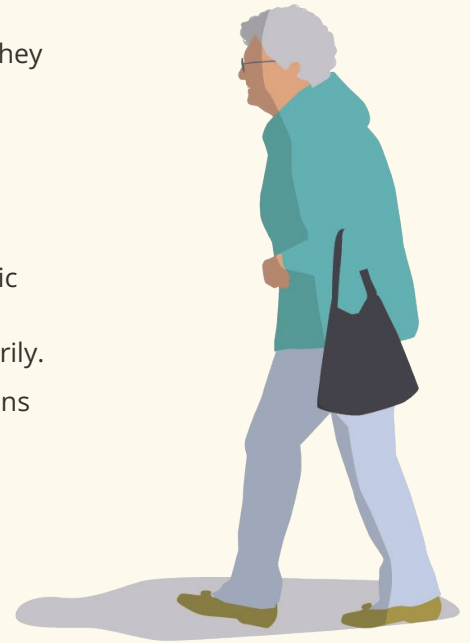
How can guardianship help someone with a mental health diagnosis?

Although a guardian can't force someone into psychiatric treatment, there are other ways a guardian can be helpful, if a person's mental health symptoms interfere with their ability to meet their needs.

A guardian can assist the person with getting voluntary mental health treatment. A guardian can also help manage money so the person's income, bills, and housing payments are under control. A guardian can also help maintain the person's health benefits so they have medical insurance coverage or home care services.

Where can I find out more about mental health resources in NYS?

- [The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration \(SAMHSA\) Helpline](#): A free, confidential helpline available 24/7, 365 days a year: 1-800-662-4357.
- [The National Alliance of Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) – You can find information about your local chapter of the Alliance at their website. They also have a free Helpline, open Monday through Friday, 10am through 10pm - 800-950-6264.
- [New York State Office of Mental Health \(OMH\) Resource List](#)



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- Mobile Crisis Team services in New York may help de-escalate a crisis and pair a person with ongoing mental health support as long as they are not an immediate danger to themselves or others. Availability of these services varies from county to county, so searching online for information on your specific county will be necessary. You can learn more about New York City's Mobile Crisis Teams through their website or by calling 988. Read more about [Mobile Crisis Teams in New York City](#).
- Emergency Medical Services (911) should be contacted if a person is ever experiencing thoughts of self-harm or harming others, or if they are in immediate need of medical support.