

PATIENT BILL OF RIGHTS

How to start a conversation with your provider

Seeking care for mental health difficulties can be intimidating and sometimes overwhelming. Even though we recommend using our Bill of Rights to guide your conversation with your provider (for example, a therapist), it can feel hard to bring up these questions. We've developed this guide to help start the conversation about the Patient Bill of Rights from www.PatientBillOfRights.org.

It feels uncomfortable bringing up these questions. I feel like I'm telling my provider how to do their job!

Sometimes it can feel like there's a difference in power when you're talking to a provider. After all, the provider was trained in how to help! Even though it might feel uncomfortable, we encourage you to bring questions to your provider. You will probably find that your provider is excited to talk to you about this! The Patient Bill of Rights was written by real providers, helping people like YOU. We *want* to talk about your rights.

And, good providers will often start the care relationship with this quote: ***Even though I'm the expert in the treatment, you're the expert in your life.*** Remember that your provider can't read your mind, and is relying on you to share what's important.

What are some ways that I can bring up the Patient Bill of Rights with my new provider or with the provider I already have?

It can be hard being direct or asserting needs in a new (or old) relationship. Sometimes, people are seeking treatment because they want to be more direct! So, we have a few suggestions for how to bring up the Patient Bill of Rights.

Hard to bring up in person? Send an email! Once you've met with your provider, you can send a short email to bring up the Patient Bill of Rights. Try this, or write your own:

"Hi, I found a website that lists the rights of people seeking mental health care (www.PatientBillOfRights.org). I want to learn more about the treatment you recommended for me, and would like to talk to you about some of the things on the site. Can we talk about it during our next session?"

Worried about forgetting to bring it up when you meet? Print (or save to your smart phone) the Bill of Rights or the Questions for a Provider! It's easy to forget about things when you walk in and start a session. If you bring the Rights with you or if you have a copy on your phone, you can use it to remind yourself. You can try starting the conversation like this:

"I found this website that lists the rights of people seeking mental health care. I printed (or saved) the list of rights. Can I show you the list and can we talk about this together?"