

# FAMILY To FAMILY (F2F)

## CLASS VI. Curriculum

- CLASS 1:** Introduction: Special features of the course; learning about the normative stages of our emotional reactions to the trauma of mental illness; our belief system and principles; your goals for your family member with mental illness; understanding illness symptoms as a "double-edged sword."
- CLASS 2:** Understanding Schizophrenia and Mood Episodes (depression and mania); characteristic features of psychotic illnesses; questions and answers about getting through the critical periods in mental illness; keeping a Crisis File.
- CLASS 3:** Mood Episodes, Borderline Personality Disorder, Anxiety Disorders, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, Dual Diagnosis: Types and sub-types of Mood Episodes; Diagnostic criteria for Borderline Personality Disorder, Panic Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder; Post-traumatic Stress Disorder; Co-occurring brain and addictive disorders; Telling our stories.
- CLASS 4:** Basics About the Brain: Functions of key brain areas; research on functional and structural brain abnormalities in the major mental illnesses; genetic revolution in biological psychiatry; genetic transmission of major mental illnesses; infectious and neurodevelopmental "second hits" which may cause mental illness; the biology of recovery; individual stages of recovery from brain disorders.
- CLASS 5:** Problem Solving Skills Workshop: How to define a problem; sharing our problem statements; solving the problem; setting limits.
- CLASS 6:** Medication Review: How medications work; basic psychopharmacology of the mood disorders, anxiety disorders and schizophrenia; medication side effects; key treatment issues; Stages of adherence to medications; early warning signs of relapse.

- CLASS 7:** Inside Mental Illness: Understanding the subjective experience of coping with a brain disorder; problems in maintaining self-esteem and positive identity; gaining empathy for the psychological struggle to protect one's integrity in mental illness.
- CLASS 8:** Communication Skills Workshop: How illness interferes with the capacity to communicate; learning to be clear; how to respond when the topic is loaded; talking to the person behind the symptoms of mental illness.
- CLASS 9:** Self-care: Learning about family burden; sharing in relative groups; handling negative feelings of anger, entrapment, guilt and grief; how to balance our lives.
- CLASS 10:** The Vision and Potential of Recovery: Learning about key principles of rehabilitation and model programs of community support; a first-person account of recovery from a guest speaker (an individual living with mental illness).
- CLASS 11:** Advocacy: Challenging the power of stigma in our lives; learning how to change the system; meet and hear from people advocating for change.
- CLASS 12:** Review, Sharing and Evaluation: Certification ceremony; Party!

**VII. References**

**VIII. Glossary**