

You Need Help! A Step-By-Step Plan to Convince a Loved One to Get Counseling

By Mark S. Komrad, MD. Center City, MN: Hazelden Publishing, 2012. 280 pp. \$14.95 (soft cover).

You Need Help! A Step-By-Step Plan to Convince a Loved One to Get Counseling by psychiatrist Mark S. Komrad should be read by anyone concerned about a person who may be exhibiting changes in behavior, excessive or prolonged sadness, anxiety, or thoughts of suicide. The book provides the steps one should follow to convince the troubled person to see a mental health professional for an evaluation.

Komrad's easy-to-read book is informed by his experience of more than two decades of medical practice in evaluating and treating people with mental illness. The book's style and format also reflect his extensive activity with his nationally syndicated call-in radio talk show about psychiatry, "Komrad on Call." This radio program has enabled millions of listeners to gain a better understanding of mental health concerns and the steps to take to help others get the treatment they need, in the interest of improving and even saving lives, with proper diagnosis and treatment. Because of his nationally recognized expertise, he is a regular guest on National Public Radio and on television, and is a sought-after psychiatric consultant to Hollywood film directors, to help them portray mental disorders and psychiatrists more accurately.

In the book, Komrad explains that the time for a professional evaluation is when our caring efforts are not helping, and the person we care about is clearly getting worse. He guides us in lessening our hesitation to act, and he helps us to understand what mental illness is and the reasons that the person may be reluctant to get help. He guides us in finding the right mental health professional, and describes what happens in the initial professional evaluation. He clarifies the best timing and environment for speaking with the troubled other about seeking an evaluation and what to do, from the most minor to the most coercive measures, if the person refuses. The

involuntary evaluation of a mentally ill person and the concerned person's safety are also addressed. This section of the book should be mandatory reading for all trainees, fellows, and medical and other health sciences students and professionals, as psychiatrically ill people more often see nonpsychiatric health professionals in an emergency because of their fear of being stigmatized. Komrad goes on to talk about how to be part of the support system and ongoing treatment plan for the individual who has been evaluated and received a diagnosis of mental illness. The appendix is packed with many helpful resources; it should be in every professional's arsenal and in every concerned other's, as well.

Komrad acknowledges the readers, most often caring, concerned, courageous others, willing to take the frightening steps to help someone they care about. He makes them feel that they are not alone with their fears and feelings. Throughout the book, he provides many case examples to help readers understand the process better. As Rosalynn Carter so wisely states in her foreword, "Helping someone to get a proper assessment by meeting with a mental health professional is vital. . . ."

In this text, Komrad never quite explores thoroughly the potential forensic complexities of being a good neighbor to the individual who is in the midst of a psychological crisis. For example, one can well imagine that the individual in distress could have a negative experience once he comes in contact with the care system. Indeed, he could follow advice, seek care, and find himself being admitted against his will to a psychiatric service. In this newly discovered context, the patient may suddenly encounter new terms like patient's rights and autonomy while combating the reality that he is sicker than he thought. Such preoccupations, however, are an extension of Komrad's central notion of turning the Good Samaritan neighbor into a functional adjunctive caregiver and guide to specialized services.

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