

## Write a History Summary of the Problems

By writing a summary you will help us get further faster in understanding and making a plan to help you and your child. You may find this summary useful to you in the future also, e.g. with a new doctor or therapist. I suggest dividing this history summary into seven paragraphs (please type). Please put the date, your child's name, and your name at the top.

- 1) Start with a paragraph listing your main concerns. Make it clear what are your top one or two concerns (and usually this means starting with the most serious ones, e.g. which involve some degree of dangerousness to self or others). Please be specific—general questions, e.g. "what is wrong, or does he/she have a mental health problem" don't give me a place to start. Also include any specific questions you have about cause, diagnosis (is it such and such), treatment (what about this medication or treatment), or a decision to be made.
- 2) Describe the current frequency and severity of the main problems, symptoms, behaviors, emotional difficulties, school difficulties, etc. (e.g., he has a major meltdown involving throwing things at least three times a week). This should give a good picture of what things are currently like. We should be able to have you write a similar paragraph sometime in the coming year as a way to measure change and progress.
- 3) Describe the degree of distress and/or impairment which is related to these problems. In other words, how upsetting is it (to the child/teen, to parents, family members, others), and how much do these problems get in the way of a productive, successful life with respect to family, school (work), peer social relationships (include romantic relationships as appropriate), and community relationships and functioning (the law, neighbors).
- 4) Next provide a history of when the problem (s) first developed and how it has changed over time, first, clarifying when it first began (perhaps the earliest stages and at what age) and how it has changed as your child has gotten older. These first four paragraphs provide the "what, when, where, how much, and how often" of the problem. This part is critical for me to understand the problem. In 5) below you will have a chance to give your thoughts about the "why's." Try to keep these parts separate.
- 5) Here's your chance to tell me the "why's," i.e. the possible contributing causes of the current problems. Describe what events, experiences, vulnerabilities, or other factors you see as having contributed to the current problems (at least partially "causing"). Sometimes these factors may be fairly clear, but often it is a complicated mixture of vulnerabilities (e.g. genetic = family history) which when combined with certain experience and learning (stress; parent-child relationship difficulties; family circumstances; loss; and psychological trauma) then results in particular emotional and behavioral problems.
- 6) Write about what needs to change for things to be much better. Please think about who has to do the changing (some people even put this in terms of percentages), and some thoughts on what that change might be.
- 7) Lastly, add a paragraph with anything very important which did not fit into the above areas.