

Key Terms

Additional Contact

In a PAD, an Additional Contact is someone who helps with daily responsibilities during a crisis (e.g., feeding pets, notifying employers), but **does not** have legal authority to make treatment decisions.

Advance Directive

An advance directive, also known as an advance healthcare directive, is a legal document outlining an individual's wishes regarding medical treatment if they become unable to make decisions for themselves.

Assisted Communication Device

These devices are designed to help individuals with disabilities communicate. Some examples include laptops, tablets, and speech-generating devices.

Behavioral Health

Behavioral health includes mental health conditions and substance use disorders. It refers to a state of mental, emotional, and social well-being or behaviors and actions that affect wellness. Behavioral health is a key component of overall health.

Source: CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/mental-health/about/about-behavioral-health.html>

Behavioral Health Crisis

A behavioral health crisis is a situation in which an individual is experiencing distress that may impact their safety, ability to care for themselves, or ability to function effectively, and might lead to incapacity.

► Examples: extreme anxiety, suicidal thoughts, confusion, hallucinations

Capacity

Capacity refers to a person's legal and mental ability to make informed decisions about their own healthcare. For a PAD to be considered valid, the individual must have capacity at the time of its creation, meaning they understand the nature, consequences, and implications of the decisions outlined in the document.

CARE Court

CARE Court (Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment Court) is a California program that connects individuals struggling with severe, untreated mental illness – often coupled with substance use challenges – to a court-ordered Care Plan lasting up to 24 months. This plan is carried out by a community-based care team and intended to support recovery and stability.

Source: California Legislative Information

https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260SB27#99INT

Conservatorship

A conservatorship is a court-ordered legal arrangement where an individual (the **conservator**) is appointed to care for another adult (**individual on conservatorship**, or **conservatee**) who may need support managing their personal or financial affairs due to a condition affecting decision-making capacity. The conservator can decide about physical and behavioral health treatment for the individual on conservatorship. In the context of PADs, a conservatee's ability to create or enforce a PAD may be limited depending on the powers granted to the conservator.

Crisis Directives

This is the section of the online PAD that contains personal information to help law enforcement and other first responders identify the individual, communicate effectively, and de-escalate a situation.

► Includes preferred name, appearance, triggers, calming strategies, communication tips, and support contacts

Crisis Event Call for Service

For crisis teams, first responders, and law enforcement, a crisis event call for service is a time-limited situation during which an individual's PAD would be reviewed and implemented as possible.

Crisis Team Member

This is an individual whose primary job is to offer support and encouragement to individuals experiencing a crisis. They may be partnered with law enforcement advocates, placed in treatment facilities and hospitals, or work on crisis hotlines.

De-escalation

De-escalation is a set of strategies or techniques used to reduce the intensity of a crisis situation, with the goal of calming heightened emotions and preventing harm. In behavioral health contexts, de-escalation focuses on creating safety, reducing stress, and restoring communication without the use of force.

Dependents

Dependents are people who rely on you for daily care. Some examples include children, a spouse, other family members, friends, older adults, or individuals who depend on the individual daily.

Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is the ability to find, understand, use, and communicate information through digital platforms such as websites, apps, and email. It includes knowing how to access online tools safely, protect personal information, and navigate technology independently or with support.

First Responder

First responders are trained professionals who are first to arrive and provide assistance at the scene of an emergency. This includes behavioral health crisis team members, firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), law enforcement officers, and other personnel trained to respond to crises and provide immediate support.

Full-Service Partnership (FSP)

A Full-Service Partnership is a community-based and individually centered program that uses a “whatever it takes” approach to develop personal care plans for individuals and families. FSPs provide behavioral health services and intensive case management to support people living with behavioral health conditions.

Gender

Biological sex and sexual orientation are not the same as gender. Gender identity exists along a spectrum, and it is important to respect and affirm each individual’s identity. According to Human Rights Watch, “One’s innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One’s gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.”

Healthcare Durable Power of Attorney (Durable POA)

A legal instrument that allows a person to name individuals who can make decisions for them when they lack decision-making capacity. The person designated through this instrument is called a health care agent, proxy, or surrogate decision maker. The health care agent represents the person’s wishes, and those wishes should be communicated in advance.

HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)

A federal law that protects the privacy of personal health information. It prohibits covered entities (healthcare providers, health plans, etc.) from using and disclosing individuals’ “individually identifiable health information.”

► Because all information in a psychiatric advance directive is volunteered by the individual, HIPAA does not apply.

Individual

In the context of this project, individual is defined as a person who creates and owns their psychiatric advance directive.

Law Enforcement Sensitivity

Individuals who have negative experiences with law enforcement may have heightened responses to the presence of weapons or other law enforcement tools, which can escalate a crisis.

Non-Hospital Treatment Facility

These buildings are not hospitals but provide authorized treatment for behavioral health conditions. These may include drop-in centers or peer respites.

Peer

A peer is an individual who has lived experience with a mental health condition, a substance use disorder, or both and is either a recipient of behavioral health services or a parent/family member of the recipient.

Peer Support Specialist

A Peer Support Specialist is an individual trained to utilize their lived experience with a mental health and/or substance use challenge as either a recipient of behavioral health services or a parent/family member of the recipient. Peer Support Specialists are trained to help others experiencing similar situations and encourage engagement in services to promote wellness and recovery.

Preferred Contact

In a PAD, a Preferred Contact is a trusted person chosen to advocate on the individual's behalf during a crisis. This person has full access to the PAD and helps ensure the individual's wishes are honored.

► Formerly referred to as a Healthcare Agent or Advocate

Psychiatrist

This is a physician who is tasked with diagnosing a person with a behavioral health condition based on the symptoms they present during their evaluation. A psychiatrist also specializes in assessing and supporting individuals experiencing behavioral health challenges, including prescribing medication when appropriate.

Psychiatric Advance Directive (PAD)

A Psychiatric Advance Directive is a legal document with an individual's specific instructions or preferences regarding treatment, in case of a future behavioral health crisis (mental health and/or substance use) in which they might not be able to make their own decisions. PADs are a means for increasing self-determination by encouraging and empowering people to make decisions about their lives to the maximum extent possible.

Recovery

Recovery is a strength-based process of change through which individuals enhance their health and wellness in ways that are meaningful to them, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential.

Substance Use

Substance use refers to the use of alcohol, illicit drugs, and other substances that can be consumed, inhaled, injected, or otherwise absorbed into the body which may have varying impacts on health and well-being, including the potential for dependence.

Supported Decision-Making

Supported decision-making is a process where individuals receive help from trusted supporters to understand options and make decisions without giving up their autonomy.

Supporters

These are people the individual trusts to support them during a crisis and recovery. They may be close family members, friends, or healthcare providers.

Therapist

Therapists are licensed professional supports individuals in their healing, growth, and recovery process. A therapist can specialize in various types of therapeutic treatment (such as talk therapy, play therapy, occupational therapy, DBT, EMDR, etc.)

Treatment Directives

In the online PAD, Treatment Directives is the section where individuals specify the type of care they want to receive during a behavioral health crisis.

► Includes medication preferences, preferred hospitals, therapies to avoid, and information on dependents, gender-affirming care, and reproductive health

Treatment Facility

A treatment facility is a licensed place that provides professional care and treatment services for people experiencing mental health or substance use challenges.

WRAP® (Wellness Recovery Action Plan)

WRAPs are personal self-management tools for daily wellness and relapse prevention. They are often developed in a self-help group setting.

► Compared to a PAD, a WRAP plan tends to include more information about day-to-day routines and focus on maintaining wellness outside moments of crisis.