

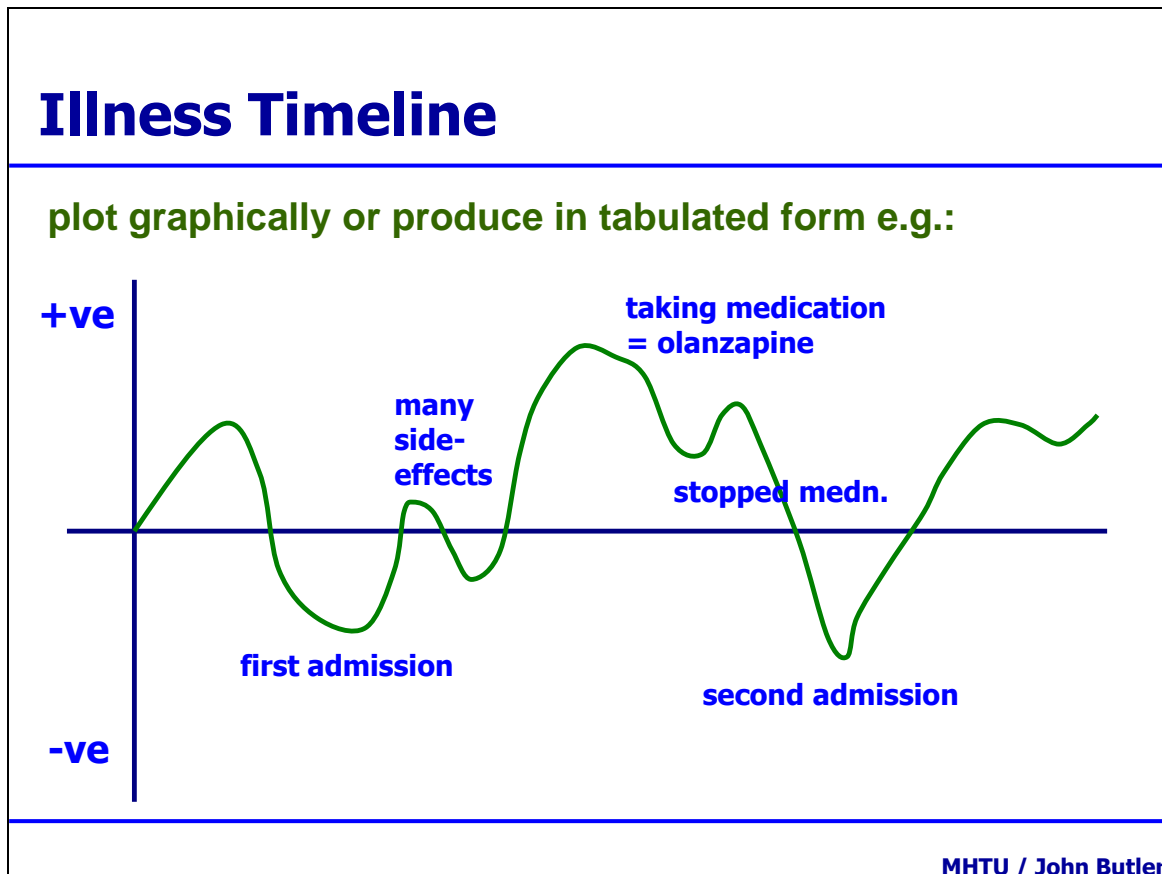
Developing an Illness Timeline (adapted from: Gray 2003)

A useful strategy for raising awareness of the links between helpful treatment & care interventions and recovery from problems or illness, this involves working closely with the service-user to identify when they, or significant others, first realised they had mental health difficulties / problems and then plotting the course of their illness and the positive & negative effects of treatment and care interventions over time.

You will need to help the service-user to identify when their mental health has been particularly good and when it has not been so good.

You will also need to help the service-user to make links between stopping medication or other treatment and care interventions and worsening symptoms, examining in detail any negative experiences.

Through discussion, actively involve the service-user in creating a sketch which represents their illness timeline, as in the example below.



To begin, simply draw a horizontal line across a blank page to represent time, and a vertical line to represent the person's rating of positive / good or negative / bad experiences. Negotiate with the person where they would like to start the timeline from and then engage them in rating and plotting their experiences over time, adding notes to the emerging sketch. This exercise can be started within a short session with the service-user and completed as a practice or homework task.

very good experience



time in years

very bad / difficult experience

Notes about personal experiences: