



Using the Mental Health System

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**“Mental illness is
nothing to be ashamed of,
but stigma and bias
shame us all.”**

Bill Clinton

Part 1

Types of Mental Health Services

Services and treatments recommended may be based on information about the needs of the individual and availability of the service.

Initial contact

Intake Referral/Pre-Screening/Phone Interview:

- Completed by phone or face-to-face
- Basic information must be provided and sometimes more details are need
- You must provide identifying information: name, age, address, telephone numbers, insurance, symptoms and behaviors

Initial contact

- You should be told if your case is accepted or when they will get back to you with an answer.
- If they accept the case, you may be told there is a “Wait List” and if you want to be placed on it.
- If they cannot accept the case, they will likely refer you to a different service. If they don't, ask them for referrals to other agencies/clinics.

While on “wait list”

They (agency or clinic) may check-in to see if you are still interested in services.

If yes, tell them so. If not, let them know so they can make room to serve others.

Once accepted, someone will call to make the first appointment. (Initial Intake Assessment/Appointment.

Clinical assessment

Why this assessment is so important:

To gather as much information as needed to make an accurate evaluation of each client's mental health needs and provide the best treatment.

Assessment questions

- Main concern and history of current problem
- Medical and mental health history
- Substance abuse history
- Developmental history
- School, work, legal, abuse history
- Family history
- Mental health assessment (prior)

Types of services

- Individual therapy
- Group therapy
- Family therapy
- Psycho-educational groups
 - ✓ Social skills
 - ✓ Anger management
 - ✓ Substance abuse

Types of services

- School-based services/Special education
- Residential treatment/group homes
- Medication management
- Psychiatry
- MDs , RNs, PTs, case managers
- Case management
- Support groups (client or family)
- Emergency services
- Hospitalization

Part 2

Recognizing the need for a mental health assessment

Behaviors and Symptoms may indicate a mental health concern or illness with our loved one, client, consumer...or ourselves

Types of behaviors or clues

- Overwhelming fear or terror
- Change in ability to cope
- Change in behavior

Types of Behaviors or Clues #2

- Decreased ability to handle stress
- Increase in maladaptive behavior
- New or increase in self-injurious behavior

Types of behaviors or clues #3

- Change in mood
- Loss of motivation
- Inability to express emotions
- Extreme overreaction to small things

Types of behaviors or clues #4

- Extremely low self-esteem
- Suicidal thoughts
- Change in energy or sleep patterns
- Abuse of alcohol or drugs
- Excessive changes in appetite.

Types of behaviors or clues #5

More or Less:

- Hyperactivity
- Irritability
- Confusion
- Disorientation
- Lethargy
- Withdrawal

Types of behaviors or clues #6

- Changes in awareness
- Extreme sensitivity to light, color, noise
- Believing thoughts are controlled by others

Types of behaviors or clues #7

- Fear of touching or being touched
- Changes in sense of self
- Sense of body boundaries changing
- Hallucinations

Symptoms of psychiatric disorders

What you think is a “typical” quality or behavior of a person with developmental disabilities may, in fact.....

Be a symptom or indicator of mental illness.

Symptoms of psychiatric disorders

Persons with intellectual disabilities and limited verbal skills have difficulty expressing thoughts about mental health conditions, such as depression.

Aggression

Ask yourself:

- Is anyone at risk?
- Does anyone feel threatened or unsafe?
- Are aggressive behaviors increasing in severity and length of time?

Aggression

What should you do if the situation is serious?



Self-injurious or suicidal behaviors

Ask yourself:

- Is individual at risk?
- Is individual threatening to harm him/herself?
- Does individual have access to a weapon or other means to harm him/herself?
- Are self-injurious behaviors increasing in severity and length of time?

Self-injurious or suicidal behaviors

What have you done in the past?

What could you do in the future?



Call case worker, therapist, doctor, agency,
or regional center worker

Self-injurious or suicidal behaviors

What should you do if the situation is severe?



Part 3

Using Mental Health Services

Reach out

- Call the Regional Center for help, suggestions
- Call Department of Mental Health
[Los Angeles County]
They can link you to agencies that specialize (or are trained) in providing Mental Health services to persons with developmental disabilities.
- Call treatment facilities, mental health agencies in your area.
- Ask friends, family...the people around you

Focus on

- Behaviors
- Signs and symptoms
- Patterns
- Your concerns

Why do this?

