



Health Services
Mental Health Services

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES INFORMATION

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES PROGRAM. The Center’s Mental Health Services program (MHS) provides individual and couples counseling, crisis counseling and psychiatric consultation. In addition, MHS offers specialized services (individual and group) for people dealing with substance use and abuse, domestic violence, or anger management.

Counseling at MHS is primarily focused on helping clients resolve problems or difficulties in their lives through a goal-directed, short-term, evidence-based approach. We do not offer open-ended, unlimited counseling. Clients establish “treatment goals” with their counselors and work toward the achievement of those goals in counseling. The counseling period for clients is typically 16 sessions or less with frequency and time intervals determined by their counselor based on the severity of their needs and their treatment plan.

Clients who are assessed by the counselor to be in crisis at the time of their Intake interview may be assigned immediately for crisis counseling, which lasts for up to six sessions.

Stand-alone psychiatric services are not available. A psychiatric consultation may be available, based on referral by the client’s medical provider or assigned mental health counselor. Clients who are prescribed medications by the MHS psychiatric provider must be able to pay for the prescriptions (with insurance, the AIDS Drug Assistance Program or out-of-pocket), as MHS does not cover the costs of psychiatric medications.

Counseling services are provided by both staff clinicians (licensed, license-eligible and certified addiction and domestic violence counselors) and pre- and post-graduate masters and doctoral-level interns who are working toward mental health degrees or licenses. MHS is a training site for mental health professionals; licensed mental health professionals directly supervise all interns. **As part of their training and as a means of assuring the quality of services, sessions with interns may be recorded.**

HOW CLIENTS ACCESS SERVICES. Anyone interested in receiving mental health services must first complete an Intake interview. During the Intake, the Intake Counselor will gather information regarding the reason(s) the client is seeking services and will screen for other issues (substance abuse, suicidality, domestic violence, etc.). In some cases, additional assessment may be required beyond the initial Intake, in order to determine the most appropriate method of treatment.

REGISTRATION AND ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION. Clients must complete a registration process to determine the payer source for services and, if needed, an eligibility appointment to enroll in a program to cover the cost of their services.

HOW CLIENTS ARE ASSIGNED TO COUNSELORS. There are many factors which determine how quickly a client is placed, including the nature of the client’s problem(s); any special requests the client may have regarding a counselor (e.g., only wants to see a lesbian, a licensed counselor, etc.); and—perhaps most importantly—how flexible the client’s schedule is for appointments. Once a client has been assigned to a counselor, the counselor will call the client to schedule an appointment. In order to protect client confidentiality, it is important that the Intake counselor is told of any restrictions on the kinds of messages—if any—that may be left for the client. **If the client fails to respond to the counselor’s calls within five business days, the counselor’s time may be made available to another client.**

OUTSIDE REFERRALS. Clients who prefer not to wait for assignment to an MHS counselor may be provided with referrals to outside clinicians. We can also provide clients with a list of other sliding scale community mental health clinics.

ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS. Regular attendance to counseling sessions is required if the client is to continue to receive services. Regular attendance is very important, not only in order for counseling to be beneficial, but also because once an appointment is made, that time is set aside by the counselor for the client. **Counseling should be requested only by individuals who are comfortable making a commitment to regular attendance as determined by their counselor.**

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Name:

PF#:

Appointments should be cancelled only for important and unavoidable circumstances. **If a client is unable to keep an appointment, it is very important that a message is left for the counselor within 24 hours of the appointment. Frequent cancellations and/or two absences without prior notification are grounds for termination of counseling services.** Because of the high demand for services, clients who will not be able to come in for their appointments for more than three sessions in a row will need to be discharged in order to make that time available to another client.

LEAVING MESSAGES. When the assigned counselor calls to schedule the first appointment, the client is provided with the phone number of the counselor's voice mail, on which messages may be left at any time. It is always best to leave a message on the counselor's direct line, rather than on the general MHS voice mail. Counselors check their voice mail regularly and will respond to messages as soon as they are able, however, **MHS cannot guarantee an immediate response**, and messages left after regular business hours may not be returned before the next business day. A list of Crisis Hotline numbers is included below for emergency situations.

FEES. It is expected that the fee for services rendered, if any, will be established through registration process and will be paid in full at every appointment. Clients who have difficulties making payments may establish a payment plan with the Front Office, however, failure to pay one's fee for more than two weeks in a row may result in suspension of services until the payment issue has been resolved.

PARKING. Parking is available behind our McDonald/Wright building between the hours of 8am and 9:30pm Monday through Friday (excluding holidays); Saturday hours between 9am and 5pm. Entrance to the parking lot is on the south side of the building. No validation is required, though parking is limited to four hours. Overnight parking is prohibited. Please only use this lot to park while you are at the Center for appointments or other Center services.

PROHIBITED BEHAVIORS. It is inappropriate for clients to be under the influence (or in possession) of alcohol, drugs or intoxicants of any kind during their counseling appointment. Clients who engage in fighting, verbal abuse or intimidation, acts of violence, or who bring in a weapon will be asked to leave, escorted by security, and may be terminated from service.

Any questions about the above policies may be addressed to the Manager of Clinical Operations, at 323-993-7617

By my signature below, I acknowledge that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the above policies:

Signature – Client

Signature – Staff Witness

Date Signed

EMERGENCY HOTLINES

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment	800-662-4357	Child Abuse Hotline	800-540-4000
Suicide Prevention Hotline	877-727-4747	Domestic Violence Hotline	800-799-7233
Elder Abuse Hotline	800-992-1660	L.A. County 24-hour resource referral	211