OUTPATIENT MENTAL HEALTH SETTINGS

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WHAT ARE OUTPATIENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES?

- Outpatient mental health services are those that do not require an overnight stay in a hospital or other treatment facility.
- They can take place in a variety of settings such as a hospital, doctors' office, community center, school campuses, office buildings, etc.
- Can be either short-term or long-term.
- A wide variety of presenting problems and mental health disorders can be treated in outpatient mental health settings.
LEVELS OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE

- Inpatient Care/Hospitalization
- Residential Programs
- PHP
- IOP
- Other Outpatient Services

Inpatient Mental Health Settings
Outpatient Mental Health Settings

TREATMENT INTENSITY

Least to Most
WHAT TYPES OF SERVICES ARE OFFERED IN OUTPATIENT SETTINGS

- Individual therapy
- Family therapy
- Group therapy
- Support groups
- Medication management
- Intensive outpatient programs
- Partial hospitalization programs
- Substance use counseling
- In-home therapy/behavioral therapy
TYPES OF OUTPATIENT MENTAL HEALTH SETTINGS

- PHP
- IOP
- Community mental health agency
- School counseling
- Private practice
- Online therapy
PARTIAL HOSPITALIZATION PROGRAMS (PHP)

- For those that are medically stable and have adequate support at home
- Helpful for those stepping down from an inpatient program
- At least 20 hours per week
- Short-term treatment
- Clients go for a portion of the day and then return home
- Counselors may facilitate all these groups or specific groups

Typical day-to-day:
- group therapy
- individual therapy
- psychoeducation
- meeting with a psychologist
- lunch
- family therapy
- complementary treatment
INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT PROGRAMS (IOP)

- Typically, 6 hours a week for adolescents and 9 hours a week for adults
  - Visits to the facility up to 4x a week
  - Up to 90 days
- Allow clients to work, go to school, or carry out other daily activities with still receiving support from mental health professionals
- Combination of individual therapy and group therapy
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AGENCY

- Public mental health services
- Often have contracts with other providers
- Make referrals for higher levels of care, employment, housing, etc.
- Clinicians, psychiatrists, and case workers use a team approach to best help a client's need
- Often have mobile crisis centers or offer emergency mental health services
COUNSELING IN SCHOOLS

- Meet with children and adolescents in the school setting to address mental health and behavioral issues
  - Provides academic and classroom support and positive behavioral supports
- Students are pulled from class for meetings with their counselor
- Sessions are typically shorter
- Collaborate with teachers, parents, court systems, CPS
- Counselor may meet with students 1:1 or in group settings
- Counselor may be needed for crisis intervention and de-escalation with students
- Referrals are often made to other settings for those that need additional services
PRIVATE PRACTICE

- For independently licensed LMHC’s
- Can take place in the home or office setting
- Set your own schedule
- Do not need to work under a supervisor
- Provides a variety of counseling services such as individual or family therapy

- May have their own staff
- Therapists must recruit their own clients
- Cover practice expenses
- Can either accept insurance or out of pocket pay
- May belong to a group private practice
ONLINE THERAPY

• **What is it?**
  • Therapy that is conducted via a HIPPA compliant video conferencing software

• **Benefits**
  • Flexibility for the clinician for scheduling and making appointments
  • Can reach those in remote locations, underserved areas, or those that cannot leave their home
  • Many outpatient settings can alter their services to be available online as well as in-person

• **Limitations**
  • Client’s need access to a smart phone or computer
  • Some companies require you to provide services to clients through text messaging
  • Not ideal for client’s who prefer talking in person or for those with certain mental health disorders
  • Often, online therapy platforms require their clinicians to be independently licensed
WHAT PRESENTING PROBLEMS ARE ADDRESSED IN OUTPATIENT SETTINGS?

• Most presenting problems and mental health disorders
• Which individuals may need a higher level of care (inpatient settings)
  • Anyone who experiences active and persistent suicidal thoughts and behaviors
  • Those that present as a threat to themselves or others
  • Those that require monitoring and managing for medication
  • Have a difficult time caring for themselves
BENEFITS OF OUTPATIENT MENTAL HEALTH SETTINGS

- Offers more flexibility than inpatient settings
- More cost effective than inpatient settings
- Client’s can learn skills that can be immediately applied to their natural environment
- Allows client’s to still connect with their support system
- Allows for the time to maintain daily activities such as work, school, socialization, family responsibilities, etc.
- Faced with triggering situations that can be faced and addressed in counseling sessions
LIMITATIONS OF OUTPATIENT MENTAL HEALTH SETTINGS

- Not suited for client's who need a higher level of care and more supervision
- Sessions are typically under 1 hour per week; there is a lot of time in between each session
- Might be faced with more triggering situations
- Some might start to avoid therapy or become less motivated for treatment
QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN CHOOSING A SETTING TO WORK IN:

- What mental health settings have you worked in before?
  - What did you like about that setting?
  - What did you dislike about that setting?
- What presenting problems and disorders do you enjoy working with?
  - How many clients within a week do you hope to see?
  - Do you hope to be independently licensed? (i.e. LMHC)
- Do you want to have a more active role with individual clients as a therapist?
REFERENCES


