
Mission of Washington State Publicly Funded Mental Health System

Mission Statement¹

The Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) and community stakeholders from throughout the state developed a mission statement for the public mental health system. It reads as follows:

The mission of Washington State's mental health system is to ensure that people of all ages experiencing mental illness can better manage their illness; achieve their personal goals; and live, work, and participate in their community.

We are committed to take actions consistent with these values:

1. We value the strengths and assets of consumers and their families and seek to include their participation in decision-making and policy-setting.
2. We respect and celebrate the cultural and other diverse qualities of each consumer.
3. We work in partnership with allied community providers to deliver quality individualized supports and services.
4. We treat people with respect, equality, courtesy, and fairness.

Given this mission, we believe the operation of the system should be based on the following principles:

1. Treatment becomes meaningful when participants have voice, access and ownership of the mental health services.
2. Staff at all levels shall treat people in the system with respect, equality, courtesy and fairness.
3. Services shall heed individual diversity and explicitly incorporate the age, culture and preferences of the participant and his or her family and/or natural supports in the plan of care.
4. Participants and their families shall be included in the ongoing process of decision-making and policy-setting in the planning, implementation and operation of the system.
5. Treatment and support is provided in such a way that the lives of people are disrupted as little as possible by mental illness while keeping them and their community safe.

¹ Text is from the Mental Health Division's "Managed Care in the Public Mental Health System: The Washington Approach." March 1998

6. Providers of mental health services must work in active partnership with other allied community providers to insure that participants receive a balanced, coordinated and individualized array of quality supports and services.
7. People shall be provided access to information about mental illness and treatment options.
8. Services shall be offered that are the most responsive to the participant's needs in the least restrictive manner and setting possible.
9. Services shall be quickly and conveniently offered so that the right services are available at the right time and in the right place allowing the greatest possible opportunity for recovery.
10. Participants have the right to receive services from qualified staff who are both clinically and culturally competent.
11. Effective plans of care shall result from a comprehensive evaluation and be based on the strengths of the person and his or her family or natural supports. They should begin with education on the nature of the mental illness he or she is experiencing and the range of options for treatments and support available in the system, including not only medications and formal psychotherapies, but also alternative approaches that may be appropriate to the age, culture and preferences of the participants.
12. Participants who experience persistent but fluctuating effects from their mental illnesses require stable relationships with the network of providers as their needs wax and wane. These relationships must allow for reductions, increases and modifications of support and services without repeated reapplication for enrollment and without constant changes in the personnel with whom the participant and his or her family or natural supports interact.
13. Managing the publicly funded trust requires acting as stewards for the taxpayers' dollars by providing the needed services in the most cost effective and efficient manner possible.