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North Sound Mental Health Administration
Section 1500 – Clinical: Mental Health Specialist

Authorizing Source: WAC, MHD Contract, BBA
Cancels:
See Also:
Responsible Staff: Deputy Director

Approved by: Executive Director
Signature:

Date: 6/25/2007

POLICY #1558.00

SUBJECT: MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that consumers defined as belonging to a special needs population shall receive consultation by a mental health specialist who has demonstrated cultural competence in the identified special area of need presented by the consumer, and that the findings of the consultation shall be addressed in subsequent treatment planning and review activities. This consultation is not required if supervisor or clinician is a Mental Health Specialist (MHS).

POLICY

When a consumer is identified as being a member of a special population group, the consumer's assigned clinician shall request and arrange for a special population consultation. The consultation shall be provided by a mental health specialist who through proper credentialing by the contracted provider has demonstrated cultural competence in working with the indicated special population or populations. Findings from the special population consultation shall be addressed in the consumer's treatment plan.

PROCEDURE

Upon completion of an intake assessment by a provider mental health professional, a new consumer of mental health services is assigned to a clinician. If in the intake assessment the consumer is identified as a member of a special population group, the clinician will request a special population consult with a mental health specialist. The consultation shall be conducted within 30 calendar days of the intake assessment. The mental health specialist determines the level of the consumer's identification with the special population, and documents cultural factors that shall be considered in planning the delivery of services to the consumer. These factors shall be subsequently addressed in the development of the treatment plan by the clinician and his/her treatment team colleagues. The mental health specialist may participate in the first 180-Day review, and at subsequent 180-Day reviews when/if indicated by the mental health specialist. Special population groups include:

- Children consumers
- Ethnic minority consumers
- Adult consumers with disabilities
- Older (geriatric) adult consumers

I. DEFINITIONS

"Adult" means a person on or after their eighteenth birthday. For persons eligible for the Medicaid program, adult means a person on or after his/her twenty-first birthday.

"Child" means a person who has not reached his/her eighteenth birthday. For persons eligible for the Medicaid program, child means a person who has not reached his/her twenty-first birthday.

"Consumer" means a person who has applied for, is eligible for or who has received mental health services. For a child, under the age of thirteen, or for a child age thirteen or older whose parents or legal guardians are involved in the treatment plan, the definition of consumer includes parents or legal guardians.

"Consultation" means the clinical review and development of recommendations regarding the job responsibilities, activities, or decisions of, clinical staff, contracted employees, volunteers, or students by persons with appropriate knowledge and experience to make recommendations.

"Cultural competence" means a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system or agency and enable that system or agency to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. A culturally competent system of care acknowledges and incorporates at all levels the importance of language and culture, assessment of cross-cultural relations, knowledge and acceptance of dynamics of cultural differences, expansion of cultural knowledge and adaptation of services to meet culturally unique needs.

"Ethnic minority" or "racial/ethnic groups" means, for the purposes of this chapter, any of the following general population groups:

- (1) African American;
- (2) An American Indian or Alaskan native, which includes:
 - (a) A person who is a member or considered to be a member in a federally recognized tribe;
 - (b) A person determined eligible to be found Indian by the secretary of interior, and
 - (c) An Eskimo, Aleut, or other Alaskan native.
 - (d) A Canadian Indian, meaning a person of a treaty tribe, Metis community, or non-status Indian community from Canada.
 - (e) An unenrolled Indian meaning a person considered Indian by a federally or non-federally recognized Indian tribe or off reservation Indian/Alaskan native community organization.
- (3) Asian/Pacific Islander; or
- (4) Hispanic.

"Mental health professional" means:

- (1) A psychiatrist, psychologist, psychiatric nurse or social worker as defined in chapters 71.05 and 71.34 RCW;
- (2) A person with a masters degree or further advanced degree in counseling or one of the social sciences from an accredited college or university. Such person shall have, in addition, at least two years of experience in direct treatment of persons with mental illness or emotional disturbance, such experience gained under the supervision of a mental health professional;
- (3) A person who meets the waiver criteria of RCW 71.24.260, which was granted prior to 1986;
- (4) A person who had an approved waiver to perform the duties of a mental health profession that was requested by the regional support network and granted by the mental health division prior to July 1, 2001; or
- (5) A person who has been granted a time-limited exception of the minimum requirements of a mental health professional by the mental health division consistent with **WAC** 388-865-0265.

"Mental health specialist" means:

- (1) A **"child mental health specialist"** is defined as a mental health professional with the following education and experience:

- (a) A minimum of one hundred actual hours (not quarter or semester hours) of special training in child development and the treatment of children and youth with serious emotional disturbance and their families; and
- (b) The equivalent of one year of full-time experience in the treatment of seriously emotionally disturbed children and youth and their families under the supervision of a child mental health specialist.

(2) A "geriatric mental health specialist" is defined as a mental health professional who has the following education and experience:

- (a) A minimum of one hundred actual hours (not quarter or semester hours) of specialized training devoted to the mental health problems and treatment of persons sixty years of age or older; and
- (b) The equivalent of one year of full-time experience in the treatment of persons sixty years of age or older, under the supervision of a geriatric mental health specialist.

(3) An "**ethnic minority mental health specialist**" is defined as a mental health professional who has demonstrated cultural competence attained through major commitment, ongoing training, experience and/or specialization in serving ethnic minorities, including evidence of one year of service specializing in serving the ethnic minority group under the supervision of an ethnic minority mental health specialist; and

- (a) Evidence of support from the ethnic minority community attesting to the person's commitment to that community; or
- (b) A minimum of one hundred actual hours (not quarter or semester hours) of specialized training devoted to ethnic minority issues and treatment of ethnic minority consumers.

(4) A "**disability mental health specialist**" is defined as a mental health professional with special expertise in working with an identified disability group. For purposes of this chapter only, "**disabled**" means an individual with a disability other than a mental illness, including a developmental disability, serious physical handicap, or sensory impairment.

(a) If the consumer is deaf, the specialist must be a mental health professional with:

- (i) Knowledge about the deaf culture and psychosocial problems faced by people who are deaf; and
- (ii) Ability to communicate fluently in the preferred language system of the consumer.

(b) The specialist for consumers with developmental disabilities must be a mental health professional who:

- (i) Has at least one year's experience working with people with developmental disabilities; or
- (ii) Is a developmental disabilities professional as defined in RCW 71.05.020.

"**Older person**" means an adult who is sixty years of age or older.

ATTACHMENTS

None