



# Crisis Services



# Client Handbook

226 S Jefferson Street, Frederick, MD 21701  
301-663-0011



## Client Rights and Responsibilities

All persons receiving crisis, counseling, and/or medication services from MHA have the right to:

- Be treated in a courteous, fair and respectful manner by MHA staff, volunteers and other representatives. Staff use of restraints and seclusion are strictly prohibited.
- Be provided with appropriate answers to questions and given appropriate referrals, when necessary.
- Receive a thorough evaluation and clear communication concerning treatment options.
- Participate fully in all decisions about treatment or services including changes in and refusal of treatment.
- Participate fully in a treatment planning process.
- Consequences for refusal of court ordered therapy will be clearly explained to clients choosing this option.
- Avail themselves of all services of the Mental Health Association, without discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, gender, nationality, family status, veteran's status, disability, sexual preference, economic situation, religion or political affiliation.
- Read their own records, in the presence of a MHA staff member, in accordance with the Health Insurance Privacy and Portability Act (HIPAA). If requested, MHA will supply photocopies of the records at a charge of \$25 per copy. Records do not include session notes.
- Have all personal information treated confidentially including deciding who else has access to their records, unless they are determined by MHA staff to be in imminent danger of causing injury to self or others or there is reason to suspect child abuse or neglect (as outlined in HIPAA and Limits of Confidentiality).
- Receive clear communication concerning payment options and consequences of failure to pay the client portion.

## Mental Health Association Mission, Services and Procedure

The Mental Health Association of Frederick County (MHA) builds a strong foundation of emotional wellness for our community by Preparing Resilient Children, Supporting Vulnerable Families, and Facing Crises Together.

### Services offered by MHA

- **CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)**—volunteers advocate for the best interest of children deemed by the court to have been abused or neglected
- **Child Care Choices**—professional development opportunities and support to early childhood and out of school time programs
- **Counseling Services**— Our clinicians provide services in a confidential, supportive environment that enhances the dignity and potential of our clients including young children, older adults, individuals, couples and families who are experiencing concerns
- **Frederick County Hotline/2-1-1**—information and referral, crisis supportive listening 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- **Healthy Families Frederick**—high quality, strength-based, family-centered home visiting services to first-time parents.
- **Parent Coaching** – trained staff work collaboratively with parents to create goals and strategies for improving parenting skills
- **PERKS (Partnership for Emotionally Resilient Kids)**—strategies, resources and support to early care programs to decrease challenging behaviors in children
- **Supervised Visitation/Monitored Transfer**—visitation and transfer services for children and their non-custodial parent
- **Survivors of Suicide**—support group for those who have experienced the death of a loved one to suicide
- **Systems Navigation**—short-term case management for families experiencing challenges accessing services for children
- **Telephone Reassurance Program**—scheduled out-going calls to the elderly and home-bound to alleviate loneliness and provide a safety check
- **Walk-in Behavioral Health Services** – meet with a Crisis Specialist who will help resolve a current crisis or concern. After your visit, you will be contacted by a Navigator to assist with connections for ongoing support in the community. For individuals with a substance use disorder concern, there is the option for connection to a Peer Recovery Specialist for any substance use disorder concerns. There is also the option to be seen by a prescriber who can conduct an evaluation to assess the need and/or appropriateness for medication services.

## **Services offered at Counseling Services and by Walk-in Prescriber**

- **Medication evaluation (60-90 minutes) and medication management (30-60 minutes):** This service is provided by a psychiatric nurse practitioner to determine whether it is appropriate to initiate or continue use of psychotropic medications. Session feedback is gathered through quick surveys at every session and will be discussed with your psychiatrist.
- **Evaluation and assessment (60-90 minutes):** This service is provided by a psychiatric nurse practitioner or licensed clinician; this is the first appointment at Counseling Services. Personal and family history is gathered to inform a diagnosis and treatment course. Client's presenting problem as well as supports, strengths, weaknesses and goals for treatment are discussed. A treatment plan will be developed collaboratively in a subsequent session.
- **Psychotherapy (25-60 minutes):** Clients meet with a licensed therapist in an individual, group or family setting depending on what is most appropriate for the client. Goals will be established and the therapist will work collaboratively with the client until goal progress has been achieved. Goal progress and course of treatment is reviewed as needed and at least every six (6) months. Session feedback is gathered through quick surveys at every session and will be discussed with your therapist. Open communication is important for your treatment, so please discuss any feedback with your clinician. For adult clients, family is as involved as the client wants them to be. For child clients, family members are expected to participate in a session at least monthly, dependent on the treatment type. Treatment frequency may be decreased as treatment goals are met and symptoms improve, and eventually discontinued upon successful completion of treatment goals.
- **For minor clients, a legal guardian must be present at every session (documentation may be requested)**

## **Additional Notes Regarding Services**

- You may withdraw from treatment at any time.
- Please be sure to sign in and out before and after your session at the front desk. This ensures the safety of all clients, visitors, and employees.
- We request you not bring children to appointments for adults, as it may be difficult to discuss important topics around them. We understand this may not always be possible, but we do ask that it is limited as much as possible.
- The State of Maryland tracks information provided by pharmacies regarding all controlled substance prescription. The prescriber may access this information at any time and may be required to do so per state law.
- Clients will wait in a private waiting room upon arrival and will be greeted by their provider before being escorted to the therapy room. All services are provided in comfortable, private therapy rooms.
- If you are unable to attend a session, the client is expected to call and cancel the appointment as soon as possible.
- If a session is cancelled with less than 24-hour notice, or if no notice is given, this will be considered a missed appointment. After three (3) missed appointments within a two (2) month period, you may be asked to reduce visits to a lower level of care until a treatment contract is able to be completed. After this time, any missed appointments in the following two (2) months will result in administrative discharge. Any exceptions to this statement need to be made by the Administrative Director on a case-by-case basis.
- Clients who have two (2) consecutive no show appointments will be moved to a lower level of care and sent an interest letter via mail. If the client does not reply to the interest letter within two (2) weeks they will be administratively discharged.
- If a client receives an administrative discharge for missed appointments, expired interest letter, or broken treatment contract, they will be required to begin the process over from the point of initial intake.

## **Eligibility**

Crisis Services accepts Medicaid and Medicare insurances for counseling and medication services. All other clients may receive services through sliding scale payments (as eligible), and may seek any reimbursement they may be entitled to directly from their insurance company.

Additionally, clients having no insurance may be eligible for temporary mental health coverage through a small fund known as Grey Zone funding. This funding is limited in availability and may stop accepting applications at any time.

**Any client deemed eligible for Medicaid has two (2) months to apply for Medicaid and provide proof of application before Grey Zone funding would be considered. If the client does not follow this procedure, the fee for each**

appointment will increase to the amount Medicaid would reimburse at (indicated on the sliding scale assessment form).

By initiating services, you are authorizing Crisis Services to release any information related to your care and treatment to Medicaid or Medicare and their review agents to obtain benefits payable for services rendered by the program. You are assigning Crisis Services all benefits due from third-party payers. You are responsible for any deductible or co-payment.

The fee for therapy is \$130.00, and the fee for medication management is \$260 per hour for clients without Medicaid or Medicare. This fee may be reduced based on your annual household income and family size. Your fee will be reassessed every 6 months or sooner if a change in your income or household has occurred. It is your responsibility to inform your clinician of any changes or reasons you may not be able to afford your fee.

### **Additional Eligibility Expectations:**

- Clients must notify the provider of any changes immediately or they may be subject to additional charges.
- If a check is returned to MHA/Counseling Services for any reason, the client will be charged a \$20 fee to cover the bank charges. After 2 returned checks and/or if the fee is not paid, no more checks will be accepted.
- If a client has an outstanding balance equal to, or greater than, three (3) times the per session fee, they will be subject to a payment plan and the possibility of discharge.
- Payment is required prior to the start of counseling or psychiatric session. Clients are expected to arrive on time for all scheduled appointments. If a client is late for an appointment, they may not be seen that day. 24-hours advance notice is required for all canceled appointments or it will be seen as a missed appointment.

### **Client Safety and Referrals**

- As a mental health provider, it is our responsibility to ensure your safety and provide the appropriate level of care. All clients will be assessed for safety/risk at the first appointment. If a higher level of care is determined to be more appropriate, a provider will discuss this with you and provide appropriate referral resources and assistance.
- **Crisis plans:** All clients will complete a crisis plan with their Crisis Specialist during their Walk-in visit. A crisis plan helps to identify a client's supports and resources in the case of a crisis or emergency. Restraints and seclusions are not used by MHA staff. If you become distraught, staff will work with you to meet your needs while redirecting and deescalating the situation.
- **Advance Directives:** Maryland law gives the right to anyone 16 years of age and over to be involved in decisions about their mental health treatment. However, a parent or guardian of a person under the age of 18 years may authorize treatment, even over the objection of the minor. The law also notes that at times, some persons are unable to make treatment decisions. Maryland law states that you have the right to make decisions in advance, including mental health treatment decisions, through a process called advance directive. ***If you would like more information about an Advance Directive, this can be provided by your Walk-in Specialist.***

### **Limits of Confidentiality**

It is important for you to know the limits of confidentiality of behavioral health information. The information that you give to staff will be held in the strictest confidence. No identifying information shall be disclosed outside Walk-in Behavioral Health Services except where required by law. The only circumstances in which your Crisis Specialist and/or Prescriber may divulge client information are the following:

- When there is a serious threat to the health and safety of the client, another individual, or the public. Information shall be shared only with a person or organization that is able to help prevent or reduce the threat.
- In the case of suspected past and present child abuse, staff are required to make a report to the Department of Social Services
- If required in the course of certain lawsuits, legal or court proceedings or by a law enforcement official through a subpoena. If you are court ordered for services, information about your treatment/recommendations may be shared per the court order.
- At the client's written request, for example to transmit information to a health care clinician.

Md. Code Ann., Fam. Law §§ 5-701, 5-704, 5-705, 5-705.1, 5-708 (2010); Md. Code Ann., Courts and Judicial Proceedings §§ 5-620, 9-108, 9-111 (2010)

### **All clients have the right to receive emergency services at any time.**

#### **During business hours emergencies:**

- Counseling Services is an appointment only provider. Providers may have emergency appointment slots built into their schedule.

- Walk-in Behavioral Health Services is open Monday-Friday from 10:00am-10:00pm, and Saturday-Sunday from 10:00am-6:00pm and can be accessed without an appointment for crisis situations.

### **After business hours:**

- **Frederick County Hotline** (available 24/7 for Crisis intervention, information, referrals and support)  
**301-662-2255**
- **National Suicide Prevention Line**  
**1-800-273-8255 (TALK)**
- **Frederick Health Hospital Emergency Room**  
**400 W. 7<sup>th</sup> St, Frederick, MD, 21701**

### **In case of an Emergency at MHA**

- Emergency Exit maps are located at the main entrance, in the client waiting room and at both ends of the Walk-in/Counseling Services hallway. In the event of an emergency, clients will be escorted from the building by a staff member.
- Fire suppression equipment is located next to the main entrance and rear emergency exit.
- First aid kits are located in the kitchens. NarCan kits are located at the front desk and rear kitchen.
- If you see something during your visit that appears unsafe, please inform a staff member immediately.

### **Additional Health and Safety Information**

- All visitors are expected to act appropriately and respectfully while on MHA property. Unacceptable behaviors include but are not limited to verbal threats or aggression, physical assaults, possession of weapons, or possession of illegal substances.
- Parents/guardians are expected to attend all sessions with their children.
- Children under the age of 8 may not be left unattended. Anyone left in the waiting room unattended must be able to play quietly and not disrupt others. Should unattended children be unable to manage themselves, the parent/guardian will be asked to make other arrangements for the child's care.
- **Infectious illness:** If you have an infectious illness, including a fever of unknown origin within the last 72 hours, or other communicable condition, please call to reschedule your appointment.
- **Prescription Medication:** Clients who bring prescription medication (prescribed by an authorized prescriber and held by the consumer) must keep the medications in the original container provided by the pharmacy. Medications may not be distributed to other people.
- **Smoking:** To protect the health and safety of all clients and employees, smoking is prohibited within the confines of the office building or other office space used for MHA business. Smoking is permitted at the back of the MHA building.
- **Illicit drugs and alcohol:** Illegal drugs and alcohol are not permitted on MHA property. If clients are believed to be under the influence of illicit drugs and/or alcohol they may be asked to reschedule any appointment with the prescriber.
- **Weapons:** MHA prohibits employees, visitors and clients from carrying weapons or items intended to inflict bodily harm or physical damage on the premises or during work-related off-site functions. This includes employees, visitors, and clients who have a wear and carry permit. We ask that you leave these items at home or hidden in your vehicle.

***Disregard of these expectations could result in you being administratively discharged from services and/or reported to law enforcement if harm or threat of harm is present.***

### **Grievance Procedures**

- If you are not satisfied with your progress, you are encouraged to discuss this with staff. If you do not feel the difficulty is resolved, you may follow the grievance procedure outlined below.
- Submit grievance in writing to appropriate Program Director.
- If grievance has not been resolved to consumer's satisfaction within five working days, submit grievance in writing to CEO of MHA
- If grievance has not been resolved to consumer's satisfaction with five working days, submit grievance in writing to the MHA Board President.
- If grievance has not been resolved to consumer's satisfaction within fifteen working days, submit grievance in writing to appropriate funding agency, as indicated by the CEO.



## **Acknowledgement of Receipt of Crisis Services Client Handbook and Consent to Treatment**

I give my consent for treatment including therapeutic and psychiatric services. I have received the Crisis Services Client Handbook which outlines services, policies, and procedures including:

- Client Rights/Responsibilities
- MHA's Mission and available services
- Eligibility/Attendance expectations
- Client Safety and Referrals/Crisis plans/Advance directives
- Emergency Procedures/Hours of Operation/emergency phone numbers
- Health and Safety Information including behavior guidelines and infectious diseases expectations
- Prescription medication/smoking/illicit drugs and alcohol and weapons expectations
- HIPAA/Limits of Confidentiality
- Grievance Procedure

If you would like a copy of additional Privacy Practices one will be provided.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guardian Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date