

## MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY/COUNSELING

*(Year 21 Service Priority #8)*

This service offers non-judgmental psychological treatment and counseling services including individual, group, and crisis intervention counseling provided by licensed mental health counseling professionals. **Mental Health Therapy/Counseling** services may be delivered in individual or group settings. **Please note that Ryan White Program funds may not be used for bereavement support for uninfected family members or friends.**

Mental health therapy/counseling services reimbursed under Part A of the Ryan White Program are limited to conditions stemming from and treated within the context of the client's HIV or AIDS diagnosis. This service is not intended to be general psychosocial practice, but is intended to address HIV-related issues and strengthen coping skills to increase adherence and access to on-going medical care and treatment.

**PLEASE NOTE: All initial assessments and subsequent assignments to Level III and Level IV psychosocial support services will be done by a licensed Level I or Level II mental health professional.**

- **Mental Health Therapy/Counseling (Level I)** - Licensed Professional Mental Health Counseling: This service includes *intensive* mental health therapy and counseling (individual, family, and group) provided solely by *state-licensed mental health professionals*. Direct service providers would possess *postgraduate degrees* in psychology or counseling (PhD, EdD, Psy.D) and must be *licensed by the State of Florida* as a Licensed Clinical Psychologist, LCSW, LMHC, or LMFT to provide such services.
- **Mental Health Therapy/Counseling (Level II)** - Licensed Professional Mental Health Counseling: This service includes *intensive* mental health therapy and counseling (individual, family, and group) provided solely by *state-licensed mental health professionals*. Direct service providers would possess *Master's degrees* in psychology, psychotherapy or counseling (MS, MA, MSW, or M.Ed.), and must be *licensed by the State of Florida* as a LCSW, LMHC or LMFT to provide such services.

### **Mental Health Therapy/Counseling Components:**

Counseling services (**Level I**) provided to clients by licensed professionals will include psychosocial assessment and evaluation, testing, diagnosis, treatment planning with written goals, crisis counseling, periodic re-assessments, re-evaluations of plans and goals documenting progress, and referrals to psychiatric and/or other services as appropriate. Issues of relevance to HIV/AIDS clients such as risk behavior, substance abuse, adherence to medical treatments, depression, panic, anxiety, maladaptive coping, safer sex, and suicidal ideation will be addressed. Mental health professionals are encouraged to practice and introduce motivational interviewing and harm reduction

strategies to their clients, if deemed clinically appropriate. Services at this level are provided for clients experiencing acute, sporadic mental health problems and are generally not long term [individual counseling shall not exceed 32 encounters per Fiscal Year and five (5) units (maximum of 2 ½ hours) per session; 1 encounter = 1 day of service].

Counseling services (**Level II**) include crisis counseling, re-evaluations of plans and goals documenting progress, and referrals to psychiatric and/or other services as appropriate. Issues of relevance to HIV/AIDS clients such as risk behavior, substance abuse, adherence to medical treatments, depression, panic, anxiety, maladaptive coping, safer sex, and suicidal ideation will be addressed. Mental health professionals are encouraged to practice and introduce motivational interviewing and harm reduction strategies to their clients, if deemed clinically appropriate. Services at this level are provided for clients experiencing acute, sporadic mental health problems and are generally not long term [individual counseling shall not exceed 32 encounters per Fiscal Year and five (5) units (maximum of 2 ½ hours) per session; 1 encounter = 1 day of service].

**Group Counseling (Levels I and II)** – refers to a group of individuals [minimum of three (3) Ryan White clients, maximum of fifteen (15) total clients] with similar problems meeting under the expert guidance of a trained mental health professional. Members of the group will be selected by the mental health professional in order to maximize the interaction, learning, and benefits derived from a group dynamic. Group counseling provides therapy in a social context, reduces the feeling of isolation many clients experience, provides an opportunity for clients to share methods of problem-solving, and allows the therapist an opportunity to observe how an individual interacts with others.

- A. Program Operation Requirements:** Staff must demonstrate knowledge of HIV disease, its psychosocial dynamics and implications, including cognitive impairment, and generally accepted treatment modalities and practices. Services may be delivered to non-HIV+ family members (as defined by the client) only if the HIV+ client is also being served. Providers will comply with super-confidentiality laws as per State of Florida's guidelines. The ratio of support group participants to counselors may not be lower than 3:1 and may not be higher than 15:1. One visit is equal to one half-hour counseling session.
- B. Additional Service Delivery Standards:** Level I and Level II providers must adhere to generally accepted clinical guidelines for psychological treatment of persons with HIV/AIDS-related illnesses. (Please refer to Section III of this book for details.)
- C. Rules for Reimbursement:** Reimbursement for individual and group therapy will be based on a half-hour counseling session not to exceed \$32.50 per unit for Level I individual counseling; \$35.00 per unit for Level I group counseling; \$32.50 per unit for Level II individual counseling; and \$35.00 per unit for Level II group counseling. Reimbursement for individual counseling units are calculated

for each client receiving the therapy (i.e., number of individual counseling units per client), whereas, reimbursement for group counseling units are calculated for the counselor that provided the group therapy (i.e., number of group counseling units per counselor).

- D. Additional Rules for Reporting:** The unit of service for reporting monthly activity of individual and group therapy is a one-half-hour counseling session and the unduplicated number of clients served. Providers will report individual and group activity separately for Level I and Level II mental health therapy/counseling services.