

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES
(Year 21 Service Priority #10)

This service offers non-judgmental psychosocial support/pastoral care treatment and counseling services including individual, group, and crisis intervention counseling provided by non-licensed psychosocial support counseling providers, peers, and pastoral care counselors. **Psychosocial Support Services** may be delivered in individual or group settings. **Please note that Ryan White Part A Programs funds for this service may not be used for bereavement support for uninfected family members or friends.**

Psychosocial support services reimbursed under the Ryan White Part A Program are limited to conditions stemming from and treated within the context of the client's HIV/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. If counseling is provided by a non-licensed professional and/or peer counselor, oversight and supervision must be conducted by a licensed professional or a professional exempt from licensing under F.S. 491.014. The supervisor will approve and sign progress notes, mini-evaluations, and referrals.

Reimbursement will be differentiated according to the level of intensity of the service and the training of the direct service practitioner, as follows:

- **Psychosocial Support Services/Counseling (Level III)** - This service includes *general* psychosocial support counseling (individual, family, and group) provided by a *Bachelor's degree* level or *unlicensed Master's degree level provider* (MSW or MS only) provider in the appropriate counseling-related field.
- **Pastoral Care and Support Services** – Pastoral Care and Support Services is equivalent to Level III psychosocial support counseling with respect to the qualifications of counseling staff. Pastoral care counselors must: (1) hold a Master's degree in theology, philosophy, social work, or psychology from an accredited institution; and (2) have completed at least four units (1,600 hours or one full year) in clinical pastoral education (CPE) in an institution accredited by one of the following professional associations: the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education, National Association of Catholic Chaplains, National Association of Jewish Chaplains, American

Institute of Islamic Studies, or Canadian Association of Pastoral Education.

- **Psychosocial Support Services/Counseling (Level IV)** – This service includes supportive counseling by trained and supervised HIV-infected or affected peers. Activities include forming or strengthening support groups and other areas appropriate for individual and group socio-emotional support related to conditions and situations stemming from a client's HIV status.

Psychosocial Support Services/Counseling Components:

Level III – Provides supervised psychosocial support/counseling designed to improve the client's psychosocial health and promote feelings of well-being. Services will include crisis counseling, periodic re-assessments, and re-evaluations of plans and goals documenting progress. Issues of relevance to HIV/AIDS clients such as risk behavior, substance abuse, adherence to mental health and medical treatments, depression, and safer sex will be addressed. Psychosocial support counselors are encouraged to practice and introduce motivational interviewing and harm reduction strategies with their clients, if deemed clinically appropriate. Counseling at this level may include relationship difficulties, client-centered advocacy, stress management and coping skills, personal and social adjustments as they relate to HIV/AIDS, and the provision of needed information and education to clients to enhance their quality of life. Services at this level are provided for clients experiencing mild to moderate mental or emotional 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].

Pastoral Care and Support Services – This service assists HIV+ persons, members of their immediate family and of their household, in the clarification/identification of their own resources/tasks/priorities and in the development and/or enhancement of their resources through individual or family/household pastoral care sessions. Pastoral Care Counselors will work with clients to clarify the spiritual and pragmatic options that order and validate the client's individual life experiences, strengthen their belief systems, purpose, and values as related to their HIV status. Pastoral care counseling is an intervention at a point of need in a client's life that strives to progressively move the client along a continuum of self-acceptance and responsibility. Pastoral care counseling must be available to all individuals eligible to receive Ryan White Program services, regardless of the client's religious or denominational affiliation.

Level IV – This service provides supervised peer support and advice through coaching, information sharing, listening, and role modeling in groups and limited individual settings. Its primary goal is the promotion of an independent living philosophy wherein the client becomes his or her own self-advocate. Individual support counseling will be provided only within the guidelines and goals of a treatment plan developed by a professional mental health counselor with assistance and consultation with the peer

support worker. The peer support counselor will provide timely feedback and information to the professional mental health counselor in order to monitor client progress. Support counseling will address adherence to mental health and medical treatments. Support counselors will not make referrals themselves, but will consult and make known to his or her supervisor information/changes in the client's condition that may require a referral. Appropriate referrals will then be made by the supervisor.

Group Counseling (Levels III and Pastoral Care) - 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 psychosocial support or pastoral support professional. Members of the group will be selected by the psychosocial support or pastoral support 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 counselor an opportunity to observe how an individual interacts with others.

Support (Group) Counseling (Level IV) – a group of individuals [minimum of three (3) Ryan White clients, maximum of fifteen (15) total clients] with similar problems meeting with a supervised peer. These groups provide emotional support and validation through discussion of shared problems and feelings. Such support may take the form of ego-empowerment, encouragement, positive affirmation or more objective methods, as in helping to plan specific courses of action, giving advice on how to solve an immediate problem, etc. Services at this level are provided for clients experiencing mild functional or emotional problems and are generally not provided on a long term basis.

- 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 should be no lower than 3:1 and no higher than 15:1. One visit is equal to one half-hour counseling session.
- B. Rules for Reimbursement:** Reimbursement for individual and group therapy will be based on a half hour counseling session not to exceed \$25.00 per unit for Level III and Pastoral Care individual counseling; \$27.00 per unit for Level III and Pastoral Care group counseling; \$15.00 per unit for Level IV individual counseling; and \$20.00 per unit for Level IV group support 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).

- C. 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 III, Level IV, and pastoral care counseling services.
- D. Special Client Eligibility Criteria:** A Ryan White Program Certified Referral or an Out-of-Network Referral (accompanied by all appropriate supporting documentation) is required for a client to receive a Level III, Level IV, or pastoral care psychosocial support service and must be updated every six (6) months. Additionally, a medical referral from a licensed Level I or Level II mental health professional (indicating that the client is suitable for Level III or Level IV psychosocial support counseling) is also required. Documentation of the medical referral must be indicated in the Ryan White Program Certified Referral, or must accompany the OON Referral. Clients receiving Ryan White Program Part A-funded psychosocial support services must be documented as having a gross household income below 300% of the 2011 Federal Poverty Level (FPL).