



Levels of Care
Within the Mental Health
System

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Crisis Stabilization Units vs. Long-Term Treatment Options

- For acute, imminent suicidal crises, the caller should be referred to a local hospital, or supervisor may call 911 (this all depends on your lethality assessment)
- For callers who require an immediate mental health assessment, and they agree to safety for now, then the caller can be referred to Mobile Crisis Unit or a crisis stabilization unit (ex: DASH)
- For all other chronic mental health concerns, the following levels of care might be the best resource

Level One: Outpatient Care

- Client may go a few times a month for medication management
- Client may see a therapist once or twice a week
- Frequency of visits could increase depending on symptoms
- CBT, DBT, EMDR are some modalities used at this level
- Referral that might be offered: Central Nassau Guidance (CNG)...they offer outpatient treatment

Level Two:

Intensive Outpatient Treatment (IOP)

- Client can obtain behavioral health services three days out of the week, for at least three hours per day
- Typically recommended for those who are chronically suicidal, have severe symptoms of depression, anxiety, or the client is not responding to outpatient treatment
- Some clients can attend for more days or for more hours
- Some programs offer medication management
- These programs focus on individual and group therapy to help the client develop additional skills to manage symptoms

Level Two: Intensive Outpatient Treatment (IOP)

- IOP can be used for Substance Use, Mental Health, and Eating Disorders
- Does not have “round the clock” supervision
- IOP can be a “step down” from inpatient treatment, especially when round the clock supervision is no longer needed.
- The benefit of IOP is that it offers more structure and more frequent check-ins than outpatient care
- Referral that might be offered: Mount Sinai South Nassau Communities Hospital Mental Health Counseling Center



Level Three: Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) or “Day Treatment”

- These programs are five days out of the week for about 6-8 hours a day
- Includes psychiatric assessment and psychiatric care
- More structured with comprehensive mental health services, from individual to group therapy to medication management
- Many programs are hospital based
- Referrals that might be offered: Victory Recovery Partners, Zucker Hillside Hospital, Mather Hospital

Level Four: Residential Treatment Center

- Residential programs are well-monitored but significantly less restrictive than inpatient treatment
- It is long-term; average length of stay ranging from 30 to 90 days depending on the program
- Patients participate in group therapy, individual therapy, and individualized psychiatric care, in a community-like environment
- Patients learn the value of being part of a therapeutic community and improving interpersonal skills before returning home
- Referral that might be offered: Catholic Charities Mental Health Residential Services (see category Housing-Mentally III)

Level Five: Inpatient Hospitalization

- Patients who are actively suicidal or experiencing psychiatric symptoms (mania, psychosis) where patient poses a safety risk to themselves or others
- Goal of inpatient is---safety and stabilization
- Patients are monitored for several hours per day in a secure unit and are in a hospital or treatment facility
- Average stay could be 3-7 days, although some patients stay longer based on safety concerns
- Patients who benefit the most- those experiencing suicidal ideations and behaviors, where a lower level of care cannot ensure safety
- Referrals that might be offered: NUMC, South Oaks, Stony Brook Hospital, Zucker Hillside Hospital (see category Mental Illness-Inpatient)

To Review: Referral Categories

- Level One- Outpatient- Category is “Mental Illness-Outpatient”
- Level Two- Intensive Outpatient Treatment- Category is “Intensive Outpatient/Partial Hospitalization”
- Level Three- Partial Hospitalization/ “Day Treatment”- Category is “Partial Hospitalization/Intensive Outpatient”. We do not have the category for “Day Treatment” as that is a term used mainly by providers amongst themselves
- Level Four- Residential Treatment Center- Category is “Housing-Mentally Ill
- Level Five- Inpatient Hospitalization- Category is “Mental Illness-Inpatient”

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