

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Introduction

The Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) Health Services Unit provides medical, dental, and behavioral health care to offenders in ten state correctional facilities.

Behavioral health includes a network of mental health professionals and paraprofessionals who evaluate and create treatment recommendations and provide services specific to the needs of each offender. A range of outpatient and inpatient mental health services is available to offenders with mental illnesses or disorders.

Behavioral health services staff are committed to providing effective, researched-based services that enhance facility and public safety, reduce recidivism, and foster healthier offender functioning.

Continuum of Services

To address the mental health concerns of the offender population, behavioral health services include a continuum of mental health care options. A range of services is available through self, professional, or institutional referral. Services are used by the following percentage of offenders:

- 20% of adult males receive psychotropic medications along with psychological follow-up and treatment as needed
- 25% of adult males receive psychological interventions

- 65% of adult females receive psychotropic medications
- 75% of adult females receive psychological interventions

Clinical Services

Evaluations of offenders are provided at various levels of referral and need.

At intake

All offenders participate in a brief mental health status screening during their initial institutional intake. Screening consists of a file review and brief clinical interview.

Offenders with a history of mental health/psychiatric intervention, suicidal attempts, or who are currently displaying symptoms of mental distress/disorder participate in further evaluation. Evaluation consists of file review, clinical interviews, and obtaining collateral material from outside sources.

A full psychological evaluation consisting of collateral information, clinical interviews, and psychological testing is conducted when indicated.

During incarceration

The following assessments are available during incarceration:

- Interview and file review for brief mental health intervention
- A full psychological evaluation is conducted for long-term intervention and institutional placement planning

- Crisis evaluation of mental status is available for immediate intervention
- Neuropsychological evaluation for diagnostic purposes and institutional placement planning
- Intellectual functioning screening and evaluation for placement purposes
- Institutional discharge planning
- Evaluation according to specific referral question

Intervention Services

Intervention services are offered according to the appropriate level of offender need and resources available. Services are divided into four levels.

Level 1

This level encompasses referrals to self-help groups available and fostered at all sites. Typically these activities occur during offender non-work hours and are facilitated by staff with volunteer assistance. The number of groups at each site varies widely based on local interest. Groups most often occur on a weekly basis and are usually small, with 5 to 15 attendees. Some groups include Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, grief support, personal empowerment, anger management, parenting, and relationships.

Level 2

These services are provided by DOC professional staff and include:

- Outpatient intervention
- Psychoeducational groups for brief intervention and treatment preparation
- Psychotherapy groups mixing didactic and process elements
- Individual psychotherapy

Licensed mental health personnel provide services at all facilities. Services are provided in both individual and group encounters. Individual encounters include brief assessments, intermediate assessments, individual therapy, and crisis intervention. Group encounters include formal, staff-planned, and facilitated group treatment sessions. Planning and non-contact activities include release and reintegration planning to prepare the offender for reentering the community.

Mental health staff conducted 25,393 individual therapy sessions in FY08. The number of sessions provided to an offender ranged from 1 to 183. The top 15 percent of users of individual therapy account for 50 percent of all individual therapy sessions.

Level 3

A heightened level of supportive services for the chronically mentally ill and socially low-functioning offender is available for offenders at the following Minnesota correctional facilities: Lino Lakes, Stillwater, Rush City, Shakopee (SHK), Oak Park Heights (OPH), and Red Wing (RW). Services are provided by DOC professional staff.

Supportive living services (SLS) units provide an intermediate level of mental health treatment services

between outpatient and residential level services. These programs are available at each custody level, but not at each facility. SLS units are located in a designated area or residential unit and provide mental health and daily living support services.

Level 4

This level services offenders with an acute level of mental illness that requires residential care. The following facilities can accommodate these offenders: SHK, OPH, and RW.

Residential programs provide specialty assessments as well as acute and chronic mental health care within a secure environment.

Units

The Mental Health Unit at OPH is a systemwide resource for adult males within the DOC system. A number of chronically mentally ill offenders are also housed there when other placement options are impractical.

The Mead Unit at SHK provides a highly-structured program of skills development over a fixed schedule of 21 days prior to placement in general population.

The Berglin Mental Health Center at RW provides a safe, intensive residential treatment option for young males with acute mental health issues. The center provides services for residents assessed to be in need of mental health management and counseling. Specialized treatment programs are provided for youth who have been identified to have additional high-risk needs that are significant contributing factors to their delinquency.

Release Planning

Specialized release planning services are offered to address an array of

offender needs. The DOC employs 12 release planners for special populations including offenders with serious and persistent mental illness, chemical dependency needs, as well as sex offenders and/or offenders who are medically fragile. Significant progress has been made to meet the needs for mental health reentry services.

Other Activities

Professional development training is available through behavioral health services addressing:

- Mental health services provisions in a correctional system,
- Internship sites for college and graduate-level practicum and internship students, and
- Opportunities for postgraduate competency in correctional mental health services.

January 2009

Minnesota Department of Corrections
1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 200
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108-5219
651/361-7200
TTY 800/627-3529
www.doc.state.mn.us

