



## **Appropriate Levels of Care in Mental Health**

### **When Is Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) Needed**

Everyone experiences times in their lives when it may be helpful to reach out for assistance from a mental health professional. Many are able to receive help and guidance on an outpatient basis by their primary care physicians, psychiatrists, nurse practitioners, psychologists and mental health therapists. When the symptoms become more debilitating, however, it will be important to consider a higher level of care.

#### ***Levels of Care In Mental Health***

- Outpatient Individual Therapy/Medication Management
- Intensive Outpatient Therapy
- Partial Hospitalization
- Inpatient Hospitalization

Outpatient therapy is for those who are not in any danger to self, others or property and are more resilient as they seek to work on treatment goals. Frequency is typically weekly and is adjusted eventually to an as needed basis. Partial hospitalization is for those who experience more serious signs and symptoms and need ongoing assessment, diagnostic and treatment services typically at a minimum of 20 hours/ five days per week and return home at night. Inpatient hospitalization requires admission into a hospital 24/7 which includes ongoing nursing, medical, medication, assessment, diagnostic and treatment services for those in very serious need of avoiding jeopardy of health to self or others.

What I would like to emphasize is the Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP). Intensive Outpatient Programs have been of tremendous assistance in helping its members return to a productive and rewarding lifestyle both on the job and in general. It is a 7 week, 3 day per week, 3 hour per day program. The main goal is to teach individuals healthy coping skills which will increase health and wellness rather than continue to struggle with daily functioning or to be placed on leave from work/school with no guidance or skills. The latter often results in relapse of symptoms or minimal existence.

### ***Those Appropriate For IOP include***

- Visits with individual outpatient providers exceeds once per week or is not currently effective
- Multiple phone calls to outpatient providers
- Stepping down from/needing to avoid partial or inpatient hospitalization
- On leave or disability from work/school
- Missing significant work or school days due to mental health/pain issues
- Needing to have short or long term disability or FMLA forms completed
- Need help coping with acute/chronic medical issues
- Frequent anxiety/panic attacks
- Moderate to severe depression
- Social withdrawal/isolation
- Inability to maintain healthy relationships
- Significantly decreased activities of daily living, such as hygiene/cooking/sleeping/ daily accomplishments, etc.
- Self-harming/self-defeating behaviors
- Suicide attempts or frequent suicidal ideation
- Lacking effective coping skills to regulate emotions, tolerate distress or be effective interpersonally
- Inability to maintain sobriety or other substance related legal issues (OVI, possession of drugs, trafficking drugs)

### ***Be an Advocate for Appropriate Levels of Care***

- Seek consultation from a licensed mental health professional
- Be diligent about complying with medication and therapy recommendations
- Consider short term disability from work/school if symptoms are seriously affecting performance
- Don't retreat to home, often under the covers, waiting and hoping to get better
- Be proactive and discuss possible higher levels of care with healthcare or mental health professionals
- Consider Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOP)

In conclusion, know the signs that you or someone you care about is struggling beyond that which can be effectively managed at the routine outpatient level of care. . Reach out and don't suffer or watch others struggle in silence. Know the effective levels of care in mental health. Know that there is effective help. There is hope!

**John A. Glovan, Psy.D.**  
Director, Health and Wellness Program  
Co-Founder, The Behavioral Wellness Group  
8224 Mentor Ave #208 Mentor OH 44060  
P: 440 392 2222 #302 F: 440 565 2349

[jglovan@behavioralwellnessgroup.com](mailto:jglovan@behavioralwellnessgroup.com)  
[www.behavioralwellnessgroup.com](http://www.behavioralwellnessgroup.com)