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PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES

WHAT ARE PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES AND WHAT CAN THEY ACCOMPLISH?

Psychiatric Services prescribes and monitors the use of medication as one way of dealing with the serious symptoms that are part of many mental health troubles. These medications may be helpful in treating such disorders as schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, major depressive disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic and severe anxiety disorders, and other severe persistent mental illnesses that affect the brain. These disorders can profoundly disrupt a person's thoughts, feelings, moods, ability to relate to others and capacity for coping with the demands of life. The medications in use today are very effective, and a significant percentage of individuals will experience a reduction of symptoms and an increase in their quality of life especially when medications are combined with other treatments such as counseling, case management and other support services.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM MY PSYCHIATRIST?

- Your psychiatrist is here to evaluate your need for medications, to prescribe appropriate medications when indicated, and to monitor the effectiveness of any medications he or she prescribes. If your psychiatrist does decide that medications will be helpful in your treatment, a prescription will be written and you will be given an information sheet about each prescribed medication that includes information on what your medication is for and possible side effects that you could experience. It is important that you keep your psychiatrist informed of any difficulties you may experience while taking medications.
- In order to assist you and your psychiatrist, The Counseling Center also has two nurses available to consult with you. If you develop questions or concerns about your medication, you should contact psychiatric services immediately and ask to talk to one of the nurses. Many times they will be able to answer your questions or may arrange for you come in to see the psychiatrist sooner than your next regularly scheduled appointment.
- Your psychiatrist is not here to provide counseling or personal therapy. If your psychiatrist determines that counseling, or any other service, will be beneficial in your treatment, a referral will be made to a specialist in that area. It is very important that you follow your psychiatrist's requests to seek additional assistance.
- Your psychiatrist and all other professionals from The Counseling Center keep all information about you, even that fact that you are a client at The Center, in strict confidence. They will not share any information about you with anyone outside of The Counseling Center, including your family, without your written permission. The only exception would be (a) if you are under 18 years old or a dependent adult (in which case your parents or other legal guardians have the right to know about your therapy), (b) if you share information that raises concern about your or someone else's safety or (c) if professionals from The Counseling Center are court ordered by a court of law to provide information about you.

HOW MUCH TIME DOES THIS TYPE OF THERAPY TAKE?

- Your initial appointment with the psychiatrist will be approximately one hour. During this time the psychiatrist will review some personal and medical history with you. He or she will ask about your symptoms, make a diagnosis and provide a prescription for any medications he or she deems necessary.
- All visits after your initial visit will be shorter "check-ups" which may last anywhere from 10 minutes to 30 minutes. Depending on your situation you will be scheduled to see your psychiatrist anywhere from every two weeks to once every three months.
- Attendance at these appointments is very important. Please do not cancel your appointment except for emergency situations since appointment times are limited. If you are late for any appointment you may lose your appointment or have to wait a long time as we try to work you into to the doctor's schedule at a different time.
- If you must cancel, please give 24-hour notice so someone else can use your appointment time and remember that rescheduling your appointment may take a long time due to the high demand for psychiatric service.

HOW CAN I MAKE PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES SUCCESSFUL FOR ME?

- Write down, before your visit, any questions you want to ask your psychiatrist and bring them with you to your appointment.
- Bring a notepad and pencil with you to jot down important information your psychiatrist may give you.
- List any side effects or symptoms that you have experienced since your last visit. This will help your psychiatrist assess if your present treatment is working.
- Tell your psychiatrist about any other medications you may be taking. This should include prescribed medications, as well as any over-the-counter medications or herbs.
- **DO NOT ABUSE ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUGS** while taking prescribed medications and take any prescribed medications only as directed by your psychiatrist. Follow all directions given by your psychiatrist.
- If you are directed to get into counseling it is important that you do so. Failure to follow your psychiatrist's recommendations may result in his or her refusing to continue to prescribe medications for you.