

Navigating the World of Psychiatric Evaluations and Appropriate Continuity of Care

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Definitions

Psychiatry

- *The field/scope of practice of Psychiatrists
- *Also used as generic/inclusive term for all Mental Health Care
- *Social Workers, Psychologists, Primary Care Doctors are often described as providing "psychiatric care"

Mental Health Care

- *More appropriate/accurate generic term
- *So non-specific, that without more detail, it really conveys little information

Therapy

- *Another non-specific term that really only conveys treatment in the most general sense
- *Could refer to ANY treatment
- *In MH circles, and often for general public, refers to Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy

- *Treatment of mental, behavioral, or emotional disorders through communication with a trained counselor or therapist

Psychotherapy

- *Best understood/most frequently used as a generic/ inclusive term for all therapies meeting definition
- *There are multiple types of psychotherapies

Counseling

- *Used by many interchangeably with psychotherapy
- *Also might be considered one type of psychotherapy
- *When used distinctly, refers to offering advice/guidance
 - *As opposed to facilitating patients/clients to find their own answers

Psychopharmacotherapy

- *Medication Treatment for mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders or symptoms
- *May include use of medications not designed for psychiatric purposes

Evaluations

An Eval By Any Other Name...

- *"Psychiatric Evaluation"
- *"Mental Health Evaluation"
- *"Diagnostic Evaluation"
- *"Psychological Evaluation"
 - *Usually specific to Psychologists, often includes Psychological Testing

The Players

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| *Psychiatrists | *Marriage and Family Therapists |
| *Psychologists | *Creative Arts Therapists |
| *Nurse Practitioners | *Psychoanalysts |
| *Social Workers | *Others |
| *Licensed MH Counselors | |

Psychiatrists

- *Physicians (Medical Doctors) who have specialized in Psychiatry
- *M.D., D.O., or MBBS
- *Scope of practice generally includes everything within "Psychiatric" or MH care
- *Does not include Psychological Testing

Psychiatrists

- *Treatment role in a team is often to oversee care and provide psychopharm intervention
- *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry is a subspecialty of Psychiatry

Psychologists

- *Generally only refers to those with doctorate level training (School Psychologists being exception)
- *PhD., PsyD.
- *Scope of practice generally includes all psychotherapies and psychological testing

Nurse Practitioners

- *Licensed to practice independently (with collaborating physician)
- *NP (or NPP)
- *Scope of practice includes psychotherapy and psychopharmacology

Social Workers

- *SW is a field in itself, with most practicing therapists being masters level trained
- *MSW, LCSW
- *Scope of practice includes psychotherapy

Licensed MH Counselors

- *Masters level clinicians trained in counseling/psychotherapy
- *LMHC
- *Scope of practice includes psychotherapy

Marriage and Family Therapists

- *Masters level clinicians trained in psychotherapy, with focus on family/systems
- *MFT
- *Scope of practice includes psychotherapy

Creative Arts Therapists

- *Clinicians with training in psychotherapy and one or more specific creative arts (music, art, dance, drama)
- *Scope of practice includes psychotherapy and specific creative arts therapies.

Psychoanalysts

- *Psychoanalysis is a specific type of psychotherapy
- *Most psychoanalysts first trained as Psychiatrists, Psychologists or masters level psychotherapists
- *Scope of practice would be based on primary discipline or psychotherapy only

Others

- *Trainees
- *Clinicians at "Exempt Sites"
- *Non-psychiatric medical specialists:
 - *Developmental Pediatricians
 - *Behavioral Pediatricians
 - *Adolescent Medicine Doctors

Who Does Most Evaluations?

- *It depends...
- *Most clinics will have a "primary clinician" (usually a masters level clinician) complete initial assessments

Supervised by a Psychiatrist

- *Does not necessarily mean that the patient was directly evaluated by the psychiatrist
- *Rather, that based on the information as documented, they agree with the plan

Treatment

Treatment Settings

- *Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs)
- *Other Mental Health Clinics
- *Private Practice
- *Primary Care ("The De Facto Mental Health Care System")
- *Other (non-psychiatric) Medical Specialists

CMHCs

- *Can't say "no"
 - *Take all payers/no insurance
- *Primary clinician/psychopharm provider (NP or MD) model
- *Sometimes intake provider will not be therapist
- *May take weeks after intake to see psychopharm provider

Other Clinics

- *Generally models similar to CMHCs, but not bound by same rules.

Private Practice

- *Clinician seen is straight forward
- *May be selective as to insurances accepted
- *Long waits or full practices not unusual, especially for Child Psychiatrists

Primary Care

- *The De Facto Mental Health Care System
- *Scope of practice (within MH) generally limited to psychopharmacologic intervention, but depends on specific doctor's training and comfort zone

Other Medical Specialists

- *Developmental Pediatricians, Behavioral Pediatricians, and Adolescent Medicine Physicians all have training in assessment and treatment of certain emotional and behavioral disturbances, but actual competencies will vary

Transitions and Continuity

Discontinuity of Care

*It is well known and documented that transitions in level of care and "hand offs" between clinicians are highest risk times for persons to stop treatment

Facilitating Appropriate Mental Health Care

- *Help your clients be educated consumers
- *Be patient with "systems"
- *Be understanding of clinicians' limits

Maximizing Collaborations

*Sometimes consultation with a Psychiatrist will provide necessary guidance for primary care doctors to provide pharmacologic treatment

You have the power to change the world...

But if you don't know what you're doing, please don't!