

THE COUNSELING SOURCE, INC. POLICY AND PROCEDURE

TITLE: Accessibility of Services

PURPOSE: The Counseling Source will have a written Accessibility Plan that addresses elimination of client barriers.

POLICY: The Counseling Source's Accessibility Plan will ensure that all services are available, accessible, appropriate and acceptable for clients. Input will be collected from persons served and actions will be taken to remove any barriers that are identified in a timely manner. The Counseling Source's organizational leadership will review the Accessibility Plan on an annual basis and make adjustments as necessary.

PROCEDURE:

1. The Counseling Source is committed to serving clients in their natural environment when possible/appropriate.
2. When serving the client in their natural environment is not possible, arrangements will be made to provide services in one of our outpatient settings. The client's geographical location will be taken into account in determining which outpatient site will be most appropriate.
3. Each site in which services are provided will be handicap accessible or appropriate accommodations will be made as necessary on an individual by individual basis so as there are no architectural or environmental barriers.
4. Routine services are typically provided Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-5:00 pm, however, appointments after hours are available upon request. Emergency or urgent services are provided 24 hours/day, 7 days/week.
5. When the individual is referred to The Counseling Source prior to discharge from the inpatient setting, TCS staff will be involved in, as appropriate, discharge planning and coordination of the provision of outpatient services.
6. No otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of The Counseling Source. This includes if the individual has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such impairment; or is regarded as having such impairment.
7. Referred individuals with a hearing impairment or communication disorder, or who speak a language other than English as a primary means of communication will have appropriate accommodations through either existing trained Counseling Source staff, or through contracted interpreters. This will be done at no additional cost to the referred individual.
8. When warranted by the client's financial circumstances, the client's eligibility for a sliding fee scale payment schedule will be assessed upon provision of required financial documentation.
9. Accessibility, availability and appropriateness of services provided will be in line with the mental health service needs of the populations served by The Counseling Source.
10. Minimum criteria for *acceptability* of services shall include, but not limited to: (1) Provision of services shall be culturally sensitive with responsive treatment planning and service

delivery. (2) This includes displaying sensitivity to ethnic and cultural differences among people. (3) Freedom of choice among therapeutic alternatives for the person receiving services shall be promoted and no person served shall be denied access to any service based on their refusal to accept other services recommended by The Counseling Source.

11. Minimum criteria for *appropriateness* of services shall include, but not limited to: (1) The provision of services will occur in the least restrictive setting as possible. (2) Delivery of service in the natural environment of the person receiving services as appropriate. (3) The provision of services will respect and attempt to maintain continuity of therapeutic relationships. (4) The provision of services will take the perceived needs of the person receiving services as well as their cultural assessment into consideration.
12. The minimum criteria for *appropriateness* of services for *persons with severe mental disability or children with severe emotional disturbance* shall also include assessment of needs and advocacy with other systems or organizations to meet those needs if the agency does not provide such services. Such needs and advocacy shall include, but are not limited to: (1) Mental health service needs, (2) housing, (3) employment and; /or educational status, (4) health, (5) income, (6) recreation, (7) cultural characteristics, (8) spiritual needs, (9) family issues and (10) transportation needs. The Counseling Source will be committed to reducing the stigma of people with disabilities. A accessibility plan will be updated annually by The Counseling Source's organizational leadership team with the purpose of identifying barriers in providing services to clients or potential clients.
13. A question on the client satisfaction survey will inquire if the person served felt as though there were specific barriers to receiving services at The Counseling Source. Additionally, The Counseling Source will accept feedback at any time from persons served regarding barriers.
14. Barriers can include: (1) Architectural, (2) Environmental, (3) Attitudinal, (4) Financial, (5) Employment, (6) Communication, (7) Transportation, and/or (8) Any other barrier identified by the Persons served, personnel, or other stakeholders.
15. When barriers are reported by persons served, personnel or other stakeholders, The Counseling Source's organizational leadership will investigate within 14 business days. If a barrier is determined to exist, The Counseling Source will be committed to removing this barrier, or make appropriate and acceptable accommodations for the individual, within 60 days of the report. Written documentation of the reports, investigations and corrective action shall be maintained.
16. An accessibility plan will be updated annually about the identified barriers that will include: (1) time lines for the removal of barriers, (b) Progress made in the removal of barriers, and (3) Areas needing improvement.
17. If barriers cannot be removed, or appropriate accommodations cannot be made, the individual will be referred to another provider with resources that are accessible for the person.

REFERENCED STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS: Ohio Department of Mental Health Administrative Code 5122:26-17, CARF Behavioral Health Standards Manual

EFFECTIVE DATE: 4/17/2006

REVIEWED: February 2018

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