



## Overview of Community-Based Mental Health Services

It is useful for all staff working in supportive housing settings to be familiar with the services for persons with mental illnesses that might be available within their community. Many communities offer some or all of the following services:

- **Assertive community treatment (ACT) teams** are designed to provide support and decrease the need for hospitalization for individuals with mental illness who would not usually get involved in treatment programs. The programs are based on an assertive outreach approach, with hands-on assistance provided to individuals in their homes and neighborhoods. Services are provided by multidisciplinary teams and include crisis intervention, medication monitoring, social supports, assistance with everyday living needs, access to medical care, psychoeducational supports to families, and employment assistance.
- **Case management services** are provided by community-based or public agencies and vary in level of intensity. The purpose of case management is to provide any assistance the consumer needs to remain psychiatrically stable and live as independently as possible. Case management services include escorting programs or appointments; teaching daily living skills such as personal hygiene, cleaning, cooking, shopping, budgeting, communication, and health maintenance; and providing support in achieving/maintaining sobriety, taking medication as prescribed, and keeping appointments. Case management services can be tailored to assist a person maintain stability and/or provide rehabilitation services (i.e., teaching various skills) so that the individual can function at a more independent level. These services can be mobile or sited within a mental health clinic or other treatment program.
- **Clubhouse programs** are consumer-oriented rehabilitative programs for adult individuals with a psychiatric disability (in some cases with a history of substance abuse), whose members work alongside staff in planning and operating the clubhouse program. Members engage in mutually planned vocational, educational, and social activities that develop skills and promote rehabilitation. A major component of the clubhouse is employment, either working in and for the club or becoming gainfully employed in the community. Common areas of concentration within the clubhouse include learning about food service, clerical work, maintenance, horticulture, and so on. The opportunity to achieve gainful employment is the central principle of the rehabilitation process, which promotes self-reliance and independence. Membership leads to continued growth, increased self-esteem, and a sense of empowerment for members.
- **Continuing day treatment** provides a social setting in which individuals recovering from mental illness learn social skills and daily living skills in order to increase independent functioning. Structured therapeutic groups meet and discuss such topics as communication skills, problem solving, vocational exploration, and symptom management. Social and

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Note: This document is included within the *Supportive Services* section of CSH's *Toolkit for Developing and Operating Supportive Housing*, which is available at [www.csh.org/toolkit2](http://www.csh.org/toolkit2). This document has been adapted from CSH's publication *Developing the "Support" in Supportive Housing*, which is available at [www.csh.org/publications](http://www.csh.org/publications).

recreational groups are also offered. Some programs have groups addressing substance use and some provide medication management. Many provide case management and referral services as well. Individuals usually attend three to five days a week, and there is usually no time limit to participation.

- **MICA continuing day treatment program** is a rehabilitative program offering day treatment activities and case management for adults with chronic mental illness in combination with chemical abuse problems.
- **Mobile crisis teams** provide psychiatric crisis intervention services directly in the community to individuals in need and to their families. In addition, staff members are available to provide interim supportive services to individuals who have been in crisis and are awaiting formal entry into an outpatient or residential psychiatric treatment program. Mobile Crisis Teams are usually linked to large hospitals and respond to crises in their area.
- **Outpatient clinics/programs** provide treatment designed to reduce symptoms, improve functioning, and provide ongoing support. Services include assessment, health screening and referral, counseling, medication therapy, medication education, symptom management, and psychiatric rehabilitation-readiness determination and referral.
- **Outreach teams** provide services to homeless individuals living in public spaces. These teams work to engage and build trust with individuals over an extended period. They often distribute food and make a variety of referrals, including linking individuals to drop-in centers or shelters.
- **Partial hospitalization programs** provide active treatment designed to stabilize and reduce acute symptoms, to serve as an alternative to inpatient hospitalization, or to reduce the length of a hospital stay within a medically supervised program. Eligibility for admission to a partial hospitalization program is based on a designated mental illness diagnosis that has resulted in dysfunction due to acute symptomatology and requires medically supervised intervention to achieve stabilization (and which, without a partial hospitalization program, would necessitate admission to or continued stay in an inpatient hospital.) Services include assessment, health screening and referral, symptom management, medication therapy, medication education, verbal therapy, case management, crisis intervention services, activity therapy, and clinical support services.

Note: CSH's *Toolkit for Developing and Operating Supportive Housing* includes additional information regarding mental health issues and services under *Preparing for Tenants' Service Needs* in the *Supportive Services* section of the *Toolkit*, available at [www.csh.org/toolkit2services](http://www.csh.org/toolkit2services).