



There are a lot of reasons children and youth may want to get mental healthcare.

Getting mental health treatment might help if you:

- want to get some counseling, therapy, or treatment;
- get in trouble at school or at home for your behavior;
- feel sad or depressed or worried a lot of the time;
- often get really angry and end up fighting or yelling;
- want to talk in a group with other youth who might be going through similar things as you; or
- think a therapist or other mental health doctor might be able to help you with other issues.

MANY PEOPLE BENEFIT FROM GETTING MENTAL HEALTHCARE.

It is not about being bad or crazy. It is about getting help to feel better.

What is public mental healthcare?

Public mental healthcare is free. The services could include counseling, family therapy, group therapy, medication management, or other services that would help you. Depending on what you need, the services could be offered from a doctor's office, a mental health clinic, in your home, or in a hospital.

Who can get public mental healthcare?

If you have Medicaid or other state medical assistance like Apple Health for Kids, you are eligible for public mental healthcare services. Do you have a "medical coupon" or a Provider One card? If so, you probably have Medicaid or Apple Health for Kids. Bring your coupon or card to your first mental health appointment.

If you do not have Medicaid or Apple Health for Kids, you can apply. You can apply at a local community service office of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). You can find your local community service office online at <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/onlinecso/findservice.shtml>.

How can you get public mental healthcare?

The first step to get treatment is to have a mental health intake. At the intake you will be asked a lot of questions. This is to find out what help you need. You can get an intake at a local public mental health program. These programs are called community mental health agencies.

IF YOU ARE HAVING A MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY, CALL 911.

You can also call a mental health crisis line or go to an emergency room. The Washington Recovery Help Line number is 1-866-789-1511. If you are in immediate danger, call 911.



TIP If you would like a mental health intake, ask your regular doctor to make a referral. This is not required, but your regular doctor can make a referral.

Which program (agency) is right for me?

You can call local mental health programs to get information about their services. You can also call them to make an appointment. If you have trouble finding the public mental health programs in your community, you can call the Regional Support Network in your area to get a list of the local agencies.

DON'T KNOW THE RSN IN YOUR AREA?

You can find phone numbers for local programs and your local crisis line number by clicking on your county's link online at www.dshs.wa.gov/dbhr/rsn.shtml.

How do I find out what mental healthcare services I will get?

You and your mental health provider should develop a treatment plan together. You have the right to participate in decisions about your mental healthcare. You have the right to help develop your treatment plan and to get the services that will meet your needs.

If you are 13 or older, you get to make the decisions about what kind of mental health treatment you need or want with your doctor or counselor.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Youth under age 21 who have Medicaid or Apple Health for Kids have the right to get **ALL** mental healthcare services that are medically necessary. This means that the services are recommended by a doctor, a therapist, or a healthcare screener and that the services will help a youth feel better or prevent a youth from getting or feeling worse.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

If you are not getting the services you need and asked for, you have a right to get a second opinion and to challenge a decision to change, reduce, deny, or stop your services.

Are there resources if I have questions or problems?

In addition to your Regional Support Network, you can contact other organizations for more information. You can contact:

- **Your local mental health Ombudsman.** This is someone who is assigned to help people who have questions or problems with public mental healthcare. You can find the phone number for your local ombuds services by clicking on your county's link online at: www.dshs.wa.gov/dbhr/rsn.shtml.
- **Legal aid** for information about your rights. There is more than one place you can call.

TeamChild

(206) 322-2444

www.teamchild.org

Northwest Justice Project

(888) 201-1014 (CLEAR hotline)

www.washingtonlawhelp.org

Disability Rights Washington (800) 562-2702, TTY (800) 905-0209

www.disabilityrightswa.org



TIP You may be interested in information about "How to Challenge a Denial of Public Mental Healthcare Services." This is available online at www.teamchild.org.

This document provides general information about your rights. It does not contain legal advice. If you need legal advice, seek the help of a lawyer. The information is current as of April 2012.

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