

Quality Report Card

Licking Memorial Health Systems



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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE

Psychotherapy Benefits Mental Health Conditions

Mental illnesses are among the most common health conditions in the United States. More than 50 percent of Americans will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder at some point in their lifetime. Medications, psychotherapy and a combination of the two have proven beneficial to people with emotional and behavioral problems. Research shows that psychotherapy can be helpful for those who do not respond well to or do not want to take medication.

Psychotherapy is a general term for treating mental health problems by talking with a psychiatrist, psychologist or other mental health provider. Also known as talk therapy, psychotherapy can help relieve the symptoms of different mental health disorders, such as anxiety, depression and addiction, without the use of medication. In addition to mental illness, psychotherapy also helps individuals who are dealing with a range of emotions, including overwhelming sadness or helplessness, an inability to cope with everyday problems, feelings of constant or unnecessary worry and difficulty concentrating.

Numerous psychotherapies are effective treatments, but some are best suited to certain disorders and conditions. Treatments can be long- or short-term, and therapists may use a combination of techniques depending on a patient's condition and preferences.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) helps patients alter how they think about certain situations by changing negative thought patterns and behaviors that are contributing

to the condition. They are introduced to coping skills that can be used in real life circumstances, learn to focus on issues and solve their problems. CBT is used to help people with depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD).

Individuals with addiction and drug abuse problems also may benefit from CBT. Specific techniques include exploring the positive and negative consequences of continued drug use, self-monitoring to recognize cravings early and identify situations that might put one at risk for use, and developing strategies for coping with cravings and avoiding high-risk situations.

Interpersonal therapy (IPT) is a short-term form of treatment that helps patients understand underlying relational issues such as conflicts with significant others, unresolved grief, and problems interacting with others. It can help people learn healthy ways to express emotions, methods to improve communication, and how they relate to others. Therapy sessions can be individual or group based. IPT is most often used to treat depression.

Psychodynamic therapy focuses on deep underlying issues that are caused from childhood experiences, such as abuse or neglect that can trigger negative behaviors such as drug or alcohol abuse. By increasing self-awareness and understanding how past circumstances affect present behavior, individuals can work with a therapist to improve their well-being.

Research shows that most people who receive psychotherapy experience symptom relief and are better able to function in their lives. Psychotherapy has been shown to be linked with positive changes in the brain and body. Benefits include fewer sick days, less disability, fewer medical problems, and increased work satisfaction. The risk with psychotherapy is minimal; however, the process may cause emotional discomfort if painful or traumatic experiences are explored during sessions.

Individuals seeking a therapist can ask for a referral from their physician, family or friends. Many employers offer counseling services or referrals through an employee assistance program. The therapist should meet state certification and licensing requirements for his or her particular discipline. For psychotherapy to be successful, it is important that patients consider their therapy as a collaborative effort with their therapist. They should be open and honest, and follow the agreed upon plan for treatment.

Licking Memorial Health Systems offers inpatient and outpatient services for behavioral health and addiction through Shepherd Hill, a nationally accredited treatment center located in Newark. For more information on outpatient services, please call (220) 564-4873. To find out more about addiction medicine, call (220) 564-4325 (HEAL).

Patient Story – Barbara*

Barbara was born and raised in Licking County. After graduating from Newark Catholic High School, she attended a university out-of-state where she met her husband. The couple spent 14 years in the other state before moving back to Licking County. They felt a smaller town would be a better environment to raise their children. The two found employment and settled into a routine.

Things changed drastically when Barbara began experiencing crippling anxiety. She was working long hours, and the stress from the job was keeping her from obtaining restful sleep. Searching for relief, she visited a healthcare professional and received a prescription. Unfortunately, the medication intensified the anxiety and created overwhelming side effects including hallucinations. Barbara visited the Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Emergency Department for assistance then was transferred to Shepherd Hill. During her three-day stay, Barbara met Elizabeth A. Yoder, D.O., and made an immediate connection. “Dr. Yoder was easy to talk to, and she made me feel comfortable. In the past, I felt judged when I spoke about certain aspects of my life, but I did not feel that way with Dr. Yoder,” Barbara said.

Dr. Yoder discussed treatment with Barbara including cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) – a form of psychotherapy that has the goal of modifying tumultuous emotions, behaviors and thoughts. CBT focuses on present circumstances and emotions in real time and explores what the patient is telling themselves that might result in anxiety or an emotional disturbance. The patient is encouraged to address rational concerns practically and to challenge irrational beliefs, rumination or jumping to the worst possible conclusion. “There were things coming up from my past, especially a very traumatic incident I witnessed as a child, that I had never

talked about with anyone,” Barbara said. Dr. Yoder explained that due to post-traumatic stress, Barbara had created negative beliefs and perceptions which contributed to her anxiety. Using CBT, Dr. Yoder helped Barbara identify harmful thoughts, assess their accuracy, and employ strategies to challenge and overcome the anxiety.

Dr. Yoder helped Barbara form healthy habits to assist in reducing her anxiety. “One of the first things she addressed was my trouble sleeping. I thought changing my sleeping habits would have no effect on my mental health, but it did,” Barbara explained. Dr. Yoder provided her with specific tools to assist in obtaining a good night’s rest – including a checklist of suggestions and reminders. Keeping electronics, especially a television, out of the bedroom was among the top recommendations. Research has shown that electronics can interrupt sleep patterns. Dr. Yoder also suggested that when Barbara was having trouble falling asleep that she get out of bed and perform simple tasks such as matching socks until she felt tired.

To overcome work-related stressors, Dr. Yoder encouraged Barbara to set several alarms on her phone. The first alarm serves as a reminder to begin completing her tasks for the day and preparing to go home. The next alarm is a check to make sure Barbara has left work. The small reminders help Barbara to remember it is acceptable to end her work day at the scheduled time, to leave the stress of the day at the job site and not feel guilty about going home for the evening.

With regular visits to Dr. Yoder, Barbara found success in overcoming her anxiety and feels more capable of mentally dealing with stressful situations. “I do not feel like I have to hide my emotions any more. I have a

better understanding of social cues than before, and my relationship with my grown children is stronger than ever,” Barbara said. Barbara was visiting or checking in with Dr. Yoder at least once a week, but now has been able to decrease her therapy visits to once a month. “Dr. Yoder is a passionate physician. She holds me accountable to use the tools she provided. Because of what she has taught me, I no longer feel ashamed of myself, and I understand that certain behaviors are acceptable, such as not spending time with people who might cause me stress.” In addition to caring for Barbara’s mental health, Dr. Yoder has coordinated with other healthcare professionals to make sure Barbara is cared for according to her health plan. When Barbara had to undergo minor surgery, Dr. Yoder had discussions with the surgical team about Barbara’s medications and other concerns.

Barbara now has a new job where she assists others and serves as a role model. “Dr. Yoder has been so generous of her time. She meets with and offers her insight to those I work with on her days off,” Barbara said. Barbara encourages others to seek assistance to overcome mental health challenges.

Licking Memorial Behavioral Health Services offers inpatient and outpatient psychiatric care. Each patient has a complete medical examination at the onset of treatment. The patient’s treatment plan is individualized to meet the patient’s specific needs. To contact the social services and nursing services available call (220) 564-4873.

**Barbara is not the patient’s real name.*

Behavioral Health Care – *How do we compare?*

At Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS), we take pride in the care we provide. To monitor the quality of that care, we track specific quality measures and compare to benchmark measures. Then, we publish the information so you can draw your own conclusions regarding your healthcare choices.

- Behavioral health is a broad term that refers to psychiatric illnesses and/or substance use disorders. Inpatient hospitalization for either condition is often necessary for effective intervention. LMH provides a wide range of services for people with behavioral health illnesses at its Shepherd Hill facility. One goal is to transition patients into outpatient settings where they can continue treatment, decreasing the need for readmission.

	LMH 2017	LMH 2018	LMH 2019	Goal
Psychiatric readmissions within 31 days	0.26%	0.0%	0.0%	less than 5.6%

- Outcome studies are conducted to monitor and measure the treatment success of addictive disease. Our data show how patients are doing up to two years after completing the program. Information regarding abstinence one year after completing the program is self-reported by patients.

	LMH 2017	LMH 2018	LMH 2019	Goal
Patients remaining abstinent	88%	97%	98%	greater than 85%
Improvement in quality of relationships	87%	95%	94%	greater than 85%
Improvement in overall physical and mental health	87%	97%	93%	greater than 85%
Improvement in overall quality of life	87%	98%	85%	greater than 85%

- Withdrawal management – the safe, medically supervised elimination of addictive substances from the body – is the most intensive care offered for patients with addictive disease. Acute withdrawal symptoms are managed by the appropriate medications for each patient’s situation. The length of stay for detoxification depends upon the drug of choice and the severity of the withdrawal.

	LMH 2017	LMH 2018	LMH 2019	Goal
Average length of stay – alcohol treatment	2.8 days	2.9 days	2.9 days	less than 3 days
Average length of stay – opiate treatment	2.9 days	2.5 days	1.7 days	less than 4 days
Average length of stay – tranquilizer (benzodiazepines) treatment	3.1 days	2.6 days	1.0 days	less than 5 days

- Education is considered an essential component of providing complete behavioral health care. A thorough understanding of the diagnosis, the purpose of medications, side effects to medications and the expected response to treatment leads to decreased relapse and readmission rates and increased long-term compliance with medication on an outpatient basis.

	LMH 2017	LMH 2018	LMH 2019	Goal
Diagnosis/disease education provided for patients and/or family	100%	100%	100%	greater than 97%
Medication education provided for patients and/or family	99.69%	99.9%	99.5%	greater than 97%

- Family participation is an important component in patients’ recovery. For continuity of care, a licensed professional clinical counselor or social worker will initiate contact with family members of Shepherd Hill psychiatric inpatients and encourage them to participate in a family meeting during the period of inpatient treatment.

	LMH 2017	LMH 2018	LMH 2019	Goal
Social work/family meeting during patient stay	91%	98%	98%	greater than 95%

- Valproic acid and lithium are two common medications used to treat multiple behavioral health diagnoses. These medications can facilitate control of symptoms and assist in recovery, but both have potentially dangerous side effects. Licking Memorial Behavioral Health professionals monitor their patients’ blood at specified intervals to ensure therapeutic levels of the medications and to observe for toxicity or other negative effects on vital organs.

	LMHP 2017	LMHP 2018	LMHP 2019	Goal
Appropriate testing complete for patients taking lithium (such as Lithobid)	91%	95%	100%	greater than 90%
Appropriate testing complete for patients taking valproic acid (such as Depakote)	94%	93%	100%	greater than 90%



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Health Tips – Staying Emotionally Healthy

An important part of our overall health and well-being, mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being and affects how we think, feel, and act in different situations. Finding ways to maintain and improve good emotional health is important to determining how people handle stress, relate to others and make healthy choices. Some approaches to managing emotional health include:

Talk to Someone – Having someone to talk to, whether it is a healthcare professional, family member or trusted friend, can provide relief from anxiety and depression.

Exercise – Exercise is known to produce endorphins – chemicals in the brain that provide feelings of happiness when released. Thirty minutes of activity each day can help to relieve stress and lessen anxiety and depression. Activities can be simple, such as taking a walk or using the stairs at work instead of the elevator. Spend time outside, if possible, as studies show that time in nature relieves stress, and exposure to sunlight produces vitamin D in the body, which increases serotonin levels in the brain.

Practice Gratitude – Gratitude is linked to improved well-being and mental health. Individuals who express gratitude tend to be happier and more content. Finding instances for which to be grateful and writing those down in a journal can yield long-term benefits for well-being.

Do Something for Someone Else – Research shows that being helpful to others has a beneficial effect on how people feel about themselves. Volunteering at a food pantry, hospital, or charity organization provides a sense of purpose and a feeling of being connected, which can decrease feelings of loneliness and increase happiness.

Prolonged feelings of sadness may be a sign of clinical depression. A person who is exhibiting feelings of sadness for more than two weeks should talk with their physician about possible treatments, such as psychotherapy and medication.



**Licking Memorial
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Please take a few minutes to read this month's report on **Behavioral Health Care**. You'll soon discover why Licking Memorial Health Systems is measurably different ... for your health!

The Quality Report Card is a publication of the LMHS Public Relations Department. Please contact the Public Relations Department at (220) 564-1572 to receive future mailings.

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