



Lifespan Behavioral Health Services

Taking Steps Together 

Client Handbook

7474 Greenway Center Drive, Suite 700-A
Greenbelt, Maryland 20770

3416 Olandwood Court, Suite 201
Olney, Maryland 20832

1003 West 7th Street, Suite 200
Frederick, Maryland 21701

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The services and facilities of Lifespan Behavioral Health Services PC are operated on a non-discriminatory basis. This policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, sex, national origin, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, economic situation, religion, or political affiliation with service delivery.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Who We Are:

Lifespan Behavioral Health Services PC (LSBH) is a multi-disciplinary team of mental health professionals who have a wide variety of specialties.

What You Can Expect at Your First Visit:

On the day of your first appointment, you would have already registered either online at our website <https://lsbhtherapy.com/> or would have filled out a registration form by visiting one of our locations. There are additional forms that you will need to fill out for our business records. We will also need to verify your identity and medical benefits. This is why we ask you to bring a photo id. If the client is under the age of 18 (minor), make sure to bring the photo id of the legal

guardian, in addition to the medical benefits card for the minor. If circumstances are one which guardianship is appointed of a minor or compromised adult to another individual; or there is shared custody, please bring your custody agreement and/or guardianship paperwork which will be scanned into the medical record. If there is joint custody, with shared decision making for medical purposes, please bring a copy of the photo id of the other guardian as well as a written statement, signed, allowing LSBH to treat the client. We do our best to check benefits eligibility at the time of registration. As part of the benefits check, we also determine your copay, co-insurance amount and deductible amount. We do our best to call you 48 hours in advance to alert you if you have payment due. If we cannot contact you due to our staffing for that day or we are not able to reach you, you are still expected to pay upon arrival.

We accept most major credit cards, debit cards¹ and checks. If your check is returned you will be assessed at \$35.00 processing fee and you will not be able to pay via a check in the future. WE DO NOT ACCEPT CASH. Services may not be rendered if payment is not made in full at the time of your visit.

Treatment begins with an evaluation. You will meet with a clinician who will ask you about the problems for which you are seeking help. The clinician² will determine the services you need and whether LSBH will be able to provide those services. If we are able to serve you, the clinician will use the information you have provided to develop a recommended plan of treatment tailored to meet your individual needs. The clinician doing your evaluation may continue as your provider; or will use their professional judgement to recommend another provider within our organization or outside of our organization for your needs.

Appointments:

We will make every effort to arrange appointment times that are at your convenience. Some clinicians might schedule you in their offices as part of their practice, while others will ask for you to go to the front desk to schedule PRIOR to leaving our office. We offer appointments both in person at our offices and virtually. It is important to note that for medication management, you must be seen every three months. There are occasions that this time frame could be extended out, and this is between you and your clinician only. Our administrators are instructed to adhere to the three-month rule. Without hearing from your clinician directly, our administrators will instruct you of the same. We understand you will run late at times, as do we, as we want to ensure that we are providing the care everyone deserves. Our administrators are not aware of your clinician's timing, therefore they will not be able to tell you if you are more than 15 minutes late if you will be seen on the same day. We also do our best to answer the phones in a timely matter. Our call volume is high, so please do not rely on this means to let us know you are running late. We also understand life happens and you will need to cancel or reschedule your appointment. We request you contact the office one (1) full business day when rescheduling or

¹ Lifespan Behavioral Health Services (LSBH) requires all LSBH clients to keep a credit card on file for payment purposes which will be billed monthly for outstanding balances. Your clinician will ask you periodically if you need to update your card at the beginning of your session. A receipt will be sent to you from LSBH showing your payment.

² Clinician refers to any professional who is handling care. This can be a therapist, nurse practitioner, psychologist, physician assistant or physician.

cancelling to avoid a fee. Our business days are Monday through Friday. If your appointment is on a Monday, you must contact our office on Friday during business hours to avoid a charge. If you cancel or reschedule less than 24 hours and/or one (1) full business day, you will be charged and will not be able to see your provider until the fee is paid. If there is a holiday, the holiday does not count as a regular business day. For example, if July 4th is a Tuesday and your appointment is for Wednesday July 5th, you must cancel by Monday July 3rd to avoid being charged.

For therapy appointments: If you are running late and/or need to cancel or reschedule your appointment for therapy, please contact your therapist directly.

Prescriber Fee: \$75

Therapist Fee: \$ 65

If you cancel less than one (1) business day on two occasions, and/or do not show up on two occasions, your clinician reserves the right to discharge you. A discharge letter will be sent to your address on file alerting you to the fact you were discharged, and your chart will be flagged and made inactive.

Contact In-between Appointments:

We do understand contact in between appointments might be necessary. We offer contact in between appointments via e-mail and/or phone. Contact in between appointments will be an out of pocket expense to you. Any contact in between appointment which takes greater than 5 minutes may be charged at the discretion of your provider as followed:³

E-mail: \$25

Phone call: \$25 for every 10 minutes. 10-minute blocks are not pro-rated.

What Kind of Treatment Might be Recommended?

Individual Therapy: Also known as "psychotherapy" or "talk therapy," individual therapy is a form of treatment in which the client meets on a one-on-one basis with a trained mental health professional in a safe, non-judgmental environment. It is time-limited, focused, and usually occurs once a week for 45-60 minutes per session. Therapy can address a wide range of mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and grief, but can also be used for coping with life stressors, such as academic challenges, life/career transitions, relationship challenges and internal struggles regarding your sense of self and identity.

Family or Couples Therapy: Family therapy is a form of psychotherapy that seeks to reduce distress and conflict by improving the systems of interactions between family members. This type of treatment is also useful in helping the family adjust to a member who is struggling with a

³ Medicaid clients will not be charged.

medical issue, addiction, as well as teaching coping strategies with the new reality of a new baby or couple's separation.

Medications: Often a person's problem involves chemical imbalances. For example, some types of depression are related to the way brain chemistry affects mood. In such instances, taking a specially prescribed medication may be very helpful.

Trans-Cranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS): TMS is an office-based treatment used for various mental health conditions as an alternative to medications, or to help you reduce the need for medications.

Urine Drug Screens: Some client's conditions are due to the use of drugs and alcohol in whole or in part. Because we need to treat each client's struggles in whole or in part to achieve success, you will be asked to submit a random urine drug screen if substances are suspected. If you are prescribed controlled substances and over the age of 16, expect to be asked to submit to a urine drug screen. The charge for a urine drug screen will be \$25. Most commercial insurances will not reimburse for these screens and it is your responsibility at the time of service to pay the \$25 fee. *If you have Medical Assistance you will not be responsible to pay, and your insurance will be billed.* Refusal to submit to a urine drug screen is your right. We reserve the right to not prescribe controlled substances to you if you refuse. You will be provided a copy of our urine drug screen policy and this handbook, and expected to sign the policy acknowledging consent to obtain a urine drug screen, even if your original presentation does not disclose substances. Refusal to sign the policy does not mean your clinician will not request you to submit to a urine drug screen. A signed urine drug screen policy must be completed in order to receive a prescription for controlled substances.

Blood Work/ Consultants: Depending on your medications and co-morbidities you will be asked to obtain blood work prior to or during your treatment. You may also be asked to obtain an electrocardiogram or cardiac work up prior to starting treatment, or imaging of your brain to seek consultation with a neurologist, or to obtain a physical exam prior to or during your treatment. We ask that you complete and sign a Release of Information (ROI) form at the time of your first visit from your primary medical doctor and any medical providers you are seeing or have seen. This includes any hospitalizations, partial programs or intensive outpatient programs you may have attended.

Other Means of Treatment: Treatment is not just what you do in the therapist's office. It may be suggested that you undertake outside activities such as reading, journal keeping, attending self-help groups, nutrition, exercise, talking to a dietician, practicing desirable new behaviors, etc.

What Kinds of Clinicians Are There?

Psychiatrist (MD or DO): This is someone who has graduated from medical school and has completed residency training in psychiatry. MD stands for medical doctor. DO stands for Doctor of Osteopathy. Most of our psychiatrists completed post-residency training known as fellowship and are double Board Certified in Child, Adolescent and Adult Psychiatry.

Physician Assistants (PA's): This is someone who has graduated from a master's level approved program who practice medicine on a team with other physicians and health care providers. Like physicians, they can practice in all different areas of medicine including psychiatry. They prescribe medicine just like a physician and practice on their own with oversight from an MD or DO.

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP): This is someone who has graduated from a master's level approved program or doctoral level program. They practiced as a registered nurse in various fields before deciding to go on for a higher level of education. Like physicians, they can practice in all different areas of medicine including psychiatry. They prescribe medicine just like a physician and practice on their own.

Psychologist (Ph.D. or Psy.D.): Someone who has graduated from a doctoral program in psychology and completed an approved internship.

Therapist/Social Worker (LCSW-C): A person who has graduated from a master's level program in social work and has completed a period of post-graduate supervision.

Therapist/Social Worker (LMSW): Same as LCSW-C, but has not completed all their post-graduate supervision. You do not need to be an LCSW-C to be an effective therapist. There are professionals who have worked many years but chose not to go on to obtain their LCSW-C.

Therapist/Professional Counselor (LCPC): A person who has graduated from a master's level program in clinical psychology or counseling and has completed a period of post-graduate supervision.

Therapist/Professional Counselor (LGPC): same as LMSW.

How Do You Get the Most from Your Treatment?

Attend Scheduled Appointments: It is necessary to be present to receive the treatment if you want it to be effective.

Speak Honestly: You are not there to please the therapist; you are there to identify your problems and to work on them. Therefore, in order to receive the greatest benefit from treatment you need to be very open and honest in talking about your feelings, thoughts and your behavior, even if you view it as "bad" or "shameful".

Risk Trying Things the Clinician Suggests: Often treatment involves some proposed changes. For example, suggestions could include speaking up and being more assertive, listening more, being less aggressive, getting a physical exam or a blood test, completing homework assignments, etc. Also, therapy usually involves suggested alternatives in how you think about yourself and the world. Change is difficult. By seeking help, you are indicating that

some changes might be useful to you. Talk with your therapist if you are having difficulty pushing yourself to replace old behaviors with new ones.

Medications and Compliance: Medication might be part of your treatment. It is a collaborative experience in which your clinician will discuss options and you are expected to ask questions. Such questions might be: What side effects can I expect? Will I gain weight? Will there be problems long term to my body? We do our best to prescribe effective and affordable medications. *It is up to you to bring your formulary to your appointment or find out if the medication being prescribed is affordable to you by contacting either your insurance company or pharmacy.* If you do not want medications, you have the right to reject the recommendation without concern of having your care terminated. If you are non-compliant it is your responsibility to alert your clinician if you are stopping your medication and to let them know why you are stopping. By collaborating with your clinician, your clinician can support you and help you find alternative treatments of your liking. *If you do not collaborate with your clinician, your clinician has the right to discharge you for non-compliance.*

Managed Care:

Most health insurance coverage today is “managed”. Some of the organizations providing managed care are Magellan, Value Behavioral Health, Kaiser, Optimum Choice, United Behavioral Health, Cigna Behavioral Health, plus many others. These and similar organizations usually require that services to their subscribers be authorized in advance. It is your responsibility to track your authorized visits and to notify your therapist in advance if further authorizations are needed, although we do our best to keep track of them via our billing department. Any services provided to you without authorizations will be your financial responsibility. Managed care organizations require therapists to provide their Utilization Review Committees with reports containing diagnostic, symptomatic, and treatment plan information before authorizing continued benefits.

Some managed care organizations or HMO’s have their own network of providers. If our providers are not paneled with your HMO, we will not be able to provide services to you except on a self-pay basis.

Our self-pay rates are as follows:

Physician: Initial Evaluation \$300; Follow-Up session: \$150
Physician Assistant: Initial Evaluation \$200; Follow-Up session: \$100
Nurse Practitioner: Initial Evaluation \$200; Follow-Up session: \$100
Psychologist: Initial Evaluation \$200; Follow-Up session: \$100
Therapist: Initial Evaluation \$180/ hour session; \$150/ 45-minute session

Length of Treatment:

No one can accurately predict how long it will take to meet your treatment goals. Your insurance benefits may help determine the length of treatment by authorizing a certain number of sessions. Additional sessions may be an out of cost expense to you. It is best to define with your therapist

or prescriber focused short term goals and plan a short course of therapy/ treatments targeted to those goals.

Emergencies:

If you experience an emergency situation in which you or a loved one is/are at risk of harm to self or others, either physically or mentally, you must contact 911 or go to your nearest emergency room. For Prince George's County residents, you may also contact the Crisis Response System at 301-927-4500. For Montgomery County residents, you may also contact the Crisis Center 24/7 at (240) 777-4000. For Frederick County residents, you may also contact the Mental Health Association-24 Hour Call Center 301-662-2255 or 866-411-6803.

If you are in another area, you can contact the Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-SUICIDE or 1-800-273-TALK.

Medication refills and content that can wait until your next appointment does not constitute an emergency.

Inclement Weather:

We will post inclement weather on our website and will record a voice message on our phone system to alert you. These decisions are made by management and at times are done at the last moment to avoid disruption of patient care. Please call our offices the next day business day to reschedule your appointment. This is the only time missed appointment fees will be waived.

Client Rights and Responsibilities:

As a client of Lifespan Behavioral Health Services PC, you have the **right** to:

- Be treated in a courteous and dignified manner.
- Be met on time for your appointment or told of any time changes as early as possible.
- Take part in planning your treatment and setting your treatment goals.
- Receive appropriate treatment regardless of your sex, race, age, religion, national origin, disability, or how you choose to pay for care.
- Know your progress in treatment, either through talking with your therapist, or in some cases, reviewing your chart with your therapist.
- Have your questions about your therapy answered.
- Discuss your medication with your doctor. This includes how the medicine works, how it makes you feel, side effects, or any need for medication changes.
- Find out in advance how much money you will be charged for treatment.
- Know the names and professions of people treating you.
- Have your treatment records and conversations with your therapist held in the utmost privacy and confidentiality provided by law.
- Decide if you do not want to continue with treatment.

- Not be subjected to physical, mental, verbal or sexual abuse.
- Know that parents and legal guardians are responsible for children 16 years and under. All procedures regarding client rights and confidentiality apply to them.
- Have a response within five (5) working days to any complaint that you may have.
- Refuse to participate in intrusive research or to be photographed by an employee, visitor or other patient.
- Receive an understandable explanation of these rights at any reasonable time.
- File grievance if you believe that any of these rights have been violated, using the Grievance Procedures you have been given.
- Refuse medication.

As a client of Lifespan Behavioral Health Services PC, you have the **responsibility** to:

- Work with your clinician to plan your treatment and decide on the goals of your treatment.
- Work to accomplish your treatment goals. This includes taking medication as prescribed.
- Be honest with your clinician(s) in discussing anything related to your problems.
- Tell your therapist and Psychiatrist how your medication(s) make you feel. Tell them about the side effects from any medication(s) you take.
- Give correct information to the staff about your family income, your employment and your health insurance coverage. Immediately tell the administrative staff whenever there is a change in any of these.
- Pay your fees at the time of your visit. Discuss any problems with your fees with the administrative staff.
- Keep your appointment and be on time since your appointment time is set-aside for you. If you are late, the time available for your session will be shortened. If you are more than 15 minutes late, your therapist or doctor may not be able to see you at all. If you know that you will be delayed or that you will not be able to keep your appointment, please call. You may be charged for any sessions that you miss without giving a 24-hour notice.
- Let your clinician know if you are not doing well or if you are feeling worse.
- Talk with your clinician if you are thinking about stopping your treatment. You may be ready to handle things on your own, or you may be facing a difficult spot in treatment and need some additional help dealing with it.

Grievance Procedures for those with Commercial Insurances:

Grievance Procedures Concerning Clinical Care for Self-Pay and Commercial Clients

STEP 1

If clients or family members have grievance or complaint concerning their treatment, they are first directed to discuss it with their therapist. If the issue cannot be resolved to their satisfaction

at this level, or they are unwilling to speak to the therapist for whatever reason, the next step may be taken.

STEP 2

If discussion with your clinician does not resolve the issue, the client/family is then directed to voice the grievance to the medical director of Lifespan Behavioral Health Services PC, Dr. Sussal. This request must be in writing and should include the client name, date of complaint, the nature of the complaint and steps that have been taken to resolve the problem. You have the right to be or have a written response within fourteen (14) working days of receipt of the request.

STEP 3

If the above steps do not resolve the problem, the client or family may appeal to their insurance company to review your case. If the client is a self-pay client, they can inquire guidance through the Maryland Attorney's General Office. Their phone number is: 410-528-1840 and their website is: <http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/CPD/HEAU/default.aspx>.

Grievance Procedures Concerning Your Bill:

STEP 1

If clients or family members have grievance or complaint concerning their bill, they are first directed to discuss it with their provider. If the issue cannot be resolved to their satisfaction at this level, or they are unwilling to speak to their provider we request you speak to our Billing Specialist Lolita Smith at lolitasmith@lsbhtherapy.com.

STEP 2

If discussion with Lolita Smith does not resolve the issue, the client/family is then directed to voice the grievance to our business manager, Carolyn Reidy. Ms. Reidy also functions as our business manager. She is the owner and operator of our Billing Company, IOU Billing. She can be reached at 1-800-819-7570 or carolynreidy@lsbhtherapy.com. This request must be in writing and should include the client name, date of complaint, the nature of the complaint and steps that have been taken to resolve the problem.. You have the right have a written response within fourteen (14) working days of receipt of the request.

STEP 3

If the above steps do not resolve the problem, the client or family may appeal to the medical director of Lifespan Behavioral Health Services PC, Joshua Sussal MD, using the same written format as previously described. Dr. Sussal will review the problem, meet with the client, if needed, and prepare a written response within fourteen (14) working days. After Dr. Sussal

reviews the case and documents his opinion concerning the situation(s), one copy of the response will be given to the client or family, with additional copies given to the Ms. Reidy, the therapist and Lolita Smith.

Grievance Procedures Concerning Non-Clinical Staff:

STEP 1

If clients or family members have grievance or complaint concerning their interactions with non-clinical staff also known as “admin”, they must first obtain the name of the person they have a grievance with and speak to the office manager about their concerns. If issues cannot be resolved to their satisfaction at this level the next step may be taken.

STEP 2

If discussion with the office manager does not resolve the issue, the client/family is then directed to voice their grievance may appeal to the medical director of Lifespan Behavioral Health Services PC, Joshua Sussal MD, using the same written format as previously described. This request must be in writing and should include the client name, date of complaint, the name of the staff member, the nature of the complaint and steps that have been taken to resolve the problem. Clients have the right to a written response within fourteen(14) working days of receipt of the request.

Grievance Procedures for Medical Assistance Clients:

STEP 1

If clients or family members have grievance or complaint concerning their treatment, bill or any other issue, they are first directed to discuss it with their therapist. They have the right to be seen within fourteen (14) working days. If the issue cannot be resolved to their satisfaction at this level, or they are unwilling to speak to the therapist for whatever reason, the next step may be taken.

STEP 2

If discussion with the therapist does not resolve the issue, the client/family is then directed to voice the grievance to the office manager. This request must be in writing and should include the client name, date of complaint, staff members name (if involvement of complaint is about a staff member), the nature of the complaint and steps that have been taken to resolve the problem. Clients have the right to be or have a written response within fourteen (14) working days of receipt of the request.

STEP 3

If the above steps do not resolve the problem, the client or family may appeal to the medical director of Lifespan Behavioral Health Services PC, Joshua Sussal MD, using the same written format as previously described. Clients have the right to be or have a written response within fourteen (14) working days of receipt of the request.

STEP 4

If the above steps do not resolve the problem, the client or family may appeal to their Core Service Agency for their county. <https://bha.health.maryland.gov/Pages/Core-Service-Agencies-Resources.aspx>

Name and Address of Contact for Grievances:

Joshua Sussal MD
CEO/Medical Director
joshuasussal@lsbhtherapy.com
(301) 982-3437, extension 225

Shay Chambers
Office Manager for Frederick and Olney.
shaychambers@lsbhtherapy.com
(301) 982-3437, extension 225

Carolyn Reidy
Business Manager/Owner IOU Billing
carolynreidy@lsbhtherapy.com
1-800-819-7570

Tiffany Harris
Officer Manager for Greenbelt
tiffanyharris@lsbhtherapy.com
(301)- 982-3437, extension 207

Receipt Acknowledgement of Lifespan Behavioral Health Service PC Client Handbook

I acknowledge that I have received the LSBH Client Handbook, which explains the required policies for all patients /clients of the office.

Printed Name of Patient / Client

Signature of Patient / Client

Printed Name of Legal Guardian (for minors)

Signature of Legal Guardian (for minors)

Today's Date