

Selecting a Provider

Seeking quality mental health care services for yourself, a relative, or friend requires special thought and attention. Knowing what to look for and what to ask will help you make informed choices. When you are choosing a provider, you might ask:

- What services do you offer? How can your services help me? What is your service philosophy? Can I talk to other people who have used your services? Ask about the nature and goals of the treatment programs, what treatments or services are provided directly, and what services are referred to sources outside the organization.
- The organization should create an individualized service plan based on a complete assessment of emotional, behavioral and physical needs. The plan should include your broad and specific goals, a description of who is going to do what and by when, what interventions, services and supports will be provided, and how often the plan will be reviewed. Questions to ask include: How will I be involved in planning my services? What opportunities are there for my family or others to participate?
- How long does it take to begin services? How often will I receive services and how long will they last? What can I do if I am unhappy about the way I am treated or with the services I receive? Does the organization take time to explain my rights and responsibilities? How will my privacy be protected?
- Is the staff well qualified? How do the staff members respond to the people receiving services? Are people treated with dignity? Ask about staff credentials such as education, training and licensure. Ask if the organization is accredited by a nationally or internationally recognized organization.
- What will be my out-of-pocket expenses? Will my services be covered by insurance, public funding (such as Medicare or Medicaid), or other resources?
- Do the facilities appear to be well maintained, clean and safe? Are the building and grounds

accessible? Is there a positive atmosphere? Is there access to public transportation?

- Are people you serve involved in planning for the future of your organization? Is the organization involved in efforts to help the community?

Accessing Community Mental Health Services

Community Mental Health service programs are publicly funded organizations which are obligated to first serve individuals who meet “priority population criteria” as defined by their state’s mental health department. Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority (NLCMHA) serves individuals with mental illness and intellectual/developmental disabilities in Crawford, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Missaukee, Roscommon, and Wexford Counties. Many county, state and federal agencies oversee community mental health service programs like NLCMHA to ensure the delivery of the highest quality of care available.

The types of services you will receive will depend upon what is medically necessary to help you feel better, i.e., the services that treat your condition and symptoms and are required for your improved mental health and well-being.

When you first call Northern Lakes, you’ll get a mental health professional who can help you with your situation. To access services call: 1-800-492-5742 or (231) 922-4850.

You will receive immediate answers to your questions about community services and how to get help from NLCMHA and other agencies.

To decide what kind of help you might need, a caring, qualified mental health professional will arrange to ask you a series of questions at a time convenient for you.

After your confidential interview, you and the mental health professional will talk together about the findings and recommendations. If you need Community Mental Health services, you will be linked to the program that is best for you. In most

Serving people in Crawford, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Missaukee, Roscommon and Wexford Counties.

cases, your first appointment will be arranged before you leave, so treatment can begin without needless delay.

The agency will coordinate services with your physician and insurance company to make sure you get efficient and cost-effective treatment.

Mental health emergencies will quickly be taken care of over the phone or in person by professional staff. **Call 1-833-295-0616 in an emergency.**

'Continuum of Care' Terms

Communities provide different types of treatment programs for people with mental illnesses and intellectual/developmental disabilities. A complete range of programs and services is called the "continuum of care." The different services or programs in a continuum of care include:

- **Office or outpatient clinic** - Visits are usually less than one hour. The number of visits depends on an individual's need.
- **Intensive case management** - Specially trained people coordinate and/or provide psychiatric, financial, legal, and medical services to help the person live as independently as possible.
- **Home-based treatment services** - A team of specially trained individuals goes into a home and develops a program of treatment to help the individual and family.
- **Family support services** - Services to help parents care for their child(ren), such as parent training, parent support group, etc.
- **Day treatment programs** - An intensive treatment program that provides psychiatric treatment with special education. Participants usually attend five days per week.
- **Partial hospitalization** (day hospital) - All the treatment services of a psychiatric hospital are provided, but the individuals go home each evening.
- **Emergency/crisis services** - 24-hour services for emergencies.
- **Respite care services** - Provides a break from caregiving responsibilities for family members, either by having a substitute caregiver come to the home, or authorizing the person needing care to leave with a trained caregiver for a short-term period.
- **Therapeutic group home or community residence** - Usually includes 6-10 people per home and may be linked with a day treatment program or specialized educational program.

- **Crisis residence** - This setting provides short-term crisis intervention and treatment. Patients receive 24-hour-per-day supervision, seven days per week. Stays usually last fewer than 15 days.

- **Residential treatment facility** - Seriously disturbed individuals receive intensive and comprehensive psychiatric treatment in a campus-like setting on a longer-term basis.

- **Hospital treatment** - People receive comprehensive psychiatric treatment in a hospital setting. The length of treatment depends on many factors.

Sources:

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry CARF, the Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission JCAHO, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations

For more information contact

Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority
1-800-337-8598 Customer Services
1-800-492-5742 Access to Services

National Alliance on Mental Illness
www.nami.org, (800) 950-6264

National Institute of Mental Health
www.nimh.nih.gov
(800) 421-4211 (depression info)
(888) 826-9438 (anxiety info)
(301) 443-4513 (other info)

Mental Health America
www.nmha.org
(800) 969-6642

The Center for Mental Health Services
www.mentalhealth.org/cmhs/