

Live and Work Well

The United Behavioral Health (UBH) enrollee newsletter

2019

What Is a Mental Health Professional?

Mental health professionals help people with mental health and mood problems. They are experts with special supervised training who have obtained proper licensing in mental health. Mental health professionals also obtain continuing education to stay up to date on changes in assessing and treating mental illness. Some may get special training to work with children or teens. Some may get special training to work with couples, families or seniors. Some get special training for helping people with problems like alcohol and other substance use. There are different types of mental health professionals. They may prescribe medicines, order medical tests, offer recommendations, or may provide services such as talk therapy, coping strategies, support and empathy. They may also offer specialty services depending on their profession or training.

Psychiatrist (Physician)

Psychiatrists are medical doctors that specialize in psychiatry. Psychiatrists often conduct a thorough psychiatric evaluation to diagnose mental illness and prescribe medications and then monitor the effects of medications. Some psychiatrists also provide psychotherapy. They are licensed by the state in which they practice and most are board certified in their specialty. Some psychiatrists have sub-specialties in the area of child psychiatry, adolescent psychiatry, addictions or geriatrics. If you are interested in seeing a psychiatrist who evaluates and treats children, be sure to ask whether or not they have been specifically trained in child psychiatry.

Master's-Level Clinician

Master's-level clinicians have a master's degree in one of the following mental health disciplines: Clinical Social Work, Professional Counseling or Marriage and Family Therapy. These individuals are independently licensed by the state in which they practice. They provide various services including assessments and psychotherapeutic interventions. Master's-level clinicians provide therapy for many basic needs, including working with patients to address concerns and root causes. They can see you alone, as part of a couple or with your entire family. In some cases, they may recommend that you consult with a psychiatrist or nurse practitioner to evaluate whether medication could be used to achieve the best outcome. Most therapists can suggest trusted psychiatrists or nurse practitioners to you for this purpose. Many therapists work together with a psychiatrist or nurse practitioner. This is important when treatment includes medications.



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Psychologist

Psychologists generally have doctoral degrees in the area of educational, child, clinical or counseling psychology. Psychologists provide a variety of services including assessments and psychological testing, and most offer psychotherapy. Some psychologists also specialize in treating children and adolescents. Psychologists offer testing that can help answer questions about what may be causing certain symptoms. Often, a master's-level clinician or psychiatrist will refer to a psychologist for such testing if they think testing is needed to confirm a diagnosis.

Nurse Master's-Level Clinician

Nurse master's-level clinicians generally have a master's degree and an RN (Registered Nurse) and/or APRN/ARNP (Nurse Practitioners with prescription writing authority) credential. These individuals provide various services, including assessments and psychotherapy, as well as medication evaluation and ongoing medication management. They usually work under the supervision of a licensed psychiatrist, and can often see patients more quickly than a psychiatrist for a first visit. Nurse practitioners can help meet patient needs in the same manner as master's-level clinicians. Nurse practitioners with advanced certification can also prescribe medications and monitor the effects of the medications.

Get an Early Start on Mental Health

We offer prevention programs for three common problems:

- Depression
- Alcohol and substance use and addiction
- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder

Each program has:

- a screening you can take on your own
- information about the problem such as common signs and symptoms
- self-help guides and tools

You can learn how to use the program on our website. You may also receive information by mail.

If you receive one of our mailings, we hope you find it useful. If you do not want to receive any more information by mail, just call the telephone number listed in the mailing.

To learn more:

- Visit <http://prevention.liveandworkwell.com>
- Call the toll-free mental health services number on your health insurance card or health plan member ID card. You can also call us to request a paper copy of the information.
- Ask your mental health professional to get information for you on www.providerexpress.com.

Why Use an In-Network Mental Health Professional?

- It usually costs less to go to an in-network mental health professional or hospital. You will usually have lower payments for visits that are in-network compared to out-of-network.
- In-network mental health professionals and hospitals have worked with us and understand how to request benefit coverage and how to submit claims. They will submit claim forms to us so you do not have to do so.
- Our in-network mental health professionals and hospitals have been screened to ensure that they meet the quality standards required by the governing agency.

How can you find an in-network mental health professional?

Log on to www.liveandworkwell.com. You can search for a provider with specific criteria such as:

- Type of mental health professional
- Male or female
- Ethnicity

- Special training
- Languages spoken
- Other specific criteria that will help make a good match between you and the in-network mental health professional

If you need help, please call the toll-free mental health services number on your health insurance card or health plan member ID card.

About Your Privacy and Confidentiality

We protect your privacy to the extent required by law. You can get a paper copy of our rules on how we collect, use and share your health information. Call the mental health services number on your health insurance card or health plan member ID card or in your benefits booklet or Evidence of Coverage.

Depression Treatment¹

Therapy, Medication, and Lifestyle Changes That Can Treat Depression

When you're depressed, it can feel like you'll never get out from under a dark shadow. However, even the most severe depression is treatable. So, if your depression is keeping you from living the life you want to, don't hesitate to seek help. Learning about your depression treatment options will help you decide which approach is right for you. From therapy to medication to healthy lifestyle changes, there are many effective treatments that can help you overcome depression, feel happy and hopeful again, and reclaim your life.

What are my depression treatment options?

Just as no two people are affected the exact same way by depression, there is no "one size fits all" treatment that cures depression. What works for one person might not work for another. The best way to treat depression is to become as informed as possible about the treatment options, and then tailor them to meet your needs.

Depression treatment tips

- **Learn as much as you can about your depression.** It's important to determine whether your depression symptoms are due to an underlying medical condition. If so, that condition will need to be treated first. The severity of your depression is also a factor. The more severe the depression, the more intensive the treatment you're likely to need.
- It takes time to find the right treatment. It might take some trial and error to find the treatment and support that works best for you. For example, if you decide to pursue therapy it may take a few attempts to find a therapist that you really click with. Or you may try an antidepressant, only to find that you don't need it if you take a daily half hour walk. Be open to change and a little experimentation.
- Don't rely on medications alone. Although medication can relieve the symptoms of depression, it is not usually suitable for long-term use. Other treatments, including

exercise and therapy, can be just as effective as medication, often even more so, but don't come with unwanted side effects. If you do decide to try medication, remember that medication works best when you make healthy lifestyle changes as well.

- Get social support. The more you cultivate your social connections, the more protected you are from depression. If you are feeling stuck, don't hesitate to talk to trusted family members or friends, or seek out new connections at a depression support group, for example. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness and it won't mean you're a burden to others. Often, the simple act of talking to someone face-to-face can be an enormous help.
- Treatment takes time and commitment. All of these depression treatments take time, and sometimes it might feel overwhelming or frustratingly slow. That is normal. Recovery usually has its ups and downs.

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Psychotherapy for depression treatment

If there is no underlying medical cause for your symptoms of depression, talk therapy can be an extremely effective treatment. What you learn in therapy gives you skills and insight to feel better and help prevent depression from coming back.

There are many types of therapy available. Three of the more common methods used in depression treatment include cognitive behavioral therapy, interpersonal therapy, and psychodynamic therapy. Often, a blended approach is used.

Some types of therapy teach you practical techniques on how to reframe negative thinking and employ behavioral skills in combating depression. Therapy can also help you work through the root of your depression, helping you understand why you feel a certain way, what your triggers are for depression, and what you can do to stay healthy.

Medication treatment for depression

Depression medication may be the most advertised treatment for depression, but that doesn't mean it is the most effective. Depression is not just about a chemical imbalance in the brain. Medication

may help relieve some of the symptoms of moderate and severe depression, but it doesn't cure the underlying problem, and it's usually not a long-term solution. Antidepressant medications also come with side effects and safety concerns, and withdrawal can be very difficult. If you're considering whether antidepressant medication is right for you, learning all the facts can help you make an informed decision.

If you are taking medication for depression, don't ignore other treatments. Lifestyle changes and therapy not only help speed recovery from depression, but also provide skills to help prevent a recurrence. Keep taking your medicine, even after you start to feel better. Stopping your medicine too early may cause your depression to return. Stopping suddenly, may make you feel worse. Experts advise people taking medicine for depression to stay on your medicine(s) for at least six months. Talk to your doctor or nurse before discontinuing your medication.

¹ <https://www.qualitymeasuresahrq.gov/summaries/summary/48838>

How to Contact Us

Our offices are open Monday through Friday. Our hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., except on holidays. You can call the toll-free number on your insurance card or health plan member ID card to learn about your benefits or get approval for care. UBH offers language assistance, at no added cost for members who prefer to speak a language other than English. Our offices have toll-free numbers for members with hearing impairments. You can also get help with services or ask questions. A Care Advocate can answer your questions about services and our decisions. Our staff will tell you their name, title, and where they work.

If you have an emergency or urgent health concern, seek immediate attention or call 9-1-1. You can always contact one of our Care Advocates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can even speak to a Care Advocate on weekends and holidays. To call us, use the toll-free number on your health insurance card or health plan member ID card or in your benefits booklet or Evidence of Coverage.



Help for Myself – Addiction Recovery

Treatment Options By: © liveandworkwell.com. All rights reserved. January 05 2017

Admitting you have a problem with substances is not easy. As you start to research treatment options, keep in mind that there is no one size fits all treatment. Although leaving your community may make sense to you, studies show that better outcomes occur when treatment and recovery is designed within your local community. There are many types of treatment options including medication that may support your recovery.

- **Detoxification** — is when you clear your body of substances and/or alcohol. This process is designed to manage the acute and potentially dangerous physiological effects of stopping substance or alcohol use. Detoxification, depending on your overall health and substance use history may safely occur in a doctor's office or you may require admission to a hospital stay. Detoxification is a first step in your recovery and should always be followed by a referral to develop a treatment plan with a professional substance use treatment provider. Detoxification alone does not address the psychological, social,

and behavioral problems associated with substance use and, therefore, do not typically produce the lasting behavioral changes that "are necessary for long-term recovery.

- **Local, short-term residential treatment** — provides intensive but relatively brief treatment that may be necessary to initiate or solidify a treatment plan for recovery. It is important for individuals to remain engaged in their treatment once they leave residential treatment to support their recovery.
- **Outpatient day (or evening) treatment** — varies in the type and intensity of services offered. Such treatment is often more suitable for people with jobs and sober social supports. Some intensive outpatient programs are also designed to treat persons with medical or other mental health problems in addition to their substance use disorders. Research supports that treatment in an outpatient setting is just as effective as treatment that occurs in a residential setting.

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- **Individual substance use counseling** — not only focuses on reducing or stopping illicit substance or alcohol use, it also addresses other areas of impaired functioning such as employment status, illegal activity, and family/social relationships. Through its emphasis on short-term behavioral goals, individualized counseling helps a person develop coping strategies and tools to abstain from substance use and maintain abstinence. Additional community supports such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, or SMART recovery may be of valuable assistance to support engagement in the recovery process.
- **Group therapy is used in many therapeutic settings to capitalize on the social reinforcement offered by peer discussion and to help promote substance-free lifestyles.** Research has shown that when group therapy is offered in conjunction with individual counseling, positive outcomes are achieved.

The best way to find what is right for you is to call a trusted resource. Speak with a licensed clinician that will listen to fully understand your personal situation; educate you on appropriate and available treatment options and arrange for a face-to-face clinical assessment by a trusted substance use treatment provider as soon as possible.

Recovery Success

Recovery from substance use should be taken one day at a time. Remember that your substance use problem developed over time, recovery will also take time.

There are some things for you to consider after completing treatment that can support you in your journey. One of the first major changes to consider is a safe and sober living environment. Ask for help in finding a safe living environment if your current situation is not supportive of recovery. It is best not to engage with people that are using or allow alcohol and/or other substances in their

home. There are also sober recovery residences throughout the country but be sure the residences have recovery support services available to you.

During your substance use, you may have neglected to take care of your physical health. While keeping the recovery process as your primary focus, it is also helpful to take care of your physical health. See your family physician and dentist to ensure your physical health has not been impacted by your alcohol and/or substance use. If you don't have a family doctor and/or a dentist, check your health care benefits to find someone that is easily accessible to you.

Giving back is an important step in reclaiming your life. Perhaps you would like to find employment or go back to school. You can move forward once you stop using alcohol and/or other substances. Check with your local community to see if there are volunteer opportunities for you. Staying active, busy and helping others will help provide meaning and purpose to your life. Remember, as you embark on your journey of recovery, you can provide hope to others and give them insight into what has been helpful for you.

There are over 23 million Americans in recovery from a substance use disorder right now (Faces and Voices of Recovery, <http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/>). Do not get discouraged if things do not move fast enough for you. Remember that your substance use manifested over a period of time and you will need to be patient as you move forward in your recovery. Other people in recovery will support you along the way. Make new friends, get phone numbers and find a community that is understanding of your condition. This may be in your local church, mutual aid groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, SMART recovery, Women for Sobriety, and many others. There are also many on-line groups and websites that can provide you support.

Smartphone apps are valuable tools in supporting a person's recovery and resiliency. Optum has created a summary of the highest-rated public

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opinion apps that can help you determine your drinking levels and give you support with your recovery and resilience. These apps will help with meditation, finding a meeting, or reading an inspiration. You can find these apps at the iTunes or GooglePlay store by searching for "addiction recovery tools." This list is not all inclusive; check out your app store to determine what apps work best for you.²

There are Personal Empowerment Tools to build on your recovery and resiliency and to help you on your journey to long-term recovery and well-being. You can join on-line or face-to-face support groups, or use tools like on-line games and other valuable resources listed here at no additional cost. You can explore these tools and see what works best for you to support your recovery.³

The information, advice, treatments and therapeutic approaches in this article are provided for informational and educational purposes only. Consult with your doctor or mental health provider for specific health care needs, treatment or medications. Certain treatments may not be covered under your benefit, so check with your health plan regarding your coverage of services. We do not recommend or endorse any treatment, medication, suggested approach, specific or otherwise, nor any organization, entity, or resource material that may be named herein. Except for Liveandworkwell.com, no other site identified herein is affiliated or controlled by us. You will be subject to the terms of use, privacy terms and policies of any site you may visit.

² <https://www.liveandworkwell.com/member/library/guides/SmartPhoneApps.pdf>.

³ <https://www.liveandworkwell.com/public>

How Teamwork Can Help You

Your brain is part of the rest of your body. When you allow your mental health professional and medical doctor (Primary Care Physician or PCP) to talk to each other and give you advice, they may be able to help you with your treatment. One way to make this possible is to sign a Confidential Exchange of Information Form, then ask your mental health professional to call your PCP and other healthcare providers.

Some reasons why it's important for all of your care providers to work together include:

- You may be getting medicines from your psychiatrist and PCP. Some medicines do not work well together. Your doctors need to know everything you are taking.
- When medical problems and mental health problems happen at the same time, the problems may be connected. Having your healthcare providers work together may be helpful to your recovery.⁶

You can find the Optum Confidential Exchange of Information Form on www.liveandworkwell.com. On the task bar, click on "Find a Resource" and select Forms from the drop down menu. Your clinician can also get a copy at www.providerexpress.com. The information your healthcare providers share is private to the fullest extent permitted by law.

Make a list of the names of all of your healthcare providers. Share this list with each person you listed and ask them to work together.

⁴ Unutzer, Jurgen MD. (2013, May). Retrieved from <https://www.medicaid.gov/State-Resource-Center/Medicaid-State-Technical-Assistance/Health-Homes-Technical-Assistance/Downloads/HH-IRC-Collaborative-5-13.pdf>

Liveandworkwell.com Online Anytime Support for Life's Changes, Stresses Challenges and Disasters!

Did you know that you have access to online professional care, self-help and an array of educational information to support your wellbeing? Liveandworkwell.com is your confidential member wellbeing portal and is worth a visit. It is full of clinician reviewed articles, multimedia, search tools and interactive programs. You and your family can use it anytime. Your use is not individually reported and does not become part of your medical record.

What's in it for me at www.liveandworkwell.com? 24/7 On-Line Convenience and Privacy! (Some features are based upon your benefit coverage.)

- Find a mental health professional with the Provider Search tool located in the "How Can We help You?" guide on the member home page.
- The Benefits & Claims tab located on the task bar, is your 24/7 self-service area for understanding your benefits and submitting or managing behavioral health claims and payments without having to call.
- Learn skills for helping your children deal with bullies, fears, friends and fitness. On the home page, scroll down to the Popular tools section and locate "My Healthy Family."
- Visit any of the topical Centers from tabs in the top task bar. Under "Personal Life" find Caregiving, Parenting and Relationship Centers. Explore the topics under the "Crisis Support" tab on the task bar, selecting Financial relief. And select "Mind & Body" on the task bar for the Recovery & Resiliency Center.

- Check out the interactive tools: Screenings for Symptoms and Personal Empowerment Programs which are located within each condition. On the task bar, click on "Mind & Body" and in the drop down select Mental Health or Substance Use. Select your condition and scroll down for a list of articles and self-help resources. Find a Suicide Prevention Education Program by selecting "Crisis Support" on the task bar. To locate our Eldercare Resource Finder, click "Personal Life" on the task bar and in the drop down select Caregiving and scroll down to the Eldercare Center.

How do I use www.liveandworkwell.com?

Go to www.liveandworkwell.com and create a personal log on to be able to use all of your online resources or enter anonymously with your access code. You can get your organization's access code from your HR department.

Have You Moved?

Commercial Members: To make sure that you keep getting mail from UBH, tell your employer that you have moved. Your employer will send UBH your new mailing address.

Medicare Members: To make sure that you keep getting mail from UBH, please tell your medical insurer and your state's Medicare office your new mailing address.

How Soon is Your Visit?

How long should you wait when you want to see a mental health or alcohol/substance use provider?

TYPE OF VISIT	WAIT TIME
Emergency with life at risk	None
Emergency with no life at risk	Less than 6 hours
Urgent	Within 48 hours (some states within 24 hours)
Routine	Up to 10 business days

We offer mental health professionals and hospitals in your area. We also offer counselors and programs to help with alcohol and other substance use problems. When you call for help, your wait for a visit should match the wait times in the above table.⁵ We list mental health professionals on our website. Visit www.liveandworkwell.com and log on. Click “Find a Resource” in the task bar and select Providers from the drop down menu. The directory offers names, phone numbers and

addresses of in-network mental health professionals. You can also see what types of help are offered. If you can’t get to our website, or need help scheduling a visit, please call UBH by calling the toll-free mental health services number on your health insurance card or health plan member ID card.

⁵ National Committee for Quality Assurance

Your Member Rights and Responsibilities

You have the right to:

- Receive information about UBH and our network
- Be treated with dignity and respect
- Privacy and your information is confidential to the fullest extent permitted by law
- Reasonable access to care regardless of: race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, or disability
- Be part of decisions about your treatment plan
- Discuss treatment options regardless of cost or benefit coverage
- Include your family in designing a personalized treatment plan for you
- Be told of your rights in a language you understand
- Voice complaints or appeals about UBH or the services UBH provides

- Make recommendations to us about our rights and responsibilities policy

You have the responsibility to:

- Give information, to the extent possible, to your clinician and managed care company, to help them provide care
- Follow the treatment plan you agreed to
- Take your medication as prescribed
- Talk about your concerns
- Be part of making your goals

You can call the toll-free mental health services number on your member card or in your benefit booklet or Evidence of Coverage to ask for a paper copy of your rights and responsibilities. You can also ask your clinician to get you a copy from www.providerexpress.com.

The Language Assistance Program

UBH serves members from many cultures. These members may speak a language other than English. We want to be sure that a language barrier does not prevent people from getting the care that they need.

For members who speak and read a language other than English, UBH offers language assistance at no cost to the member. UBH has interpreters to assist members. We can also translate certain documents in writing.

If your preferred language is not English, call us at the mental health services phone number on your health insurance card or health plan member ID card to tell us your preferred language. If you have already given us this information, you don't need to contact us again.

For language assistance call the mental health services phone number on your health insurance card or health plan member ID card.

Leaving the Hospital: What Now?

After leaving the hospital, it is best to visit a mental health professional within seven days.⁶ This improves the chances of maintaining good mental health.

If you need help finding a mental health professional, call us. We can help you find a mental health professional and schedule a visit. Call us using the mental health services phone number on your health insurance card or health plan member ID card.

Mental health issues require ongoing treatment. The good news is that there are many helpful treatments available and many things you can do to stay healthy. Tips include the following:

- Learn about your condition and the available treatments.
- Take your medicine(s) as prescribed by your doctor or nurse⁷
- Do not stop taking your medicine(s) without talking to your doctor or nurse.
- If you are having side effects from your medicine(s), talk with your doctor or nurse. They may provide guidance that will lower side effects, or give support until temporary side effects decrease.

- Go to your follow-up visits. Remember it is important that you have a visit with your mental health professional within seven days of discharge from the hospital¹
- If mental health issues come back or get worse, talk to your mental health professional as soon as possible.

Find out more about mental health issues at www.liveandworkwell.com > Mind & Body > Mental Health.

⁶ National Committee for Quality Assurance, HEDIS® 2018 Technical Specifications <https://www.qualitymeasures.ahrq.gov/summaries/summary/48842>

⁷ Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (www.dbsalliance.org)

How to Appeal a Decision

You can appeal if you are not pleased with a decision we make about your care or benefits. The notice that you get about our decision would tell you how to appeal. You can also call us to learn how to file an appeal.

You may also have the right to a review by a third party. This right is for certain final decisions made by the plan. If your appeal is eligible, it will be reviewed by an independent review organization (IRO). An IRO is separate from us. We will do what the IRO decides and carry out its instructions.

If you are not sure if your appeal can go to an IRO, or if you have questions about appeals, please call us. Call the toll-free mental health services number on your health insurance card or health plan member ID card or in your benefits booklet or Evidence of Coverage.

Self-Management Tools by Condition

Taking a pill or going “cold turkey” without actively engaging in your recovery will not necessarily result in wellness. Adding self-management tools to your treatment plan can boost your wellness and help you move forward into your best life. Self-management tools are interactive tools that can help you determine risk factors, provide coping skills, provide guidance on health issues and suggest ways to improve health, or support reducing health risk or maintaining low health risk. There are all kinds of tools available to you. Do you like online games or graphic novels? Online or face-to-face chat with others who have had similar experiences and can offer support? Do you like tracking your wellness? Links to online tools can be found on www.liveandworkwell.com.

A few self-management tools include:

- Whole Health Tracker that addresses physical activity, healthy eating, and managing stress. Set your goals in ten dimensions of health and then track them as you move to wellness.
- MARS-12 that helps you measure your movement in recovery. Measure your movement every month or so, and then use our other self-management tools on www.liveandworkwell.com to help you sharpen your skills in each domain.

To access these self-management tools by condition, visit www.liveandworkwell.com and log on. Click “Mind & Body” in the task bar and select Mental Health from the drop down menu. Scroll down the page and select a topic. To request a paper copy of the Whole Health Tracker or MARS-12, call the mental health services number on your health insurance card or health plan member ID card.

How We Make Decisions about Benefit Coverage

All our staff follow strict rules when they decide about approval of benefits. Decisions are based on what your benefits cover and your medical need. We do not reward staff or healthcare providers for saying “no” to care or service. We do not give financial rewards to our staff or healthcare providers to make decisions that result in less care or service than what is needed.



UBH's Complex Case Management Program

UBH offers a Complex Case Management program for individuals who could be helped through more intensive coordination of services. This program is intended to help people with complex behavioral health conditions connect with needed services and resources. Care Coordinators work intensely with you or your loved one in the development of a comprehensive plan of care which coordinates the following:

- Therapeutic services (therapy, medication management, case management, etc.)
- Community and Psychosocial supports (education/support regarding illness, coordination with support system, other supportive services)
- Coordination of care between medical and behavioral physicians and clinicians
- Recovery and Resiliency Services (peer support, development of a crisis/recovery plan, life planning activities)
- Other services as appropriate (legal, shelter, basic needs, etc.)

Program Goals:

- Movement to recovery
- Enhanced wellness
- Building resiliency through self-care and empowerment

Criteria for acceptance into the program include:

- Presence of complex behavioral health condition(s) which require a greater level and intensity of services
- History of intensive behavioral health service utilization over the past 12 months
- Willingness to actively participate in the program for at least 90 days

If you believe that you or a loved one meet these criteria and would benefit from UBH's Complex Case Management program, please contact UBH via the toll-free number on the back of the member's insurance card to ask for this program. UBH looks forward to partnering with you or your loved one on the path to recovery and wellness.

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

It is estimated that one in 20 children have Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). ADHD is a brain disorder that shows its effects on individuals through short attention spans, hyperactivity and impulsive behavior.⁸

The Symptoms

ADHD is occasionally difficult to recognize because it shares symptoms with other disorders such as chronic depression. There are three main symptoms that generally affect children (and adults) with ADHD. Those with ADHD may exhibit one or all of these symptoms at any given time.

- **Hyperactivity** — Near constant motion is a telltale sign of ADHD in children. Tendencies to regularly fidget, tap a foot, bounce in a chair, or twirl a pencil are common. Inability to refrain from talking, especially in settings like school or church, can be another sign of ADHD.
- **Inattentiveness** — Paying attention for prolonged periods of time is a challenge for children with ADHD. Those who are easily distracted or bored, daydream frequently or have trouble following directions may do so because of ADHD.
- **Impulsivity** — Children who are impulsive tend to act before they think. They may put off homework or break rules without thinking about the consequences. Children with ADHD tend to blurt out words and interrupt the conversations of others.

You may want to consider consulting your child's school, pediatrician or mental health professional about an ADHD evaluation. Your child may need a medical evaluation, as well, to rule out other conditions that may be responsible for some of the symptoms. In children with ADHD, these problems typically have been evident for at least six months prior to diagnosis, and some of them have occurred before the age of seven. It is very important that a professional who is trained in the diagnosis and treatment of ADHD complete the evaluation.⁹

Treatment

Medication can help reduce symptoms of hyperactivity, inattentiveness, and impulsivity in children and adults with ADHD. However, medications come with side effects and risks — and they're not the only treatment option. Whether you're the parent or the patient, it's important to learn the facts about ADHD medication so you can make an informed decision about what's best for you or your child.

Treatment for ADHD isn't just about taking medication. There are many other effective treatments that can help kids with ADHD improve their ability to pay attention, control impulsive behavior, and curb hyperactivity. Nutritious meals, play and exercise, and learning better social skills are all part of a balanced treatment plan that can improve performance at school, improve your child's relationships with others, and decrease stress and frustration.¹⁰

If you decide to take medication for ADHD, it's important to take the medication as directed. Following your doctor and pharmacist's instructions will help you maximize the effectiveness of medication for ADHD and minimize the side effects and risks. Here are some guidelines for safe use:

- **Learn about the prescribed medication.** Find out everything you can about the ADHD medication you or your child is taking, including potential side effects, how often to take it, special warnings, and other substances that should be avoided, such as over-the-counter cold medication.
- **Be patient.** Finding the right medication and dose is a trial-and-error process. It will take some experimenting, as well as open, honest communication with your doctor.
- **Start small.** It's always best to start with a low dose and work up from there. The goal is to find the lowest possible dose that relieves you or your child's symptoms.

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- Monitor the medication's effects. Pay close attention to the effect the medication is having on your or your child's emotions and behavior. Keep track of any side effects and monitor how well the medication is working to reduce symptoms.
- Taper off slowly. If you or your child wants to stop taking medication, call the doctor for guidance on gradually decreasing the dose. Abruptly stopping medication can lead to unpleasant withdrawal symptoms such as irritability, fatigue, depression, and headache.

Talking to your child about ADHD medication

Many kids and teens with ADHD don't take their medication correctly — or stop taking it without talking to their parents or doctor — so if your child is on ADHD meds, make sure that he or she understands how to take the medication correctly and why following prescription guidelines are important.

Encourage your child to come to you with any medication-related concerns so you can work together to solve the problem or find another treatment option. It's also important to remember that ADHD medication should never have a numbing effect on a child's energy, curiosity or enthusiasm. A child still needs to behave like a child.

Dealing with side effects

Most children and adults taking medication for ADHD will experience at least a few side effects. Sometimes, side effects go away after the first few weeks on the medication. You may also be able to eliminate or reduce unpleasant side effects with a few simple strategies.

If troublesome side effects persist despite your best efforts to manage them, talk to your doctor about adjusting the dose or trying a different medication. Many people respond better to the long-acting or extended release formulations

of ADHD medication, which build gradually in the bloodstream and then wear off slowly. This minimizes the ups and downs caused by fluctuating medication levels and causes less of a rebound effect, where symptoms return, often worse than before, as the medication wears off.

The following are tips for getting the best help for a child who has just started taking medicine for ADHD:

- Have at least one visit with your child's doctor within 30 days of starting the new medicine.
- Visit your child's doctor regularly, but at least two times in the nine months after the first visit.¹¹

⁸ Tips for Parents of Children with ADHD <https://www.liveandworkwell.com?pin=united&redirectURL=/en/member/article.7280.html>

⁹ ADHD Assessment covers seeing a professional, testing, diagnosis <https://www.liveandworkwell.com?pin=united&redirectURL=/en/member/article.13752.html>

¹⁰ Treatment for Children with ADHD <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/add-adhd/treatment-for-childhood-attention-deficit-disorder-adhd.htm>

Quality at the Core

We review our quality management (QM) program each year. We set goals for service and care. We can give you a summary of our progress in meeting our goals. You can get a summary of our QM program description. Call us to get a paper copy. Use the mental health services phone number on your member card or in your benefits booklet or Evidence of Coverage.

Want More Info?

- United Behavioral Health
www.liveandworkwell.com
Call the mental health services number on your member insurance card.
- The National Institute of Mental Health
www.nimh.nih.gov
866-615-6464 or
866-415-8051 Telecommunications Device for Deaf (TDD)
- National Mental Health Information Center
www.samhsa.gov
877-726-4727 or
800-487-4889 Telecommunications Device for Deaf (TDD)

Help for Recovery from Mental Illness

- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
www.dbsalliance.org
800-826-3632
- National Alliance on Mental Illness
www.nami.org
800-950-6264
- Mental Health America
www.mentalhealthamerica.net
800-969-6642



Help for Recovery from Alcohol or Other Substance Use

- Alcoholics Anonymous
www.aa.org
212-870-3400
- Narcotics Anonymous
www.na.org
818-773-9999
- Al-Anon and Alateen
www.al-anon.alateen.org
888-425-2666
- Nar-Anon
www.nar-anon.org
800-477-6291
- SMART Recovery
www.smartrecovery.org
866-951-5357

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