



UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES

Q&A regarding Mental Health Services offered at University Health Services (UHS)

1. Which mental health services are available at University Health Services?

Through our University Health Services- Mental Health (UHS-MH) program, we offer a variety of high quality outpatient mental health services to students, house staff, fellows and trainees of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, School of Nursing, Bloomberg School of Public Health and the Johns Hopkins Hospital.

The services we provide include:

- a) Psychiatric assessment and treatment, including medication evaluation and medication management.
- b) Individual therapy.

As part of our evaluation, we also provide education and communication to our patients regarding their diagnosis and treatment. Where appropriate, for conditions that we may not have the expertise or the resources to treat, or when our patients themselves request outside evaluation, we help make referrals to other resources on campus or in the community.

2. Who is eligible to receive your services?

All current and active full-time enrolled students in the Schools of Medicine, Nursing or Public Health are eligible to receive mental health services regardless of insurance. Part-time students in the School of Public Health are eligible to receive services only if they have opted to pay the health fee. All current and active house staff and post-doctoral fellows are also eligible for our services. Spouses/same-sex domestic partners who are covered by the Student Health Program (EHP)* may also access University Health Services- Mental Health services.

*Student Health Program (EHP) – this is the insurance plan that covers students, house staff, post-doctoral fellows and trainees and is offered through your School and/or training program.

3. How do I make an appointment and what should I expect when I call for the first time?

To make an appointment, please call 410-955-1892. We will schedule you for a same day 20-minute confidential phone appointment with one of our mental health counselors. The mental

health counselor will assess your needs and recommend the next step, which may involve a comprehensive face-to-face psychiatric evaluation and/or psychotherapy.

If, after evaluating you, we determine that your condition is one that we may not have the expertise to treat in our program, we will help provide you with a list of resources to help treat your condition and guide you through this process.

4. What types of conditions do you evaluate and treat?

We evaluate and treat a wide range of psychiatric conditions, including but not limited to:

- a) Adjustment disorders
- b) Mood disorders, including depression and bipolar disorder
- c) Anxiety disorders, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- d) Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- e) Schizophrenia

5. Are there certain conditions that you do not treat?

We are a general Psychiatry service whose mission is to provide high quality primary care Psychiatry to our patients. However, treating certain conditions may require specific expertise and/or specialized services that we may not currently have among our group of mental health professionals. In these cases, we feel that it is best for our patients to refer them to colleagues who would be able to evaluate and treat them. These referrals could be either in the Johns Hopkins Health System or in the community and you would have to use your insurance to access these services.

Examples of conditions that we do not currently have the expertise or resources to treat include:

- a) Eating disorders requiring active specialty management
- b) Substance abuse and/or dependence requiring active specialty management
- c) Long standing conditions for which a long-term stable relationship with a therapist is the treatment of choice
- d) Situations in which we feel that the severity or complexity of the diagnosed condition cannot be appropriately treated in our office setting

6. How will I know that I have one of the conditions that you are not able to treat?

We will let you know, after our initial assessments, and also during the course of your treatment with us, if we feel that we do not have the resources or the expertise to treat you. In case we will not be able to treat you, we will guide you and help refer you to a mental health expert who will be able to treat your condition.

7. It would be nice to be able to access specialized psychiatric services through your program instead of having to use my health insurance and pay out-of-pocket. Is this something that could be arranged in the future?

Our goal is to provide high quality mental health services while keeping the cost of these services as low as possible. This is because our program is funded entirely through a health fee that all students, house staff, post-doctoral fellows and trainees in East Baltimore are assessed when they enroll in their programs. Hiring a professional to offer a specialized service for which very few of our patients may benefit would increase the Health Fee (cost) for all when only a few actually use the service.

As part of quality improvement, we do track requests for services from our students and trainees and discuss these requests during regular Student Health Committee* meetings. In the future, if we were to determine that certain services were in high demand, we would begin a conversation with our stakeholders (student government representatives, House Staff Council, Post-Doctoral Fellow's Association, and Deans) and see how we might start providing these services. This would likely require an increase in the health fee.

*Student Health Committee – UHS welcomes student, house staff and post-doctoral fellow input and suggestions. Representatives from each School and JHH meet monthly to interact with UHS in planning and implementing various policies.

8. What are my options for treatment for conditions that you do not treat at University Health Services-Mental Health?

We will do our best to help you obtain the treatment you need by making a referral to another mental health provider or facility with the resources and expertise to treat you either on campus or in the community. These are practices that we believe have the specialty services that you need. You also could contact your insurance company to see if they have a recommendation for an in-network provider in the area.

9. If I am referred to another provider or facility for a condition that you do not treat, will I have to pay for my visits?

You would need to use your medical insurance and will have to pay co-pays out of pocket for services that your insurance does not cover. How much you would pay depends on the type of insurance you have and whether or not you will be seeing a provider within your insurance network or not. Since each insurance plan is different, it is important that you contact your insurance if you have questions about this. For those covered by the Student Health Program (EHP), you can contact Darnell Williams (UHS Benefits Manager) @ 410-955-3872 if you have questions.

For this reason, and because health care can be very expensive, it is important to choose an insurance plan that provides excellent coverage for mental health services with low deductible and out-of-pocket costs, and coverage for prescriptions. The Johns Hopkins

Student Health Program (EHP), offered through your School or the JHH is one such plan, but there may be other similar plans available in the insurance market.

Specifically, if you do have the Johns Hopkins Student Health Program Insurance (EHP), all visits to in-network mental health providers are covered at 90% after a \$100 deductible. This includes visits to specialists in the Department of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, which for many of our students would be the most convenient referral location.

10. I am required to have psychological testing to determine if I have a learning disability. Where and how can I obtain this testing?

We are not able to conduct psychological or neuropsychological testing for IQ, learning differences, or autism spectrum disorders because this type of testing requires a specially trained Psychologist. We would be happy to help arrange such testing for you through the Johns Hopkins Department of Psychiatry or through resources in the community. Please bear in mind that this type of testing can be expensive and may not be covered by your insurance.

11. I am leaving the State of Maryland and would like to see a mental health provider at my destination. Would you be able to provide me with a recommendation?

Unfortunately, we are not familiar with health care providers or facilities outside of the State of Maryland. When you do find a mental health provider out of state, we would be happy to communicate with their office to provide information, medical records, etc. You would need to sign an authorization form before we can release any of your private, confidential health information to another provider.

12. I am traveling out of state for a research or clinical rotation. I will still be in the United States. Do I have to find a mental health professional out of state?

It depends. Our first and foremost concern is our patients' good health and safety. Our general rule is that our services are available to Baltimore-based students and trainees because, in order to make an accurate diagnosis and treatment recommendations, we feel that it is essential to see and evaluate you in our office. Therefore, if you are already our patient and have a mental health need while you are away, we encourage you to use your health insurance to find a mental health provider who can assess and treat you at your destination.

However, we may be able to make exceptions in certain cases. For example, if you are away, doing well, all you need is a prescription refill and your UMH psychiatrist agrees, we will likely be able to provide the prescription for you.

Similarly, if you are away, doing well and agree to return to Baltimore periodically so that we can see you in the office during your visits, your UMH psychiatrist may be able to continue to follow you.

This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

13. What if I am traveling abroad? Would you be able to follow me?

There are many complicating factors to travel abroad, including the fact that we are not able to prescribe medications or “practice medicine” outside of the United States. Therefore, we regret that we would not be able to follow you while you are out of the country.

14. I already have my own mental health provider that I see regularly in the community, but I would like to access your program as well. How can I do that?

It is not generally a good idea to have two different professionals treat you for the same problem unless they are working together as a team. We would be happy to evaluate and treat you, but our expectation is that you would transfer your care to our program.

15. I have a psychiatrist in the community and would like to see a psychotherapist in your program. Is this something that we can do?

Our ability to treat you effectively depends on close communication and collaboration between mental health providers, and our psychiatrists and psychotherapists work together as a team.

Our rule regarding this is that we are not able to offer you psychotherapy unless you also agree to be evaluated and followed by a psychiatrist in our program. We feel that it is extremely important for our psychotherapists to collaborate with and receive supervision by our own psychiatrists while you are under treatment with us.

16. What if I have a psychotherapist in the community and would like to access a psychiatrist in your program to prescribe medications? Is this something that we can do?

We may be able to offer you a psychiatry evaluation and follow-up if you have an outside psychotherapist. One of our psychiatrists will need to evaluate you first and agree that this is an appropriate approach in your case. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

17. My spouse and I would like to have couples therapy. Is that available through your program?

Because we are a small program, in order to be able to maintain strict patient privacy and confidentiality, we do not currently have the resources to provide couples therapy or group therapy to our students.

18. I have seen a mental health professional in your program and I do not agree with his or her recommendations for treatment. What are my options?

We understand that there can be occasional disagreements between health care providers and patients. We encourage you to discuss the disagreement openly with your psychiatrist or

counselor. If you wish a second opinion, we will be happy to have you see another mental health professional in our group, but we do ask that you let your current provider know before we can do this. We are a small program and would generally be able to offer you this opportunity one time only.

If you wish, you also may see a mental health professional outside the program using your insurance.

Generally, if you do not follow the recommendations for treatment provided by our team, we would not be in a position to help you and may ask you to find a psychiatrist or counselor outside our program.

19. Is long-term psychotherapy available through your program?

Our program's goal in providing psychotherapy is to help each student or trainee reach his or her usual level of functioning, before the acute crisis that made them seek help in our program. In the majority of cases, short-term, problem-focused psychotherapy is felt to be quite effective in achieving this goal. Therefore, we do expect that most individuals will require short-term psychotherapy.

However, we also realize that there may be instances, such as, for example, in cases of severe depression, anxiety, etc. where long term treatment may be needed to treat your condition. This will be a decision that will be made during the course of treatment on a case-by-case basis by your treatment team (psychiatrist and therapist). If it is felt that long-term therapy is medically indicated or necessary in your case, we will do our best to provide it for you with the resources that are available to us.

20. I like to have someone to talk to regularly about my problems while I am at Hopkins. Can I access your program for this purpose?

The psychotherapy offered through our services is primarily geared toward students and trainees who are facing some sort of mental health need or crisis resulting in impairment and our goal is to help them resolve that crisis and return to their usual level of functioning. In these cases, we provide psychotherapy as long and as frequently as would be medically indicated.

We do not provide psychotherapy if we do not feel that there is evidence of mental health impairment. In these cases, we would be happy to refer you to resources in the community where you may see a therapist either using your insurance (if this type of service is covered) or through self-pay.