

Calling a Psychiatric Hospital

Most often your client will get to the psychiatric hospital for an assessment without your assistance. However, if you would like to call to help establish care here are some tips from someone who used to work at a psych hospital. ERs and walk in clinics are on a walk-in basis, but psych hospitals generally have fewer staff around and are already dealing with transfer patients and other appointments. Please call first to make an appointment for an assessment if possible. If the facility is completely booked for that day and you truly believe they're in danger, steer them to an ER.

1. Let the intake person know that you are an outpatient therapist and want to discuss getting your client an assessment.

2. They will probably ask a general question about what's been going on with the client. This is where you let them know that they likely need inpatient because they're _____ (suicidal, homicidal, gravely disabled) OR they likely need partial/IOP because they're _____ (highly depressed, anxious, etc. and failing at current level of care).

DON'T give them a recap of the last 6 months of therapy. They want to determine whether or not an assessment would be appropriate. They're NOT creating a treatment plan with you. Furthermore, they will ASK you for any additional information they need. Here is what the Intake Counselor will need to know:

- a. **How old** is the client and what **gender**? This is to determine if they have a bed.
 - b. What insurance do they have? Generally, Medicaid clients have to be assessed at an ER or a community mental health center walk-in clinic. If they have Medicaid, save yourself the time of the phone call and send the client to one of those places.
 - c. **WHAT** exactly did the client say/do that's concerning you?
 - d. **WHEN** did the concerning events occur? If it was last week, they probably don't need inpatient today. And you probably should've called last week.
 - e. **HOW OFTEN** are these things happening? Are they cutting daily? Have they attempted suicide 3 times before? That info can be helpful. Honestly anything else is too much information unless the intake counselor asks for it.
3. OK, so at this point the intake person has probably determined whether or not your client is a good fit for what they have to offer. It's important that you keep it brief and can give factual evidence for the client's behavior because if the facility you called isn't going to be the most helpful, it's better for you to find that out 3 minutes into the call rather than 15 minutes into it.
4. If the client is a good fit and the facility has availability, here's info they'll ask for:

- a. Demographics- date of birth, age, address, phone number, insurance company
- b. Current medications- not only is it important to know psych meds, but some facilities can't handle certain medical meds, so try to have all of them.
- c. Medical issues- different facilities can handle different levels of medical needs.
- d. Do they have a history of violence?
- e. Do they also use/abuse drugs or alcohol?
- f. Do they have any legal issues?
- g. When could they come in for an assessment?

FAQ:

“What if my client isn't willing to get assessed?”

PHP and IOP are voluntary programs only. If the client doesn't want to go to the assessment, you can't force them. If they need Inpatient but are unwilling to go, you may ask family to take them to the ER or you could call the police for a welfare check and they could take the client to an ER from there. You can also fill out an M-1 Hold form if you are licensed (see below).

“But I'm not going to drive my client there personally, how can I ensure they'll show up?”

Get their license plate number and make of their car and let them know you'll call the police if they're not at the hospital by a certain time (however long you think is reasonable) and tell them to call you or have the facility call you when they arrive. If the client doesn't show up, follow through with the police. Don't worry about whether it'll make them mad.

“How do I conduct a Mental Health Hold?”

If your client is unwilling to be hospitalized, you can fill out a M-1 form (only if you are licensed). These are located in the top drawer of the file cabinet in the work room (and also in this Emergency Binder). Call 911 and give the officer the information. Also be sure to give the client a “Client Rights” form (also in this binder).

“How do I call the Police?”

If your client is in Castle Rock, call the Castle Rock police department (303-663-6100). If your client is in unincorporated Douglas County, call the Sheriff (303-660-7505).

- Let the officer know you are a mental health professional
- Give the client's name, date of birth, address
- Give the client's diagnosis
- Tell them what makes your concern imminent
- Say why you need a police officer (e.g. not safe, not cooperative...)