

Mental Health

Background Notes

The majority of clients of DHS are in need of mental health services, both children and parents. [I-E.3.3.1](#) explains how medications used to treat mental illness of children in substitute care are to be documented and administered. [Policy I-C.4.1](#) provides workers with a timeline to achieve a mental health assessment, medical and dental exam for children when they are placed in out of home care. In addition to treatment services parents frequently have psychological evaluations completed for the purpose of case planning.

Tasks / Assignments:

- Review the policy, [I-C.4.1](#) and identify the timeline for referral for a mental health assessment. Locate the mental health agency in your community that serves DHS children and parents.
- Find out whom your local office refers clients to for mental health services. What is the process for accessing and referring a client for counseling? Where are the therapy notes from the counseling session filed in the case file?
- Ask your supervisor to help you find a case that has a report or therapy notes that you can familiarize yourself with. Determine where the notes are to be filed in the case file.

Discoveries

- *What is the timeline for referring a new child in care for a mental health evaluation?*
- *Where are the notes from mental health treatment filed?*
- *How are the notes used in casework practice?*
- *With whom can you share mental health treatment notes?*

Mental Health continued...

Tasks / Assignments:

- Ask a coworker who they have used for psychological evaluations, how to write a referral letter for an evaluation and how the payment process works. Review one example of a referral letter.
- Obtain a copy of a psychological evaluation. Read the evaluation and discuss with your Supervisor how the evaluation would influence case planning.

Discoveries

- *How quickly can the contracted therapy provider begin working with your families?*
- *What is the sequence of treatments for a family dually diagnosed with alcohol and drug addiction and mental health needs?*
- *Who is the psychologist who provides evaluations for your office most often?*
- *What resources exist for families who are not primarily English speakers?*
- *What resources are available for interpretation and translation for those families?*
- *How does the psychological evaluation inform and shape child welfare practice?*

