

Mental health interventions and supports

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The most effective treatment for many mental health conditions is a combination of therapy and medications. In some cases, a mental health professional who meets the qualifications defined in [Minn. Stat. §245I.04, subd. 2](#) and a licensed practitioner work together with the person receiving treatment to determine the best treatment plan. During the diagnostic assessment process, these professionals review the available treatment and support options with the person, and possibly their expanded support team, and help determine the appropriate treatment options. In addition to therapy and medications, effective therapeutic options include positive support practices, vocational training, self-help and support groups.

While DHS does not expect 245D-licensed service providers to offer or recommend therapy services, it is helpful for providers to have a general idea of therapy options. People may ask their licensed service providers to share information, implement therapist recommendations, arrange transportation to and from therapy appointments, set up technology for telehealth appointments or help with other support efforts.

Finding a good match for therapy

There are many different types of therapy to meet people's needs and preferences. The person, and possibly their expanded support team, may consult with a qualified mental health professional who can recommend the most effective therapeutic approach.

The connection between a person and their therapist is impactful. Compatibility is important. When selecting a therapist, the person should consider culture, norms, beliefs, interests, languages or availability of telehealth appointments.

Types of therapy

Different types of therapy use various modalities and tools to support a person to reach their goals. The therapist's framework often determines the appropriate modalities. Mental health therapies include individual, family, couples or group therapy. The following sections describe some evidence-based practices and therapy modalities.

Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is a general approach to treat mental health symptoms by talking with a psychiatrist, psychologist or other mental health provider (Source: [Mayo Clinic – Psychotherapy](#)). The therapist uses psychotherapy to:

- Reduce the person's mental health symptoms.
- Increase the person's functioning.

Psychotherapy takes many forms. For more information, refer to [American Psychological Association – Understanding psychotherapy and how it works](#).

Psychoeducation

Psychoeducation is a therapeutic intervention that provides education and resources in an empathetic and supportive environment. The therapist uses psychoeducation to:

- Teach the person problem-solving and communication skills.
- Help the person and their loved ones better understand and cope with mental health concerns.
- Improve family well-being.
- Lower rates of relapse.
- Improve recovery.

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)

CBT is a blend of cognitive and behavioral therapy. Cognitive therapy focuses on how a person's thoughts and beliefs influence their mood and actions, and it aims to change a person's thinking to be more adaptive and healthier. Behavioral therapy focuses on a person's actions and aims to improve behavior patterns. CBT is a short-term, goal-oriented therapeutic intervention. Both the person and their therapist need to be actively involved in CBT. The therapist uses CBT to help the person:

- Identify distorted or unhelpful thinking patterns.
- Recognize and change inaccurate or irrational beliefs.

- Relate positively to others.
- Change behaviors.

Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT)

DBT is heavily based on CBT. DBT aims to teach a person the skills to regulate emotions, improve relationships, handle stress and be mindful. Therapists first used DBT to treat chronically suicidal people with borderline personality disorder, but therapists have adapted it to treat multiple mental health concerns. DBT emphasizes validation or acceptance of uncomfortable thoughts, feelings and behaviors instead of struggling with them. The therapist uses DBT to:

- Assure the person that their behavior and feelings are valid and understandable.
- Help the person find a balance between acceptance and change.
- Help the person develop new skills (e.g., coping skills, distress tolerance and mindfulness practices).
- Coach the person to understand their responsibility to change their disruptive behavior.

Neurofeedback

Neurofeedback is a form of therapy that measures biological responses and provides a feedback signal (Source: [National Library of Medicine – Neurofeedback: A comprehensive review on system design, methodology and clinical applications](#)). The therapist uses neurofeedback to teach the person self-control of brain functions. For more information and demonstration videos, refer to [California State University, San Bernardino – Neurofeedback](#).

Other therapy options

Each person should consult with a qualified mental health professional to explore therapy options, consider matches and determine next steps.

Other considerations

Applying a trauma-informed approach in therapy

The therapist and the person's expanded support team should take a trauma-informed approach when the person has, or may have, experienced trauma. Trauma is common, and sometimes it is more common than people expect. Trauma may include (but is not limited to) abuse, neglect, social exclusion or the passing of a loved one. Trauma-informed therapy recognizes and emphasizes how traumatic experiences impact a person's mental, behavioral, emotional and physical well-being (Source: [Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine – What is trauma-focused therapy?](#)). A therapist can apply a trauma-informed approach to any type of therapy.

Trauma-informed supports for 245D providers

Trauma-informed supports is an effective, person-centered, evidence-based approach. It considers the effects of trauma and builds supports to create a trusting and healing space without retraumatizing a person. DHS endorses trauma-informed supports as a positive support practice.

A 245D-licensed provider can use the guiding principles of trauma-informed supports to:

- Acknowledge the different types of trauma the person may have experienced.
- Provide safety (as defined by the person) for the person who experienced the trauma.
- Empower the person.
- Develop a trusting, collaborative relationship with the person.
- Have compassion for the person.
- Offer the person choices.

Adaptive strategies

People with disabilities can use adaptive strategies to benefit from the same interventions and treatments as people without disabilities. For examples of therapy modifications and adaptations that can help support people with intellectual or developmental disabilities, refer to the [National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services – Adaptive strategies video series](#).

Additional resources

[Psychotropic Medication Manual](#)

[Psychotropic Medication Manual – Resources](#)

