

ROLE OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONSULTANTS

Behavioral Health Consultants (BHCs) will assist Child Protective Investigators (CPIs) and the Diversion Team in identifying the behavioral health needs of families involved in the child welfare system. BHCs will collaborate with CPIs and the Diversion Team to identify substance use and co-occurring behavioral health disorders, enhance family engagement, and improve access to appropriate treatment services. BHCs also develop contacts, facilitate recommendations for referrals, and assist investigative staff with engaging clients in recommended services.

The role of the BHC includes:

1. Providing clinical expertise to support Child Protective Investigators and the Diversion Team in identifying parents with behavioral health needs within the child welfare system.
2. Engaging families involved in the child welfare system in behavioral health services to promote stability and well-being.

TARGET POPULATION

Families under investigation by the Florida Department of Children and Families due to possible child abuse or neglect in which mental health or substance use disorders are suspected.

BHC RESPONSIBILITIES

BHC will collaborate with the CPIs and/or the Diversion Team to assist in keeping families together and ensure that the behavioral health services for parents in at-risk families are initiated.

BHC responsibilities are to:

- Support the investigative and Diversion staff in understanding the effects of the behavioral health issue on parent/caregiver behavior.
- Assist investigative and Diversion staff in identifying the signs and symptoms of mental health or substance use disorders and the best practices to engage parent/caregiver in treatment.
- Assist in the field and provide office consultation during pre- or post-commencement when there is an open investigation with a suspected or identified behavioral health need.
- Partner with the investigative and/or Diversion staff to provide consultations to assist in identifying danger threats, adult functioning, parental protective capacities (diminished or present), and safety management services.
- Maintain a working knowledge of community mental health and substance use providers.

- Work collaboratively with community service providers and the managing entity to develop contacts, facilitate referrals, and assist investigative staff with engaging clients in recommended services and improving timely access to treatment.
- Track the referrals and entry into treatment for parents referred to behavioral health service provider.
- Support investigators in mitigating behavioral issues and crises.
- Participate in legal, multi-disciplinary, and any other meetings that will assist the investigative staff and families.

SERVICE DELIVERY

A BHC must have, at minimum, a master's degree in behavioral health or human services-related field. The BHCs will be co-located with Child Investigation team and be available to:

- Provide in-office consult and record review to assist CPI in determining safety actions and further services to meet behavioral needs of the family.
- Accompany CPI in the field to assess the family's service needs and engage them in recommended services.

PROTOCOL

1. CPI conducts investigation regarding allegations of abuse, neglect, abandonment and/or special conditions for children.
 - a. If CPI determines the need to review the case with a BHC for assistance with determining behavioral health needs, they may contact the BHC by phone, email or a face-to-face meeting as soon as possible. The BHCs will be available during regular business hours at each Child Protective Service location.
2. CPI will engage BHC early in the abuse investigation to increase the likelihood of families engaging in services. In consultation with the CPI, BHC will determine appropriate referrals to behavioral health service providers for further assessments to determine best treatment.
 - a. BHC may review information gathered by CPI, prior individual and family abuse history, service cases, criminal justice records and any other pertinent documents (as available) to identify needs and services for at-risk families.
 - b. BHC may participate in multi-disciplinary team staffings or other meetings conducted to assist the family.
 - c. Following the consultation, BHC will contact the family **within two (2) business days** to schedule the assessment.
3. The BHC and the CPI may conduct a joint home visit to further assess the identifying danger threats and possible behavioral health needs of the parents.
 - a. After a home visit, the BHC is responsible for completing and submitting any necessary referrals directly to behavioral health service providers **as soon as possible but no later than two (2) business days**.
 - b. Referrals are tracked by the BHC, and follow-up must be conducted to ensure that parent(s) have entered treatment. Tracking and follow-up entails:

- Verifying **within three (3) business days** of submitting the referral that the behavioral health service provider has scheduled or attempted to schedule an initial appointment.
- Contact the parent/caregiver **within ten (10) business** days after the referral was made to follow up on access to treatment.
- Contact the CPI/Diversion staff if the parent is not responsive to services to discuss engagement plans and mutually decide on the next steps to proceed with the case.

DOCUMENTATION

The BHC is responsible for documenting service contacts and referral status updates in the service provider's client record and FSFN. Updates to FSFN will be entered **within two (2) business days** of occurrence.

REPORTING

The network service provider will complete and submit the *Behavioral Health Consultant Activity Log* **by the 10th of each month**. The template of the activity log can be found at

<https://centralfloridacares.org/providers/>

BHC SERVICE DELIVERY FLOW CHART

