

What are Mental Health Services?

1) What do mental health services do?

Mental health services teach people new ways to deal with life stressors, and to change unhelpful thoughts and behaviors. River Oak Center for Children provides mental health services to children and youth.

2) How often are the appointments?

The appointments are usually once a week at first, to assess (learn about your needs and background) and to develop treatment goals. Then appointments are scheduled based on the need of the client. There are different types of treatment: groups, skills coaching, individual therapy, therapy as a family, and sessions with parents/caregivers. Meeting regularly is one key to making sure that the services help.

3) How long will services last?

Therapeutic services are the most helpful in the first 6 – 9 months. After that, more services often don't help much more. So the services will probably last about 6 to 9 months.

4) Where do the appointments take place?

We may work with you in the office, in your home, school, or in the community depending on what would be the most effective place to learn and use the new strategies and skills.

5) Does the parent or caregiver need to be involved?

Yes! The child/youth will benefit more if the parent/caregiver can tell the provider how things are going. Also, the child/youth will benefit more if the parent/caregiver knows what is being taught in sessions and is able to help coach the child/youth to practice and use these skills outside of sessions. Having parents /caregivers practice skills with the child/youth outside of the sessions really helps to build those skills and make more progress in therapy. Mental health services are temporary and it is important to have parent /caregiver participation in treatment in order to make progress and sustain that progress when services are completed. Having the parent/caregiver involved in services also gives an opportunity to learn more strategies and ideas to help strengthen family relationships. Depending on the age of the child/youth, the parent/caregiver involvement could vary from every session to monthly check ins.

6) Determining when mental health services should end

Typically this is a joint decision between the family and the provider. If a family plans to end services, they can notify their provider. The provider can give their opinion as to whether the child/youth would still benefit from more services. Services may end:

When the child/youth has met their treatment goals.

If progress is not being made toward goals, and the best types of services have been offered.

If the family decides they no longer want services or now is not a good time.

If a family is unable to meet regularly for services, the provider will phone, then send a letter, then close the services if the family cannot meet regularly.