



Mankato Mental Health Associates, P.A.

201 North Broad Street, Suite 308 • Mankato, MN 56001

Main Office: 507-345-4448 • Fax: 507-345-6761

Medication Management: 507-508-9278

www.mankatomentalhealth.com • mmha@hickorytech.net

A Guide For Consumers Of Psychological Services The Minnesota Psychological Association

PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGISTS: Psychology is the science of behavior. Psychologists are professionals who use scientific procedures to study behavior and learn about its causes. Many psychologists use their knowledge about behavior, together with special techniques for which they have been trained, to help people deal more effectively with problems and live more rewarding lives.

HOW TO IDENTIFY A PSYCHOLOGIST: In Minnesota and most other states, persons must prove that they have met specific education and experience requirements and pass an examination testing their knowledge and skills before they can call themselves psychologists. A person who has passed this examination or its equivalent receives a license to practice psychology. Psychologists must keep a list of the psychological services they are licensed to provide on record with the Minnesota Board of Psychology. Some professional organizations offer recognition or credentials to persons who want to provide various types of counseling or psychotherapy. Persons who possess these credentials may not necessarily be psychologists. If you want to obtain the services of a psychologist, you should verify that the service provider you have contacted has actually obtained a license to practice psychology. It is against Minnesota State Law for persons to represent themselves as psychologists in private practice unless they have a license to practice psychology. It is also against the law for licensed psychologists to offer psychological services for which they have not been licensed.

HELP FOR PERSONAL PROBLEMS: Psychologists provide many different kinds of help.

Most people who contact a psychologist want to get help solving a personal problem of some kind or to change their behavior or lifestyle in some way. Psychologists may also be contacted on behalf of someone else such as a child or disadvantaged adult who may be unable to seek help for himself or herself. There are many theories about the cause of psychological problems and many techniques for treating them. Psychological researchers have found that most psychological problems can be treated successfully in more than one way. When selecting a treatment technique, psychologists usually attempt to match their own unique skills to the unique treatment needs of each client. Some psychological problems have specific treatments that have been shown to be more effective than others and which all psychologists treat in the same way. Sometimes, however, the client has a problem that the psychologist does not know how to treat or is not licensed to treat. When this happens, the client should be referred to another qualified professional who can provide the kind of treatment that is needed. Psychological treatment usually involves both assessment and psychotherapy. Assessment is the process of finding out what the problem is and what might have caused it. Sometimes, psychological testing is a part of the assessment process. Psychologists are trained to give psychological tests and interpret their results. These tests may help the psychologist understand the client more quickly and thoroughly than might be possible on the basis of only talking with the client. Psychotherapy is the process of learning how to change the things that need to be changed. Although both assessment and psychotherapy occur to some extent in all sessions with a psychologist, most of the assessment is generally completed in the early sessions with psychotherapy based on that assessment following in later sessions. The treatment process may be as short as several sessions or as long as many months depending on the number of problems involved, the length of time the problems have been present and the impact the problems have had on the person's life. The number of sessions and how often they are held is usually decided upon together by the client and psychologist.

PAYING FOR TREATMENT: Most psychologists bill for their services on the basis of the amount of time spent working with the client. The Minnesota Board of Psychology and Minnesota Department of Health require that fee information be readily available to clients when they arrange to receive psychological services. Insurance companies usually have information on average fees for use in paying claims. Additionally, the Minnesota Psychological Association can provide information about fees customarily charged by Minnesota psychologists. Minnesota law requires most group health insurance policies to provide coverage for psychological services. Your insurer should be able to tell you the amount of insurance benefits provided and the qualifications your psychologist must have to be reimbursed under your insurance.



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policy. Persons who are not insured and cannot afford to pay for psychological treatment on their own may be eligible for free treatment at a publicly funded hospital or social service agency. Many psychologists offer sliding fee scales or payment plans for persons who could not otherwise afford to pay for psychological treatment.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: As a consumer of psychological services, you have specific rights regarding professional involvement with a psychologist. These rights begin with the initial inquiry, remain in effect through all appointments and unscheduled contacts and continue to remain in effect through termination of your professional relationship with a psychologist. Their rights are as follow:

1. You have the right not to be discriminated against in provision of professional services on the basis of race, age, sex, ethnic origin, creed, disabilities, affectional preference and other civil liberties.
2. You have the right to know the following about your psychologist:
 - A. Professional competence, training, experience, education and any other relevant professional or personal information that may be important to the services provided.
 - B. The proposed fees, method of payment and any other practices regarding payment of the services.
 - C. The policies, practices and limitations of the privacy of the information that you will share with the psychologist.
 - D. The method for presenting a complaint or grievance about the psychologist not only within the agency or organization where services are delivered, but also to the Minnesota State Board of Psychology.
3. You have the right to negotiate an understanding of the purpose of the psychological services including an estimate of the number of therapy sessions, the length of time involved, the method of treatment and the expected outcomes of the therapy.
4. You have the right to confidential treatment of personal records and may approve or refuse their release to anyone, except as provided by law.
5. You have the right to read your own records. The psychologist shall assist you in understanding your written records by being available to answer questions and to explain the meaning of test scores and technical terminology.
6. You have the right to refuse recommended treatment and refuse participation in experimental research.
7. You have the right to voice grievances and request changes in your treatment without restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination or reprisal.
8. You have the right not to be subjected to sexual harassment, physical or verbal.
9. Your psychologist shall make reasonable efforts to involve a close relative or friend prior to providing emergency services.
10. If you are a minor or judged not able to give informed consent, your parent or guardian must provided permission for the services, except as provided by law.
11. You have the right not to be referred or terminated without explanation and notice. You have the right to active assistance from you psychologist in referring you to other resources.



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WHAT IF YOUR RIGHTS ARE VIOLATED?

Persons who believe that any of their rights have been violated should contact:

Minnesota Board of Psychology
717 Delaware Street SE, Suite 343
Minneapolis, MN 55414
Phone: 612-623-5419