



Hartford   
HealthCare

Institute of Living

# Professionals' Program

Orientation Booklet

## **PROFESSIONALS' PROGRAM INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the Professionals' Program, a Partial Hospital and Intensive Outpatient Program at the Institute of Living. We hope that your time with us will be one that will provide you with healing, insight, and an increased ability to address and better cope with the stressors and situations that have brought you here. The Professionals' Program is designed to offer a safe environment for individuals to receive psychiatric treatment. Each person who enters the program is struggling with symptoms and situations that are causing them distress. They also come with a desire to address those situations so that they might return to their work and personal lives as a healthier person with greater ability to manage stress and thrive.

The Professionals' Program is located in the Buckingham Building at the Institute of Living, 200 Retreat Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut. Parking is located in the Golf Lot on the IOL campus. Please see parking and directions included in your admission email. In the event of severe weather, the program may be transitioned to telehealth held on Zoom or canceled entirely, please check your email regularly prior to severe weather events. Program participants will be informed by staff via email if there will be any change in the program format due to weather. If you do not receive a message from the staff, the program will run as scheduled. The Program is closed: New Year's Day, Independence Day, Christmas Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Labor Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving Day

## **PROGRAM EXPERIENCE**

The Professionals' Program is an intensive group therapy that is a total of eight weeks. Most patients start the program attending five days a week for an immersive group experience; program days are Monday – Friday at our "PHP", or Partial Hospitalization Program, which includes four groups a day from 9am to 1pm. After approximately two weeks, as determined collaboratively by patient and clinical staff, individuals "step-down" to our 4 day a week Intensive Outpatient Program, or "IOP", (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday), and then transition to three days a week (Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday) to taper off treatment, often while doing a partial return to work on non-program days/times. Please see program schedule for detailed group times. Attendance is expected for the entirety of all assigned program days. There is a brief 10-minute break between groups. Snacks, coffee and water are provided.

## Components of Treatment

- **Group therapy**
  - Group therapy is the main treatment component, and it's expected that group members bring the majority of their clinical needs into group. No individual therapy is provided; however, we encourage you to continue to see your individual therapist on non-program days.
- **Medication Management**
  - Medication management begins on admission with our psychiatrist. Individual appointments will occur as needed, and group members will meet with the psychiatrist during medication check-in group weekly.
- **Individual meetings with the group clinician (not 1:1 therapy)**
  - Occurs on admission, step-down from the 5 day a week PHP program and on discharge. These meetings are to help set treatment goals, orientation to program and support in fully utilizing group. You may also touch base as needed with the clinical staff for acute issues or administrative concerns.
- **Family Meetings**
  - Occasionally, one family meeting is held with patient's significant others or other important people to help address any short-term needs. This will be discussed with your clinician.
- **Typical program day**
  - Includes attending your scheduled groups. Occasionally you will be pulled from groups to meet with staff individually during groups, or at the end of the day. On your day of admission and discharge you will meet with the medication provider and clinician. Occasionally, group members join each other for lunch in our campus cafeteria after groups have ended.

## PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

- **Secure your own individual therapy and medication management appointments**
  - The program will support you in searching for providers if you do not have them, and may send you some suggested referrals. It is your responsibility to call providers and have appointments secured by discharge.
- **Schedule any individual therapy or medical appointments outside of program hours**
  - All patients are expected to arrange individual therapy and any other appointments at times that do not conflict with the program's hours. It is discouraged to miss group to attend a medical appointment unless absolutely necessary. In general, most insurances will not cover an appointment with an individual therapist or a community psychiatrist on the same day that you attend a PHP/IOP.
- **Check your email regularly (daily)**
  - This is our primary means of communication, scheduling, and program updates. Email is not to be used to discuss clinical issues (see email policy).
- **Have a plan in case of an emergency**
  - In case of a clinical crisis or emergency after program hours (8am to 4pm), the following resources are available to you for help: The IOL Access Center (8am to 4pm; 860-545-7200), 911, the National Suicide Prevention Hotline via phone or text (988) and your local emergency room.
- **Arrive on-time to groups**
  - If you are more than 15 minutes late to the first group you will not be able to enter the room, arriving late is disruptive to the group process. There is no grace period for subsequent groups and group members are expected to return from breaks on time ready to start the next session.
- **Complete all admission paperwork in a timely manner, including releases of information**
- **Attendance is a strict requirement, see attendance policy for more details**
- **Limit substance use, including alcohol and marijuana**
  - This is to help stay present in therapy work and to better clearly gauge if there are benefits from medication changes and/or treatment

## PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM GROUP THERAPY GUIDELINES

1. Use “I” statements in groups and share from your own experience. Please do not speak in the third person, this usually acts to distance the speaker from what they are sharing. When you are drawn to giving advice, it may be helpful to explore why you want to give advice and what you are trying to do? The answer may be to offer support, connection and understanding. Is there a way to share what’s been helpful for you without telling another person what to do?
2. Groups are a place to be curious about others, as opposed to assuming you know what others are thinking or what their behavior means, e.g., exploring one’s intent vs. one’s impact. Group is a place to become more present in your own actions, to learn how your behavior makes others feel, how it influences others’ opinions of you, and how your behavior influences your opinion of yourself. Group creates an opportunity for interpersonal patterns to be recognized and for change to occur.
3. Group is also a place to practice reworking your healthy boundaries, such as challenging yourself to open up more if you’re typically reserved, are working to share intentionally, or to limit over disclosure that could leave you feeling dysregulated and depleted. This includes being mindful of shared group time, i.e., each person is responsible to take space but to also share space. Group is also a place to respect each other and arrive on time to group.
4. Group is a place to disconnect from distractions and challenge oneself to sit with discomfort and healthy levels of anxiety. For many, staying constantly in motion is a way to avoid emotional experiences, groups are a place to challenge that and to be present with yourself and others. We ask you to try to minimize any distractions. For example, no eating in groups, no cell phone or apple watch use in group, no crafting, coloring, journaling, no notetaking in process group and minimize the use of fidget toys. If you need to use stress ball or fidget to help regulate and maintain attention, please ensure it is quiet and non-disruptive to the group process.

5. Confidentiality is paramount. Knowledge gained about other group members is to be held in strict confidence. "What is said in the group, stays in the group." This includes taking notes on what other people share with any identifying information.
6. If discussing a past traumatic or adverse experience, please name the event as opposed to getting into the details of the event. If you were discussing an issue of a past car accident, we request you name the event, like "I had a scary car accident", as opposed to sharing the specifics in graphic detail of how the car accident occurred and the injuries that resulted. It is OK and strongly encouraged to name difficult things, and we want to keep others and the person sharing safe while talking about challenging topics and past traumas.
7. We recognize that safety and trust must be established in order to provide an environment conducive to self-disclosure. Because it takes some people longer to feel secure than others, group members are provided with the flexibility to disclose at their own pace.
8. Program members hold responsibility for working through any difficulty or challenges had with others in the program. If a disagreement or miscommunication takes place, it is expected that a discussion will be had between the parties (e.g., between group members, between patient and clinician, or between patient and psychiatrist), with a neutral 3<sup>rd</sup> party present, if indicated. Group members will not transition to other clinicians, medication providers or groups within the program. Improving interpersonal effectiveness, relational insight and working toward healthy communication are goals and a cornerstone of the program.
9. Group members are expected to dress neatly and appropriately.
10. Feedback to other group members should be in a supportive, challenging, and non-judgmental manner that expresses respect. We strive to provide a safe and supportive environment that is inclusive regarding issues of race, nationality, age, gender, gender identification, profession, place of origin, etc.

11. No outside relationships with other group members during program. No sexual relationships, business relationships or meeting up to socialize outside of program hours while in program. There are several reasons why the program strongly discourages outside socializing:
- When patients engage in an outside social group, this socializing can interfere with the therapeutic work that needs to be done inside the program
  - Inevitably, not everyone receives an invitation, resulting in feelings of exclusion
  - Confidentiality becomes much harder to maintain and patients who elect not to attend an outside social group may be concerned about their privacy
  - Lastly, this is a time when patients feel vulnerable and can easily become overwhelmed with their own challenges. The desire to help each other can put patients at risk, placing them in situations with each other that can make them even more vulnerable.

## PROGRAM POLICIES

### Attendance Policy

Patients are required to attend the Professionals' Program as scheduled. Staff should be notified of absences or late arrivals by calling (860) 545-7061. If a patient does not call and staff cannot reach the patient by phone, their emergency contact person will be contacted.

The Professionals' Program has a strict attendance policy to ensure quality of care and maintain the treatment efficacy and engagement. Attendance and arriving on time are aspects of healthy boundaries anticipated from all participants in the program. Frequently missing groups or full treatment days, arriving late, or leaving early diminishes the effectiveness of treatment, and can also impact the treatment of others, as it is disruptive to the group process. **Attendance is expected for the entire treatment day depending on your assigned schedule.** At times, we understand situations might interfere with attendance such as family emergencies or illness. In those circumstances, it is crucial to communicate with the program immediately, prior to groups starting.

Excessive absences are considered reason for discharge from the program. Missing more than three groups, missing three or more full program days, or arriving late/leaving early from groups frequently (e.g., more than three times) can result in discharge from the program. Please reschedule any routine medical appointments to occur outside of program hours. If you have vacation or travel planned, please reschedule, or consider joining the program at an alternative time. Missing treatment due to travel or vacation will indicate readiness for discharge.

### **Long-Term Disability and Social Security Disability Policy**

Given this program is intended to support those struggling in aspects of balancing work demands as well as mental health, individuals who have not had stable employment in the last year, who are on long-term disability or applying for social security disability would be better suited in one of the other IOL programs where returning to work is not a focus of treatment. Our clinical staff can support FMLA, short term disability, and CT Paid Leave paperwork. We are unable to support any documentation requests for extended leave (e.g., greater than two weeks) past discharge from program.

### **Email Policy**

Any information exchanged electronically or with the use of technology increases the risk of confidentiality breaches. Although it is unlikely, there is a possibility that information you include in an email can be intercepted and read by other parties besides the person to whom it is addressed. Therefore, the program cannot guarantee protection from unauthorized attempts to access, use, or disclose personal information exchanged electronically. We ask that you DO NOT USE email to communicate clinical concerns. We ask that email is only used for scheduling and logistics, such as refill requests and schedule clarifications. Further, we as a team believe it is important to communicate any concerns or issues you are experiencing in group, or if absolutely needed, in an individual session with your clinician or psychiatrist. You can expect that emails will be answered between 8:00am and 3:30pm Monday to Friday. In addition, we ask that you check your email regularly. If you are having a clinical emergency and need immediate support, we ask you to reach out to the 24/7 Crisis Hotline at 472-HELP, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline via phone or text at 988, 911, or go to your nearest emergency room.

### Return to Work Planning Policy

We support individuals taking a leave from work via completing FMLA, Short-Term Disability and/or CT Paid Leave requests for their time in treatment in our program. We also work with individuals to complete any gradual or partial return-to-work plans while still in treatment. **We can support some return to work planning up to four weeks post discharge, with the goal of returning to full-time, in-person work whenever possible.** Any patient requesting accommodations or restrictions that exceed four weeks post discharge will need to seek support and documentation from their outpatient providers. Please bring any questions to your clinician about your return-to-work plan.

### Reoccurring Treatment

On rare occasions individuals may find themselves struggling with mental health shortly after leaving the program. In the case of need for another PHP/IOP treatment, we welcome individuals back to our program on a case-by-case basis. Typically, if individuals need PHP/IOP within six months of discharge, we strongly recommend an alternative treatment program to ensure a variety of treatment experiences to offer the greatest chances of clinical improvement. If individuals previously struggled in our program, discharged prior to our recommendation, or were generally not a good fit for our treatment approach we maintain the option of recommending alternative treatments in the best clinical interest of the patient.

### CAMPUS AND GENERAL POLICIES

- The entire campus is a no-smoking, no-vaping, no-tobacco/cannabis zone.
- Verbally abusive, threatening, assaultive or destructive behavior is not acceptable and is reason for discharge from the program. No weapons are allowed on campus. No storage of weapons in personal cars parked on campus.
- In the event of a change in insurance information, address, phone number, or other identifying information, patients are expected to notify the Professionals' Program staff immediately. Failure to do so could result in unexpected charges for your care with us or make it difficult for us to contact you.

### PROGRAM STAFF

### **Program Clinicians**

Upon admission to the Professionals' Program, you will be assigned a clinician. Your clinician will assist you in becoming familiar with the program, identifying treatment goals, assessing the progress you are making, and helping you to prepare for discharge. Program clinicians lead groups, hold brief individual meetings with program participants and work with the rest of the staff to ensure that you receive coordinated care from our interdisciplinary treatment team. Your primary clinician will communicate with your outpatient therapist, facilitate a session with your primary partner(s) if one is indicated, and work with you to obtain an outpatient therapist or prescriber if you do not have one. FMLA and Short-Term Disability paperwork should also go through your program clinician. If you have any questions about your time in program, please seek your primary clinician.

### **Program Psychiatrist**

All patients admitted to the Professionals' Program will be seen by a program psychiatrist on, or close to, the day of admission. Afterwards, patients will be seen during a weekly Assessment Group that the psychiatrist attends and individually as needed. Patients also meet with a psychiatrist on the day of discharge. These sessions allow for an overall assessment of physical, medical and psychiatric status and one's participation in the program. In the event of a medical or psychiatric emergency, the program psychiatrist is called to intervene as necessary and as available. In conjunction with the rest of the Professionals' Program staff, the program psychiatrist assists in the development of the treatment plan and its review in weekly team meetings for clinical staff.

### **Program Manager**

The Program Manager functions as an administrative manager, as well as a clinical team member. The program manager may cover groups, meet with patients individually, manage any administrative concerns from patients and provide additional support for the program clinicians and psychiatrist.

## PATIENT RIGHTS

- You have the right to be treated without discrimination on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, source of financial support, or mental or physical disability.
- You have the right to expect that you will be treated with personal dignity and respect in the provision of care and treatment.
- You have the right to services that are offered in the least restrictive environment possible.
- You have the right to individualized treatment including an individualized treatment plan that is periodically re-evaluated and that actively includes your input in its development.
- You have the right to expect the hospital will provide competent, qualified, professional clinical staff to supervise and carry out the treatment plan.
- Your family and significant others have the right to be personally involved in your treatment unless you request that such individuals not be contacted or included.
- You have the right to request the opinion of a consultant or to request an in-house review of the individual treatment plan. Any expenses incurred will be your responsibility.
- You will be informed of the identity of all staff members responsible for your care, including the staff member's status and their staff relationship.
- You will be informed of the nature of your care, the procedures, and the treatment you will receive. You will also be informed of the treatment program's expectations regarding your participation in treatment and your conduct while in treatment.
- You have the right to refuse treatment procedures and to be informed of the treatment program's decision to suspend or terminate treatment when a patient chooses to refuse treatment procedures. Such decisions will be made for clinical reasons according to accepted professional standards.
- You have the right to refuse to participate in any research project without compromising program services.
- You have the right to know the reason for any changes in availability of program staff.
- You have the right to expect your records and any other information regarding your treatment to be protected in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws.
- You have the right to knowledge of the costs of the program, itemized where possible, for services rendered
- You have the right to express any concern regarding your rights directly to the program manager. If you have a problem or question concerning your care which you are reluctant to raise with program staff who are caring for you, you may contact the program manager's supervisor or access the Patient Relations Department by calling (860) 972-1400, Monday to Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.