



Hartford 
HealthCare

Institute of Living

Professional Program

Orientation Booklet

PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Professional 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 Professional 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 Professional Program is located in the Buckingham Building at the Institute of Living, 200 Retreat Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut. It is an intensive group therapy program. Program participants attend in-person and virtually on Zoom. Program days are Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays (Fridays are a virtual program day). Please see program schedule for detailed group times. Attendance is expected for the entirety of all assigned program days. There is a brief break between groups. A typical stay in the program is 6-8 weeks.

In the event of severe weather, the program may be held exclusively on Zoom. Program participants will be informed by staff if there will be any change in the program format due to weather. In the case of severe weather, program participants are asked to check their voice messages and/or emails for communications from staff. If you do not receive a message from the staff, the program will run as scheduled.

The Program is closed on the following days:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

Patients are required to attend the Professional 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' IOP 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. **Attendance is expected for the entire treatment day (all three groups), three or four days a week, 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 your program clinician immediately, prior to groups starting. Other excused absences include court, inclement weather, funeral bereavement, child care, or a family emergency.

Excessive unexcused absences are considered reason for discharge from the program. Missing more than four unexcused groups, missing two 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. A routine medical appointment is not an excused absence. **Other unexcused absences include travel and vacation.** If you have vacation or travel planned, please reschedule, or consider joining program at an alternative time. Missing more than one group day due to travel or vacation will indicate readiness for discharge prior to the travel.

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.

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 other appointments at times that do not conflict with the Professionals' Program's hours. In general, most health care insurances will not cover an appointment with an individual therapist or a community psychiatrist on the same day that you attend an Intensive Outpatient Program. Other medical appointments should also be scheduled for either non-program days or non-program hours.

- **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.

- **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 8pm; 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 you will not be able to enter the group, arriving late is disruptive to the group process.

- **Complete all admission paperwork in a timely manner, including releases of information**

PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM GROUP GUIDELINES

1. Knowledge gained about other group members is to be held in strict confidence. "What is said in the group, stays in the group." Everything said in a group is confidential and must not be discussed with anyone who was not in that particular group. Confidentiality is of the utmost importance in the Professional Program. Any breach in confidentiality is seen as directly impacting the safety of the community and may lead to discharge from the program.
2. Group members share responsibility for maintaining group norms and for making the group work - i.e., when a group member sees a need, it is appropriate for that person to respond to that need by helping a fellow member formulate a goal, focus their thoughts, have adequate "air time," or draw in a non-participating member.
3. 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 3rd 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.
4. Members also share responsibility for starting and stopping sessions on time.
5. 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.

6. Be mindful that only one person should be talking at a time.
7. Use "I" statements in groups.
8. Patients are expected to dress neatly and appropriately regardless of whether they are attending program in-person or via Zoom.
9. The use or distribution of alcohol/drugs anywhere on the hospital campus or attending the Professionals' Program under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs is not acceptable and will result in discharge from the program.
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. Safety and respect preclude sexual activity among members of the Professionals' Program. Sexual feelings may be generated during treatment, but they need to be discussed with staff rather than acted upon. Failure to respect boundaries of intimacy, including asking another patient out for a date, is a reason for discharge from the program.
12. Business arrangements of any kind among program participants are also forbidden.
13. 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.
14. Verbally abusive, threatening, assaultive or destructive behavior is not acceptable in the Professionals' Program and is reason for discharge

from the program. No weapons are allowed on campus. This includes no storage of weapons in personal cars parked on campus.

15. The entire campus is a no-smoking, no-tobacco zone. This includes any form of tobacco, cannabis or vaping.
16. Meeting up with other patients outside the program while you, or the other individual, is a patient here is not recommended. There are a number of 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.

REMOTE SESSION GUIDELINES*

There are some key differences in a remote session vs. an in-person session as group members are at home rather than in the facility. Listed below are some guidelines for how to get the most benefit as possible from remote sessions.

1. The most important thing is to have privacy. Please do everything possible to make sure you are in a private space where it is unlikely you will be heard or interrupted. If you have difficulty with this, speak to your program clinician to problem-solve. Headphones can also help to enhance privacy.
2. Try to make yourself comfortable, but not too comfortable. If you can, settle into a nice, comfortable chair. Avoid lying in bed, on your couch, sitting on the floor, or walking around during sessions.
3. Put a box of tissues next to you. If you want, pour yourself a glass of water, but avoid having a snack or a meal during sessions.
4. Turn off all devices other than the one you are using for the Zoom groups. Try to turn off all programs or apps other than the Zoom app and your notifications. If you have other phones in the home, please put them in another room and avoid answering them during group.
5. Leave yourself 15 minutes before the treatment day starts to walk outside or do something else to prepare yourself to start the first session. Similarly, giving yourself 15 minutes to clear your head after the last group, but before jumping into your activities for the day, can be helpful to remember the important elements of the therapy groups and deepen your experience.
6. It is important that we know your location for remote sessions. Please do your best to always Zoom from the same location. If you are in a remote session, you need to be physically within CT for all sessions due to professional services not being able to cross state lines.

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. Our program psychiatrist will frequently send zoom invites to meet with you that same day. Please check your email in-between groups, and at the end of the day, if possible.

If you are having a clinical emergency and need immediate support we ask you 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.

PROGRAM STAFF

Program Clinicians

Upon admission to the Professionals' Program, each patient is 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.

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 the staff.

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.

*Remote session guidelines adapted from Russess, G.I. & Essig, T. (2019). "Bodies and screen relations: moving treatment from wishful thinking to informed decision-making." In Govrin, A., 7 Mills, J. (eds.) *Innovations in Psycho-analysis: Originality, Development, Progress*. Routledge, London).