

The Kempe Center

COLORADO CHILD MALTREATMENT
HEALTHCARE NETWORK



Best Practice Standards for Behavioral Health

Colorado Child Abuse Response and Evaluation Network

Best Practice Standards for Behavioral Health

PRACTICE GUIDELINES

The Care Process Model (CPM) describes the foundational elements and practice guidelines, including: the importance of focusing on pediatric traumatic stress, a roadmap of care, definitions of the terms used within pediatric mental and behavioral health settings, example vignettes, detailed instructions on each step of the model, information related to special populations of children, and resources for both children/families as well as providers. Pediatric Traumatic Stress Screening Tool will be used by providers to screen patients for trauma and then plan for management based on the patient's individual score.

If concerns about care are uncovered as a result of the CPM, immediate referrals to behavioral health services should be made. It is important for children to be connected to behavioral health care early as it provides more time to reverse some of the effects of early childhood trauma. Among maltreated children, pediatric providers have a distinct role in being a safe adult and are often relied upon to ensure both physical and behavioral health needs are evaluated and treated. Much of what can be observed in a pediatric visit may go unnoticed in the child's other social settings, thus the importance of incorporating behavioral health screeners to physical health measures.

THERAPEUTIC MODALITY AND TREATMENT

The CARE Network is committed to using the most evidenced trauma treatment modalities available, thus behavioral health providers are expected to be trained in at least one evidence-based treatment modality (e.g., Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Treatment, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, for more see: <https://www.nctsn.org/treatments-and-practices/trauma-treatments/interventions>) and all treatment approaches are rooted in trauma-informed strategies (see SAMHSA's definition here: <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/SAMHSA-s-Concept-of-Trauma-and-Guidance-for-a-Trauma-Informed-Approach/SMA14-4884.html>). Individuals providing psychotherapy must follow all rules and regulations set forth in Colorado's Mental Health Practice Act (for detailed information: <https://dpo.colorado.gov/RegisteredPsychotherapy/Laws>), thus must be a licensed behavioral health provider or registered as a psychotherapist through Colorado's Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) and in good standing.

While the exact course of behavioral health treatment for each child/family with suspected or confirmed child maltreatment or adversity is unique, best practice guidelines for behavioral health providers includes:

- Completing a psychosocial history for each child and family they are treating
- Assessing for anxiety, depression, and trauma symptomology through the use of empirically validated measures at minimum (*note: designated providers within the

CARE Network are using a validated behavioral health screening tool that can be accessed through a release of information)

- Establishing a mechanism for evaluating client symptomology
- Participating in a case conference when appropriate, that includes an interdisciplinary team of care professionals and community agency representatives for the purposes of coordinating care when there is suspected maltreatment.
- Maintaining records in accordance to discipline standards

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

- Behavioral health providers shall evaluate children referred without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, or payment source and render the same quality of services to these recipients as would be rendered to private individuals.
- Behavioral health providers must maintain malpractice insurance.
- Behavioral health providers are responsible for proper billing documentation.
- Parent/guardian consent for release of information should be obtained when making a behavioral health referral so information can be shared with the behavioral health provider once selected. Information about creating partnerships and selecting behavioral health providers are included at the end of this document.