



## Helping You Choose Quality Behavioral Health Care

Selecting quality behavioral health care services for yourself, a relative or friend requires special thought and attention. The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations has prepared this information to assist you in making your selection. Knowing what to look for and what to ask will help you choose an organization that provides safe, quality care, treatment and services to meet your needs.

Behavioral health care services refer to a continuum of services and settings that serve individuals and families across the life span. Begin your search by talking with behavioral health care professionals and families and peers with similar needs to identify several behavioral health care organizations. If time permits, visit each one and talk with the staff about the organization's services, policies, history and staff credentials. Then use the following questions to help you determine whether the organization meets your needs.

### About the organization

- What is the organization's service philosophy? Ask about the nature and goals of the program and what kind of clients it is designed to serve. What is the organization's experience in helping a person like me?
- Is the staff well qualified and experienced? Ask about staff credentials (education, training and licensure).
- Does the organization create an individualized plan based on assessed needs? The plan of care should be updated as the needs of the client changes.
- Does the organization develop a discharge plan to ensure appropriate services are provided after the individual leaves the program? How does the organization choose the other programs or agencies to refer clients to?
- What interventions are utilized in the organization and what is the organization's philosophy on their use?

### Client and family concerns

- Are adult clients the key drivers in decisions about their own care, treatment and services?
- Are the buildings and grounds suitable to the nature of the services provided and the age of clients? Is there adequate space and ventilation? Is the facility clean? Does it provide a positive atmosphere?
- Does the organization take time to explain the client's rights and responsibilities? Ask to see a copy of the organization's rights and responsibilities information.
- Does the organization have a procedure for receiving and resolving client complaints and the family concerning the quality of care? Ask for details.
- How does the organization communicate with the families of its clients?
- How does the organization communicate with foster families?

### Quality issues

- Does the organization have a quality improvement program?
- How does the organization ensure that care, treatment and services are delivered safely?
- Is the organization accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting body such as The Joint Commission? Joint Commission accreditation means the organization voluntarily sought accreditation and met national health and safety standards.

To find out if the behavioral health care organization you are considering is accredited by The Joint Commission, see Quality Check<sup>®</sup> on this website or at [www.qualitycheck.org](http://www.qualitycheck.org). Quality Check

is a comprehensive guide to all Joint Commission accredited health care organizations and programs.

Quality Check provides Quality Reports that include information on the organization's overall performance level and how it compares to other organizations in specific performance areas. If a report is not available on Quality Check, or if you would like a printed copy, please call the Customer Service Center at (630) 792-5800.

To report information or concerns about accredited organizations:

- Call or e-mail our Office of Quality Monitoring (800) 994-6610 or [complaint@jointcommission.org](mailto:complaint@jointcommission.org).