



Mary's
Center

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202.483.8196

Saving lives and creating stronger communities, one family at a time.

Mental Health Glossary of Terms

Mary's Center School Based Mental Health

Behavioral Health Services: A term used to describe the many different types of therapy people can receive to help them feel better in their life. Sometimes instead of *behavioral health services*, people say *mental health services* or *counseling services*.

Ex: The clinic offers "medical, dental, and *behavioral health services*."

Coping: Ways of dealing with situations, feelings, and people in your life that make you feel overwhelmed.

Ex: Writing, going for a walk, and listening to music are all forms of *coping*.

Crisis: When you feel extreme distress (pain or sadness) and you are unable to function like you normally do.

Ex: Examples of a *crisis* are thinking about hurting yourself or someone else.

Crisis Intervention: A professional, usually a doctor or a therapist, works with the person who is having the crisis to help them calm down and feel better.

Ex: A therapist talks with someone who is crying and thinking about hurting themselves until the person has calmed down. Once they are calm, the therapist will help the person get proper treatment to ensure they are safe.

Diagnosis: Doctors and therapists organize symptoms into different categories to understand how the person is feeling. A diagnosis is a name for the group of symptoms a person is feeling or experiencing.

Ex: A person who has felt sad, irritable, and hopeless for three months may be told their *diagnosis* is "depression". These are all common symptoms of depression.

Distress: Feelings of extreme pain and/or sadness.

Example: After her grandmother passed away, Jessica told her therapist she was feeling *distressed*.

Health Insurance: An agreement you make with an insurance company so they cover the costs of your medical and mental health treatment. Sometimes the individuals pay for their



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health insurance and sometimes, instead of a company, the government pays for your treatments. This type of insurance is called *Medicaid*.

Ex: "I pay money every month for my *health insurance*. Then, when I had surgery on my knee, my *health insurance* covered the cost of the surgery."

Medicaid: Medicaid is health insurance that is paid for by the government. A family needs to make less than a certain amount of money per year to qualify.

Ex: "My family applied for *Medicaid* and now we all have health insurance."

Mental Health: How a person thinks, feels, and acts when faced with life's situations. This includes how people handle stress, make decisions, and interact with other people.

Ex "My *mental health* is good. I feel happy most days and I am able to wake up and go to school. I do my homework and get along with my classmates."

Psychiatric Medication or Psychotropic Medication: A medication used to help people feel better mentally and emotionally. Certain medication, such as Advil, is used to help with pain or discomfort in your body such as a headache. Psychiatric or psychotropic medication is used to help our minds and bodies feel better.

Ex: Ana was prescribed *psychiatric medication* to help reduce feelings of depression.

Psychotherapy: Psychotherapy is a fancy word for therapy. In therapy, you talk with a therapist to help you feel better and learn about your feelings, thoughts and behaviors. You can also learn how to respond to difficult situations with healthy coping skills. Therapy can happen individually (just you and the therapist), in a group (with others), or with your family.

Ex: "I began receiving *psychotherapy* to learn how to deal with my anger. I have learned deep breathing exercises that help me calm down when I start to get angry."

Symptom: Any feeling or change that is different than how a person normally feels.

Ex: Feeling always worried and not being able to sleep are examples of *symptoms*.

Transition: In general, a transition is a change from one thing to another. For you, it means the process of getting ready to move from high school to adult life. The process happens over a period of many years. Preparing for the transition in advance can help make it easier. You can prepare by talking with adults in your life and making a plan to make sure you have everything you need to be successful.

Ex: "Now that I have graduated, I need to transition to a therapist outside of school. "



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Sources:

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