



# Outpatient Consumer Handbook



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## **Hours of Operation**

Monday-Friday, 8am - 5pm

Evening and Weekend hours available

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## **Thank you for choosing Northstar Psychological Services** **Outpatient Mental Health Services**

- ✓ Northstar Psychological Services (NPS) offers an array of outpatient services including individual and family, community skill building, as well as the availability of psychological, psychiatric evaluations and medication management.
- ✓ Outpatient services are delivered in an office or community-based setting utilizing the latest approaches to alleviate symptoms of psychological disorders, behavioral challenges, and stress related issues.
- ✓ The frequency of services are determined by an assessment leading to a determination of medical necessity. We appreciate not everyone can make it to the office during our normal business hours. Therefore, we offer after-hours and early appointments, and try to accommodate your schedule. We offer flexible appointment hours Monday thru Friday (and on weekends and evenings), based on consumer needs and available upon request.
- ✓ Our treatment team works with individuals and families via person-centered treatment planning to establish goals for and outcomes of the therapeutic interventions.
- ✓ NPS is dedicated to training and development of its staff and strives to meet the needs of our communities through training, consultation, and specialized therapy programs.
- ✓ Therapy sessions and psychiatric appointments are private and confidential.
- ✓ Therapeutic approaches to treatment may vary based on the clinical background and expertise of each of our clinicians.

### **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to educate, counsel, and equip clients and their families experiencing a variety of issues. At NPS, clients receive thoughtful and comprehensive treatment for even the most sensitive of issues. NPS avoids one-size-fits-all counseling practices and strives to provide psychological services that are unique to the individuals whom we serve, and we consider the determination of each client's specific therapeutic needs of primary

## **Values**

- **INTEGRITY**

Open, honest and direct communications and keeping commitments.

- **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Based on our collaboration with the consumer and family, we utilize accurate data to set goals and drive performance. Consumer feedback is a key factor in measuring achievements.

- **COMPASSION**

The Consumer is the main reason NPS exists

- **COLLABORATION**

Listening, Caring and Collaborative action are Core Values. We do this through the development of mutually strong and healthy professional relationships. Open doors and open minds.

- **INNOVATION:**

Informed by the past, we look to the future by the creation of a creative culture that supports the ideas of consumers and the team. We welcome opportunities which support informed disruptions of the status quo.

## **Our Beliefs**

NPS believes every person has the right to the best treatment possible. NPS consumers receive the very best in consumer care, surrounded in a welcoming and supportive environment. NPS also firmly believes the consumer is essential to overcoming his or her own problems. NPS supplies consumers with the tools needed to improve their lives. NPS helps consumers develop and enhance the skills needed to confront and cope with their issues, not only during treatment, but also long after counseling ends. The goal at NPS is for consumers to leave counseling feeling they have learned how to make better choices in their day-to-day life, as well as feeling they can lead a healthier and happier life.

At NPS, consumers receive thoughtful and comprehensive treatment for even the most sensitive of issues. NPS avoids one-size-fits-all psychology practices and strives to provide psychological services that are unique to the individual. NPS considers the determination of each consumer's specific psychological needs of primary importance.

NPS is sensitive to individual differences and preferences. Practices and activities that reduce stigma are encouraged at NPS. Most importantly every interaction with NPS consumers is founded in respect, careful listening, and a positive, supportive environment.

## Ethical Practices

- Northstar Psychological Services Code of Ethics is based on three ethical universal principles. Equity and justice, respect for people and personal and professional and ethical code of conduct related to all aspects of business, including marketing practices, service delivery, professional responsibilities and human resources. In order to ensure the highest level of integrity through all aspects of business as well as to maintain a professional and collaborative relationship with stake holders, NPS maintains this set of values and beliefs in order to guide staff regarding decision making and actions.

NPS's core ethical belief and values include but are not limited to the maintenance of consumers' confidentiality; utilization of consumer's first language whenever possible; working with in areas of competence; ensuring consumers are treated with dignity and a nonjudgmental attitude; provision of the consumers bill of rights maintenance of ethical billing practices; ensuring clinical staff is supervised in accordance with Best Practice, consultation; ensuring strength based and accurate clinical documentation; continued emphasis on learning through education and training, maintenance of the profession, and avoidance and of conflicts of interest.

NPS maintains the core values consistent with the code of ethics for the following agencies: American Nurses Association (ANA), National Association of Social workers (NASW), American Psychological Association (APA), Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), American Counseling Association (ACA), in adherence with Georgia state board of social workers, marriage and family therapist and professional counselors.

## Meet Your Outpatient Team

- ✓ **Clinical Director:** Our Clinical Directors provides clinical and operational oversight of all aspects of the clinical program. They oversee the direction of the clinical programs as well as managing the operations of the center.
- ✓ **Director of Clinical Operations:** Our Director of Clinical Operations manages the day-to-day clinical and operational aspects of treatment provided to consumers and outpatient services. They direct clinical staff via the management of the RCSs and are responsible for at-risk situations such as mandated reporting, involuntary commit procedures, duty to warn, and crisis situations
- ✓ **Regional Clinical Supervisor (RCS)/Regional Administrator (RA):** The RS and RA work as a team to provide clinical and administrative oversight of all aspects of treatment provided to consumers. They support clinical development and supervise outpatient clinicians. They direct clinical staff in at-risk situations such as mandated reporting, involuntary commit procedures, duty to warn, and crisis situations. These individuals also oversee the clinical content of medical records and the quality of therapy documentation. They assist in case management.

- ✓ **Community Clinicians:** With consumer participation, our community clinicians develop individualized treatment plans, conduct periodic treatment plan reviews, and also develop an appropriate plan for discharge. They conduct individual, family and/or group therapy sessions as indicated by the psychologist, the psychiatrist, treatment team members, and per the agreement of the consumer. In working with children and adolescents, our therapists utilize a strength-based, child centered, and family focused approach and work in collaboration with other community programs or facilities that are involved with the consumer. Our therapists meet with the Outpatient Clinical Director and staff Psychiatrist monthly to receive supervision.
- ✓ **Office Staff:** Our office staff meets and elicits the needs from presenting potential consumers. They communicate with insurance companies regarding authorizations of services and support our clinicians with their daily tasks.
- ✓ **Medical Staff:** Our medical staff consists of psychiatrists and nurses that address all aspects of the consumer's medication and psychiatric needs.



## **Introduction to CORE Services offered by NPS**

### **What are CORE Services?**

CORE Services are a range of specialized outpatient, community based therapeutic services provided by NPS Community Clinicians to children, adolescents, adults, and their families. These services include diagnostic, psychiatric, training and counseling services for behavioral issues, and substance abuse issues. NPS provides CORE Services in the Metro-Atlanta area and surrounding counties.

NPS provides CORE Benefit Package (contracted by DCH, under the guidelines of DBHDD) services based on Consumer Eligibility, Service Definitions, and Service Guidelines. NPS specializes in CORE Services for children and adolescents. We offer the following CORE Services:

- Psychological Evaluations / Psychosexual Evaluations
- Behavioral Health Assessments
- Service Plans / Treatment Plans
- Plan Reassessment
- Community Support: Individual; face-to-face (CSI) and collateral (CSIUK)
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR-I) and Case Management for Adults
- Family Training/Counseling
- Group Training/Counseling
- Individual Counseling
- Nursing Assessment and Health Services
- Psychiatric Diagnostic Assessment and Psychiatric Treatment
- Crisis Intervention Services
- Peer Support Services

### **Advance Directives**

An advance directive is a written statement of a person's wishes regarding medical treatment, made to ensure those wishes are carried out should a person be unable to communicate them. These can include living wills, durable power of attorney for health care, mental health care directive, and psychiatric care directive. Advance directives can include instructions related to situations involving Do Not Resuscitate (DNR), organ and tissue donation, short term unconsciousness, effects of Alzheimer's, and/or serious mental illness. If you feel that you are at risk of becoming unable to make decisions related to your or your child's medical treatment, please contact the Division of Aging Services at 404-657-5258 or visit their website at [www.aging.dhr.georgia.gov](http://www.aging.dhr.georgia.gov). They will guide you through the process and ensuring your desires are carried out.

## **What can I expect from NPS?**

- **How can I refer someone to NPS for services?** NPS receives referrals for services in a variety of ways:
  - By phone: (770) 667-3877
  - Through our website: <https://npsga.com/referrals.html>
- **When can I expect to have my first contact?** The majority of our consumers are contacted to confirm desire for services within 48 hours of the referral having been made.
- **What can I expect on the first visit? Upon confirmation of your desire for services and qualifying insurance,** you can expect to meet with our clinical diagnostic team within 5-business days of the qualifying conversation. You will also receive information about the type of treatment you will get, as well as your rights and responsibilities as a consumer. You will be able to ask questions about your treatment with NPS, and you will be given the opportunity to state any specific preferences you have for therapy (such as needing a Spanish-speaking therapist). You and your therapist will identify your therapy goals, and work together to create a treatment plan that will help you to reach your therapy goals.
- **What kinds of problems does NPS treat?** NPS treats a wide variety of life issues. In order to best meet the clinical needs of our consumers, each professional at NPS has expertise in different clinical areas. These areas of expertise cover all clinical areas of treatment, including the treatment of substance abuse, depression, eating disorders, anxiety, anger management, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, and trauma issues.
- **Can I receive services from NPS if I cannot come to an office location?** Yes! While we do provide therapy services in our two convenient office locations, we also provide community-based services in consumer's homes, schools, or other community location that is most convenient for the consumer. The only services not provided in a community setting are psychiatric and nursing.
- **Can someone receive services from NPS if they do not have insurance? There are a few cases in which** NPS can see consumers who have no insurance, but this needs to be determined on a case by case basis.
- **How long has NPS been in business?** NPS has provided counseling services for children, adolescents, and adults in the greater-Atlanta area and throughout the state of Georgia since 2000.



## **Quality Improvement Program**

- ✓ NPS is constantly striving to provide and ensure the highest quality of care. You may receive a letter, phone call, email or request to complete a survey via survey monkey. All results of this survey are confidential, and results are monitored for trends and long term outcomes related to consumer care. This data is necessary to continue to evaluate and improve the quality of services. It is not mandatory that you participate in these surveys; however, they are a vital tool in the evaluation of services at NPS, and we encourage your participation.
- ✓ If you feel in any way that your service has been less than satisfactory and/or confidentiality has been breached please do not hesitate to call the grievance hotline at 1-800-721-8879. The sooner you voice your concerns, the sooner we can work to resolve your concerns.
- ✓ We also love to hear when you feel our staff or treatment teams are going above and beyond to provide you the best quality of care. Please feel free to share these moments with the clinical team as well.

## **Client Fee Schedule**

If eligible, all fees will be billed to your insurance provider. If co-pays are required by the individual insurance plan, consumers are responsible for co-pay payment.

### **Fees for services are listed below:**

- Psychological Evaluation: \$1400
- Substance Abuse Evaluation: \$1400
- Psychosexual Evaluation: \$1400
- Psychiatric Evaluation: \$300
- Psychiatric Follow-up: \$175 per session

Services can be offered at a discounted rate based upon the sliding fee scale schedule below dependent upon financial eligibility and family size. If you feel you meet these requirements, or would like more information, please see the representative at the front desk.

Annual Income Thresholds by Sliding Fee Discount Pay Class and Percent Poverty						
Poverty Level*	100%	125%	150%	175%	200%	>200%
Family Size	Minimum Fee	20% pay	40% pay	60% pay	80% pay	100% pay
<b>1</b>	\$11,490	\$14,363	\$17,235	\$20,108	\$22,980	\$22,981
<b>2</b>	\$15,510	\$19,388	\$23,265	\$27,143	\$31,020	\$31,021
<b>3</b>	\$19,530	\$24,413	\$29,295	\$34,178	\$39,060	\$39,061
<b>4</b>	\$23,550	\$29,438	\$35,325	\$41,213	\$47,100	\$47,101
<b>5</b>	\$27,570	\$34,463	\$41,355	\$48,248	\$55,140	\$55,141
<b>6</b>	\$31,590	\$39,488	\$47,385	\$55,283	\$63,180	\$63,181
<b>7</b>	\$35,610	\$44,513	\$53,415	\$62,318	\$71,220	\$71,221
<b>8</b>	\$39,630	\$49,538	\$59,445	\$69,353	\$79,260	\$79,261
<b>For each additional person, add</b>	\$4,020	\$5,025	\$6,030	\$7,035	\$8,040	\$8,040

## Overview of Consumer's Rights

Your rights as a consumer, including confidentiality of your participation in evaluation and treatment services, will be observed in accordance with O.C.G.A. 37-3-166, 37-4-125, 37-7-166, DHR Rules and Regulations for Consumer Rights, Chapter 290-0-9; 42 U.S.C. 290dd-2, and NPS Consumer Rights and Responsibilities Policy, NPS program policies and any other applicable laws, regulations, and policies, including the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) privacy regulations. A summary of these rules and regulations will be reviewed with you and are available for inspection at each service location. You also will be provided a copy of the NPS HIPAA Privacy Notice. This information will be reviewed on an annual basis with you.

### YOU HAVE THE RIGHT:

1. The right to be treated with consideration and respect for personal dignity, autonomy and privacy.
2. The right to receive services in a humane setting which is the least restrictive setting feasible as defined by the treatment plan.
3. The right to be informed of one's own condition, of proposed or current services, treatment or therapies, and of the alternatives, as well as the risks and benefits of those treatments.
4. The right to freedom from abuse and neglect
5. The right to freedom from financial or other exploitation
6. the right to freedom from retaliation and humiliation
7. The right to complete informed consent or refusal or expression of choice regarding service delivery, release of information, concurrent services, the composition of the service delivery team and involvement in any research projects in which you would also have to right to adherence to guidelines and ethics for.
8. The right to access self-help and advocacy support services

9. The right to a current, written, individualized treatment plan that addresses one's own mental health, physical health, social and economic needs and that specifies the provision of appropriate and adequate services, as available, either directly or by referral.
10. The right to active and informed participation in the establishment, periodic review and assessment of the treatment plan.
11. The right to freedom from unnecessary or excessive medication.
12. The right to freedom from unnecessary restraint or time-out.
13. The right to participate in any appropriate and available agency service, regardless of refusal of one or more other services, unless there is a valid and specific necessity which precludes and/or requires the consumer's participation in other services. This necessity shall be explained to the consumer and written in the consumer's current treatment plan.
14. The right to be informed of and refuse any unusual and hazardous treatment procedures.
15. The right to be advised of and refuse any observation by techniques such as one-way vision mirrors, tape recorders, televisions, movies or photographs.
16. The right to consult with independent treatment specialists or legal counsel, at one's own expense. A listing of advocates is available as a resource to all consumers.
17. The right to have an independent person who is not a member of the treatment team resolves a problem raised by the consumer.
18. The right to confidentiality of communications and of all personally identifying information within the limitations and requirements for disclosure of various funding and/or certifying sources, state or federal statutes, unless release of information is specifically authorized by the consumer, parents, or legal guardian of a minor consumer or court-appointed guardian of an adult consumer in accordance with State and Federal Regulations. This also includes the right to be informed of the nature of information to be released to other parties.
19. The right to have access to one's own psychiatric, medical, or other treatment records, if 14 years of age or older. The agency may withhold information from a child which it has good reason to believe will be harmful to that child. The basis for withholding information from a child shall be recorded in the child's case record. It is required that the placing agency concur with thus withholding prior to the information being withheld from a child who requests information from his/her record.
20. The right to be informed in advance of the reason(s) for discontinuation of service provision and to be involved in planning for consequences of that event.
21. The right to receive an explanation for the denial of services.
22. The right not to be discriminated against in the provision of service on the basis of religion, race, color, creed, sex, national origin, age, lifestyle, physical or mental handicap, developmental disability or inability to pay.
23. The right to know the cost of services.
24. The right to follow and practice your own religion or abstain from practice of religion.
25. The right to be discharged as soon as care and treatment are no longer necessary.
26. The right to be fully informed of all rights and responsibilities as well as the program's rules and regulations.
27. The right to exercise any and all rights without reprisal in any form including continued and uncompromised access to service.
28. The right to file a grievance or offer suggestions to the program director or his/her designee.
29. The right to an investigation and resolution when you feel your rights have been infringed upon.
30. The right to oral and written instructions for filing a grievance.

31. All other rights which are required under law.

**HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (HIPAA) PRIVACY PRACTICES**

1. To access or inspect your health care information unless a physician determines the record review is detrimental to your well-being.
2. To obtain a copy of your health care information for as long as the information is retained. (A reasonable fee may apply for copying.)
3. To request in writing that NPS restrict the use and disclosure of your confidential health care information.
4. To receive a copy of the notice of the NPS Practices to Protect the Privacy of Your Health Information.
5. To make a reasonable request in writing to receive communications from NPS by alternative means or locations.
6. To request a list of when and to whom your health care information was released without your authorization within 6 years of your request for non-routine disclosures made on or after July 1, 2007.
7. To request an amendment to your health care information.

**CONSUMERS' RESPONSIBILITIES: AS A CONSUMER OF NPS, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY:**

(Violations of these responsibilities could result in discharge and/or termination of services. Please see our website, [www.npsga.com](http://www.npsga.com), for further information.)

- ✓ To show consideration and respect towards staff, other consumers and the property of others.
- ✓ To provide accurate information of past and present complaints, past illnesses and hospitalizations, medications, and any perceived risks in your care and unexpected changes in your condition.
- ✓ To meet financial obligations agreed to with NPS.
- ✓ To participate in developing your treatment plan including expressing any concerns about your ability to follow the proposed care plan and to ask questions when you do not understand.
- ✓ To take medications as prescribed.
- ✓ To accept the consequences of not following the treatment and service plan.
- ✓ To support the program by participating to the best of your ability and by being on time for all scheduled appointments and activities.
- ✓ To comply with the rules of the service location.
- ✓ To respect the confidentiality, privacy, and property of others who are receiving services with you.
- ✓ To report changes in your condition to those responsible for your care and welfare.

**HIPAA**

- **Confidentiality** refers to the explicit, agency-wide constraints placed upon the use of, access to, and protection of information obtained in the course of the consumer's relationship with the agency.
- **Privacy** refers to the rights of the consumer to determine who will have access to information about him/her, to decide when and under what circumstances that access will occur, and to be made aware of the ultimate use that will be made of that information
- **Informed consent** indicates that the release of information is restricted by guidelines and attested to by consumer signatures. Informed consent requires that the consumer know the nature of the request and whether or not he/she is legally required to comply. Under these guidelines, the consumers are aware of the nature of their records, know with whom the data is to be shared and the time frames with which it is to be handled, know what is to be revealed, and are aware of the implications of providing this information in so far as this is predictable.

## Privacy Practices

- ❖ Northstar Psychological Services is committed to protecting its consumers' privacy. This notice describes our policies and practices for collecting, handling, and protecting personal information about our consumers. This policy, in the same manner as all our policies, will be continually reviewed for clarity and effectiveness. Consequently, it may be necessary for us to revise our privacy policy in the future. If we make revisions, you will be notified about these in writing.
- ❖ To be able to better administer our behavioral health program, we must collect, use, and disclose non-public personal information. Non-public personal information is information related to an individual consumer and/or the consumer's parent/guardian. This information could include the consumer's name, name of the consumer's parent/guardian, other identifying information, insurance plan information used in billing for services, and information relating to the consumer's service program that would reside in the consumer's chart. Non-public personal information does not include publicly available information or statistical information that does not identify individual persons.

**Information that we collect and maintain:** Non-public personal information about our consumers and/or consumer's parent/guardian is collected from the following sources:

- We receive information from our consumers and/or consumers' parents/guardians, from psychological evaluations performed by psychologists or psychiatrists, consumers' insurance companies, county agencies, schools, and other organizations who have involvement in our consumers' services. This information may be submitted to us in person, in writing, by telephone, fax, or electronically.
- We collect and use this information in developing treatment plans, providing ongoing services, performing reviews, providing for billing, handling any appeals or grievances, and any other consumer service-related activity. This information might include a diagnosis code, personal histories, previous treatment information, identifying information, progress notes, and other information related to consumers' cases according to the need.

**Information that we may disclose and the purpose:** We use and disclose the personal information we collect (described above) only as necessary for us to deliver behavioral health services. This use and disclosure includes:

- Development of treatment plans for each consumer, including goals and treatment interventions.
- Monitoring progress of treatment interventions in achieving the goals identified in treatment plans.
- Monitoring the quality of our services as part of our ongoing Quality Assurance/Performance Improvement Program during which written and telephone surveys are made to supplement other case information.
- Providing personal information to your insurance company so that we can effectively provide services, and to our billing department in order to receive payment for those services. Our contracts require these organizations to protect the confidentiality of any information that is used or shared.
- Disclosing information under order of a court of law in connection with a legal proceeding.
- Disclosing information in accordance with federal or state laws such as OCGA 19-7-5(c)(1).
- Disclosing information to government agencies or credentialing organizations that monitor our compliance with applicable laws and standards.



- Disclosing information under a subpoena or summons to government agencies that investigate possible violations of law.

**How we protect information:** We restrict access to our consumers' non-personal public information to those employees, agents, consultants, or other persons working in our organization who need to know the information to allow us to provide behavioral health services. We obtain signed clearances from consumers' parents/guardians in instances where there is a need to transfer information to other organizations such as another service provider. We maintain physical and procedural safeguards that comply with state and federal regulations to guard non-public personal information from unauthorized access, use and disclosure.

In order to access you or your child's medical records a request must be made in writing to NPS, by calling 770-667-3877. This request should include date(s) requested and type of documents being requested. NPS will work with you if you should have such a request for access to the records.

### **Consent for Phone Messages**

In order to protect your privacy under HIPAA guidelines, Northstar Psychological Services needs written permission in regards to leaving messages/voicemails regarding your care or the care of your child. If an NPS representative needs to contact you and you are unavailable, it may be necessary for staff to leave a message for you to return our call.

By signing the consent to treat and verification of consumer orientation/handbook, consumer releases liability from Northstar Psychological Services for leaving a message on the home, work, or cellular numbers that consumer has provided.

### **Primary Care Physicians (PCP)**

In order to ensure that you or your child receives comprehensive care across service providers and across life domains, we offer collaboration with your PCP. You can choose to have the PCP involved in your treatment by signing a Release of Information.

If you do not know who your or your child's PCP is, or you do not have one, NPS can help connect you. We have partnered with PCPs in the metro-Atlanta area to offer streamlined, whole health care to consumers. Below is a list of PCPs that accept NPS consumer referrals:

#### **Kids Start Pediatrics**

1515 Westfork Drive, Suite C  
Lithia Springs, GA 30122  
Phone: 770-941-5552  
Fax: 678-264-8896

[info@nuestrosninos.org](mailto:info@nuestrosninos.org)

[www.nuestrosninos.org](http://www.nuestrosninos.org)

#### **The Pediatric Place**

9570 Nesbit Ferry Rd, Suite 201  
Alpharetta, GA 30022  
Phone: 770-640-8119  
Fax: 770-988-5553  
[info@thepediatricplace.com](mailto:info@thepediatricplace.com)

#### **Nuestros Ninos Our Kids Pediatrics**

777 Franklin Gateway SE  
Marietta, GA 30067  
Phone: 770-732-6007  
Fax: 770-732-8242

#### **Cobb Pediatrics**

3405 Dallas Highway SW, Ste 300

## **Child Protective Services Law (mandated reporters)**

All employees of Northstar Psychological Services follow the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) that mandates the reporting of suspected child maltreatment. The staff who work with you or your child directly, as well as any staff you collaborate with (Outpatient Clinical Director, Psychiatrist, Nurses, Office Managers, Outpatient Therapists, other office staff, etc.) are all named as mandated reporters under this law. The mission of all NPS staff is to ensure that our consumers, their siblings and other family members are afforded a safe and secure environment in which they can learn, grow, and reach their potential.

## **Nondiscrimination in Services**

Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of consumers shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age or sex, perceived sexual orientation, actual or perceived gender identity, and/or actual or perceived gender expression. NPS is committed to providing a treatment environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive, including sexual harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated.

Program services shall be made accessible to eligible individuals with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aids and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Any consumer (and/or guardian) who feels they have been discriminated against may file a complaint of discrimination with any of the following:

**Northstar Psychological Services**  
120 Vann Street, Suite 100  
Marietta, Georgia 30060  
Human Resources: 770-667-3877

**U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services**  
Office for Civil Rights  
Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center, #16T70  
61 Forsyth Street, S.W.  
Atlanta, GA 30303-8909  
Customer Response Center: (800) 368-1019  
Fax: (202) 619-3818  
TDD: (800) 537-7697

**DFCS Civil Rights Program**  
Two Peachtree Street, N.W.

Suite 19-248  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
Phone: (404) 657-3735  
Fax: (404) 463-3978

**Georgia Human Relations Commission (GHRC)**  
Office of Constituent Services  
55 Trinity Avenue  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
GHRC direct line: (404) 330-6026  
Statewide (Toll free): 1-800-georgia (1-800-436-7442)

**Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Atlanta District Office**  
100 Alabama Street



Suite 4R30  
Atlanta, GA 30303

Phone: (404) 562-6800  
TTY: (404) 562-6801

## Outpatient Program Guidelines

- ❖ An orientation to the office (restrooms, emergency exits, first aid, etc.) is provided upon first visit as requested.
- ❖ The type and extent of the services to be provided will be determined following a behavioral health assessment.
- ❖ We will work with you to establish criteria for discharge during the intake and will assist you in transitioning upon discharge. You and your NPS team members will work together to determine when you or your child is ready for discharge. The discharge process includes helping identify community resources to support your success after discharge from outpatient services. Throughout the course of treatment we will be thinking together about what life will be like after outpatient, as we want you, or your child to continue to experience wellness and success after discharging from outpatient services.
- ❖ When there is risk of imminent danger to yourself, your child or to another person, the clinician is ethically bound to take necessary steps to mitigate such danger.
- ❖ Certain personal health information may be released to a pharmacy for the purpose of medication therapy, but only with a signed release by you.
- ❖ You will be made aware of financial obligations, fees, and arrangements (i.e. – co-pays if applicable).
- ❖ You are responsible to immediately notify the outpatient office staff if you have any change of insurance to ensure timely and appropriate billing of services rendered.
- ❖ NPS is committed to the proper, professional, and responsible care and treatment of consumers and to safeguarding the integrity of staff/consumer relationships at all times. Employee/consumer behavior and conduct which NPS considers inappropriate, unacceptable and strictly prohibits includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - ✓ Motivational incentives such as money, gift cards, or other material items **will not** be used in your outpatient treatment.
  - ✓ Lending, borrowing, purchasing or selling any form of personal property;
  - ✓ Allowing or requiring consumers to perform services of a personal nature for the benefit of any staff member;
  - ✓ Giving keys, telephone numbers to be used for personal contact, address or other inappropriate property and information to consumers and their families;
  - ✓ Personal, sexual, or romantic involvement with consumers;
  - ✓ Initiating contact with current or former consumers and failing to report coincidental contact;
  - ✓ Certain activities which present a conflict of interest including the acceptance of gifts from families;
  - ✓ Any contact with families which is not directly related to the treatment of the consumer;
  - ✓ Any other contact, behavior or attitudes which NPS deems harmful to the best interest of its consumers and program operation (*taken from NPS Corporate Policy 300-003, Consumer Relationships*).

- ❖ NPS reserves the right to deny admission/readmission for any reason, including but not limited to:
  - a. Inactive/ineligible insurance
  - b. Physical violence/aggressive outbursts
  - c. Current drug and/or alcohol abuse (referrals will be made for treatment should consumer consent)
  - d. Lack of credentialed therapists for a specific insurance
  - e. Failure to be compliant with services
- ❖ In rare instances when staff may be placed in unsafe or threatening situations that cannot be resolved, it may be necessary to exclude consumers from participation in services or ultimately discharged involuntarily. This may include, but is not limited to consumer or responsible adult appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, violence or threats of violence, or unsafe health conditions. In the event that a consumer is excluded from services, the consumer/guardian will be made aware of the restrictions, the reason that they have been made, and how to regain access to the services.



## **Outpatient Medication Management Guidelines**

It is the policy of NPS to provide Psychiatric Evaluations and Medication Management within outpatient mental health clinics. Agency Psychiatrists (or other qualified licensed professionals) will prescribe medication to consumers in need based upon assessment and utilizing best practice standards. The following information will assist you in understanding medication treatment at NPS:

- You will need to complete an intake with an outpatient therapist prior to an evaluation with a psychiatrist.
- It is important that you provide NPS's medical team with information regarding co-existing medical conditions, current medications including all psychiatric, medical, herbal, and over the counter along with the dosages, times taken, effectiveness, and prescribing physician for possible medication interactions and coordination of care.
- NPS prescribers are dedicated to ensuring the safety of their consumers by adhering to best practice standards while providing quality medication therapy. Some medications, such as benzodiazepines or hypnotics, will not be prescribed or continued when a consumer is also receiving other controlled substances with another provider. If a consumer does not disclose receiving other controlled substances by another provider, the prescriber may choose to terminate medication monitoring.
- NPS is committed to ensuring your need to see a psychiatrist is met in a timely manner.

- NPS does not have medications or samples on site. Psychiatrists will not dispense or administer medication to consumers within its outpatient program.
- The use of medication should be utilized when indicated to assist with obtaining treatment outcomes, improving symptoms and to promote recovery and resiliency. NPS does not complete evaluations to determine social security disability.
- In order to ensure we are providing you with the most appropriate and precise care as it relates to your medication therapy, it may be necessary to obtain labs including urine specimens. The results that will be obtained will provide us with valuable information regarding the way your medication is interacting in your system. It will give us information to make decisions regarding your medication and will allow us to make clinically informed decisions about your care. Refusal to participate in random urine drug screens may result in discharges from medication treatment.
- It is the policy of NPS to make all attempts possible to avoid ever prescribing medication outside of an evaluation or medication check. If you miss your medication check, your psychiatrist may choose not to prescribe until you have been seen at our office.
- NPS psychiatrists, nurses and other employees as indicated will provide you with education related to potential side effects or reactions to your medications. You will report any side effects exhibited and frequency of occurrence to medical team or therapist.
- You are encouraged to call the outpatient clinic immediately if you experience an adverse medication reaction. NPS psychiatrists can be consulted during traditional business hours to assist with supporting your medication needs.
- In case of emergencies related to the use of medications, then you will be instructed to report to the nearest emergency room.
- If you have medication questions during business hours (M-F, 8am-5pm), please call the office at (770) 667-3877.
- If an after-hours medication consultation is needed, you may call (678)684-7555. If there is no answer, consumers and community partners should call the Georgia Crisis Access Line, GCAL, at 1-800-715-4225. ***If the situation is life threatening, please call 911 immediately.***
- If you decide to transfer care to another provider or have terminated services at NPS, we want to assist you in the transition. At psychiatrist discretion, a 30 day prescription may be provided.

## **Northstar Psychological Services is committed to the safety of all team members...**

NPS is a **non-seclusion/non-restraint** agency that does not use and subsequently does not train staff to utilize these approaches. What this means is that our staff will not perform physical restraints on you to restrict your movement and our staff will not seclude your child in a locked area.

NPS will respond to emergency circumstances that present imminent risk to you. Given the definition of an emergency procedure- all emergency procedures are time-limited. Employees involved in emergency situations will follow through with consultation with a supervisor and contacting 911 as necessary.

NPS staff work collaboratively to make your treatment experience a positive one. Any violent, aggressive, or otherwise inappropriate behavior toward staff or others can result in your discharge from the program.

No weapons of any kind are allowed on clinic property. Anyone entering the clinic with a weapon will be asked to immediately remove the weapon from the property. Any refusal to remove a weapon will result in police notification and immediate discharge from the program.

### **NPS's policy regarding, illegal drugs, and tobacco products**

- Possession of alcohol, tobacco products (including electronic cigarettes), or illegal drugs are prohibited in the workplace.
- NPS employees are prohibited from possessing any of these items while working. Employees are prohibited from using tobacco products and/or electronic cigarettes when providing direct services to consumers.
- In order for all team members to enjoy a safe experience, NPS expected families to also refrain from possession of these items during sessions.

### **How to File a Grievance**

As a family-focused organization, NPS strives to deliver the highest clinical quality of service to our consumers at all times. The following mechanisms are in place to resolve complaints to ensure that consumer rights are safe guarded and disputes concerning their issues, concerns, and or violations of rights are resolved promptly and fairly:

- Please call the grievance hotline at 1-800-721-8879. A NPS representative will respond to you within 1 business day regarding the nature and status of your complaint. A resolution to your complaint will be determined within 2 business days of receipt

- All consumers also have the right to participate in the complaint/grievance process provided to you by your county or managed care organization.
- A consumer who files such a complaint in good faith will not be subject to reprisal, recrimination, retaliation or threat of such action.

### **Review of Intake Paperwork**

At your initial meeting, your therapist/intake worker will review and ask you to complete many electronic forms, as listed below. Please ask questions during this process, as your signature on any form serves as acknowledgement of both your receipt of the form as well as your understanding of what it contains. Please have all your insurance cards and photo identification available so that a copy can be made for your chart.

#### **Intake Paperwork:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Release of Information for Primary Care Physician | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent for Treatment        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consumer Rights and Responsibilities              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Informed Consent             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consumer Handbook Acknowledgement                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School forms (if applicable) |

### **Crisis Management and NPS**

#### **What happens if I or my child has a crisis?**

If a crisis occurs and your clinician is not immediately available, consumers and community partners should call the Georgia Crisis Access Line, GCAL, at 1-800-715-4225. ***If the situation is life threatening, please call 911 immediately.***

#### **Helpful Phone Numbers**

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
  - 1-800-273-8255
- **Georgia Crisis and Access Line**
  - 1-800-715-4225
- **Teens in Crisis**
  - 1-877-968-5463
- **DeKalb Community Service Board, Crisis Access Line (24/7)**
  - (404) 892-4646
- **Fulton County Department of Mental Health, Emergency Mental Health Services (24/7)**
  - (404) 730-1600 \* (404) 730-1608 TDD
- **Cobb and Douglas Counties Community Services Board (24-Hour Crisis Line)**
  - (770) 422-0202
- **Emergency Services – 911**