

SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH SYSTEM  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES

DATE: September 19, 2018

BHRS POLICY: 18-04

SUBJECT: Credentialing and Service/Billing Privileges for Mental Health Rehabilitation Specialists

AUTHORITY: California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 9, Chapter 11; CCR Title 9, §532.6, §630 and §1810.435;

SUPERSEDES: New Policy

ATTACHMENTS: Attachment A: Mental Health Rehabilitation Specialist Verification Form

PURPOSE:  
This policy explains how Behavioral Health & Recovery Services (BHRS) credentials Mental Health Rehabilitation Specialists (MHRS).

BACKGROUND:  
Under Title 9, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) is the designated body within San Mateo County authorized to evaluate materials for applicants who request to be identified as Mental Health Rehabilitation Specialists (MHRS) and to credential applicants who qualify. This applies to all Specialty Mental Health Service staff employed by and contracted with BHRS. In any instance where regulatory guidance/authority is vague, BHRS provides clarification to ensure providers meet compliance and quality standards.

DEFINITION:  
Mental Health Rehabilitation Specialist:  
An MHRS must have the combined education and mental health experience required by state law. In all cases the experience must be: “in a mental health setting as a specialist in the fields of physical restoration, social adjustment, or vocational adjustment.” (CCR Title 9, §630)

There are three ways that education and experience add up to qualify certification as an MHRS. The MHRS must have any the following:

- An Associate’s degree (AA) plus 6 years of experience in a mental health setting.

- A Bachelor’s degree (BA or BS) plus 4 years of experience in a mental health setting.
- Two additional years of graduate professional education (after the BA/BS degree) and two years of experience in a mental health setting.

Please note that an Associate’s degree is the bare educational minimum required; two years of college is not sufficient.

MHRS’s may provide Mental Health Services (including contributions to Assessment, but excluding Therapy), Targeted Case Management, Day Rehabilitative Services, Day Treatment Intensive Services, Crisis Intervention, Crisis Stabilization, Adult Residential, and Crisis Residential Treatment services.

**PROCESS:**

Those who qualify based on the above criteria may apply by completing the MHRS Verification Form (Attachment A) and faxing or emailing it to BHRS Quality Management (QM). BHRS QM may request proof of education and/or experience. Contracted providers are responsible for verifying the accuracy of and maintaining evidence of each provider’s qualifying experience and education and must ensure the form is accurate prior to submitting it to BHRS QM. If a provider is unsure of whether they qualify, they may consult with BHRS QM.

Please note that in all cases, the applicant must have a combined total of 8 years of education and experience in mental health as outlined above and in Attachment A.

If BHRS QM determines that the applicant meets the requirements to be an MHRS, the applicant will receive a written notification and the following rights and responsibilities apply:

- The MHRS will sign all documents using the title Mental Health Rehab Specialist (MHRS).
- If your agency is 5150 certified, the MHRS can apply for 5150 certification by completing and passing the 5150 training on the BHRS website.
- The MHRS may be designated as the “head-of-service” in an agency providing behavioral health services.
- The MHRS may co-sign adult residential weekly progress notes.

Please refer to the BHRS documentation manual for additional information.

Approved: Signature on File  
Stephen Kaplan, LCSW  
BHRS Acting Director