

## **New Mexico Sexual Assault Service Providers Core Standards – Therapy Services**

### **I. Policy Statement**

**Access to therapy is a critical service that Sexual Assault Service Providers (“the agency”) provide to those who have experienced sexual violence. It is the policy of the agency to provide access to therapy by employing staff therapists to provide these services, or by coordinating with other community service providers to which clients can be referred for therapy. At initial contact with clients, or as soon as possible, clients should be provided with a description of therapy services offered by the agency or services that can be accessed through referral, as well as the potential benefits of using therapy to heal from sexual violence.**

#### **Requirements for Therapy Services Provided by the Agency:**

- The agency will promote open access policies whereby clients can access a therapist within 24 hours or during the next business day after requesting therapy.
- Clients will be provided with a comprehensive assessment including their own self-identified resources and needs. The assessment will focus on behavioral health as well as key elements of overall health including sleep, diet, the use of caffeine and other substances, medications, and information about medical conditions and medication.
- Clients and therapists will develop client treatment plans together to outline measurable goals and objectives that clients want to achieve with therapy in language that clients can understand.
- The agency will promote the use of evidence-based best practices by therapists, and practices that are grounded in current knowledge to help clients address the neurobiology of trauma, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy.
- The agency will promote the use of evidence-based best practices by therapists to help clients address somatic challenges.
- Clients and therapists will evaluate progress with clients’ symptoms and health throughout the therapy process.
- Clients and therapists will develop a discharge plan together to identify progress made and resources for potential future needs.
- The agency will provide access to after-hours emergency services for clients who experience a mental health emergency through an agency crisis hotline or by providing information on other service providers who offer this service.

#### **Requirements for Therapists Employed by the Agency:**

- Therapists must possess a minimum of a master’s degree in counseling or a related field.
- Therapists must be currently licensed in the state of New Mexico to provide therapy services.
- Therapists must utilize a minimum of 2 hours of clinical supervision per month

(group or individual) provided by a therapist with independent licensure in the state of New Mexico.

- The agency will promote the best practice of a treatment team approach to maximize opportunities for peer supervision, quality improvement and clinician self-care and retention in light of repeated exposure to traumatic material.

**Requirements for Agencies that Refer Clients for Therapy Services:**

- The agency will screen providers for expertise in providing therapy for trauma-related issues, and preferably for expertise in sexual violence-related trauma.
- The agency will develop with providers a protocol for referring clients.
- The agency will offer to help clients with linking with providers for therapy, and will assist if the client chooses to have help.
- The agency will follow up with clients whenever possible regarding the referral and the clients' satisfaction with therapy services provided by other service providers.
- The agency will require proof of New Mexico licensure and insurance from providers.