

## Integrated Treatment for Co-Occurring Disorders Clinical Guideline

MVP Health Care® (MVP), as part of its continuing Quality Improvement Program, has adopted the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Integrated Treatment for Co-Occurring Disorders evidenced-based practices knowledge informing transformation (KIT) toolkit<sup>1</sup>. The full resource can be found at:

<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Integrated-Treatment-for-Co-Occurring-Disorders-Evidence-Based-Practices-EBP-KIT/SMA08-4366>

### Impact of The Condition

The combination of having a mental health and a substance use diagnosis is termed dual diagnosis, or co-occurring disorders. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 21.5 million U.S. adults experienced both a mental illness and a substance use disorder in 2022<sup>5</sup>. About a third of individuals who experience a substance use disorder during their lives will also experience a co-occurring mental health disorder and vice versa<sup>3</sup>. Co-occurring disorders include anxiety disorders, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), bipolar disorder, depression, personality disorders and schizophrenia. Persons who suffer with a substance use disorder and another mental illness often exhibit symptoms that are more persistent, severe, and resistant to treatment compared with persons who experience either disorder alone<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, persons with co-occurring disorders relapse more frequently and are more likely to be hospitalized, violent, incarcerated, homeless, and infected with HIV, hepatitis and other diseases.

### Summary of the Guidelines

Practitioners who work in the model of integrated treatment for co-occurring disorders screen, diagnose and treat both mental health and substance use disorders. As it can be challenging to distinguish symptoms of a mental illness from symptoms of a substance use disorder due to overlapping symptomatology, specialists of the multidisciplinary team are trained to conduct a thorough and comprehensive evaluation to obtain history and current symptoms as part of the diagnostic assessment, formulation, and individualized treatment plan. Treatment modalities include motivational interventions; cognitive-behavioral approach; individual, group and family counseling; self-help and support groups; and psychopharmacological interventions. The goals associated with integrated treatment include reduced substance use; improvement in psychiatric symptoms and functioning; decreased hospitalization; increased housing stability, fewer arrests; and improved quality of life.

Additional tools to assist providers with educating their patients on behavioral health conditions are available on the MVP Health Care website by following the link below.

[Quality Programs and Initiatives | MVP Health Care](#)

In conjunction with these guidelines, MVP Health Care offers Case Management for members with behavioral health conditions. If you would like to refer your patients to the Case

Management program, please call the MVP Case Management Department at **1-866-942-7966**.

This guideline is not intended to replace the role of clinical judgment by the physician in the management of this, or any other disease entity. It is an educational guideline to assist in the delivery of good medical care. All treatment decisions are ultimately up to the physician. Where medication recommendations are made, please refer to each health plan's formulary for coverage considerations.

MVP Health Care updates its clinical guidelines at least every two years. The review process is also initiated when new scientific evidence or national standards are published. Practitioners are alerted via the web site and by written notices from the plan via fax or newsletter. A hard copy of the clinical guideline can be requested by calling the Customer Care Center for Provider Services, Monday through Friday, 8:30 am – 5 pm, at [1-800-684-9286](tel:1-800-684-9286).

### References

1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Integrated Treatment for Co-Occurring Disorders Evidenced-based Practices (EBP) kit:  
<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Integrated-Treatment-for-Co-Occurring-Disorders-Evidence-Based-Practices-EBP-KIT/SMA08-4366>
2. National Alliance on Mental Illness. Substance Use Disorders: <https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Common-with-Mental-Illness/Substance-Use-Disorders>
3. National Institute of Mental Health. Substance Use and Co-Occurring Mental Disorders: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/substance-use-and-mental-health/>
4. National Institute on Drug Abuse. Co-Occurring Disorders and Health Conditions: <https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/co-occurring-disorders-health-conditions#mental>
5. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Co-Occurring Disorders and Other Health Conditions  
<https://www.samhsa.gov/substance-use/treatment/co-occurring-disorders>