

Innovative Counseling, Inc.

Grievance Procedures – Patient Rights

I. Written Policies:

- a. All patients of Innovative Counseling are afforded patient rights in accordance with state law and associates and any employees are to know and understand the posted patient rights.
- b. Right to file a grievance: Any patient who has reason to believe that he/she has been unfairly denied their stated rights may file a grievance without fear of reprisal in any way. Another person or employee may file on behalf of the patient.
- c. The clinic director will coordinate the efforts of Innovative Counseling to comply with the grievance regulations.

II. Procedures:

The following procedure is intended to provide fair, responsive, and respectful procedures available to clients to resolve any grievances.

- a. Clients Rights Specialist:
 - i. A therapist who is not an associate shall be appointed by the director to serve as client's rights specialist. Current client rights specialist is Cynthia R. Thomas, MSW. The specialist shall be trained by the clinical director in the required procedures and shall not have any involvement in the program or treatment of the specific client.

III. Informal Process of Resolution:

- a. Informal grievances may be submitted orally to the patient's therapist or consulting psychiatrist and they will initiate attempts to informally resolve the patient's grievance on his/her behalf.
- b. Clinic director or designee will serve as trained client's rights specialist for the informal resolution. If resolved informally, they will document the resolution of the grievance issue agreed upon and will give to patient, associate involved, and place a copy in the patient's record.
- c. The informal procedure is not a prerequisite for seeking formal procedure.
- d. May be used pending initiation of or as adjunct to the formal resolution process.
- e. Process shall be adapted to the particular needs and strengths of the client in order to assist them and/or agents in understanding the process as much as possible.

- f. The time limits of the formal process shall be suspended during informal resolution process until either party indicates they wish formal process to begin/resume.

IV. Formal Resolution Procedures:

- a. A formal grievance must be submitted in writing and shall include the name and address of the grievant as well as the name and address and relationship of anyone filing a grievance on the patient's behalf. Alternative methods of communication may be appropriate and client's right specialist will assist the client in filing the grievance.
- b. It must briefly describe the action and situation alleged to interfere with the patients rights and may be given to any staff member or associate.
- c. A grievance must be filed within 45 days of the grievant's awareness of the alleged rights violation. The clinic director may waive this requirement if extenuating circumstances exist to justify it.
- d. The client's rights specialist (who is not an employee and is contracted to fulfill this position) shall conduct an investigation of the grievance to determine its validity. All involved persons may submit evidence relevant to the grievance.
- e. Client's rights specialist shall be notified within 3 days. The specialist will gather evidence, relevant facts and the application of appropriate laws to those facts, and prepare a written report which determines whether a grievance is founded or unfounded. If founded, it shall address the specific actions or adjustments for resolving the issues and any appropriate timelines for doing so. Copies will be given to client or person acting in their behalf, file and clinical director. Report will be due within 30 days of filing a formal grievance.
- f. If the parties agree with the resolution plan, changes will be implemented within the suggested time frame. If there is disagreement over the report, the clinical director shall form the official position and shall state the basis for any modifications to the suggestions of the client's rights specialist. Copies will be given to the client and client's rights specialist along with a written notice explaining further administrative review available. Report is due within 10 days of the client's specialists report.
- g. Modifications for emergency situation: Grievance may be presented immediately in any form. The clients rights specialist will assigned with in 24 hours. Client's rights specialist report shall be submitted within 5 days of presentation of grievance. Written decision will be issued within 5 days of receipt of report.

V. Administrative Review:

Requests for administrative review may be made by the client or person acting on their behalf. Clinic director prepares a written summary of this request. Copies or original grievance, clients rights specialist report, written decision, and request for administrative review are submitted to the appropriate agency within 7 days of receiving the request in a non emergency situation and by overnight mail within 3 business days for emergency situations.

If grievant wishes to seek a state review of the county director's decision, such a request and supporting materials will be forwarded to the appropriate office. If a final review by specific state administrator is requested, director will assist grievant in preparing a written request if unable to do so on their own.