Mental Health Provider in Primary Care
Core Competencies

- Identifies problem quickly and accepts the patients point of view
- Limits the number of problems identified and applies patient strengths and resources to the problem
- Is change-focused and measures outcomes at every visit
- Focuses on functional outcomes
- Able to address motivational factors and readiness to change
- Accepts patient’s level of readiness to change and emphasizes patient role in change
- Interventions can be understood and supported by other primary care team members
- Effectively co-manages patient care with team members
- Shows understanding of relationship of medical and psychological systems within the cultural context of the individual patient
- Shows knowledge of psychotropic medicines and adherence strategies
- Adheres to evidence based pathways for behavioral health conditions, e.g. pain, depression, obesity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental Health Providers should not</th>
<th>Mental Health Providers should</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prefer specialty Mental health care</td>
<td>Become intrigued with the idea of helping a patient “function” better</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prefer treating psychiatric disorders</td>
<td>Be comfortable with noise and rooms with sinks (and uncomfortable furniture)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Like to spend an hour with a patient</td>
<td>Want to take a team approach to patient care</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perform best in a quiet working environment</td>
<td>Have training in behavioral and brief interventions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Want to be in charge of patient care</td>
<td>Be willing to help a patient of any age</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack training in behavioral and brief interventions</td>
<td>Think it’s better to spend 10 minutes with a patient than zero</td>
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From: “Integrating Primary Care and Behavioral Health Services: A Compass and a Horizon”. Kirk Strosahl, Ph.D and Patricia Robinson Ph.D. for the Collaborative Family Healthcare Association 9th Annual Conference, and

Skills Required for Mental Health Providers Integrated into Primary Care

1. Focused Assessment
2. Time Efficiency
3. Decisiveness with Limited Data
4. Cognitive-Behavioral Expertise
5. Skills for Enhancing Motivation to Change
6. Appreciation for a Population Health Focus
7. Good Communication with Physician Colleagues
8. Ability to Function as a Team Member
9. Tolerance for Position in a Hierarchical System
10. Flexible Hours/Availability
11. Understanding of Medical Conditions, Procedures and Medications

Key Factors in Establishing a Mental Health Service in Primary Care

1. Get Your Foot in the Door
2. Be a Team Member
   a. See all patients referred
   b. View referring physicians as your primary customers
   c. Communicate well
3. Build Key Relationships
   a. Sit in with physician colleagues
   b. “Act like” a primary care provider
   c. Assist coworkers
4. Persist in “Marketing” Mental Health Provider Services
   a. Designate a “Problem of the Week”
   b. Conduct daily check-ins
5. Be Available
6. Learn the Primary Care Culture
   a. Adopt the Primary Care pace
   b. Adopt a “Population Health” perspective
   c. Give feedback promptly and succinctly
7. Attend to Ethical Issues
8. Plan Around Financial Issues

From: