



Guide for SMI referrals

A mental illness is a condition that can affect how a person thinks, feels or acts. Such conditions may affect someone's ability to take care of themselves, stay safe or manage their life. Serious Mental Illness (SMI) is a term used in Arizona for people who have certain mental health diagnoses, and have difficulty managing their life because of that diagnosis. People with SMI may need extra help, they may be able to get mental health services like therapy, medicine and support from a team that can help them stay safe and feel better.

Anyone living in Arizona can ask to be assessed to see if they qualify for SMI determination benefits. The person should contact the Regional Behavioral Health Authority (RBHA) and request an SMI evaluation. After the evaluation is complete, an organization called Crisis Response Network (CRN) reviews the applicant's mental health records, talks with those involved in giving care, and may meet with applicants to get information needed for the decision making process.

Below is a checklist that may help you determine if someone is appropriate for an SMI evaluation:

- The person should be at least 17.5 years old and live in Arizona or plan to live in Arizona
- The person has been diagnosed with one or more SMI eligible conditions (see SMI form)
- The person can have both an SMI and non-SMI diagnosis, and still be SMI eligible.
- The person may have a history of mental health treatment, like outpatient medication management, counseling, or inpatient psychiatric hospitalization.
- The person has severe problems functioning in one or more areas, because of the SMI eligible conditions (CRN psychologists determine if this is due to the SMI diagnosis or a different condition)

There are two areas where a person may have difficulty functioning:

1) Managing Daily Life

- Taking care of oneself might be affected. A person may be unable to feed, clothe or bathe themselves, find a safe place to live, or get needed healthcare.
- A person may not understand that they need to, or may refuse to take care of their health. Other people might have to do any of these things for them.
- A person may have trouble in roles with others including have problems in their relationships.
- A person may have a hard time getting and/or staying in school or getting and/or keeping a job.

2) Risky Behavior

- A person may (in the past or currently) be thinking about or actually be hurting or harming themselves or others.
- A person may be thinking about dying or killing themselves.
- A person might have used crisis services like going to the emergency room or calling the crisis line.
- A person might have needed to go into the hospital one or more times because of mental illness.
- A person might feel out of control, have a hard time following laws or rules, or have a hard time acting in ways that a lot of people would consider "normal."
- A person may be using drugs or alcohol to deal with mental or physical conditions.