

Mental Health Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Terms

ACT – acceptance and commitment therapy

AEB – as evidenced by

ALOS – average length of stay

AMA – against medical advice; in the US, insurance companies may refuse to pay for care when patients discharge AMA

AOC – administrator on call

BMI – body mass index

BPS – biopsychosocial, often refers to a biopsychosocial assessment

Bx – behavior

CBT – cognitive behavior therapy

CPS – Child Protective Services (a division within the Department of Health and Human Services)

CPT – Cognitive Processing Therapy; a type of manualized CBT that is used specifically for PTSD; consists of 12 sessions of 60-90 minutes each that focus on evaluating and changing the thoughts relating to trauma; includes homework for the client consisting of writing assignments and worksheets

DBT – dialectical behavior therapy; often used with suicidal people

D/C – discharge (termination of services)

DOB – date of birth

DTs – delirium tremens (severe alcohol withdrawal symptoms)

Dual Dx – dual diagnosis: mental health diagnosis + substance use disorder diagnosis

DV – domestic violence; older term

Dx – diagnosis

ED – eating disorder

EMDR - eye movement desensitization and reprocessing; often used for people recovering from trauma

HI – homicidal ideation

HLOC – higher level of care

IBW – ideal body weight

IOP – intensive outpatient program

IPV – intimate partner violence

IT – individual therapy

LCSW - licensed clinical social worker

LMFT - licensed marriage and family therapist

LOC – level of care

NAMI – National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

NIMH – National Institute for Mental Health

NP – nurse practitioner

NSSI – non-suicidal self-injury

OCD – obsessive-compulsive disorder

Pedis – children (pediatric clients), pronounced “pee-dees”

PHP - partial hospitalization program

PN – progress note

PO – parole officer

PRN – as needed, when necessary

Pt – patient

PTSD – post-traumatic stress disorder

RD – registered dietitian

ROI – release of information

RT – recreational therapist, recreation therapy

RTC – residential treatment center

SH – self-harm

SI – suicidal ideation

SIB – self-injurious behavior

SUD – Substance Use Disorder

Sup – supervisor

Sx – symptoms

THX - Therapist

TMS – transcranial magnetic stimulation

TT – treatment team

Tx – treatment

UA – urinalysis

UDS – urine drug screen

WNL – within normal limits

Mental Health Terminology

These terms and phrases are common buzzwords in mental health settings but often are not clearly defined.

Grounding – the process of feeling safe, stable, and secure or “grounded” in your body in the present moment; resulting in a regulated nervous system

Process Groups – mental health groups that center on processing

Processing – a talk therapy strategy that uses spoken, conversational interaction to help a client understand themselves and their experiences by analyzing past experiences and creating a coherent life narrative that fosters new insights