

CareCertify LLC

Mental Health Clinic Training Series

MHC-01

The Outpatient Mental Health Clinic & 245I.20

Participant Guide

Mental Health Clinic Training Series · Audience: Clinic Staff · Clinicians · Practitioners · Front-Office · Support · CE Hours: 1.0

A Coordinated Team Within Clear Standards

Outpatient mental health clinics provide diagnostic assessment, psychotherapy, and other services to people seeking mental health care. In Minnesota, these clinics are certified under Minn. Stat. 245I.20, within the Mental Health Uniform Service Standards Act (Chapter 245I), which sets standards for the treatment team, qualifications, training, documentation, and client rights.

This guide gives you the map: the services, the team and certification requirements, the roles across the clinic, and how clients move through intake and care. Whether you're clinical or non-clinical, knowing how the clinic works helps you play your part well.

Learning Objectives — by the end of this module you will be able to:

- Describe what an outpatient mental health clinic provides
- Explain mental health clinic certification (245I.20)
- Identify the treatment team and clinic roles
- Describe intake and case assignment
- Explain where you fit and the standards that apply

Section 1: What an Outpatient Mental Health Clinic Is

An outpatient mental health clinic provides services such as diagnostic assessment, individual, family, and group psychotherapy, and other mental health services to people in the community. Clinics serve children, adults, and families across a range of mental health needs.

Care is delivered by a team — mental health professionals, clinical trainees, behavioral health practitioners, and support staff — within clear standards. The clinic's purpose is to help people recover and thrive while living in their communities.

Section 2: Mental Health Clinic Certification (245I.20)

Outpatient mental health clinics are certified under Minn. Stat. 245I.20, within the Mental Health Uniform Service Standards Act (Chapter 245I). Certification sets standards for the treatment team, services, intake and

case assignment, supervision, documentation, and client rights, and is administered by the Department of Human Services. These standards exist to protect clients and ensure quality, consistent care.

Section 3: The Treatment Team and Required Disciplines

Under 245I.20, a certified mental health clinic's treatment team must include at least four mental health professionals. At least two must be employed by or under contract with the clinic for at least 35 hours per week each, and must specialize in different mental health disciplines. The team must include a psychologist qualified as a mental health professional and a physician or nurse qualified as a mental health professional. This multidisciplinary team brings different expertise together for clients.

Section 4: Roles Across the Clinic

A clinic runs on many roles. Mental health professionals provide assessment, diagnosis, therapy, and supervision. Clinical trainees and behavioral health practitioners provide services under supervision. Front-office and reception staff are the first contact for clients — their warmth, professionalism, and attention to safety shape the client's experience. Support, billing, and records staff keep the clinic running, accessible, and compliant. Every role, clinical and non-clinical, contributes to good care.

Section 5: Intake, Case Assignment, and the Responsible Professional

Under 245I.20, the clinic must have policies for intake and case assignment — reviewing a client's condition and need for treatment, the services the clinic offers, and other resources, to determine whether it can appropriately accept the client. Each case is assigned to a treatment team member competent in the needed service, and a mental health professional remains responsible for each client's case, documented from start to end. Good intake matches each client to the right care.

Section 6: Competence and Supervision

Quality depends on matching staff to clients appropriately. The clinic has a procedure to identify and document each treatment team member's areas of competence, and assigns clients to staff competent in the needed clinical service and the client's characteristics. Clinical trainees and behavioral health practitioners work under the supervision of mental health professionals. Everyone works within their role and competence and escalates when something is beyond it.

Section 7: Training and Client Protections

The clinic operates within the broader Chapter 245I standards: required training for staff (including the 30 hours before direct contact for practitioners and behavioral aides under 245I.05), documentation standards, and client rights and confidentiality protections (covered in the next lessons). These standards apply across the clinic and exist to keep clients safe and care effective.

Section 8: Where You Fit on the Team

Whether you provide therapy, schedule appointments, or manage records, you're part of a coordinated team within the standards of 245I.20 and Chapter 245I. Work within your role, communicate, and escalate beyond your scope. Every role — clinical and non-clinical — shapes a client's experience, safety, and care. Your everyday work is part of how the clinic helps people recover.

Key Terms

| Term | What it means |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Outpatient mental health clinic | A certified clinic providing assessment, therapy, and mental health services. |
| 245I.20 | Minnesota's mental health clinic certification statute. |
| Treatment team | The multidisciplinary team required by certification. |
| Mental health professional | The highest qualified clinician, responsible for cases. |
| Intake / case assignment | Determining appropriateness and matching clients to staff. |
| Responsible professional | The mental health professional responsible for a client's case. |

Check Your Understanding

1. What services does an outpatient mental health clinic provide?
2. Under what statute are mental health clinics certified?
3. What does the required treatment team include?
4. How does intake and case assignment work?
5. How do clinical and non-clinical roles both contribute?

What's Next

Looking ahead

Next, MHC-02: Client Rights, Informed Consent & Intake covers clients' rights and the intake experience.