

# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

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*TO CREATING MENTAL HEALTH  
TREATMENT PLANS*



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# **Every client needs an individually tailored treatment plan.**

When a mental health professional creates a comprehensive treatment plan specially designed to meet their client's needs, they give their client directions towards growth & healing. Although not all mental health professionals are required to produce treatment plans, it's a beneficial practice to both the healthcare team member, & the client.

## **In this guide, we'll show you:**



**Why Mental Health Treatment Plans are Essential**



**How to Create Effective Psychiatric Treatment Plans**



**Sample Treatment Plans**

# What is a treatment plan?

Psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, mental health counselors, social workers & other behavioral health professionals use treatment planning as a tool to effectively treat clients.

Without a clear plan in place, it can be hard to track progress, stay organized & keep a record of individual client care.

A treatment plan is a detailed plan tailored to the individual client & is a powerful tool for engaging the client in their treatment.

**Treatment plans usually follow a simple format & typically include the following information:**

- ✓ A diagnosis of the current mental health problem
- ✓ High-priority treatment goals
- ✓ Interventions
- ✓ A timeline for treatment progress
- ✓ Space for tracking progress

# What is the purpose of a treatment plan?

**The purpose of a treatment plan is to guide a client toward reaching goals.**

A treatment plan also helps the healthcare team monitor progress & make treatment adjustments when necessary. You might think of a treatment plan as a map that points the way towards a healthier condition. Without a treatment plan, both the client & healthcare team have no clear direction on how to improve behaviors, negative thinking patterns & other problems impacting the client's life.



**Research shows that focus, & structure are critical parts of positive therapy outcomes.**

**Model & technique factors account for 15% of a change in therapy.**



# **GOAL-SETTING AS PART OF A TREATMENT PLAN HELPS CLIENTS:**

- ✓ **STAY MOTIVATED**
- ✓ **BOOST CONFIDENCE**
- ✓ **CONCENTRATE**
- ✓ **AVOID FEELING OVERWHELMED**
- ✓ **ACHIEVE MORE**
- ✓ **FEEL SATISFIED**
- ✓ **AVOID CONFUSION**
- ✓ **SET PRIORITIES**

- Treatment plans help therapists & behavioral health staff with documentation.
- Treatment plans contain essential information about a client's progress in a clear & organized format with details such as dates, names, & measurable goals.

**With this information readily available,  
writing a progress note becomes an  
easier part of the job.**

# The Goals & Interventions of Mental Health Treatment Plans

Treatment planning is a team effort between the client & the healthcare staff. Both parties work together to create a shared vision & set attainable goals & objectives. A goal is a general statement of what the client wishes to accomplish

## Goal Examples:



**The client will learn to cope with negative feelings without using substances.**



**The client will learn how to build positive communication skills.**



**The client will learn how to express anger towards their spouse in a healthy way.**

An intervention, on the other hand, is what staff are doing to facilitate the client's journey toward reaching those goals.

## Intervention Examples:



**Therapist will provide substance abuse counseling to a client with alcoholism, to help them maintain sobriety.**



**The nurse will administer antidepressant medication to assist in relief of depressive symptoms.**



**The healthcare clinician will encourage the client to complete a daily assertiveness log with the goal to learn healthy communication skills.**

# Tips for Identifying Goals & Interventions for Patients

Every clinician is different & so is every treatment plan. A healthcare professional must use their skills to help a client establish the best goals & objectives for their unique condition.

**Clinicians can ask themselves these questions to help uncover the best goals for their clients:**

- **Does the client have unhealthy practices or behaviors?**
- **What are some positive ways to make changes to unhealthy behavior?**
- **How can I help the client adopt new behaviors?**

**After you've realized the goals, you can determine the objectives by asking yourself:**

- **What does the client need to do to accomplish the goals?**
- **What interventions can I perform to help them achieve these goals?**

# Clients play an important role in developing their treatment plan.



Although you will use your professional knowledge to facilitate treatment planning, clients must participate in the following ways:

- **The client must acknowledge/accept that they need treatment to progress on the path to wellness**
- **They must understand where the areas for improvement are & what they can do to help themselves, as well as what the staff can do to facilitate the process.**
- **They must be willing to learn skills to solve the problem in a healthy way.**

A **treatment plan** is simple but specific. Although treatment plans vary, a treatment plan template or form generally **contains the following fields**:

- ➡ **Psychiatric Diagnosis:** Used as a reference to create goals, interventions, etc. Add any pertinent medical diagnosis being actively treated (TJC/CMS requirement).
- ➡ **Short/Long Term Goals:** Must be measureable & timed.
- ➡ **Active Problems Being Addressed**
- ➡ **Interventions:** Things the staff are doing/providing to make sure the client is reaching the established goals. Interventions need to be directly related to meeting the goals (which are based upon the active problems).
- ➡ **Signatures:** The final section of the treatment plan is where the counselor & the client sign their names. This signifies that the client participated in developing the treatment plan & agrees with the content.

# Mental Health Treatment Plan

## Tips & Reminders

There are no set rules for developing a treatment plan for your client because every plan is unique. However, we'll look at a few tips to help you through the goal-setting & planning process.



- ✓ **Goals:** Do the goals address the listed issues? Are they attainable during treatment? Does the client understand the goals as written? Does the client seem ready to change & accomplish the goals?
- ✓ **Interventions:** Do the interventions address the goals? Are they realistic for the client's current situation? Does the client understand what is expected of them & does the staff understand what the client's expectations are about the plan?
- ✓ **General:** Is the treatment plan customized to suit the client based on their unique skills, goals, lifestyle, & background? Has the client participated in developing the plan? Is the plan dated & signed by all parties who were involved.

## 1. MEASURE SUCCESS

To evaluate the effectiveness of the treatment plan, you need to keep score of how the client is doing. Ask the client to count & keep track of their thoughts, feelings & behaviors in a log so you can monitor their progress.

## 2. SET SMART GOALS

Work with your clients to set goals & objectives they can actually reach. Use the rules of SMART for guidance.

**SMART** stands for the following: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Based.



## 3. SET GOALS THAT MOTIVATE

Patients are more likely to complete objectives & work towards reaching a goal if the goal is personally important to them. If a goal does not add value or meaning to their life, they will not have the motivation to work through objectives.

# How a Mental Health Treatment Plan Complements Other Notes

**Treatment plans** not only help the client, but they also serve the entire behavioral health team. A treatment plan is a tool that promotes good communication between staff members & helps provide documentation necessary for billing. As part of a client's medical health record, treatment plans also help facilities comply with federal & state laws.



**Let's look at a few ways mental health treatment plans assist with recordkeeping.**

# 1. PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION



*A **psychiatric evaluation** involves using tools to measure & observe a client's behavior. By evaluating a client, a clinician can determine a diagnosis & develop a treatment plan. A treatment plan helps organize this information in one neat document. The treatment plan also allows for quick reference of the initial evaluation when staff members or clinicians need to revisit the evaluation in the future.*

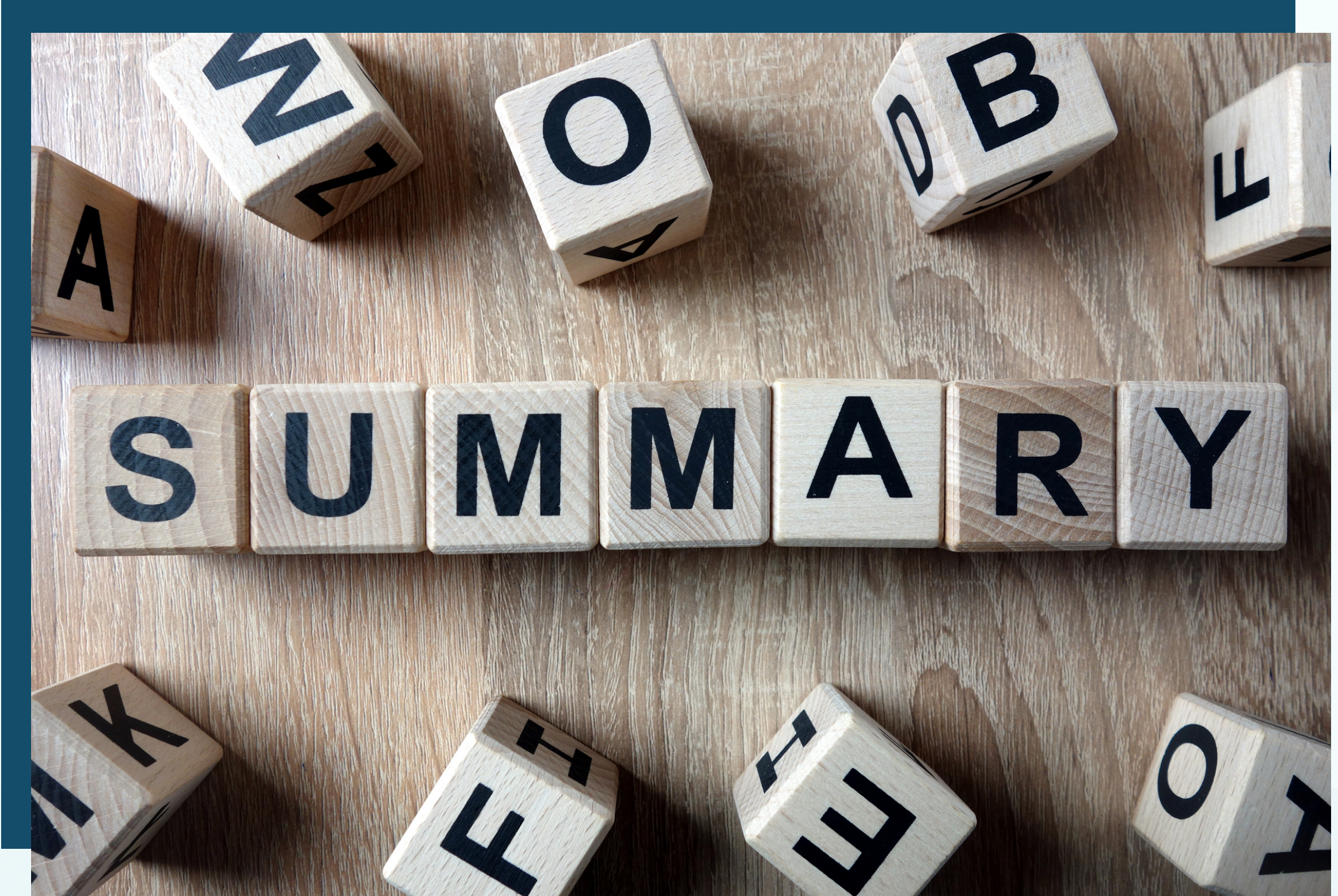
## 2. PROGRESS NOTES

Treatment plans & progress notes tend to go hand in hand because progress notes need to incorporate one or more treatment objectives. Progress notes are essential for communicating client care & getting reimbursed for services. A treatment plan helps staff meet progress note requirements & keep track of how a client is doing.

### **Progress notes typically include:**

- ☒ **The treatment plan**
- ☒ **Any changes in the client's condition**
- ☒ **Descriptions of a client's response to treatment**
- ☒ **The outcome of treatment**

### 3. DISCHARGE SUMMARY



*When clients are ready to leave a treatment program, a **discharge summary** is needed to document how the patient completed treatment and what their plan for continuing care is. A treatment plan can guide the writing process when it's time to produce an accurate, detailed discharge summary.*

# CREATE A MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT PLAN WITH ICANOTES



Electronic health record (EHR) software allows medical professionals to store vital documents, such as treatment plans, evaluations & discharge summaries digitally in an organized, user-friendly format.

**ICANotes is EHR software designed specifically for the behavioral health field.**

With ICANotes, you can easily & quickly create unique treatment plans for your clients. You can also use ICANotes' EHR software to record the initial assessment, write progress notes & create a discharge summary all in the same place.

# CREATE A MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT PLAN WITH ICANOTES

*The treatment plan module  
includes the following features:*



**Easy-to-use interface:** An intuitive, user-friendly interface makes it easy to create a treatment plan in a few simple steps with minimal typing.



**Comprehensive lists:** Users can select from a list of 32 common mental health problems, long-term & short-term goals for each problem & also intervention content for each goal. Users can also customize treatment plans if problems or goals are not on the lists.

# CREATE A MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT PLAN WITH ICANOTES

Proper documentation does not need to be a stressful, time-consuming part of the job. **ICANotes** solves many of the problems of traditional paperwork & offers benefits such as:

- Greater accuracy
- Convenient prescribing
- Improved communication
- Consolidated information
- Reduced billing issues
- Fewer hours spent documenting
- Less stress in the workplace

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