



Tennessee Department of Children's Services

## Protocol for DCS Regional Mental Health Clinicians to Conduct a Mental Health Diagnostic Assessment for Custodial Youth

### **Applicability**

This protocol applies to all DCS Psychologists and DCS Regional Mental Health Clinicians. For the purposes of this Protocol, these individuals will be collectively referred to as "DCS Regional Mental Health Clinician" or "DCS Clinician." The DCS Regional Mental Health Clinician is independently licensed and can provide a mental health diagnostic assessment within their scope of practice. This Protocol does not include the provision of direct therapy services by a DCS Regional Mental Health Clinician.

### **Purpose**

Custodial children and youth awaiting placement may need a new or updated mental health diagnostic assessment to be accepted for placement at a residential treatment facility. The purpose of this assessment is to obtain a biopsychosocial history, assess current mental health functioning, determine any applicable Diagnostic and Statistical Manual ("DSM") diagnoses, and make treatment recommendations. In appropriate circumstances, DCS Regional Mental Health Clinicians may conduct these assessments for children/youth that do not have a recent assessment to expedite placement.

### **Obtaining and Conducting a Mental Health Diagnostic Assessment**

1. The custodial child/youth's DCS Worker sends a request for a mental health diagnostic assessment via secure email to the DCS Director of Psychology or designee. The request shall be accompanied by any existing mental health records or prior assessments. The DCS Director of Psychology/designee will review the request and determine if a mental health diagnostic assessment is needed.
2. If the DCS Director of Psychology/designee determines that a mental health diagnostic assessment is not needed, s/he will notify the DCS Worker. If the DCS Director of Psychology/designee determines that the custodial child/youth needs a mental health diagnostic assessment, s/he will assign the referral to a DCS Regional Mental Health Clinician.
3. After a DCS Regional Mental Health Clinician receives an assigned referral, the DCS Clinician will coordinate with the child/youth's DCS Worker to obtain appropriate signatures on forms [CS-04235, Consent to Treatment](#) and [CS-0559, Authorization of Release of Information and HIPAA PHI To or From DCS and Notification of Release](#). The DCS Clinician will also review any documentation provided prior to completing an assessment.

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Current Effective Date: 01/01/23

Supplemental to: None

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4. After receiving signed copies of the form [CS-4235, Consent to Treatment](#), the DCS Regional Mental Health Clinician will schedule and conduct a mental health diagnostic assessment on the custodial child/youth. The assessment may be conducted via telehealth or in person.
5. The DCS Regional Mental Health Clinician will prepare a report of the mental health diagnostic assessment that includes any applicable DSM diagnoses and treatment recommendations. Upon receiving signed copies of the form [CS-0559, Authorization of Release of Information and HIPAA PHI To or From DCS and Notification of Release](#), the DCS Clinician shall provide the report to the custodial child's DCS Worker within three (3) business days of completion of the assessment.

**Documentation, Access, and Storage**

1. The DCS Regional Mental Health Clinician shall maintain a patient record for each child or youth seen for an assessment. This record shall include, at a minimum, the form [CS-4235, Consent to Treatment](#), the mental health diagnostic assessment, and any associated clinician notes.
2. The custodial child's patient record shall be stored in a locked and secure area and maintained separately from the child's case file. Any access to the child/youth's mental health information will be in accordance with DCS policies and procedures, state statutes, and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements.
3. Patient records shall be retained in accordance with the applicable Records Disposition Authority.