INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT PROGRAM (IOP)

Frequently Asked Questions

Discover the strength within.
MY CHILD IS BEING REFERRED TO SOMETHING CALLED IOP. WHAT IS THAT?

IOP is an acronym for Intensive Outpatient Program. Insurance providers and the medical and behavioral health communities often use the acronym (IOP) to describe a highly focused, short-term therapeutic program to address behavioral health issues. IOP can serve as a **bridge for stepping up** to more intensive therapeutic services to help prevent a more restrictive level of care (such as hospitalization or residential treatment) or **for stepping down** from a more restrictive level of care (such as hospitalization or residential treatment).

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT GREAT CIRCLE AND ITS INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT PROGRAM?

As Missouri’s most comprehensive provider of behavioral health services, Great Circle is fully committed to a mission of strength and service for children and families. It is the one and only reason for our existence, and what we passionately focus on daily through more than 40 behavioral health programs in Missouri and beyond. Great Circle is in this for the long haul. Because the need for behavioral health services continues to grow each year, we are continually striving to do more. We have more than doubled our program outreach and more than tripled our geographic footprint, and we’re on track to touch the lives of more than 38,000 children and families in 2018 alone.

Here are 10 ways our IOP program can best serve your child and you:

1. You will immediately find a welcoming environment guided by Great Circle’s Model of Care. Helping kids and families is our business.
2. We are uniquely equipped and honored to serve both younger children, ages 6 – 12, and youth ages 13 – 18.
3. We provide specialized tracks for youth who struggle with self-harm or substance use, and children who have been adopted or have a history of trauma, poor coping skills, or dangerous or impulsive behaviors.
4. We tailor the treatment plan to meet the specific needs of your child and family circumstances. Our belief is that every family is different, and individualized attention is vital to success.
5. As we work through all aspects of our program with your child, we actively seek and encourage participation of the whole family.
6. Our clinicians select the evidence-based modalities that will provide the most effective treatment possible for your child.
7. Our care team makes an investment in your child, getting to know him or her and, by doing so, helping them discover their unique strengths and capabilities to deal with difficult circumstances and challenging situations.
8. Discharge planning starts on day one. Our commitment is to help you and your child build a vision for the future and plan for success following treatment.
9. When discharge day arrives, our care team works with you to ensure a smooth transition with your family and your child’s community (such as school, therapist, psychiatrist).
10. We help connect your family to additional programs and service providers that support your child’s journey toward better mental health. That includes connecting you, if you desire, to other Great Circle services, such as individual or family counseling through one of our Community Counseling Centers across the state.
WHAT TYPES OF KIDS AND FAMILIES DO YOU WORK WITH MOST FREQUENTLY IN IOP?

In one word – ALL. That’s because, over a lifetime, no one is immune from behavioral health issues, just as physical health issues can impact anyone. Great Circle offers the most comprehensive behavioral health services in Missouri because we know it’s important for all children and families, from all walks of life and life’s circumstances. As we continue to grow our services to meet needs, we can be an option for all kids and families who find themselves facing behavioral concerns stemming from many life challenges, such as bullying or being bullied, peer issues, parent or family struggles, and traumatic life events.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BEHAVIORS GREAT CIRCLE CAN HELP WITH?

First, it is important to know that signs of behavior change do not equal a diagnosis. It is always best to seek the care of a behavioral healthcare professional. Some signs that a child, teen or individual may be struggling with a behavioral health challenge can include:

- **Mood changes**: feelings of sadness, lack of motivation or withdrawal that last at least two weeks, or mood swings that cause problems in relationships at home or school.
- **Intense feelings**: overwhelming aggression, anger or fear for no reason, sometimes accompanied by a racing heart or fast breathing that interferes with daily activities.
- **Physical harm**: engaging in self-harm by cutting, burning or having suicidal thoughts or actions.
- **Substance abuse**: using drugs or alcohol to try to cope with feelings and situations.
- **Difficulty concentrating**: trouble focusing or sitting still which is causing poor performance in school or at work.
- **Unexplained weight loss**: sudden loss of appetite, frequent vomiting or poor body image.
- **Behavior change**: drastic changes in behavior, sleeping habits or personality, including dangerous or risky behaviors.

HOW DOES IOP WORK AT GREAT CIRCLE?

Your child will work to develop and improve skills to work through his or her unique obstacles. Our clinical staff works with you to develop a treatment plan designed for your child’s goals. Our program focuses on reducing your child’s presenting symptoms through a combination of structured group therapies, medical services, case management and other services. Using a strength-based approach, our goal is to help every client gain the skills they need for success in a lower level of care. An example would be living at home, yet continuing to receive individual or family counseling as needed.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE STRENGTH-BASED?

Our staff members invest in getting to know your child and his or her strengths, interests and talents. The underlying philosophy of this approach is to help each child identify his or her unique capabilities by developing healthy relationships with staff. Through these daily interactions, staff in turn will help your child become more aware of how his or her individual strengths can help develop and apply strong coping skills during situations he or she may find difficult or challenging.

WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF YOUR STAFF?

Great Circle’s clinicians, case managers and milieu staff are highly trained and have significant experience delivering a variety of intensive outpatient services. All therapeutic services are led by a licensed medical or mental health professional (nurse or psychiatric provider).
HOW LONG WILL MY CHILD BE IN THE IOP PROGRAM AND WHAT WILL AN AVERAGE DAY LOOK LIKE?
Many factors affect the length and intensity of your child’s involvement in the program, including your child's presenting concerns and his or her progress in treatment. Depending on those needs, your child may receive services 3-6 hours per day, and 3-5 days per week. The length of treatment can vary from 4-6 weeks.
After an initial psychiatric and medical assessment, treatment days consist of a tailored mix of individual, group and family therapy. Our staff also meets regularly to discuss medication management, your child's progress toward treatment goals and potential barriers, discharge planning and coordination of care with other support services.

HOW DOES GREAT CIRCLE INVOLVE FAMILIES IN TREATMENT?
Great Circle’s priority is to successfully stabilize your child in your home and community, and success requires your help and support. We strongly encourage you to play an active role from admissions to discharge, and regularly engage with us during the treatment process. We also believe family therapy is a key part of the process, so we work with your current insurance provider to make sure you have access to those services.

HOW ARE THESE SERVICES PAID FOR?
Great Circle accepts most insurance plans. We can help you learn more about the benefits available to you and work with your insurance representatives to guide you through the application and authorization process required for admission. During your child’s treatment, your insurance company also will conduct independent reviews regarding treatment progress.
St. Louis County and Jackson County residents may be eligible for assistance through funding Great Circle has received through either the St. Louis County Children's Fund or the Jackson County Community Children’s Fund.

WILL YOU HELP ME COORDINATE MY CHILD'S CARE AFTER DISCHARGE?
Absolutely. We understand how important a smooth transition at discharge is for your child. We can help coordinate, as needed, with your primary care physician or pediatrician, other medical or social support providers, and your child’s school.
We also can work with you and your child to secure individual and/or family therapy through our community counseling centers or other outside providers.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT IOP AT GREAT CIRCLE?
Please call our toll-free number, 1-844-424-3577 (GCHELPS), and we will direct you to a representative who can answer your questions about IOP, as well as other Great Circle services.

Contact us for more information:
1-844-3577 (GCHELPS)
greatcircle.org