



CLIENT HANDBOOK

WellStone is North Alabama's largest and most comprehensive behavioral healthcare provider. We treat children, adolescents and adults who face mental illness, substance abuse and a broad range of obstacles to health and well-being. Our team works with you, with your medical providers and across our own programs to connect you to counseling, training and resources to restore hope.

This handbook is designed to help you learn more about the services that are available to you and how we can help you. Learn more about your rights, appointments, and payment options, as well as our values, policies, and mission. Most importantly, find out how we will be there for you when you need it most. Count on us to be confidential, supportive, and solution-oriented.

Thank you for choosing WellStone to support your journey to well-being.



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About Us

Our Mission and Vision

WellStone exists to restore hope and healthy living by providing comprehensive behavioral health services in the community.

Our Values

Caring: We are compassionate toward those impacted by behavioral health disorders.

Committed: We are dedicated to one another through collaboration and teamwork.

Can-Do: We are optimistic problem-solvers who do what it takes to get the job done.



Emergencies

If you have a mental health-related emergency in the evening, on a weekend or on a holiday, call our 24/7 response lines and ask for the mental health staff on-call.

Cullman: 256-734-4688

Please note, therapists are “on-call” on a rotating basis, and the therapist returning your call may not be your regular therapist. Problems that are not emergencies should be discussed with your regular therapist during your scheduled appointments.



Services

Outpatient Counseling

Our outpatient counseling services are available for a wide variety of behavioral health conditions, including adjustment issues, depression, anxiety, bi-polar disorder, and psychosis. Outpatient services are available on an individual basis or in a group setting. Sessions are conducted according to a mutually agreed upon plan of care and are typically available weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly.

Outreach Counseling

Our outreach counseling services are provided by a team of mental health professionals and clinical support personnel in the home and in the community. Outreach counseling is available for more serious behavioral health conditions that often increase the possibility of hospitalization. Outreach sessions are available on an individual basis and are available once or multiple times a week. Sessions are conducted according to a mutually agreed upon plan of care with the goal of stepping down to less intensive services when possible.

Day Treatment

Our day treatment programs are available to those who require a focus on basic living skills in a structured day setting.

Nova Center for Youth and Family

Nova Center provides child and adolescent services in individual, group, and school-based settings.

[Outpatient Counseling](#) is available for a wide variety of behavioral health conditions, including depression, anxiety and attention deficit disorder, and adjustment issues with family, friends, and school difficulties.

[Outreach Counseling](#) is available for more serious behavioral health conditions that could increase the possibility of a young person being removed from their home.

[The Launch Program](#) is an additional outreach service of the Nova Center that helps out-of-school youth ages 16-24 reach their educational and career goals.

[Treatment Services](#) for outpatient counseling substance abuse conditions are available on an individual basis and intensive outpatient counseling is available in a group setting during evening hours. These interventions typically last several weeks and may include multiple sessions per week until the individual is ready to step-down to a less intensive level of care. Referrals are accepted from a wide variety of community partners, including the juvenile justice system.

[New Horizons Recovery Center](#)

New Horizons Recovery Center provides counseling and treatment for adults facing substance use disorders.

[Comprehensive Assessments](#) serve as the first step in determining recovery goals and the appropriate treatment program.

[Outpatient Groups](#) focus on treatment of substance abuse disorders. (Minimum 2 hours per week)

[Intensive Outpatient Groups](#) address substance abuse dependence and meet for a minimum of nine hours of treatment per week.

[Continuing Care Groups](#) help sustain recovery upon completion of the Outpatient or Intensive Outpatient Program. (Minimum 2 hours per week)

[Individual Counseling](#) is offered on as-needed basis.

[Psychiatric Services](#)

Psychiatric services are provided by a group of board-certified psychiatrists and certified nurse practitioners who provide both evaluation and ongoing monitoring for the prescription of medications when needed. Sessions are conducted according to a mutually agreed upon plan of care and are typically available monthly with the goal of stepping down to less intensive services when possible.

Nursing services are provided by a group of registered nurses as a supplement to the psychiatric services provided at WellStone. Nurses work collaboratively with primary care physicians and other caregivers as needed and are available in between sessions with the psychiatrist or nurse practitioner to problem solve and assist patients in managing their behavioral health condition and prescribed medications.



Client Rights

As a client of WellStone, Inc., you have a right to:

- Considerate, respectful, humane, adequate, and appropriate care from our staff in a safe environment at all times and under all circumstances.
- Receive services regardless of race, gender identification, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, national origin, social status, diagnostic category, or length of residence in the Cullman area.
- Receive accurate, easily understood information during every aspect of service delivery to facilitate the decision-making process regarding treatment.
- The provision of services in a manner that is responsive to and respectful of your unique characteristics, needs and abilities.
- Confidentiality of all information both inside and outside of the treatment setting and access to consumer records.
- Choose to give or withhold informed consent and to receive copies of any informed consents authorized.
- Access to complaint/grievance procedures for dispute resolutions.
- Statement of applicable charges/fees, consequences for non-payment and limitations on duration of services.
- Be informed of the need for parental or guardian consent for treatment, if appropriate.
- Be fully informed concerning services in verbiage altered to the consumer's condition and ability to understand.
- Participation in research or experimentation.
- Be free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and mistreatment.
- Privacy of mail, telephone communications and email.
- Access courts and attorneys
- Be informed of commitment, requirements, and length of commitment, and to receive appropriate services after commitment.
- Availability of an adequate number of competent, qualified clinical staff to ensure appropriate execution of your service plan.
- Refuse services.

- Be informed of accessing rights protection.
- Be free of punishment, physical or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, harassment, threats, exploitation, coercion, or fiduciary abuse.
- Be informed consent for specialized equipment.
- Report without fear of retribution, any instances of perceived abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Enforce rights through courts or appropriate processes.
- Personal liberty and to the same general rights as any citizen of the US and the state of Alabama.
- Ask about therapist's qualifications and express preferences regarding the selection of service provider(s).
- Be informed of the person who has the primary responsibility for your care.
- Participate fully in all decisions related to the treatment and care provided.
- Access the provision of care as according to accepted clinical practice standards within the least restrictive and most accommodating environment possible.
- Be informed of the nature of possible significant adverse effects of the recommended treatment, including any appropriate and available alternative treatments, services and/or providers.
- Be informed of any potential restriction of rights that may be imposed.
- Be informed of all program rules and/or responsibilities prior to the initiation of care and consequences for non-compliance.



Payment of Fees

WellStone is a public, non-profit corporation and not a state agency. We are committed to providing services to those in need while also satisfying our legal obligations. In order to reach these goals, WellStone adjusts fees according to a client's ability to pay. It is WellStone's policy to collect payment for all services rendered. We require that clients are current and up-to-date in their financial accounts at the time services are rendered.

Your health insurance, including Medicare and Medicaid, will be filed by WellStone as a courtesy. Information obtained at the first visit allows you to know what will be covered by third-party payments and what you as the client will be expected to pay. Fees are expected to be paid at the time of each appointment. Further explanation of fees and payment schedules is outlined in our Payment for Services Policy which is available upon request.



Appointments

Your appointment time has been reserved specifically for you, and it is important that you keep all scheduled appointments. If you become ill or find you cannot come to your appointment, please call WellStone at **256-734-4688** Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. as far in advance as possible to cancel or reschedule your appointment. It is very important to call us at least 24 hours in advance of your scheduled appointment so we can schedule other appointments. Otherwise, you may be charged for the time that was scheduled for you.

In an effort to maintain the medical providers' schedules to the best of our ability, WellStone has a "Late Arrival" policy. A client who is more than five minutes late to their medical appointment will have two options:

1. The client can wait on their medical provider to work them in again on the schedule (which can be done **only if another client cancels or does not show** for an appointment); however, there is **NO guarantee** that an opening will become available.
2. The client can reschedule their appointment for a later date and time. The client will receive an appointment based on the next available opening to the medical provider's schedule.



Client Responsibilities

As our client, we ask you to:

- Provide, to the best of your knowledge, accurate and complete information regarding your medical history, including present and past illnesses, medications (both prescription and nonprescription), hospitalizations, etc.
- Inform WellStone staff of any changes in your physical health, the medication you are taking or your contact information.
- Be responsible for the consequences of your actions should you refuse treatment or do not follow the recommendations of your WellStone therapist or psychiatrist.
- Protect the confidentiality of other WellStone clients by not disclosing their name or any information that they share.
- Attend all scheduled appointments and activities.
- Take medication exactly as prescribed by the psychiatrist and immediately report any side effects or other problems associated with your medication. Also, be sure to ask the doctor or nurse any questions you have about your medication.
- Be considerate and respectful of other clients, staff, and WellStone visitors. Treat others the way you want to be treated.
- Be respectful of WellStone property by not vandalizing or destroying it any way.
- Be respectful of the property of others by not taking things that do not belong to you.
- Participate in planning, implementing, and following through with your Treatment Plan,

realizing that the more effort you give, the more likely you are to see improvements.

- Ask questions when you don't understand treatment, instructions, etc.
- Cooperate with drug / alcohol screening as needed. Please note that no client will be dismissed from a program because of one positive drug screen.



Client Appeals

You have the right to appeal decisions about your care and treatment at WellStone. If you are dissatisfied with treatment recommendations and/or decisions, you may appeal the decision.

The following procedures are in place for client appeals:

- A client may appeal a decision through his/her therapist. He/she should call and schedule an appointment with his/her therapist to do this.
- In some instances, such as being discharged from a group, a client may be required to appeal a decision through the clinical team. In this case, the client must call and schedule an appeal appointment.
- If a client is still not satisfied, he/she has the right to schedule an appointment with the Program Manager to further appeal the decision.

You may further appeal decisions through the Chief Clinical Officer and the Chief Executive Officer at WellStone.

Additionally, all clients have the right to contact the Consumer Advocate:

State of Alabama
Department of Mental Health
Office of Advocacy Services
RSA Union Building
100 N. Union Street
PO Box 301410
Montgomery, AL 36130
1-800-367-0955

Client Satisfaction

If you are not satisfied with services you receive at WellStone and cannot resolve the problem with your therapist, their supervisor, or Division Director, **call (256) 533-1970** and ask for the Chief Executive Officer or designated staff to assist in resolving the problem. It is our intention to solve all problems satisfactorily and within a reasonable time.

