



# Severe Mental Illness

## The Importance of Proper Documentation

# Types of Severe Mental Illness (SMI) include:

---

Disorders	
<b>F20–F29</b>	<b>Psychotic Disorders</b> are serious illnesses that disrupt how a person thinks, feels, and perceives the world.
<b>F30–F39</b>	<b>Mood Disorders</b> represents a category of mental illnesses in which the underlying problem primarily affects a person’s persistent emotional state (their mood).
<b>F60.0–F60.9</b>	<b>Personality disorders</b> represent “an enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that deviates markedly from the expectations of the individual’s culture” per the <i>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual on Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5)</i> .
<b>F43.10–F43.12</b>	<b>PTSD</b> People may be diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) if their symptoms last for an extended period after a traumatic event and begin to interfere with aspects of daily life, such as relationships or work.
<b>F40–F41, F06.4</b>	<b>Anxiety disorder</b> symptoms can interfere with daily life and routine activities, such as job performance, schoolwork, and relationships.
<b>F10–F19</b>	<b>Substance use disorder (SUD)</b> is a treatable mental disorder that affects a person’s brain and behavior, leading to their inability to control their use of substances like legal or illegal drugs, alcohol, or medications.

# Evidence-Based Screening Assessments

---

The identification of mental health or substance use conditions, and referrals to the applicable behavioral health providers, is an essential part of providing integrated care.

Examples of evidence-based screening tools include but are not limited to the following:

- **PHQ-9:** Depression is assessed using this tool to identify and measure the severity of depressive symptoms in adults.
- **PHQ-A:** Adolescent depression is evaluated with this version of the PHQ, tailored to detect depressive symptoms in younger populations.
- **CRAFFT:** Adolescent substance use is screened using this behavioral health tool to identify high-risk alcohol and drug use.
- **CAGE:** Alcohol misuse is detected through this brief questionnaire designed to identify problematic drinking behaviors.
- **SBIRT:** Alcohol and drug use are addressed through this comprehensive approach involving screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment.
- **Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale:** Postnatal depression is screened using this tool to identify depressive symptoms in postpartum individuals.
- **GAD-7:** Generalized anxiety disorder is assessed using this validated, self-administered tool to evaluate symptom severity and support clinical decision-making.

# Documenting and reporting the specificity of severe mental illness in the medical record is important to ensure:

---

- Accurate Diagnosis and Treatment Planning
- Continuity of Care
- Tracking Progress and Identifying Issues
- Legal Purposes
  - Detailed documentation serves as a record of the care provided and the reasoning behind decisions, which can be important in legal proceedings or audits.
- Improved Communication and Coordination of Care
- Patient Empowerment
  - The benefits range from re-assurance, reduced anxiety, positive impact on consultations, better doctor-patient relationship, increased awareness and adherence to medication, and improved patient outcomes.
- Reporting of correct ICD-10 codes

# Important elements of documentation should be documented, at minimum, annually and should include:

---

- Diagnosis and Symptoms
- History
- Functional Limitations
- Medication and Treatment
- Treatment Plan
- Progress and Response to Treatment
- Mental Status Exam
  - Can be divided into the broad categories of appearance, behavior, motor activity, speech, mood, affect, thought process, thought content, perceptual disturbances, cognition, insight, and judgment.
- Objective Evidence
  - Documenting observable and measurable facts about a patient's appearance, behavior, speech and mood/affect.
- Patient Perspective
  - Documenting the patient's experiences in their own words including self-reported symptoms, stressors, medication use/compliance, and any recent life updates.
- Safety and Risk
  - Using evidence-based risk assessment tools to assess and identify risk factors that may compromise the safety of the patient.

# Resources

---

We're here to help. Additional educational opportunities are available from Aetna.

Please contact us at [RiskAdjustment@aetna.com](mailto:RiskAdjustment@aetna.com) with questions.

## **Additional Resources:**

- National Institute of Mental Health
- *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual on Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5)*
- *International Classifications of Diseases, Tenth Revision, Clinical Modifications (ICD-10-CM)*

If you suspect fraud or abuse related to Medicare or would like to report healthcare fraud-related issues, please call the toll-free hotline, 1-800-338-6361 or email us at [AetnaSIU@aetna.com](mailto:AetnaSIU@aetna.com).

**Fraud** involves submission of false information to the Government or a Government contractor to receive money or a benefit. **Waste** includes practices that result in unnecessary costs to the Medicare Program. **Abuse** involves payment for items or services when there is no legal entitlement to payment.

Thank you