

## **OMS Interview Guide Reference Sheet**

### **April 2017**

The full OMS Interview Guide and other OMS resources are available on the Maryland Beacon Health Options Website ([http://maryland.beaconhealthoptions.com/provider/prv\\_oms.html](http://maryland.beaconhealthoptions.com/provider/prv_oms.html)) and on the OMS Datamart Website under the “Additional Resources” tab ([http://maryland.beaconhealthoptions.com/services/OMS\\_Welcome.html](http://maryland.beaconhealthoptions.com/services/OMS_Welcome.html)). The OMS Datamart is the online home of OMS data, where aggregate results can be viewed.

### **STARTING THE INTERVIEW**

#### **Introducing the OMS**

There are several approaches to introducing the questionnaire. The clinician/counselor can explain that:

- It will help to track treatment progress.
- It will assist staff to provide the best care and improve the program overall. How the client/caregiver answers the questions will not affect his/her ability to receive services.
- There are no right or wrong answers.

#### **Determining the Primary Respondent (only applicable for Child and Adolescent Questionnaires)**

- The Primary Respondent (PR) is the respondent whose responses to the questions are recorded.
- When both the child and caregiver are present, both should be encouraged to participate.
- However, the clinician/counselor must decide who is most appropriate to serve as the PR. If it is not clear who is most appropriate to be the PR, these general guidelines can be helpful:
  - ages 6-11: caregiver
  - ages 12-17: child/adolescent.

### **CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW**

#### **Asking the Questions**

- The clinician/counselor is responsible for reading all of the questions and recording the responses.
- The client/caregiver is free to follow along with a copy of the questionnaire or view the computer screen during the interview.
- All questions should be read exactly as they are written and in the order in which they are written.
- Even slight wording changes can impact the perception of the question and therefore the information collected.

#### **Types of OMS Questions**

- **Objective Questions** – Objective questions are those that are essentially factual and that are not influenced by personal opinions (e.g., “Where are you living right now?”).
  - Several objective questions, marked by an asterisk (“\*”) must be completed for submission.
  - If information for a required question is not available from the client/caregiver, the clinician/counselor should choose the best response based on the most recent information available.
- **Subjective Questions** – Subjective questions, marked with a “Ψ”, are those that are based on the personal opinions of the client/caregiver (e.g., “In general, how satisfied are you with where you currently live?”)
  - Once the questions have been read as they are written, it is fine to discuss the respondent’s answer; however, the clinician/counselor should not try to influence the client’s opinion.
  - If the discussion changes the initial response, clearly endorse the respondent’s final answer.

## **Interviewer Directions**

- Skip Patterns – These are used when a particular response to the question directs the clinician/counselor to skip over one or more questions. These are programmed into the online version of the OMS, but, in the print version, clinicians/counselors must pay careful attention to the skip directions provided.
- Definitions – Definitions are available for some words or questions. These are underlined in the online version of the questionnaire (click on the word for the definition) and available in the Interview Guide.
- Interviewer Instruction Boxes – Throughout the questionnaire, there is information provided in brackets or interviewer instruction boxes to help guide the clinician/counselor through the questionnaire.

## **Useful Interviewing Techniques**

If a client, child/adolescent, or caregiver is having difficulty answering a question, helpful techniques include:

- Using the OMS Response Cards to help respondents remember the answer options.
  - Response cards are available for download from the Beacon Web site and can also be found in the OMS Interview Guide.
- Re-reading the question, but be sure not to reinterpret the question.
- Re-reading all of the answer options, but be certain to read all the options, not just a few.
- Neutral probing, which is a technique to clarify a respondent's answer without inadvertently biasing it.
  - This technique can be most relevant for subjective questions.
  - It may be difficult to master at first because it differs from some counseling approaches
  - Some examples of neutral probing are:
    - "Whatever it mean to you."
    - "Yes, but which answer fits best?"

## **POTENTIAL INTERVIEW CHALLENGES**

- Disagreement Regarding Answer – If the clinician/counselor disagrees with the answer a respondent has provided, feel free to explore those differences. If, after discussion, no agreement can be reached, record the respondent's answer.
- Refusals – In rare situations, the client/caregiver may refuse to answer one or more questions. In those situations the clinician/counselor may complete the objective question(s) if he/she is reasonably sure of the correct answer. The clinician/counselor should not complete the subjective question(s).
- Language Issues – Clinicians/counselors may administer the OMS to clients speaking other languages in the same manner that treatment is conducted (using interpreters, etc.).
- Crisis Situations – If the individual is in crisis and the OMS questionnaire cannot be submitted for authorization, contact the Beacon Care Manager regarding obtaining authorization. Good clinical judgment always prevails.