



DISCOVERY CONNECTIONS

AN ATTACHMENT AND BONDING CENTER

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Sliding Fee Discount Program Policy

Discovery Counseling Business Office Policies

Effective Date: April 1st, 2021

Policy: To make available free or discounted services to those in need.

Purpose: All clients seeking services at Discovery Counseling are assured that they will be served regardless of ability to pay. No one is refused service because of lack of financial means to pay. This program is designed to provide free or discounted care to those who have no means, or limited means, to pay for their medical services (uninsured or underinsured).

Discovery Counseling will offer a Sliding Fee Discount Program to all who are unable to pay for their services. Discovery Counseling will base program eligibility on a person's ability to pay and will not discriminate on the basis of an individual's race, color, sex, national origin, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Federal Poverty Guidelines are used in creating and annually updating the sliding fee schedule (SFS) to determine eligibility.

Procedure:

The following guidelines are to be followed in providing the Sliding Fee Discount Program.

1. Notification: Discovery Counseling will notify clients of the Sliding Fee Discount Program by:
 - Payment policy handout will be available to all clients at the time of service.
 - Notification of the Sliding Fee Discount Program will be offered to each client upon admission.
 - Sliding Fee Discount Program application will be included with collection notices sent out by Discovery Counseling.
 - An explanation of our Sliding Fee Discount Program and our application form are available on Discovery Counseling's website.
 - Discovery Counseling places notification of the Sliding Fee Discount Program in the waiting area.
2. Request for discount: Requests for discounted services may be made by client/patients, family members, social services staff, or others who are aware of financial hardship. The Sliding Fee Discount Program will only be made available for therapy/office visits. Information forms can be obtained from the front desk and the website.
3. Administration: The Sliding Fee Discount Program procedure will be administered through the Office Manager. Information about the Sliding Fee Discount Program policy and procedure will be provided to clients. Staff are to offer assistance for completion of the application. Dignity and confidentiality will be respected for all who seek and/or are provided healthcare services.

4. Completion of Application: The client/responsible party must complete the Sliding Fee Discount Program application in its entirety. Staff will be available, as needed, to assist client/responsible party with applications. By signing the Sliding Fee Discount Program application, persons are confirming their income to Discovery Counseling as disclosed on the application form.
5. Eligibility: Discounts will be based on income and family size only.
 - a. Family is defined as: a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together; all such people (including related subfamily members) are considered as members of one family. Discovery Counseling will also accept non-related household members when calculating family size.
 - b. Income includes: gross wages, tips, salaries, income from business and self-employment; unemployment compensation; worker's compensation; Social Security; Supplemental Security Income; public assistance; veteran's payments; survivor benefits; pension or retirement income; interest; dividends; royalties; income from rental properties, estates, and trusts; alimony; child support; assistance from outside the household; and other miscellaneous sources.
6. Income Verification: Applicants must provide one of the following: prior year W-2, two most recent pay stubs, letter from employer, or Form 4506-T (if W-2 not filed). Self-employed individuals will be required to submit detail of the most recent three months of income and expenses for the business. Adequate information must be made available to determine eligibility for the program. Self-declaration of income may be used. Clients who are unable to provide written verification may provide a signed statement of income.
7. Discounts: Those with incomes at or below 100% of poverty will receive a full 100% discount for therapy services. Those with incomes above 100% of poverty, but at or below 200% of poverty, will be charged according to the attached sliding fee schedule and based solely on family size and income. The sliding fee schedule will be updated during the first quarter of every calendar year with the latest Federal Poverty Guidelines. However, clients will not be denied services due to an inability to pay.
8. Waiving of Charges: In certain situations, clients may not be able to pay the discount fee. Waiving of charges must be approved by Discovery Counseling's CEO. Any waiving of charges should be documented in the client's file along with an explanation ("ability to pay, good will, etc.")
9. Applicant notification: The Sliding Fee Discount Program determination will be provided to the applicant(s) in writing, and will include the percentage of the Sliding Fee Discount Program write off, or, if applicable, the reason for denial. If the applicant is approved for less than a 100% discount or denied, Discovery Counseling will work with the client and/or the responsible party to establish payment arrangements. Sliding Fee Discount Program applications cover outstanding client balances for six months prior to application date and any balances incurred within 12 months after the approved date, unless their financial situation changes significantly. The applicant has the option to reapply after the 12 months have expired or anytime there has been a significant change in family income. When the applicant reapplies, the look back period will be the lesser of six months or the expiration of their last Sliding Fee Discount Program application.
10. Refusal to Pay: If a client verbally expresses an unwillingness to pay or vacates the premises without paying for services, the client will be contacted in writing regarding their payment obligations. If the client is not on the sliding fee schedule, a copy of the sliding fee discount program application will be sent with the notice. If the client does not make effort to pay or fails to respond within 60 days, this constitutes refusal to pay. At this point in time, Discovery Counseling can explore options not limited to, but including offering the client a payment plan, waiving of charges, or referring the client to collections.
11. Record Keeping: Information related to Sliding Fee Discount Program decisions will be maintained and preserved in a centralized confidential file located in the Office Manager's office, in an effort to preserve the dignity of those receiving free or discounted care.
 - a. Applicants that have been approved for the Sliding Fee Discount Program will be logged in Discovery Counseling's practice management system, noting names of applicants, dates of coverage, and percentage of coverage.

- b. The Office Manager will maintain an additional monthly log identifying Sliding Fee Discount Program recipients and dollar amounts. Denials and applications not returned will also be logged.
- 12. Policy and procedure review: The SFS will be updated based on current Federal Poverty Guidelines. Discovery Counseling will also review possible changes in our policy and procedures and for examining institutional practices which may serve as barriers preventing eligible clients from having access to our community care provisions.
- 13. Budget: During the annual budget process, an estimated amount of Sliding Fee Discount Program service will be placed into the budget as a deduction from revenue.

Attachments:

2022 Sliding Fee Schedule

Client Application for the Sliding Fee Discount Program

For Office Use:

Approval: _____

Revised: _____

Reviewed By: _____