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Outpatient Care at New Oakland: Therapy that meets you where you are



by **Kevin Sendi, JD, MBA**
President and CEO
New Oakland Family Centers

 **24-Hour Crisis Hotline**
877-800-1650



To learn more about New Oakland's state of Michigan-licensed FACE to FACE Partial Hospital Program, visit us online at www.NewOakland.org

Whether you're experiencing anxiety, depression, stress, grief, relationship concerns, behavioral challenges, or simply navigating a difficult season of life, therapy can provide support, guidance, and practical tools for healing.

At New Oakland Family Centers, our outpatient services are designed to meet individuals and families where they are. Through compassionate, evidence-based care, our clinicians work collaboratively with clients to identify goals, build strengths, and create meaningful change. No two mental health journeys are alike . . . and treatment should be as unique as the individuals and families we serve.

For more than 35 years, New Oakland has been a leader in providing

comprehensive mental health services across Michigan. Our outpatient programs offer flexible, personalized care that allows individuals to receive support while continuing to engage in daily responsibilities, including work, school, family life, and other commitments. Whether you're seeking support for the first time or continuing your journey toward wellness, we're here to help take the next step.

Seeking support is not a sign of weakness; it's a courageous step toward caring for yourself and those you love. No matter where you are in your journey, New Oakland is committed to providing the right care, at the right time, in a compassionate environment where healing and transformation can begin.

To learn more about outpatient services or to schedule an appointment, call **800-395-3223**. Our team is available to answer questions and help connect you with the care that best fits your needs. 

Therapy 101: What to Expect When Getting Started



by Mara Lipkowitz, LMSW
Director of Clinical Services
New Oakland Family Centers

For many people, the hardest part of therapy is taking the first step. Questions like, "What do I say?", "Will they know how to help me?" or "What will happen at my first appointment?" can make reaching out feel overwhelming. At New Oakland Family Centers, we strive to make the process as comfortable, straightforward, and supportive as possible.

Step 1: Reaching Out

Getting started begins with a call to **800-395-3223**. One of the unique aspects of New Oakland is that our live call center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Whether you're calling during your lunch break, after putting the kids to bed, or in the middle of the night when concerns feel most overwhelming, a call center representative is available to assist you.

During this initial conversation, our team will ask a few basic questions about the services you're seeking and the concerns that brought you to us. These questions help us determine the most appropriate care path and connect you with the services that best fit your needs.

We will also collect important information such as demographic details, insurance information, and contact information so we can schedule your first appointment.

Step 2: Understanding Your Benefits

If you plan to use insurance, a member of our billing team will contact you prior to your appointment to review your insurance benefits and explain any potential costs or financial responsibilities. We believe that understanding the financial aspect of care is an important part of the process, and our goal is to ensure there are no surprises related to your coverage and benefits.

Our team is happy to answer questions and help you understand what to expect from both a clinical and financial perspective.

Step 3: Preparing for Your Appointment

As your appointment approaches, you'll receive a text message reminder with details about your upcoming intake appointment designed to help you stay informed and prepared.

Many people wonder if they need to do anything special before their first therapy appointment. The answer is simple: just come as you are. You don't need to have all the right words or know exactly where to begin.

Step 4: Your First Appointment

Your first appointment is called an initial intake or mental health assessment, and it typically lasts about one hour.

This appointment is an opportunity for your clinician to get to know you as a whole person. During the assessment, your clinician will ask questions about a variety of topics, including as:

- Your current concerns and symptoms
- Your mental health history
- Previous counseling or treatment experiences
- Your childhood and family history
- Important relationships and support systems
- Medical history and medications
- Stressors or significant life events
- Your strengths, goals, and hopes for treatment

While this may sound like a lot of questions, there are no right or wrong answers. You are encouraged to share at your own pace. The purpose of the assessment is to better understand your experiences so that we can recommend the most appropriate treatment approach and begin building a therapeutic relationship based on trust and collaboration. 

Team Spotlight: Christina Bonacorsi, LPC Director of Clinical Resources



For more than 15 years, Christina Bonacorsi, LPC, has grown alongside New Oakland Family Centers, building a career rooted in compassion, leadership, and a deep commitment to those seeking mental health care.

Christina's journey with New Oakland began as a clinical intern, where she developed

the foundational skills and passion for helping individuals and families navigate life's challenges. After completing her internship, she joined the organization as a PHP Therapist, Discharge Manager, and Utilization Review Specialist, working directly with individuals experiencing serious mental health concerns and helping ensure continuity of care as they transitioned between levels of treatment.

Over the years, Christina advanced through several leadership roles, including Supervisor of Partial Hospitalization Services and Clinical Supervisor, gaining a comprehensive understanding of both the clinical and operational aspects of

behavioral healthcare. Her experience working across multiple levels of care has provided her with a unique perspective on the client journey and the importance of timely, coordinated support.

Today, as Director of Clinical Resources, Christina oversees the processes that help guide consumers through their care experience. From ensuring individuals are connected to the most appropriate level of care to monitoring treatment compliance, supporting quality improvement initiatives, and evaluating access to services, her work helps create a seamless experience for the thousands of people who turn to New Oakland each year.

Known for her collaborative leadership style and unwavering dedication to both clients and staff, Christina remains focused on a simple but powerful goal: ensuring that every person seeking help receives timely, compassionate, and effective care.

Her story is a testament to the opportunities for growth within New Oakland and the impact one person can have through years of service and commitment. Whether mentoring staff, strengthening systems of care, or advocating for those seeking support, Christina's influence can be felt throughout the organization and across the communities we serve. 

Mental Wellness Matters— The Importance of Setting Boundaries



by **Sandra Siegel, MA, LPC**
Associate Clinical Director
New Oakland Family Centers

In today's fast-paced world, many of us are constantly balancing work responsibilities, family commitments, social obligations, and the expectation to always be available. While staying connected can be rewarding, it can also leave us feeling emotionally exhausted when we don't create space for our own needs.

One of the most important—and often overlooked—skills for maintaining good mental health is learning to establish healthy boundaries. Boundaries are the limits we set to protect our time, energy, emotions, and relationships. Rather than pushing people away, healthy boundaries allow us to show up more fully in our personal and professional lives while reducing stress and preventing burnout.

Understanding Healthy Boundaries

Many people associate boundaries with saying “no,” but healthy boundaries are much more than that. They are about communicating your needs clearly, recognizing your own limits, and making intentional decisions about how you spend your time and energy.

Healthy boundaries may involve protecting personal time after work, limiting responsibilities that become overwhelming, asking for help when needed, or communicating honestly about what you can realistically manage. They also include respecting the boundaries of others, creating healthier and more balanced relationships for everyone involved.

Establishing boundaries is not selfish—it is an important form of self-care that allows us to care for ourselves while continuing to care for others.

Why Boundaries Matter

Without healthy boundaries, stress has a way of accumulating over time. Constantly saying “yes” to every request, taking on responsibilities beyond our capacity, or neglecting our own needs can lead to emotional exhaustion, resentment, anxiety, and burnout.

When we consistently ignore our limits, even activities we once enjoyed can begin to feel overwhelming. Healthy boundaries help create the balance needed to recharge, allowing us to return to our responsibilities with greater patience, focus, and emotional resilience.

Research has shown that chronic stress can impact not only emotional well-being but also physical health, contributing to sleep disturbances, headaches, fatigue, weakened immune function, and increased risk for anxiety and depression. Setting boundaries is one way to reduce these long-term effects by creating opportunities for rest, recovery, and self-care.

What Healthy Boundaries Can Look Like

Boundaries look different for everyone, but they often include small, intentional changes that support overall well-being. Examples include:

- Allowing yourself uninterrupted time to rest and recharge.
- Limiting work communications outside scheduled hours whenever possible.
- Setting realistic expectations for yourself instead of striving for perfection.
- Communicating openly when you need support or additional time.
- Protecting time for hobbies, exercise, family, and activities that bring joy.
- Recognizing when a commitment no longer aligns with your capacity and giving yourself permission to decline respectfully.

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New Oakland locations to serve you

Ann Arbor Center
501 N. Maple Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Center Line Center
26522 Van Dyke Avenue
Center Line, MI 48015

Clarkston Center
6549 Town Center Drive
Clarkston, MI 48346

Clinton Township Center
42669 Garfield Road
Clinton Township, MI 48038

Farmington Hills Center
32961 Middlebelt Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48334

Flint Center
2401 South Linden, Suite A
Flint, MI 48532

Kalamazoo/Portage Center
8225 Moorsbridge Rd.
Portage, MI 49024

Livonia Center
29550 Five Mile Road
Livonia, MI 48154

Okemos Center
2300 Jolly Oak Road
Okemos, MI 48864

Port Huron Center
500 10th Avenue, Suite A
Port Huron, MI 48060

Southfield Center
20505 W. 12 Mile Road
Southfield, MI 48076

Southgate Center
13305 Reeck Road
Southgate, MI 48195

Warren Center
8150 E. 13 Mile Road
Warren, MI 48093

24/7/365 Call Center
800-395-3223



Word Search

See if you can find 15 words from this issue of New Oakland News

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Boundaries
Challenges
Clinician

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Guidance

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Outpatient

Overwhelming
Resilience
Stressors

Therapy
Transformation
Wellness

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24-Hour Crisis Hotline
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The importance of healthy boundaries

(continued from pg. 3)

These actions may seem simple, but practiced consistently, they can significantly improve emotional wellness and reduce feelings of being overwhelmed.

Boundaries in Relationships

Healthy relationships thrive on mutual respect, trust, and communication. Establishing boundaries helps create clear expectations while reducing misunderstandings and frustration.

For parents, boundaries may include setting consistent routines or encouraging age-appropriate independence. For couples, it may mean communicating openly about household responsibilities or personal time. Friendships may benefit from honest conversations about availability, emotional capacity, or expectations.

Although setting boundaries can feel uncomfortable at first, most healthy relationships become stronger when individuals communicate openly and respectfully about their needs.

When Setting Boundaries Feels Difficult

Many people struggle with boundaries because they worry about disappointing others or being perceived as selfish. Feelings of guilt are common, especially for caregivers, parents, and individuals who naturally place others' needs before their own.

It's important to remember that protecting your mental health allows you to be more present, patient, and engaged in the relationships that matter most. Taking care of yourself is not taking away from others—it is helping ensure you have the emotional resources to continue supporting them.

Learning to establish boundaries is a skill, and like any skill, it becomes easier with practice. Therapy can also provide a safe environment to explore personal values, identify unhealthy patterns, and develop communication strategies that support healthier relationships.

A Small Change with Lasting Benefits

Healthy boundaries are not walls meant to keep people out—they are guidelines that help us protect our well-



being while maintaining meaningful connections with others. Every time we honor our own limits, we strengthen our ability to manage stress, improve our relationships, and care for both ourselves and those around us.

Mental wellness isn't achieved through one big decision. It's built through small, intentional choices we make every day. Whether it's taking a lunch break, turning off work notifications for the evening, asking for help, or simply giving yourself permission to rest, every healthy boundary is an investment in your long-term well-being. Therapy can help you build the skills and confidence needed to establish healthy boundaries and create lasting emotional wellness.

