

Program Description & Components: Northern California Functional Restoration Program

Introduction:

As outlined in the MTUS/Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, page 31, there is no one universal definition of what comprises interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary treatment. The most commonly referenced programs have been defined in the following general ways (Stanos, 2006):

- (1) Multidisciplinary programs: Involves one or two specialists directing the services of a number of team members, with these specialists often having independent goals.
- (2) Interdisciplinary pain programs: Involves a team approach that is outcome focused and coordinated and offers goal-oriented interdisciplinary services. Communication on a minimum of a weekly basis is emphasized. The most intensive of these programs is referred to as a Functional Restoration Program, with a major emphasis on maximizing function versus minimizing pain.

Components suggested for interdisciplinary care include the following services delivered in an integrated fashion:

(a) Physical Treatment; (b) Medical Care and Supervision; (c) Psychological and Behavioral Care; (d) Psychosocial Care; (e) Vocational Rehabilitation and Training; and (f) Education.

Program Description & Components:

The Northern California Functional Restoration Program (NCFRP) is part of a 16,500-square-foot outpatient clinic. The approximately 4,000 square foot area dedicated to the program includes space for a gym, a private entrance and waiting area, class room training, exam rooms, psychotherapy rooms, administrative offices and a dedicated reception area to allow for easy access to patients and providers.

According to the MTUS Guidelines, the criteria for the use of a multidisciplinary pain program require that an adequate and thorough evaluation is performed including baseline functional testing so that follow up with the same tests can note functional improvements.

The Northern California Functional Restoration Program provides an initial comprehensive evaluation which includes an extensive Medical, Psychological and Physical Capacity evaluation of the patient. Included in this evaluation is baseline functional testing so that the patient could undergo follow-up testing during the program to confirm functional improvement. A realistic treatment plan is developed that we feel is attainable during the FRP. NCFRP utilizes a multi-disciplinary team of professionals providing individualized treatment plans. A weekly multi-disciplinary team meeting is held, open to Carriers and Nurse Case Managers, to discuss progress and a weekly comprehensive report is generated.

The Northern California Functional Restoration Program consists of a variety of services geared towards facilitating recovery of functioning and quality of life - physically, medically, socially, mentally, emotionally, and vocationally with an emphasis on maximizing function versus minimizing pain. For (a) Physical Treatment, patients attend groups on strength and conditioning, proper body mechanics, ergonomics, functional movement, posture and balance, tai chi, yoga, nutrition, and biofeedback. For (b) Medical Care and Supervision, each patient attends an individual appointment with a physician on a weekly basis as well as physician lectures on medication management and the medical bases of chronic pain and its treatments. For (c) Psychological and Behavioral Care, (d) Psychosocial and (f) Education, patients are provided with intensive training in wellness-focused (active, independent) skills for managing stress and pain, communication skills for fostering healthy social support, relaxation and meditation training, education on mindfulness for attentional retaining and autogenic nervous system arousal, and specific tools for coping with anxiety, depression, and grief. Patients are also supported in (e) vocational rehabilitation and training through career planning, and skills training aimed at return to work.

Duration:

According to the MTUS Guidelines total treatment duration should generally not exceed 20 full-day sessions, or the equivalent in part-day sessions. ODG further explains that 20 full-day sessions is equivalent to 160 hours.

Patients will attend the Northern California Functional Restoration Program for up to 6 weeks in a continuous course treatment program. NCFRP is designed to be consistent with the MTUS/ODG recommendations of part day sessions demonstrated to be highly effective when administered over the duration of 160 hours distributed over 6 weeks. The modalities are provided to the patient on a daily basis and Medical and psychological providers are available to the patients for the duration of the 160-hour program to assist the patients' progress not only in individual and group sessions whether in-person or telephone appointments, but also in applying relevant skills in the milieu and managing crises as they arise.