

WHAT DOES AN OMBUDSMAN DO?

The word “ombudsman” refers to someone who provides impartial recommendations for resolution of a variety of issues. The Ombudsman Program at Mental Health America of Franklin County helps individuals and their families resolve issues with mental health and/or alcohol/drug services.

The Ombudsman Program offers caring, knowledgeable mental health professionals who can assist clients by either working with staff at agencies where they receive services, or helping them find needed services. The program is free, and all interactions are confidential, unless permission is given otherwise.

Our professionals are respectful and impartial. They understand the frustrations and challenges people experience with mental health and alcohol/drug services.

WHO CAN USE THIS SERVICE?

We welcome calls from people experiencing difficulties with their treatment providers, from concerned family members, as well as from those having mental health or alcohol/drug abuse problems who don't know where else to turn.

“The ombudsman gave me a lot of information, insight, and specific agency information that helped me figure out exactly what services would best suit my daughter’s needs.”

ABOUT MHAFC

MHAFC is an affiliate of Mental Health America, the country’s leading nonprofit dedicated to helping ALL people live mentally healthier lives. MHAFC supports our community by guiding people in need of mental health services to the appropriate providers, as well as by providing services that may not otherwise be accessible.

MHAFC’s programs and services include:

- information about mental health issues
- referrals to appropriate services
- free counseling for uninsured/underinsured
- a maternal mental health program
- support groups
- mental health screenings
- educational programs for professionals
- workplace and community-based programs
- advocacy and legislative efforts

As a membership organization, we rely on our members’ support to keep us strong. To find out more about becoming a member, please visit www.mhafc.org.



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OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM



Helping those who are experiencing problems with mental health and alcohol/drug services



Clients surveyed ranked their SATISFACTION with the Ombudsman Program ABOVE 90%.

This means the clients strongly agreed that their ombudsman is:

- timely in responding
- respectful
- fair and impartial
- culturally sensitive

Clients also strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the resolution of their concerns and that they would use the program's services again.

HOW DO I CONTACT AN OMBUDSMAN?

Mental Health America
of Franklin County
2323 W. Fifth Ave., Suite 160
Columbus, OH 43204
614-242-4357 (confidential, direct line)
Monday–Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Callers receive a response within one business day.

HOW CAN THIS PROGRAM HELP ME?

Our mental health professionals in the Ombudsman Program act as advocates for mental health and alcohol/drug abuse clients and their family members by:

- Listening to concerns or complaints and helping to find a solution
- Assisting clients in understanding their rights and responsibilities
- Making referrals to community resources
- Helping clients effectively navigate the mental health and alcohol/drug system
- Empowering clients to advocate for themselves and work successfully with service providers
- Tracking agency waiting lists to help make timely and effective referrals

"I don't know anyone else who could have given me the information I needed. The Ombudsman Program is ONE IN A MILLION."



WHAT ISSUES CAN I GET HELP WITH?

The Ombudsman Program works with client and family advocates; client rights officers; the Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Board of Franklin County; and other agency staff to ensure clients continue to receive quality services.

Our professionals can assist you with:

- access to treatment
- denial of services
- access to medication
- quality-of-service issues
- incarceration-related issues
- system navigation
- medical benefits
- priority referral to legal services*

**services provided by the Legal Aid Society of Columbus*

"I was shown genuine concern for my problem. Without the ombudsman, I wouldn't know where to turn."

