

Assertive Community Treatment – Athens County

Integrated Services for Behavioral Health is forming an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team to serve adults with serious mental illness and high service needs through intensive, community-based care. Over the past 50 years, ACT has become one of the most widely researched and implemented models of community behavioral healthcare. ACT is designed for individuals who experience

- Repeated psychiatric hospitalizations,
- Frequent crisis service use,
- Involvement with jails or courts, and
- Difficulty maintaining housing, employment, or stability in traditional outpatient care

WHY ACT?

Research, such as Coldwell and Bender (2007), has consistently shown strong outcomes for people served by ACT teams, including

- Fewer psychiatric hospitalizations and crisis episodes,
- Increased housing stability and independent living,
- Better engagement in and satisfaction with treatment,
- Reduced psychiatric symptoms, and
- Improved functioning and quality of life.

HOW ACT WORKS

ACT is a team-based approach to provide high-intensity, compassionate, person-centered services in homes and community settings:

- Clinical treatment and therapy,
- Psychiatric care and medication support,
- Rehabilitation and skills-building,
- Outreach and engagement, and
- Case management and coordination of care.

When fully implemented, ACT teams are multidisciplinary, including psychiatric providers, nurses, community behavioral health workers, behavioral health clinicians, and specialists in substance use treatment, vocational services, and peer support.

ACT teams work closely with families, natural supports, hospitals, crisis services, courts, jails, shelters, and community providers. There is no fixed time limit for ACT services. The team partners with individuals to build skills and stability that support eventual transition to less intensive services when appropriate.



WHEN TO REFER TO ACT

You do not need to know whether someone fully qualifies for ACT to make a referral. A referral allows the ACT team to determine whether a full assessment is appropriate. Referrals are welcome from

- Hospitals and emergency departments,
- Jails, probation, and courts,
- Shelters and housing providers,
- Community behavioral health providers,
- Primary care providers, and
- Family members or natural supports

CONSIDER REFERRING WHEN A PERSON IS 18+ AND HAS...

1. A serious mental health condition, such as
 - Schizophrenia or other psychotic disorder,
 - Bipolar disorder (I or II), or
 - Major depressive disorder with psychotic features.

One of these diagnoses is required to receive ACT services, but persons without a diagnosis can be referred for full assessment if they experience serious symptoms such as hallucinations, delusions, severe mood changes, or agitation.

2. A Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) determination OR serious needs assessed by the ACT team related to mental health, risk behaviors, or functioning.
3.
 - Within the past year, two or more psychiatric hospitalizations or two or more crisis interventions, OR
 - Within the past 2 years, difficulty meeting basic needs or involvement with the criminal justice system.
4.
 - Recurrent or persistent psychiatric symptoms, or
 - A substance use disorder lasting more than six months, or
 - Need for intensive services to prevent or step down from a higher level of care, or
 - Limited success engaging with traditional outpatient services.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A REFERRAL?

The ACT team reviews the referral and may request additional information prior to contacting the potential client. If appropriate, the team contacts the client to complete a full assessment. Eligibility is confirmed and client consent is obtained prior to enrollment in ACT services. Submitting a referral does not guarantee ACT enrollment, but it ensures the individual is considered for the most appropriate level of care. **When in doubt – refer or contact us!**

ISBH is currently in the ACT start-up phase. While building staffing and capacity, we are serving a smaller caseload and providing ACT-informed, mobile services. We are not yet a full-fidelity ACT team, but we are intentionally and actively building toward that model.

To make a referral, scan the QR code, click the link, or contact us directly:

[ACT - Athens County Referral & Screening](#)

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