

**OMS Interview Guide Reference Sheet
(OMS Questionnaires Version 3)
December 13, 2014**

The full OMS Interview Guide and other OMS resources are available on the ValueOptions® Maryland Web site (https://www.valueoptions.com/provider/pvr_info.htm) and on the OMS Datamart Web site (maryland.valueoptions.com/services/OMS_Welcome.html) under the “Additional Resources” tab. The OMS Datamart is the online home of OMS data, where aggregate results can be viewed.

PURPOSE OF THE OMS

- The Outcomes Measurement System (OMS) tracks how well the people served in Maryland’s behavioral health system (PBHS) are doing over time.
- The state does not use the OMS to track the progress of individuals; however, clinicians are encouraged to use the information in clinical assessment and treatment planning:
 - the OMS interview is meant to be a collaborative process between the clinician and the client
 - clinicians can stop to discuss clients’ answers to particular questions
 - previous responses can also be used to track progress over time for individuals

STARTING THE INTERVIEW

Introducing the OMS

There are several approaches to introducing the questionnaire. The clinician can explain that:

- It will help to track how treatment is progressing
- The information is intended to assist clinicians in providing the best care possible to the individual
- The information is helpful to improve the program’s quality of care
- Responses to the questions will in no way impact authorization for services the clients will receive
- There are no right or wrong answers

Determining the Primary Respondent (only applicable for Child and Adolescent Questionnaires)

- When both the child and caregiver are present, both should be encouraged to participate.
- However, the clinician must decide on one person to be the Primary Respondent (PR) based on his/her perception of who will provide the most accurate information.
- The following guidelines can be helpful, but may be overridden at the clinician’s discretion:
 - ages 6-11: caregiver
 - ages 12-17: child/adolescent

CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

Asking the Questions

- The clinician is responsible for reading the questions and recording the responses. The client, child/adolescent, and/or caregiver are free to read along, and can be given his/her own copy of the questionnaire to review.
- Unless otherwise noted, all questions should be read exactly as they are written in the questionnaire and in the order in which they are written – it is very important that the data are collected in a consistent way across the entire system.

Special Types of Items

- Mandatory Items (marked with a “**”) – These must be completed for the OMS submission. If the answer is not available from the client, child/adolescent, or caregiver, the clinician should mark the best response for these items based on the most recent information available.
- Client/Caregiver Opinion Only Items (marked with a “Ψ”) – Discussion about the response to the item is still permitted, taking care not to persuade the individual to change his/her response. The initial response recorded should not be changed unless the individual independently indicates a different response. Note that these are not mandatory items.
- Skip Patterns – These are used when a particular response to the question directs you to skip over one or more questions. These are programmed into the online version of the OMS, but, in the print version, interviewers must pay careful attention to the skip directions provided.
- Definitions – Definitions are available for some words or questions. These are underlined in the online version of the questionnaire (click on the word for the definition) and available in the Interview Guide. It is recommended that clinicians have a copy of the definitions on hand when conducting the interview.
- Instructions/Interviewer Notes – Throughout the questionnaire, there is information provided in brackets or interviewer instruction boxes to help guide the interviewer through the questionnaire.

Useful Interviewing Techniques

- The OMS Response Cards are a useful tool during the interview for helping clients, children/adolescents, or caregivers remember answer options. They are available for download from the ASO Web site and can also be found in the OMS Interview Guide.
- If a client, child/adolescent, or caregiver is having difficulty providing a recordable response, you can try these techniques:
 - Neutral probing is an interview technique used to clarify a respondent’s answer without inadvertently biasing it. Examples include: “Whatever it means to you” or “Yes, but which answer fits best?”
 - You can try re-reading all of the answer options.
 - However, do **not** reinterpret the question and do **not** give a definition of a word or phrase unless it is one of those with a specific OMS-provided definition.

CHALLENGES IN CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

- Disagreement Regarding Answer – If you disagree with the answer a respondent has provided, feel free to explore those differences. If, after discussion, no agreement can be reached, record the respondent’s answer.
- Refusals – Clients, children/adolescents, and caregivers are free to refuse to answer any item or to participate in the OMS interview.
- Language Issues – Providers may administer the OMS to clients speaking other languages in the same manner that treatment is conducted (using interpreters, etc.).
- Crisis Situations – If the individual is in crisis and the OMS questionnaire cannot be submitted for authorization, contact the ASO Care Manager regarding obtaining authorization. Good clinical judgment always prevails.
- Other – Consult the OMS Interview Guide for additional information or instructions regarding other challenging situations.