

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE MENTAL HEALTH OMBUDS SERVICES?

You may use Ombuds Services if you are eligible to receive public mental health services and are a resident of Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific or Wahkiakum Counties. If you have concerns about services you are receiving, think that your rights have been violated, or if you do not agree with a decision that denies services, contact your Ombuds for an appointment by calling **1 866 439-3064**. Family and community members are encouraged to call.

## WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW?

The Mental Health Ombuds is:

- Is a family member of someone receiving mental health services;
- Is a private contractor;
- Follows confidentiality regulations;
- Mandated by the State of Washington to assist people with the complaint and grievance process  
(ref: WAC 388-865-0255)

## HOW TO CONTACT THE MENTAL HEALTH OMBUDS

Please call for assistance.



**Theresa Mahar**  
**1 866 439-3064**

**Mental Health Ombuds Services are provided free of charge**

The Ombuds Service is available to all residents of Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific and Wahkiakum Counties and does not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, age, creed, Vietnam-era or Disabled Veteran status, or disability.

**E-mail:**



**[theresamahar@msn.com](mailto:theresamahar@msn.com)**

**Ombuds Services will follow-up on compliments and suggestions, too.**

**Mental Health Ombuds\***  
Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific  
& Wahkiakum Counties

## Client Rights Protection and Resolution of Complaints and Grievances



### **Ombuds\om-bədz**

Ombuds is an advocate for clients of publicly funded mental health services. The Ombuds can help you connect with mental health agencies, resolve complaints or grievances and answer questions about how the system works.

## WHAT DOES THE OMBUDS DO?

- ❖ **Helps** clients and family to express a complaint or grievance;
- ❖ **Resolve** complaints and grievances at the lowest possible level;
- ❖ **Continues** to be available to advocate, investigate and assist the client through the grievance and administrative hearing processes
- ❖ **Represents** or supports the client through the fair hearing process;
- ❖ **Coordinates** and collaborates with allied systems' advocacy and Ombuds services to improve the effectiveness of advocacy
- ❖ **Assists** clients in developing a mental health advance directive



**CLIENT feedback is essential to improving and maintaining quality mental health services. You can help improve services by voicing your concern when things go wrong.**

## WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

A complaint is a verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction that cannot be mutually resolved between the client and the person / agency involved. A complaint does not require a written response.

## WHAT IS A GRIEVANCE?

A grievance is a complaint that must be put in writing and requires a written response from the agency or Regional Support Network (RSN).

## WHAT IS AN APPEAL?

An appeal is a written request for the RSN to review a denial or termination of service. An appeal can be requested through the Ombuds or RSN.

## WHAT IS AN ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING?

An administrative (fair) hearing is a review by the Washington State Office of Administrative Hearings when a person believes their rights or a Washington Administrative Code has been violated or when a grievance cannot be resolved.

**Let the Ombuds know what is going well and what is not working**

## HOW DO I EXPRESS MY CONCERN?

- It is a good idea to first try to resolve your complaint with the person directly involved before you try other things. Explain your concern. Let the person know what would work better for you. Be clear about what your complaint is. Also, be clear about what an acceptable solution will be. Try to find some ways to reach an agreement that will satisfy both you and the other person.
- Call the agency or the Ombuds and tell them you want to file a complaint.
- If you are not happy with the outcome or you want a response in writing, put your complaint in writing as a grievance and send it to the Ombuds, agency or RSN.

You may request the assistance of the Mental Health Ombuds at any step.

