

HOW TO USE THE TEMPLATE FOR FAMILY THERAPY WITHOUT PATIENT PRESENT (90846) OR WITH PATIENT PRESENT (90847)

Effective January 1, 2017, CMS has assigned a time requirement for Family Therapy – 50 minutes of face to face time. However, under the CPT time rule, “a unit of time is attained when the midpoint is passed.” Thus, the minimum time for Family Therapy is 26 minutes. The actual face-to-face time spent with the family/patient must be documented in the treatment record. The decision whether to include the patient in the Family Therapy session is entirely a clinical decision. “Family” includes traditional family members, live-in companions or significant others involved in the care of the patient. However, paid staff member at an institution or facility are not considered “significant others.”

There are two options when completing the template. You can print the template version of the form and complete your note by hand or, if you prefer to enter your information directly into the form, you can download the fill-in version of the form. After entering the information into the designated spaces on the form, you can print the form to be included in the patient’s chart and/or save the completed form directly to your computer.

The elements of the templates include:

Date of Service: Insert the date on which the Family Therapy was provided.

CPT Code: Check off whether 90846 or 90847.

Patient Present: Check off whether the patient was present or not.

Current Diagnosis: Note the patient’s current diagnosis/diagnoses.

Others Present and Relationship to Patient: List the names of all those who participated in the Family Therapy session (other than the patient) and their relationship to the patient.

Psychotherapy: Check off one or more of the modes of psychotherapy used and include a description of the specific psychotherapeutic interventions employed during the Family Therapy session.

Medical Necessity: Check off one or more of the three identified rationales for providing Family Therapy. The Psychotherapy Interventions listed should relate to the medical necessity rationales selected.

Medication Changes: If there were medication changes ordered during the Family Therapy session, update medication and note any changes. A box is included to permit a check off to indicate that no side effects or adverse reactions were noted by the psychiatrist or reported by the patient. If there are side effects or adverse reactions noted or reported, include documentation.

I-STOP Review: If I-STOP review was required and performed for any medication changes for controlled substances, check off the box and enter any other pertinent information.

Family Therapy Treatment Plan Update: Describe plan for continued Family Therapy sessions (with or without patient present) and insert date/interval for next Family Therapy session.

Total Face-to-Face Time: Insert the total face-to-face time of the Family Therapy session. CMS has assigned 50 minutes as the time required for the service. However, under the CPT rules for time, "A unit of time is attained when the mid-point is passed. For example, an hour is attained when 31 minutes has elapsed (more than midway between zero and sixty minutes). Therefore, the minimum time is 26 minutes to meet requirements of the service.

© Seth P. Stein, Esq. 2017