

Case Number:	CM14-0037444		
Date Assigned:	06/25/2014	Date of Injury:	09/13/2013
Decision Date:	07/28/2014	UR Denial Date:	03/17/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/28/2014

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to an expert reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The expert reviewer is licensed in Psychology and is licensed to practice in California. He/she has been in active clinical practice for more than five years and is currently working at least 24 hours a week in active practice. The expert reviewer was selected based on his/her clinical experience, education, background, and expertise in the same or similar specialties that evaluate and/or treat the medical condition and disputed items/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

The claimant is a 38 year-old female (██████████) with a date of injury of 9/13/13. The claimant sustained injury to her psyche when she tried to escort a student to a safe room after the student ran out of the classroom. In doing so, the student punched the claimant in the abdomen and kicked her in the leg. The claimant sustained this injury while working as a Special Education/Resource Teacher for ██████████. The claimant has received several diagnoses including: Major depressive disorder, Adjustment disorder, Panic disorder, and Anxiety state NEC. Most recently, treating psychiatrist, ██████████, opined that the claimant's Adjustment disorder had transitioned into Post-traumatic stress disorder. The claimant has been treated via medications, individual psychotherapy, and EMDR.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

The Final Determination was based on decisions for the disputed items/services set forth below:

Individual Psychotherapy 12 Sessions: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Mental Illness and Stress Chapter.

Decision rationale: The CA MTUS does not address the treatment of PTSD nor depression therefore, the Official Disability Guideline regarding the cognitive treatment of PTSD will be used as reference for this case. Based on the review of the medical records, the claimant began services with [REDACTED] following the initial evaluation in October 2013. She has completed a minimum of 23 psychotherapy sessions. It is also reported that she completed at least one EMDR session on her own. The medical records indicate that the claimant has been able to make some progress and is working on returning to work in the fall. The ODG states that in the treatment of PTSD, there is to be an "initial trial of 6 visits over 6 weeks" and "with evidence of objective functional improvement, total of up to 13-20 sessions over 13-20 weeks (individual sessions) may be needed. It further states that "extremely severe cases of combined depression and PTSD may require more sessions if documented that CBT is being done and progress is being made. Psychotherapy lasting for at least a year, or 50 sessions, is more effective than shorter-term psychotherapy for patients with complex mental disorders, according to a meta-analysis of 23 trials". Given that the claimant struggles with depression in addition to PTSD and panic and she has been making progress towards going back to work, the request for additional psychotherapy sessions appears reasonable. As a result, the request for "Individual Psychotherapy 12 Sessions" is medically necessary.