

BASIC FLOWCHARTS

Flowcharts vary in complexity. Simple flowcharts can be more effective for troubleshooting and, when combined with cognitive walk-throughs, offer powerful aids in understanding, troubleshooting, and improving processes that directly influence the customer and the staff.

Flowcharts, however, can be intimidating and overwhelming, especially for those who do not like the quantitative sciences. Therefore, presentation is very important. Use the following rules as guidelines for effective flowcharting, whether it is done individually or as a group.

- Be consistent with **page orientation**. If flowcharts are printed on copy paper, it's probably best to make the chart flow from the top down, rather than left to right. If you have a big horizontal whiteboard in your meeting room, it would be best to have the flowchart read from left to right.
- If the flowchart is too complex, **break it down** to smaller, manageable parts. A process that is difficult to flowchart indicates a problem in itself—the problem of navigating a complex system. Having a clear, accurate diagram of a process already forms part of the solution.
- Use of standard, basic flowcharting **symbols**, as shown in FIGURE 1 below. Consistent symbols make it easier to communicate with and comprehend diagrams.

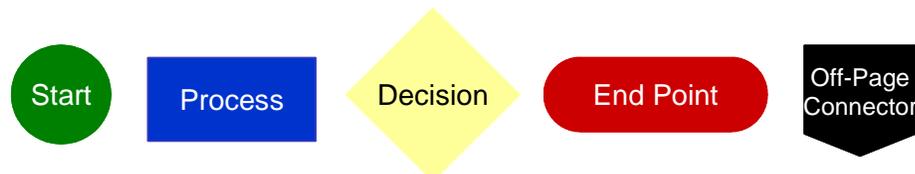


FIGURE 1: FLOWCHARTING SYMBOLS

- **Number flowchart items** for easy reference. As seen in the flowcharts in FIGURES 2a and 2b, numbering each node makes it easier to understand and troubleshoot the process.
- **Create a “before” and “after” flowchart**, to show how the process has changed. This makes communication easier, and demonstrates visually how a change project benefits the current system. Signal Behavioral Health Network provided the examples in FIGURES 3a and 3b below.

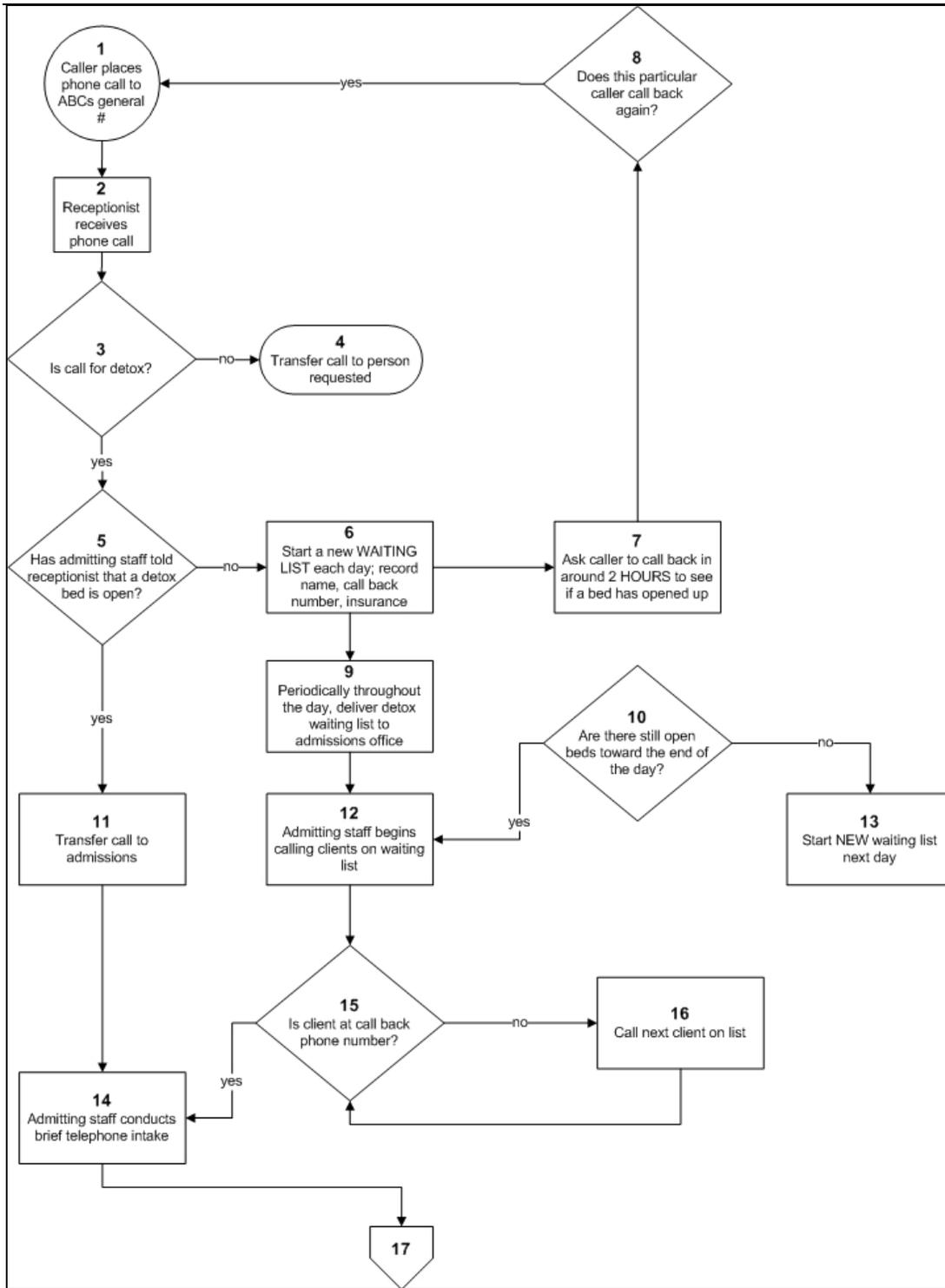


FIGURE 2a: ACCESS FLOWCHART FOR DETOX PROGRAM AT ABC RECOVERY (NODES 1-17)

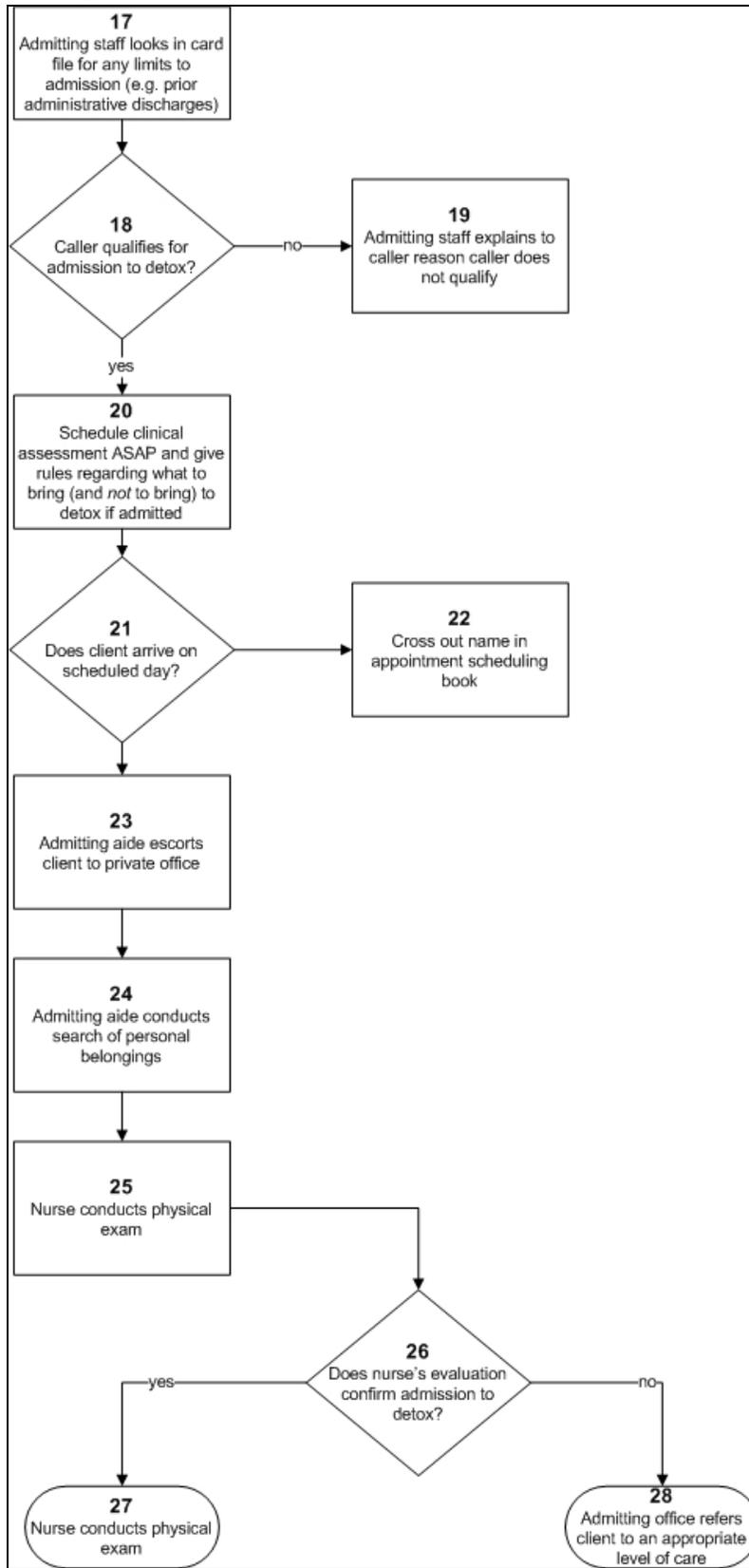


FIGURE 2b: ACCESS FLOWCHART FOR DETOX PROGRAM AT ABC RECOVERY (NODES 17-28)

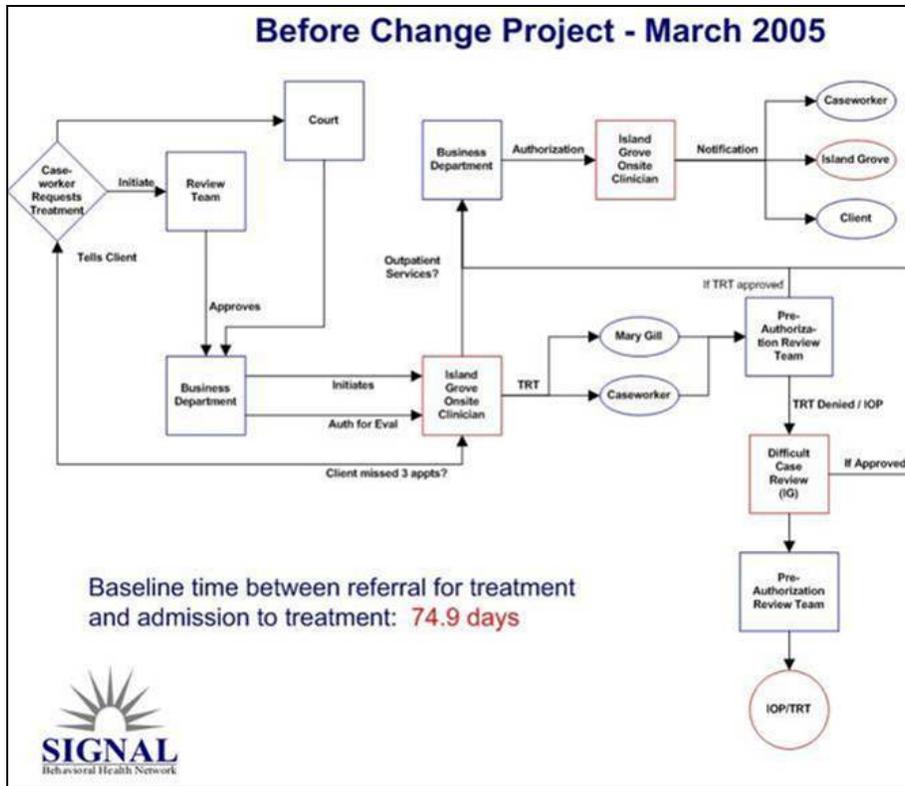


FIGURE 3a: “BEFORE” FLOWCHART, SIGNAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NETWORK

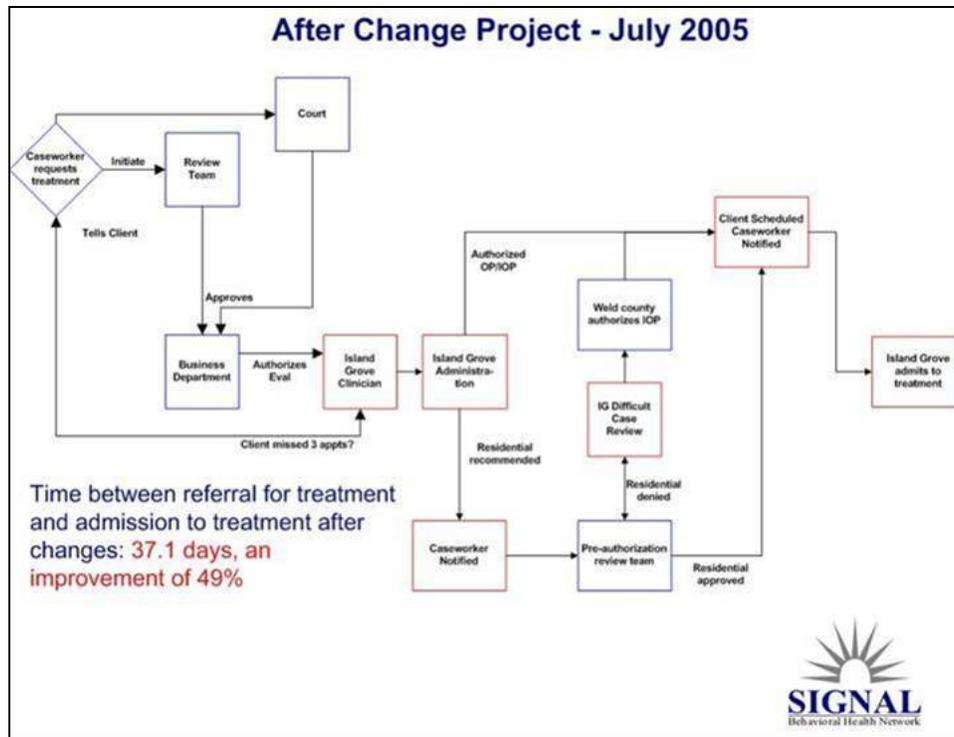


FIGURE 3b: “AFTER” FLOWCHART, SIGNAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NETWORK