



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services
Promoting Recovery, Resilience & Self Determination

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Dear Philadelphia Residents, Families, and Communities:

The multiple layers of trauma experienced over the past several months across the country have deeply impacted us here in Philadelphia. From the ongoing disruption, uncertainty and isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic to the tragic deaths of black and brown people, including a member of our community, Walter Wallace Jr., trauma has gripped the nation, resulted in civil unrest, and exacerbated feelings of anger, fear, frustration, and sadness. We all are experiencing some degree of anxiety and stress that these compounding circumstances have created.

We want you to know that the City of Philadelphia stands ready to help those seeking support during this difficult time. The Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS) is here to support all Philadelphians as we cope with this traumatic period. We stand in solidarity with those directly impacted by systemic racism, injustice, and all the resulting trauma. For those who do not share in this lived experience, we must demonstrate allyship, awareness, and agency to provide support for those directly impacted and experiencing this daily.

It is important to be aware of the significant impact trauma has on our individual and community well-being during these times. People who experience traumatic events have an increased risk of developing a range of behavioral health challenges. DBHIDS takes an approach to trauma that builds on resiliency, expands protective factors, considers people's overall wellness, uses a population health approach, and incorporates evidence-based practices to decrease the impact of trauma. We also prioritize equity and community inclusion.

DBHIDS is responsible for oversight of a provider network that funds services for children, youth, adults, and families in Philadelphia with behavioral health challenges and/or intellectual disAbilities. We are recognized nationally and internationally for the breadth of services provided across a broad continuum of care including prevention, treatment and supports after traumatic events. Additionally, we support innovative programs to connect people with behavioral health resources and reduce the stigma associated with seeking care.

We work alongside community partners and many city agencies to address barriers to health equity and wellness. Social determinants of health have a significant impact on the overall health outcomes of individuals, families, communities and nations. Social determinants can be defined as conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. They include factors like socioeconomic status, education, the physical environment, employment, and social support networks, as well as access to health care. We support various community-based outreach teams and establish partnerships across multiple environments to improve social determinants of health, including schools, social service organizations, community programs, faith-based organizations, physical healthcare settings, and much more.

Now more than ever, everyone should be aware of available behavioral health resources and monitor their overall health and wellness. Mental and emotional health is just as important as physical health. To make access to services even easier during this challenging time, DBHIDS partnered with Independence Blue Cross and others to develop and promote mindPHLtogether.com. The campaign works to reduce the stigma attached to seeking mental health care while also making it as easy as possible for residents to access the numerous available resources.

We also encourage everyone to visit Healthy Minds Philly (healthymindsphilly.org) to take the free, quick, and anonymous behavioral health screenings. The online screenings help to identify signs and symptoms of behavioral health challenges proactively. If more immediate crisis supports or mobile emergency intervention is needed, our Mental Health Hotline at 215-685-6440 is staffed by trained professionals 24 hours per day.

In addition to these broadly available resources, I urge all who have the option to explore resources made available through employers and medical insurance plans, such as Employee Assistance Programs, telephonic assistance, group meetings, and more. There are multiple pathways to access behavioral health care and supportive services. If you have questions about where to start and need guidance, you can always call CBH Member Services at 1-888-545-2600 for mental health and/or substance use concerns. If a community is experiencing heightened stress and anxiety, they can contact the Network of Neighbors networkofneighbors@phila.gov to discuss the situation and available community supports at the active mobile numbers during the COVID pandemic: 267-593-5455/ 267-593-5482.

We can -- and will -- get through this and improve our city together. Philadelphia is known for its remarkable resilience, tenacity, and strength, and DBHIDS will continue to support community healing every step of the way. Remember, you are not alone; we are here to help you.

Be well, Philadelphia.



Jill Bowen, PhD

Acting Commissioner
DBHIDS