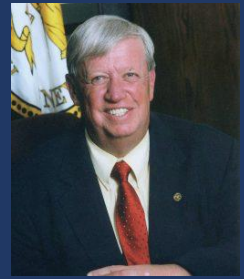


Department of Health and Human Services

830 Bergen Avenue - 4B,
Jersey City, NJ 07306
(201) 369-5280
www.hcnj.us

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SUMMER 2022 NEWSLETTER

Issue 9

A Message from the Director



Taking care of your mental well-being is as important as taking care of your physical well-being. The COVID-19 Pandemic has put the spotlight on mental health. The current focus on mental health is more important now than ever before. Social Isolation, job loss, food insecurity and other life challenges experienced during the Pandemic have impacted the health and well-being of many during the past few years. According to Mayo Clinic research, since the Pandemic, there has been a major increase in the number of adults living in the United States who have reported symptoms of stress, anxiety, depression and insomnia.

We must be vigilant about preserving our mental health. Good mental health helps us to maintain overall wellbeing and prevent serious health conditions. Self-care is important to benefit your mental health. Self-care strategies include taking care of your mind and body and connecting with others. Good self-care makes it easier to overcome life's challenges. It leads to better productivity, a better quality of life and healthier relationships. Throughout the Pandemic, Hudson County has made mental health wellness a priority. This was accomplished by engaging in activities including making wellness calls and visits, providing tips and resources to the community and funding programs that promote wellness and resiliency. In this issue, we are sharing information about some of those programs, and we are providing you with information about available behavioral services. Additionally, we have included tips to support your mental health and wellness.

As stated by Vikram Patel, "There is no health without mental health; mental health is too important to be left to the professionals alone, and mental health is everyone's business".

Naivee Zoon

A SPOTLIGHT ON MENTAL HEALTH

One of the positive aspects to come out of the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic is the new emphasis on one's health and wellness. At the forefront of this newly emphasized focus are two words the world has begun to look at in a different way: mental health. The world is now comfortable with the idea that having a bad day, experiencing stress or feeling negative emotions does not mean one has a formally diagnosed mental illness, but the person may be reacting to adverse stimuli. The idea that individuals experience fluctuations of their overall mental wellbeing has become normalized. These fluctuations may be influenced by several individual and environmental factors. Many life circumstances can impact mental wellness and lead to mental illness. The COVID-19 Pandemic is an example of something that has had a direct impact on many individuals. *(Continued on page 2)*



When dealing with something as global and uncontrollable as the COVID-19 Pandemic, it may often feel like the factors impacting our mental health are out of our control. For many people, it may feel like these traditional stressors compounded by the Pandemic are overwhelming, anxiety-provoking and often too much for one to handle.

However, there are ways to increase one's mental wellness and not feel so impacted by global and individual stressors. Here are some recommendations to improve mental wellness while continuing to experience both internal and external stressors, including the COVID-19 Pandemic:

- Limit your exposure to triggering news outlets
- Focus on ways to boost your immune system to feel more in-control to combat physical illness
- Identify ways to socialize in environments that make you comfortable without being unnecessarily exposed to illness
- Ask questions and check in with yourself to see how you're feeling mentally and emotionally and validating how you feel
- Engage in physical pursuits such as yoga, meditation and any movement that makes you feel good
- Connect with loved ones
- Set boundaries
- Make sure children are receiving age-appropriate news and deliver news in a way that is understandable for them
- Maintain a daily routine for all members of the family
- Allow children to express concerns or ask questions

If you feel like your self-care practices are not helping the way they once were and you need assistance from a professional, please call the Hudson County Division of Mental Health and Addictions Services at 201-369-5280, exts. 4250 or 4254. The Division can help to connect you to services and provide support as you navigate through the behavioral health system. Additional assistance may be obtained by contacting **988, NJ Mental Health Cares at 1-866-202-4357 and ReachNJ at 1-844-732-2465.**

Mental health matters

4 Tips to Support Your Mental Wellness

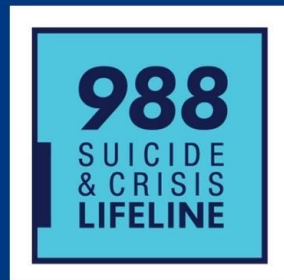
Connect with friends and family

Engage in physical activity

Maintain a daily routine

Limit exposure to triggering news outlets

For additional assistance or support, contact:



INTRODUCING...

Bridgeway Behavioral Health Services



Let's take a minute to meet the new Certified Community Behavioral Health Care Clinic (CCBHC) Bridgeway. They are open 7 days per week, located at 152 Central Avenue in Jersey City and provide integrated services across the developmental lifespan inclusive of mental health, substance use, case management, physical health screening, and care coordination.

CCBHC may be reached at 201-370-4232. Keep reading to learn why you should become acquainted with them!

Q&A with Bridgeway:

1. What exactly is a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC)?

Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics provide integrated services in a single location. Individuals who are in need of services are able to experience "one-stop shopping" by getting all of their services provided in one location, eliminating the barriers many individuals face in having to follow up to get their needs met in multiple locations. CCBHCs offer same day/next day access to services so individuals are able to begin a course of treatment which addresses their needs immediately.

2. How does this differ from a regular outpatient agency where a person may obtain mental health or substance use services?

CCBHCs provide services to individuals who have complex needs and challenges, and who have often struggled to benefit from services provided in a traditional outpatient setting that are not set up to manage the complexity of their needs. CCBHCs provide case management services and coordinate closely with other organizations the individual may be involved with, ensuring that important information about the individual does not "fall through the cracks" and create a gap in needed services.

3. Who should go to the CCBHC?

Residents of Hudson County who may be experiencing mental health, substance use, and physical health co-occurring issues, along with concrete needs such as financial entitlements, unstable housing, food insecurity, and difficulties with education and employment should go to the CCBHC. Individuals who have not been able to benefit from traditional outpatient services that are not able to offer the same level of support as a CCBHC does are also welcome to go to the CCBHC.

4. What if I have physical health challenges, will staff from the CCBHC be in touch with my other health care providers?

Individuals with physical health challenges will receive a physical health screening by a Registered Nurse or Licensed Practical Nurse at the CCBHC. Staff will then facilitate care coordination with their other health care providers to ensure that linkages are made for medical follow up and treatment, and that continued collaboration regarding the individual takes place.

5. Can I still come to the CCBHC if I only have physical health challenges?

Individuals who only have physical health challenges cannot be served by the CCBHC, as the services provided are integrated services including mental health and/or substance use. Individuals with physical health challenges will be referred to Federally Qualified Health Centers.

6. How will the CCBHC help improve the overall system of care in Hudson County?

The CCBHC is integral to improving the overall system of care in Hudson County. Residents of the County with complex needs and challenges often experience lengthy wait times for services in traditional outpatient settings in the County. This wait for services only exacerbates the difficulties they are experiencing and continues to impact their functioning in all areas. The rapid access to services offered by the CCBHC eliminates these wait times. Additionally, being able to receive integrated services in a single location will improve individuals' ability to follow up with their treatment needs as they will not need to go to other locations.

The Division of Children & Youth Services on... COVID 19's Impact on Youth Mental Wellness

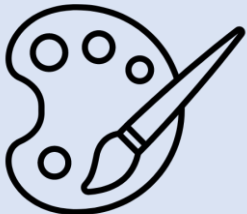
The social isolation, stress and loss experienced during the COVID-19 Pandemic have exacted a significant, and lingering, toll upon children and youth in Hudson County. The United States Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy, issued an advisory at the end of 2021 noting the “urgent need to address the nation’s mental health crisis.”¹ On a local level, New Jersey has experienced alarming rates of youth suicidality, depression and anxiety as a result of COVID². The Division of Children and Youth Services (DCYS) has sought to counter these impacts this year through internal programming and funding community-based initiatives, using American Rescue Plan of 2021 federal funds, that promote the development of resiliency and wellness within young people. These programs contain one or more of the following protective factors:



Productive social connections are vital to healthy brain development in young people. The January 2022 Journal of Adolescent Health attributes social connectedness with better mental health among youth during the Pandemic. All of the programming supported through DCYS promotes social connections. For example, Hunter’s World and New City Kids linked young people to peers and older youth mentors for guidance and support. The DCYS Hudson County Youth Leadership Council provides an opportunity for youth to interact with peers and the community to decrease mental health stigma and raise awareness about resources.



Physical Activity has also been connected by research to better mental health among youth during COVID. In addition to keeping young people healthy, physical activities help to relieve stress and can alleviate depression. This year, funded programs such as Hope and Future and HOPES CAP keep youth engaged in structured fitness and recreational activities that promote self-confidence, teamwork, and leadership.



Creative Expression is another recreational protective factor linked to emotional regulation and stress relief. Funded programs from Catholic Charities, HOPES CAP, New City Kids, Partners in Prevention and CoxPhit engage young people in arts activities, music and Lego building in a safe environment with their peers.



Linkage to professional help is vital for some and difficult to obtain for many families because of increased need, demand and cost. In response, Hudson County has utilized American Rescue Plan funds to establish a clinical mental health resource at three Prevention Links Family Success Centers throughout the County and has augmented mental health and respite services at Haven Adolescent Community Respite Center. In addition, Partners in Prevention hosted ten wellness events throughout the County and provided mental health resources to young people and their families.

¹ <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2021/12/07/us-surgeon-general-issues-advisory-on-youth-mental-health-crisis-further-exposed-by-covid-19-pandemic.html>

² <https://www.nj.com/education/2022/03/we-cant-wait-nj-must-tackle-surging-mental-health-crisis-now-experts-warn.html>;

<https://projects.nj.com/features/depression/index.html>

Highlights from the 2022 Brain Health & Community Resource Fair



See below for a listing of 2022 Department Meetings. Please email the contacts provided to confirm meeting details.

MEETING	WHEN	WHERE
Children's Interagency Coordinating Council (CIACC)	The fourth Wednesday of the month at 9:30 am (with the exception of August).	Via Zoom. Contact smoore@hcnj.us
Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) Task Force	Bi-monthly on the second Tuesday of the month at 2:00 pm. Next meeting November 1 st at 2pm (due to election day).	Via Zoom. Contact CSweeney@hcnj.us
Food Security Task Force	Bi-monthly (or monthly as needed) on the last Wednesday of the month at 1:30 pm. Next meeting September 28 th .	Via Zoom. Contact cgrandin@hcnj.us
Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC)	The second Thursday of the month at 10:00 am.	Via Zoom. Contact smoore@hcnj.us
Local Advisory Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (LACADA)	November 18 th . All meetings begin at 10:00am. December 1 st meeting begins at 1:00 pm.	Via Zoom. Contact rjames@hcnj.us
Mental Health Board	The third Thursday of the month at 5:30pm.	Via Zoom. Contact khanley@hcnj.us
Municipal Alliance	September 28 th . All meetings begin at 10:00 am. December 7 th meeting begins at 1:00 pm.	Via Zoom. Contact dpalmer@hcnj.us
Office on Aging Advisory Board	December 15 th at 11:00 am.	Via Zoom. Contact bpoffel@hcnj.us
Office of Inclusion and Accessibility (formerly Office of Disability Services)	October 19 th and December 21 st at 5:30 pm.	Via Zoom. Contact eross@hcnj.us
Office of Veterans Affairs Stakeholder Meetings	June 1 st , September 13 th and December 14 th at 1:30 pm.	TBD. Contact jnorthgrave@hcnj.us
Professional Advisory Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (PACADA)	Bi-monthly on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 1:00 pm.	Via Zoom. Contact rjames.hcnj.us
Youth Services Commission Meetings	October 20 th and December 15 th . All meetings begin at 9:15am.	Via Zoom. Contact hcapps@hcnj.us