



THE CONNECTION | MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | SEPTEMBER 2023

Supporting Marylanders Experiencing Housing Insecurity

Studies have shown that experiencing housing instability and insecurity can negatively impact a person's overall health. This includes increasing a person's risk for many mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety, and behavioral issues. Pro Bono Counseling's mental health WARMLine is a free and confidential resource available to support Marylanders experiencing housing insecurity.

For a recent WARMLine caller, who had lost their home and was living in their vehicle, this included talking through practical safety planning, such as where to park overnight and how to cover the windows for protection and privacy. The WARMLine associate encouraged the caller to try to fully charge their phone before parking each evening in case of an emergency, and helped the caller identify additional resources like shower facilities and cooling center locations.

The caller expressed appreciation for this information, stating, "That's really important to think about; thank you."

The WARMLine is also a place for callers to process the myriad of emotions they experience. Housing insecurity often involves grieving the loss of important belongings due to eviction and lack of affordable storage. Not having a safe place to claim as one's own can cause stress, self-doubt, and a shaken sense of identity. The WARMLine facilitates processing emotions caused by these issues in a way that many housing resources are not equipped to, providing support through empathy and active listening or reframing a caller's situation as part of structural, rather than individual, failures.

With so much focus on meeting basic needs during this time, reaching out to the WARMLine can also provide a much-needed break for a caller to breathe, talk about their day, or even just chat about what brings them joy.

At the end of a recent interaction, a caller stated, "It's nice to talk to you; it's very comforting, actually. You laugh with me, you talk with me; you don't treat me

like, 'Oh, here's this poor homeless person calling again.' You treat me like a normal person."

While the WARMLine associate and the caller discussed that this should be a minimum expectation for service agencies, they acknowledged that seeking services can often be discouraging and dehumanizing. As this example shows, Pro Bono Counseling's WARMLine is a resource that helps Marylanders sustain themselves and care for their mental health during challenging times.

To reach PBC's mental health WARMLine, call 410.598.0234 weekdays 10AM–8PM, and 10AM–6PM on weekends.

Counseling When You Need It

Occasionally staff members are questioned about the frequency a person may contact Pro Bono Counseling (PBC) for resources. A misconception is that if you've contacted PBC in the past for counseling, that you may not be eligible to utilize the services again.

PBC wants to assure you that you may reach out for assistance as often as necessary. Our priority is to connect you with the mental health that supports you best, when you need it. Mental health needs change over time and PBC is here to provide you with the necessary support.

One such example is a man (he/they pronouns) in his 20's who initially called PBC several years ago to address historical trauma that continued to impact his mental health. The client and their mother were connected to family counseling for several months through PBC.

Recently, the client called back for a new individual therapist following a car accident and resulting impacts to their physical and mental health. The client reported experiencing stress and anxiety about resuming his daily activities.

After PBC connected this client with a therapist, a clinical team member contacted them to check in on his experience with his provider and he reported positive

Welcome PBC Volunteers

Pro Bono Counseling's volunteer clinicians are the driving force that enables us to connect Marylanders to quality mental health resources at no cost. We sincerely thank the thousands of mental health professionals who have given their time since our inception in 1991.

Join us in welcoming the following mental health clinicians who joined our team as PBC volunteers last month:

- Caroline Hughes
- Patricia Klein
- Jerrica Robertson
- Ariel Wagerman

Have you considered volunteering with PBC? If you're a licensed counselor, social worker, psychologist, or therapist, please join us! Click [HERE](#) for more info.

changes from participating in therapy.

"It's nice to know there is someone I can take the stressful things that go on in my life to, who I can talk with and help me objectively work through them and navigate with," he explained. "There were two specific instances where I was anxious, and I was anticipating when would be my next session. It was nice to know I had a session coming up, where I could discuss the situation that happened."

If you are experiencing an issue that can be addressed through therapy, call PBC today at 410.825.1001.

Meet PBC's New Interns

The start of a new school year means new volunteer interns with Pro Bono Counseling. The following students will fulfill fundamental roles with the organization as interns as they work to complete their degrees. Please join us in welcoming them!



•Camellia Cheikhah, a graduate student at Towson University, is pursuing an MA in Psychology with a Clinical Concentration, and expects to graduate July 2024;

•Isabella Dinshah is an undergrad at the University of Maryland-College Park, majoring in Psychology and Public Policy with a focus in Behavioral Health Policy, and plans to graduate Fall 2024;



•Briana Pizarro attends Goucher College, pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and minor in Sociology. Her anticipated graduation date is Spring 2024;



•Kiera Robinson is an undergraduate at Towson University, majoring in Psychology and minoring in Family Studies. She plans to graduate Fall 2024.



PBC Resource Corner: OHLA

In recognition of National Hispanic Heritage Month, this month's resource corner is Organization of Hispanic Latin Americans of Anne Arundel County (OHLA). Founded in 1998, OHLA is the oldest organization in the county established specifically for Hispanic and Latino community members. Its goal is to meet community needs by addressing known barriers, being inclusive, and "by providing a safe and trusted space for Latinos/Hispanics to arrive and get connected to services."

OHLA helps community members find services in Spanish, and provides resources for social services, legal services, immigrant services, health care, workshops and trainings, business development, housing assistance, and workforce training. OHLA also assists with translating and interpreting documents and various applications.

Walk-ins are welcome at 80 West St., Suite A, in Annapolis. For more info, call 410.269.4421, email info@ohlamd.org, or visit their website, ohlamd.org.