



THE CONNECTION | MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | JANUARY 2024

Connecting With the Right Mental Health Professional

Taking the first step to reach out for mental health assistance can be intimidating, but it is also necessary in order to begin your path to healing and improving your overall well-being. The clinical team at Pro Bono Counseling (PBC) recognizes how difficult it can be and makes every effort to put you at ease from the moment you pick up the phone. And in doing so, their highest priority is connecting you with the right mental health counselor to meet your needs.

Research has shown that the right connection can be one of the most important factors for success. To ensure you receive the right mental health connection, you will be asked quite a few questions during your confidential phone interview. The

questions are personal, but not intrusive, and allow the clinical team to get to know you as an individual. This also provides you with the opportunity to express what type of therapist you feel would be most helpful and what your goals are for therapy.

"At PBC, we know how important it is to match clients with the clinicians that are right for them," explained Clinical Director Sherri Bloom. "The relationship is only successful if you feel you can trust the person you are working with, and ultimately feel both seen and heard by your therapist."

Sherri explains that PBC's work does not stop once connecting a client with their clinician. The clinical team will follow up to see how the client is doing and evaluate their overall experience.

For example, a man in his 30's was

matched with a PBC therapist in August 2023 for help managing symptoms of anxiety and depression. When a staff member recently contacted this client to check in, he shared, "We're having a good time. The therapist is doing some methods differently than I was used to, so that's wonderful."

"You guys have been so helpful," he continued. "You found a good fit for me with the first clinician. That really helps when you're not feeling so hot."

A woman in her 40's was matched with a PBC therapist for counseling for anxiety and depression. She was in therapy until early 2023. Recently, this woman called PBC to thank the people who were involved in connecting her with her clinician.

"I wanted to ask if there's a specific person at PBC who does the matching because whoever matched me with my therapist did a phenomenal job," she stated. "She was amazing and helped me so much."

Are you ready to get connected? PBC is here to help. If you or a person you know is experiencing stress, anxiety, grief, or a life transition, call us at 410.825.1001.



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.

Please join us in welcoming the following mental health clinicians who enrolled as PBC volunteers last month:

- Daniel Beard
- Kathy McIndoe
- James DeMaio
- Gloria Saez
- Melissa Freymann
- Stacia Turner

Have you considered volunteering with PBC? Click [HERE](#) for more info.

PBC Resource Corner: University of Maryland SAFE Center

January is designated as National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, a time to educate ourselves about human trafficking, its signs, and to offer tools for prevention and response. Labor and sex trafficking are the two most common forms of trafficking. There are approximately 199,000 human trafficking incidents in the U.S. annually.

The University of Maryland SUPPORT, ADVOCACY, FREEDOM, AND EMPOWERMENT (SAFE) Center for Human Trafficking provides direct services to all survivors of sex and labor trafficking, regardless of age, gender, or nationality. Free case management services are avail-

Upcoming CEU Workshops

In 2023, Pro Bono Counseling (PBC) offered a total of 46 continuing education credits. PBC's workshop topics are educational, timely, relevant to a clinician's practice and are presented by experts in their respected fields.

Register today to attend an upcoming online continuing education workshop:

February 14

Providing Counseling Pro Bono: Clinical Applications for Volunteers - 1 CE Credit, Presenters - Amy Greensfelder, LMSW, Sherri Bloom, LCSW-C, and Yolonda Nelson-Swain, MAHS, VASIII

February 16

Eating Disorders, Body Image, and Self-Harm - 1.5 CE Credits, Presenter - Stefanie Gilbert, PhD

February 21

Exploring Affirming Therapy and Healing Practices for Nonbinary Individuals

1.5 CE Credits, Presenters - Randall Leonard, LCSW-C ; and Aidan L. Grennell Cormier, LMSW, MPH

For more information and to register, visit PBC's [Events and Workshop](#) page.

PBC Volunteer Forum

Mark your calendar—Pro Bono Counseling is hosting an online Volunteer Forum on Wednesday, March 6, from 12:00 to 1:00 PM. During this interactive meeting, Executive Director Amy Greensfelder will provide an overview of the past year, including statistics and the impact volunteers have made throughout the state of Maryland.

Volunteers will also have the opportunity to meet in breakout rooms during the Forum to provide feedback on your experience with the organization and meet with the entire PBC team.

Don't miss this opportunity to let us know how we can further support the great work you do--[CLICK HERE](#) to register today.

Vendor Donates Proceeds

Thank you to Eternal Optimist Goods, an online handmade goods vendor that has donated a portion of its 2023 sales directly to Pro Bono Counseling. The mission of Eternal Optimist Goods is to spread awareness and foster a global understanding about mental health. According to owner Julie Slivka, "We seek to help normalize and destigmatize mental health, as well as getting help for it."



The vendor, which sells handmade jewelry, accessories, and self-care items, donates proceeds each year to a mental health cause, and chose PBC to support its counseling services.

"As a Mental Health First Aid instructor for the University of Maryland Extension, I frequently refer to PBC's services to help people who are uninsured, underinsured, or are unfamiliar with counseling services," Julie added. "You provide an invaluable resource to Maryland!"

Visit Eternal Optimist Goods on [Etsy](#).



able, in-person and over the phone in both English and Spanish.

The SAFE Center also offers legal, mental health, crisis intervention and economic empowerment services. A Drop-In Center is available for SAFE clients to have a meal, search for a job, receive tutoring or just to rest. Additionally, there is a food pantry and clothing closet onsite to meet urgent needs of clients.

To receive aid from the SAFE Center during normal business hours, call 301.314.7233. For aid after hours and weekends, call 1.888.373.7888. For more information, go to [umdsafecenter.org](#).