



THE CONNECTION | MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | MARCH 2024

Providing Mental Health Care Access for Older Adults

It is estimated that up to 25% percent of adults 65 and older are living with a mental health condition, the most common of which is anxiety or depression. Mental health conditions among older people often go under-recognized and under-treated, and the stigma surrounding mental health can make people in this age group reluctant to seek help.

Additional barriers to mental health care can include lack of insurance coverage, financial limitations, and challenges in locating suitably trained professionals to address their mental health issues.

Pro Bono Counseling's goal is to ensure that all Marylanders have access to the mental health care they need and deserve. And that includes Marylanders of all ages. In 2023, Pro Bono Counseling (PBC) volunteers donated 11,642 counseling hours to 1,308 clients across the state of Maryland. Those clients who received counseling ranged in age from 4 years old to 93 years old.

The licensed mental health clinicians enrolled as PBC volunteers specialize in many different areas of expertise, including older adults as well as issues commonly requested by this population, such as coping with a life altering or chronic medical condition, anxiety and depression, caregiving concerns, and end of life, grief, and bereavement.

A few years ago, a woman in her 80's initially called PBC seeking ways to cope with anxiety and stress. She has since reconnected with her therapist again recently. When speaking with a clinical team member about her experience with counseling, the client emphasized how much her therapist, and therapeutic resources, had helped her in managing her emotions.

"My therapist has given me a different perspective on how to handle situations," she explained.

The client emphasized her appreciation for being able to have a changed view of her situation and overall experiences, acknowledging that it helped her find new ways to cope. The client went on to ex-

plain her newfound motivation and optimism after attending therapy with PBC.

"It has been a traumatic two-year period and now there is light at the end of the tunnel," she said. "My therapist has really turned the corner for me."

This client also provided feedback on her experience reaching out to PBC as an older adult.

"You all are very senior-friendly," she stated. "There's not a lot of places that will just listen to us. Even just the initial phone call, and the follow up calls, they were tremendous."

PBC is your mental health connection -- If you're experiencing stress, anxiety, grief, or a life transition, call us at 410.825.1001.



Forum Enables Exchange

Pro Bono Counseling (PBC) hosted its second annual Volunteer Forum this month, meeting with clinicians for a valuable information exchange. During this interactive meeting, PBC Executive Director Amy Greensfelder provided an overview of the past year, including statistics and the impact volunteers have made throughout the state of Maryland.

"We look forward to this event because it provides us with another opportunity to hear directly from clinicians about their experiences as a volunteer," explained Amy. "It's also important to share information that we report upon, such as demographic information and outcomes."

Volunteers also met in breakout rooms

Upcoming CEU Workshops

Register today to attend an upcoming online continuing education workshop:

April 3

Mental Illness Among South Asian Americans - 1.5 CE Credits,
Presenters - Vani Rao, MD; Nalini Juthani, MD; Bhagirathy Sahasranaman, MD

April 18

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

April 26

Dual Relationships: Balancing Ethical Responsibilities - 3 CE Credits,
Presenter - Veronica Cruz, LCSW-C

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

Welcome New PBC Volunteers

Please welcome the following mental health clinicians who enrolled as Pro Bono Counseling (PBC) volunteers last month:

- Jamia Andersen
- Katherine Bracken
- Sherie Luevano
- Nwabu Phendulu
- Nithyasri Ramesh

Have you considered volunteering with PBC? Enrolling as a volunteer offers many benefits, including thoroughly screened clients matched based upon your experience and preferences, free continuing education workshops, case consultations, and networking opportunities.

Click [HERE](#) for more info and to enroll.

during the Forum to provide feedback on their experience with the organization and to network.

"The organization updates and general discussion were very informative," stated one attendee. "The overview was very helpful and I enjoyed meeting with other volunteers."

PBC's Gratitude Gathering

Have you registered for Pro Bono Counseling's Gratitude Gathering yet? Join us on May 2, to honor and celebrate volunteers for the impact they make each year to ensure all Marylanders have access to mental health care. We will also recognize PBC's generous supporters and community partners.

Event sponsorships are still available-- By sponsoring the event, your organization will support the hundreds of licensed mental health care volunteers who donate their time to Marylanders in need.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more info and to register.

PBC Resource Corner: MENTOR Maryland | DC

A quality mentoring relationship can provide children with many benefits, including guidance to help fulfill their potential and support when facing obstacles. This month's highlighted organization is MENTOR Maryland | DC as it is a valuable resource for Maryland's youth.

The organization has a mentorship database that connects young people to a responsible and trustworthy mentor. These mentors

can help with various goals: academic plans, healthy lifestyle choices, or direction through difficulties. MENTOR Maryland | DC is available for children of all ages, and there is no cost for connecting with mentors. There are also various



online mentorship events scheduled on their [Events Calendar](#).

For more information about the mission and passion behind MENTOR Maryland | DC, visit mentormddc.org.