



# PRO BONO COUNSELING®

Your Mental Health Connection

## THE CONNECTION | MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | APRIL 2024

### PBC Volunteers Fundamental to Mental Health Access

In 2023, mental health professionals enrolled as Pro Bono Counseling (PBC) volunteers donated over 11,000 hours of counseling to more than 2,000 Marylanders. Without the generosity of these volunteers giving so freely of their time and expertise, mental health care would otherwise not be available to many Marylanders.

More than 800 licensed professional counselors, social workers, doctors, psychologists, marriage and family therapists, nurses, and art therapists located across the state are enrolled with PBC as volunteers and provide mental health care to those in need. These trained profession-

als provide a safe and supportive space, either in person or via secure platforms, for clients to share and explore a wide range of issues that may be burdening them.

The professionals enrolled as volunteers are diverse in their cultural backgrounds, expertise, spoken languages, gender, therapy style, as well as in their specialties, which enables the clinical team to find the right match between therapist and client. The most commonly requested specialty areas are anxiety, depression, trauma, grief or loss, and parenting.

As a PBC volunteer, clinicians are asked to pledge to take a single case pro bono each year, however many offer to assist additional clients. Last year, 327 volunteers saw between two to five clients, and 66 clinicians donated counseling services to more than five clients.

“Demand for mental health care continues to rise, and so far this year we’ve seen a 25% increase in counseling requests over the previous year,” stated PBC Clinical Director Sherri Bloom. “We are extremely grateful for the generous volunteer clinicians who help to meet this demand and to ensure Marylanders have access to the care they need.”

In November of 2023, a woman in her 40’s contacted PBC seeking assistance with issues she had encountered. The clinical team matched her with a therapist who could support her through relational stress and previous trauma.

During a follow up call this month, the client discussed her experience with PBC and her therapist, explaining that it is not easy for her to open up, but she has been working on it.

“I am learning so many things about myself,” she stated. “And I would not be here without Pro Bono Counseling.”

The client also shared that when she talks about PBC to others, they can’t believe she is receiving free mental health care service.

“As an immigrant, I face a lot of things

### Upcoming CEU Workshops

Register today to attend an upcoming continuing education workshop:

**May 16 - IN PERSON**

**Caring with Compassion: A Journey Toward Trauma-Informed Care** - 3 CE Credits, Presenter - La Keita D. Carter, PsyD

**May 21 - ONLINE**

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

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

### PBC’s Gratitude Gathering

Join us for Pro Bono Counseling’s Gratitude Gathering at the Vollmer Center on May 2, as we honor and celebrate our volunteers for the impact they make each year to ensure all Marylanders have access to the mental health care they need, and also recognize PBC’s generous supporters and community partners.



Dr. Asma Naeem

Scheduled event activities include:

• **Volunteer Recognition** - PBC will honor and recognize milestone service achievements and all volunteers will be eligible for special gratitude gifts.

• **CHAI Radha Pathak Humanitarian Award** - Honoring the memory of Dr. Radha Pathak’s benevolent spirit in helping others, this year’s award recipient is Baltimore Museum of Art Director Dr. Asma Naeem, for her attention to social equity, power, identity, migration and diaspora communities.

• **Terapias Community Care Award** - In celebration of the 10th anniversary of PBC’s Terapias Initiative, this award will be presented to: Donna Batkis, LCSW-C; Kathleen Page, MD, and the team at Behavior Health Equity Across Maryland; Catalina Rodriguez Lima, Director of the Baltimore City Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs; and Giuliana Valencia-Banks, Baltimore County’s Chief of Immigrant Affairs. They are being recognized for their response attending to the emotional, language, and cultural needs of the families impacted by the Key Bridge tragedy.

• **Silent Auction Fundraiser** - bid on items including Orioles tickets, restaurant gift cards, artwork, theater and symphony tickets, personal trainer sessions, and more!

Tickets are limited, so [RSVP](#) to attend today: <https://tinyurl.com/PBCGG>

### Welcome New PBC Volunteers

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

- Zohaa Awan
- Jonay Boylan
- Allison Brown
- Mariah Copeland-Dixon
- Jennah Kuhn
- Yao Lu

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.

To learn more about volunteering or to enroll, click [HERE](#)

and I am able to get help and support with Pro Bono Counseling,” she explained. “I am so happy I live in Maryland to receive these services.”

If you’re a licensed mental health professional interested in volunteering with PBC, please visit our [website](#) to enroll or email [PBC’s Outreach Coordinator](#).

### PBC Resource Corner: TurnAround, Inc.

In observance of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, this edition’s highlighted resource is TurnAround, Inc., an organization that exists to educate, advocate for, and empower people impacted by intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking. The organization offers a variety of resources to not only help individuals directly impacted by sexual violence, but also their friends, family, and community.

TurnAround provides many free programs, including a 24/7 crisis helpline

and text line, virtual trauma-focused group therapy, emergency shelter services, and legal consultation.

Individuals who have experienced sexual violence can contact TurnAround at any time. For access to clinical or legal services, individuals will be connected with trauma-informed intake coordinators to begin the process of obtaining resources and services.

Visit [this link](#) to get connected with Turnaround, or [this link](#) to view upcoming events.

