

Mental Health Care Is Health

Mental health professionals, across the nation, recognize the importance that mental health plays in the overall wellness and health of an individual. As mental health specialists, our education, training, experiences, and competency puts us in the best position to support children and adults with maintaining your well-being — with compassion, empathy, and skill.

Mental health providers advocate for the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Members of the profession recognize the importance of viewing the individual from a wholistic perspective that integrates mental health with social, cultural, vocational, educational, and physical wellness. Through evidence-based treatment, mental health professionals provide preventive and wellness services and chronic disease management and focus on comprehensive mental health measures that promote positive lifestyle changes and greater mental and physical health resilience for individuals and families.

Millions of adults and children throughout American experience mental health symptoms, including PTSD, anxiety, depression, substance-use disorders, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and more. Mental health counselors are ready to assist individuals in addressing the multiple crises that have impacted our nation, and the world:

The Covid-19 Pandemic – mental health professionals are treating untold numbers of individuals and families that are dealing with pandemic related depression, anxiety, grief, substance use, and other mental disorders

Economic Distress – Uniquely trained in career counseling, mental health professionals provide counseling for those who have become unemployed or underemployed. They provide employment enrichment approaches such as the improvement of on-the-job relationship skills, and can actively support them in their employment search while they can also gain additional training or job-related competencies and reduce their levels of stress.

Systemic Racism and Inequality – mental health providers all receive graduate education in multicultural counseling and advocacy for diversity, equality, and inclusion for all individuals and their families

Affordable Health Insurance and Health Care – the mental health profession is on the forefront for promoting integrated behavioral health care that attends to both medical and psychological issues

Environmental Issues – mental health providers practice holistically to help address social influences that negatively impact the health and mental health of individuals, families, and communities

Substance Use Disorders and Suicide – mental health providers are on the front lines as primary mental health therapists addressing the opioid addiction crisis, and other addictions such as alcohol abuse, as well as employing state-of-the-art suicide prevention strategies.

Members of the American Mental Health Counselors Association stand with our colleagues in the other mental health helping professions in offering support resources. The mental health specialists/professionals with the training, expertise, and aptitude to aid you and the members of your organization include clinical mental health counselors (e.g., LPCs, LCMHCs), psychologists, social workers (LCSWs), and marriage and family therapists (MFTs). They are trained, experienced, and specifically licensed to address individuals experiencing mental, emotional, physical, and cognitive distress.

What can you and your association do right now?

- ❑ Create a list of two or three Primary Mental Health Care Providers you can call, including crisis phone and text lines.
- ❑ Create a self-care plan that is practiced on a daily basis that includes activities such as deep breathing, meditation, yoga, etc.
- ❑ Be kind to yourself—avoid self-criticism and focus on the values of your vocation.
- ❑ Continue to be who you are—compassionate and caring.
- ❑ Stay (connected with colleagues, friends, and family by phone, text, email, or video-chat).

The goal is that Americans will no longer separate mental health from physical health when it comes to access to care or quality of treatment. The next generation must grow up knowing that mental health is a key component of overall health and there is no shame, stigma, or barriers to seeking out care.

Remember, you are not alone. Many mental health professionals, some are even providing free services, are available to talk to individuals.

Oftentimes, just a phone call, text, email, video chat, or even snail mail can be encouraging and immensely beneficial.

For more information about how mental health providers can help address the needs of our nation today read our 2021 position paper on mental health reform entitled, “A Mental Health Access Improvement Roadmap” at <https://www.amhca.org/advocacy/mentalhealthreform>.

For more information about how Americans are suffering from mental health disorders on a scale rarely seen before, due to a perfect storm of systemic racism, the COVID-19 pandemic,

and economic turmoil. read our 2020 report entitled “Beyond a Perfect Storm: How Racism, Covid-19, and Economic Meltdown Imperil Our Mental Health” at <https://www.amhca.org/events/publications/reports/beyond-perfect-storm>.