

Behavioral Health Supports and Resources:

Traumatic Stress, Community Violence and Race-Based Trauma

It is deeply important to all of us at the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) that we have conversations about the impact of institutional and structural racism on behavioral health, and the COVID-19 crisis underscores the urgency we feel in bringing these issues forward. As a state agency, DMAS is committed to the wellbeing of all people. DMAS will continue to focus our efforts on addressing social determinants of health to drive health equity and better outcomes for populations made vulnerable to adverse outcomes by a long history of injustice and trauma. Racism is real, and the shattering pain society is feeling today is heightened by the fact that this tragedy continues to repeat itself in a cycle of cumulative, unbearable trauma. We are seeing people manifest this pain, fear and anger in various ways, and some are painful to witness. It is a natural inclination to deny, to look away and to struggle with accepting and integrating these realities, but we must strive to stay present in this moment in order to create real and lasting change.

We encourage all Behavioral Health providers to offer support to your organizations and communities in acknowledging, strategizing, and taking action to address racial health inequities that are exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Providers may want to start discussions, review policies, and consider publishing information around trauma-responsive and trauma-informed care, and cultural humility. We know that healing happens in relationships, and when the experience of trauma and racism is silenced, it impacts our ability to be healthy. It is important to remember that being culturally humble does not mean "understanding or knowing" every culture. Culturally humble means that you are able to accept your own limitations around culture and the ability to work with those who are of other backgrounds. It is even more important now, if you have not done so before, to incorporate culturally sensitive, trauma-informed care into your practices. "Culturally Sensitive Trauma-Informed Care" refers to the capacity for health care professionals to effectually provide trauma-informed assessment and intervention that acknowledge, respect, and integrate patients' and families' cultural values, beliefs, and practices.

How to Assess: Culturally Sensitive Trauma-Informed Care

...QUESTIONS PROVIDERS SHOULD ASK

LISTEN

...for variations in understanding. Ask:

- What is your understanding of what's happened?
- What is worrying you the most?
- What does your family think about it?

BE OPEN

...to involving other professionals. Ask:

- Who do you normally turn to for support?
- Who else should be involved in helping your child?
- Are you open to outside referrals and resources?

RESPECT

...different communication practices. Ask:

- Who typically makes the decisions about your child?
- What information should be shared with your child?
- Is there anyone else you would like me to talk to?

<https://www.healthcaretoolbox.org/cultural-considerations/culturally-sensitive-trauma-informed-care/12-health-care-toolbox/cultural-considerations.html>

How Can We Help?

As individuals experience increased levels of stress and heightened realities of insecurity, providers should be equipped to assess levels of distress and levels of emotional support needed. When assessing levels of distress, the following areas of focus will assist providers in gaining an understanding of where their client is functioning emotionally and what level of supports is needed.

1. What is the client's level of emotional pain? (Gain an understanding of the quantity and severity of unpleasant emotional experiences the client is exposed to.)
2. What are the client's fears and worries?
3. Consider any recent experience with grief and/or loss.

Resources about Mental Health Impact from Traumatic Events and Race-Based Trauma

- National Institute of Mental Health: Coping with Traumatic Events -

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/coping-with-traumatic-events/index.shtml>

- National Institute of Mental Health: Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Disasters and Other Traumatic Events: What Parents, Rescue Workers, and the Community Can Do - <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/helping-children-and-adolescents-cope-with-disasters-and-other-traumatic-events/index.shtml>
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) - <https://www.nctsn.org/>
 - NCTSN – Community Violence Resources - <https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/community-violence/nctsn-resources>
- SAMHSA: Tips for Survivors: Coping with Grief after Community Violence - <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma14-4888.pdf>
- SAMHSA: Tips for Survivors: Coping with Grief After a Disaster or Traumatic Event - <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma17-5035.pdf>
- Multicultural Mental Health Resources – Includes: “Coping with Uncertainty and Fear,” “Race Based Trauma and Support in Times of Civil Strife,” “Multicultural Mental Health Resources,” and “Resources for Addressing Emotional and Psychological Needs in the LGBTQ Community.” <https://www.alexandriava.gov/dchs/adultservices/default.aspx?id=92889>
- Healthcare Toolbox- Culturally Sensitive Trauma-Informed Care: <https://www.healthcaretoolbox.org/cultural-considerations/culturally-sensitive-trauma-informed-care/12-health-care-toolbox/cultural-considerations.html>
- “Becoming a more culturally, adversity, and trauma-informed infused, and responsive organization.” <https://www.wcmt.org.uk/sites/default/files/report-documents/Treisman%20K%202018%20Final.pdf>

Crisis Support

SAMHSA’s Disaster Distress Helpline provides 24/7, 365-day-a-year crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural disasters, human-caused disasters and racial crises. This toll-free, multicultural, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories. Stress, anxiety, and other depression-like symptoms are common reactions after a disaster or crisis. Call **1-800-985-5990** or text **TalkWithUs to 66746** to connect with a trained crisis counselor. <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress. Call 1-800-273-TALK. Support is available in English and Spanish and via [live chat](#). <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/>

Veteran's Crisis Line is available 24/7 for all veterans, service members, National Guard and Reserve, and ANY family members and friends.

- Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1 or Text 838255
- For those who are deaf or hard of hearing, call 1-800-799-4889
- Chat online at the website <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741741 for free and confidential support 24 hours a day throughout the U.S. <https://www.crisistextline.org/>

Vibrant Emotional Health Safe Space provides crisis support by chat and phone, coping tools and distraction tools: http://vibrant.org/safespace?_ga=2.152460537.1336160752.1585580512-1385357376.1585580512

Teenline offers peer-based support for teens (currently only chat and email options are available). Text TEEN to 839863 or chat online at <https://teenlineonline.org/>

The Trevor Project offers crisis support specifically for LGBTQ Youth. Call 1-866-488-7386, Text START to 678678 or visit <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/> for live chat.

Boystown Hotline: 24/7, accredited by the American Association of Suicidology.

- Spanish Speaking counselors and translation services for more than 100 language available.
- Speech and hearing impaired can contact them at hotline@boystown.org
- 1-800-448-3000

Commonwealth of Virginia Supports and Resources

Virginia Community Services Board (CSB) Contact Information:

CSBs help people in Virginia with mental health, intellectual disability, and substance use disorder needs. CSBs provide pre-admission screening services 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

- [CSB Emergency/Crisis Phone Numbers by County](#)
- [CSB Contact Information](#)
- [CSB Disaster Emergency Coordinators](#)

To help find the member's local CSB: <https://vacsb.org/community-services-boards-and-the-behavioral-authority-csbs-and-the-bha/>

Mental Health America of Virginia Warm Line is run by peers and is open 365 days a year, M-F, 9am-9pm and weekends 5pm-9pm. Call 866-400-MHAV (866-400-6428)

Virginia Organization of Consumers Asserting Leadership (VOCAL) <https://vocalvirginia.org/>

National Alliance on Mental Health Virginia <https://namivirginia.org/>

Voices for Virginia's Children (VOICES): vakids.org and for advocacy resources call 804.649.0184