



# School-Based Mental Health Services & School Social Work

The goal of School-Based Mental Health Services (SBMHS) is to enhance student well-being and remove barriers to mental health treatment by providing therapy services in schools during school hours.

## VISION

All students and families will have access to social-emotional, behavioral and mental health interventions to support student achievement and well-being.

## MISSION

School social workers will advocate for, support and empower students, schools, families and communities to remove social, systemic and mental health barriers that impact student well-being to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment.

## WHAT ARE SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES?

School-Based Mental Health Services are similar to having a community mental health office inside a school. Services are provided through a partnership between the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), Howard County Health Department, The Horizon Foundation, The Kahlert Foundation, and approved community mental health agencies. SBMHS are voluntary and parent/guardian consent is required for all services. School social workers, licensed mental health professionals from community mental health agencies, student services staff, teachers, and school administration collaborate to support your student's social and emotional well-being and academic achievement. In HCPSS, SBMHS provided by approved community mental health agencies are billed through your insurance. However, resources are available to support all students regardless of insurance.

## WHY HAVE MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS?

School-Based Mental Health Services in schools:

- Improve academic performance and personal relationships with family and friends
- Remove barriers (transportation, schedules, access) for families seeking services for their child
- Decrease time away from school
- Provide relief from symptoms earlier rather than later
- Can prevent long-term problems

## WHO PROVIDES SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES?

- Licensed Mental Health Professionals employed by community mental health agencies approved to provide services in HCPSS
- HCPSS-Employed Licensed Social Workers

## REASONS TO REFER

Student is currently experiencing, or has experienced:

- Barriers to accessing care outside of school
- Trauma
- Behavioral challenges
- Emotional challenges, including anxiety or more worries than other kids
- Decline in school performance or grades

Please note at times students may exhibit behaviors that concern parents. Often certain behaviors are as expected for the development age. However, some behaviors that significantly impact a child over a period of time may be worthy of additional consideration and may warrant a referral for SBMHS. For additional information on when to be concerned, please visit: <https://www.hcpss.org/supports/mental-health-wellness/warning-signs/>

## SERVICES AVAILABLE

- Individual counseling
- Group counseling
- Family counseling
- Teacher support and consultation
- Mental health evaluation
- Psychiatric consultation
- Advocacy for students and families
- Crisis intervention
- Connecting families to community resources
- Referrals to community mental health programs and specialty care

## HOW CAN I GET HELP?

Contact your student's school counselor. After you contact the counselor:

- A referral will be made to the Student Support Team.
- You will be contacted for additional information and to discuss eligibility and available resources.
- You will be asked to sign paperwork consenting for services.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

- HCPSS and participating community mental health agencies follow strict guidelines on sharing private information about your child.
- Records are kept confidential.
- Written parental permission is required for therapy information to be shared with school staff.

# Accessing Behavioral Health Resources

The Howard County Public School System wants each student to thrive socially, emotionally and academically. The following behavioral health resources are available to Howard County students and their families.

## To Get Crisis Support

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-8255

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your family, and best practices for professionals.

### Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center

410-531-6677

[grassrootscrisis.org](http://grassrootscrisis.org)

Grassroots provides free telephone or walk-in counseling, emergency shelter for the homeless, a 24-hour suicide hotline, Mobile Crisis Team and a Runaway Teen Program.

### Mobile Crisis Team (MCT)

410-531-6677

911 (ask for the Mobile Crisis Team)

MCT responds with the police to psychiatric emergencies, family crises and other traumatic events. Operates from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m.

### Crisis Text Line

Text HOME to 741741

[crisistextline.org](http://crisistextline.org)

Crisis Text Line provides free, 24/7 anonymous support.

### Maryland Crisis Connect Line

Call 211 and select option 1

Text your zip code to 898-211

[MDCrisisConnect.org](http://MDCrisisConnect.org)

This resource is available 24/7 to provide support, guidance and assistance.

## To Find a Behavioral Health Provider

### Bureau of Behavioral Health

410-313-6202

[howardcountymd.gov/gethelp](http://howardcountymd.gov/gethelp)

The Bureau of Behavioral Health promotes behavioral health wellness, and provides integrated linkage to behavioral health and substance abuse resources and prevention services.

### Network of Care

[howard.md.networkofcare.org/mh/](http://howard.md.networkofcare.org/mh/)

This website provides a directory of providers and information about behavioral health services, laws and related news, as well as communication tools and other features.

### Health Department Community Services Directory

<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/Health/Behavioral-Health/Community-Services-Directory>

This frequently updated guide lists practitioners who work with young people. Click on the Directory of Behavioral Health Services for Youth link.

### Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

[findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

SAMHSA's Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator is a confidential and anonymous source of information for persons seeking services for substance use or mental health problems.

## To Utilize Other Howard County Resources

### Behavioral Health Navigator (Howard County Health Dept.)

<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/health/behavioral-health-navigation>

### The CARE Line for Howard County Families

410-313-CARE (2273)

[children@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:children@howardcountymd.gov)

The CARE Line is a free information and referral service to support families in finding answers and solutions for issues involving children or teens.

### HC DrugFree

443-325-0040

[hcdrugfree.org](http://hcdrugfree.org)

HC DrugFree provides resources and education on prevention, treatment, recovery, and health and wellness to address behavioral health disorders.

### Maryland Coalition of Families

410-730-8267

[mdcoalition.org](http://mdcoalition.org)

An MCF Family Peer Support Specialist helps families access community services related to mental health or substance use challenges.

### NAMI Howard County

410-772-9300

[namihowardcounty.org](http://namihowardcounty.org)

NAMI HC improves the lives of individuals with mental illness and their families through education, advocacy and support.

### HoCo Opioid Help

410-531-6677

[HoCoOpioidHelp.com](http://HoCoOpioidHelp.com)

Anyone seeking help for opioid addiction may call or visit the website for resources.

**Please note:** Every school has a Student Support Team (SST). Therefore, even if a school does not have a social worker or school-based mental health services, all students may access their school counselor and may receive referrals for outside services.