



Children & Families First

Behavioral Health Consultant Program

Service Overview

The aim of the BHC program is to increase appropriate mental health access to students and their families and to assess for and decrease the risk of suicide and other safety concerns for middle school students. At this time, the program is in 30 public and charter middle schools throughout the state of Delaware.

Direct Care Services

Short-Term Counseling

Requires parental/guardian consent for services.

Short-term counseling is a brief, intensive counseling service that lasts for three months. It is designed for students experiencing acute emotional or behavioral health issues that require quick intervention. Students receive weekly or biweekly counseling during the three month period.

Supportive Counseling

Requires parental/guardian consent for services.

Supportive counseling is a preventive and as needed counseling services that can last for the duration of the school year. It is designed for students who need less intensive, more long-term support during the school day to be successful in the school setting. Students receive counseling services as needed and are provided brief check-ins biweekly.

Crisis Services

All students in the school are eligible for crisis services.

Crisis services include *risk assessments* and *counseling intervention* to students experiencing an immediate threat of harm to self or others or another significant emotional or behavioral problem during the school day. Risk assessments specifically address risk of suicide or other safety concerns and include assessment, safety planning and connection to mobile crisis as needed. Crisis services also include de-escalation for other emotional or behavioral issues impairing the students immediate functioning, but do not include a safety concern. BHCs provide de-escalation and counseling support to allow the student to return to class successfully. Crisis services may also include behavioral support and intervention.

Group Counseling

BHC led and facilitated groups require consent. School led and BHC assisted groups do not require BHC specific consent.

BHCs can offer group counseling to address various social, emotional and behavioral difficulties, such as anger management, self-esteem, coping skills, etc.

Referral and Case Management

All students and families in the school are eligible for referral and case management support.

BHCs support students and families in connecting with community providers for therapy and other social services needs.

Indirect Services

BHCs are encouraged to work as a supportive member in the school's team, providing mental health consultation to teachers and administrators working with students with mental health difficulties. BHCs also assist the school in other strategies to connect with students and families, such as contacting students with attendance issues, notifying parents/guardians of school updates, and monitoring students during lunches, hall time, etc.

Eligibility for Services

Any middle school student and family is eligible for BHC services with the BHC assigned to their school.

Referral for Services

Referrals for BHC services can come from anyone in or outside of the school. They can come from the school counselors, school nurse, teachers, administrators, students or families. Outside agencies, such as Mobile Response or inpatient facilities may also refer to the BHC to provide support to at-risk students in the school setting. Schools may choose to further direct the referral process to fit the culture and service structure of their school.

Telehealth Services

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all services described above have been adapted to being provided via telehealth. We have mobilized our BHCs to provide all the same services they provided in the brick and mortar school to a new virtual world. Our goal is to increase our supportive and preventive services so students and their families remain safe and healthy under whatever stresses the pandemic is creating for them.