More Clients Seeking First Time Therapy During Pandemic

Since the current pandemic began, our clinical team has documented not only a significant increase in the number of calls to Pro Bono Counseling but also an increase in callers seeking therapy for the first time. Due to the impact of stay-at-home orders, financial stress, social injustice, and events taking place around them, some people are feeling a heightened sense of anxiety and depression and need someone to talk to about it.

"With all that’s happening in the media, it’s constant, and I have thoughts that don’t stop," explained one recent caller. "I’m feeling down, and it is hard to shut it all off."

Counseling is an excellent tool to help process fear or anxiety about the state of the world right now.

"Our goal is to remove all barriers to accessing mental health care, and that includes ensuring clients are comfortable reaching out to us," stated PBCP Executive Director Amy Greensfelder. "Our clinical team does an excellent job of assessing clients’ needs and walking them through the entire process to alleviate any concerns.

When clients contact Pro Bono Counseling, the clinical team conducts a confidential interview to determine discuss their concerns and interest in seeking therapy. Each request for counseling is unique and we personalize our services to clients’ needs. To connect clients with the best therapist for them, we take into consideration preferences for a counselor’s cultural background/expertise, gender, and therapy style, among other factors.

Of the interview process, one client recently remarked to a clinical team member, "I feel so cared for. Thank you so much for your help."

If you or anyone you know is feeling sad, depressed or overwhelmed and want to make a change in their life, call PBCP at 410.825.1001 for a confidential phone interview.

Pro Bono Counseling Intern

Ada Truong, an undergraduate student at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, was looking for a clinical psychology summer internship that aligned with her interest in psychopathology and would enable her to gain valuable client experience while giving back to her community. After learning about Pro Bono Counseling's mission to connect Marylanders with quality mental health services, she knew that an internship with the organization would be a great fit. She started with PBCP in the summer of 2020, and has not stopped yet.

"Although my internship was initially scheduled to terminate in the fall of 2020, I loved the work and people at Pro Bono Counseling so much that I decided to stay on," explained Ada.

Ada’s internship will now run through May 2021, which is when she will graduate with a B.S. in Psychology, and a minor in Biology. As an undergraduate intern, Ada is primarily engaged in the clinical day to day tasks that match clients with volunteer mental health clinicians, and she is involved in macro projects as well. She also recently joined a PBCP advocacy work group.

"I’m very excited to learn more about state-wide behavioral health policies and the avenues through which we can pursue more equitable and accessible therapy for Marylanders requesting mental health care," stated Ada. "Ada is a wonderful clinical intern, and we are grateful for all of the work she has done for the organization," said PBCP Clinical Director Sherri Bloom. "We appreciate her dedication to our mission."

Upon graduation, Ada hopes to work full-time as an EMT to gain more clinical experience for a year before applying to medical school to pursue a career in internal/family medicine or psychiatry.

"If you are interested in interning with Pro Bono Counseling, I would strongly encourage you to reach out," stated Ada. "PBCP offers a wonderful opportunity to be actively involved in the field of mental health and make a significant difference in the lives of many Marylanders."

PBCP offers undergraduate and graduate level internships in clinical work, public policy, or both. If you’re interested in interning with PBCP, please send your resume and cover letter to Sherri@ProBonoCounseling.org or call 410.825.1001 to learn when the next internship position will be available.

BIPOC Workshop Series During Black History Month

To coincide with Black History month, Pro Bono Counseling is offering a continuing education workshop series focused on working with clients who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). PBCP recognizes that historically there has been limited education for providers on working with BIPOC clients. On Thursday, February 25, three continuing education workshops are being offered.

The workshops are:
- "Addressing Spiritual Dimension of Clients Exposed to Trauma: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color," presented by Oladipo S. Adeledeji, MS, LCPC, NCC;
- "Working with Black, Indigenous and People of Color: Does Race Matter?," presented by Christopher L. Bishop, PsyD, LCSW-C; and
- "Ethnic Identity and the Therapeutic Process," presented by Charla McKinzie Bishop, Ph.D., MSEd.

Each workshop offers 1.5 CEUs and the registration fee is $20/workshop or $50 for all three workshops (workshops are free for all PBCP active volunteer clinicians). Visit our website at ProBonoCounseling.org for more information or to register.

Mark Your Calendar to Attend PBCP 2021 Professional Continuing Education Online Workshops

Thursday, February 18
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM
Pro Bono Clinician Orientation

Thursday, February 25
10:30 AM, 1:00 PM, and 2:45 PM
Black, Indigenous and People of Color Workshop Series

Monday, March 8
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Depression: Professional and Personal Perspectives

Wednesday, March 17
10:00 AM - 11:30 PM
Pro Bono Clinician Orientation

Get More Involved with PBCP

Did you know you could attend Pro Bono Counseling’s continuing education workshops for FREE? Register with PBCP today to take at least one client per year, and attend all of our workshops free of charge! PBCP is always in need of additional volunteer clinicians to allow us to help clients throughout Maryland. Enroll now at ProBonoCounseling.org.