Explains PBCP WARMLine Manager Elizabeth Stoner, LCSW-C. Whether the caller needs a short-term intervention, is interested in taking a first step towards therapy, or simply just needs someone to talk to, the WARMLine can be an invaluable resource.

“We have assisted callers ranging in ages from 14 to 91, and we can respond to a true variety of issues,” says Elizabeth. Additionally, those under the age of 18 are not restricted from calling and do not need parental permission. “Anyone can call the WARMLine and receive resources,” she adds.

The issues WARMLine calls address vary greatly, ranging from work stress, financial issues, to domestic violence and past trauma. Additional call examples include young adults who contact the WARMLine to talk about school or relationship issues, as well as older people interested in opening up about feelings of isolation or reflection of their life.

One recent caller stated, "I find the WARMLine support an invaluable necessity. The therapist listens well, is empathetic, is knowledgeable, as well as humane. Most importantly, I come away feeling heard and seen.”

What should a caller expect when they contact the WARMLine? There is absolutely no commitment necessary. The only information a caller is asked to give is the name they would like to be called by, the county they live in, their age, and their phone number, just in case the call is unexpectedly dropped.

The length of the session is usually about 20-30 minutes, depending on the caller. Each interaction is unique and focuses on the needs of the individual caller, in which the WARMLine professional can help highlight the caller’s strengths, come up with the next steps to resolve their stressors, and be a listening ear. One recent caller expressed, "Just having someone who is unbiased to talk to so I can sort stuff out makes a world of difference." A frequent WARMLine misconception is the mindset that what someone is experiencing is not significant enough to warrant a call; this is never the case.

"The WARMLine is a wonderful and unique resource, filling the gap between crisis services and ongoing therapeutic care," states Elizabeth. "Often people are hesitant to reach out for help unless they want to commit to therapy or are in true danger, but the WARMLine is available to give an opportunity between these steps.” There is no obligation to call the WARMLine again and it can be the perfect introduction to working towards formal counseling if needed.

PBCP’s WARMLine is available weekdays from 10AM to 6PM, and on weekends from 10AM to 8PM, by calling 410.598.0234.

Pro Bono Counseling is Changemaker Challenge Finalist

Pro Bono Counseling Project (PBCP) is a finalist for the United Way of Central Maryland 2021 Changemaker Challenge in Baltimore County, a social innovation competition encouraging fresh thinking to address pressing issues in the county.

On Wednesday, November 17, PBCP Executive Director Amy Greensfelder will be "pitching" to contest judges and audience members Pro Bono Counseling’s concept and mission of connecting Marylanders in need with licensed mental health professionals at no cost. Grants will be awarded at various levels up to $25,000. Additionally, a $5,000 award will be given based on audience choice. The winner of the audience choice award is also eligible to win one of the other grants.

“Our mission isn’t new—we’ve been quietly executing it for 30 years, but it is as innovative as it was 30 years ago,” explains Amy. “The need for mental health care is great, the costs and barriers to care are growing—Pro Bono Counseling provides an essential service, ensuring that mental health care is accessible to all.” The event will be held virtually, with contestants sharing a video about their innovative idea and then participating in a question and answer session with the judges.

Support PBCP and vote for our organization! Register to attend at uwcm.org/baltimorecountychangemaker.

Upcoming Workshop Dates

Mark your calendar to attend PBCP’s upcoming continuing education workshops:

November 1 - Nature Informed Therapy: An Introduction to Integrating Nature into Clinical Practice Presenters: Heidi Schreiber-Pan, PhD, LCPC; and Zoe Jack, MS, LMSW, RYT

November 9 - Reproduction in the Age of COVID Presenters: Julie Bindeman, PsyD

November 10 - Introduction to Pro Bono Counseling: Clinical Applications for Volunteers Presenters: Amy Greensfelder, LMSW, and Sherri Bloom, LCSW-C

November 17 - Family Caregivers: Addressing the Support They Need Presenter: Kate Washington, PhD

December 1 - Introduction to Pro Bono Counseling: Clinical Applications for Volunteers Presenters: Amy Greensfelder, LMSW, and Sherri Bloom, LCSW-C

December 8 - Intimate Partner Violence and COVID-19: The Evolution of Service Delivery Presenters: Beth Webb, LMSW, and Elsabat Martinez, LCSW-C LICSW

December 10 - After Delivery: Diagnosing and Treating Postpartum Mood and Anxiety Disorder Presenter: Ilana Jackson, PsyD

For more information or to register, visit https://probonocounseling.org/training/events/.

PBCP Resource Corner: CovidCONNECT

The Maryland Department of Health and NAMI Maryland (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) have launched a program for those impacted by COVID-19, as a survivor, caregiver, or through loss of a loved one. The CovidCONNECT resource page hosts COVID-19 fact sheets, clarification of COVID-19 rumors, as well as details on participation in clinical studies and plasma donation for people who have contracted the coronavirus.

As part of this project, NAMI has developed free, peer-led support groups for COVID survivors who are interested in connecting with others to talk about the challenges of recovering from the virus. Trained peer facilitators host small group sessions the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm to provide necessary and crucial support. Click here to learn about joining the group or receiving training to be a peer facilitator.