



PRO BONO COUNSELING®

Your Mental Health Connection

THE CONNECTION | MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | JULY 2024

Sharing the Positive Impact of Mental Health Care

Pro Bono Counseling (PBC) was founded with the goal of connecting uninsured and under-insured low-income Marylanders with compassionate and qualified mental health professionals who provide care on a volunteer basis at no cost. For more than 33 years, the PBC team, its volunteers, community partners, and supporters have been working to remove barriers that historically have kept people from receiving the mental health care and resources they need and deserve.

One of PBC's priorities is reaching out to communities to ensure that Marylanders in need are aware of the resources that are available to them at no cost. We strive to communicate the benefits of mental health care, the positive impact it can have on your overall well-being, and how to navigate mental health systems and resources.

But sometimes it's even more compelling to hear that message directly from someone who has experienced what you may be going through. With the permission of the person who shared their story with us, we'd like to share it with you:

If I could give you my experience with Pro Bono Counseling in two short words, they would be: life saving. [My clinician] Dr. Laura is kind, consistent, communicative, and an incredible teacher. She has brought me though some very significant trauma in my life to a place where I can not only talk about it without shaking, a place of healing, but to a place of growth.

I am by no means "totally healed" or done with therapy, but I am no longer a prisoner of my trauma. She is teaching me how to mentalize, how to better handle my emotions, my parenting has improved, I gained the confidence to apply for and accept a new job that can lead to bigger things for me in my career. I am planning on going back to school to finish my degree. I could go on and on.

In short, she saved my life. I was alive, but in agony, and depression. I feel like a whole person now, not just a shell. And that

is all because of Dr. Laura and Pro Bono Counseling. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Some people influence your life, but Dr. Laura has saved mine, and there is truly no exaggeration in that statement. I am now, and will forever be: grateful!

PBC appreciates that this person was willing to share their story in an effort to motivate others to seek out the assistance they may need. PBC is your mental health connection -- If you're experiencing stress, anxiety, grief, or a life transition, call us at 410.825.1001. If you'd like to provide a testimonial about your experience with PBC, please contact us [here](#).



Volunteer clinicians recently met with PBC staff for orientation.

Actively Enrolled PBC Volunteers Reach an All-Time High

Pro Bono Counseling (PBC) could not accomplish its mission to remove barriers and provide relief by connecting Marylanders to mental health support without the licensed mental health professionals who enroll as volunteers and donate their time. And the current number of active volunteers enrolled with PBC has just reached a new organization milestone—904 clinicians!

"A PBC volunteer is considered active if they have agreed to see at least one client over a one-year period," explained Clinical Director Sherri Bloom. "We are thrilled to report that we have reached the highest level ever of clinicians currently providing counseling services to Marylanders in need."

Clinicians who enroll as volunteers are licensed professional counselors, so-

Upcoming CEU Workshops

Register today to attend an upcoming online continuing education workshop:

August 14

Providing Counseling Pro Bono: Clinical Applications for Volunteers - 1 CE Credit, Presenters - Amy Greensfelder, LCSW, Sherri Bloom, LCSW-C, and Yolonda Nelson-Swain, MAHS, VASIII

September 10

Providing Counseling Pro Bono: Clinical Applications for Volunteers - 1 CE Credit, Presenters - Amy Greensfelder, LCSW, Sherri Bloom, LCSW-C, and Yolonda Nelson-Swain, MAHS, VASIII

September 17

When Clients Use Cannabis: The Clinician's Guide - 3 CE Credits, Presenter - Ashley Wynn-Grimes, MS, RN-BC

September 26

Intersections of Care: Key Considerations for Providing Affirming Care to LGBTQIA+ Adolescent Populations - 3CE Credits, Presenter - Lee Westgate, MSW, MBA, LCSW-C

For more information on these workshops and to register, visit PBC's [Events and Workshop](#) page.

PBC Resource Corner: Black Mental Health Alliance

July is designated as Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) Mental Health Awareness Month to highlight the unique struggles that underrepresented groups continue to face in seeking mental health care and treatment. This month's highlighted resource is the Black Mental Health Alliance (BMHA), which works to "develop, promote, and sponsor culturally relevant educational forums, trainings and referral services that support the health and well-being of Black people and their communities."



BMHA provides workshops and forums across a wide range of issues including burnout, radical Black self-care, and men's mental health. Since 1984, this non-profit organization has advocated and provided a platform to educate and erase the stigma surrounding health and mental illness. They feature the intrinsic cultural strengths, traditions, and structures that can serve as the foundation of strong Black families.

For more information, call 410.338.2642, or visit their website [HERE](#).

cial workers, psychologists, marriage and family therapists, psychologists, nurses, doctors, and art therapists. While we only ask that volunteers commit to seeing one client per year, many generously agree to see more. Last year, 47% of volunteers saw between two to five clients, and 10% assisted more than five.

"Obviously, the more clinicians who enroll as volunteers, the more people we will be able to match with therapists," stated Sherri. "Since our requests for counseling have increased significantly this year, by more than 25%, we will now be able to help even more Marylanders."

Have you considered volunteering with PBC? It offers many benefits, including thoroughly screened clients matched based upon your experience and preferences, free continuing education workshops, case consultations, and networking opportunities.

To learn more about volunteering or to enroll, email PBC Outreach Coordinator Yolonda Nelson-Swain or click [HERE](#).

Welcome New PBC Volunteer

Pro Bono Counseling (PBC) sincerely thanks the thousands of mental health professionals who have given their time since our inception in 1991.

Please join us in welcoming the following mental health clinician who enrolled as a PBC volunteer last month:

- Tereza Dvorak