



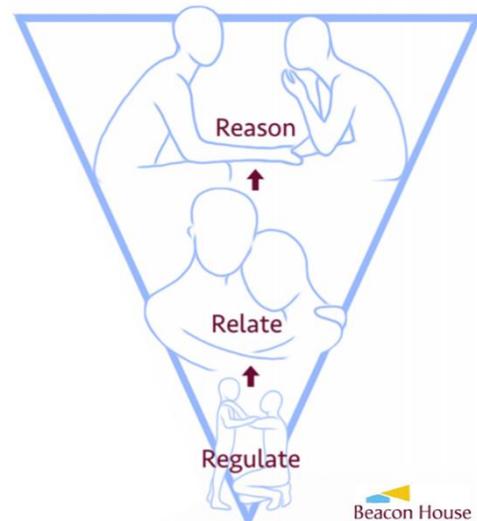
Behavioral Health Services - *Communications*

Strengthening Alliance in the Era of Telehealth and the COVID-19 Crisis

The COVID-19 crisis, and any type of crisis, can be seen as both a danger and opportunity (Kanel, 2012). Of recent, Behavioral Health Services as we know it has been transformed by this crisis. In spite of its unprecedented danger, we have launched opportunities to continue providing services to our clients through a variety of telehealth platforms.

While we temporarily use telehealth, we can adopt Perry's (2013) trauma-informed and neurosequential approach (see diagram) to help our clients through this crisis, and still maintain a strong alliance with them (click links to resources below).

1. We can help our clients **REGULATE** through a variety of [mindfulness](#), [grounding](#), [calming](#), and [distress tolerance](#) activities, while promoting our clients' [safety](#), and managing [risks](#).
2. To **RELATE** with them, we can build rapport, show empathy, and validate their feelings of stress and anxiety by using tips on [How to Build TeleTherapeutic Relationship](#).
3. We engage our clients in **REASON** and learning what to do by helping them develop coping and adaptive thoughts and behaviors. To this end, we can supplement our work with [psychoeducation](#), collaborating on [worksheets](#), or even using a variety of [apps](#).



Perhaps, many of us remain to be skeptic about using telehealth as we might view it as a poor substitute for strengthening alliance and facilitating a 'sense of presence' with our clients. As much as this can be true, current research indicates that alliance is not compromised when telehealth is used. Despite social distancing and shelter-in-place measures, using telehealth might actually increase access to services by underserved populations as we continue to advance social justice, and advocate for equity through our work.

For consult or questions, please reach out to Ritchie Rubio, Ph.D. (CYF Director of Practice Improvement and Analytics) at ritchie.rubio@sfdph.org.

Staff Shout Out During COVID-19 Response: Community Justice Court



Sylvia Guatemala of the Community Justice Court (CJC) team has been working diligently to connect with monolingual, Spanish-speaking clients experiencing homelessness. The CJC team had not heard from a client since before the shelter-in-place order. Sylvia was able to connect with the client's Parole Officer out of County to re-connect with the client. Due to Sylvia's efforts to get in touch, she learned that they are doing well, and have moved in with family during this crisis. Thank you, Sylvia!

BHS Trainings Available Online

The Behavioral Health Services (BHS) Training Unit is a team of the Office of Equity, Social Justice, and Multicultural Education (OESM). The Training Unit works to create robust training and capacity-building opportunities which support the BHS workforce.

Many past trainings are available online, including new trainings hosted in collaboration with the BHS COVID-19 Response Team. One of the newest additions to the BHS Training Unit archives is a COVID-19 specific, staff wellness webinar which was facilitated by Nia Hamilton-Ibu, LCSW and attended by 100 members of the BHS workforce.



The following trainings are archived on the Behavioral Health Services Training Unit vimeo website:

COVID-19 Response Webinars

- Wellness Webinar for Staff | Nia Hamilton-Ibu, LCSW (Presented April 2, 2020)
- Telecare for Opioid Use Disorders | David Kan, MD (March 30, 2020)
- Information for Opioid Treatment Programs Regarding COVID-19 | Judith Martin, MD (March 17, 2020)

Substance Use Disorder Treatment Webinars

- Substance Use Epidemiology in San Francisco: 2019 | Phillip Coffin, MD
- Harm Reduction Basics for Substance Use Treatment Providers | Charles Hawthorne
- Cannabis and Cannabis Use Disorder | Tauheed Zaman, MD
- Preventing Addiction-Related Suicide | Christine Yuodelis-Flores, MD
- Racialization of the Opioid Epidemic | Jules Netherland, PhD
- Treatment for Cocaine/Methamphetamine Use | Richard Rawson, PhD
- Women and Substance Use | Joan Zweben, PhD
- Integrating Tobacco Cessation Services in Addiction Treatment Settings | Joseph Guldish, PhD
- Addressing Cognitive and Physical Disabilities in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Substance Use Disorders | Dennis Moore, Ed.D
- Implementing Buprenorphine Treatment in Narcotic Treatment Programs: Clinical

Issues | Judith Martin, MD

- Implementing Buprenorphine Treatment in Opioid Treatment Programs: Administrative Issues | Judith Martin, MD
- Opportunities for Hepatitis C Modalities in Substance Use Treatment Settings | Katie Burk, MPH

Update on Eating Disorders

- Introduction | Karen Mu, MD
- Medical Consequences of Eating Disorders | Sara Buckelew, MD, MPH
- Evidence-based Treatment for Eating Disorders | Erin C. Accurso, PhD
- The Role of Nutrition in Recovery | Andrea Garber, PhD, RD

For questions about the BHS trainings, please contact BHS-OESM@sfdph.org.

Behavioral Health Services COVID-19 Communications Updates

The BHS COVID-19 Response Team is working around the clock to provide you with the most updated information from local, state and federal sources. All BHS specific guidelines and resources can be accessed on [our public DPH BHS COVID-19 GoogleDrive](#) for civil service staff, contractors, and BHS stakeholders. In addition to the DPH BHS COVID-19 GoogleDrive, please visit the following sites for the most accurate and up to date information available:

City and County of San Francisco

- Includes information on testing, services, resources, volunteer opportunities, and the eviction moratorium.

San Francisco Department of Human Resources

- Includes employee rights for paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave under the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act*.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- Includes prevention, testing and treatment guidelines.

DPH BHS Director Communications Email

In order to prioritize and streamline COVID-19 communications, BHS Acting Director, Marlo Simmons, in collaboration with BHS COVID-19 Response Team members, are sending all COVID-19 updates from the new DPH BHS Director Communications email account. Email lists have also been updated to more effectively reach you. If you or someone you know is not receiving COVID-19 updates, please contact jena.johnson@sfdph.org.

BHS COVID-19 Virtual Town Halls

On April 26, over 350 providers participated in the first BHS COVID-19 Town Hall on April 26, hosted by the BHS COVID-19 Response Team. Presenters included Ambulatory Care Director, Hali Hammer and BHS Acting Director, Marlo Simmons, among other key leadership. The next BHS COVID-19 Town Hall will be held online on April 10, from 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM. Town Hall presentations, announcements, and resources, [can be accessed here](#).

Improving Access to Buprenorphine Treatment

In Fall of 2018, BHS Substance Use Disorder Services and Quality Management implemented a Performance Improvement Project (PIP) to assist Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) in complying with the Drug Medi-Cal requirement to provide buprenorphine as a treatment option. Buprenorphine offers many benefits compared to methadone.

- It is thought to be a safer cardiovascular choice,
- requires fewer clinic visits,
- allows more flexibility in travel plans, and
- permits treatment to be received from a primary care provider.

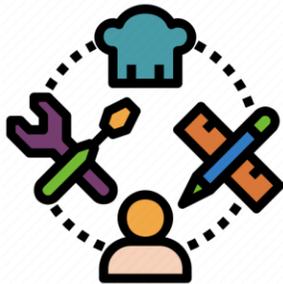
At the start of our PIP, only one of the seven OTPs had implemented buprenorphine services and the number of patients treated with buprenorphine remained low. The goals of the PIP were to increase the number of OTPs offering buprenorphine services from one clinic to seven clinics, and each OTP having at least five patients shown as receiving this medication. A root cause analysis was conducted which revealed patients' apprehensions and misconceptions about buprenorphine, operational barriers to providing treatment, and billing challenges of adopting a new treatment.

To address barriers, PIP stakeholders implemented interventions in the form of training, new protocols and workflows, EHR data reconciliation, and technical assistance. As of January 2020, all of the OTPs have established billing codes and workflows for administering buprenorphine. Six out of the seven OTPs have implemented buprenorphine services and provided treatment to 185 patients, although three of the seven OTPs had not yet provided buprenorphine to the PIP standard of five patients. SUD Services will continue monitoring the availability of this treatment and offering technical assistance so that all OTPs provide buprenorphine services as a quality treatment option for patients.

Number of New Buprenorphine Induction Clients Served by Month



Updates on Behavioral Health Vocational Programs



On an ongoing basis, the Behavioral Health Services Vocational Programs team works to promote vocational opportunities to peer professionals with lived experience. This is done through sustaining and strengthening with a variety of partnerships. Until recent social distancing and "shelter-in-place" precautions were implemented, the Vocational Programs team routinely conducted in-person outreach to promote vocational opportunities.

Some highlights include:

- Monthly outreach with prospective clients at Hospitality House's employment drop in center, Bay Area Addiction Research and Treatment (BAART) Opioid Addiction Center, and Swords to Plowshares.
- Additional outreach at residential sites with HealthRIGHT 360, Baker Places, Progress Foundation, and Episcopal Community Services' Navigation Centers.
- Collaboration in the Larkin Street Youth Services' recent Youth Job Fair, and other stakeholder efforts focused on transition aged youth.

The Vocational Programs team is still offering employment services and job placement in a limited capacity. Additionally, the team will be postponing future community outreach efforts. These changes are due to the COVID-19 impact on our program and our partners.

If you have any questions, please contact Travis at william.hill@sfdph.org or 415-255-3607.

Staffing Updates

Transition Age Youth (TAY) System of Care (SOC)

Greetings,

This announcement is way overdue, but is important and exciting to share. Effective March 1, Heather Weisbrod, LCSW began serving as the Acting Director for the Transition Age Youth (TAY) System of Care (SOC). Heather has been an incredible force in Behavioral Health Services' work to develop a first ever TAY SOC in San Francisco. Heather will continue to work in close partnership with Kali Cheung, MPH, another BHS leader on our TAY SOC Team. Kali will continue in her role as Associate Director of the TAY SOC.

Many thanks to Heather for stepping up to take on this big and important role. Please join BHS in congratulating Heather!



For information about the TAY SOC, please contact Heather Weisbrod, LCSW at heather.weisbrod@sfdph.org or Kali Cheung, MPH at kali.cheung@sfdph.org.

Healthy Streets Operations Center (HSOC)

We are excited to have Allison Horky, LCSW coming on as our Senior Behavioral Health Clinician at Healthy Streets Operations Center (HSOC). Allison started on April 6, in the midst of this chaotic time when HSOC has been solely focused on providing outreach and education about COVID-19. We are looking forward to having her lead these efforts within our team. Allison is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who obtained her Masters in Social Work from the University of Michigan. She worked at the SF Homeless Outreach Team for the last 3.5 years as a Clinical Supervisor with the Case Management team. Before that, she spent 3.5 years at the Westside AIDS Case Management program working with clients who have co-occurring disorders. Welcome, Allison!

For information about HSOC, please contact Robin Candler at robin.candler@sfdph.org or at 415-255-3941.

Drug Court Treatment Center



Effective This April, Gloria E. Hernandez, CADPT #6620 will be joining DPH BHS Drug Court Treatment Center as a Health Worker III. Gloria is Bay Area native who started her professional career in community activism with The Center for Third World Organizing (CTWO). Gloria has worked in community non-profits (HR360 and Baker Places).

Gloria states her work experiences have “had a transformative impact on how I see substance use disorders, mental health and how it relates to the industrial prison complex, affirming my passion to work with substance users. Over the years, I have worked tirelessly in my communities to be a voice and advocate for those who cannot so that they may access the most basic and needed resources and be treated with dignity and respect while doing so.” Please welcome Gloria to our DPH family and we

look forward to her enthusiasm and advocacy for our clients in the forensic system.

For information about Drug Court Treatment Center, please contact Linda Wu, LCSW, Program Manager at Linda.H.Wu@sfdph.org or at 628-217-6418

Upcoming Trainings

For registration and information, visit www.sfdph.org/training and click on “Behavioral Health Services.” Future trainings will be posted once registration is open.

April 2020	Time	Training	Location	Trainer	CE’s Offered
Monday 4/6	12:00 PM – 1:00 PM	Tele-behavioral Health for SFDPH Behavioral Health Services: Essential Elements and Tips for Treatment	Online Webinar Register at https://bit.ly/2QZ0JpC	Hamilton Holt MD Charles Mayer-Twomey LCSW George Su, MD	1 CME/CE (MD/DO, Nurses, Pharm, PhD, PsyD, LMFT, LCSW, LPCC)
Wednesday 4/8	9:00 AM – 10:30 PM	Substance Use Disorders	Online Webinar Register at https://bit.ly/3bMfjFT	Judith Martin, MD	N/A
Wednesday 4/15	12:00 PM – 1:00 PM	Addressing COVID-19, Social Isolation, and Trauma: Best Practices for Suicide Prevention	Online Webinar Registration Opening soon	Brandon Hoeflein, PhD	1 CME/CE (MD/DO, Nurses, Pharm, PhD, PsyD, LMFT, LCSW, LPCC)

BHS Communications is published by the BHS Office of Equity, Social Justice, and Multicultural Education: BHS-OESM@sfdph.org.