

Op-Ed

Op-ed: In the Bronx, mental health support is all around you

By Susan Herman

0 comments Posted on August 11, 2021



As our city continues to move towards recovery from the pandemic, mental health support is available. That's a commitment from the Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health and all of our partners.

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Last week, hundreds of Bronx residents came through Roberto Clemente Plaza for the City Hall In Your Borough Resource Fair. I was there to talk with them about mental health. As it turns out, that's a topic the Bronx wants to talk about.

Many asked me how they can help their children or other loved ones, who have been struggling since the pandemic began. Some wanted to know about support in Spanish, or how to find the right, culturally responsive therapist. It was as clear from these conversations as it is from [the data](#) —



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New Yorkers need mental health resources, now more than ever.

Here's the good news: Today in the Bronx, there are more mental health services available than there have ever been – from Highbridge to Hunts Point and from Soundview to Eastchester. Our office, the Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health, partners with more than a dozen city agencies and nearly 200 community based organizations to embed new mental health support in communities citywide.

These are organizations New Yorkers know and trust. Like Neighborhood SHOPP Casa Boricua, which helps arrange visits and calls between volunteers and isolated older adults through a program managed by the Department for the Aging. JASA coordinates volunteer visitors as well, and they also have clinicians on staff to provide mental health support at five Older Adult Centers throughout the Bronx, including at the Riverdale Y, the Bay Eden Senior Center and PSS Davidson Center.

In partnership with the Office of Community Mental Health, the NYPD and the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, Safe Horizon – the nation's leading victim services agency – supports victims of crime from every precinct in the city, including all 14 precincts and Police Service Areas in the Bronx. The advocates offer counseling, safety planning, advocacy and practical assistance to anyone harmed by crime, violence or abuse. Many are bilingual, so victims of crime in Kingsbridge can receive support in Spanish while New Yorkers who live along the Grand Concourse can get help in languages like Swahili, Ga and Twi. Advocates have worked with trusted neighborhood organizations – like BronxWorks and VIP Mujeres – that serve the Bronx.

For Bronx residents experiencing homelessness, the Office of Community Mental Health has added mental health counselors on site at city-run family shelters throughout the borough. The same is true for the residences and drop-in centers for runaway and homeless youth. And Community Access and the Institute for Community Living operate mobile mental health treatment teams to provide ongoing care for New Yorkers who live with serious mental illness and have a history of justice involvement and homelessness.

Thanks to our partners, there are also many services now available for children and young people. Through the Early Childhood Mental Health Network, the Association to Benefit Children and the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services offer therapy and other services for the youngest New Yorkers and their families. And at 248 high-

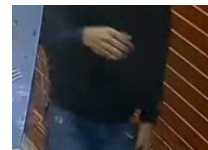
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needs public schools across the city, including dozens in the Bronx — social workers from organizations like Astor Services for Children & Families have supported students through the most tumultuous school year in memory.

You can find out more about all of these programs through the [Office of Community Mental Health website](#), which is updated regularly with data on our reach and impact.

With so many new services available, it's helpful to have a starting point. Bronx residents looking to find mental health support for themselves or someone they know can explore our [online guide](#) on what to know, where to look, and who to call to get connected to care at any level of need.

Additionally, any New Yorker in need can call, text or chat online with a trained counselor or peer support specialist through [NYC Well](#). The service offers crisis counseling and immediate mental health support, as well as referrals to ongoing care. When needed, mobile crisis teams of clinicians and peers travel to provide assessments and short-term care for people experiencing a behavioral health crisis. NYC Well is culturally and linguistically responsive, with translation services available in more than 200 languages.

As our city continues to move towards recovery from the pandemic, mental health support is available. That's a commitment from the Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health and all of our partners. Remember, you don't have to leave the Bronx to find mental health support — you may not even have to leave your neighborhood.

Susan Herman is the director of the Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health.

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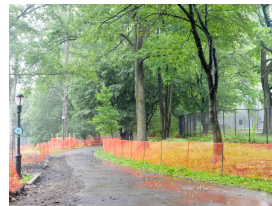
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