



COVID-19 MANUAL



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section I:

COVID-19 General Guidance	4
---------------------------------	---

Section II:

COVID-19 Vaccination.....	710
------------------------------	-----

Section III:

COVID-19 Work Guidance for Staff and Contractors	9
--	---

Section IV:

RHD MCRT/Care Center Emergency Preparedness Coronavirus Plan.....	10
---	----

Section V:

Clinic Operations.....	12
A. Coronavirus Triage Clinic Procedures for Nursing Team and Front Desk Staff Screening Tool	
B. Staff Info	
C. Med-Management/Genoa	
D. Tele-behavioral Health Medication Management Policy & Procedures	

Section VI:

Communications Plan.....	15
--------------------------	----

Section VII.

Mental Health First Aid and Psychological Support.....	20
--	----

Section VIII.

Frequently Asked Questions.....	22
---------------------------------	----

MANUAL SUMMARY

COVID-19

MHSD has transformed its service delivery system in response to the requirements for safe distancing and maintenance of behavioral health care for vulnerable persons. The purpose of the manual is to provide guidance and recommendations for safe operations during the COVID-19 federally declared emergency. General Guidelines and specific clinical and administrative operations are outlined in compliance with local, state and federal requirements.

SECTION I. COVID-19 GENERAL GUIDANCE

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others that circulate among animals, including camels, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people and then spread between people such as has been seen with recent outbreaks of MERS and SARS.

Risks The unvaccinated and those with exposure to others who are infected with any version of the Corona virus, have a greater risk for becoming ill. Reported cases have ranged from mild illness (similar to a common cold) to severe pneumonia that requires hospitalization. Prior deaths were reported mainly in older adults who had other health conditions. With the newer variants, rates of infection and death are more prevalent in the unvaccinated. To minimize the risk of spread, Louisiana health officials are working with health care providers to promptly encourage vaccination along with preventative strategies such as hand washing, keeping a distance and mask wearing.

Symptoms

For confirmed infections, reported illnesses have ranged from infected people with little to no symptoms (similar to the common cold) to people being severely ill and dying. Symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- Chills
- New loss of taste or smell
- Nausea or diarrhea
- Muscle pain
- Headache

How is Coronavirus spread?

Health experts now know that the new coronavirus spreads from an infected person to others through:

- respiratory droplets produced when coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

Healthcare Provider Responsibilities

Preserving MHSD clinic functioning is paramount. It is critical for MHSD facilities to continue to provide care for all patients, irrespective of COVID-19 infection status, at the appropriate level. Facilities may need to respond to a surge in patients requiring care. Use of the telehealth platform permits safe responding to assure continuity of care.

For a complete listing of Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on COVID-19, please refer to the [LDH FAQ Updates](#). For a Persons with clinical features and epidemiologic risk factors for COVID-19 should be immediately reported to the Louisiana Office of Public Health Infectious Disease Epidemiology Program (IDE) Hotline at 1 (800) 256-2748.

Testing

Early detection of COVID-19 infections remains an important public health priority. The following people should be tested for COVID-19:

- People who have symptoms of COVID-19, including those who are fully vaccinated.
- People without symptoms of COVID-19 including:
 - People not fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccine who have had close contact with someone with confirmed COVID-19.
 - People not fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccine who have taken part in activities that put them at higher risk for COVID-19, such as attending large social or mass gatherings, or being in crowded indoor settings.
 - People not fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccine who are prioritized for expanded community screening for COVID-19.

Prevention for Self and Others

Get Vaccinated!

- Three *vaccination options are currently available through Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson and Johnson.*
- Differences in vaccinations can be found at <https://ldh.la.gov/covidvaccine/#about-vac>.

Clean your hands often

- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact

- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick
- Put **distance between yourself and other people** if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

Stay home if you are sick

- Except to get medical care. Staff is advised to seek guidance from their Healthcare provider.
- The protocol in these instances is 14 days isolation at home followed by 72 hrs. of being completely symptom free before returning to work. Reliance is being placed on the absence of symptoms if additional testing is not available to confirm non-infectivity. If available, newly approved CDC antibody testing may be pursued. Seek guidance from a healthcare professional on the results.
- You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes, and people who are caring for you should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

Cover coughs and sneezes

- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- **Throw used tissues** in the trash.
- Immediately **wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Wear a facemask

- **If you are sick:** You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes, and people who are caring for you should wear a facemask if they enter your room.
- **If you are NOT sick:** You should wear a facemask when caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a facemask), and in general circulation with others not living in the same household with you. N95 Facemasks may be in short supply and should be used primarily by healthcare providers. Generally, any face covering is advised including homemade and professional barrier masks. Protection for the eyes include eyeglasses or other facial plastic screening devices.

Clean and disinfect

- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- **If surfaces are dirty, clean them:** Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. Clorox, Lysol, and 60% or greater alcohol products are most effective.

Section II. COVID-19 Vaccination

Vaccination is one of the strongest tools we have in the fight to slow the spread of coronavirus and ultimately stop the pandemic. Getting vaccinated helps protect the health and wellbeing of our communities, and community immunity starts with you. Masking up, staying physically distant, and washing hands will continue to be crucial steps in protecting ourselves and our communities as well.

The presence of the delta strain makes it even more important for you to promote vaccination against COVID-19. When more people are vaccinated, there are fewer chances for COVID-19 to spread, regardless of the mutation. From the data that are currently available, the vaccines appear to be effective against the new strains of SARS-CoV-2, including the delta variant.

Breakthrough cases (positive COVID-19 cases in patients 2+ weeks from completing their vaccine series) have been reported. While rare, breakthrough cases can be expected to increase as community prevalence of COVID-19 increases. Patients should be counseled that the 3 currently available COVID-19 vaccines provide excellent but not absolute protection. Please visit the [CDC Clinical Considerations webpage](#) for all the latest updates.

The infographic features the MHSD logo at the top center, which consists of a stylized 'M' with three human figures above it, followed by the text 'MHSD METROPOLITAN HUMAN SERVICES DISTRICT'. Below the logo is a horizontal line, and then the title 'Vaccinate with Confidence' in a large, orange, serif font. The infographic is divided into two main sections. The first section is titled 'Strategy: Protect communities at risk from under vaccination' and includes a light blue arrow-shaped box on the left labeled 'Protect Communities'. To the right of this box are three bullet points, each preceded by an orange checkmark: 'COVID-19 vaccines will be a critical tool in ending the pandemic.', 'The vaccine will be given to eligible groups in phases. However, eventually every adult in LA who wants a COVID-19 vaccine will be offered one.', and 'Vaccinations are by appointment only.' The second section is titled 'Strategy: Get providers and parents effective info & resources' and includes a light blue arrow-shaped box on the left labeled 'Empower Families'. To the right of this box are three bullet points, each preceded by an orange checkmark: 'If you have already had COVID-19 and recovered, you will still need to get vaccinated.', 'Those with a history of allergies should consult with their doctor before getting vaccinated.', and 'To locate a pharmacy to get the Covid-19 vaccine, visit covidvaccine.la.gov.'

Stop Myths

Strategy: Stop misinformation from deterring the public's trust

- ✓ No steps were skipped during the clinical trials and data review process for COVID-19 vaccines. Safety is a top priority.
- ✓ Individuals who receive a COVID 19 vaccine should be monitored. Although rare, severe reactions are possible.
- ✓ Getting vaccinated will not make you positive on a viral test if you are not infected with the actual virus.

The following card was developed to assist non-vaccinated persons make an informed decision about vaccination:

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10 Reasons to get Vaccinated

- ✓ **You are more likely to succumb to the coronavirus than getting vaccinated**
- ✓ **If you are mentally ill, it is critical to get the vaccine**
- ✓ **The COVID-19 Vaccine DOES NOT give you the COVID Virus**
- ✓ **Being vaccinated helps prevent you from getting COVID-19 so you are less likely to spread the disease to others - especially the vulnerable population.**
- ✓ **Even though every persons case may not be extreme, you have no way of knowing how COVID-19 will affect you!**
- ✓ **Although the COVID-19 virus is new, the technology used to create it has been around for years.**
- ✓ **Getting the COVID-19 Vaccination is the quickest way to end the pandemic and for us all to get back to normal!**
- ✓ **Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are around 95% effective.**
- ✓ **The COVID-19 Vaccine is 100% free. No co-pay.**
- ✓ **Vaccines are as important to your overall health as diet and exercise**

www.MHSDLA.org

SECTION III: COVID-19 WORK GUIDANCE FOR STAFF AND CONTRACTORS

With COVID-19 rates continuously surging, we need to do all we can as an agency to protect ourselves, our families, and the people that we serve. If you are fully vaccinated you have very good, but not absolute protection. Your risk, while relatively small, will increase as the amount of COVID-19 circulating in your community increases. Masking and distancing particularly when indoors will increase your safety should you desire extra protection. Listed below are some general housekeeping rules/practices all MHSD employees and contractors should follow to slow/stop the spread at MHSD.

1. Practice hand washing (for at least 20 seconds), social distancing and disinfecting your personal areas (including steering wheel, gear shift, purse handles).
2. If you have symptoms of COVID-19 or have come in contact with someone who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, please notify your supervisor and stay home. Sick employees should follow [Louisiana Department of Health](#) and the CDC recommended steps below.
 - **Stay home.** Most people with COVID-19 have mild illness and can recover at home without medical care. Do not leave your home, except to get medical care. Do not visit public areas.
 - **Take care of yourself.** Get rest and stay hydrated. Take over-the-counter medicines, such as acetaminophen, to help you feel better.
 - **Stay in touch with your doctor.** Call before you get medical care. Be sure to get care if you have trouble breathing, or have any other [emergency warning signs](#), or if you think it is an [emergency](#).
 - **Avoid public transportation**, ridesharing, or taxis
 - **As much as possible, stay in a specific room** and away from other people and pets in your home. If possible, you should use a separate bathroom. If you need to be around other people or animals in or outside of the home, wear a cloth face covering.
 - Additional guidance is available for those living in [close quarters](#) and [shared housing](#).
 - See [COVID-19 and Animals](#) if you have questions about pets.
3. Employees should not return to work until they meet the criteria to discontinue home isolation, in consultation with their health provider.
4. You can be with others after
 - 3 days with no fever **and**
 - Respiratory symptoms have improved (e.g. cough, shortness of breath, loss of sense of taste or smell) **and**
 - 10 days since symptoms first appeared
 - Return to work with a negative COVID-19 screening or after 14 days of self-isolation at home.
5. If you must quarantine due to exposure, and can work remotely, you will work remotely during the 14-day isolation period. If you have discussed remote work options with your

supervisor and are unable to telework, please contact the Director of Human Resources to discuss your options. If you contract COVID-19, please reach out to your supervisor and/or the Director of Human Resources for additional guidance.

6. MHSD will be conducting temperature and COVID-19 screenings for all employees and contractors who enter our facilities. These questions may include, but are not limited to, whether or not you have symptoms of COVID-19, are under evaluation for COVID-19 (for example, awaiting the results of a viral test to confirm infection), or if you have been on close personal contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. Answering affirmatively to any of the questions will warrant additional discussion with your supervisor.
7. ***Communication is key!*** Please communicate your level of exposure to your supervisor. This is not something that is shameful or should be kept private due to the ease of passing and/or contracting the virus. If you need any support, please contact Human Resources.

Note: If you have been vaccinated and become infected with the Coronavirus, please consult the MHSD HR or Medical Director for specific guidance.

SECTION IV: CARE CENTER/CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM COVID-19 RESPONSE

The MHSD Care Center and Metro Crisis Response Team (MCRT) are prepared to follow the Louisiana Department of Health and CDC Guidelines regarding information about Corona Virus, it's variants and its prevention and treatment. Additionally, for the benefit and protection of all our employees and persons served, it is essential that we minimize the risk of spreading infectious diseases with prudent precautions and institute safeguards consistent with the requirements set forth for workplace safety. **Recommended strategies for employees who provide Care Center and crisis services are consistent with MHSD requirements for all staff (see Section I.)** The detailed Revised Requirements for Face to Face (f2f) interactions by the crisis team with the community is outlined in [Attachment A](#).

I. Metro Crisis Response Team (MCRT) Plan

A. Staffing Needs if Outbreak occurs among Staff.

- Infected staff should be taken off the schedule for a minimum of 14 days in compliance with LDH and CDC requirements. Staff is advised to seek guidance from their

healthcare provider. Coverage for the shift would be arranged with day staff schedules. If our on-call and day staff are unable to fill the vacant shifts MCRT would use resources from other RHD programs to assist with available staff.

- Remote work at home options are available for both the Care Center staff and MCRT staff if in office viral spread or local, state and federal guidelines requires a partial or complete shutdown of onsite office operations.
- MCRT Program Manager will communicate any changes in coverage and corrective actions immediately with the MHSD contract monitor and appropriate clinic management staff.

B. MCRT Community Face-to-Face Safety Protocol and Plan Summary

The uncertainty of infectivity of the public in face to face interactions has resulted in the following clinical guidance by the MCRT teams' Medical Director for best practice standards of care. The goal is not to deny crisis behavioral health services to those in need but rather to ensure the safety of staff, persons served and ultimately community.

1. Brief Screening Guidance:

Before dispatching on a face-to-face call, MRCT will add a brief physical health screening of the of individuals in the environment to our normal pre-dispatch safety assessment.

The suggested phrasing is “In the best interest of everyone involved and out of an abundance of caution, before we dispatch, I’ve got to ask about symptoms of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) in the house. Is anyone currently in the home experiencing symptoms of (1) fever, (2) shortness of breath (3) coughing? Has anyone who has been in the home in the last 2-3 days experienced those symptoms or been in contact with someone experiencing those symptoms? Has anyone in the home recently traveled to a high-risk area?”

2. If anyone in the environment has a cough plus a fever or they or household member has recently traveled to a high-risk area, as identified by the CDC, we will not dispatch on a face-to-face. The individual should be advised to present to a medical professional for assessment.
3. During on-call hours, if a face-to-face is clinically warranted and MCRT is unable to dispatch due to active illness in the home, the case will be staffed with the on-call psychiatrist to determine the most appropriate intervention.
4. During this period of heightened concerns, we advise taking extra precautions for any face-to-face contact in the community. These include (1) refraining from handshakes, (2) maintaining distance from others (3) limiting items touched within the home.

II. Care Center Plan

A. Staffing Needs if Outbreak occurs among Staff.

- Infected staff should be taken off the schedule for a minimum of 14 days in compliance with LDH and CDC requirements. Staff is advised to seek guidance from their healthcare provider. Coverage for the shift would be provided by the Program Director and Program Manager. In addition, Care Center Specialists will adjust to accommodate additional staffing needs
- MHSD requirements for environmental disinfection will be adhered to for personal areas to reduce additional viral spread. In the event of widespread to assigned clinic, movement to a safe alternative MHSD site will be arranged combined with use of telehealth capability
- In the event no Care Center Specialist is able to work (due to outbreak or contact of the Coronavirus), all calls will be routed to MCRT Crisis Line for normal business hours and afterhours. MCRT Crisis team will be provided with a scripted message advising of Care Center Closure and/or taking messages for a callback from one of MHSD clinics.
- CARE Center Program Manager will communicate any changes in coverage and corrective actions immediately with the MHSD contract monitor and appropriate clinic management staff.

Section IV. Clinic Operations

A. Facility Entrance

Employees/Contractors//Persons Served and all Visitors must use one designated entrance into all MHSD facilities. Temperature checks and health screenings are required by all, to assure the safety of everyone. Everyone is also asked to comply with all guidance for personal sanitizing and social distancing to help keep our environment safe. Masks must be worn except while working alone in offices. MHSD is committed to providing PPE and making changes to our clinic and work environments to assure safe distancing and disinfection of all common areas.

1. Coronavirus Clinic Triage Procedures for Nursing Team and Front Desk Staff

Control the environment

- Require a mask be worn on premise. Provide one if necessary.
- Ask Health questions and provide temperature checks to all persons
- Check for coughing and other clinical signs (if coughing, give mask immediately)

- Assess for fever of more of 100.4 or more and refer to PC/Urgent Care if needed, ER only if severely ill
- Get Persons In & Out
- Assure work areas are sanitized
- Encourage Flu shots for all
- Ask everyone if they have been vaccinated for the coronavirus. If not, provide information about what we know and optional sites including the GENOA pharmacy at MHSD.

2. Screening Tool

The screening tool is administered to everyone entering an MHSD facility.



Person Served _____ Date _____

MHSD Employee completing screen _____

Support Personnel Screening Tool for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

- Have you had a fever? Yes No
- Have you had symptoms of respiratory illness (cough, difficulty breathing etc.)? Yes No
- Have you had diarrhea? Yes No
- New Lost sense taste? Yes No
- New Lost sense of smell? Yes No
- Sore Throat Yes No
- Chills Yes No
- Muscle Pain Yes No
- Headache Yes No
- Repeated Shaking Yes No

-
- Have you traveled in the geographical area of the Corona virus in the last 14 days? Yes No
 - Have you had close contact with anyone who has a confirmed case of COVID-19 Disease? Or have had close contact with someone while they were ill? Yes No
 - Have you been tested for the corona virus? Yes No
 - If yes, what were the results? Positive Negative Results Pending

If yes or pending to EITHER Question give the person served a mask and get a nurse Do Not seat the person in the lobby.

- Have you had the COVID-19 Vaccination? Yes No
 - Would you like to schedule an appointment for the COVID-19 Vaccination? Yes No
- If Yes, see the MHSD nurse to schedule the appointment.

B. Changes to Clinical Services Effective July 6, 2021, MHSD will resume face to face clinic appointments, and continue telehealth virtual services based upon the preference of the person served. The use of audio services are no longer permitted for billable services.

C. Changes to Clinic Services - July 1, 2020 - July 6, 2021

1. Telehealth Capability has been employed as the primary modality of care for all MHSD clinics as a result of the Coronavirus Epidemic. [\(See Attachment 2 Telehealth Policy.\)](#) Both voice and video capabilities are being used by treatment and clinic staff. To adhere to the requirements for safe distancing and to reduce the spread of the virus, MHSD has also implemented a limited number of exceptions for which face to face in-clinic encounters are permissible. The exceptions include:

1. Medication injections
2. Physician Emergency Certificates / PECs
3. Urine toxicology for prescribed medications and illicit substances
4. Physician approved of urgent or emergent in-person visits

In instances where a f2f visit is appropriate, the clinician can elect to see the individual in their office, in a conference room, or via video, by placing the patient in a separate video equipped MHSD office.

MHSD has converted all scheduling to a centralized scheduling system to manage all requests for services. Efforts are coordinated between the Care Center and front desk staff to minimize inefficiencies in the process of getting individuals to services and in their capability to use any equipment for telehealth services.



Video link: <https://vimeo.com/409975744>

2. New Process for all Prescriptions for Social Distancing

Given the need for safety and environmental control, with the exception of medication injections, medication pick-ups at all clinic sites is discontinued. All medications prescribed by MHSD prescribers are either mailed out (Genoa Pharmacy) or picked up at retail pharmacies.

About Mail-outs:

The Genoa in-house pharmacy has agreed to mail all prescriptions (or provide curbside pickup at one designated clinic only, as an exception.) Successful mailing requires a 1-2 day delay in receipt of the medication at a reliable address by a person 18 years or older. A signature is required to complete the delivery process.

Unsuccessful deliveries are held at the post office for 30 days before returning to the pharmacy.

Section VI. Communications Plan

The MHSD Communications Department is committed to keeping staff, partners and the community aware of agency and service updates during CoVID19. The following measures have been put in place as priority for our department at this time.

Newsletter

- The District Voice, MHSD's internal newsletter, will be suspended.
- The District Quarter, MHSD's partner newsletter, will now be sent monthly to the all staff list and partner list combined to highlight agency and service updates.

Social Media

- All agency updates will be posted on social media platforms: Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn. We will also share best practices during this time for the community

Website

- All agency updates will be posted on website's homepage.

Events

- All outreach and events have been cancelled until further notice.

Media

- All media requests will continue to be managed by the Director of Communications. No one is authorized to speak on behalf of the agency outside of the Executive and Medical Director, Dr. Rochelle Head-Dunham

Marketing

- All agency marketing will continue running via TV, Billboard, Radio and Bus Transportation.

- All grant focused marketing campaigns will continue, i.e. Gambling, Louisiana State Opioid Response

- All special event marketing plans and agreements i.e. Recovery Walk, have been suspended until further notice.

Training

- All staff and community Trainings has been suspended except for Tele- Behavioral Health, required MHSD and State trainings, which are all online.

General Public:

MHSD has engaged several efforts to address emotional difficulties associated with COVID-19.

With the uncertainty, grief and loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it's **essential** we all take time to **heal**. Join us to exercise **resilience** as we **reflect, process** and **cope**, during bi-monthly virtual group sessions.

#GETYAMINDRIGHT

VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUP

1ST & 3RD WEDNESDAYS EVERY MONTH

5:15PM - 6:15PM CT | ZOOM

HEALINGISTHEREVOLUTION@IWESNOLA.ORG



Register!

MHSD in collaboration with the Institute for Women and Ethnic Studies (IWES) created a virtual support chat line that is available to the general public. The purpose of this support line is to create a safe space for people to share and learn how to navigate their mental health during COVID-19.

The chat line is facilitated by licensed mental health professionals.



Smokers have a 14% chance of contracting COVID-19.

Click here to learn more!

Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

According to the CDC, smokers have an increased risk of contracting COVID-19 and for developing more severe respiratory complications. Similar complications are also associated with use of marijuana and vaping. This graphic was shared on all platforms to help raise awareness.



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Need someone to talk to get through the COVID-19 pandemic?

Call:
504-568-3130

LOUISIANA Spirit

Crisis Counseling Available
www.MHSDLA.org

MHSD provides crisis counseling services to anyone requiring emotional support for coping with the emotional strain of the COVID-19 crisis. Federal support for these services is through the Louisiana Spirit Federal Grant. Counselors are available Monday – Friday 8 am - 5 pm. Services are available to the general public.

Commercial Series

MHSD Protect Your Neighbor, Get Vaccinated Campaign:

Featuring Terence Blanchard <https://youtu.be/7IC75EvkCT8>

Featuring New Orleans Clergy <https://youtu.be/IR0gYbrGJLI>

Featuring Big Freedia <https://youtu.be/mkpr3tQdHA0>

Featuring Big Chief Bo Dollis Jr. of the Wild Magnolia https://youtu.be/lck_knDdGco

Mental Health and COVID-19 Interview with Dr. Michelle Easton https://youtu.be/V7aY_-881yg

Mental Health and COVID-19 with Dr. Ouida Collins, MD <https://youtu.be/Ze9ZW4-6W3s>

1		Protect Your Neighbor: Mental Health and COVID-19 with Dr. Ouid... Metropolitan Human Services District
2		MHSD Mental Health and COVID-19 Interview with Dr. Michelle Easton Metropolitan Human Services District
3		MHSD Protect Your Neighbor, Get Vaccinated Metropolitan Human Services District
4		Protect Your Neighbor, Get Vaccinated Metropolitan Human Services District
5		MHSD "Protect Your Neighbor" Campaign - Big Chief Metropolitan Human Services District
6		MHSD "PROTECT YOUR NEIGHBOR" Campaign - Big Freedia Metropolitan Human Services District

Public Service Announcements (PSA)

Local Radio Stations PSAs, Xavier University of Louisiana, CDC Vaccination Messaging Campaign

Internal Staff Audience: No Longer Available



METROPOLITAN HUMAN SERVICES DISTRICT

MHSD Staff

Faith Partners

Meditation & Reflection Line

Join us
Mon. - Fri.
7:00 AM - 7:15 AM
CALL (605) 313-5393
Access Code: 655417

We know this is a trying time. Let us help!

The MHSD Faith Partners Initiative was developed to bridge the divide between faith and science in the care of individuals in need of behavioral health support services. Assistance was available daily to all MHSD staff by various faith leaders through a meditation and reflection line, during the first 2 months of the “stay at home” period of the Pandemic.



METROPOLITAN HUMAN SERVICES DISTRICT

Mind, Body & Goals Presents:

Power Hour

Check In
Stress/Crisis Management Tips
Nutrition
Laugh it Out
Meditation

Join every Wednesday at 2pm by phone: +1-408-418-9388 Access code: 961 718 938

Metropolitan Human Services District introduced Mind, Body, and Goals as a voluntary, interactive, employee wellness program promoting mental and emotional health during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The virtual support sessions address various topics such as work-life balance, coping with change, nutrition and fitness, meditation and other mindfulness techniques for healthy coping. POWER HOUR sessions are scheduled weekly and facilitated by a Human Resource representative. The sessions provide an opportunity for contract and civil service staff to get additional resource information to address a variety of needs.

Section VII. Mental Health First Aid and Psychological Support



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SERVICES DISTRICT

**Crisis tele-health
services available.**

Call:
504-568-3130
Code Word: **First Responder**

In Partnership With...

 **City of New Orleans**
Mayor LaToya Cantrell

 *First Responder Crisis Counseling*
www.MHSDLA.org

The MHSD Behavioral Health Emergency Response Team (BHERT) is our equivalent of the FEMA Crisis Counseling Program and the State of Louisiana’s Louisiana Spirit CCP. This model is a non-clinical approach that provides behavioral health support, stress management and resource linkage to those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Those impacted include but is not limited to the General Public, First Responders, Children, the Elderly and staff of MHSD.

The BHERT Model supports short-term interventions that involve the following counseling goals:

1. assisting impacted individuals in understanding their current reactions
2. mitigating stress
3. reviewing disaster recovery options
4. promoting the use or development of coping strategies
5. providing emotional support; and
6. encouraging linkages with other individuals and agencies who may help individuals in their recovery process (recover to their pre-disaster level of functioning). (Fema.gov)

To achieve this mission, BHERT adopts the following key principals of the CCP:

- Strengths Based-Crisis services promote resilience, empowerment, and recovery.
- Anonymous- Crisis counselors do not classify, label, or diagnose people; no records or case files are kept.
- Outreach Oriented- Crisis counselors deliver services in the communities rather than wait for survivors to seek their assistance. This will be implemented with the use of non -traditional outreach methods, such as media, telehealth and marketing strategies.
- Conducted in Nontraditional Settings- Crisis counselors make contact in homes and communities, not in clinical or office settings.
- Designed to Strengthen Existing Community Support Systems- The crisis team supplements but does not supplant or replace existing community systems.

The MHSD BHERT team is comprised of a diverse group of individuals with previous emergency preparedness counseling experience. These individuals are under the direct supervision of Metropolitan Human Services District. Counseling services include face-to-face services and/or tele-health virtual services, depending on what is in the best interest of service needs. Positions for BHERT team members include Crisis Counselors, Clinical Coordinator, Operations Coordinator, Resource Linkage Coordinators, and Administrative Assistant. The BHERT utilizes MHSD's Resource Coordination unit for necessary resource referrals. For those individuals that may need services beyond the scope of the CCP, the BHERT relies on the skills of the Clinical Coordinator to make the appropriate recommendation for additional behavioral health services or assessments.

Programmatic Services:

The MHSD Behavioral Health Emergency Response Team adheres to the guidelines set forth by the Center Disease Control and the State of Louisiana to provide services to individuals impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. With the aid of mass media, the team educates individuals on common reactions to disasters, tips for stress management and grief and loss. The messaging is consistent with the key principals of the CCP. Due to the social distancing mandate, telecommunications are used in place of face-to-face interaction. BHERT integrates the MHSD crisis line to filter calls of impacted individuals to the BHERT crisis counselors. The BHERT utilizes MHSD's Resource Coordination unit for necessary resource referrals. For those individuals that may need services beyond the scope of the CCP, the

BHERT relies on the skills of the Clinical Coordinator to make the appropriate recommendation for additional behavioral health services or assessments.

Services provided under this model:

- Individual and group crisis counseling
- Basic supportive or educational contact
- Community networking and support
- Assessments, referrals, and resources
- Development and distribution of educational materials
- Media and public service announcements.



Section VIII. COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

For the latest please review [Frequently Asked Questions](#)