



The Center for Behavioral Health & Wellness

Transforming behavioral health and wellness across Boston is achievable. The Center for Behavioral Health & Wellness “The Center,” established in 2022 at the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC), was created in response to the growing need for evidence-based, effective, and meaningful behavioral health resources. The Center aims to promote and coordinate behavioral health and wellness programming across Boston. Envisioning a community where all can achieve their ideal behavioral health and wellness, through just, trauma-informed, and intersectional approaches. The Center focuses on reducing behavioral health inequities by addressing barriers that impede the vision.

The Center has engaged, listened to, and been informed by internal BPHC groups, civic leaders, community members, youth, behavioral health agencies, healthcare organizations, academic institutions, state officials, philanthropic groups, and the Boston Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plans.

Objectives:

- Address Boston residents' longstanding and emergent behavioral health needs through a comprehensive public health approach to behavioral health
- Develop innovative, evidence-based, and sustainable prevention and response models for behavioral health and wellness that addresses systemic inequities through a thorough and coordinated citywide response
- Align, coordinate, and support existing behavioral health and wellness programming within BPHC bureaus and City departments.
- Enhance community efforts to build resilience and improve behavioral health in everyday settings such as schools, workplaces, and faith-based organizations
- Advocate for changes in the community and institutional infrastructure that mitigate risk factors that negatively affect behavioral health, especially in historically underserved populations.

Key Activities:

- Provide immediate and long-term strategies that support behavioral health and wellness across the lifespan
- Engage in citywide communication strategies to reduce stigma related to behavioral health and increase awareness, education, and comfort in talking about behavioral health and wellness
- Coordinate behavioral health and wellness programming offered by the City of Boston
- Promote culturally competent, innovative, and evidence-based behavioral health and wellness prevention practices
- Address identified training needs in behavioral health, including cultural competency and trauma-responsive care
- Build professional development and career pathways in behavioral health and wellness, with a focus on increasing workforce diversity.

The mission of the BPHC is to work in partnership with communities to protect and promote the health and well-being of all Boston residents, especially those impacted by racism and systemic inequities.



Primary Outcomes of Interest:

Behavioral health and wellness initiatives, in coordination with other BPHC and City of Boston departments and programs, will focus on three initial priorities:

(1) Workforce

Strategies to recruit, expand, and train a more diverse, culturally competent, trauma-informed behavioral health workforce that fully represents and reflects the diversity of Boston communities.

(2) Communication

Public communications about wellness, behavioral health, and substance use that addresses stigma, offers skills in addressing behavioral health issues, and acknowledges historic and ongoing barriers to care, with an initial focus on youth behavioral health.

(3) Capacity

Capacity building and training programs in behavioral health across Boston in collaboration with community partners.