

Mental Health Matters in DC

Telling the story of behavioral health services in the District to impact policy

About this project:

We are collecting stories about behavioral health services in DC – why they matter, where barriers exist, what they mean to our community and providers. We will compile the stories in a colorful, interactive “StoryMap” online.

The resulting webpage will be accessible by the public, but created as an advocacy tool, tailored to reach our policymakers (government officials and their staff) as they consider how to protect and improve services and programs related to mental health, behavioral health, substance use treatment and recovery support services in the District of Columbia. We want to bring the stories from the community to the halls of government in a safe and accessible way. We know they will have an impact.

About StoryMaps:

StoryMaps are created using ArcGIS software - a map tool to create custom maps, data visualizations, text, photos, and videos to enhance digital storytelling. The interactive narrative is easy to publish and share. The DC Health Matters Collaborative used the same software to public the interactive online version of our 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment:

http://www.dchealthmatters.org/content/sites/washingtondc/2019_DC_CHNA_FINAL.pdf

More examples of story maps used for advocacy are online here: <https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/products/arcgis-storymaps/albums/causes-advocacy>.

Who we want to include:

- DC residents who have needed mental health or substance use services themselves or for family members.
- Community leaders who have seen the importance of services for their neighbors, congregants or colleagues.
- Advocates and experts working to improve services.
- Social services or non-profit providers working with residents who do (or could) utilize behavioral health services.
- Health professionals of any practice type serving patients with behavioral health concerns.
- Behavioral health professionals who have experience practicing in the DC system, serving DC residents.

How to share your story:

- Call and leave an anonymous voicemail at: (202) 670-2743
- Complete the Google Form anonymously: <https://forms.gle/dre9NK3KwLQGiaeNA>
- Write an email and send to: story@dhealthmatters.org
- Record a voice memo or video on your phone and send to: story@dhealthmatters.org
- Take a photo or create a piece of art that represents your response, with a brief description and send to: story@dhealthmatters.org
 - o *If you send an image or video of yourself, be sure you are comfortable sharing with a wider audience*
 - o *If you send images or video of other people, be sure you have their permission to share with a wider audience*

Note: we will not collect personal details or identifying information. This is not a project for research purposes; it is a storytelling project as part of an advocacy campaign.

What to say:

While we are using stories for a public project, *we will not use names or images without express permission*. Participants do not need to include your name or identifying information. We invite everyone to include the following in messages, as they feel comfortable:

1. Are you a community member receiving services, or a service provider?
2. What DC neighborhood are you living or practicing in?
3. Respond to any of the prompts below

Community members:

- Describe your experience with getting behavioral health care either for yourself or a family member.
- Have you and/or your family been able to get the treatment or services you've needed? Why or why not?
- How do mental health services and treatment matter in your community?
- What idea or solution do you have for improving behavioral health services and/or access to services?

Providers (Social service, non-profit, health professionals):

- Describe your experience connecting your client/patient(s) to OR providing behavioral health care.
- Have your clients/patients been able to get the treatment or services they've needed? Why or why not?
- How do mental health services and treatment matter for your clients/patients?
- What idea or solution do you have for improving behavioral health services and/or access to services?