

A watercolor-style graphic of a human brain, rendered in various shades of blue and green, positioned on the left side of the slide.

Assessing and Addressing the Mental Health Needs of the Community

The Mental Health Council of the Big Bend Model

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MENTAL HEALTH COUNCIL OF THE BIG BEND

Apalachee Center,
2-1-1 Big Bend,
Bond Community Health Center,
Capital Regional Medical Center,
Centene Staywell
Conversations with Nicole,
DISC Village,
Florida A&M University
Florida Blue Cross/Blue Shield
Florida State University
Leon County/Florida Department
of Health
NAMI Tallahassee

Northwest Florida Behavioral Health
Network
Neighborhood Medical Center,
Simply Healthcare
Southside Frenchtown Community
Alliance
Tallahassee Memorial Hospital (TMH)
Tallahassee Primary Care Associates
(TPCA)
Tallahassee Senior Center
Twelve Oaks Recovery Center
Whole Child Leon



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The Mental Health Council of the Big Bend Approach

The Mental Health Council of the Big Bend (MHC) is a group of 23 stakeholder organizations including universities, healthcare providers, healthcare funders and advocacy groups of people with lived experience concerned with behavioral health services in Florida's Big Bend Region that has been meeting since 2015.

The aim of the MHC is to foster an evidence-based approach to determine **needs** and **solutions** to mental health and substance abuse and to provide a “think tank” for stakeholders in this region.

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Taking An Epidemiological Approach to MHSA Needs

The Stress Survey (2015) – UWBB, FSU, FAMU

The Community Health Needs Assessment (2016) – Leon County Department of Health; MHC, UWBB and TMH

The Behavioral Health Perceptions Survey (2016) – MHC, TMH

The Primary Care Physicians Survey (2017) – MHC, FSU College of Medicine

Conclusions

The four mental health surveys were used to develop a **White Paper**, crafted by the Center for Behavioral Integration at FSU College of Medicine. The White Papers includes the following conclusions regarding behavioral health issues in this community:

Anxiety levels are above average across Leon County, despite broad Florida Health Department data indicating average or slightly below average self-reports of poor mental health in Leon County.

Psychiatric symptoms appear to cluster in some neighborhoods – particularly anxiety in Frenchtown and South City, depression in South City, and anxiety and psychosis in the Rte 20 Aenon Church Road.

Conclusions

There is a disconnect between report of symptoms and utilization of treatment resources – despite a generally positive expressed attitude towards treatment, and access to treatment.

Local primary care physicians identified an absence of easily accessible information and guidance regarding behavioral healthcare resources as a significant barrier to referrals. Anecdotal discussions with area stakeholders confirm a **significant shortage of psychiatric prescribing practitioners**, along with a sufficient workforce of non-prescriber mental health professionals.

Self-identification of the need for BEST PRACTICE treatment, and accessing mental health services, may be limited by a **need for education** regarding the indicators of mental health symptoms and the efficacy and availability of non-prescriber treatment.

Strategic Plan

- Based on the findings of the Community Survey, the MHC developed a 4 pronged strategy to address the issues identified:

- **EVALUATE**

- **ENGAGE**

- **EXPAND**

- **EDUCATE**

- **ELEMENTS OF ADDICTION**

Evaluate: KEEP GATHERING DATA TO ASSESS THE ISSUE

Ongoing partnerships with entities conducting CHNA's

Be Kind To Your Mind event surveys collected at community mental health event to track community response.

Partnered with Citrus, Jefferson and Madison Counties to support similar efforts in their areas.

Presentations to AHCA; DOH; the First Lady and other community stakeholders.

Drs Flynn and Reeve both founding participants in the **State of Florida's Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Commission's Data Analysis Committee.**

Engage: CONTINUE A COMMUNITY DIALOGUE ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Be Kind To Your Mind Community Education events held in underserved areas.

Black and Brown Men's Mental Health Training presented by FAMU clinicians and ENGAGE Members to train Black barbers and hair stylists on mental health response

Mental Health coordinator hired by Bond CHC.

MHC-BB invited by Citrus, Jefferson and Madison County Health Departments to replicate work in those counties.

Opioid Crisis Steering Committee, "adopted" by Mental Health Council as the Elements Committee.

Expand: GROW THE LOCAL POOL OF MENTAL HEALTH CLINICIANS

Fifth class of **psychiatric APRNs** certified and graduated from FSU School of Nursing.

New psychiatric residency program site opened by UCF/HCA Capital Region in 2022.

New psychiatric residency program in partnership between Apalachee Center, Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare and FSU College of Medicine opening July 1 2024.

TEAMS Mobile Response Unit and Resiliency Hub programs created by Leon County following recommendations from MHCBB.

Mental Health Navigator and Leon County Sheriff's Department Mental Health Unit (in partnership with Apalachee Center) created by the City of Tallahassee and Apalachee Center following recommendations from MHCBB.

Creation of the FSU Mood and Anxiety Center of Excellence and FSU Behavioral Health at Apalachee Center joint clinic.

<https://med.fsu.edu/fsubehavioralhealthapalacheecenter/home>



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Educate: RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF ISSUES AND RESOURCES

Multiple media appearances by Council members (WFSU; WCTV; Tallahassee Democrat; Cumulus Media) discussing mental health issues.

Referral Date Base for Behavioral Health managed by FSU Center for Behavioral Health at 211 Big Bend currently operational.

Series of short mental health awareness videos produced by MHC (funded through TMH) produced and promulgated on social media for Mental Health Awareness Month.

Consultation with Leon County and the City of Tallahassee resulting in new mental health initiatives.

MHC-BB is a replicable model for the State: Primary Components

- Careful MH/ SA Stakeholder selection and representation
- Shared value of coming together to leverage resources to address MH/SA needs in the community
- Using a data-driven, scientific approach (partnered with the universities)
- Hub of communication and dissemination of MH/SA related efforts in the region ; coordinate efforts that would otherwise remain un-coordinated
- Leveraging resources and partnerships – no funding

Contact Information

- Website: <https://mentalhealthcouncil.org/>