HOWARD COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (MHCAC)

Fall Newsletter-Connection and Partnership - October 2026



Who are we...

The Howard County Mental Health Community Advisory Council was created in 2018 in partnership with Howard County Pubic Schools and the Howard County Local Children's Board. The MHCAC is made up of over 180 members from the community who are interested in removing barriers and building awareness for mental health support in Howard County for our children and families.

We meet monthly on the first Friday from September to June. If you are interested in attending our monthly meetings, please email Cynthia Schulmeyer-Coordinator, Psychological Services at cynthia_schulmeyer@hcpss.org. For more information, check out our website: mhcac.squarespace.com

Howard County Mental Health Resources

Grassroots Crisis Intervention
24/7 mental health assistance and walk-in clinic. Crisis servcies available.
https://grassrootscrisis.org

Howard County Health Department
Howard County health and medical resource.
https://www.howardcountymd.gov/health

Howard County Health Department-Behavioral Health Navigator:
Howard County Health Department for mental health resources.
https://www.howardcountymd.gov/health/behavioral-health-navigation

Howard County Public Schools Mental Health Supports
https://www.hcpss.org/supports/mental-health-wellness/

NAMI-National Alliance on Mental Health
Mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness.
https://namihowardcountymd.org

NAMI-FAMILY CAREGIVER HOTLINE
CALL 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) Press "4" to connect with a skilled Family Caregiver HelpLine Specialist or **TEXT Family to 62640.**

CAREAPP
Resources for mental health services in Howard County.
https://www.hclhic.org/resources/access-to-care

Howard County Network of Care
Resources for mental health services in Howard County.
https://mentalhealth.networkofcare.org/howard-md/HealthCare

Howard County Behavioral Health Road Map
Review of mental health process.
https://www.howardcountymd.gov/office-local-childrens-board/youth-behavioral-health

Community Events

OCTOBER

October is National Bullying Prevention Month. Check out these resources.
https://www.pacer.org/bullying/info/

October 30th 6:00-8:00 pm
Spook-Tacular Night
6221 Mango Tree Rd, Columbia, MD (Color Burst Park)
Hay maze, trick or treat trail, pumpkin decorating, fun games, goodie bags and more.
https://www.eventeny.com/events/spooktacular-2026-28308/?utm_medium=referral&utm_source=chatgpt.com

NOVEMBER

November 7th 12:00 pm- 4:00pm
Fostering Hope Summit: Toolkit for Everyday Challenges
Krav Maga Maryland, 8895 McGaw Road, Columbia, MD
https://blossomsofhope.org/summit/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Additional Events:
Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition Community Events Calendar
https://www.hclhic.org/home/calendar?id=2026&subid=3&submit=+Go+To+Calendar



LISTEN-DON'T FIX

As parents and caregivers we often jump in too quickly with solutions and fixes. When we do this, our children and teens do not have a chance to tell us the whole story and problem solve on their own. One effective strategy we can use is Reflective Listening.

What is Reflective Listening?

Reflective listening is a communication tool that involves carefully listening to another person and then reflecting their thoughts and feelings back to them to confirm understanding.



How to do it:

Give your full attention to the speaker
Listen for the main ideas and emotions
Restate what you heard in your own words
Check if you understood correctly

Why it works:

It helps children and teens feel heard. It can help calm emotions, understand feelings, build trust and teach them to manage their emotions.



https://www.universalcoachinstitute.com/reflective-listening/



REFLECTIVE LISTENING



TOP 10 REFLECTIVE LISTENING STATEMENTS

1. IT SOUNDS LIKE...
2. WHAT HAPPENED NEXT, THEN WHAT HAPPENED
3. TELL ME MORE
4. WHAT I HEARD YOU SAY IS...
5. IT SEEMS THAT...
6. GO ON...
7. HMMMMMM.....
8. YOU ARE SOUNDING/LOOKING....
9. HELP ME UNDERSTAND
10. IS THERE SOMETHING MORE YOU WANT TO SHARE...



REFLECTIVE LISTENING RESOURCES

Inside Out Reflective Listening Video:
https://youtu.be/t685WM5R6aM?si=aWU8ydbHLWWhNBXx

https://wellspringgreenville.com/reflective-listening-the-parenting-skill-that-changes-everything/

https://www.cdc.gov/parenting-toddlers/communication/index.html

https://www.openskywilderness.com/parent-child-communication/

https://www.bluebirdcfp.com/post/a-new-way-to-connect-with-your-t-w-een-reflective-listening



SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCES



Prevention

If you, or someone you know, is struggling with suicidal thoughts, it's important to make your home, or the home of another person, safer. Studies show that limiting access to possible methods of suicide, like medications or firearms, can help prevent it. According to a recent Howard County Health Assessment Survey, 1 in 3 residents reported feeling down, depressed or hopeless. These feelings can sometimes lead to thoughts of suicide and there are steps you can take to help,if you or someone you know is struggling. Simple actions can make a difference.

What can you do-Give Support

If someone is thinking about suicide, take it seriously.

Have a conversation and speak privately with them.

Listen closely, without judgment and show you care.

Ask them directly if they are thinking about suicide. (This will not put the idea of suicide in their head.)

If you, or someone you know is in crisis these resources can help:

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE
24/7 CALL,TEXT,CHAT

Dial or Text 9-8-8

If you are a veteran, press 1, for Spanish press 2, Visit 988lifeline.org

Text TALK to 741741 (Crisis Text Line), Text AYUDA for Spanish, Text STEVE for young people of color, or Visit crisistextline.org.

Help the person get to a hospital Emergency Department.

Trevor Project for LGBTQ Youth: Call 1-866-488-7386, Text START to 678-678 or Visit thetrevorproject.org. Trans Lifeline: Call 1-877-565-8860 or Visit translifeline.org.





Howard County LHIC

Local Health Improvement Coalition

https://www.hclhic.org/healthy/suicide-prevention

Teen Health Matters

https://teenhealthmatters.org/get-help-now/mental-health-suicide-prevention/



Howard County Gun Lock Program

https://www.howardcountymd.gov/health/gun-lock-program

****Please note that resources and information provided in this newsletter are just a sample of what is available and not an all inclusive list. For more information on mental health topics please use the links listed in the Howard County Mental Health Resources section. You can also reach out to the the Howard County Health Department Behavioral Health Navigator at 410-313-6240 or bhnavigator@howardcountymd.gov.**



VIOLENCE PREVENTION REOSURCES

Gun Safety Research -By Ellie Namkoong, MHCAC Student Intern 2025-2026

Did you know that in 2023, 58% of gun-related deaths were suicides? And that number only continues to grow. From May, 2025 to the following April, 27,832 individuals lost their lives to this specific method, marking 67% of all gun deaths in that time span.

Is there anything we can do? How can we advocate for change, and what will change look like?

In the words of Dr. Paul Nestadt, a professor and the medical director at the Johns Hopkins Center for Suicide Prevention, "Strategies that put time and space between guns and those at high risk of suicide are proven to save lives." Most suicides are impulsive, which is why guns are such a common method. Separating an individual from the method for even a short amount of time can save their life. As such, three policies have been studied: extreme risk laws, safe and storage laws, and mandatory waiting periods.

Extreme Risk Protection Orders, or ERPOS, are put into place when someone close to a suicidal individual, be it a family member, psychiatrist, or primary care provider, legally appeal to have a court take away the individual's guns for a period of time, often around two weeks. Safe storage laws usually require ammunition and the firearm itself to be stored separately, with at least the latter in a safe. But it doesn't have to be a legal requirement. Director Herren with Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence recommends that all gun owners store their firearms in safes with pictures of people who depend on them to create pause and consideration on how to move forward. Last but not least, mandatory waiting periods order sellers to only allow owners to take home their guns two weeks after their initial appeal. Individuals aren't allowed to impulsively purchase a gun and are forced to physically wait to receive one.

When studying any policy, one can't help but wonder whether it actually works. When crossreferencing data on which states have the most and least firearm suicides with what policies these states have implemented, it was found that 8 out of the 10 states with the highest firearm suicide rates had no policies implemented at all. Conversely, every one of the 10 states with the lowest rates had 2-3 of these policies set in place.

It may seem difficult to stimulate change for such a large issue, but it's a necessary step in ensuring safety for the country we live in. And change really is possible, as long as we're all willing to fight for it.

Explore More

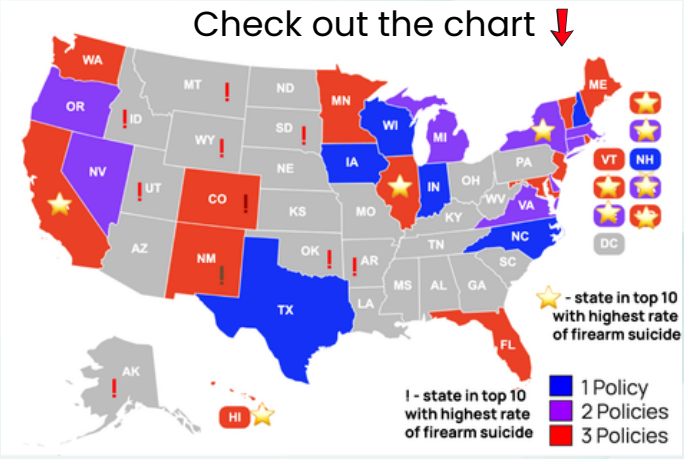
https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2025/new-report-highlights-us-2023-gun-deaths-suicide-by-firearm-at-record-levels-for-third-straight-year

https://www.cdc.gov/injury-violence-data/data-vis/

https://preventfirearmsuicide.efsgv.org/about-firearm-suicide/statistics/

https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/

Check out the chart





COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS

BEAM: Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective

The Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective (BEAM) is a national 501c3organization that trains, funds, holds healing space and resources an international network of therapists, wellness practitioners, healing justice efforts and grassroots wellness initiatives to transform and support the well being and mental health of our most marginalized communities.

https://beam.community

Black Mental Health Alliance

Making Culturally Relevant Behavioral Health Care Accessible For Everyone

Expanding behavioral health accessibility, neurodiversity support, and healing-centered programs that strengthen Black children, families, and communities. We are dedicated to making culturally relevant behavioral health care accessible for Black communities by providing trusted resources, support programs, and equity-driven mental health services.

https://blackmentalhealth.com

Immigrant Mental Health

The Immigrant Behavioral Health Services Program assists people who are foreign-born, live in Howard County, are low-income and are uninsured*. Funds are available to help with the cost of behavioral health evaluations, counseling and medication management. Interpretation services available

For more information, call 410-313-6202 or email ibhp@howardcountymd.gov.

Inclusive Therapists

Inclusive Therapists is a social justice and liberation-oriented mental health directory, community, and resource hub. We offer a safer, simpler way to find a therapist, counselor, coach, or mental health provider committed to collective liberation and healing. We center on the intersections of Racial, 2SLGBTQIA+, Neurodivergence, and Disability Justice.

https://www.inclusivetherapists.com

Asian Mental Health Collective

Asian Mental Health Collective was founded in 2020 by community members who have lived with mental illness, therapists, and advocates. It began with a viral Facebook group and in-person meetups for Asians to talk openly about their feelings. We broke barriers by creating the first and largest Asian therapist directory. We also hosted the first online Asian Mental Health Conference. Over the years, we've inspired tens of thousands of people to join the conversation.

While the organization has evolved, AMHC is still all about community. We build online spaces for folks looking to connect, share, and learn about the intersections of mental health and Asian identity. We also know that, for most of us, Asian identity is complex. Though we're all Asian in the diaspora, we have varied cultures, languages, backgrounds, and traditions. Our differences interweave to create a strong and diverse community.
We want mental health care that acknowledges and understands these identities, rather than erases them. We offer free therapy, support groups, and learning communities that do just that. Whether you're just beginning your mental health journey, or are well on your way, this space (and community) is for you.

https://www.asianmhc.org

My Life Foundation

My Life Foundation is a community-driven organization to provide behavioral and mental health services for the Asian American communities through prevention education, advocacy, health promotion, public awareness programs, and referral services in order to reduce any health disparities and increase well-being and health equality.
Building upon our core beliefs, My Life Foundation recognizes the unique challenges faced by the Asian American community. Cultural nuances, language barriers, and the societal pressure to conform to certain standards can often act as roadblocks in seeking mental and behavioral health support. It's our endeavor to create a safe and understanding platform where these challenges are acknowledged, and the individuals are provided with holistic and tailored solutions.

https://www.mlfmd.org

CentroSOL

Centro SOL se esfuerza por promover la equidad en salud para los latinos. Proporcionamos programas de salud física y mental así como en la atención clínica. Cualquiera puede participar de forma gratuita.

https://jhcentrosol.org



COPING SKILL CORNER



Self-Regulation of Emotions

What is self-regulation?

Self-regulation is the ability to control your emotions and actions based on what is happening around you. It means being able to stay calm when you are upset, handle changes, and deal with frustrationwithout having an outburst. Self-regulation helps children and teens learn how to make good choices and work toward their goals, even when things do not go as planned or their feelings are hard to manage.

How do we teach self-regulation?

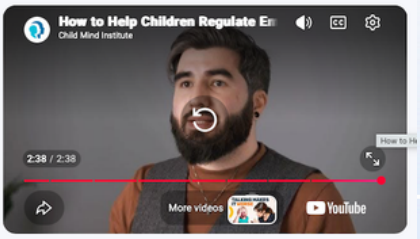
Self-regulation is taught through practice, connection, and modeling—not simply by telling a child to calm down. Children and teens develop these skills over time. Practicing self-regulation skills when emotions are regulated can help develop these skills. Adults can help by first providing support and then gradually teaching them to manage their emotions on their own.

Five Core Self-Regualtion Skills

1. Recognize Feelings
2. Learn to calm the body
3. Stop and Think
4. Problem Solve
5. Learn from Mistakes and Practice



Check out this video



https://youtu.be/0tfYqP3D69E?si=Yx1yBKJama8AcXmL





SELF-REGULATION RESOURCES

https://childmind.org/article/can-help-kids-self-regulation/

https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8848120/

https://positivepsychology.com/emotion-regulation/

https://www.cdc.gov/parenting-teens/tips-coaching-emotions/index.html

https://illinoisearlylearning.org/reslists/self-regulation/