



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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GOVERNMENT OF THE  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

# Mental Health Resource Guide

## School Year 2025-2026

Your guide to accessing mental health  
resources at DC Public Schools.



[DCPSMENTALHEALTH.ORG](https://dcpsmentalhealth.org)

[school.mentalhealth@k12.dc.gov](mailto:school.mentalhealth@k12.dc.gov)



## Who We Are

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The DC Public Schools (DCPS) School Mental Health (SMH) Team is dedicated to serving schools and supporting the holistic well-being of every child. Our team of experts offers comprehensive consultation and services, using proven assessment methods and therapeutic practices. By identifying students' individual needs early, we provide tailored support that ensures their success. Experience the difference our evidence-based approach can make.

## Crisis Support Numbers

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In a mental health crisis, it is crucial to have access to the right support. We have compiled a list of important contact numbers that you should keep handy. Stay prepared and know where to turn when you or someone you know needs immediate help. **Remember, in an emergency situation, dial 9-1-1.**

**Child and Adolescent Mobile Psychiatric Service (ChAMPS)** is an emergency response service for children, teenagers, and adolescent adults who are having a mental health or behavioral health crisis.

**202-481-1440**

**Access Helpline at the DC Department of Behavioral Health** is a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week telephone line staffed by behavioral health professionals who can refer a caller to immediate help or ongoing care.

**1-888-7WE-HELP**

**The Psychiatric Institute of Washington (PIW)** offers comprehensive behavioral healthcare to children, adolescents, and adults who are experiencing mental health and substance abuse issues.

**1-800-369-2273**

**Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** provides 24-hour, confidential support to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Call or text to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

**Call or text 988**



## **WORRIED ABOUT A STUDENT?**

If a student you know is experiencing a mental health challenge, please complete this referral form and a member of the school wellness team will respond.

**SCAN HERE:**



**Mental health matters.**  
**We're here for you.**





## Mental Health Partners

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To ensure all students have access to the supports they need in school, DCPS has launched an initiative to expand mental health services by pairing schools with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). The DCPS School Mental Health team partners with these CBOs to provide additional services to students at all three tiers of intensity.

Some CBO partners also provide other intensive services, including but not limited to:

- Family functional therapy
- Trauma-focused cognitive behavior therapy
- Parent-child interaction therapy
- Multi-systemic therapy
- Substance use
- Mindfulness training

Other CBOs provide psychiatric services and community-based supports that extend beyond school-based mental health offerings.

## Frequently asked questions

# F.A.Q

### What are school-based mental health services?

School-based mental health services are provided to students by qualified school staff who focus on whole child development. These services can address a variety of needs that your student may have, from academic challenges to grief and loss, anxiety, trauma, and other challenges that young people face.

### Who provides school-based mental health services?

These services are provided by mental health professionals and school counselors.

- DCPS school-based mental health professionals are all certified by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE).
- School social workers are also licensed at the clinical level by DC Health.
- Clinicians from the DC Department of Behavioral Health's (DBH) School-Based Behavioral Health Program and our Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are either licensed individually or supervised by a licensed professional whose agency has been approved by DBH and DCPS.

## Frequently asked questions

# F.A.Q

### What is the difference between a school counselor, a school psychologist, and a school social worker?

School counselors, psychologists, and social workers each play an integral role in supporting the emotional health of students of all ages. Each professional group has different yet critical roles in supporting student outcomes and school communities.

**School counselors** support students directly through academic planning and goal setting, classroom lessons that maximize student success, and small-group interventions to support students as they transition through grades. At the secondary level, they also help students plan for higher education, the military, or the workforce. They also contribute to school-wide prevention programming and serve as trusted adults at school.

**School Psychologists** help educators identify student strengths and areas of growth in both the academic and social-emotional areas. They also serve as leaders in the Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) work that happens at school, partnering to identify skill deficits and supports to improve those areas of challenge, whether academic, social-emotional, attendance-related, or behavioral. School Psychologists also screen students who exhibit early signs of disabilities and collect data to determine the level of students' needs. If concerns persist, school psychologists complete comprehensive psychological assessments to help determine if a student meets the eligibility criteria for a disability classification and requires specialized instruction and/or related services. School Psychologists contribute to school-wide mental health prevention planning and implementation.

**School social workers** are licensed by both the DC Department of Health and OSSE. They are trained to provide evidence-based mental health treatments and practices to students. School social workers are best suited to provide behavior support services as included on a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), 504 plan, and complete Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP) to understand and address behavior concerns in the learning environment.

## Frequently asked questions

# F.A.Q

### **Are Community-based Organization (CBO) clinicians the same as school-based mental health providers?**

CBO clinicians are employed by their respective agencies; they are not DCPS employees. They work alongside DCPS school-based mental health providers to support students and families. Both groups of professionals provide supportive services to students and families. CBO clinicians, however, do not provide behavior support services to students who are prescribed the service on an IEP or 504 plan.

### **Why would my child be referred to a CBO?**

Students are referred to CBOs through the school's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). Schools use data to look at student progress in a variety of areas: reading, math, attendance, and behavior. Students who need support are provided targeted interventions for their area of need. The school-based mental health team and partners work together to determine the best clinician and/or organization to meet individual students' needs.

### **Is there a cost associated with services my student receives from a CBO?**

No student will be turned away for services, whether or not they have insurance. However, if a student does have insurance through an accepted company, their insurance will be billed for services. Billing for services allows CBO clinicians to provide Tier 3 services in the school setting. Clinicians will request health insurance information for billing purposes only. Students who do not have insurance can work with CBO clinicians to obtain insurance or receive support from a DCPS school mental health provider or counselor depending upon the level of need.

### **If my child fills out the Student Self-Referral Form or is referred for mental health services by another adult, will I be notified?**

By law, students can receive mental health services without parental consent. However, DCPS views parents as partners, and the district includes parents in the referral process, seeking their consent to the greatest extent possible.

### **Can my child receive services in school if they are already receiving counseling/behavioral support services from an outside agency?**

Yes. If your child is receiving services from an outside agency, they can also receive school-based mental health services. It may be helpful to share this information with your child's outside provider so that services and treatment can be coordinated.

### **If my child is seeing a CBO clinician, is their treatment information shared with DCPS?**

No, but DCPS is interested in knowing whether our students are progressing in treatment. Basic progress may be shared within the context of educational planning and progress monitoring. Routine information provided to DCPS is:

- Name of the student's clinician
- Clinician's licensure status
- Name of the clinician's supervisor and licensure status if they are not licensed to practice independently

# DCPS MENTAL HEALTH WEBSITE

The DCPS Mental Health website is a supportive and user-friendly resource designed specifically with parents in mind. For resources to promote strong mental well-being, a directory of our local school mental health teams, and an events calendar featuring workshops, webinars, and community activities, visit [dcpsmentalhealth.org](https://dcpsmentalhealth.org).





# Provider Directory



The School Mental Health Provider Directory is a valuable resource located on the DCPS Mental Health website. Locate School Psychologists, Social Workers, School Counselors, and Community-Based Organizations across DCPS.



[View Directory.](#)