



Behavioral Health Help Line Frequently Asked Questions for Providers and Advocates

What is the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Help Line (BHHL)?

The Massachusetts Behavioral Health Help Line (BHHL) is a single point of contact for individuals and families to receive real-time support, initial clinical assessment, and connection to the right mental health and substance use disorder evaluation and treatment.

How does it work?

The BHHL is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year via phone and text at 833-773-2445 (BHHL), and online chat at masshelpline.com/chat. Every call, text, or chat conversation includes clinical follow up, and staff will remain on the line with callers until they are connected to services.

When is it operational?

The BHHL launched on January 3, 2023.

What languages are available?

The BHHL offers real-time interpretation in more than 200 languages. Individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing can contact MassRelay at 711.

How much does it cost?

The BHHL is free and available to all Massachusetts residents, regardless of insurance status or ability to pay.

Who is answering calls to the BHHL?

The BHHL is a service of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, operated by the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP). The BHHL is staffed by trained clinicians and certified peer specialists to support all caller needs.

How does the BHHL team determine risk?

BHHL staff are trained to conduct full risk assessments using industry standard screening tools. Based on the acuity and severity of the caller's situation, risk ratings are categorized as emergent, urgent, or routine.

What is the next step for callers?

BHHL staff will make a referral depending on the risk assessment for each caller. An emergent risk rating will result in a 911 or Mobile Crisis Intervention response. An urgent risk rating will result in a same or next day appointment. A routine risk rating will result in a connection to one of the newly-designated Community Behavioral Health Centers (CBHCs) across the Commonwealth, or to another provider for outpatient scheduling. BHHL staff will also utilize Massachusetts Behavioral Health Access (MABHA), Network of Care, and other existing tools to help callers access resources they need (e.g., transportation, childcare, or food).

What is a warm hand-off?

When referring a caller to a provider or resource, the BHHL staff member will stay on the line with the caller while connecting them with that next provider or resource. The BHHL staff member will relay the reason for the call and provide information about the caller's needs, staying on the line until the caller's next steps are finalized. BHHL staff will follow up with callers to ensure transitions of care are successful.

When should a provider or advocate refer someone to the BHHL?

- When there is an urgent or routine behavioral health need identified.
- When someone is in non-emergent emotional distress and there is further behavioral health assessment needed.
- When someone is struggling to navigate behavioral health services or determine what treatment or support they need.

How do 988, 211 and 911 work with the BHHL?

988, 211, and 911 teams are working together to provide warm hand-offs to and from the BHHL when appropriate to meet the caller's needs.

Will there be consumer materials available to distribute?

Materials including posters, brochures, and wallet cards will be available in 13 languages at the Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse at mass.gov/MAClearinghouse.

To learn more, visit
masshelpline.com