

BE
KIND
TO YOUR
MIND

PATIENT MAGAZINE
All Things CDMHC

Updates and Information

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BHDD SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT of BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
OFFICE of MENTAL HEALTH
Charleston Dorchester Mental Health Center

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“Our hope is that the information you find here empowers you to take an active role in your care, strengthens your confidence in navigating resources, and reminds you that you are not alone in your journey.”

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this edition of our patient magazine. At CDMHC, our mission is simple yet powerful: to support the recovery of people with mental illnesses.

This magazine is designed to help you better understand the resources and services we provide, while also offering education that encourages self-advocacy and mental wellness.

We believe recovery is deeply personal, and our focus is always on person-centered care—supporting each individual as they define and pursue their own vision of healing.

Our hope is that the information you find here empowers you to take an active role in your care, strengthens your confidence in navigating resources, and reminds you that you are not alone in your journey.

Thank you for being part of the CDMHC community. We are honored to walk alongside you in recovery and wellness.

*Warmly,
Jennifer Brush*

Executive Director, CDMHC

ANNUAL RECAP: CDMHC 2025

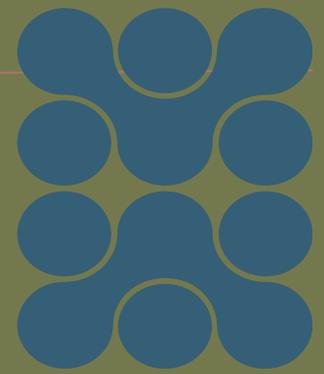
In 2025, CDMHC continued to make a meaningful impact across South Carolina, supported by funding from the state government, federal distributions through the legislature, grants, and payment for services. This funding not only sustained our daily operations but also allowed us to provide vital specialty programs—including the statewide Mobile Crisis Call Center, the 988 Call Center, the TriCounty Crisis Stabilization Center, and Highway to Hope.

OVER THE PAST YEAR, CDMHC:

- Delivered more than 106,000 services to nearly 9,000 people.
- Handled nearly 35,000 mobile crisis calls from across South Carolina.
- Responded to over 1,200 calls in the Charleston and Dorchester areas.
- Provided early intervention and safety planning that resulted in 1,150 diversions from emergency rooms, jails, and hospitalization.
- Offered more than 4,400 services to over 3,100 children in 92 schools across Charleston and Dorchester counties.
- Ensured treatment effectiveness, helping patients make and maintain gains in their daily functioning.
- Expanded our team by hiring new staff and strengthening professional development for both new and established employees.
- Maintained high levels of patient and stakeholder satisfaction, affirming the value and helpfulness of our services.

Together, these accomplishments reflect our ongoing mission: to support the recovery of people with mental illnesses by delivering compassionate, effective, and community-centered care.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE:



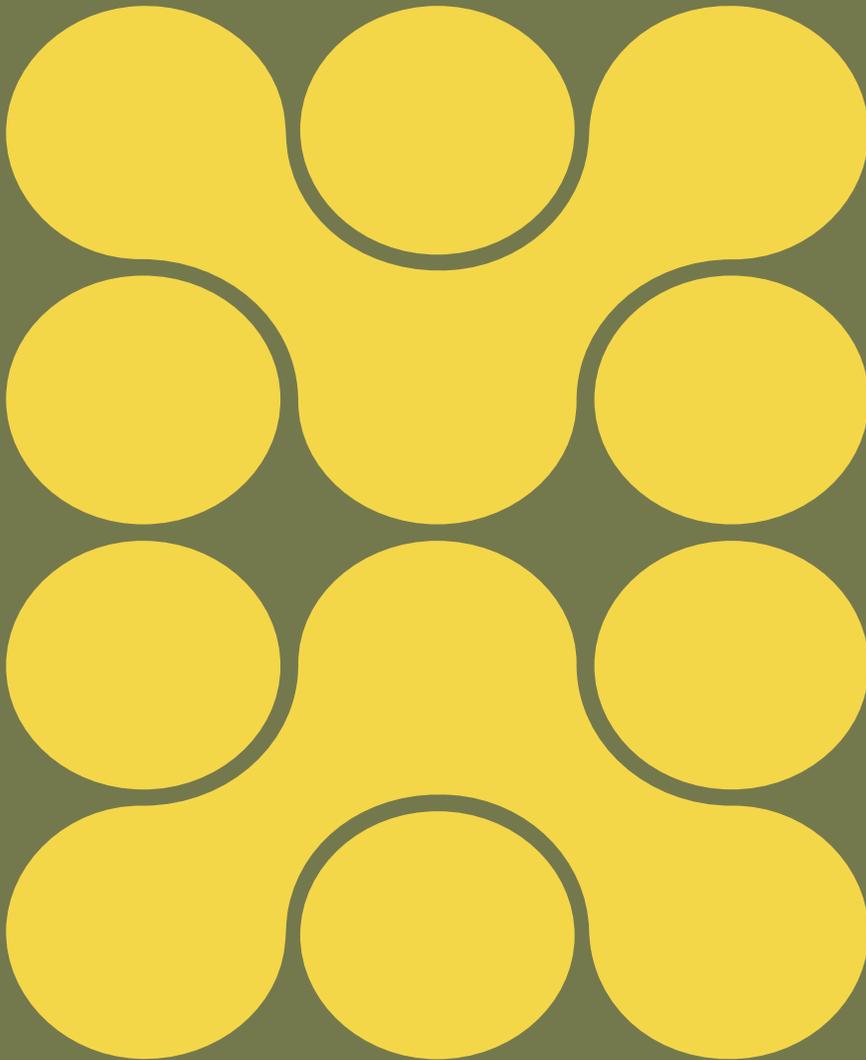
Empowering Recovery. Ensuring Quality.
Advocating for Change. Inspiring Innovation.

At CDMHC, everything we do is rooted in our mission: to support the recovery of people with mental illnesses. Our values shape how we care for each individual and how we grow as a community.

- **Recovery** We treat the person, not the illness. Recovery looks different for everyone, and we honor each individual's vision of healing by walking alongside them with compassion and support.
- **Quality** Every patient deserves effective, evidence-based care. Through ongoing training, supervision, and consultation, we ensure that our services are not only professional but also deeply compassionate.
- **Advocacy** Recovery extends beyond our center. We build strong partnerships in the community, expand resources, and work to reduce stigma so that people living with mental illness feel supported everywhere they go.
- **Innovation** The needs of our community are always evolving. We take pride in finding creative solutions and developing new approaches to care, ensuring that were main responsive and effective.

In 2026, CDMHC is focusing on what matters most: **valuing our staff, delivering quality care, and working smarter**. We're committed to appreciating and retaining the dedicated team that makes recovery possible, ensuring every patient receives compassionate, effective support, and improving how we use our time and resources so care is timely and efficient. Together, these priorities keep us strong and centered on our mission of supporting recovery.

LISTENING. INNOVATING. SUPPORTING. RECOVERY.



At CDMHC, we listen to our staff, patients, and community to develop innovative programs that meet the evolving needs of those we serve. Our mission is simple and powerful:

“To support the recovery of people with mental illnesses.”

About CDMHC

Our Programs

- Adult Therapy
 - Individualized therapy services for adults experiencing mental health challenges.
- Youth in Transition
 - Therapy for young adults transitioning out of high school and into college or the workforce, with a focus on age-specific needs.
- Child and Adolescent Therapy
 - Therapy for children and teens, provided either in schools or at the clinic. Family therapy is required, and a guardian must participate in treatment planning and medication management appointments.
- Jail Transition Team
 - A team of therapists provides case management and support to individuals who are incarcerated. Upon release, the team coordinates with the clinic and community partners to ensure a smooth transition to community-based care.
- Mental Health Court (Charleston County)
 - A clinician works with the legal system to provide treatment for individuals involved in the justice system, aiming to reduce incarceration rates among those with mental illness.
- School Mental Health Counseling
 - Therapy for children and adolescents provided in schools—before, during, or after school hours—to minimize disruption to education while supporting mental wellness.
- NAVIGATE & New Directions
 - Evidence-based programs for individuals experiencing early psychosis, focused on recovery and long-term wellness.
- First Response Support Team (FRST)
 - Specialized care for current and former first responders and their families.
- Highway to Hope
 - Community-based therapy and medication management services delivered outside the clinic to improve access to care.
- HomeShare
 - A supportive housing program that helps individuals succeed in community-based living environments.
- Vocational Support
 - Services that help individuals find and maintain employment.
- First Responder Support Team
 - Therapists that help and support our First responders and their families

Services Offered Across Programs

In each of our programs, you may receive one or more of the following services:

- Individual Therapy
 - One-on-one sessions with a therapist to work on personal goals and mental health concerns.
- Family Therapy
 - Sessions involving family members to strengthen relationships and support the recovery process.
- Group Therapy
 - Small group sessions led by one or two therapists, focused on shared goals and peer support.
- Nursing Services
 - Nurses may assist with medication administration, monitor symptoms or side effects, and support your overall treatment progress.

WELLNESS. RECOVERY. RESILIENCY.

There are many aspects
when it comes to recovery
and the process to get there.
And a lot of it are little
things that make a bigger
impact than we think!



WELLNESS

noun

the state of being in good health, especially as an actively pursued goal.
"measures of a patient's progress toward wellness"

Wellness Activities That Support Mental Health

Mental health wellness is about more than managing symptoms—it's about creating daily habits that nurture your mind, body, and spirit. By including simple wellness activities into your routine, you can strengthen emotional balance, improve coping skills, and enhance your overall quality of life.

Mind-Body Practices

- Mindfulness and Meditation – Taking just 10 minutes a day to focus on your breath or practice guided meditation can reduce anxiety and improve emotional regulation.
- Yoga or Stretching – Gentle movement helps release tension, improve flexibility, and calm the nervous system.

Physical Activity

- Walking Outdoors – A brisk walk in nature boosts mood, lowers stress, and increases energy levels.
- Regular Exercise – Activities like swimming, cycling, or dancing improve sleep, reduce depression, and build resilience.

Creative Expression

- Art and Music – Drawing, painting, journaling, or listening to music can provide emotional release and foster self-discovery.
- Writing – Journaling thoughts and feelings helps process emotions and encourages self-advocacy.

Social Connection

- Group Activities – Joining a support group, book club, or community class strengthens social bonds and reduces feelings of isolation.
- Volunteering – Helping others builds purpose and connection, which are protective factors for mental health.

Rest and Relaxation

- Sleep Hygiene – Maintaining a consistent sleep schedule supports emotional stability and cognitive function.
- Relaxation Techniques – Deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or guided imagery can calm stress and improve focus.

Self-Care Habits

- Balanced Nutrition – Eating regular, nourishing meals supports both physical and mental energy.
- Digital Breaks – Limiting screen time and practicing “tech-free” moments helps reduce overwhelm and improve presence.

Putting It All Together

Wellness activities don't need to be complicated. The key is **consistency**—choosing practices that fit your lifestyle and making them part of your daily routine. Whether it's a morning walk, a few minutes of journaling, or connecting with a friend, these small steps add up to big improvements in mental health.

By embracing wellness activities, you empower yourself to take an active role in your recovery and well-being. Remember: mental health is not just about treatment—it's about building a life filled with balance, connection, and hope.

KICKING THE HABIT

The Link Between Mental Health and Tobacco Use

Why Does This Happen?

There are a couple of reasons researchers believe this happens:

It can feel like a quick fix.

- Some people use tobacco to help manage tough feelings like anxiety, sadness, or stress. It might seem to help at first—but that relief doesn't last. Over time, they may end up using more and more, and unfortunately, their symptoms often get worse.

Smoking can lead to serious health problems.

- Things like heart disease, cancer, and lung issues are common among people who smoke. These health problems can actually make mental health symptoms like depression and anxiety even harder to manage. In fact, they're some of the top causes of death for people with mental illnesses.

Tobacco Can Also Affect Your Medications

Here's something many people don't realize: tobacco can make mental health medications less effective. That might mean:

- Your meds don't work as well
- You need a higher dose
- You have to try different medications to find one that works

Thinking About Quitting?

If you're considering quitting, you don't have to do it alone. Talk to your therapist, nurse, or doctor—they can help you find support. A lot of resources are free and might include:

- Counseling
- Nicotine patches or gum
- Medications to help you quit

Studies have found that people living with mental health conditions are:

- More likely to use nicotine
- More likely to get addicted to it
- Using nearly twice as many tobacco products as people without a mental illness

Tobacco products include cigarettes, vape, dip, and chew

Quitting tobacco is a big step, but it can make a huge difference in how you feel—both physically and mentally.

For more information, check out the South Carolina Tobacco Quitline at www.quitnowsc.org



SOUTH CAROLINA
Tobacco Quitline

1-800-QUIT-NOW

Free 24/7* quit support — *your way.*

If you vape, smoke, or dip, we can help you quit for keeps.

*Closed on major holidays. Open New Year's Day.

The SC Tobacco Quitline offers:

Free Support from trained
Quit Coaches

Free Nicotine gum, patches, and
lozenges (if appropriate)

Free quit guide and step-by-step
quit plan

Optional online and text support*

*Charges may apply

Tailored support options:

1-888-7AI-QUIT (724-7848) offers free,
custom quit support for American
Indians

1-855-Déjelo-Ya (335-3569) offers free
quit support in Spanish

TTY dial 711

Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669)

or text 'READY' to 34191 to enroll.

Learn more at www.quitnowsc.org.

**When you're ready to quit,
we're here to help.**

RECOVERY

noun

the process of improving or becoming stronger
again

So, what does recovery look like for you?

At CDMHC, our mission is to support the recovery of people with mental illnesses. We're here to support your recovery journey—whatever that looks like for you.

We know that mental health recovery isn't one-size-fits-all. That's why we take a person-centered approach to care. Your treatment team will work with you to explore your goals and help you define what recovery means to you.

Maybe it means feeling understood.

If so, you might benefit from our Peer Support Program. Our certified Peer Support Specialists have lived experience with mental health challenges and are trained to support others on their journey. They're here to help you build hope, resilience, and a sense of empowerment—and they can even work with your family or support system if that's something you'd like.

**WHATEVER YOUR GOALS ARE,
WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU REACH
THEM.**

**TALK TO YOUR THERAPIST ABOUT
WHAT RECOVERY MEANS TO YOU—AND
HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU ALONG
THE WAY.**

Maybe it means finding or keeping a job.

Employment can be a big part of recovery for many people. We've partnered with South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation to help connect you with the right job resources. Sometimes, their specialists even come to the center to make things easier for you. We also offer an Individual Placement and Support (IPS) program. Our on-staff counselors work closely with you and your treatment team to help you find a job quickly and build the skills you need to succeed and grow in your role.

Or maybe it means making a difference.

If you're interested in shaping the future of mental health care, you can join our Patient Advisory Board. It's a great way to share your voice and help CDMHC improve care in ways that are effective, compassionate, and meaningful.

Understanding Your Diagnosis and Treatment Plan

One really important part of recovery is knowing what's going on with your mental health and how your treatment is supposed to help. Research shows that when people understand their diagnosis and treatment plan, they're more likely to feel better—and stay better.

So don't be afraid to ask questions.

If you're unsure about your diagnosis or what it means for your day-to-day life, talk to your therapist, nurse, or doctor. They're there to help you understand your symptoms and what to expect from treatment. The more you know, the more confident you can feel about making decisions for your health and wellness.

Your care team can also give you educational handouts that you can read on your own or share with family, friends, or caregivers.

National Institute for
Mental Illness Handouts
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications>



NAMI
<https://www.nami.org/about-mental-illness/>



Handouts in Spanish
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/espanol/spanish-listing>

UNDERSTANDING YOUR TREATMENT

When it comes to mental health care, not all treatments are created equal. Evidence-based practices (EBPs) are mental health treatments that have been proven to work through scientific research. These approaches are used by trained professionals to help people feel better, manage symptoms, and improve their quality of life.



Why It Matters

When you receive evidence-based care, you're getting treatment that's:

- ✓ Backed by research
- ✓ Guided by expert knowledge
- ✓ Personalized to your needs

This means you're more likely to see real, lasting progress in your mental health journey.

Common EBPs

At CDMHC, our clinicians are trained to use EBPs to help you achieve your recovery goals.

Here are a few EBPs we use:

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) - Helps you recognize and change unhelpful thoughts and behaviors.

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) - Teaches mindfulness, emotional regulation, and coping skills—often used for mood disorders and trauma.

Motivational Interviewing (MI) - A supportive way to explore your goals and build motivation for change.

Trauma-Focused CBT (TF-CBT) - Designed for children and teens who have experienced trauma.

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) - Focuses on your strengths and what's working, helping you set and achieve realistic goals in a short amount of time.

Family Therapy - Involves working with family members to improve communication, resolve conflicts, and support each other's mental health.

Medication Management - When needed, medications are prescribed and monitored based on clinical guidelines.

What You Can Do

✓ **Ask Questions:** It's okay to ask your provider what kind of treatment they're using and how it helps.

✓ **Stay Involved:** The more you understand your care, the more empowered you'll feel.

✓ **Speak Up:** If something isn't working for you, let your provider know. Treatment should be a team effort.

Empowering Recovery

Why medication education matters in Mental Health Care

In the journey toward mental wellness, medication can be a powerful ally—but only when it's understood, respected, and used as part of a holistic treatment plan. At our outpatient community-based mental health clinic, we believe that education is just as essential as the prescription itself. That's why every person we serve—and their support system—is provided with comprehensive, personalized guidance about the medications they're prescribed.

Beyond the Pill: Understanding the Purpose

Psychotropic medications are prescribed to help manage symptoms of mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. But understanding why a medication is prescribed is the first step toward feeling empowered in your treatment. Our team explains how each medication works, what it's intended to treat, and how it fits into your overall recovery goals.

Balancing Benefits and Risks

Every medication has potential benefits—and possible side effects. We walk patients and their families through both, offering clear information about what to expect, what to monitor, and when to reach out for help. We also discuss contraindications (conditions that may make a medication unsafe) and the importance of reporting any changes in health status.

What If You Miss a Dose?

Life happens. If a dose is missed, it's important to know what to do. Our staff provides easy-to-follow instructions tailored to each medication, helping patients avoid complications and stay on track.



Lifestyle Matters: Diet, Exercise, and Substance Use

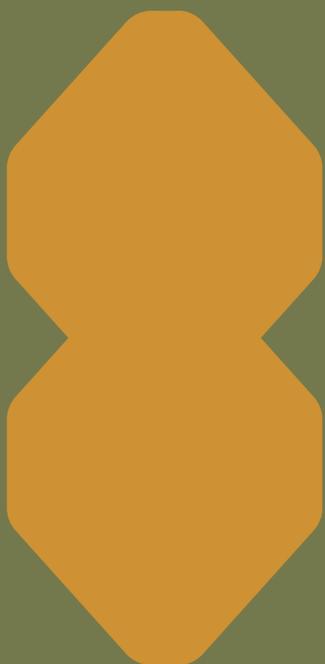
Medication doesn't work in a vacuum. What you eat, how you move, and whether you use substances like alcohol or tobacco can all affect how your medication works. We educate patients on how to support their treatment with healthy habits—and what to avoid.

Pregnancy and Medication Safety

For individuals who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, medication safety is a critical concern. We provide clear, compassionate guidance about risks, alternatives, and how to make informed decisions in partnership with your healthcare team.

Monitoring Progress and Staying Informed

Taking medication as prescribed is essential—but so is knowing whether it's working. We teach patients how to monitor their symptoms, track changes, and communicate effectively with their providers. When lab tests or follow-up appointments are needed, we explain why and what to expect.



What About Other Medications?

Interactions between medications—prescription or over-the-counter—can be serious. We help patients understand how to safely manage multiple medications and what to share with their providers.

Self-Administration and Support

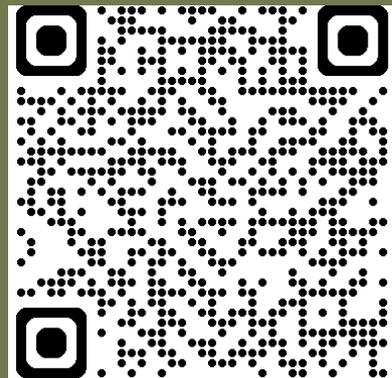
For those who self-administer medication, we offer hands-on instruction and written guides to ensure safety and confidence. We also encourage support systems—family, friends, caregivers—to be part of the education process, reinforcing understanding and adherence.

When Questions Arise

Medication questions don't always wait for your next appointment. That's why we make it easy to contact your care team with concerns, changes, or emergencies. Whether it's a side effect, a missed dose, or a new symptom, we're here to help.

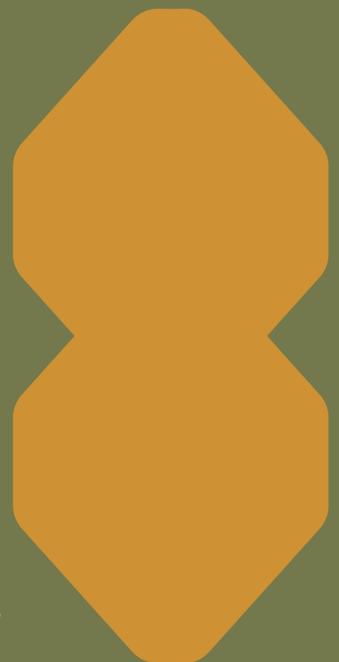
Medication is more than a prescription—it's a partnership. Through education, support, and person-centered care, we help individuals take an active role in their recovery and build a foundation for lasting wellness.

Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222 or



If you are having difficulty accessing or affording your medication, please talk to a staff member. CDMHC can connect you with resources to help you.

For urgent medication questions or if you are experiencing a psychiatric emergency, please contact our crisis team at 843-414-2350.



RESILIENCE

noun

the capacity to withstand or to recover quickly
from difficulties; toughness

Building Mental Health Coping Skills: Tools for Everyday Life

Coping skills are the strategies we use to manage stress, navigate challenges, and maintain emotional balance. Just like physical health, mental health requires regular care—and having a set of reliable coping tools can make a big difference in how we handle life’s ups and downs.

Why Coping Skills Matter

Everyone experiences stress, anxiety, sadness, or frustration from time to time. Coping skills help us respond to these emotions in healthy, productive ways. They can reduce the intensity of difficult feelings, improve our relationships, and support long-term mental wellness.

Practice Makes Progress

Coping skills are most effective when practiced regularly—not just during a crisis. Try different techniques to see what works best for you. Your therapist will help you to develop a plan for what to do when you are struggling. This will include understanding triggers, identifying coping skills that work for you, and making a list of resources and people who can help.

Types of Coping Skills

There’s no one-size-fits-all approach, but here are a few common types of coping strategies:

- Healthy Distractions: Reading, listening to music, watching a favorite show, or engaging in a hobby can give your mind a break.
- Physical Activity: Exercise, stretching, or even a short walk can release endorphins and reduce stress.
- Relaxation Techniques: Deep breathing, meditation, or progressive muscle relaxation can calm the nervous system.
- Social Support: Talking with a trusted friend, family member, or therapist can help you feel heard and supported.
- Problem-Solving: Breaking down challenges into smaller steps can make them feel more manageable.
- Positive Self-Talk: Replacing negative thoughts with encouraging ones can shift your mindset and build resilience.

Accessing your care: Telehealth services at CDMHC

At Charleston Dorchester Mental Health Center (CDMHC), we believe that accessing your mental health care should be as easy and comfortable as possible. That's why, in addition to in-person therapy sessions, we offer telehealth services—a convenient way to meet with your provider online.

What Is Telehealth?

Telehealth allows you to attend therapy sessions using a secure, private video platform. You'll still receive the same high-quality, compassionate care you expect from CDMHC—just from the comfort of your own space.

How It Works

Before your appointment, you'll receive a link to your provider's virtual waiting room. Simply click the link, enter your name, and wait for your session to begin. It's that easy!

To participate, you'll need:

- A personal device (smartphone, tablet, or computer)
- A stable internet connection
- Both video and audio capabilities (sessions cannot be conducted by phone only)

Need Help Getting Started?

If you don't have access to a device or internet service, talk to your provider. CDMHC can connect you with a case manager who may be able to help you find resources to get the technology you need.

Not confident using technology? You're not alone. Local libraries and community centers often offer free classes on basic internet and device use. Your provider can help you find support to get started.

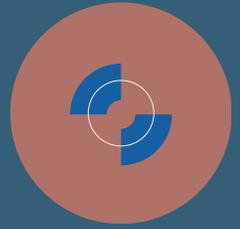
Tips for a Great Telehealth Experience

Telehealth therapy is just like in-person therapy—just online. To get the most out of your session:

- Choose a quiet, private space free from distractions
- Avoid joining sessions while working or driving
- Dress appropriately, just as you would for an in-person visit

Your mental health matters. Whether in person or online, CDMHC is here to support you every step of the way.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Al-Anon: 843-762-6999

Alcoholics Anonymous: 843-723-9633

Narcotics Anonymous: 843-852-3001

NAMI of the Greater Charleston Area: 843-284-3091

Dorchester Alcohol and Drug: 843-871-4790

Charleston Center: 843-722-0100 or 843-958-3300

Fetter Clinic Charleston: 843-722-4112

Fetter Clinic Summerville: 843-821-3444

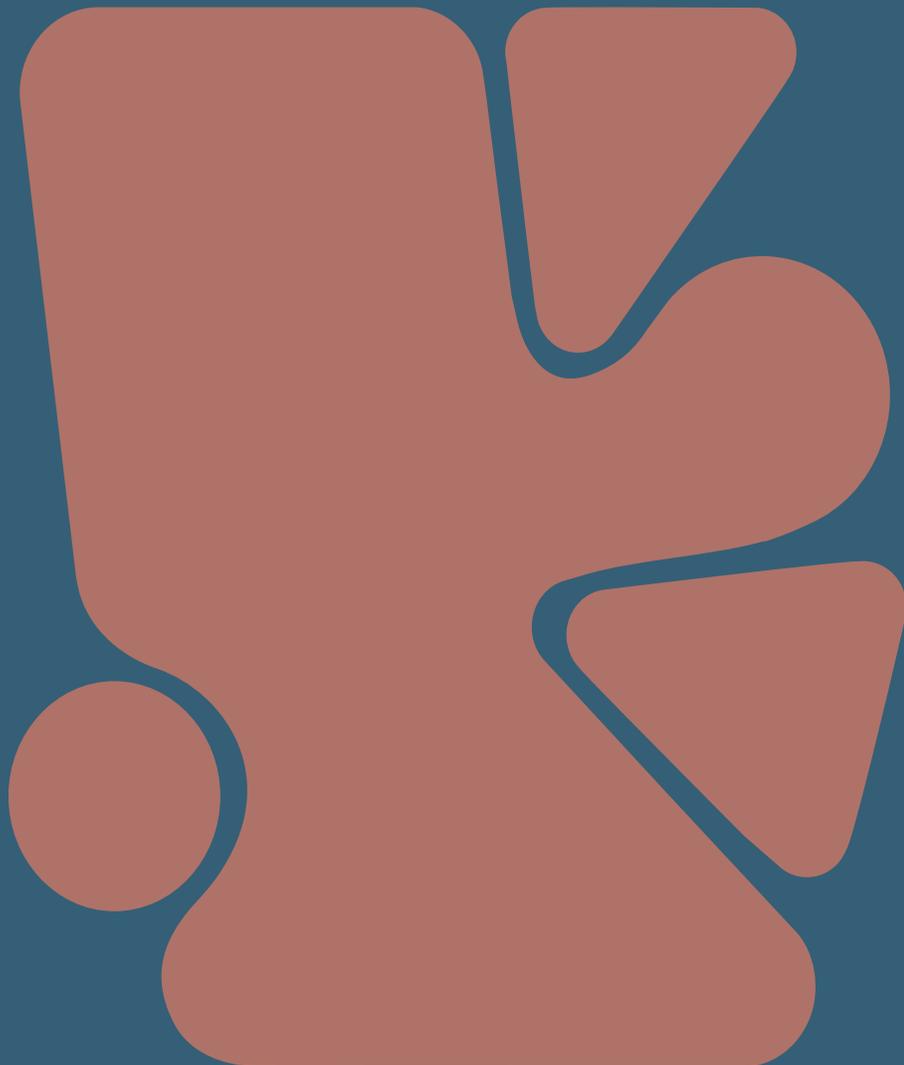
My Sister's House: 843-744-3242

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-273-4673

Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities: 866-275-7273 or 803-782-0639

Vocational Rehabilitation – Charleston: 843-740-1600

Vocational Rehabilitation – Dorchester/Berkeley: 843-761-6036





“Mental health problems don't define who you are. They are something you experience. You walk in the rain and you feel the rain, but you are not the rain.”

: MATT HAIG

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE A COPY OF THE
MAGAZINE, PLEASE ASK A STAFF MEMBER
AND THEY WILL PRINT ONE FOR YOU!**