
BE CONNECTEDNETWORK
NEWS
"News You Can Use"



Training Announcements

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), Office of Talent Acquisition and Learning, are offering virtual and in-person trainings. For more information regarding trainings, [click here](#).

If you have any questions, please contact DBHDDLearning@dbhdd.ga.gov.



Person-Centered Planning: Offering Settings Options to Individuals Receiving HCBS Webinar

The Georgia Collaborative ASO and DBHDD present the following training opportunity for IDD Providers. Please click on the title of the training to register.

Person-Centered Planning: Offering Settings Options to Individuals Receiving HCBS Webinar
Tuesday, June 17, 2025, 10:00AM - 11:00AM

This training will focus on supporting Direct Support Professionals, Support Coordinators, and providers with information and tools to effectively implement person-centered planning that prioritizes preferences in HCBS settings options. Attendees will learn how to facilitate meaningful conversations that honor the values, goals, and choices of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities receiving HCBS. The training will also explore regulatory expectations and provide practical strategies full presenting settings options.

Support Need Levels & Tiered Rates Virtual Webinar

June 16, 2025, 2:00PM - 3:30PM

This information session will cover the rollout of updates to the support need levels framework that is used to inform tiered rates for certain DBHDD services. This session is intended for DBHDD service providers as well as DBHDD Central and Regional staff, and Support Coordinators.



The goal of the webinar is to share information about the updates to the 7-level support need levels framework that are necessary due to the recent updates that were made to the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) assessment.

Registration is required.

The webinar will include a discussion of the following:

- Support Need Levels Framework Updates
 - Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) updates
 - Overview of the new 7-level framework
- Implementation Plan
 - Phase-in schedule
- Reassessment Policy
 - Change in condition
- Q&A

Register Now!



DD Informational Webinar for Individuals & Families

**Tuesday, June 17, 2025
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM**

The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) is making updates to how support needs are used to inform service rates. This webinar will share more information about these planned updates.

The topic areas covered will be:

- Changes to the Supports Intensity Scale-Adult (SIS-A) assessment
- Updates to support need levels and service rates
- When will updates occur?
- What should you expect & who is this for?

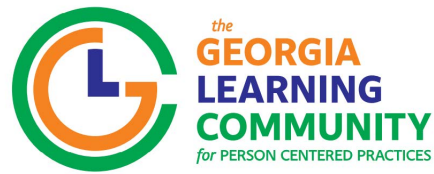
Registration is required to attend!

This webinar is specially for people who receive home and community-based waiver services from DBHDD and their family members. Please share this training announcement with the individuals/families that you deliver services to.

For any questions, please contact DBHDDLearning@dbhdd.ga.gov

Register Now!

Community's Mini Gathering: A Celebration of Person Centered Practices



**Wednesday, June 18, 2025
9:00AM - 4:00PM**

Join us for meaningful connection and shared learning! Mini Gathering is a regional extension of The Gathering - a celebration of person centered practices. This year's theme is **Be Seen, Be Heard, Belong**.

The Mini Gathering will offer a full day of meaningful connection, self-expression, and shared learning. It's designed for individuals, families, direct support professionals, and advocates who believe in the power of person-centered practices and inclusive community living.

Highlights include:

- Interactive Breakout Sessions
- Self-Advocate Panels
- Creative Expression
- Community Celebration

Location:

Trinity Anglican Church
325 W Jackson St., Thomasville, GA 31792

The event is limited to 60 participants!

To ensure an opportunity for everyone to attend, we request that agencies register no more than 4 people (if a provider agency: 3 self-advocates and one staff).

Register Now!

Flyer: Mini Gathering by GA Learning Community



**Free Person-Centered Thinking
Training Now Available**

**Training Dates Now Available through
June 2025**

**DBHDD, in collaboration with IntellectAbility, is providing free
Person-Centered Thinking (PCT) Training.**

Person-Centered Thinking Training consists of two-parts:

Part 1: Complete Person-Centered Thinking eLearn. This 3-hour eLearn course is housed within Relias. To find it search for *A Course on Person-Centered Thinking* within Relias.

Part 2: A one-day virtual, PCT training with a GA Learning Community Trainer. This is a Zoom-based virtual training with a live trainer.

Important Information:

1. At the conclusion of the eLearn course in Part 1, the learner will have the opportunity to register for the one-day, virtual training.

2. Learners must upload their certificate from Part 1 to register for Part 2.
3. Your registration remains in a pending status until your eLearn course activities have been reviewed. Activities must be completed in earnest. Learners whose activities contain nonsensical entries will be asked to reanswer the areas before their registration is approved.
4. To receive the full credit for Person-Centered Thinking Training, both Part 1 and Part 2 must be successfully completed.
5. The learner will receive a certificate for each part of training.

If you have questions about this training and how to get started, email:
PCSupport@ReplacingRisk.com

Register Now!

ASSESSING SUICIDE RISK USING THE COLUMBIA SUICIDE SEVERITY RATING SCALE (C-SSRS)

NEW TRAINING DATES AND LOCATIONS ADDED



Training Dates:

- Monday, June 2, 10:00AM - 12:00PM OR 1:00PM - 3:00PM (CUMMING, GA)
- Monday, July 28, 10:00AM - 12:00PM OR 1:00PM - 3:00PM (THOMASVILLE, GA)
- Tuesday, July 29, 10:00AM - 12:00PM OR 1:00PM - 3:00PM (MACON, GA)

Target Audience:

This training opportunity is intended for behavioral health clinicians responsible for the care of individuals who are or may be at risk for suicide.

Training Location:

Location address will be included in registration confirmation.

This IN-PERSON training is now open to Regions 1, 2 and 4

Additional details to follow for other Regions once dates and location details are confirmed.

See the attached flyer for additional information.

Registration is now open! Click the link below to register.

Register Now!

Updated Flyer: C-SSRS Training 2025

Featured Article



Summer Safety Reminders

Sun safety is always in season. It's important to protect your skin from sun damage throughout the year, no matter the weather.

Why? Exposing your skin to the sun year-round means you are exposing it to ultraviolet radiation, which can cause sunburn, skin aging (such as skin spots, wrinkles, or "leathery skin"), eye damage, and skin cancer, the most common form of cancer in the U.S.

Skin cancer is on the rise in the U.S. The [National Cancer Institute](#) estimates there were 100,640 new cases of skin melanomas and 8,290 related deaths in 2024. In 2021, there were an estimated 1.4 million people living with melanoma of the skin in the U.S. About 6.1 million people are treated for basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma, the two most common types of skin cancer, in the U.S. every year, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). Sunscreen is one way to protect against the rise in skin cancer rates.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration continues to evaluate sunscreen products to ensure that they are safe and effective. Although all sunscreens help protect people from sunburn, only broad-spectrum sunscreens with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 help protect us from skin cancer and early skin aging caused by the sun.

Below are some sun safety tips and things to consider when planning outdoor activities according to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA):

- Limiting Sun Exposure:
 - No sunscreen completely blocks UV radiation. So other protections are needed, such as protective clothing, sunglasses, and staying in the shade.
 - Limiting your time in the sun, especially between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., when the sun's rays are most intense.
 - Wearing clothing to cover skin exposed to the sun, such as long-sleeve shirts, pants, sunglasses, and broad-brim hats. Sun-protective clothing is now available. (The FDA regulates these products only if they are intended to be used for medical purposes.)
 - Choose sunglasses with a UV400 rating or "100% UV protection" on the label. These sunglasses block more than 99% of UVA and UVB radiation and provide the most protection against UV rays.
 - Do not mistake dark-tinted sunglasses as having UV protection. The darkness of the lens does not indicate its ability to shield your eyes from UV rays. Many sunglasses with light-colored tints – such as green, amber, red, and gray – can offer the same UV protection as very dark lenses.
 - Even on an overcast day, up to 80% of the sun's UV rays can get through the clouds. Stay in the shade as much as possible.
- Using Sunscreen
 - Read Sunscreen Labels - Only products that pass the FDA's broad-spectrum requirements, and therefore protect against UVA exposure, can be labeled "broad spectrum."
 - Using broad-spectrum sunscreens with an SPF value of 15 or higher regularly and as directed. (Broad-spectrum sunscreens offer protection against both

- UVA and UVB rays, two types of the sun's ultraviolet radiation.)
- Apply sunscreen liberally to all uncovered skin, especially your nose, ears, neck, hands, feet, and lips.
- No sunscreen is waterproof. Check the instructions on your sunscreen for information about its water resistance and reapplication instructions if you are sweating or going in the water.
- Reapply at least every two hours. Apply more often if you're swimming or sweating.
- Many spray sunscreen products contain [flammable ingredients](#), like alcohol. Be careful when using these flammable products. Read and follow the warning label, and don't use these sprays near an open flame, especially around children.
- Risk Factors for Harmful Effects of UV Radiation
 - People of all skin colors are potentially at risk for sunburn and other harmful effects of UV radiation, so always protect yourself.
 - Be especially careful if you have:
 - Pale skin.
 - Blond, red, or light brown hair.
 - Been treated for skin cancer.
 - A family member who has had skin cancer.
 - If you take medications, ask your health care professional about sun-care precautions. Some medications may increase sun sensitivity.

The U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has additional information and resources regarding sun safety. Click the link for more information: [Tips to Stay Safe in the Sun | FDA](#).

Division of Behavioral Health

SAVE THE DATE

2025 Behavioral Health Symposium

Callaway Gardens Lodge Conference Center
October 1 - October 3, 2025

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), Division of Behavioral Health is pleased to announce that it will again host the Behavioral Health Symposium, October 1 - 3, 2025, with a Pre-Symposium taking place on October 1st. This year's conference will be held **IN-PERSON** at Callaway Gardens Lodge Conference Center - Pine Mountain, GA.

The theme this year is “**Opening Doors to Recovery**”. The goal of the symposium is to inform professionals about best practices in the delivery of behavioral health services and supports and is intended to benefit all organizations that currently contract with DBHDD's Division of Behavioral Health.

Hotel Booking Information

Book your hotel room at Callaway Gardens Lodge Conference Center for the DBHDD 2025 Behavioral Health Symposium!

Reservations can be made via phone or online.

The cut-off date for all reservations is 08/31/2025.

To book by phone

Call 1-855-943-6375; mention 'DBHDD 2025 Behavioral Health Symposium' for the group rate.

To book online

Click the following link: [DBHDD 2025 Behavioral Health Symposium](#). The group rate code will automatically be applied; select your room, dates, and click 'Book Now' to reserve.

NOTE FOR DBHDD STAFF WHO NEED A HOTEL ROOM: The booking information provided above is only for **non-DBHDD staff** who need a room. DBHDD Central Office and Regional Field Office Staff must identify their lodging needs during registration.

DEADLINE EXTENDED: Submit your Award Nominations by Wednesday, June 4, 2025

Click the buttons below to view Award Category Descriptions and to Submit your Award Nominations! **The nomination deadline for all awards has been extended to Wednesday, June 4, 2025.**

[Award Category Descriptions](#)

[Submit Your Award Nominations Now!](#)

General Questions about the DBHDD 2025 Behavioral Health Symposium?
Email ssu@cviog.uga.edu

Division of Developmental Disabilities

DEADLINE APPROACHING QUICKLY: NCI-IDD State of the Workforce Survey 2024

The Georgia Division of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) would like to request your assistance with the **2024 NCI State of the Workforce Survey**. The Georgia Division of IDD is partnering with National Core Indicators – Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (NCI-IDD) on a nationwide survey about our Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). This survey helps us understand our DSP workforce to inform staffing levels, job stability, wages, compensation, measure improvements, and compare our DSP workforce with other states.

Who: IDD Provider agencies that employed DSPs during the 2024 calendar year.

What: A survey about DSP employment numbers, job length, pay, benefits, and other workforce details for DSPs employed between January 1 and December 31, 2024.

Why: Your participation is crucial for an accurate statewide picture of our DSP workforce and will be essential for informing our upcoming rate study.

How: Twice a week, your agency receives an email from HSRI (staffstability@hsri.org) with a unique survey link and login. The survey should be completed by your HR or payroll departments. Only one survey per agency is needed.

Goal: Aiming for 100% participation to fully represent our DSPs. Last year, only about 40% of agencies responded, and that doesn't give us the full story of our DSP workforce.

Deadline: Please complete the survey by June 30, 2025.

For survey assistance, contact Latonya Williams at latonya.e.williams@dbhdd.ga.gov.



SAVE THE DATE

for the

**River Edge Crisis Services
and Diagnostic Center**

and the

**Mercer University School of Medicine
Center for IDD Care**

OPEN HOUSE

MONDAY, JUNE 9, 2025

10:00 AM

**750 HAZEL STREET
MACON, GEORGIA 31201**

PARRISH
CONSTRUCTION GROUP

 **DBHDD**

Georgia
Department of
Behavioral Health
& Developmental
Disabilities

 **RIVER EDGE**
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

 **MERCER**
UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Center for IDD Care

 **AZAR • WALSH**
ARCHITECTS

Policy Updates

Since May 1, 2025, DBHDD has not released any new policies or updated any existing policies that pertain to DBHDD Community Providers.

Please direct all policy-related questions to the Office of Provider Relations via the Provider Issue Management System (PIMS). To submit your questions, [click here](#).

Office of Provider Relations

Question for your Provider Relations Team?

The Provider Issues Management System (PIMS) is your online source to have your questions answered in a consistent, reliable and timely way! In addition to providing a timely response, the information we gather from PIMS will assist DBHDD in trending common concerns, developing FAQs, and informing policy reviews. You can access the PIMS site directly by using the link below.

Provider Issue Management System (PIMS)

PIMS is also accessible through the [DBHDD website](#) by selecting the "**Submit a Question to Provider Relations**" tile on the DBHDD homepage.

Senior Provider Relations Manager

Sharon Pyles

Provider Relations Managers

Mary Williams
Libby Barbour

For Provider Relations inquiries,
please contact us at
DBHDD.Provider@dbhdd.ga.gov.



BE WELL



Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities | 200 Piedmont Avenue, S.E. West Tower | Atlanta, GA 30334 US

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