

# Branding and Style Guide



**D·B·H·D·D**

**Georgia Department of Behavioral Health  
and Developmental Disabilities**

**Office of Public Affairs**

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## Introduction

This branding and style guide for the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) contains official format and style guidelines for written communication to internal and external audience. The guide is a resource for branding, logo use, writing, citations, templates, and more. This information is intended to help DBHDD employees promote the voice and brand of the department in a clear, consistent, and professional way. The guidelines within the branding and style guide are effective for all DBHDD employees, whether in the state office, field offices, or hospitals.

Please contact the Office of Public Affairs with any questions related to the branding and style guide.

[Public Affairs Contact Information](#)

## About DBHDD

The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities is the state agency that provides treatment and support services to people with mental health challenges and substance use disorders, and assists individuals who live with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

## Vision and Mission

DBHDD's vision and mission are essential parts of the department's branding and should be visible in communications from DBHDD staff. The vision and mission should always be included in presentations given to external audiences. It is highly recommended that they be included in internal presentations as well.

**Vision**      Easy access to high-quality care that leads to a life of recovery and independence for the people we serve.

**Mission**     Leading an accountable and effective continuum of care to support Georgians with behavioral health challenges, and intellectual and developmental disabilities in a dynamic health care environment.

When it does not make sense to use the entire vision or mission, employees should incorporate catch-phrases or components into conversation, writing, and presentations. Ex. Easy access to high-quality care; accountable; effective.

## Logo Use

The DBHDD logo establishes the brand of the department and represents its vision and mission. Using it in an appropriate and consistent way reinforces the identity of the department; altering it in any way diminishes its meaning and weakens it as a useful identifier of DBHDD and its work.

The information contained in the logo section of this style guide establishes proper use of the logo on publications, stationery, business cards, signs, and other graphic and media tools, including Internet, television, and marketing materials.

Anyone using the DBHDD logo must adhere to the standards outlined in this manual. This applies to providers, or any other entities, as well as DBHDD staff. The Office of Public Affairs can offer assistance and provide additional high resolution artwork and digital files.

For additional information, please contact the [Office of Public Affairs](#).

### Use of Department Name

“Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities” is the official name of this department. All divisions, offices, and units must include the department’s name when referring to their relationship to the department or when placing contact information on a publication.

When using the department’s name in text, it should always be written as “Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities.” When “DBHDD” will be used on second reference, it should first be placed in parentheses immediately following (never before) the full department name. The word “the” should not come before DBHDD, unless DBHDD is being used as an adjective.

“Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities” may be used without the logo, but the logo should not be used without the department name appearing somewhere on the document, except in special circumstances approved by the Office of Public Affairs.

### Permitted Logo Use

Use of the DBHDD logo by any organization, business, or individual must be approved in advance by the Office of Public Affairs.

**The use of any DBHDD name or logo is prohibited in advertisements that promote non-DBHDD entities, unless special circumstances warrant it. These circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Office of Public Affairs must approve any advertisement copy, layout, or placement using the DBHDD logo. This includes broadcast (Internet and television) and print media.**

**Use of DBHDD’s logo or name is strictly prohibited when such use does or will imply endorsement by the department, unless approved by the Office of Public Affairs.**

DBHDD signs at department facilities contribute to the identification and overall visual image of the department. The logo standards presented in this manual apply to any DBHDD signs.

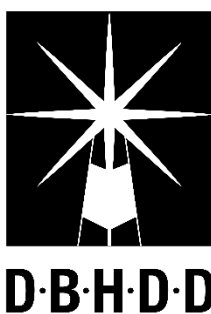
### **Guidelines for Use of the DBHDD Logo**

The logo should always appear to the left of accompanying text such as the name of the department. Prominent text accompanying the logo should appear in “Georgia” or another suitable font (see font section below). When resizing the logo, make sure to lock the aspect ratio. Stretched logos may not be used. The logo should never be reduced to less than ½” wide. The logo may only be produced in the standard blue or grayscale.

Acceptable versions of the DBHDD logo:



Serene Blue:  
Hex Code: #1E1A53  
PMS 281



Radiant Gold:  
Hex Code: #F99D1C  
PMS 143

No division, program, unit name, or artwork (including other logos) can replace the official DBHDD logo. When certain artwork appears in addition to the logo, written approval by the Office of Public Affairs of such artwork must be received prior to the publication of the material. This also applies to specialty items.

### **Co-Branding**

The logo may not be combined with other images or graphics. Use of the logo in conjunction with another organization’s logo is acceptable only with permission from the Office of Public Affairs. The Office of Public Affairs reserves the right to edit and approve any document containing the DBHDD logo.

# Editorial Guide

## Style Manual

DBHDD uses the [Chicago Manual of Style](#), which establishes writing standards to promote consistent style, grammar, and formatting. Exceptions to Chicago Style will be noted in this document. Staff are encouraged to become familiar with Chicago Style and should contact the Office of Public Affairs for guidance.

## Fonts

The official font for letters and memos is Georgia (12-point). Times New Roman may also be used. Other fonts may be used in emails, provided that they are plain and simple. Ex. Arial, Calibri, and Helvetica. Shadow fonts and Comic Sans should not be used for any reason.

## Grammar and Punctuation

Correct grammar and punctuation should be used in all written communication.

### *Common Mistakes*

- **Pronoun-antecedent agreement:** Be consistent with singular and plural nouns and pronouns. Ex. A *person* should contact *his or her* (not *their*) provider.
- **Subject-verb agreement:** In general, use singular verbs with singular nouns, and plural verbs with plural nouns. The following is a helpful resource for the nuances of subject-verb agreement:  
<http://www.grammarbook.com/grammar/subjectVerbAgree.asp>.
- **Verb conjugation:**

## Simple Verbs

### *Past Tense*

	Singular		Plural	
1 <sup>st</sup> person	I	walked	we	walked
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	you	walked	you	walked
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	s/he, it	walked	they	walked

### *Present Tense*

	Singular		Plural	
1 <sup>st</sup> person	I	walk	we	walk
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	you	walk	you	walk
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	s/he, it	walks	they	walk

*Future Tense*

	Singular		Plural	
1 <sup>st</sup> person	I will	walk	we will	walk
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	you will	walk	you will	walk
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	s/he, it will	walk	they will	walk

**Continuous Verbs**

*Past Tense*

	Singular		Plural	
1 <sup>st</sup> person	I was	walking	we were	walking
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	you were	walking	you were	walking
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	s/he, it was	walking	they were	walking

*Present Tense*

	Singular		Plural	
1 <sup>st</sup> person	I am	walking	we are	walking
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	you are	walking	you are	walking
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	s/he, it is	walking	they are	walking

*Future Tense*

	Singular		Plural	
1 <sup>st</sup> person	I will be	walking	we were	walking
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	you will be	walking	you were	walking
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	s/he, it was	walking	they were	walking

**Perfect Verbs**

*Past Tense*

	Singular		Plural	
1 <sup>st</sup> person	I had	walked	we had been	walked
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	you had	walked	you had	walked
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	s/he, it had	walked	they had	walked

*Present Tense*

	Singular		Plural	
1 <sup>st</sup> person	I have	walked	we have	walked
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	you have	walked	you have	walked
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	s/he, it has	walked	they have	walked

*Future Tense*

	Singular		Plural	
1 <sup>st</sup> person	I will have	walked	we will have	walked
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	you will have	walked	you will have	walked
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	s/he, it will have	walked	they will have	walked

**Perfect Continuous Verbs**

*Past Tense*

	Singular		Plural	
1 <sup>st</sup> person	I had been	walking	we had been	walking
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	you had been	walking	you had been	walking
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	s/he, it had been	walking	they had been	walking

*Present Tense*

	Singular		Plural	
1 <sup>st</sup> person	I have been	walking	we have been	walking
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	you have been	walking	you have been	walking
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	s/he, it has been	walking	they have been	walking

*Future Tense*

	Singular		Plural	
1 <sup>st</sup> person	I will have been	walking	we will have been	walking
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	you will have been	walking	you will have been	walking
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	s/he, it will have been	walking	they will have been	walking

Note: Some verbs are *irregular* and do not follow the typical conjugation pattern. Ex. begin/began/begun. For a list of irregular verbs and their conjugations, please see:

<http://www.englishpage.com/irregularverbs/irregularverbs.html>



- It's and Its:
  - *It's* is a contraction of *it is*. Do not use contractions in writing.
  - *Its* is a singular possessive pronoun.
    - Ex. The book is missing *its* cover.
  
- They're, Their, and There:
  - *They're* is a contraction of *they are*. Do not use contractions in writing.
  - *Their* denotes possession by a group.
    - Ex. She borrowed *their* book.
  - *There* refers to a place.
    - Ex. She put the book *there*.
  
- You're and Your:
  - *You're* is a contraction of *you are*. Do not use contractions in writing.
  - *Your* is a possessive pronoun.
    - Ex. I returned *your* book.
  
- Possessive Nouns:
  - Singular nouns not ending in *s*: add an apostrophe and an *s*.
    - Ex. The girl's book is blue.
  - Singular nouns ending in *s*: add the apostrophe after the *s*.
    - Ex. The dress' seam ripped.
  - Plural nouns: add the apostrophe after the *s*.
    - Ex. The girls' books are heavy.
  
- Me and I: *I* is a subject. *Me* is a direct object.
  - Ex. *I* borrowed the book from Bill.  
Bill gave the book to *me*.  
Please give the report to Jane and *me*.
  
- Assure, Insure, and Ensure:
  - *Assure* means to promise or state confidently.
    - Ex. I *assure* you that the report will be finished.
  - *Ensure* means to make certain.
    - Ex. The teacher *ensured* that every student ate lunch.
  - *Insure* means to protect by means of an insurance policy.
    - Ex. I *insured* the ring because of its value.
  
- Between and Among:
  - *Between* refers to items in separate groups.
    - Ex. She chose *between* tomatoes and green beans.
  - *Among* refers to items that are part of the same group.
    - Ex. She chose green beans from *among* the vegetables.

- Affect and Effect:
  - *Affect* is a verb.
    - Ex. The oil spill *affected* gas prices.
  - *Effect* is noun.
    - Ex. The oil spill had an *effect* on gas prices.
    - Exception: *effect* as a verb. There is a particular instance in which *effect* is used as a verb. This occurs when something *effects* a *change*. Ex. The oil spill *effected* a *change* in gas prices.
  
- Coordinating Conjunctions:
  - Do not use coordinating conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) to begin a sentence.
  
- Quotations:
  - Periods and commas go inside quotation marks. All other punctuation goes outside the quotation marks, unless the punctuation is part of the quote.
    - Ex. Did she say, “I like ice cream”?  
She asked, “Do you like ice cream?”
  
- Lay, Lie:
  - *Lay* is an action word that takes a direct object.
    - Ex. *Lay* the book on the table.
    - Past tense/past participle: laid
    - Present participle: laying
  
  - *Lie* means to recline. It does not take a direct object.
    - Ex. I’m going to *lie* on the couch.
    - Past tense: lay
    - Past participle: lain
    - Present participle: lying
  
  - When *lie* means to make a false statement, the verb forms are lie, lied, and lying.
  
- Health Care: two words
  
- Percent v. Percentage:
  - Percent means *out of each hundred*. It refers to a specific number.
    - Ex. 10 *percent* of the class.
  - Percentage does not include a specific number.
    - Ex. A large *percentage* of the class likes ice cream.
  
- Help and Assist:
  - Help him lift the table. Here, *to* is not necessary.
  - Assist him *with* lifting the table.

- On-site and Offsite: Note the difference.
- Mass Nouns and Count Nouns:
  - Mass Nouns: use greater/less.
    - Ex. Bill’s fear of spiders is *greater* than Sam’s.
  - Count Nouns: use more/fewer.
    - Ex. Jane has *more* apples than Jill.
- That and Which:
  - *That* is used with restrictive clauses. A clause is restrictive if removing it changes the sentence’s meaning.
    - Ex. Writing *that is too small* is hard to read.
  - *Which* is used with non-restrictive clauses.
    - Ex. The letter is in her handwriting, *which is hard to read*.
    - Note the comma before *which*.

This list highlights some of the most common errors but is not nearly exhaustive. Please contact the Office of Public Affairs with questions about grammar.

### **The Oxford Comma**

In a series of three or more elements, use a comma before the conjunction.

Ex. Bill likes apples, pears, and grapes.

If the last element in the list contains a pair, use a comma before the first conjunction.

Ex. Her favorite sandwiches are turkey, roast beef, and peanut butter and jelly.

### **“Georgia”**

“Georgia” should always be written. “GA” is **only** used as a postal code and should not appear in any other setting. In official letterhead and other correspondence from DBHDD, “Georgia” is written out in the address line.

### **Plain Language**

The goal of communication is to deliver a message in a way that is clear and easily understood by the target audience. Use plain, simple language in written and oral communication. Especially when presenting to an external audience, do not assume that members of the audience are familiar with a topic. Avoid jargon, programmatic language, unnecessarily long words or complicated sentences, and overuse of acronyms.

### **Correct Use of Words**

#### **Use, not Utilize**

In almost every case, the words “utilize” and “utilization” are superfluous and should be discarded in favor of “use.”

### **Method, not Methodology**

Similarly, “method,” not “methodology,” is usually the correct word. A “method” refers to the tools, processes, or ways of doing something (such as obtaining data). “Methodology” generally relates to a system of methods.

### **Acronyms**

Use of acronyms should be limited to those that are common and easily recognizable. This applies to written and oral communication.

- Do not use an acronym without writing the words out first. Include the acronym in parentheses after the words it represents.
  - Ex. Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD)
- Do not use acronyms to refer to a division, office, or work unit within DBHDD.
- Only use an acronym if the word is being used more than once in the document.
- Never use the same acronym to refer to more than one thing in a document.
- Regardless of other rules for the use of acronyms, do not use too many different acronyms in a single document. This causes the reader to take his attention away from understanding the document and instead focus on remembering the acronyms.
- The following are *examples* of common DBHDD words that should not be reduced to acronyms in official communication or presentations:
  - Behavioral health
  - Developmental disabilities/intellectual and developmental disabilities
  - Substance abuse/substance use disorder
  - Supported employment

### **Capitalization**

Capitalization is used to denote proper nouns, not to signify importance. Do not capitalize common nouns (exception for headlines or presentation titles). When referring to DBHDD as the “department,” the word should be lowercase. Professional designations and certifications are not capitalized, even when followed by an acronym. Ex. licensed professional counselor (LPC).

Note: Job titles are only capitalized when preceding a person’s name, such that the title becomes a part of the name. The following examples are correct:

- Executive Director Bill Jones said.
- The company’s executive director, Bill Jones, said.

- Bill Jones, executive director of the company, said.

## Citations

When reproducing work product or ideas from outside the agency, credit must be given to the author. Depending on the type of document, a formal bibliography may not be necessary, but the work must be credited in some way.

Letters, presentations, reports, etc., written or created by DBHDD employees are the property of DBHDD and may be reproduced for appropriate work-related purposes with or without permission from the originator, and without citation. However, in a formal report, *all* sources should be cited.

## Miscellaneous

The additional notes below will aid in clear writing and effective communication.

- Avoid using jargon, like “technical assistance,” which is not understood by the general public.
- Do not use extra words.  
Ex. Six people went to the meeting. **Not:** A total of six people went to the meeting.
- If using data or statistics, numbers must be reported accurately, and terminology must be used correctly.
- In a bulleted list, use consistent verb forms/tenses. The chart below shows correct and incorrect examples.

### CORRECT

The new process will:

- Allow for faster responses
- Create greater accountability
- Improve moral

### INCORRECT

The new process will:

- Allow for faster responses
- **Creating** greater accountability
- **People will have** higher morale

In the first example, all bullets use the same verb form. In the second example, the first bullet uses the infinitive form (“allow”); the second bullet uses a participle (“creating”), and the third bullet is a complete sentence, in contrast with the first two, which are phrases.

## Templates

The Office of Public Affairs maintains templates for letterhead, memos, envelopes, business cards, and PowerPoint presentations. Use of emblems, symbols, artwork, or logos other than the DBHDD logo is not permitted.

All official templates are located in the [template library](#).

**Note:** *Official DBHDD templates should be used in all communications. Templates should **never be altered or reformatted** without express permission from the Office of Public Affairs.*

### Letterhead

The information below serves as a guide for letter writing. In order to preserve proper formatting, please access the letterhead template for *your specific office* from DBHDD's [template library](#). (Do not copy and paste this section into a document.)



Georgia Department of Behavioral Health  
& Developmental Disabilities

Judy Fitzgerald, Commissioner

**D·B·H·D·D**

Office of the Commissioner

Month DD, YYYY

Name  
Title  
Organization  
Address

RE:

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr./Senator, etc. [Last Name]:

[Body of letter—do not indent paragraphs.]

Sincerely,

John A. Doe

*If enclosing a document, “Enc. [description of document]”*

*If other people are receiving a copy of the letter, “Cc: [list each name on a separate line; the first one goes on the same line as Cc:]”*

\*Mrs. should not be used in professional correspondence.  
For a comprehensive guide to forms of address in specific circumstances, visit:  
<http://www.formsofaddress.info/>.

## Footer

The letterhead templates include a customized footer for each office. The standard footer appears below.

2 Peachtree Street, NW | 24th Floor | Atlanta, Georgia 30303 | 404.463.7946 | [dbhdd.georgia.gov](http://dbhdd.georgia.gov)

## Memos

The information below serves as a guide for writing memos. In order to preserve proper formatting, please access the memo template from DBHDD's [template library](#). Use the letterhead template for your office and follow the text guidelines below.



Georgia Department of Behavioral Health  
& Developmental Disabilities

Judy Fitzgerald, Commissioner

**D·B·H·D·D**

Office of the Commissioner

## MEMORANDUM

TO:

FROM:

DATE:

RE:

[No salutation required. Go immediately into the content.]

A signature is not necessary. Follow the protocol in the letters section above for enclosures, copies, and footers.

## PowerPoint Presentations

Visit the [template library](#) to access DBHDD's PowerPoint template.

Like other format guidelines, the PowerPoint template is designed to create a consistent, branded, and professional look for the department. Presentations that have been reformatted or use fonts, colors, or bullets inconsistent with the template will not be approved. Please do not write in all caps, or use acronyms without writing them out

first. All charts and tables must be created in the PowerPoint template. Do not paste them from another file, as these files often cannot be edited.

Creating an Effective PowerPoint Presentation:

- **Practice** delivering your presentation (ideally, in front of a co-worker).
- **Time** your presentation.
- Create slides as a **visual aid** to help engage listeners.
- Make your presentation **simple** and **easy to follow**.
- People either **read or listen**, so avoid making your slides so complex that your audience cannot pay attention to the presentation.
- **Less is more:** Whenever possible, reduce the amount of content on each slide, and do not use more than **50 words per slide**.
- Do not use complex graphs or data; if detailed information is needed, **provide a handout**.
- When including **numbers**, be sure that they **are correct** and that any **calculations are accurate**.
- Presentations should be limited to **25 slides**.
- Use large fonts (**at least 20-point**).

## Marketing Materials

Flyers, brochures, and other marketing materials should conform to the standards established in the branding and style guide. The Office of Public Affairs can assist with basic documents. All materials must be approved, including those produced by outside graphic artists. Contact the Office of Public Affairs for information on preferred vendors and promotional items.

## Photography and Videos

Use of photographs and images can enhance a presentation's visual appeal. Such material should promote DBHDD's vision and mission and must be appropriate in a professional setting. Do not use photographs and images without permission of the copyright holder. Many images found online may not be reproduced. Contact the Office of Public Affairs with questions about finding acceptable photographs and images.

Photographs and multimedia featuring DBHDD consumers must be accompanied by a signed waiver for each consumer who is identifiable from the photograph, etc. Using photographs, videos, or other materials identifying DBHDD consumers without express permission is a violation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). DBHDD's policy on release of information and accompanying forms can be found [here](#).



Contact DBHDD's Office of Legal Services with questions related to privacy and disclosure releases.

## Email

### Etiquette

Email is a less formal style of written communication than traditional letters. Emails should be short, direct, and include an informative subject line. Correct grammar and a professional tone and style should always be used.

The guidelines in the fonts section of this manual apply to emails. Font color should be black or dark blue. Do not use a background in emails.

### Signatures

DBHDD uses a standard email signature to promote branding, consistency, and professionalism. With the exception of official confidentiality disclaimers, no other information, including inspirational quotes, should appear after an email signature.

Email signatures should follow the example below:



**Jane Doe**  
Project Manager  
O: 404.555.5555  
M: 404.555.5556

Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental  
Disabilities  
2 Peachtree Street, NW, Suite 24-000 • Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
[jane.doe@dbhdd.ga.gov](mailto:jane.doe@dbhdd.ga.gov) • [dbhdd.ga.gov](http://dbhdd.ga.gov)

