

FEBRUARY 6, 2018 BY DBHDD

Commissioner's Corner 02/06/2018



2018 is off and running. Between budget and legislative activities, and our ongoing system-wide transformation, we continue to drive toward the end of the ADA Extension Agreement, scheduled for June 30, 2018. As we focus on these significant strategic priorities, I wanted to take a pause and revisit our "WHY?". Why do we embrace our challenging mission to serve some of Georgia's most vulnerable citizens?

By now, you are familiar with DBHDD's vision of *easy access to high-quality care that leads to a life of recovery and independence for the people we serve*. We talk about our vision often, but it takes more than aspiration to keep us on track to make this vision a reality. It takes a specific focus, commitment, and vigilance. Values are just pleasant words if you cannot see them in action. Our "why" is the belief that recovery is real, and independence is possible.

That is why I am so excited to announce DBHDD's new policy on Recovery, Wellness, and Independence. This policy touches our entire system: hospitals, providers in our network, and all DBHDD employees. It codifies our commitment to these three tenets that drive our purpose. It articulates our belief in the principles of self-determination, freedom, and personal responsibility as the key to achieving a satisfying, independent life with dignity and respect. We believe that it is important for our employees and providers to be aligned with individuals and families in the goals, values, and principles of recovery and resilience that support independence and wellness. More than just a conceptual framework, we strive to ensure that services are delivered in a way that honors these values and principles.

In the policy, you'll find definitions of terms like recovery, independence, and wellness. Though you may already use these words daily, I encourage you to read the definitions. You might be surprised at what inspires you as you connect the words to your work and your "why."

The policy is informed by a series of guiding principles and values that:

- Convey the hope of recovery from behavioral health challenges. Recovery emerges from hope. Therefore, convey messages of hope, encouragement, and the belief that recovery is possible.
- Are informed by the wisdom of lived experiences. Knowledge gained from lived experience is distinct from that gained from education and clinical practice. Each person's experiences bring something valuable to the table, so it is critical to engage the unique voice individuals and families.
- Address trauma.
- Recognize that recovery occurs through many pathways. Service planning and delivery must be individualized and person-centered.
- Empower communities by working as partners with the people we serve and those in their support network.
- Are based on respect, focused on the strengths of the individual, culturally informed, and anchored in wellness.

Additional values and principles are contained within the policy. As with the definitions mentioned above, I hope each of you will read these closely. As for me, the most essential word is hope. I started this year with a spirit of great optimism and hope, and the amazing work I see every day has sustained that energy!

This policy will be significant for our department, our provider partners, and most importantly, the individuals and families we serve, as it guides us toward meaningful work that is centered on making our vision a reality. You can read the full text [here](#).

I thank you for your tireless commitment and look forward to making continued improvements to our service delivery system that are grounded in recovery, independence, and wellness for the people we serve.

Sincerely,

Judy Fitzgerald, Commissioner

<http://dbhdd.org/blog/2018/02/06/commissioners-corner-02-06-2018/>

