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Georgia Department of

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH and
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

DBHDD

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Owner:	<i>Judy A. Fitzgerald: Commissioner</i>
Chapter:	<i>Access to Services</i>
Section:	<i>Leadership</i>

Recovery, Wellness, and Independence, 15-150

APPLICABILITY

All DBHDD Providers Operating by Contract or Letter of Agreement
All DBHDD Employees

POLICY

DBHDD's vision is easy access to high-quality care that leads to a life of recovery and independence for the people we serve.

As such, DBHDD recognizes that all people, regardless of their challenges, can build resilience, independence, and wellness to enjoy a life well lived. These broad concepts include principles of individual self-determination, freedom, and personal responsibility and are considered key to achieving the goal of a satisfying, independent life with dignity and respect for everyone.

Accomplishing this requires that:

- DBHDD employees, community service providers, and individuals and families served are aligned in their understanding of the concepts, values, and principles of recovery and resilience that support individuals and families in leading a life of greatest independence and wellness.
- Practice is aligned with these values and principles and focuses on achieving the goals of individuals and families.
- DBHDD employees and community service providers are governed and empowered by policies and informed by the values, principles, and best practices that promote and support individuals' recovery, greatest independence, and wellness.

DBHDD employees and community service providers are expected to:

- Understand DBHDD's adopted definitions, values, and principles of recovery, resilience, independence, and wellness;
- Practice in a manner that is agreeable with these values and principles, and results in processes and outcomes associated with the recovery and independence of individuals and families;
- Ensure that these values and principles are incorporated into the creation and design of new practices, policies, and strategic plans; and
- Use new and/or existing processes to identify and amend practices and policies that do not

support these values and principles.

DEFINITIONS

Community - A shared space where individuals interact (for example: where they live, work, participate in services, and engage in other activities that are personally meaningful), and/or share a sense of connection.

Independence - The capacity to direct and control one's own life and environment to the extent desired. Independence encourages and builds on social networks and natural sources of support and promotes inclusion in the community to the extent desired by the individual.

Recovery - A deeply personal, unique, and self-determined journey through which an individual strives to reach his/her full potential. Individuals in recovery from a mental health challenge improve their health and wellness by taking responsibility for the pursuit of a fulfilling and contributing life while embracing the difficulties they have faced. Recovery is nurtured by relationships and environments that provide hope, empowerment, choices, and opportunities. Recovery is not a gift from any system. Recovery belongs to the person. It is a right, and it is the responsibility of us all.

Resilience - An individual's ability to adapt to challenges or change. Resilience develops over time and gives an individual the capacity to not only cope with life's challenges, but to also be better prepared to respond positively to life events.

Self Responsibility - When an individual has the power and opportunity to make informed choices and decisions and to initiate plans and actions for his/her life, and is willing and able to hold himself/herself accountable for accepting and managing the consequences of his/her decisions.

Wellness - "A positive state of mind and body, feeling safe, and able to cope with a sense of connection with people, communities, and the wider environment" (Source: <https://www.recovery.com/recoveryandwellbeing>). A state in which body, mind and spirit are in balance, and at peace.

A. DBHDD'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

Individuals and families served are supported to lead meaningful lives in the community. DBHDD employees and community service providers are guided by the following principles and values that:

1. **Convey the hope of recovery from behavioral health challenges**

Recovery emerges from hope. Therefore, it is essential that DBHDD employees and service providers ensure that environments, policies, practices, and communications consistently convey messages of encouragement and hope that recovery is possible.

2. **Are informed by the wisdom of lived experience**

The knowledge and wisdom gained from being diagnosed and living with a behavioral health challenge and/or an intellectual or developmental disability (I/DD) is valuable. That personal experience is distinct from and complementary to the knowledge and wisdom gained from education and clinical practice. Therefore, it is important to build upon the lived experiences that individuals perceive as influential to their identity and life goals. Delivery of high-quality services, that support individuals and families in leading meaningful lives, requires an appreciation for and integrated use of both types

of knowledge. It is important in service delivery when engaging with individuals and families that we:

- a. Seek and reflect on the strengths they have developed and challenges they have experienced in life as well as while engaging with the service system.
- b. Incorporate individuals and families served, as well as other identified supports, into services and service system quality assurance, quality improvement, and strategic planning processes.
- c. Integrate the wisdom and voices of lived experience in the form of peer support and self-advocacy. The lived experiences of peer specialists and supporters, and the hope that they inspire and model through their example and mentorship, enhances the ability and willingness of individuals to communicate about and engage in their own wellness.

3. Address trauma

People experience, perceive, respond to and cope with trauma in various ways across the life span. A very high percentage of individuals diagnosed with behavioral health and/or I/DD conditions have experienced trauma. Therefore, it is essential that DBHDD employees and service providers are able to recognize and assess the many ways that the experience of trauma can manifest in the lives of individuals and families served; and to provide evidence-based practices and services to treat and heal past trauma. It is also essential to ensure that environments, practices, communications, and policies do not inflict further trauma for individuals and families served.

4. Recognize that recovery from behavioral health challenges occurs via many pathways

Recovery is uniquely defined by the individuals and families being served. Therefore, service planning and delivery must be individualized, aligned with person-centered planning practices, and governed by policies that allow for maximum self-determination of the individuals and families served, and for flexibility in service planning and participation.

5. Empower communities

Recovery, independence, and full integration for individuals happens in communities. It is essential that DBHDD employees and community service providers:

- a. Work in partnership with individuals to create opportunities for community engagement; and
- b. Partner with members of the community to embrace and include individuals in recovery, independence, and full integration, ensuring equal access to all rights, privileges, and opportunities associated with belonging to a community.

6. Support self-responsibility

Many individuals emphasize the importance of taking responsibility for making decisions in their lives, and taking action that is essential to living a life of recovery and independence. While individuals are ultimately responsible for their choices, it is essential that DBHDD employees and community service providers:

- a. Create opportunities and support individuals in making decisions that are related to their life goals;

- b. Offer support and education useful in recognizing potential consequences and outcomes of their actions; and
 - c. Recognize and change practices, policies, and communications that support beliefs and attitudes associated with discrimination against people who have, or are perceived to have had a behavioral health and/or I/DD diagnosis.
7. **Are based on respect**
DBHDD employees and service providers ensure that individuals are referred to and treated in a manner which conveys respect, and acknowledgement that their views are important, valuable, heard, and taken seriously.
 8. **Are person-driven**
Service providers acknowledge that individuals may be at different stages of recovery or independence, in order to meet individuals and families where they are on their journey. This approach seeks to learn from the individual and family what they want to accomplish, and how to best support them in achieving these goals.
 9. **Are strengths-based**
A focus on strength development is equally as important as symptom management in the recovery or skills-building process. Service providers continually assess and build on the strengths of the individuals and families, and incorporate these strengths to help assist in the development of a plan for wellness, and assist them in using their strengths to achieve their goals.
 10. **Are Age Independent**
Recovery and supporting independence are life-long processes, and individuals and families will be supported in recovery regardless of their age or stage in life.
 11. **Are holistic**
Many aspects of individuals' lives, including spirituality, social supports, physical health and other factors, are recognized as equally important to individuals with behavioral health challenges and/or I/DD. Holistic services take into account the many roles played by the individual and the environment in which he/she lives.
 12. **Are supported by peers, allies, advocates, and families**
Service providers support individuals in connecting with peers, allies, advocates and families, and engage these groups in service planning and evaluation.
 13. **Are nurtured through relationships and social networks**
Service providers use and model effective communication and interpersonal skills to foster trust and build respectful relationships with individuals served, as well as with colleagues and other stakeholders. Providers educate and empower individuals and their networks in the use of natural community support systems, and reduce dependency on the formal service system.
 14. **Are culturally based and influenced**
Service providers seek to understand how individuals see and define themselves, and their diagnoses, strengths, and opportunities in the context of their world view, family, communities, and values. Respect for each individual's cultural identity is integrated into all aspects of service delivery. This includes, but is not limited to, the development and implementation of service goals and policies, and the provision of and linkage to

culturally thoughtful resources in the service environment and in the community.

15. Are anchored in wellness

Services focus on supporting individuals in moving toward building a life characterized by the presence of positive emotional health, engagement, having a sense of meaning, and accomplishment.

B. FURTHER INFORMATION

1. For more information about recovery-focused service, see Office of Recovery Transformation at <http://dbhdd.georgia.gov/recovery-transformation>.
2. For more information about I/DD services, see Developmental Disabilities Resources at <https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/resources-0>.

RECOMMENDED READING

Philadelphia Behavioral Health Services Transformation Practice Guidelines for Recovery and Resilience oriented treatment. Version 1.0 <http://dbhids.org/tools/practice-guidelines/Conceptual Framework of a Recovery-Oriented System of Care>

RELATED POLICIES

[Patients' Rights and Clients' Rights, 24-103](#)

Attachments:

No Attachments

Approval Signatures

Approver

Date

Judy A. Fitzgerald: Commissioner [AA] 2/5/2018