



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2023.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Chesterfield

Program Title: Emotional Health Planning for Individuals who have an Intellectual or Developmental Disability.

Program Category: Health and Human Services

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Joseph P. Casey, Ph.D.

Title: County Administrator

Signature: 

Emotional Health Planning

Executive Summary

Chesterfield County CSB

The Chesterfield County CSB Mental Health Support Services (MHSS) developed the Emotional Health Planning project in 2022 and was awarded the Behavioral Health Equity Grant. Using this funding, Chesterfield County CSB MHSS partnered with Robin's Hope to develop short term classes geared towards promoting emotional health through learning social emotional skills for individuals that have developmental disabilities. This program provided adults with disabilities education and tools to live an emotionally healthy life through a series of therapeutic group sessions utilizing a trauma informed approach. Specifically, goals included to provide individuals with developmental disabilities skills to have emotionally healthy feelings, behaviors, and thoughts; educating them on how to identify and implement coping skills that will provide them some control over their emotions; providing tools that may help them communicate what they need from their primary caregivers to cope with life's challenges; and to follow-up on the effectiveness of the program. This program was a success, with individuals and families requesting more classes and the culmination of winning a NACo award.

Chesterfield re-applied for the Behavioral Health Equity Grant and was once again awarded the grant funding, with the caveat that the program grows and can be shared amongst other County CSB's. For 2023, our CSB will support local providers and community service boards with setting up similar programs to bridge service gap in providing social emotional learning for adults with disabilities. Additionally, we will be providing these individuals with tools that may help them communicate what they need from their primary caregivers to cope with life's challenges and educate DD support providers how to support individuals to live an emotionally healthy life. The Chesterfield CSB will provide 3 psychoeducational sessions with former participants for refresher; conduct a workshop to train providers and caregivers; and provide follow-up support for caregivers and providers with setting up similar programs to increase emotional health. We will offer satisfaction surveys after each session for the refresher course. Satisfaction surveys will be completed after the workshop and link for more detail feedback will be sent later.

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES VACO AWARD SUBMISSION

ABSTRACT OF THE PROGRAM:

In 2022, Chesterfield Mental Health Support Services partnered with Robin's Hope for the development and implementation of a personalized Emotional Health Plan (EHP) program to help adults with Developmental Disabilities who have experienced a trauma in their life. The Emotional Health Plan is a tangible tool utilized to help individuals with developmental disabilities and their caregivers to understand the emotional response of trauma, and how to support individuals through a trauma response to prevent a crisis. Identified individuals with a Developmental Disability participated in four psychosocial educational sessions meant to help with developing skills to communicate feelings, build coping skills, understand trauma, and develop the Emotional Health Plan. The program was tailored for individuals with Developmental Disabilities by providing 1:1 support and resources to ensure the comprehension and retainment of strategies. Everyone was invited to share their personal experiences of trauma and received support from their peers. The program provided a safe space to communicate needs at times of emotional distress. Connection with peers developed organically and some continue to maintain a relationship outside of the program. Through evaluation of program outcomes, there were findings of individuals appearing calmer and more relaxed. Participants were able to verbalize and demonstrate strategies that were taught in the sessions.

THE PROBLEM OR NEED ADDRESSED BY THE PROGRAM

Individuals with Developmental Disabilities are identified as one of the most vulnerable populations in society, with a high percentage of abuse, neglect, and exploitation rates. Traditionally individuals with Developmental Disabilities do not receive therapy or any other therapeutic interventions to support them with emotional health. Caregivers are often told individuals with Developmental Disabilities don't have the cognitive capacity to understand therapeutic concepts or ability to retain skills. Chesterfield Mental Health Support Services believes that everyone should have an equal opportunity to be emotionally healthy, even if it takes some out of the box thinking, longer therapy sessions and support for the caregivers. The Emotional Health Planning program provided individuals with Developmental Disabilities with psychoeducational sessions and therapeutic interventions to help support their emotional health.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Chesterfield Mental Health Support Services staff developed a program for socioemotional learning program, called "Emotional Health Planning". The program was run by a team that consisted of four Chesterfield Mental Health Service Coordination staff and included support from Robin's Hope, a community partner. Robin's Hope was brought in for their expertise on trauma. The program allowed for a max of 10 participants per group. The program was developed over a period of approximately six months. It targeted adults with Developmental Disabilities who wanted to develop skills to help them lead a more emotionally healthy lifestyle. There were two, four-week sessions provided. The sessions are broken down by a new topic each week. The four identified topics were: "Introduction to Identifying Trauma and Your Feelings", "Communicating your Emotions to Caregivers", "Coping Skills" and "Developing a Plan".

Individuals were provided with a workbook at the beginning of the program, which was developed by the Emotional Health Planning Team. It was completed during each session. The workbook is a tool that the individual utilizes to keep reminding them of strategies taught during sessions after the program was

completed. It was also designed for the caregiver to be able to utilize to understand the individual's triggers and what their support needs are. These support needs were identified by the individual and written in their personalized workbook.

Each session was opened by an icebreaker activity. The team utilized a soccer ball with various fun topics. This ball was tossed to each participant and whatever question their thumb landed on they would share about. This activity often evoked laughter and socialization among peers. The icebreaker was then followed by a feelings check-in. This provided each participant an opportunity to share how they were feeling that day and why. The participants had an option to acknowledge if they wanted feedback from staff and/or peers. All sessions were ended with "self-care share" where everyone had an opportunity to share a coping skill that they will use for self-care when they get home. The group sessions consisted of a group leader and assistants that provide one on one attention to individuals who may struggle with understanding concepts, those who need support with completing workbook assignments, and those who need assistance with caring for personal needs. These sessions lasted an hour and a half. The first 30 minutes of each session was an opportunity for the individual to socialize with peers. Snacks and drinks were provided. The remainder of all sessions was dedicated to education, demonstration, exploration, and reinforcement of therapeutics techniques to increase emotional health.

Session 1, "Introduction to identifying trauma and your feelings", provided the participants with a basic level of education on the neuroscience of trauma and trauma responses. The Group Lead utilized pictures, physical prompts, and repetition to support participants with understanding the material. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) was given to each participant. The Group Lead reviewed the causation factors and the effect on health. The session also provided participants with skills on how to respond when they have a trauma trigger.

Session 2, "Communicating your emotions to caregivers", provided communication techniques to effectively communicate wants, needs and feelings in a positive manner. The participants were educated on types of communication and was provided with a list of vocabulary words to describe their emotions. There were exercises to educate participants on identification of feelings and the physical manifestations of those feelings. They were provided video to demonstrate ineffective communication and a discussion was lead on how to improve. The participants were encouraged to verbalize to reinforce their ability to communicate. There were opportunities for participants to share personal experiences guided by mental health professionals.

Session 3, "Coping Skills", explored coping skills and identified strategies that empowered participants to have control over their mental health. There was more focus placed on understanding and communicating their emotions. The participants completed a log that documented what their triggers were and what coping skill they used during that trigger. The log also provided a space where they documented the effectiveness of the coping skill and the results at the end of sessions. The participants were provided with a "coping toolkit" during this session. The toolkit was a lunch box that included antistress gadgets and fidget toys. The items were used to help with any feelings of anxiety or nervousness.

Session 4, "Developing a Plan", was utilized to finalize participants individualized emotional health plans. Concepts taught in previous sessions were reviewed and participants graduated. Chesterfield MHSS used these sessions to bridge the gap in service delivery to an identified vulnerable population of individuals with Developmental Disabilities. This session provided an opportunity for individuals with Developmental Disabilities to empower themselves when it comes to their emotional health in a safe

environment. The program allowed opportunities for individuals to build a bridge with others and be supported by their peers. The program supported individual with Developmental Disabilities to build resilience, be empowered when it comes to their emotional health, and to foster meaningful connections with others. All participants received a certificate and celebrated with a pizza party. Final surveys were completed.

Objectives of the program:

- To provide skills for individuals with Developmental Disabilities to have emotionally healthy feelings, behaviors, and thoughts.
- To educate individuals with Developmental Disabilities on how to identify and implement coping skills that will provide them some control over their emotions.
- To provide individuals with Developmental Disabilities with tools that may help them communicate what they need from their primary caregivers to cope with life challenges.

ADVANCING DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Individuals with Developmental Disabilities do not traditionally receive therapeutic services due to cognitive and adaptive deficits. These same individuals are often at more increased risk for trauma and or adverse childhood experiences and in turn could benefit greatly from therapeutic interventions. Chesterfield Mental Health Support Services believes in providing inclusive services and designed this program to bridge the gap to this underserved group. Counseling has been shown to not be commonly used for individuals with Developmental Disabilities. Though there is a clean need, there is a lack of education and experience within the counseling profession. Many therapists do not feel comfortable working with individuals with Developmental Disabilities and there continues to be an on-going assumption that people who have a Developmental Disability do not have the cognitive skills needed to benefit from therapy. Differentiated approaches are often all that is needed to make a difference effectiveness of the counseling. The more providers and therapists that are exposed to varying models of therapeutic education, including Emotional Health Planning, the more acceptance, appreciation, and understanding there will be of the model and the approach. With programs like Emotional Health Planning being brought on board, we can begin to see a shift in social change.

Financial Needs

A request was made to the Department of Behavioral Health and Disability Services (DBHDS) to fund this program through the "Behavioral Health Equity Grant". DBHDS had provided additional funding for this program through the fall of 2024.

PROGRAM COST:

The total approximate cost for the program for two 4 week sessions is **\$8500.00**.

The break down for expenses include the following:

- Booklets-100.00
- Food- \$500.00
- Robin's Hope-\$ 7,000.00 Trauma Experts, Community Partner
- Anti-Stress Kits-\$850.00
- Paper/Plastic Supplies-\$50.00

PROGRAM RESULTS/SUCCESS:

The program was successful according to feedback from surveys completed by participants at the end of every session. Chesterfield Mental Health has video testimonials from participants about their satisfaction about their program. There were direct comments and emails sent from participants, families and case managers with the following quotes:

- “This was a really encouraging space and individuals were excited and looking forward to each meeting.”
- “This was a very active and talkative group that really opened. Individuals mentioned wanting this to continue.”
- “A caregiver mentioned that one individual talked all week about it and that this was a big deal for them. I heard another person wanted to come back to the second one.”

Email from CSB case manager to the Developmental Disability Support Coordination Manager:

“I wanted to pass along feedback from a family that attended the first session of the Emotional Health Planning. An individual on my caseload AP #14758 was able to attend the program and his dad would call me weekly and tell me what an impact the class had on his son. AP was wanting to get to class early and stay late, he bonded with staff, and really feel like he made friends in the program. It was expressed to me weekly that they wished the program could last longer and they even asked if he could also attend the second session since he had made so much progress in just those 4 weeks. AP expressed that being in the class made him happy and he left every week happier and “lighter” than when he went in. I know that if this program is able to continue that he would sign up over and over again if he is allowed to. The family and AP both expressed several times how thankful they are for the program and for Stephanie and that they really feel lucky and honored to have been able to participate. I genuinely saw how happy the class made AP and just as an outsider seeing it I am very thankful to everyone who helped with the class. Just wanted to pass along the appreciation and praise. “

Molly White, BS, QDDP

The overall results of the program were:

- Participants were able to share examples of utilizing their coping skills.
- Participants were able to identify their coping skills easily. They smiled and showed confidence when describing how they are implementing the skills that they have learned.
- Individuals were able to recall and use communication skills that were taught such as "I statements" vs "You statements" during sessions.

Lastly, Chesterfield was able to establish a positive relationship with Robin's Hope. Robin's Hope stated, “We were able to learn skills and techniques to provide services more effectively to people who have developmental disabilities in the community”. The overall working relationship was successful, and we both are looking forward to work together in the future.

FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM:

Chesterfield re-applied for the Behavioral Health Equity Grant for 2023 and was once again awarded the grant funding, with the caveat that the program grows and can be shared amongst other County CSB's. For 2023, our CSB will support local providers and community service boards with setting up similar

programs to bridge service gap in providing social emotional learning for adults with disabilities. Additionally, we will be providing these individuals with tools that may help them communicate what they need from their primary caregivers to cope with life's challenges and educate DD support providers how to support individuals to live an emotionally healthy life. New topics will include self-esteem and suicidal ideation. The Chesterfield CSB will provide 3 psychoeducational sessions with former participants for refresher; conduct a workshop to train providers and caregivers; and provide follow-up support for caregivers and providers with setting up similar programs to increase emotional health. We will offer satisfaction surveys after each session for the refresher course. Satisfaction surveys will be completed after the workshop and link for more detail feedback will be sent later.

Lastly, this program should be recognized because it is an innovative program that is bridging a service delivery gap to a vulnerable population. This program also provided techniques and resources to a community partner who verbalized challenges with working with the Developmental Disability population. This program can be easily duplicated and implemented in other CSB's and Mental Health Support providers throughout the state.

Emotional Health Planning

Press Release of Brochure Insert

Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are identified as one of the most vulnerable populations with a high percentage of abuse, neglect, and exploitation rates according to DisabilityJustice.org. Traditionally these individuals do not receive therapy or any other therapeutic interventions to support them with emotional health. Our CSB believes that everyone should have an equal chance to be emotionally healthy, even if it takes some out of the box thinking, longer therapy sessions and support for the caregivers. Chesterfield CSB applied for and received the Behavioral Health Equity Grant from DBHDS for 2022 and 2023. Chesterfield partnered with Robin's Hope to offer two groups with four psychoeducational sessions. The four identified sessions will be: "Introduction to identifying trauma and your feelings", "Communicating your Emotions to caregivers", "Coping Skills" and "Developing a plan". These sessions will help the individual understand a basic level of the neuroscience of trauma and trauma responses. The CSB and community partner educates and demonstrates communication techniques. Individuals will see examples on how to express their emotions to their caregiver in an effective manner. Coping skills are explored and strategies identified that will empower individuals with disabilities to have control over their mental health.

The CSB will use these sessions to bridge the gap in service delivery to an identified vulnerable population of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This provides an opportunity for an individual to empower themselves when it comes to their emotional health in a safe environment. This program allows for opportunities for individuals to build a bridge with others and be supported by their peers. The goal for this program is for individual with disabilities to build resiliency, be empowered when it comes to their emotional health, to foster meaningful connections with others and to educate others on the best way to support their emotional health.