

Together we can improve mental health in our communities

Helpers in Plain Sight: A Guide to Implementing Mental Health Task Sharing in Community Based Organizations

This guide will help **community-based organizations** (CBOs), licensed **mental health providers** (MHPs), and private and government **funders** design and implement a task sharing approach to improve community mental health.

Why is Mental Health Important?

Every year,

1 in 5

adults in the U.S. experience a mental health disorder

Millions more experience substance use disorders

In C2C, **1 in 3** people screened for a mental health or substance use disorder at a CBO are currently experiencing symptoms

The Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity, the Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC, and the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene launched **Connections to Care (C2C)** in March 2016 as part of ThriveNYC, New York City's program to tackle critical gaps in mental health care and promote mental health for all New Yorkers. C2C currently funds 14 CBO-MHP partnerships.

While risk of experiencing a mental health condition is widespread, it is not evenly distributed. We need new strategies, including new relationships between clinicians and communities, to reduce persistent disparities in risk for mental illness, and in mental health care access and outcome, often linked to structural racism and other historically and socially structured sources of distress and trauma.

This guide was based largely on New York City's **Connections to Care (C2C) program**, which empowers CBOs to fulfill this important role. CBO staff encounter a range of mental health issues as they work with people to address social needs, advance personal goals, or navigate crises. The trusted relationships CBOs have with community members offer an opportunity to better identify, engage, and support people who are experiencing or at risk for distress or mental illness, with expected benefits for CBOs, MHPs, and community members.

Task sharing builds on CBO and MHP strengths while helping both take on important new roles so that together they can:

- Match evidence-informed mental health strategies to community priorities and needs
- Train and coach CBO staff to deliver evidence-informed mental health skills, and integrate these skills into the everyday work of the CBO
- Develop and strengthen new referral pathways between CBOs and MHPs
- Coordinate care across CBOs and MHPs
- Engage the wisdom of community members, CBOs, and MHPs to continue improving and adapting approaches that will lead to better experiences and outcomes

Helpers in Plain Sight: A Guide to Implementing Mental Health Task Sharing in Community Based Organizations, provides comprehensive guidance for designing, implementing, monitoring, and improving a mental health task sharing approach between CBOs and MHPs. Throughout the guide you will find:



C2C Examples



Checklists



Worksheets



Task Sharing Self-Assessment



Additional Resources

Find the Guide at:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/opportunity/pdf/specialinitiatives/sif/helpers-in-plain-sight-2020.pdf>