

WE ALL HAVE MENTAL HEALTH

MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY CARE Overview

Mental health is how we think, feel, and act. We all have mental health. Mental health community care is a preventive model of care that equips and empowers all individuals with the ability to provide informal, community-based mental health support.

Informal, community-based support focuses on **mental health promotion** in order to encourage and **increase healthy behaviors, protective factors, and resilience**. Through this, we can **reduce the risk and impact of mental illness, provide early intervention, and support the process of healing & recovery**. Critical to the community care model is **collaboration** with primary and specialty mental health care providers. Working together helps to ensure everyone has access to informal support as well as formal support when needed.



Mental Health Community Care is about building communities where everyone has what they need to be able to be effective at caring for ourselves & each other.

SCOPE OF INFORMAL MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY CARE

Informal care consists of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that everyone can learn and do. These include:

- Understanding mental health as something we all have—it is how we think, feel, and act
- Applying positive self-care practices routinely
- Engaging in conversations in a genuine way, with empathy and the intent of building meaningful relationships
- Understanding and applying trauma-informed guiding principles when interacting with others
- Understanding the impact of social determinants of health and the effects of systemic racism on mental health
- Recognizing signs that someone may be struggling
- Modeling emotion regulation, co-regulation, and effective coping skills
- Connecting individuals to primary and specialty supports when needed
- Providing initial response in crisis situations
- Initiating dialogue and collaborating with others to embed mental health informal care supports throughout the community.

All of the above are informed by practices found in social-emotional learning, trauma-informed care, and suicide prevention.

Through intentional effort to increase awareness and competence in the above areas, individuals and organizations are better positioned to provide mental health community care.

Informal support is not therapy, nor does it replace formal support (i.e., diagnosis, prescription, and treatment). Informal support complements formal support by reinforcing healthy behaviors, increasing protective factors, and building resilience.

