



# **A Guide to Adult Services from the Rhode Island Division of Developmental Disabilities**

Revised March 2025

# Our Commitment to You

The Rhode Island Division of Developmental Disabilities is part of the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH). We, at the Division, help make sure adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) have access to the services they need. We do this by planning, funding, and monitoring developmental disability (DD) services.

We are not a guardian system. We believe everyone deserves to live happy and healthy lives. We support adults with I/DD to live the lives of their choice. We do this by connecting people with I/DD to opportunities that are available to them.



We work hard to make sure people get high quality DD services. Our main responsibilities to adults with I/DD are to:

- Help pay for services with money from Medicaid.
- Give access to resources and supports that meet their needs.
- Increase the types of opportunities they have to be more active in their community, including the opportunity to work and earn money.
- Ensure they receive supportive Person-Centered Planning (PCP). PCP helps each person who receives services to create a service plan that matches their interests and goals.
- Protect their human rights, health, and safety. This is done by ensuring that service providers get the needed services and supports to the people they serve.

# How to Use This Guidebook

We, at the Division of Developmental Disabilities, are pleased to give you this Guidebook. The purpose of this guidebook is to give you information about DD services and living a life you choose. Our goal is to help you learn about:



How to apply for services.



How to pay for services.



What a Person-Centered Plan (PCP) is and why it matters.



What the different services are and how to get them.



Tips to stay healthy and safe in the community.

The biggest lesson we hope you learn from this Guidebook is that you are in charge of your life. You have the control to make important choices about things you want, and do not want. This includes setting your own goals and choosing your own services.

Sometimes making choices means making mistakes. Everyone has the right to make mistakes. Mistakes help you learn more about yourself and show you how to make even better choices. It's okay for you to make mistakes as you move around the DD system.

We believe you are the expert in your life, and we're committed to helping you lead the way to your future. If you have questions or want to learn more about any of the topics in this Guidebook, [visit the Division website](#) or call (401) 462-3421.

# What Will I Learn in This Guidebook?

<u>How Do I Get DD Services?</u>	Page 5
<u>What If I Am Under Age 18 and In School?</u>	Page 6
<u>How Do I Apply for DD Services?</u>	Page 7
<u>What is the DD Application Process Like?</u>	Page 8
<u>How Do I Start Services?</u>	Page 9
<u>What Happens After I'm Approved for DD Services?</u>	Page 10
<u>What is a "Level of Need"?</u>	Page 11
<u>Medicaid and DD Services</u>	Page 12
<u>What is An Individual Budget?</u>	Page 13
<u>What is a Person-Centered Plan (PCP)?</u>	Page 14
<u>What Does it Mean to Lead My Plan?</u>	Page 15
<u>What is Important for Me and What is Important to Me?</u>	Page 16
<u>Your Life, Your Rights DD Services Bill of Rights</u>	Page 17
<u>Who Can Help Me Make Decisions?</u>	Page 18
<u>What is Supported Decision Making?</u>	Page 19
<u>What Decisions Do I Need to Make About DD Services?</u>	Page 20
<u>Conflict Free Case Management (CFCM)</u>	Page 21
<u>What Are the Provider Agency Responsibilities?</u>	Page 22
<u>What Does it Mean to Self-Direct my Services?</u>	Page 23
<u>What Are Goods and Services?</u>	Page 24
<u>What if I Need A Place to Live?</u>	Page 25

# What Else Will I Learn in This Guidebook?

<u>What If I Need a Lot of Support and Can't Live on My Own?</u>	Page 26
<u>How Can I Get Help Being More Involved in My Community?</u>	Page 27
<u>What are DD Transportation Services?</u>	Page 28
<u>What If I Want to Get a Job?</u>	Page 29
<u>Will Working Affect My Social Security?</u>	Page 30
<u>How Can SSDI Work Incentives Help?</u>	Page 31
<u>How Can SSI Work Incentives Help?</u>	Page 32
<u>How Do I Report My Earnings If I Am Working?</u>	Page 33
<u>Who Offers Benefits Counseling?</u>	Page 34
<u>What Are my Savings Options?</u>	Page 35
<u>What Does Wellness Look Like?</u>	Page 36
<u>What is Mental Health?</u>	Page 37
<u>Mental Health Resources</u>	Page 38
<u>What is a Substance Use Disorder?</u>	Page 39
<u>What Is Substance Use Disorder Treatment?</u>	Page 40
<u>What If I Have an Emergency?</u>	Page 41
<u>What is Abuse?</u>	Page 42
<u>Where to Get Help From Abuse?</u>	Page 43

# How Do I Get DD Services?



1. Be 18 years old or older to receive services. You can apply as early as 2 months before your 17<sup>th</sup> birthday.



2. Have a diagnosis of an intellectual or developmental disability that makes doing certain things hard. A **diagnosis** is a licensed professional's identification of how a person's mind or body is working. The diagnosis must come before age 22.



3. Live in Rhode Island or planning to move to Rhode Island from another state.



4. Be approved for BHDDH DD services. You can [apply for DD services online](#).



5. Be approved for Medicaid Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) through the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS). The Division will help you apply for LTSS once you are approved for services.

# What If I Am Under Age 18 and In School?

If you are 18 years old or younger and still in school, the Division can help you prepare for transition to adult services. We will share information with you that will help guide you towards success. These steps will help get you started with your road to transition:



1. Get to know the [DD eligibility requirements by looking at our website](#).



3. Complete the [online DD application form](#). The earliest you can do this is 2 months before your 17<sup>th</sup> birthday.



5. Choose your [service pathway, services, and providers](#).



2. Ask your teacher to invite us to your next IEP meeting by sending an [online IEP invitation](#).



4. When your application is approved, complete the [assessment process](#) with Division staff.



# How Do I Apply for DD Services?

To apply for DD Services in RI, you must submit a completed application form, along with additional paperwork, which includes:



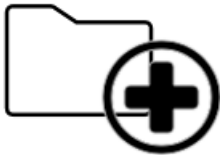
**Personal Identifying Information.** This is proof of your identity including: a copy of your birth certificate or I-94 form, Social Security card, Medicaid and other health insurance cards.



**Official Diagnosis.** This is a doctor's identification of your intellectual or developmental disability. It explains the things you may need support with.



**Intelligence/Cognitive Tests Scores.** These are the results from tests you completed with a licensed professional. The tests try to figure out how you learn, think, and make decisions. The results must be from before you turned age 22.



**Medical Records.** These are notes about your mental and physical health related to your disability. The records are from your doctor(s). Only recent records are needed.



**Vocational Records** (if you have any). These are notes about your work history and goals. The records are from your school or Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS).



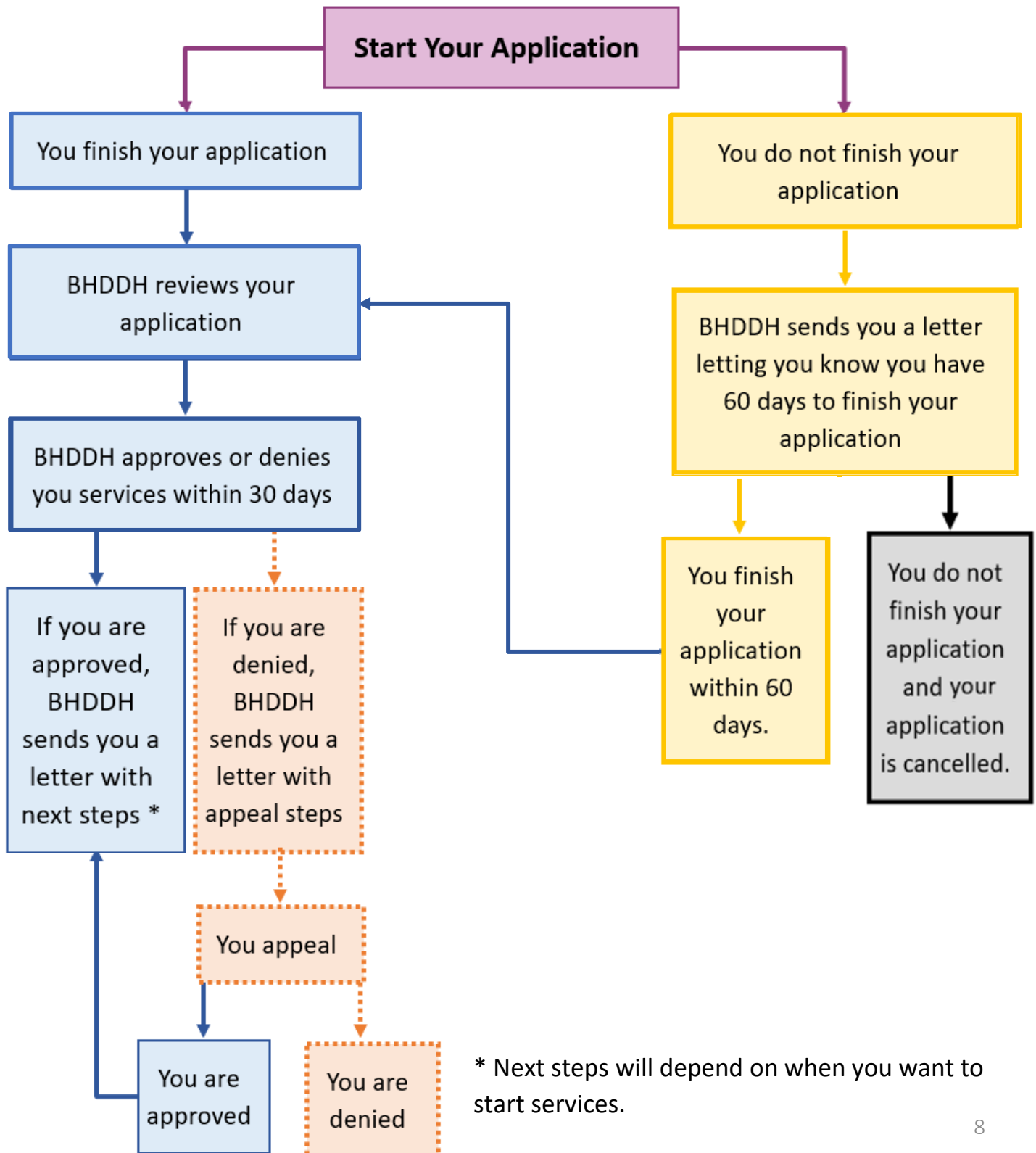
**Other Agency Records** (if you have any). These are notes about your abilities and needs. The records are from other agencies you have gotten services from in the past.



**Court or Legal Records** (if you have any). These are legal documents from the court or a lawyer such as: a copy of the Appointment of Guardianship or Power of Attorney paperwork.

# What is the DD Application Process Like?

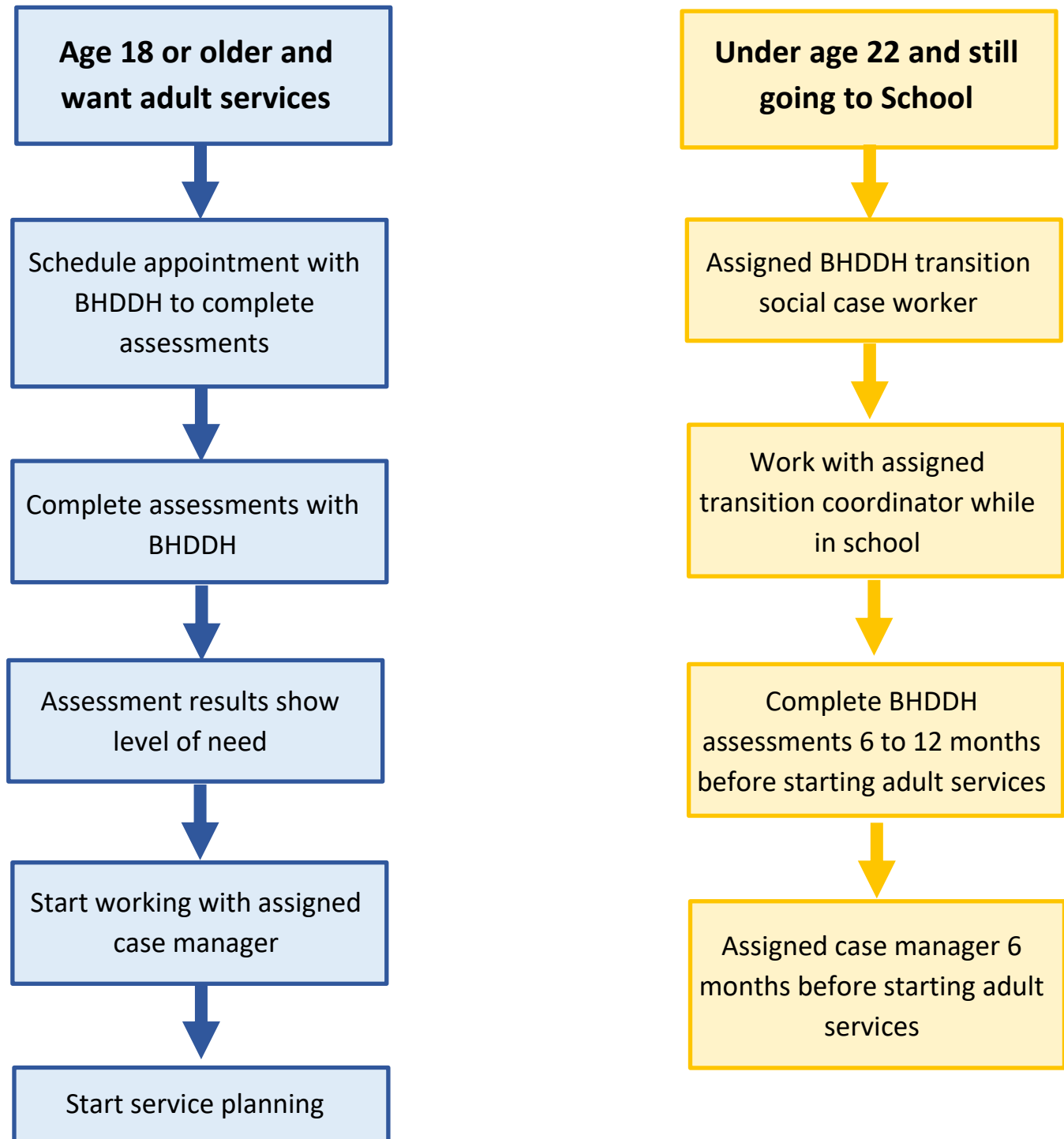
DD applications are reviewed by the BHDDH Eligibility Review Committee. The Committee lets people know if they are approved or denied DD services within 30 days of getting applications.



\* Next steps will depend on when you want to start services.

# How Do I Start Services?

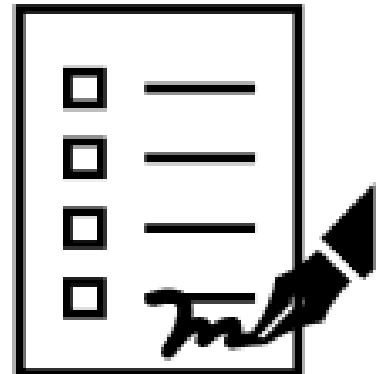
You can apply for DD services before you turn age 18, but you must be 18 or older before those services can begin. The process to start services depends on whether you are still in school or not.



People aged 18-21 can get some adult services while still going to school. They would follow the “Age 18 or older and want services” steps.

# What Happens After I'm Approved for DD Services?

If you were found eligible for DD services, then you would move into the assessment process. The **assessment process** is how we collect and use information about your strengths and needs. This information helps us know the kind of supports you may need. There are 3 steps to the BHDDH assessment process:



<b>Step 1:</b> <b>SIS-A 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition</b>	<b>Step 2:</b> <b>ANSQ Questionnaire</b>	<b>Step 3:</b> <b>Individual Follow-Up</b>
<p>The <b>Supports Intensity Scale-Adult Version (SIS-A)</b>, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, is a standardized assessment tool. The SIS measures your level of support need. It includes questions to better understand things you do well and need support with to live the most independent life possible. For more visit: <a href="#">SIS-A 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition webpage</a>.</p>	<p>The <b>Additional Needs and Support Questionnaire (ANSQ)</b> is an assessment tool. The ANSQ finds support needs in addition to what you have answered in the SIS-A. It includes 8 topics to learn more about your legal, mental health, behavioral, medical, cognitive, interpretation, and situational support needs.</p>	<p>The <b>individual follow-up</b> will take place about 3 weeks after the SIS-A and ANSQ. The individual follow-up is the time to share any other information you think is important to best explain the types of supports you need to be successful in the community.</p>

For more information, visit the [Divisions website](#).

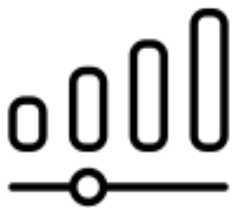
# What is a “Level of Need”?

Everyone getting DD services has different strengths and needs. The Division will learn your strengths and needs by having you complete the BHDDH assessment process. The **BHDDH assessment process** is a set of questions that find out the level of daily supports you need to be successful in daily life. The BHDDH assessment process includes:

1. Supports Intensity Scale-Adult Version (SIS-A), 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition
2. Additional Needs and Support Questionnaire (ANSQ)
3. Individual Follow-up

The results from the assessments show your level of need. **Level of need** is how much support you need to complete daily activities and be successful. Your level of need will be shown in 2 parts in your funding letter:

## SIS-A Tier Level



This is the level of need that comes from your SIS-A assessment results. This includes information about how much support you need with different life activities. Examples of life activities are work, health, and community living.

## Additional Support Needs



This is the level of need that comes from your ANSQ. This includes information about the things you need support with in addition to what the SIS-A covers.

## How The Level of Need Is Used

Your level of need is used along with other information to decide how much funding you get. **Funding** is the amount of money you will have for the year to spend on DD services. This money comes from Medicaid and can only be used for DD services.

# Medicaid and DD Services

The money BHDDH gives you to buy DD services comes from Medicaid. **Medicaid** is a government health insurance provider. Medicaid makes it possible for people with limited income to get the health care they need.

## Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS)



Medicaid offers long term services and supports (LTSS) to people with disabilities. **LTSS** are a set of care programs focused on helping people stay independent and safe. People can get these programs in their home, community, or nursing home.

LTSS programs often last for many years, unless the person no longer needs them. These programs focus on giving people choices. People will decide where to live, what services they get, if they work, and how they spend time in the community.

## Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS)



DD services are LTSS home and community-based services (HCBS). **HCBS** are services and supports people get in their own home or community. HCBS helps support people's independent living skills so they can live the life they want.

## HCBS Final Rule and Access Rule



DD service providers must follow the HCBS final rule and access rule. The rules say all HCBS services must support time in the community. People getting services must have the chance to join community activities. This includes attending events, working, and accessing community resources.

To learn more about Medicaid, explore the [Medicaid.gov website](https://www.Medicaid.gov) and the [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\) website](https://www.CMS.gov).

# What is An Individual Budget?

The money someone is given for DD services is called a **funding level**. You can create an individual budget from your funding level. An **individual budget** is a DD service spending plan that is individualized. This means, you get to choose the type, number, and amount of DD services you want to buy to reach your goals. Individual budgets are made up of 3 parts: (1) flexible budget, (2) fixed budget, and (3) add-on budget.



## Flexible Budget

This is the part of your service budget that you can make decisions about. You decide how much or little of your budget you want to spend on services, like:

- Community-Based Supports
- Center-Based Supports
- Assistive Technology
- Professional Services
- Goods and Services
- Support Brokerage
- Transportation
- Respite

## Fixed Budget

This is the part of your service budget that DD will pay for automatically. No changes can be made to your fixed budget. Services paid for from this budget include costs for group homes, shared living services, or fiscal intermediaries.

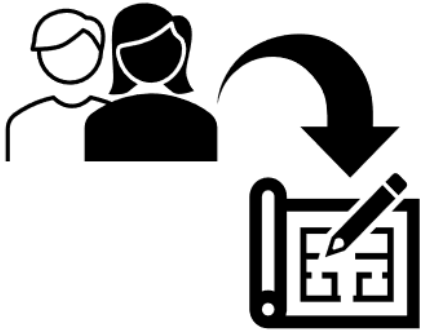
## Add-On Budget

This is extra funding to pay for certain services, like:

- Job Coaching and Retention
- Job Development
- Group Supported Employment
- Personal Supports in the Workplace

For more, review the [Brochures and Guides webpage](#) for a guide to individual budgets.

# What is a Person-Centered Plan (PCP)?



A **Person-Centered Plan (PCP)** is also called an **Individual Support Plan (ISP)**. It is the DD service plan that lists your long and short-term goals. It will also list the steps, resources, and services you choose to help you reach your goals.

Writing a PCP is a team effort. As a participant, you will lead your PCP meetings by making decisions about your plan. You will decide who you want invited to the planning meetings, and when you want the meetings to take place. Plans will be written by your case manager.

The Division will make sure you have a PCP that meets your needs. We will make sure you are getting the services you need and can meet your goals with the services you are getting.

There are pieces of information that must be included in a PCP. This information includes:



What is important to you including your hopes, dreams, wants, needs, and people in your life.



What your strengths are and what resources help you be successful. This includes how you like to communicate, learn, and more.



What your goals are for your life. This can be your work, education, health, safety, independence, relationships, and other goals.



What services, supports and resources you think will help you reach your goals.

# What Does it Mean to Lead My Plan?



You have the right to live the life that you want. This includes having access to services you think will best support you. Since you are the expert in the things you do well and the things you need help with, it is important that you lead your service plan.

Leading your service plan means you make the final decisions about the services you get. Leading your plan starts with you sharing your thoughts and ideas about what you need and when you need it. Your plan will include things that are important to you and important for you.

You will be supported in leading your plan by the people and providers that you choose to be part of the conversation.

Some tips that may help you lead your plan are:

## Know Your Rights

- You have the right to good quality services.
- You have the right to have access to the same opportunities as people without disabilities.
- You have the right to participate in community activities and events with people without disabilities.
- You have the right to be treated fairly and without discrimination.

## Take Charge

- Know the details of your plan.
- Ask for meetings with your provider to review your plan and any problems you may have.
- Make changes to your plan, including change providers.
- Know when planning meetings with your provider are scheduled so you have time to prepare a list of things you want to talk about.

# What is Important for Me and What is Important to Me?

Your Person-Centered Plan (PCP) will be a guide you and your providers use throughout the year. Your PCP should tell you what is important for you and what is important to you.

What is important for you and what is important to you sound similar. Yet, they can be completely different things. It is helpful to know the difference between “important for” and “important to.”

## Important for

Things that are important for you are your needs. These are the services and supports you need to stay safe and healthy. This includes things you need to be active and included in your community. Examples of what is important for you are:



A service dog to help you get out



Tools that help you communicate



Living in a safe home

## Important to

Things that are important to you are your wants. These are the services and supports that will help you feel happy, comfortable, and satisfied. Examples of what is important to you are:



A calm place to work on projects



Taking a break after homework



Taking a nap after a long workday

# Your Life, Your Rights

## DD Services Bill of Rights



### Know Your Rights

All people with disabilities have the same rights as anyone else. These include:



Freedom to be yourself and make decisions



Not be treated unfairly because of who you are



Live a safe, meaningful, and free life



Be treated with dignity and respect

### Your Rights and DD Services

Your life is your choice. This is also true for DD services you get.

You have rights when it comes to your DD services that are called the **DD Bill of Rights**. The DD Bill of Rights make sure you are treated well and get the help you want so you can live the life you choose. The DD Bill of Rights are:



You plan your life and pick your services and providers



You understand your services and can ask questions at anytime



You can let your provider or BHDH know if you are unhappy with your services



You are protected from abuse and mistreatment



Your privacy is protected



You can get your record at anytime



You live in a safe and comfortable home



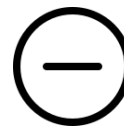
You can take risks and make mistakes



You wear clothing, own items, and eat food you want



You can have relationships and people can visit you



You will have safety plans that have the least restrictions



You are involved in your community and choose the activities you do

**If you feel your rights have been violated, please contact the Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights by visiting their website.**



# Who Can Help Me Make Decisions?

There are many people that can help you make decisions about your life. Who you choose to ask for help may change depending on the decision you are trying to make. Here are some questions you can ask yourself when you are thinking about asking someone else for help making decisions:

1. Who are the people in my life that I trust?

2. Who are the people that help me right now?

3. What kind of help am I looking for?

4. How and when can I ask for help?

The people you choose to help you may be family members, friends, providers, or other professionals. When you have a group of people you can rely on for help and support, the group is called a **support group**.

Support groups are great resources because they can give you advice and cheer you up. You never have to follow all the advice your support group gives you, but you can use the information to help you decide. Just remember, when it comes to making decisions about your life, the choice is yours.

# What is Supported Decision Making?



Making choices about your own life is your right. You can decide what you would like your life to be like. Having choices can make you feel accomplished. It can also increase your self-esteem and help you fulfill your own unique destiny.



**Supported Decision Making (SDM)** is one way you can keep making choices for yourself. SDM is a way people can help you make choices while supporting your right to make your own choices.



With SDM, you will work with one person or a team of your choice. The people you choose to work with you will help you make choices, but they cannot make choices for you. You will get help learning what your options are, including the pros and cons of each option. When you understand your options and feel ready, you will make the final decision.



You can protect your right to making decisions even more with a signed agreement. The **signed agreement** is a document that explains how a group of people will work together. Signed agreements are legal documents, which means the law protects them.



You can start or stop SDM at any time. You can also change who is on your SDM team at any time.



For more information about supported decision making visit the [RI Center for Supported Decision-Making website](#). You can also review the [Disability Rights Rhode Island guide](#).

# What Decisions Do I Need to Make About DD Services?

Before starting DD services, you have decisions to make. These decisions are:

## What Type of DD Services Do I Want?

Community-Based Supports	Center-Based Supports	Employment Supports	Housing / Residential
Professional Services	Transportation	Assistive Technology	Respite

You can learn more by visiting the [DD Services Webpage](#).

## How Do I Want to Get DD Services?

### Services From an Agency

You work with an agency or DD organization of your choice. Your staff will be from the agency. The agency will manage the providers that work with you.

### Self-Directed Services

You hire and manage your staff. You decide how much to pay your staff. You work with a Fiscal Intermediary (FI) to complete service paperwork and payments. You choose the FI to work with.

### Hybrid

You work with both an agency and FI of your choice. You decide which services you want from the agency and which you want to self-direct. The FI will help you complete service paperwork and payments.

## What Agencies or Providers Do I Want To Work With?

There are about 40 DD agencies you can choose from. Not all DD agencies provide the same services. You can learn more by visiting the [Licensed Provider List webpage](#).

If you self-direct your services, you can find providers by posting job openings. Your job openings should include the services you want provided. It should also have the days and times you want services, and the skills you want your staff to have. You can post job openings in newspapers or online. You can learn more by visiting the [Self-Directed Services webpage](#).

You will also choose a Conflict Free Case Management (CFCM) agency to work with. They will help you with planning. They will also help you find services you may want to use inside and outside the DD system.

# Conflict Free Case Management (CFCM)



**Conflict-Free Case Management (CFCM)** is a service for people getting long-term services and supports (LTSS). The goal of CFCM is to make sure you get the services you need. A CFCM agency can only provide CFCM. This means the agency does not provide any other service. By only providing CFCM, the agency can focus on helping you find services and supports available to you. These services and supports may be from any agency or place in the state. CFCM is required by Medicaid. The Division will also offer CFCM.

Another group of providers giving short-term CFCM are Independent Facilitators (IF). IFs are not certified by Medicaid as CFCM. IFs used to be called Independent Plan Writers. IFs will only be working with people who self-direct.

## CFCM and IF Providers

CFCM is provided by a Conflict-Free Case Manager. IF is provided by an Independent Facilitator. Both types of providers will help you:

- Lead your Person-Centered Plan (PCP) meetings.
- Write your PCP and make changes throughout the year.
- Learn about the resources, services, and supports in your community.
- Explore new opportunities and activities.
- Get the resources, services and supports in your community.
- Make sure you are happy with the services you are getting.

# What Are the Provider Agency Responsibilities?

Agencies offering services must have a license. A **license** is a piece of paper that lets an agency do something. Licenses are based on laws from a state. Agencies with a license are allowed by the law to give services in Rhode Island.

Agencies with a license have responsibilities they must meet every year. Agencies must make sure the services they give to people are helpful, useful, and successful. There are eight main responsibilities agencies must meet.

1. Services are person centered. This means the person getting services makes choices about what they want and need.
2. Services focus on the person's autonomy. **Autonomy** means a person has the freedom to make choices and do things for themselves.
3. Services allow the person to take risks. This means the person can make mistakes. The risks will not harm the person's safety or health.
4. Service information is easy to understand. This means the person is given information in a way they understand and can use.
5. Service notes are taken. This means the provider keeps track of services a person gets. The notes are stored in the person's file.
6. Services have good outcomes. This means the provider checks-in with people getting services to make sure they are happy.
7. Services are given by trained staff. This means staff know how to give the services they are supposed to give.
8. Services help increase time in the community. This means providers help the person be more active in their community.

# What Does it Mean to Self-Direct my Services?

Self-directed supports gives you more control over your funding and services.



All participants set their own goals and decide their own schedule. The difference with self-directed supports is you will hire your own support staff and manage your service budget.



With self-directed supports, you are the boss. You find, hire, train, and supervise your support staff. You decide how much to pay your support staff, and you can fire them if you need to.



A Fiscal Intermediary (FI) will help you manage your funding. You choose the FI you will work with. The FI will help you complete hiring paperwork and payroll for your support staff. The FI will also help you submit important paperwork, like your Person-Centered Plan (PCP), to the Division.



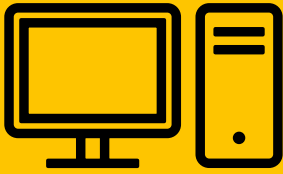
A Support Broker (SB) may help you self-direct your services if you are interested. The SB can help you learn self-directing skills like how to manage staff, manage your budget, and find information and resources in the community.



With self-directed supports you can use your funding to buy goods and services. There are rules about what you can and cannot buy that your FI can help you with.

For more information visit the [Self-Direct Services webpage](#).

# What Are Goods and Services?



**Goods** are items that help you do the things you want to do. Goods include tools, supplies, technology devices, and applications.



**Services** are activities and help you get from others to do the things you want to do. Services include certain therapies, transportation, membership fees to health clubs, and educational activities.

If you get DD services, you may be able to get help paying for goods and services you need. For this to happen, the good or service must:

- Help you reach a goal or meet a need in your Person-Centered Plan (PCP).
- Make you be more independent and need less help from support staff.
- Help you be safe and more independent in your home.
- Give you more opportunities to live and be included in your community.
- Not be offered from other Medicaid sources.



Some goods and services are not allowed. Examples of non-allowable goods and services are concert tickets, tutoring classes, gaming devices, and home gym supplies.

# What if I Need A Place to Live?



You can get supports to help you live on your own or with a room mate in independent housing. **Independent housing** is housing anyone in the public can get and is not a service from the Division.

If you need support to live on your own, you can use Community-Based Supports in your home and in the community.

There are many options you can choose to make your housing more affordable. These options come from the state and are known as **rental assistance programs**. Rental assistance programs come from the state or federal government. They help you pay your rent. There are four options you can explore:

**1. Tenant-Based Vouchers:** ties the rental assistance to you. This means you can live in any apartment or house as long as your landlord accepts the program. You can also move to a new home and still get the rental assistance.

**2. Project-Based Vouchers:** tied to a certain unit. This means you must live in a certain apartment and would lose the rental assistance if you moved out.

**3. Public Housing Units:** tied to a certain unit that is owned by a Housing Authority. This means you must live in one of the units to get the rental assistance. You would lose the rental assistance if you moved out.

**4. Privately Owned Subsidized Housing:** tied to a certain unit that is owned by a private company. This means you must live in one of the units to get the rental assistance. You would lose the rental assistance if you moved out.

To learn more about rental assistance, visit the [RI Housing website](#).

# What If I Need a Lot of Support and Can't Live on My Own?

The Division has three residential services. **Residential services** are services that include housing as part of the service. These services are not for everyone. You must meet a certain level of need to get these services. These services are meant to help you stay safe and active in your community. The three residential services are:

- 1. Shared Living Arrangement (SLA)** is when you live with another person, couple, or family in a home setting that you choose. The person you live with will help you with daily activities like cooking, transportation, and personal care. You can still use other DD services you are interested in, like community-based supports.
- 2. Whole Life Shared Living Arrangement (WLSLA)** is a type of SLA. You will live with someone you choose who will help you with daily activities at home. The person you live with will help you in other ways besides just at home. They will help you make friends, find ways to be active in your community, get a job if you want one, and reach your goals.
- 3. Residential Habilitation or Group Home** services are given to you by a licensed DD provider. This means you will live in a home owned by your provider. You will live with other adults with disabilities. You will get help from staff all day every day as you need it. You will get help taking care of yourself, staying safe, making friends, and joining community activities.



People who live in SLA, WLSLA or Group Home pay rent and help with other home expenses, like food and utilities. The type of service you get depends on your level of need. If you need more help, then BHDDH can work with you to see if you match with Shared Living or Group Home services.

# How Can I Get Help Being More Involved in My Community?



Being involved in your community is important. When you are in your community you get the chance to meet new friends, try new things, and explore new places. You may even learn new things about yourself.

You can get help spending more time in your community with DD services.

With **Community-Based Supports** you will get help in or out of your home so you can do more things by yourself. You will get help being more involved in your community. You will decide where to go, what you want to do, and who you want to do things with. You will learn about your community by looking at maps, reading the newspaper, exploring, and talking to other people. You will also learn new skills like solving problems and deciding what to do in your free time.

With **Center-Based Supports** you will go to an agency center to learn how to do more things by yourself. You will get help being more involved in your community. You will decide when to go to the center for help, and what you want help with. You will learn new skills like solving problems, talking to people, and deciding what to do with your free time.

With DD services, you can get help traveling to and from your home to community activities.

# What are DD Transportation Services?



There are three DD transportation options to choose from. As a DD participant, you can choose to use your funding for as many transportation trips as you need.

## What Are the Three Transportation Options

1. You can pay your agency for transportation they provide.
2. You can use your funds to pay for trips on The Ride Program (RIPTA). You need to add RIPTA to your plan and purchase order. RIPTA will bill the Division directly.
3. You can use the self-direct option for transportation, even if you use an agency for most services. You can pay for trips on Uber, Lyft or taxi service or to pay someone you know for driving you.



## Do I Need to Self-Direct to Use the Self-Direct Transportation Option?



No, you do not need to self-direct to use the self-direct transportation option. You can use the self-directed funds option to use Uber, Lyft, taxi service, or to pay someone for rides. You will pay a fee for this.

## Who Do I Contact For More About DD Transportation Services?

Contact your provider. Your provider will help you make sure your plan and purchase order have the transportation options you need. You can use one or all the transportation options.



# What If I Want to Get a Job?

You can get employment support in many ways. For example, you can get help from the **Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS)** and/or BHDDH. Help you get from ORS and/or BHDDH can be at the same or different times. When it comes to BHDDH there are many DD services available to you.



1. **Job Discovery** is for help learning more about yourself and community. You will work with an employment specialist to create a new job for yourself.



2. **Job Exploration** is for help starting your employment journey. You will get help making choices about work and figure out your path to employment.



3. **Job Development** is for help finding a job. You will work with a certified employment specialist to find a job and get hired.



4. **Job Coaching** is for help learning how to do a new job. It can also be used to learn new job skills if your job tasks change. You will work with a certified employment specialist while you are at work.



5. **Job Retention** is for help keeping a job. You can get job retention after you finish with job coaching. You will work with a certified employment specialist to keep and grow in your job.



6. **Group Supported Employment** includes job development and job coaching. It is done in a group of more than 2 people.



7. **Personal Supports in the Workplace** is for help with self-care activities at work. This can include help with medical or behavioral health needs.

For more information visit the [Employment Services webpage](#).

# Will Working Affect My Social Security?



Deciding to start working is exciting, but you may worry you will lose the money you get from Social Security to pay for things you need, like rent and food. You can work and still get help from Social Security with work incentives. Your Social Security may change, but working often leads to you earning more overall.

## What Are Work Incentives?

Work incentives are programs from the Social Security Administration (SSA) that protect your benefits while you work. Work incentives are different depending on the Social Security program you get benefits from. You may get Title II Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or both.

### Title II Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

**Title II Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)** benefits provide payments to people with disabilities. People can get this benefit no matter what their income is. To get this benefit, people must have worked in the past and paid taxes. The amount of money people get depends on how much money they made by working. Some people get SSDI based on their parent's work history.



### Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

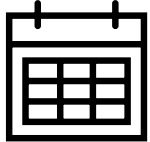


**Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** benefits provide payments to people with disabilities and older adults. People can get this benefit if they have little or no income or resources. It is not based on work history. People can get SSI even if they never worked.

It is important to find out which work incentive programs are right for you. Benefits counseling can help you with this. For more information on work incentives and benefits counseling visit the [Employment webpage](#).

# How Can SSDI Work Incentives Help?

There are five Title II Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) work incentives. **SSDI** benefits provide payments to people with disabilities. People can get this benefit no matter what their income is. People must have worked in the past and paid taxes or have a parent that did. The amount of money people get depends on how much they, or their parent, made by working.



**1. Trial Work Period (TWP)** can be used if you have not worked before but want to try working. You can keep all your social security benefit checks no matter how much money you make at your job. TWP lasts 9 months. It can be stopped once it starts.



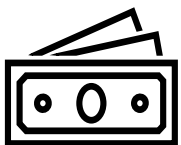
**2. Extended Period of Eligibility (EPE)** is after TWP. You can continue working and keep your social security benefit check. You must earn below a certain amount of money each month to keep your benefit check. EPE lasts 36 months. It cannot stop once it starts.



**3. Expedited Reinstatement (EXR)** lets you restart your SSDI benefits if the benefits stopped because you were making too much money at work. You have 5 years to ask for your benefits back.



**4. Extended Period of Medicare Coverage (EPMC)** lets you keep your Medicare health insurance if you are working and your social security benefit checks stop. You can keep your Medicare plan for 93 months (just over 7.5 years) after you finish TWP.

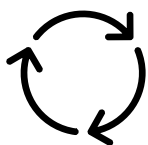


**5. Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE)** helps you cover the cost for items or services related to your disability that you use for work. The money you spend will be taken away from your total monthly income. You will have more money in your benefit check.

For more information about work incentives, and to meet with a benefits counselor, visit the [Sherlock Center Work Incentives webpage](#).

# How Can SSI Work Incentives Help?

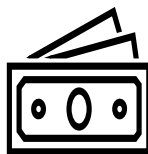
There are seven Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI) work incentives. SSI benefits provide payments to people with disabilities and older adults. People can get this benefit if they have little or no income or resources. It is not based on work history. People can get SSI even if they never worked.



**1. The Continuation of SSI** lets you keep your SSI check and work. You must make less than a certain amount of money. Your Medicaid will continue.



**2. Expedited Reinstatement (EXR)** lets you restart your SSI benefits if the benefits stopped because you were making too much money at work. You have 5 years to ask for your benefits back.



**3. Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE)** will not count some of the money spent on items related to your disability used to work.



**4. Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)** lets you save money for school or training programs without your SSI benefits stopping.



**5. Blind Work Expense (BWE)** will not count some of the money spent on work items, like transportation, meals at work, and uniforms.



**6. The Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS)** lets you save money to pay for things to help you reach your job goals, like training programs.



**7. The Sherlock Plan** lets you keep Medicaid health insurance if your SSI checks stop because you make too much money working. You may need to pay a copay for the insurance.

For more information and to meet with a benefits counselor, visit the [Sherlock Center Work Incentives webpage](#).

# How Do I Report My Earnings If I Am Working?



If you get government support and work, you must report how much money you make. Where you report to depends on the type of government support you get.

Type of Support	Who to Report To
Social Security (SSI and/or SSDI)	Social Security Administration (SSA)
Housing (subsidized, etc.)	Housing Authority
Medicaid DD Services	Division of Developmental Disabilities

## Getting DD Services and Reporting Earnings

The Division created an online form to help you report your earnings. This form is called the Employment and Earnings Reporting Form. If you get DD services and work, you must complete this form for any of these reasons:

- Started a new job.
- Changes to work hours and/or earnings.
- Stopped working
- Want to get benefits counseling.

All forms must be submitted with proof of income. This can be 4 weeks of paystubs or bank receipts showing 4 weeks of automatic deposits.

The Division will share the form and proof of income with the Department of Human Services (DHS). DHS uses the information to find out your income disregards. **Income disregards** remove part of your income to decide your government benefits.

For more information, visit the [Employment and Earnings Reporting Requirements webpage](#).

# Who Offers Benefits Counseling?



**Benefits counseling** is a type of service. You meet with a benefits counselor to talk about your plans to work. The benefits counselor will help you learn about your benefit options. The focuses of this counseling is on finding out how working can change your Social Security benefits.

## How to Get Benefits Counseling

You can get benefits counseling for free. There is more than one way to get benefits counseling. You can get benefits counseling from:



### Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS)

ORS is the first place to go for benefits counseling if you get ORS services.



### Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

DDD is the first place to go for benefits counseling if you get DD services.



### Social Security Administration (SSA)

SSA offers benefits counseling through the Ticket to Work Program.



### Sherlock Center

Sherlock Center partners with ORS, DDD, and SSA on benefits counseling.

# What Are my Savings Options?



Having money saved in the bank is helpful. With a savings you can pay for bills and other costs you did not expect. Two programs will let you save without your Social Security benefits stopping:

1. Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (ABLE)
2. Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS)

## Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (ABLE) Accounts

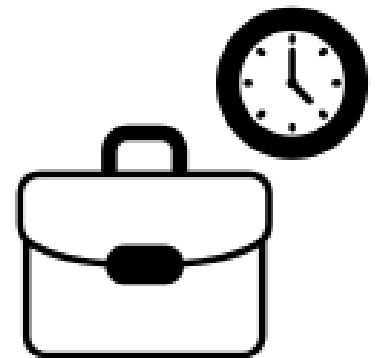
The Rhode Island ABLE will let you save for disability related costs. You can save up to \$18,000 per year. There are rules to how you can spend this money. You must only use this money to pay for items and services related to your disability. You can spend money on things like health programs, education, housing, and more.

All you need to start an account is \$25.

To learn more, including how to open an account, explore [RI's ABLE website](#).

## Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS)

The Social Security Administration (SSA) offers the PASS savings program. The goal of PASS is to help people return to work. PASS lets you save money to pay for things to help you reach your job goals. You can spend money on training programs, supplies to start your business, and more.

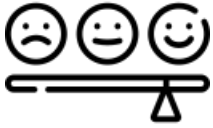


You must submit a plan that describes your work goals.

To learn more, including how to start, explore the [SSA PASS website](#).

# What Does Wellness Look Like?

Wellness is about how you feel and live your life. Wellness is about your health and is made up of 7 parts:



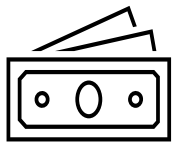
1. **Emotional Wellness** is accepting your emotions and talking to people you trust when you feel bad or sad.



2. **Physical Wellness** is eating healthy foods, staying active, taking medication, and keeping doctor appointments.



3. **Social Wellness** is spending time with friends in the community doing activities you enjoy.



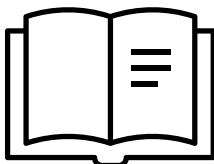
4. **Financial Wellness** is learning how to make and manage money to pay for things you need.



5. **Community Wellness** is living in a safe place and being involved in your community.



6. **Spiritual Wellness** is finding out what you believe in and treating yourself and others with kindness.



7. **Learning Wellness** is learning something new every day and exploring your interests.

# What is Mental Health?



**Mental health** is how well your mind is working so you can cope with stress, learn, and do things you enjoy.

An important piece to mental health is emotions.

## What Are Emotions?

**Emotions** are feelings we have about ourselves, others, and things going on around us. Some emotions feel good, like happiness and joy. Other emotions feel bad, like anger and sadness. All emotions are healthy and important. Emotions even help keep us safe.



It is normal to feel many different emotions in a day. Many things change our emotions, like people we are with, activities we do, or stressful events.

Emotions can make us think or act in certain ways. For example, when you feel excited you may like to dance and cheer. You may act different when you feel another emotion, like fear or disappointment.

## What is Mental Illness?



**Mental illness** is a health condition that changes how a person thinks, feels, and acts. Mental illness is like physical illness, such as colds or broken bones. Instead of making your body feel bad, mental illness makes your mind feel bad.

There are warning signs of mental illness. The warning signs have to do with sudden changes to a person's behaviors and/or feelings. A person may start to sleep or eat more or less than usual. They may start to feel irritable or depressed. They may have problems in their relationships or have trouble focusing. They may also stop feeling joy doing activities they used to enjoy.

People of any age, race, gender, or ability can have a mental illness. The good news is a person with a mental illness can start to feel better with treatment.

# Mental Health Resources

**Mental health resources** are places you can go for help with mental health. The resources can be places in the community or online. To help get you started, explore the list of mental health resources listed on this page.

## Behavioral Health (BH) Link



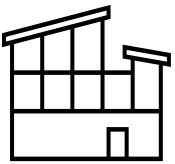
[BH Link](#) is a mental health center in East Providence. They help people who are having a mental health emergency. You can visit the BH Link office or call the hotline number 988 for help. BH Link is open 24/7.

## BHDDH



Many people with I/DD get mental health services through the Division. [BHDDH also has the Division of Behavioral Healthcare](#). This Division offers mental health and substance use services. Most of the services provided come from community mental health centers.

## Community Mental Health Centers



**Community Mental Health Centers** are mental health service centers. They help people with mental illness feel better. These centers offer therapy and case management. They have a hotline for people to call for help during mental health emergencies. For a list of community mental health centers, visit the [BHDDH website](#).

## National Resources



There are many organizations that focus on mental health. They give information about mental health, including how to get help. Three organizations to explore are: (1) [Mental Health Association of Rhode Island \(MHARI\)](#), (2) [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\) Rhode Island](#), and (3) [Mental Health America \(MHA\)](#).

# What is a Substance Use Disorder?

A **substance use disorder** is a type of mental illness. A person with this disorder uses substances in unhealthy ways that makes them sick. They may use the substances even if they do not want to. **Substances** are drugs people drink, smoke, breathe in, or swallow. Substances make people feel, think, and behave in risky ways. Some substances are legal, like alcohol, while others are illegal. Substances include:

- Alcohol
- Tobacco (i.e., cigarettes, vape)
- Marijuana (or weed)
- Inhalants (fumes from paint thinners or gasoline)
- Other drugs (LSD, mushrooms, cocaine, ecstasy, opiates)
- Prescription medication (medicine from a doctor that is used wrong)

## What Does a Substance Use Disorder Look Like?



A person may use substances when they are stressed or having difficult feelings. The person's normal coping skills may not work anymore. Substances may help the person forget about their difficult feelings, but substances are not healthy.

Using substances without talking to a doctor is unsafe and can make people sick. Substance use disorders lead to trouble staying focused and getting along with others. They also get in the way of the person taking care of themselves.

## How to Get Help With A Substance Use Disorder?

It is important to get treatment for substance use disorders. Substance use disorder treatment helps people learn healthier coping skills. The goal of this treatment is to support people as they learn how to stop using drugs and alcohol.

For more information visit the [American Psychiatric Association webpage](#).

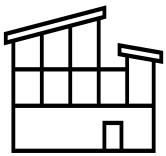
# What Is Substance Use Disorder Treatment?

Substance use disorder treatment helps people learn healthier coping skills. There are different levels to this treatment that depend on the substances they have been using. For example, a person who wants to quit smoking cigarettes can get help from a therapist at a community health center. If the substance was alcohol instead of cigarettes, then the person would have to start treatment at a hospital.

## What Are the Levels of Substance Use Disorder Treatment?

According to [Brown University Health](#), there are different levels of substance use disorder treatment. Three of the most common treatment levels are:

### 1. Outpatient treatment



You get help from a therapist at a community health center. You may meet your therapist for a one-on-one appointment or for a group appointment with other people with a substance use disorder. You may start with appointments every week or every two weeks.

### 2. Inpatient treatment



You stay at the hospital for treatment. It can be dangerous to stop certain substances, like alcohol or opiates, all at once. Treatment for these substances starts with detox in the hospital. **Detox** is when substances leave your body. A team of doctors and nurses will make sure you detox safely from substances.

### 3. Residential programs



You live in a house with other people with a substance use disorder. You meet with a therapist for one-on-one appointments or for group appointments with other people. Therapists and other treatment providers can help you in the home 24/7.

For treatment information, visit the [BHDDH Substance Use Conditions website](#).

# What If I Have an Emergency?

An **emergency** is a serious event that happens suddenly and causes harm to people and their environment. Emergencies are often dangerous and unsafe. People in an emergency need help right away. There are many types of emergencies, like medical and mental health emergencies.

## What Are Medical Emergencies?



**Medical emergencies** are illnesses or injuries that need to be treated by a doctor right away. Examples are breathing problems, broken bones, deep cuts, and strong feelings of pain.

## What Are Mental Health Emergencies?

**Mental health emergencies** are situations involving thoughts and behaviors that become unsafe. A person may start saying and doing things that are unlike themselves. For example, they may think about hurting themselves or others. If this happens, it is not because the person is bad. Instead, this happens because the person likely has a mental illness that is not treated. When a mental illness is not treated a person may become sicker and need emergency care.



## How Do I Get Help In An Emergency?

It is important to get help right away in an emergency. You can go to your local emergency room or call for help. The number to call for help will depend on the type of emergency you are in.



**911**

Call **911** if you or someone else is hurt or in danger. The police, firefighters, and ambulance will be sent to help you.



**988**

Call **988** if you are having thoughts and feelings that are unlike yourself. A therapist will talk to you to make sure you are safe. The therapist will help you feel better and get more help if you need it.

# What is Abuse?

**Abuse** is when someone treats another person bad. Abuse is harmful and can cause injuries. There are many different types of abuse. No type of abuse is okay.

## Types of Abuse



**1. Physical abuse** is someone hurting your body and causing injuries on purpose. This can be hitting, biting, hair pulling, and more.



**2. Sexual abuse** is someone making sexual comments or contact with you that you do not want. This may be someone touching your privates or making you touch them. Someone making you take pictures, say things, or look at things about sex are other examples.



**3. Verbal abuse** is someone saying and doing things that hurts your feelings. Another word for verbal abuse is emotional abuse or psychological abuse. This can be yelling, swearing, and bullying. Verbal abuse can be threatening you and making you feel afraid.



**4. Material or financial abuse** is someone using you for your money or belongings. This can be someone stealing from you, making you give them things, or not letting you use your money.



**5. Mistreatment** is someone treating you badly. This can be someone giving you the wrong medicine or treatment on purpose. This can be someone stopping you from doing things and being with others.



**6. Neglect** is someone not helping you when they are supposed to. This can be someone not getting you to a doctor when you are hurt or sick. This can be someone not giving you food or helping you with hygiene.

# Where to Get Help From Abuse?

Everyone has the right to live a safe life and be free from abuse. If you or someone you know is being abused, there are places you can go for help.

## State Offices to Report Abuse

### **BHDDH Quality Assurance Unit at (401) 462-2629**

This is the State office to report abuse in adults with disabilities. You can report abuse, mistreatment, neglect, and financial exploitation any time, day or night. Call the hotline at (401) 462-2629 to report abuse. To learn more, visit the [BHDDH Quality Management webpage](#).

### **Rhode Island Office of Healthy Aging at (401) 462-0555**

This is the State office to report abuse in adults aged 60 or older. You can report abuse any time, day or night. Call the hotline at (401) 462-0555 to report abuse. To learn more, visit the [Office of Healthy Aging website](#).

## Help in the Community

There are many community agencies that provide phone support to people who are being abused. You can call the agencies for help any time, day or night. Many also have an online chat option. Three agencies you can call for help are:

1. [Helpline RI](#) at (1-800) 494-8100
2. [Day One](#) at (1-800) 494-8100
3. [Blackstone Valley Advocacy Center \(BVAC\)](#) at (401) 723-3057

**Call 911 if you are in danger and need help right away.**



## **State of Rhode Island**

Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals  
Division of Developmental Disabilities

**Address:** 6 Harrington Rd, Cranston, RI 02920

**Website:** [www.bhddh.ri.gov](http://www.bhddh.ri.gov)

**Main Phone:** 401-462-3421

**Español:** 401-462-3014