

MEMORANDUM



Bellevue Parks &
Community Services

DATE: May 06, 2024

TO: Human Services Commission Members

FROM: Saada Hilts, Human Services Planner
Parks & Community Services

SUBJECT: Panel Conversation: Trends and Challenges in Behavioral Health Services

Background

After the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a notable increase in demand for Behavioral health services, including both mental health and substance use disorders. According to the [Human Services Needs Update](#), nearly 20% of 6th graders reported contemplating suicide. Additionally, drug overdoses, largely due to fentanyl, have surged, with more than 1,050 fentanyl overdose deaths in King County in 2023, representing a 47% increase over 2022.

While efforts are underway, more prevention and treatment initiatives are necessary. Human Services staff have assembled a panel of organizations focused on providing Behavioral Health Services to address these pressing issues. These organizations play a crucial role in offering support, prevention, and treatment services to low and moderate-income individuals and communities grappling with mental health and substance abuse challenges.

Representatives from the following agencies will be joining the panel:

- Michael Byun: Executive Director at Asian Counseling and Referral Service
- George Gonzalez: Executive Director at Harborview Abuse & Trauma Center
- David Downing: Executive Director at Youth Eastside Services

Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) provides comprehensive mental health services to promote whole health by addressing physical, mental and social well-being. ACRS' team of skilled, compassionate, bilingual, and bicultural, licensed case managers and psychiatric staff partner with clients to meet unique needs and goals. Services may include case management, individual, group, and family therapy and counseling, psychiatric evaluation and medication management, supported employment, housing assistance, wellness and day activity programs, acupuncture, and other Eastern approaches to wellness.

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Harborview Abuse & Trauma Center offers tailored interventions for children, families, and adults affected by trauma, crime, and child maltreatment. Services include trauma-specific cognitive behavioral therapies, cognitive behavioral therapy for children with sexual behavior problems, and behavior management therapy to reduce violence or abuse risk. Expert counselors provide brief case consultation to the public and professionals on sexual assault, child maltreatment, and trauma.

Youth Eastside Services works with counselors within Lake Washington and Bellevue schools, and community-based programs, to provide mental health counseling and substance use treatment to ALL youth, birth-22, and their families in East King County, regardless of their ability to pay.

Panel members will be asked round-robin style to answer the following questions:

1. What does the term Behavioral Health encompass?
2. What are some common misconceptions or misunderstandings about behavioral health services?
3. What are the most significant behavioral health service needs and barriers impacting those seeking and providing services?
4. Provide a brief overview of your program and the services provided that address these needs and barriers.
5. What challenges is your agency experiencing that the Commission should be aware of?

Commissioners will be invited to ask questions after the panel has completed answering all questions.