



# Understanding the Intersection of Public Health and Behavioral Health Treatment

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# Training Objectives

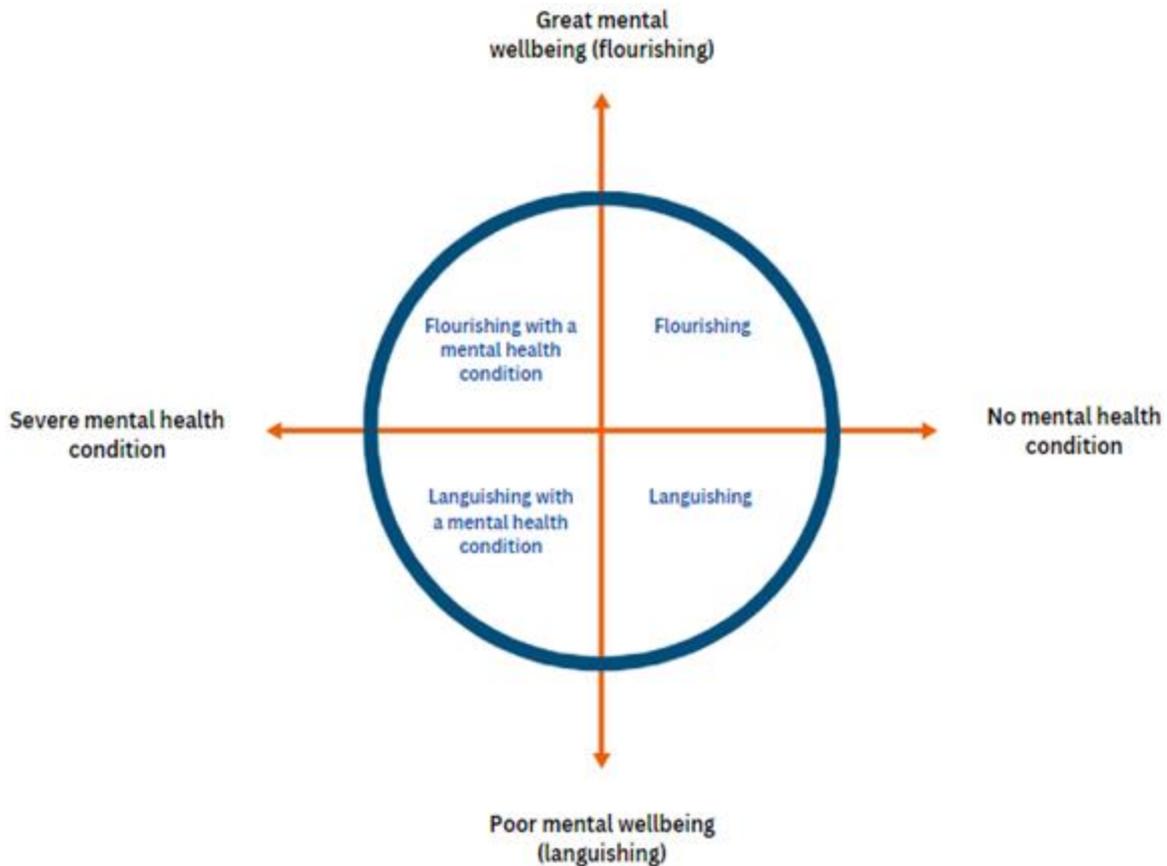
Participants will be able to:

- Describe the continuum of care as it relates to behavioral health and describe the role of public health agency partners across that continuum.
- Name at least three points of intersection between public health and behavioral health treatment.
- Name one thing to do differently based on understanding of the intersections between public health and behavioral health.

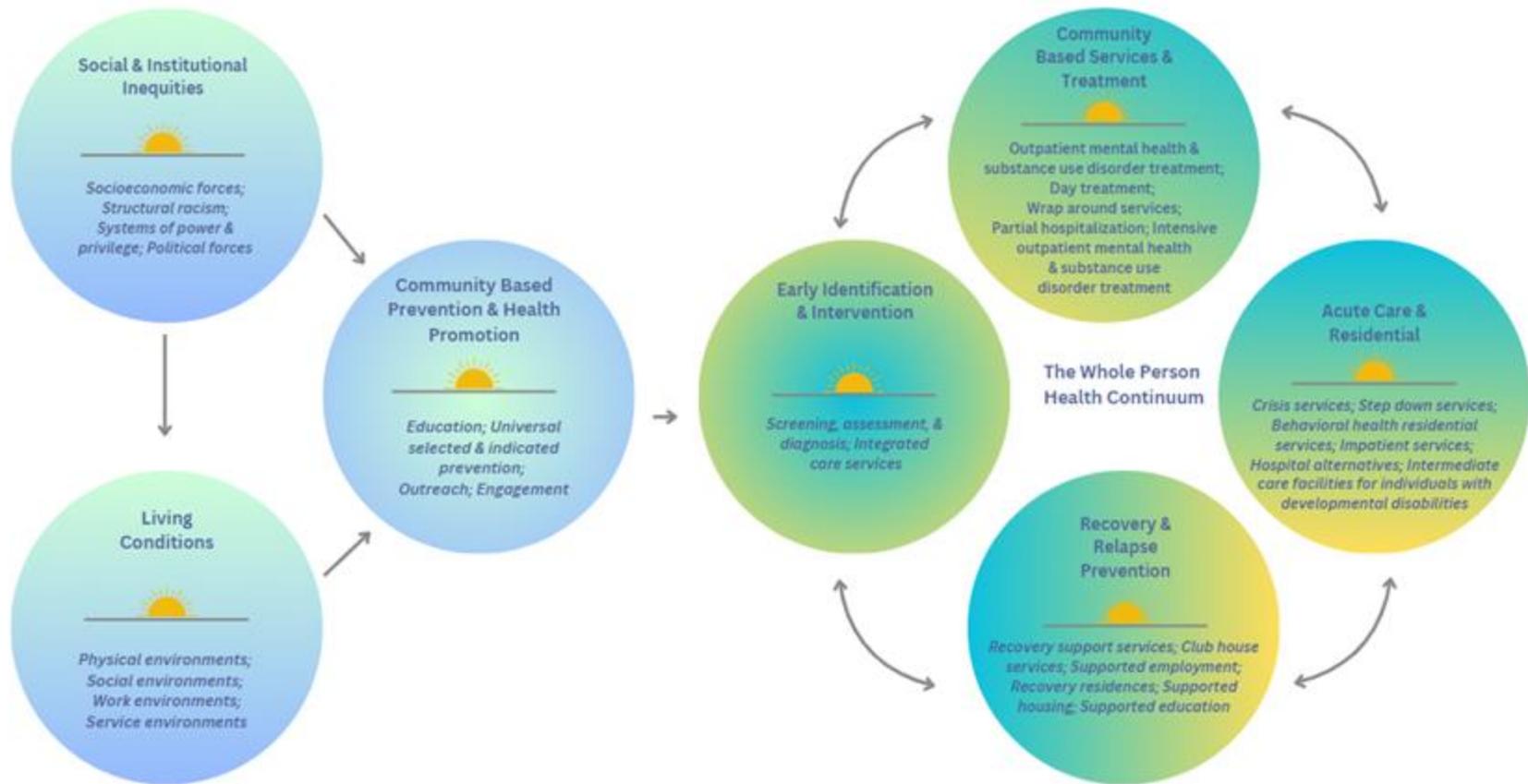
# What is Public Health?

- Public health promotes and protects the health of people and communities in the settings where they live, learn, work and play.
- While health care providers treat people who may be sick or have a health condition, people working in public health try to prevent people from getting sick or developing a condition in the first place.
- Public health practitioners also promote wellness by encouraging healthy behaviors and working to create conditions in which people can be healthy.

# The Intersection of Public Health and the Behavioral Health Continuum



# The Behavioral Health Ecosystem





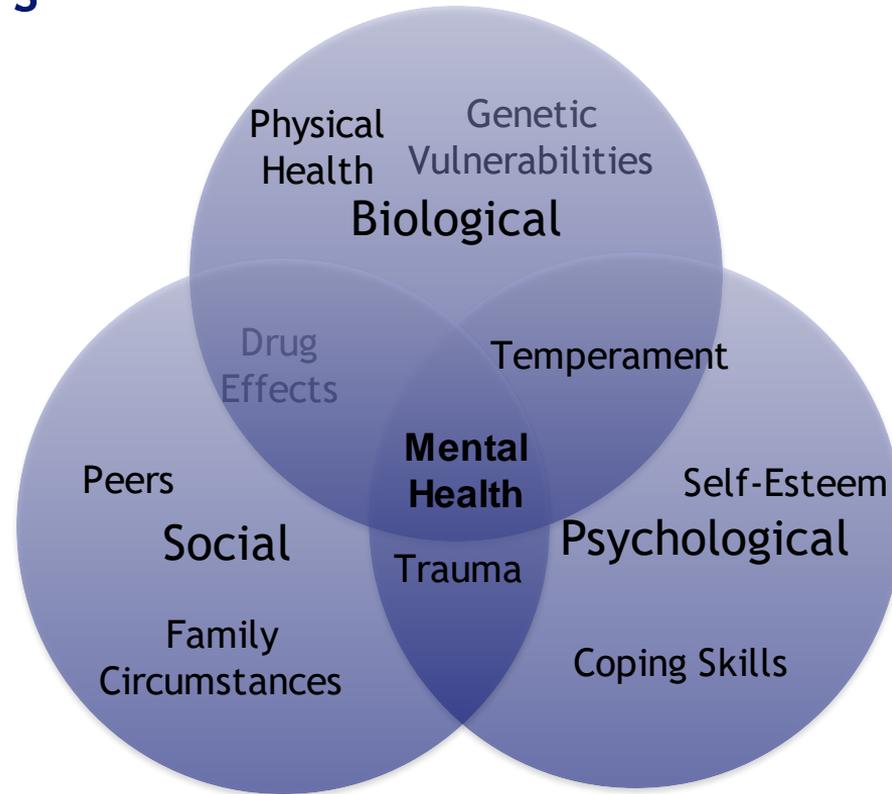
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## The Public Health Role

- The public health role in behavioral health treatment is rooted in the understanding that mental health and physical health are both essential to overall health.
- Public health's role includes identifying and addressing the risk factors and health disparities associated with mental health conditions and substance use disorders, and related health outcomes like suicide.



# The Public Health Role: Identifying and Addressing Risk and Protective Factors



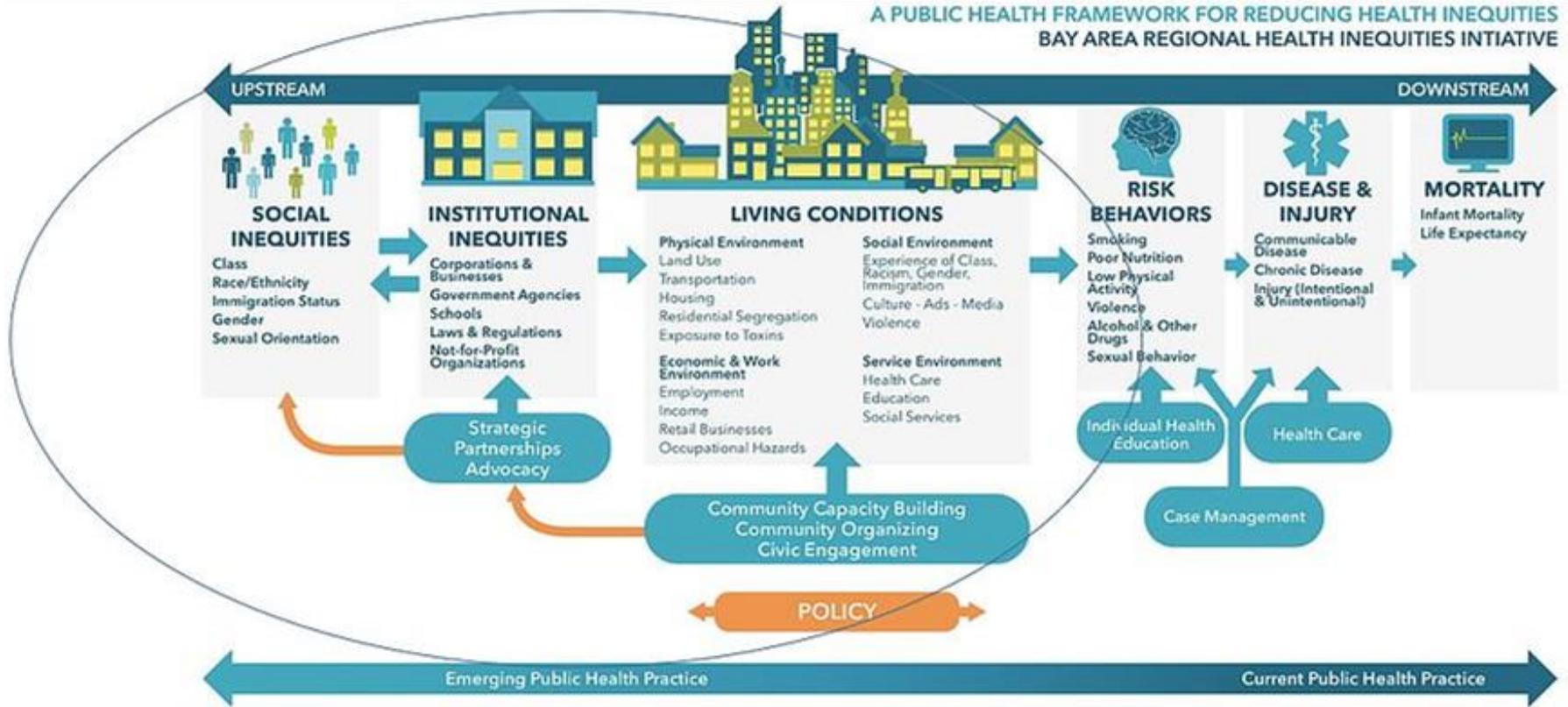
# The Public Health Role: Identifying and Addressing Determinants of Health



*Booske, B.C., Athens, J.K. Kindig, D.A., et al. Different perspectives for Assigning Weights to Determinants of Health. University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. February 2010*



# The Public Health Role: Identifying and Addressing Determinants of Health (part two)



# Food for Thought...



Think about the ways that behavioral health conditions impact the physical health of individuals and vice versa.



Now think about the ways that social and community conditions impact behavioral health.



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## The Public Health Role (cont.)

- Public health also has a role in increasing awareness that mental health conditions and substance use disorders are treatable, and negative health outcomes are preventable.
- Public health has a role in decreasing the stigma associated with seeking help, improving screening and early intervention, and ensuring access to quality, culturally relevant care and recovery services in various community settings that meet the needs of different individuals.



# The Public Health Role: Understanding the Intersection (1)

## Public Health's Role in Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention

### About the Framework

This framework describes public health's role in mental health promotion and suicide prevention. It is centered in fairness and justice and serves as a guide for public health programmatic and policy strategies. This framework is to help public health practitioners in communicating their role in mental health promotion and suicide prevention with multi-sector partners.

### The Role of Public Health

While healthcare providers typically treat people who are ill, people working in public health aim to **prevent illness and injury in the first place. Public health specializes in improving the conditions where we live, learn, work, and play.** What surrounds us shapes us and our health.

Public health's role in mental health promotion and suicide prevention is rooted in understanding that **mental and physical health are both essential to the overall health of every person.** Mental health promotion is one aspect of suicide prevention, however, both areas share a common set of risk and protective factors. Addressing these shared factors through a public health approach can improve both outcomes and prevent other outcomes, including chronic diseases, substance use, violence, and adverse childhood experiences. Therefore, public health has an important role in helping to improve the lives of all people in communities.

### The Collective Vision

**Working Together to Create  
Bright Tomorrows and Thriving Communities**

Cross-sector partners work closely together to build communities where all people can thrive.



*If you or someone you know is experiencing distress or thoughts of suicide, contact the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Trained counselors are available 24/7/365. This service is free and confidential. Call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org.*

# The Public Health Role: Understanding the Intersection (2)

## Public Health's Role in Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention

### CORE BELIEF

Public health holds a core belief that mental health and well-being are central to overall health and every person's health is important. This core belief is rooted in health equity. To support thriving communities where all people have a sense of hope, connection, purpose and meaning, we must understand that mental health is health and that every person's health is important. People's bodies, brains, and experiences are intertwined. Thus, access to communities that are safe and healthy places to live is essential.

### VALUES

#### Social and institutional equity

Public health works to ensure that everyone has a fair and full opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires valuing every person's health. It requires acknowledging the historical, unfair and unjust practices and policies that harmed, and continue to harm, the health of specific groups of people. Current health disparities are rooted in these unfair social and institutional policies and practices that routinely advantage majority groups. Public health values working with groups of people in specific, sensitive ways to address unfair social and institutional policies and practices that affect their health.

#### Multi-sector partnerships

The goal of promoting mental well-being and preventing suicide is complex. Multisector approaches and partnerships are crucial to preventing harm and achieving positive outcomes. Public health recognizes the value in these partnerships, and in shared accountability and success. These sectors include, but are not limited to, behavioral health and healthcare systems, other government entities, community-based organizations, urban planners, schools, faith-based and spiritual organizations, employers, military, and human services.

#### Data and research-informed actions

Public health values collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and sharing data to inform decisions about programmatic and policy strategies. Public health also values contributing to research on suicide prevention and mental health promotion through evaluation and telling stories of success in communities. To build trusting relationships with community members, data should include lived experience and tradition, and community members should be involved in decision making, the collection, interpretation, and sharing of the data. Data should be communicated in a way that is culturally responsive and linguistically inclusive.

#### Community-led solutions

Public health values the strengths and unique contributions of communities and understands that effective solutions come from the expertise and lived experience of people in communities. Those with lived experience are the best prepared to create culturally responsive, tailored, and enduring solutions for their community. Public health must build trust and support communities to identify and implement solutions.



# The Public Health Role: Understanding the Intersection (3)

## STRATEGIES

The following strategies common to mental health promotion and suicide prevention build upon the foundational capabilities of public health, which include assessment and surveillance, community partnership development, policy development and support, accountability and performance management, equity, and communications.

### Promote well-being

Public health implements strategies designed to create and support environments and relationships that build individual and community resilience and connection. These strategies may include:

- Promoting protective environments and social connections.
- Improving the essential conditions for health and well-being (i.e., economic stability, civic engagement, and addressing unfair policies and practices that can harm the health of specific groups in society).
- Enhancing data systems to better reflect lived experience and mental health disparities and evaluate related outcomes in communities.
- Using effective and culturally responsive communication approaches.
- Reducing stigma around mental health and help-seeking.

### Improve access to supports and opportunities

Public health improves policies and systems that impact the entire population of a community. These policies and systems can either increase access or create barriers to the help individuals may need. Removing barriers to access is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Some communities may require additional resources to help individuals access support. Public health increases access to and availability of:

- Supportive relationships
- Trainings to recognize people at risk of suicide and to intervene in mental health crises.
- Resources that support individuals, loved ones, and communities after suicide risk, attempt, death, or other mental health crisis.
- Harm reduction supports.
- Healthcare and healing systems, including Western medicine, spiritual, and cultural care.

## OUTCOMES

Public health is one of many key partners with a role in supporting communities where all people experience a sense of hope, connection, purpose, and meaning. Building these experiences into the social fabric of a community creates a sense of well-being and care within communities, which contributes to lower rates of mental health conditions, suicides, and other health outcomes.

### Hope

Communities have hope for the future that is grounded in a sense of identity and unique value.

### Connection

Communities are designed to support a tight knit network of resources and connections between people and to their culture. People feel safe within and connected to their community.

### Purpose

Communities create opportunities for individuals to have a sense of purpose in their daily lives.

### Meaning

Communities support everyone in having a sense of how they, their families and cultures are a part of something bigger, however that is defined for them.

*Inspired by First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework (Canada), Frameworks Institute, and Colorado's Tri-County Health Department Mental Health Framework*

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# Understanding the Intersection: Across the Behavioral Health Continuum



## Mental Health and Wellness Promotion

Optimize mental health and promote wellbeing by addressing the determinants of mental health



## Prevention

Prevent and reduce the incidence of behavioral health and associated negative health outcomes through mitigation of risk factors and increasing protective factors



## Clinical and Support Services

Improve access and engagement in services for people with a behavioral health concern or diagnosis



## Recovery and Reclamation

Support the ability to thrive in the community and support recovery from a behavioral health condition



## Food for Thought (part two)...



Given the continuum of behavioral health and public health's role in behavioral health, what are the ways that public health might be a partner to behavioral health treatment providers?

# Strategies: Promote Wellbeing



- Promote protective environments and social connections.
- Address unfair policies and practices that can harm the health of specific groups in society.



- Enhance data to better reflect lived experience and mental health disparities and evaluate related outcomes in communities.
- Use effective, culturally responsive communication.



- Reduce stigma around mental health and help-seeking.
- Embrace the concept of health in all policies-related to public policies that address the determinants of mental health.

# Strategies: Promote Wellbeing (cont.)



- Increase awareness that the social conditions that impact mental health concerns can be improved and mental health conditions are treatable. This is also true for suicide and substance use disorders.



- Improve social cohesion or community connectedness, including civic engagement, connection to schools and between young people and trusted adults.



- Strengthen skills and knowledge about help seeking, problem solving and coping through training and emotional development programs.

# Strategies: Improve Access to Supports and Opportunities



- Increase access to and availability of supportive relationships.
- Increase access to and availability of trainings to recognize people at risk of suicide and to intervene in mental health crises.



- Increase access to and availability of resources that support individuals, loved ones, and communities after suicide risk, attempt, death, or other mental health crisis.
- Increase access to and availability of harm reduction supports.



- Increase access to and availability of healthcare and healing systems, including Western medicine, spiritual, and cultural care.

# Strategies: Improve Access to Supports and Opportunities (cont.)



- Increase universal screening and early identification for mental health conditions or harmful substance use in a variety of settings (e.g., primary care, schools, workplaces).



- Support integration of behavioral healthcare into primary care and additional settings.
- Expand care coordination/patient navigation into more provider and community support settings.



- Support expansion and retention of a quality behavioral health workforce that is representative of the communities they serve.
- Increase quality referrals to, and engagement in, culturally relevant services.

# The Public Health Role: Understanding the Intersection



## Food for Thought (part 3)...



In what ways do public health and behavioral health treatment intersect?



What is something that you might do differently in your practice based on understanding the intersections between public health and behavioral health.

To better inform our future trainings and request topics for office hours, please complete this short survey. Use the QR code or short URL to access it. Your feedback is important. Thank you!



<https://bit.ly/bhprovidertrainingsurvey>



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# Appendix A: Additional Resources

## Office Hours

Office Hours are offered on the last Friday of every month (through September 2024) at noon MT! Please visit the [HCPF Safety Net Landing Page](#) for details & registration information.

## Listserv

Join the Listserv to receive notifications of trainings, technical assistance, and other stakeholder engagement opportunities: [Register Here](#)

## HCPF Safety Net Provider Website

Visit the website for details on upcoming training topics and announcements, training recordings and presentation decks, FAQs and more: <https://hcpf.colorado.gov/safetynetproviders>

## TTA Request Form and E-Mail

Request TTA support or share your ideas, questions and concerns about this effort using the [TTA Request Form](#) or e-mail questions and comments to: [info@safetynetproviders.com](mailto:info@safetynetproviders.com)



# Appendix B: References

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- Michael Compton and Ruth Shim, “The Social Determinants of Mental Health”, *Focus*, 13(2015).
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