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CRCG Events Calendar

April 12 – Leader Training and Bridge Call, 10-11:30 a.m. CDT

May 10 – Leader Training and Bridge Call, 10-11:30 a.m. CDT

May 31 – Restorative Practices for CRCGs Webinar Series: Part 3, 2-3 p.m. CDT

June 14 – Leader Training and Bridge Call, 10-11:30 a.m. CDT

June 28 – Restorative Practices for CRCGs Webinar Series: Part 4, 2-3 p.m. CDT

July 25-27 – 2023 TxSOC and CRCG Conference

State CRCG Office Updates

Save the Date: 2023 Texas System of Care (TxSOC) and CRCG Conference



TxSOC & CRCG Conference
Building Authentic Connection
Reconnecting • Reimagining • Revitalizing

Please save the date for the 2023 TxSOC and CRCG Conference, which will be held July 25-27, 2023, at

The University of Texas at Austin's J.J. Pickle Research Campus in Austin, Texas. Attendees will have an option to participate both in-person or virtually. The conference theme is "Building Authentic Connection: Reconnecting, Reimagining, and Revitalizing." The conference is designed for youth, family members, child-serving providers, and community leaders. The focus is building authentic connections; collaborating to improve outcomes for children, youth, young adults, and their families; and spotlighting voices with lived experience.

Continuing education units will be available. Registration is coming soon!

Are you looking for accommodations for the conference? Room blocks are available at [Hampton Inn](#) and [Home2Suites](#). Reserve your room today.

For more information, contact info@txsystemofcare.org.

2022 CRCG Recognition Awards Ceremony

The State CRCG Office would like to congratulate and thank all the remarkable nominees and awardees of the 2022 CRCG Recognition Awards. A virtual awards ceremony was held in February to recognize the awardees for their exceptional dedication to improving the lives of individuals and families in their communities. The ceremony was well attended by CRCG leaders, community members, and agency partners. Remarks were given by Julie Abreu, CRCG State Coordinator, along with awards announcements and a special congratulatory group video from State CRCG Workgroup members and CRCG representatives.

The following recipients were recognized at the ceremony:

2022 Outstanding CRCG

Bexar County Children and Youth CRCG

2022 Shining Star Award Recipients

Tanya Jopling, M.A., LCDC

Coordinator Behavioral Health Services for the Bexar County Juvenile Probation Department and Member of the Bexar County Children and Youth CRCG

John O'Brien, M.Ed.

Superintendent of Schools for Van Vleck Independent School District (ISD) and Member of the Matagorda County CRCG

Ginger L. Guy

Executive Administrative Assistant for the Randall County Juvenile Probation Department and Secretary of the Potter and Randall Counties CRCG

Terry Allen

Chief Juvenile Probation Officer for the Tyler County Juvenile Probation Department and Member of the Tyler County CRCG

To view the recording of the event, visit the [GoToWebinar](#) webpage.

2023 State CRCG Office Annual Survey: Thank You for Your Response!

Thank you to all CRCG leaders who participated in the State CRCG Office Annual Survey. We greatly appreciate and value your feedback. The responses received will help us get a better idea of CRCGs' current needs, what training topics will be most useful, and what types of support will help CRCGs best serve their community. We will use the feedback to guide our training and support efforts in 2023.

State CRCG Office Presentations

The State CRCG Office had the opportunity to present information about CRCGs to a variety of audiences in the first quarter of 2023, including the Texas Education Agency's statewide wellness team on February 8. This was part of their 2023 Mental and Behavioral Health Webinar Series, which will continue throughout the year. Register for upcoming webinar sessions below and visit the [Texas School Mental Health](#) website for additional resources.

- [April 12, 2023](#)
- [May 10, 2023](#)
- [June 14, 2023](#)

The State CRCG Office also presented at the Texas Juvenile Justice Department Training Academy's Skill Enhancement, Education and Development (SEED) virtual conference on March 22; and participated in the Texas CASA Forum in San Antonio on March 29 along with key partners and child welfare leaders across the state to discuss enhancing collaboration.

Thank you to all the organizations and agencies for the invitation to present to their staff, leadership teams, and stakeholders. If you are a part of an organization or agency and would like to learn more about CRCGs and the great work they do, please contact the [State CRCG Office](#).

CRCG Site Visits

Upshur County CRCG

New leaders of the Upshur County CRCG met with the State CRCG Office in January to discuss their new roles and the kind of support their team needs. The leadership team includes Robinann Noland, Co-Chair; Geni Jackson, Co-Chair; and Shelby Shinall, Coordinator and Data Reporter, who are representatives from the local mental health authority Community Healthcare. The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss who are essential partners of a CRCG, and how to connect with and recruit new

Resources

CRCG Website

The [CRCG website](#) has great resources for leaders and members, including guidebooks covering all things CRCGs, and resources for families and community members. Popular links include:

[CRCG Training Toolkit](#)

Webinar Recordings

The State CRCG Office webinars bring valuable resources and information to CRCG partners and members.

Restorative Practices for CRCGs [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)

Visit the [CRCG Training and Technical Assistance webpage](#) to view other past webinar recordings.

Sharing Is Caring

Please share our newsletter with your colleagues or anyone that might benefit from this information!

Contact Us

We would love to hear from you! If you have thoughts, concerns, comments, ideas, or anything else that you would like to share, please contact the State CRCG Office.

CRCG@hsc.state.tx.us

(512) 206-5255

members. Further, an occasion was provided to go over the CRCG data collection system and answer questions about data entry and reporting.

Blanco County CRCG

Blanco County community members sat down in January to discuss the next steps in establishing a CRCG. The meeting brought together the State CRCG office with partners from the Hill Country Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Centers, Community Resource Centers of Texas, Inc., Texas Department of State Health Services' Children with Special Health Care Needs Program, and Highland Lakes Family Crisis Center. The group discussed how to identify key partners, plan an organizational meeting, create CRCG policies and procedures, collect referrals and host the first CRCG meeting, and staffing. The State CRCG Office went over leadership roles and responsibilities and discussed supports available to new leaders. Special thanks to Dawn Capra, Director of Community Impact, Community Resource Centers of Texas, Inc., who brought all the interested parties together and offered to host the first organizational meeting for the CRCG. The upcoming months will be full of activity as this new group continues making progress.

State CRCG Office Available for Virtual Technical Assistance

The State CRCG Office is available for virtual training and technical assistance, including helping navigate virtual platforms and attending practice meetings. Please email the State CRCG Office at CRCG@hsc.state.tx.us or call 512-206-5255 for assistance.

Spotlight on CRCGs

Welcome New CRCG Leaders

A special welcome to the new CRCG leaders that have volunteered to take on key roles in 2023:

- Abigail Vasquez, Chair, and Linda Ramos-Perez, Co-Chair, of the Aransas, Bee, Live Oak, and San Patricio Counties CRCG and the Brooks, Duval, Jim Wells, Kenedy, and Kleberg Counties CRCG
- Renée Hawkins, Chair, of the Gregg County CRCG
- Suzanne Marquis, Data Reporter, of the Collin County CRCG
- Dr. Shana Bunch-Fancher, Co-Chair, of the Burnet County CRCG
- Cinthya Onofre, Chair, of the Parker County CRCG
- Sandi Hanks, Chair, of the Tyler County CRCG

We appreciate the time and commitment that these leaders are devoting to supporting their local CRCGs and communities.

To share success stories for upcoming newsletters, email the State CRCG Office at CRCG@hpsc.state.tx.us.

Upcoming CRCG Events

Monthly Leader Training and Bridge Call

The monthly leader training and bridge call, hosted by the State CRCG Office, offers a time to provide training and technical assistance to CRCG leaders and answer questions, as well as an opportunity for leaders to share ideas, discuss challenges, and network. A portion of these sessions are dedicated to regional cohort breakout rooms to allow leaders to connect and build partnerships with other CRCGs in their region.

All CRCG leaders are welcome and encouraged to join each month. The training occurs every second Wednesday of the month from 10–11:30 a.m. CT. A calendar invite is sent to all CRCG leaders with the meeting information. Upcoming dates and times include:

- April 12, 2023, 10-11:30 a.m. CDT / 9-10:30 a.m. MDT
- May 10, 2023, 10-11:30 a.m. CDT / 9-10:30 a.m. MDT
- June 14, 2023, 10-11:30 a.m. CDT / 9-10:30 a.m. MDT

For questions or additional information, please contact the State CRCG Office at CRCG@hpsc.state.tx.us.

Restorative Practices for CRCGs Webinar Series: Strengthening Individual, Family, School, and Community Partnerships

Join the State CRCG Office and Region 4 Education Service Center for the Restorative Practices for CRCGs Webinar Series: Strengthening Individual, Family, School, and Community Partnerships.

The purpose of this webinar series is to provide introductory information on the principles of Restorative Practices.

Upcoming sessions include:

- May 31, 2023, from 2-3 p.m. CDT: The Circle Experience
- June 28, 2023, from 2-3 p.m. CDT: How to Implement Circle Practices during CRCG Meetings: Part 1
- August 23, 2023, from 2-3 p.m. CDT: How to Implement Circle Practices during CRCG Meetings: Part 2

To register for the webinar series, visit the [Restorative Practices for CRCGs Registration](#) webpage.

Recordings for past webinars are available online on the [CRCG Training and Technical Assistance](#) webpage.

CRCG Partner Agency Updates

Texas Health and Human Services Commission

Office of Mental Health Coordination

Veterans Mental Health Services

The Deadly Gap: Suicide Risk in the First Year Post-Military Service

According to data released by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in September 2022, the suicide rate for veterans has begun to trend downward. After climbing steadily between 2001 and 2018, age- and sex-adjusted suicide rates for veterans peaked in 2018, but then fell in both 2019 and 2020, falling by 9.7 percent in that two-year time.¹ While this is certainly uplifting news, there is much more work to be done.

One opportunity that VA has acknowledged is increasing supports during the first year after a service member leaves the military and transitions into

¹ [2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report, VA Suicide Prevention, Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, September 2022](#)

civilian life. This first year of transition has been identified as high risk for suicide, with research estimating the suicide rate to be 2.5 times higher for these “new” veterans than for the active-duty population² and double the rate compared to the general veteran population.³ This period has therefore been deemed, “The Deadly Gap.” Given that more than 200,000 service members leave the service each year,⁴ this is an exclusive sector of the military community with unique needs.

There are several reasons why this time period can be difficult for a transitioning service member. To start, it’s important to acknowledge the protective factors that the military provides. Beyond a consistent paycheck and reliable healthcare and housing (all imperative to strong mental health), the military provides structure with clear expectations. Service members are provided “built-in” mentors through their chain of command, as well as a sense of community and camaraderie with fellow service members. When one leaves the service, all of this is essentially gone, and these now-veterans are learning to navigate job-searching, healthcare, and housing in a civilian world that many have not experienced as an adult. In fact, research tells us that there is low usage of VA and other community services during this first-year post-service.⁵

In addition to these challenges, it’s likely that veterans are moving away from their last duty station, resulting in a loss of social and community connections, a possible school change for their children, re-integrating back into an extended family situation, and attempting to find a new sense of purpose and fulfillment. Furthermore, the need to “push through” struggles (physical, emotional) is lessened. Studies show that a large proportion of military members who experience mental health problems do not seek help - as many as 40-60 percent.⁶ Without the stigma, fear of security clearance loss or promotions, veterans may now find themselves recognizing the need to address these issues.

In an effort to best serve this unique population of “new” veterans, VA and other organizations have begun to implement specific programs and services.

² [Association of Suicide Risk with Transition to Civilian Life Among US Military Service Members - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)

³ [The deadly gap: Understanding suicide among veterans transitioning out of the military - ScienceDirect](#)

⁴ [Transition Assistance Program | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](#)

⁵ [The deadly gap: Understanding suicide among veterans transitioning out of the military - ScienceDirect](#)

⁶ [Stigma as a Barrier to Seeking Health Care Among Military Personnel with Mental Health Problems | Epidemiologic Reviews | Oxford Academic \(oup.com\)](#)

VA has implemented the [Solid Start](#) program, calling every veteran three times during their first year of separation. The [ETS Sponsorship program](#) is a non-profit organization that partners with VA, the Department of Defense, and local communities to support service members through the transition process from military to civilian life. And finally, Military One Source extends their services to veterans during their first year of separation.

It is important to note that while this first-year post-military service period is high-risk, service members and veterans can experience thoughts of suicide at any time. The Military Crisis Line is a free, confidential resource for all service members, including members of the National Guard and Reserve, as well as veterans and their families, even if they're not enrolled in VA benefits or health care. Dial 988, then press 1.

Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training introduces participants to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use concerns, builds understanding of their impact, and gives an overview of common treatments and resources.

Adult, youth, and teen MHFA trainings are available to community members across the state through the local mental health and behavioral health authorities. More information on how to enroll in a course can be found at [Mental Health First Aid | Texas Health and Human Services](#).

Rural Mental Health

Community Engagement Pilot

Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Rural Mental Health works to ensure that all Texans have access to care at the right time and the right place.

Rural Mental Health reviewed five years of crisis data and found:

- Rural Texans were more likely to access crisis services than urban Texans, despite there being fewer rural Texans;
- Rural Texans aged 18 years and older were about 45 percent more likely to access crisis services than their urban counterparts; and
- Rural Texans under age 18 were about 150 percent more likely to access crisis services than their urban counterparts.

Rural Mental Health took a deeper dive and found parts of South, Central, and East Texas have higher incidents of mental health crisis. In response, Rural Mental Health implemented a community engagement pilot, meeting with rural communities in those areas to search for local solutions with the

goal of ensuring rural Texans have equal opportunity for mental health care and wellness.

HHSC knows that Texans in rural communities are both independent and innovative in helping their neighbors. Needs expressed in the three regions include:

- Mental health and suicide awareness training;
- Helping organizations co-located and collaborating to meet community needs;
- Community resource centers that ensure people know where to go to seek assistance or get information; and
- Safe and easily accessible recreational opportunities for children and families.

Rural Mental Health continues the work with the All Texas Access Initiative. The latest All Texas Access Report is currently available here: [Rural Mental Health | Texas Health and Human Services](#). To contact HHSC's Rural Mental Health unit, email RuralMentalHealth@hhs.texas.gov.

Texas Department of State Health Services

Children with Special Health Care Needs

The Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) Systems Development Group supports population-based services for children with special health care needs relating to the Title V Block Grant and is part of the Maternal and Child Health Section at the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS).

The program partners with community-based contractors around Texas to provide support for families with children and youth with special health care needs and disabilities. Services may include in-home or center-based respite, parent-to-parent connections, educational training and workshops, support groups, community recreational activities, and more. Not all services are available in all parts of the state. Case management for families is also available through DSHS regional offices.

The program leads two statewide learning collaboratives that meet quarterly by webinar to share knowledge, implementation strategies, and best practices. The meetings are open to everyone interested, including youth and young adults, parents, and providers, as well as representatives from local community organizations, hospital and university systems, and health care plans.

Upcoming calls are scheduled on the following dates:

[Medical Home Learning Collaborative \(MHLC\)](#)

Wednesday, April 5, 2023, 10–11:30 a.m. CDT

To register for the MHLC, visit the [MHLC](#) webpage.

[Transition to Adulthood Learning Collaborative \(TALC\)](#)

Wednesday, May 3, 2023, Noon–1:30 p.m. CDT

Haley Greer, Juris Doctor, Master Pool Trust Director with the Arc of Texas will join us to share updates on the Trust, give an overview of Special Needs, Trusts, and more! Bring your questions and please share with others who may be interested.

To register for the TALC, visit the [TALC](#) webpage.

Meeting dates are subject to change.

Program resources on transitioning to adult health care, community inclusion, medical home, and more are free and can be ordered on the [DSHS Resource Order Form](#) webpage.

For more information about the Learning Collaboratives and the CSHCN program, please email Ivy Goldstein, State CSHCN Health Coordinator at ivy.goldstein@dshs.texas.gov.

Other News and Events

Children’s Mental Health Acceptance Day

On Saturday, May 6, 2023, the Texas HHSC, in partnership with the TxSOC and community partners, will return in-person to celebrate Children’s Mental Health Acceptance Day (CMHAD). The event will start at 9:00 a.m. CDT at the Texas State Capitol, 1100 Congress Ave., Austin, TX 78701. To learn more, visit the [CMHAD Home Page](#).

CMHAD is a nationally observed day to raise awareness about mental health challenges experienced by children and their families. The goal of this event is to build awareness about and reduce mental health stigma and garner community support for children and families, so they do not feel alone in facing them. The theme of this year’s event is “Make a Beat for Children’s Mental Health!”

HHSC invites community organizations to participate in CMHAD as an exhibitor. The in-person event will allow organizations to showcase their services and expertise while building valuable connections to others. Each exhibitor will also be displayed on the CMHAD website. To register your

organization as an exhibitor for CMHAD, visit the [CMHAD Exhibitor Page](#). Registration will be open through April 17, 2023.

Community organizers across the state are encouraged to plan local CMHAD events. Planning resources can be found at [CMHAD Toolkit](#).

Save the Date: 6th Annual Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day Symposium

Mark your calendars for May 11, 2023, to attend the 6th Annual Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day Symposium hosted by the National Council on Aging, the Administration for Community Living, the Health Resources and Services Administration, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. This free, all-day, virtual event will feature an engaging plenary, informative sessions, and a diverse array of topics addressing the most pressing behavioral health needs in older adults.

To learn more, visit [Save the Date: 6th Annual Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day Symposium](#) webpage.

2023 Texas School Safety Conference

The 2023 Texas School Safety Conference hosted by the Texas State University's Texas School Safety Center, will be held June 18-22, 2023, in San Antonio, Texas.

Creating safe and healthy environments requires a daily commitment from staff, students, and community partners. Themed Developing School Safety Leaders, the conference will offer strategies to empower everyone in the school community to lead with confidence.

Nationally recognized keynote speakers and relevant breakout sessions based on best practices in the field of school safety will equip you to improve the school safety posture of your districts and communities.

To learn more, visit the [Texas School Safety Conference](#) webpage.

36th Annual Texas Council Conference

The 36th Annual Texas Council Conference hosted by the Texas Council of Community Centers, will be held June 21-23, 2023, in Houston, Texas. The Annual Texas Council Conference brings together local, state, and national experts to share perspectives on best practices for integrated health, person directed and recovery-based services, MHFA, public policy, peer support, and other promising practices affecting people with serious mental illness, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and substance use disorders.

To learn more, visit the [36th Annual Texas Council Conference](#) webpage.

18th Annual Statewide Parent Conference

Save the Date for the 18th Annual Statewide Parent Conference hosted by Texas Parent to Parent (TxP2P), July 14 and 15, 2023, at the Embassy Suites in San Marcos, Texas.

The conference helps Texas parents learn how to deal with the unique issues and challenges they face on a daily basis in caring for their children. The two-day conference offers 50 different sessions within several tracks, each covering a different topic. The tracks include: advocacy (general and legislative), parenting and sibling issues (and a Sibshop), special education law (basic to advanced), medical issues (including Medical Home and Medicaid Waiver Programs), behavior, mental health, parent leadership, resources and services, self-advocacy, transition issues for youth and young adults with disabilities, and creating a good life for people with disabilities.

Through seminars and face-to-face networking, parents, self-advocates, family members, caregivers and professionals learn from each other as they continue their unique journeys caring for a child with a disability or a special health care need. TxP2P's goal is for everyone to leave the conference with renewed energy and passion along with tools and information they need to make positive changes for children with disabilities in Texas.

To learn more, visit the [TxP2P Parent Conference](#) webpage.

The Texas HHSC Institute

The Texas HHSC Institute hosted by the Texas HHSC, will be held July 17-20, 2023, at the University of Texas at Austin Commons Center in Austin, Texas and virtually. The Texas HHSC Institute is a conference that provides education and training for state agencies, private providers, clinicians, caregivers, and other stakeholders with a vested interest in addressing the intellectual, mental, and behavioral health needs of a variety of populations.

To learn more, visit [The Texas HHSC Institute](#) website.

Partners in Prevention Conference

The 36th Annual Texas Council Conference hosted by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, will be held November 14-16, 2023, in Austin, Texas. The Partners in Prevention Conference is the largest annual gathering of prevention and early intervention professionals in Texas. The conference attracts parent educators, youth service providers, civic leaders, policy advocates, researchers, DFPS staff, Prevention and Early Intervention grantees, and others with a professional interest in child and family well-being, youth development, and juvenile justice. Attendees benefit from a

wide variety of presentations, including lived experience from parents and youth, fatherhood engagement, ethics, diversity, equity and inclusion, program evaluation, home visiting, and positive youth development.

To learn more, visit the [Partners in Prevention Conference](#) webpage.