

**McLean Hospital and Mass General Brigham (MGB) Outreach Program with Indian Health Service (IHS)
Mental Health Peer Support, Training and Education**

In the wake of the initial phase of the pandemic, Navajo Nation was disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and by spring, 2020 had the highest rates of death and infection in the country. In the close-knit Shiprock, New Mexico and Chinle, Arizona communities, the layers of grief and loss were overwhelming to the providers treating patients while simultaneously mourning the losses of staff, children of staff, patients, esteemed elders, and neighbors. These two communities had almost no access to mental health support. The McLean collaboration with MGB Outreach Program with Indian Health Service (IHS - formerly BWH Outreach Program with IHS) was initiated in March 2021 with the goal of sending mental health clinicians to provide individual peer support and group sessions to the under-resourced, grieving, and strained provider and hospital staff. The program offers mental health peer support as well as skills and counseling training to peer counselors and other staff members. McLean staff members provide education through grand rounds and staff trainings. In 2021, in the initial phase of this program, clinicians met with departments and groups to facilitate conversation and share pandemic-related experiences, and they conducted inpatient unit debriefing sessions. In many instances, these opportunities were the first time that departments had sat together to talk about their experiences during the first year of the pandemic. In March 2021, the psychiatrist who was the first volunteer in the McLean program was also the first person in 12 months to have the opportunity to provide grand rounds at Northern Navajo Medical Center (NNMC) in Shiprock, NM since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020.

During the first year of this collaborative program, 24 McLean providers (MD, PhD, PsyD, RN, and LICSW) each spent one week at NNMC. One clinician provided mental health peer support to staff at the Chinle Regional Health Care Facility in Chinle, AZ. From March-December 2021, McLean clinicians provided 25 weeks of mental health peer support, teaching and training. During this time, McLean staff facilitated 106 group sessions and 38 inpatient unit debriefing sessions, and provided 367 individual peer support sessions, 92 staff skills trainings, and 13 grand rounds. Staff skills trainings focused on improving patient care techniques, patient counseling, and self-care. Grand Rounds topics included Alzheimer's Disease and the Healthy Aging Brain, the Impact of COVID on Substance Abuse, Women's Mental Health: One Size Does Not Fit All, Peer Support in Healthcare, Sleep for Well-Being During Disasters and Trauma, COVID in the geriatric population, among other topics.

Volunteers in this program report that this opportunity has provided them with both a renewed sense of professional well-being and personal well-being. In addition, in 2021, 100% of volunteers said their volunteer experience was very positive and they were interested in future professional development activities to serve communities in need of critical mental health care.

In April 2022, McLean Hospital was honored to receive the Harvard Medical School Dean's Community Service Award for McLean's collaboration with Brigham and Women's Hospital (now MGB-wide) and the IHS providing peer support in the Northern Navajo Medical Center.

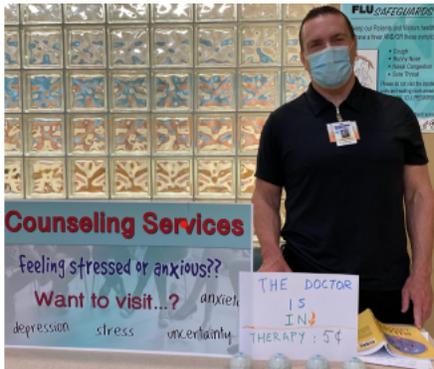
Since January 2022, McLean providers continue to be on-site at NNMC for peer support approximately one week per month and continue to be responsive to the evolving needs of the staff. Several McLean staff have been to NNMC on multiple occasions, fortifying ongoing relationships with staff. There are multiple other efforts (including some that are virtual) for staff training and educational initiatives.

Additional information and McLean Hospital staff supporting this program include:
<https://www.mcleanhospital.org/news/i-wanted-do-anything-could-help-offering-support-caregivers-indigenous-communities>

Shelly F. Greenfield MD MPH, Chief Academic Officer and program physician champion
Christopher Palmer MD, Director, Department of Postgraduate and Continuing Education
Marjorie Overhiser, Department of Postgraduate and Continuing Education

Additional information about Mass General Brigham Outreach Program with IHS include:
Ellen Bell, MBA, MPH, Director, Community Health Outreach and Training Programs, MGB
<https://www.brighamandwomens.org/assets/BWH/indian-health-service/pdfs/mgb-outreach-program-brochure.pdf>

Photos of McLean volunteers at NNMC, Shiprock NM and Chinle Regional Health Care Facility, Chinle AZ:



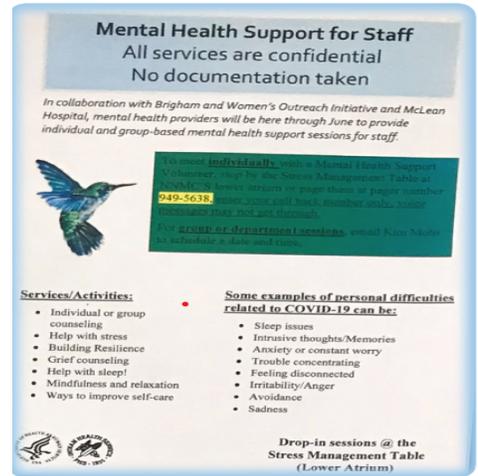
Blaise Aguirre, Shiprock
Staffing "Mental Health Table" between sessions



David Alperovitz, Chinle
In traditional hogan used for sessions



Dr. Shelly F Greenfield staffing the
“Mental Health Table” in Shiprock



Shiprock Hospital Poster

Harvard Medical School Dean's Community Service Award April 2022 for McLean Hospital Collaboration with BWH Outreach Program with Indian Health Service (IHS)

(From Left to Right: Dean Joan Reede MD, Christopher Palmer MD, Shelly F. Greenfield MD MPH, George Q. Daley, MD Dean of HMS)

