



Northwest (HHS Region 10)

**ATTC**

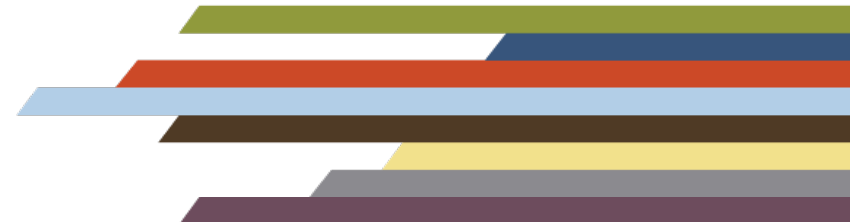
Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
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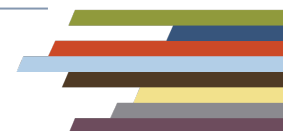
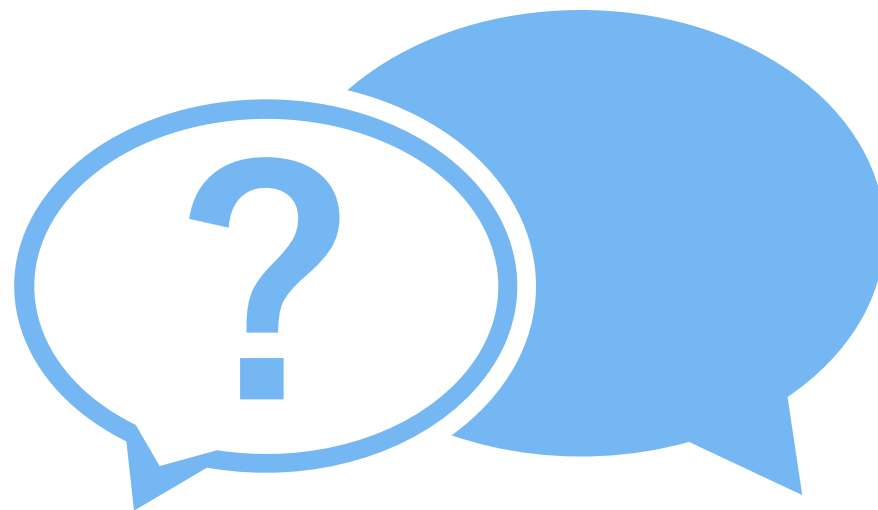
## Washington State Builds a Stronger Mental Health Workforce: Introducing the Behavioral Health Support Specialist

# Thank you for joining us! The webinar will begin shortly.

- **Participants are automatically muted during this presentation**
- **Got questions?** Type them into the chat box at any time and they will be answered at the end of the presentation.
- An ADA-compliant recording of this presentation will be made available on our website at:  
<http://attcnetwork.org/northwest>



**Questions? Please type them in  
the chat box!**



# Surveys

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**We greatly appreciate your feedback!**

Every survey we receive helps us improve and continue offering our programs.

It only takes **1 minute** to complete!



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Your certificate will be emailed within a week to the address you registered with.

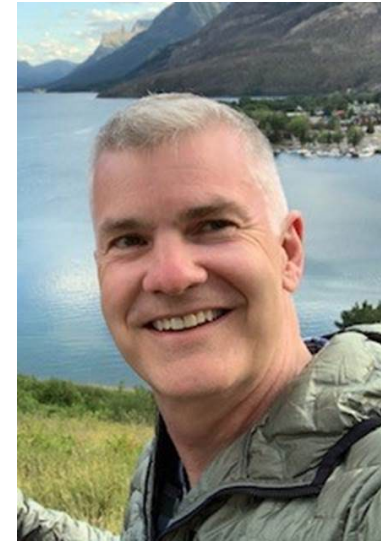


# Northwest ATTC Presents

## Washington State Builds a Stronger Mental Health Workforce: Introducing the Behavioral Health Support Specialist



Ursula Heflick  
MS, LMHC, SUDP



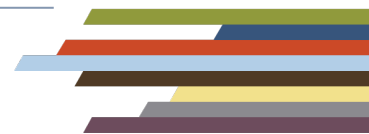
Bill O'Connell  
EdD, LMHC, NCC




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Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
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# Washington State Builds a Stronger Mental Health Workforce: Introducing the Behavioral Health Support Specialist

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# DISCLOSURE

- The speakers report no financial conflicts of interest related to this presentation.
- The speakers are referencing the most recent draft of documents including CR 102 to credential a BHSS. These drafts are open to public comment, therefore, some of the material presented is conditional and subject to change.

# PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The mental and behavioral health workforce shortage has hindered access to care in the United States, resulting in long waitlists for persons who need behavioral health care. Bachelor level practitioners are one solution to increasing available mental and behavioral health treatment across a variety of settings.

A Behavioral Health Support Specialist (BHSS) will provide brief treatment for depression using behavioral activation, anxiety using CBT and engage in harm reduction for substance use issues.

This webinar highlights an innovative effort in Washington State to initiate a bachelor's-level BHSS curriculum leading to credentialing to expand the mental health workforce and improve access to care.



# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Participants will understand the relationship between approved bachelor programs in behavioral health, psychology, and social work and the new state BHSS credential.
2. Participants will recognize the role and function of the BHSS in the various settings they can practice under supervision.
3. Participants will distinguish between substance abuse treatment work and BHSS interventions.

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# BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

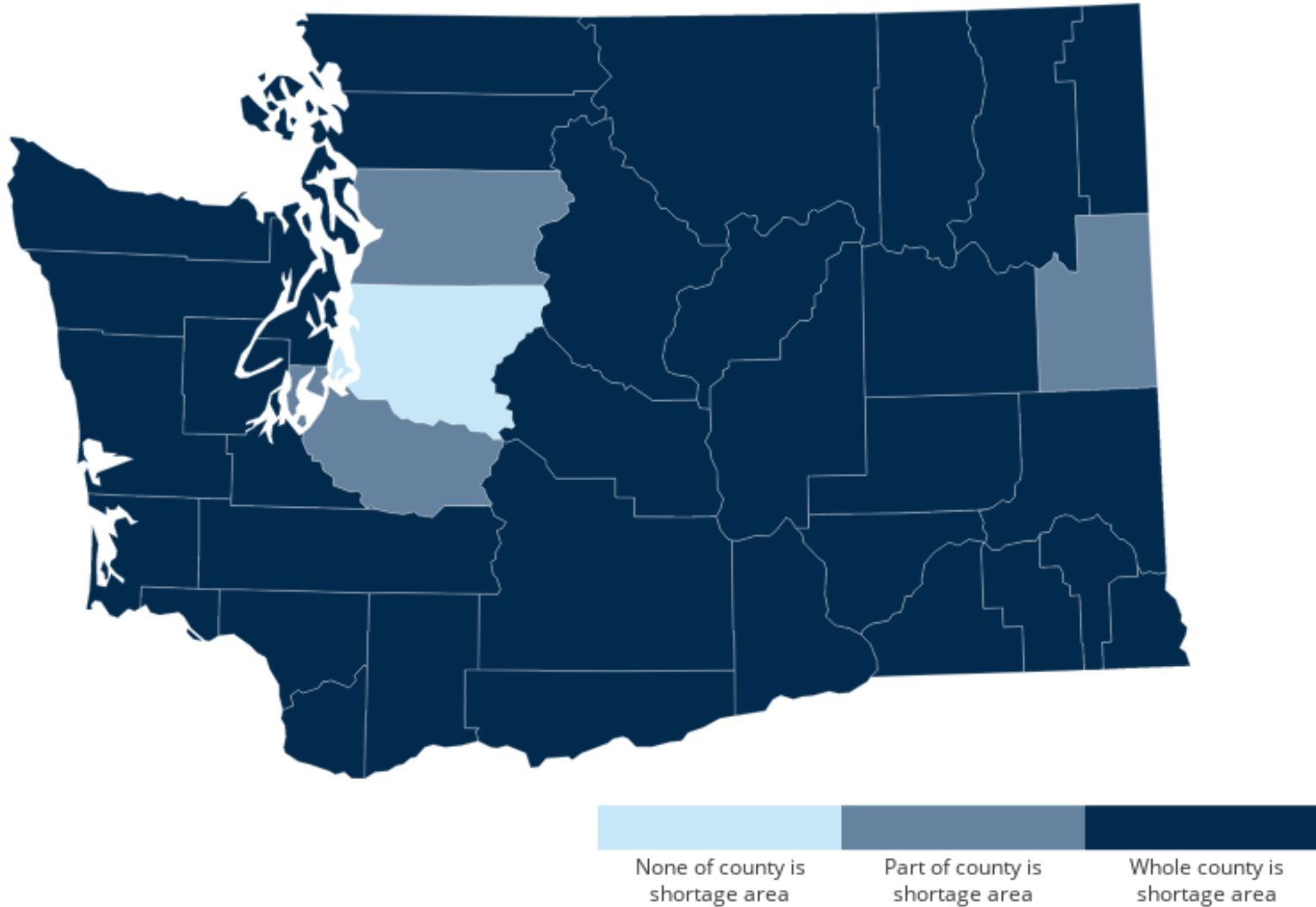
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SUPPORT SPECIALIST



# OVERVIEW OF CHALLENGE IN WASHINGTON

- Behavioral health workforce shortage
- Need for full range of treatments
- Need for increased access to care for all

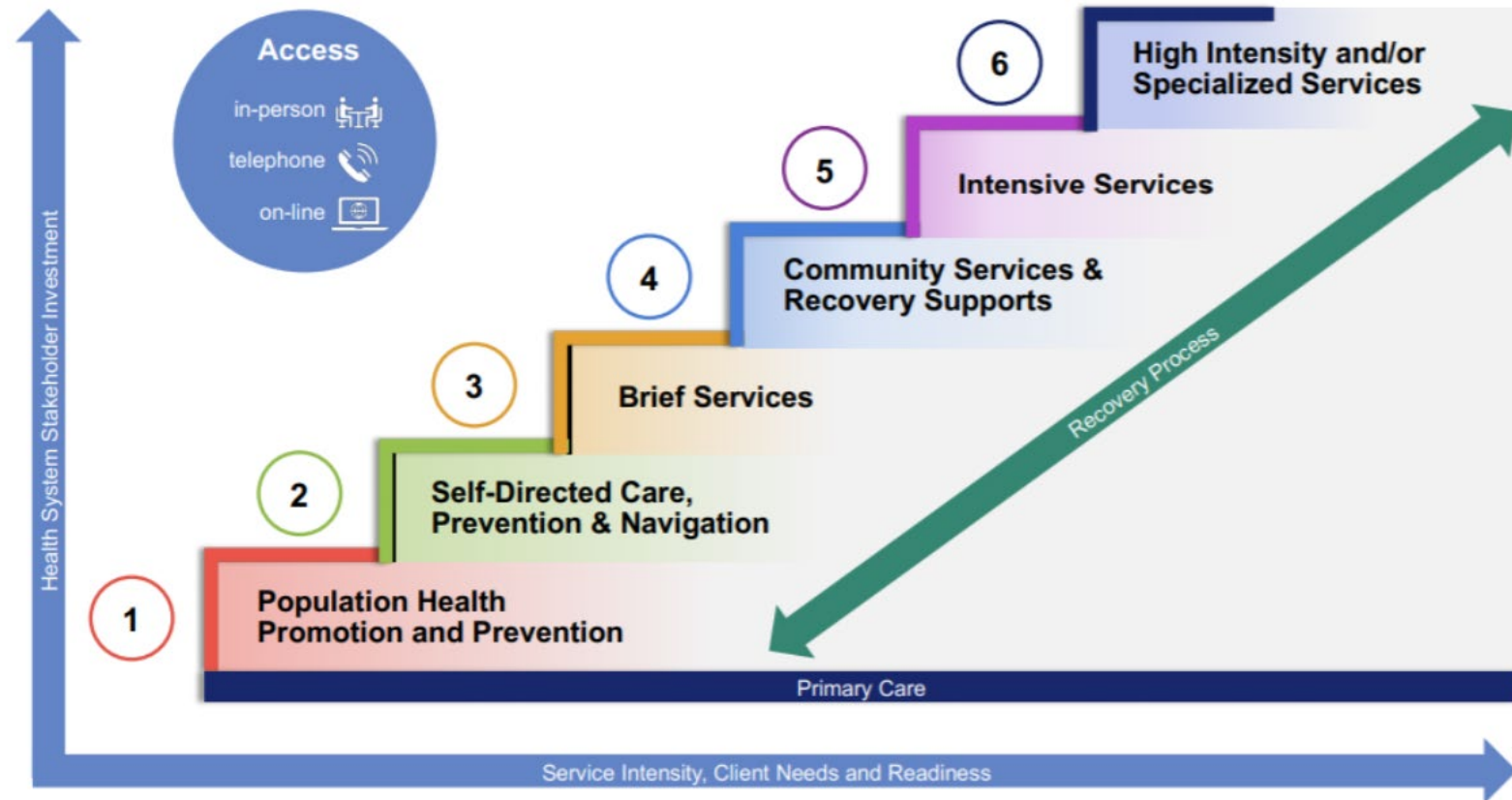
## Health Professional Shortage Areas: Mental Health, by County, 2022 - Washington



Source: [data.HRSA.gov](https://data.HRSA.gov), July 2022.

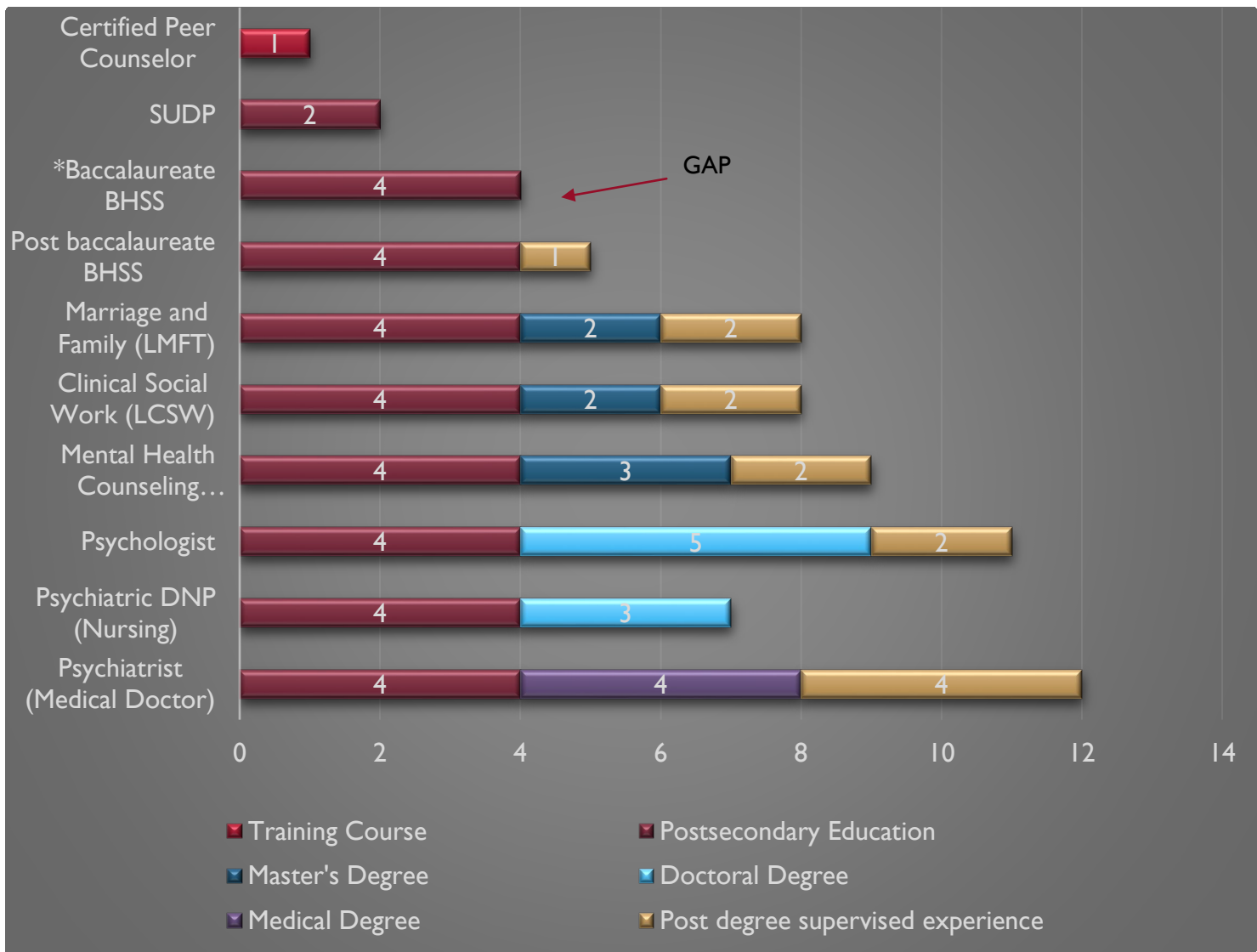
# WA MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER SHORTAGE AREAS

Sources: [RHI Hub](https://RHIHub.org) & [HRSA](https://HRSA.gov)



# STEPPED CARE MODEL

IMAGE SOURCE: NEW BRUNSWICK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



**TYPICAL EDUCATION & TRAINING FOR LICENSURE FOR SELECT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OCCUPATIONS IN WA STATE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

# BHSS CREDENTIALING

- Four-year degree in Psychology, Social Work, Behavioral Healthcare or Related Degree program with BHSS specialization
- Bachelor-level credentials already exist in many states.



PARTICIPANTS WILL UNDERSTAND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN APPROVED BACHELOR PROGRAMS IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, PSYCHOLOGY, AND SOCIAL WORK AND THE NEW STATE BHSS CREDENTIAL.

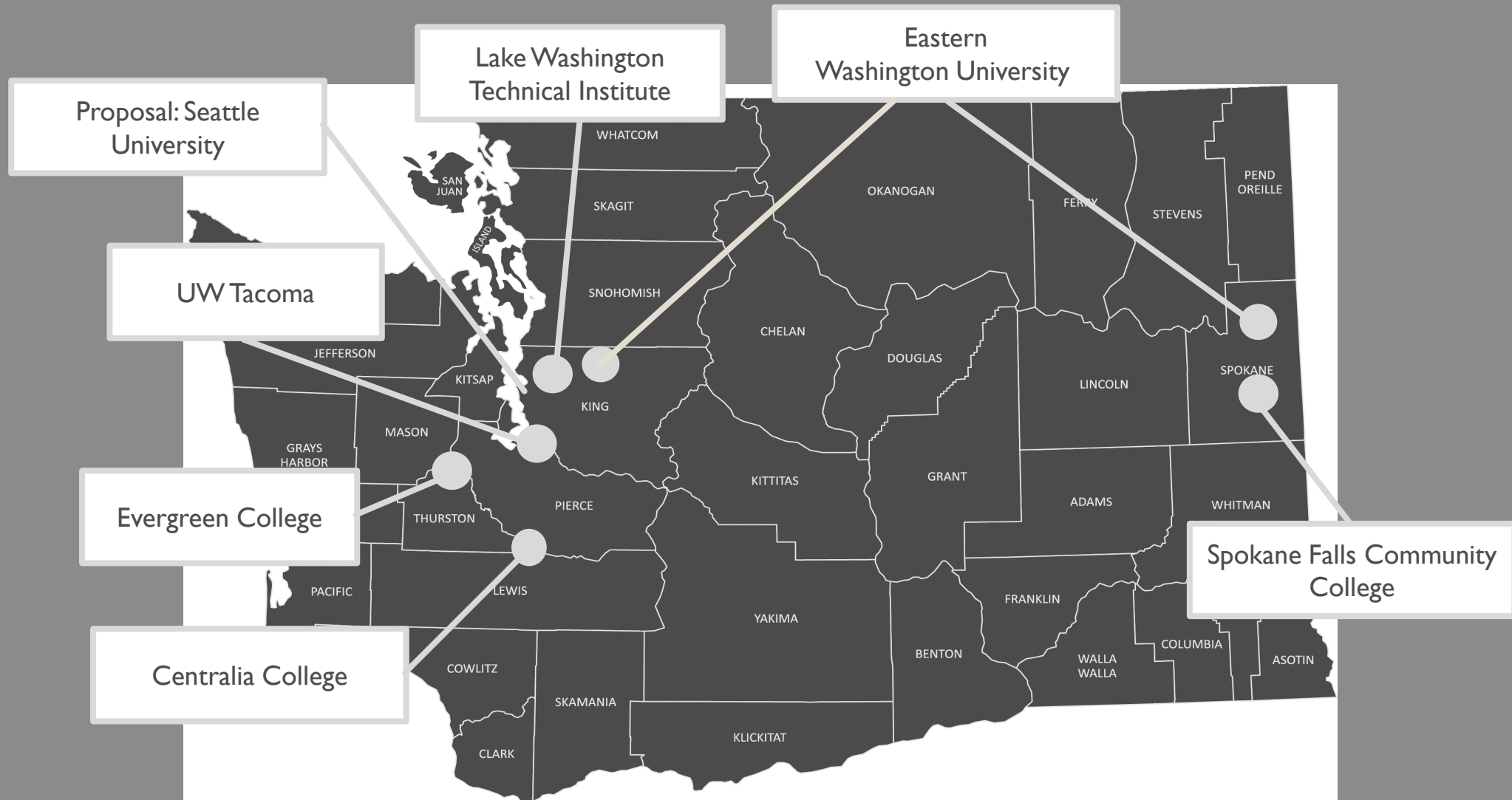
**LEARNING OBJECTIVE I**



# WHAT IS AN APPROVED PROGRAM?

- Programs move from provisional to full approval
- There is alignment with 29 out of 34 competencies listed in WAC using the current gap analysis tool provided by the department and UW
- The educational program must continue working to achieve full compliance
- Practicum sites meet the requirements of the WAC
- A fully approved educational program must:
  - Reapply for approval every seven years after initial approval
    - Required updates
  - An educational program shall report substantial changes to the department within 60 days.
    - Program audits
  - The department may conduct audits to ensure an educational program continues to meet educational standards.

# EDUCATION PARTNERS



# BHSS EDUCATION META-COMPETENCIES

1. Health Equity
2. Helping Relationships
3. Cultural Responsiveness
4. Team-Based Care and Collaboration
5. Screening and Assessment
6. Case Management and Care Coordination
7. Interventions
8. Legal, Ethical and Professional Issues



PARTICIPANTS WILL RECOGNIZE THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE BHSS IN THE VARIOUS SETTINGS THEY CAN PRACTICE UNDER SUPERVISION.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVE 2

# BHSSS' SCOPE OF PRACTICE

**Treatment for a behavioral health condition which is impacting a client's quality of life by:**

- **Delivering** brief, evidence-based interventions for common behavioral health conditions under supervision.
- **Tracking** and monitoring treatment response and outcomes using measurement-based care. Interventions ought to be adjusted based on patient response to find the most effective treatment;
- **Consulting** with their clinical supervisor about a client whose symptoms fail to improve; and
- **Referring** a client to alternate health care providers or other resources when the client's needs exceed the BHSS's scope of practice or competence.

**Note:**

- Brief, evidence-based interventions are strategies focused on the reduction of symptom severity within a time frame congruent with the needs of the patient, provider, and treatment setting. The strategies are often informed by principles associated with cognitive behavioral, problem-solving, strategic, or solution-focused psychotherapies.

# CLINICAL SUPERVISION

## Clinical Supervision (draft rules)

### Traditional

- Advanced social worker or associate license under chapter 18.225 RCW;
- Independent clinical social worker or associate license under chapter 18.225 RCW;
- Marriage and family therapist or associate license under chapter 18.225 RCW;
- Mental health counselor or associate license under chapter 18.225 RCW;
- Psychiatrist under chapter 18.71 RCW;
- Psychiatric advanced practice registered nurse license under chapter 18.79 RCW; or
- Psychologist or associate license under chapter 18.83 RCW.

## Clinical Supervision (draft rules):

### Specific to Integrated Care

- Osteopathic physician license under chapter 18.57 RCW;
- Physician license under chapter 18.71 RCW;
- Physician assistant license under chapter 18.71A RCW;
- Other providers may also be eligible to provide BHSS supervision if they:
- Hold a Washington state credential issued by another state agency; and have the ability to assess, diagnose, and treat identifiable mental and behavioral health conditions as part of their scope of practice.

# CLINICAL SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Supervising a BHSS's treatment of clients and ensuring the BHSS does not exceed their scope of practice;
- Providing regular, outcome-focused supervision appropriate for the BHSS's training, education, and experience;
- Providing competent supervision based on the supervisor's own level of training, education, and experience; and
- Ensuring that behavioral consultation is available to the BHSS if necessary.

# BILLING

- BHSS services will be recoverable through state Medicaid and third-party insurance.
- The Health Care Authority (HCA) has convened a work group to examine the scope of practice of a BHSS and relationship to service codes.
- The BHSS will be able to work across settings when appropriate supervision is available.





PARTICIPANTS WILL DISTINGUISH THE BETWEEN SUBSTANCE  
ABUSE TREATMENT WORK AND BHSS INTERVENTIONS.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE 3**

# SAMPLE SKILLS FROM JOB DESCRIPTIONS

## SUDP

1. Maintain a caseload with a minimum of ten clients.
2. Provide educational presentations related to chemical dependency, behavioral health, CBT, and REBT.
3. Facilitate and structure group therapy and individual counseling sessions.
4. ASAM evaluation and Treatment Plan Review of each client's progress a minimum of once per week per client.
5. Understand and facilitate federal confidentiality laws, 42 CFR, and protects client confidentiality/anonymity, and assures no information is shared without proper authorization.

## BHSS

1. Demonstrate warmth, empathy, respect, and concern for others, while maintaining boundaries.
2. Administer, score, and document patient symptoms using screening instruments for common mental health and substance use disorders.
3. Provide brief interventions that include goal setting, problem-solving, motivational enhancement, harm reduction, and patient activation strategies.
4. Recognize behavioral health crises and warning signs; assess the level of risk for harm to self or others and report to supervisor and health care team.
5. Participate in routine supervision and/or consultation; consultation will focus on new patients and those not improving as expected under the current treatment plan.

# SUDP AND BHSS AREAS OF PRACTICE

## SUDPs: Specialists

- **Specialized focus:** Specifically addresses substance use disorders.
- **Therapeutic role:** Provides individual and group counseling, and facilitates behavior change.
- **Treatment planning:** Develops and implements treatment plans based on ASAM criteria.
- **Documentation:** Maintains detailed client records and complies with regulatory standards.
- **Education:** Provides education on chemical dependency and related topics.
- **Collaboration:** Works with a treatment team to coordinate care.

## BHSSs: Generalists

- **Broader focus:** Supports the whole health of patients with various mental and behavioral health conditions.
- **Collaborative role:** Works closely with a care team, including medical providers, psychiatrists, and mental health providers.
- **Screening and assessment:** Administers screening tools, monitors patient progress, and documents findings.
- **Education and support:** Provides patient education, brief interventions, and support.
- **Crisis management:** Recognizes and responds to behavioral health crises.
- **Social inclusion:** Focuses on helping patients reintegrate into the community.

Q & A



# COMMUNICATION AVENUES

- UW BHSS Clinical Training Program
  - Email: [bhsswa@uw.edu](mailto:bhsswa@uw.edu)
  - [Sign up](#) for quarterly newsletter.
  - University of Washington [website](#)
- Spokane Falls Community College BAS Integrated Behavioral Health
  - Email: [ursula.heflick@sfcc.spokane.edu](mailto:ursula.heflick@sfcc.spokane.edu)
- Department of Health BHSS Website
  - DOH Program Staff: [BHSS@doh.wa.gov](mailto:BHSS@doh.wa.gov)
  - Sign up for [GovDelivery](#) for updates
  - DOH [website](#) 292929

# Surveys

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**We greatly appreciate your feedback!**

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