

# Fostering Mutually Beneficial Relationships

## The Transformative Impact of Pro Bono Counseling

Presented by: Sherese Danielle Ezelle, LMHC, LPC, NCC  
Director of Behavioral Health Integration, Project Access Northwest

# Sherese Danielle Ezelle, LMHC, LPC, NCC

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Licensed Mental Health Counselor, National Certified Counselor and Behavioral Health Expert with multiple state licenses, including Washington, Colorado, Virginia, Georgia, and New York.

She specializes in holistic mental health counseling and case management, guiding patients towards achievable goals for wellness and recovery.

She actively participates in community initiatives aimed at promoting mental health and wellness, particularly in underserved populations.

Recognized for her insights on workplace wellness, Sherese raises awareness about mental health issues, aiming to reduce stigma and encourage prioritization of mental well-being.



# Agenda

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- Introduction – What is Pro Bono Counseling?
- Addressing Barriers & Empowering Clients
- Benefits for Mental Health Professionals
- The Pro Bono Counseling Program at Project Access Northwest
- Open Discussion/Q & A



# What is Pro Bono Counseling?

Definition and It's Importance

# Pro Bono Counseling is...

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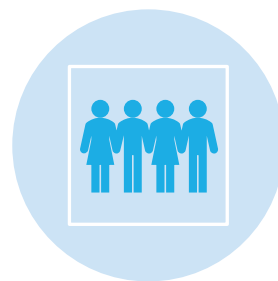
The voluntary provision of mental health services at no cost to individuals or communities in need



A solution to **address** the growing mental health crisis and disparities in access to care



A way to **empower** underserved communities to prioritize their mental well-being



A way to **foster** a more equitable and inclusive mental health care system

# Our Why

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A major focus at Project Access Northwest is **removing barriers**.

We know that our clients face increased barriers due to several factors outside their control.

- Limited access to providers
- Costs
- Stigma attached to getting care
- Clients chasing physical symptoms that are best addressed from a behavioral health lens
- Lack of wraparound and follow up support – clients falling through the cracks





# The Power of Pro Bono Counseling

# Interview with Sherri Bloom, LCSWC

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CLINICAL DIRECTOR WITH PRO  
BONO COUNSELING, MARYLAND





# Project Access Northwest – Pro Bono Counseling Program

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## WHO we serve?

- Our services are available to people living at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- Most common diagnoses are depression, anxiety, grief, trauma and life transitions.

## HOW we work?

- Clients can be referred by a community health provider OR self-refer
- Clients participate in a confidential phone interview to discuss their concerns and interest in seeking therapy. We will then identify a “best-fit” therapist — considering client preferences for cultural background, expertise, gender, and therapy style, etc. — and schedule an appointment when a therapist or counselor is identified.

## Client Perks

- A short, confidential phone screening conducted by a care coordinator
- A referral to a screened, “best-fit” volunteer licensed counselor or other resources
- No-cost counseling for a time frame agreed upon between client and provider – based on ***their*** needs!

## Provider Perks

- Thoroughly screened and well-matched clients. Only those who can engage in insight-oriented counseling will be matched to volunteer providers, based on a variety of factors such as age, interest areas/ specialties, availability, therapy style, etc.
- Case Consultation
- Free Continuing Education Workshops
- Increased support and destigmatization – Ask A Therapist Blog
- Free state licensure supervision hours

# Benefits for Clients

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- Increased Access
  - Financial Relief – Free services eliminate cost barriers, making mental health care accessible to those that cannot afford it
  - Availability – Services offered in areas lacking mental health resources, providing care where it is needed most
  - Inclusivity - Has the ability to reach diverse populations, including marginalized communities, who may not seek help otherwise due to various barriers
- Awareness – Education, Stigma reduction – empowering individuals to prioritize their well-being
- Community Trust – Establishes reliable networks within the community promoting long-term engagement and continuity of care

# Benefits for Providers

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- Giving Back
  - Skill Development – Exposure to unique cases, Personal fulfillment – satisfaction from helping others
- Professional Growth – Consultation groups, free continuing education
- Networking – Connections with other providers to gain increased insight and perspective
- Consistent client engagement– Establishes reliable networks within the community promoting long-term engagement and continuity of care



# Brainstorming/Collaboration

Mutually Beneficial Relationships in Action

# Thinking outside the box

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You are a new **client** that has never been to counseling. You have 3 children and only make 1500.00 per month working a part-time job as a server. You have struggled with feelings of depression for a while but because your insurance does cover therapy you never thought to reach out for help. English is your second language and behavioral health was “never really talked about in your family.”

- What do you need?
- What are some of your potential barriers?

You are a new Pro Bono **Counselor** with Project Access Northwest. You just received your first referral (congrats!) You are still new to the program and feel a bit overwhelmed. You have a small private practice on the weekends and work primarily as a behavioral health administrator. You joined Pro Bono to give back to the community and find a sense of community outside of your 9 to 5.

- What do you need?
- What are some of your potential barriers?



# Potential Challenges

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## Client –

- Language
- Technology
- Limited community resources

## Provider –

- Time constraints
- Feelings of compassion fatigue/burnout
- Limited resources, opportunities for quality consultation
- Documentation standard concerns
- Lack of community



PRO BONO COUNSELING

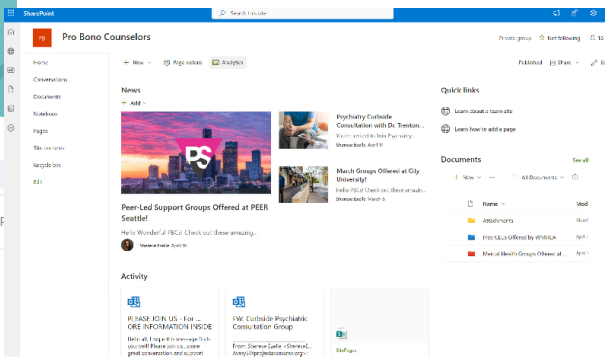
# PSYCHIATRY CURBSIDE CONSULTATION GROUP

All medical providers are invited to join these monthly online meetings to gain valuable insight and recommendations from board-certified psychiatrist Trenton James, MD

EMAIL SHERESE FOR DETAILS



# Solutions



VOLUNTEER AS A CLINICIAN

VOLUNTEER AS A GRADUATE STUDENT

Related Entries:

- Who We Serve and How
- Meet our Providers
- Behavioral Health Fact Sheet
- Mental Health Helplines and Resources
- Mental Health Assessments
- Crisis Resources
- Ask a Therapist
- Pro Bono Counseling: What to Expect (English)
- Pro Bono Counseling: What to Expect (Spanish)
- Pro Bono Counseling: FAQs



Pro Bono Counseling Program  
200 Broadway, Suite 202 • Seattle, Washington 98102 • www.projectaccessnw.org  
Tel: 206.788.4204 • Fax: 206.382.3507 • info@projectaccessnw.org

PATIENT PROFILE	
Name:	Date of Birth:
Phone number:	Email:
Address:	
City:	State:
Zip:	
Primary system: <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency <input type="checkbox"/> In person	
Do you need an interpreter? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Appointment type preference: <input type="checkbox"/> Teletherapy <input type="checkbox"/> In person	
MENTAL HEALTH HISTORY	
What would you like to work on?	
Please share your history with:	
Medication:	



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Please share your history with:	
Hospitalizations:	
Substance use:	
Legal issues:	
Trauma:	
Additional comments:	



## Pro Bono Counseling Program

### Provider FAQs

- Can Pro Bono Counseling clients complete our counseling practice forms?**  
Yes, clients can complete your practice's intake forms. A brief screening is done by the Pro Bono Counseling team to identify the best fit therapist. However, additional screenings may be required to start counseling.
- What should I do if I cannot accept a client referral?**  
If you cannot accept a referral, please notify Shereshe Ezelle, Behavioral Health Clinical Director, at shereshe@projectaccessnw.org (or reply to the referral email received from the Pro Bono Counseling administrative team) promptly so that necessary arrangements can be made.
- Can Pro Bono Counseling clients sign our counseling practice forms?**  
Yes, clients can sign forms specific to your practice. The forms used by Project Access Northwest and the Pro Bono Counseling Program are tailored to our program and may not be applicable to your practice as per state statutes.
- Should I inform you if I schedule Pro Bono Counseling clients for counseling sessions?**  
If you schedule Pro Bono Counseling Program clients for counseling sessions, please inform us of their names and statuses for coordination purposes. This can be done by replying to the referral email received from the Pro Bono Counseling administrative team.
- What information is included on the Pro Bono Counseling Program screening form?**  
Our Pro Bono Counseling screening form gathers demographic information and details about client issues/items they would like to discuss with their assigned therapist. It requires signing consent to be matched to a pledged Pro Bono Counselor.
- What does the referral process look like for Pro Bono Counseling clients?**  
Please refer to the "What to Expect" document on our [Pro Bono Counseling program page](#). This document can also be found directly at [Pro Bono Counseling: What to Expect](#) and is available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).
- What should I do if I have any other questions or need further support?**  
This FAQ document aims to address common queries related to intake procedures, assignment processes, and communication protocols within the Pro Bono Counseling Program. For more information, feel free to contact Behavioral Health Clinical Director Shereshe D. Ezelle, LMHC, LPC, at 206-489-4560 or shereshe@projectaccessnw.org.
- Thank you so much for your pledge!**

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info@projectaccessnw.org • www.projectaccessnw.org



## Pro Bono Counseling Program

### What to expect

- Thank you for your interest in the Pro Bono Counseling program.** We are dedicated to providing accessible mental health support within our financial constraints. By enrolling in the Pro Bono Counseling program, you are taking a significant step toward prioritizing your mental health and well-being. Our program offers you the opportunity to receive professional counseling services at no cost, tailored to your individual needs and circumstances. Through the dedicated support of licensed therapists, psychologists, or counselors who volunteer their time and expertise, you can navigate life's challenges, enhance your mental health outcomes, and improve your overall quality of life. Additionally, by participating in Pro Bono Counseling, you are joining a community that values mental health support for all individuals, regardless of financial limitations. **Here's what you can expect when you sign up for the program:**
  - Submitting the Pro Bono Counseling—Client Enrollment Form**  
Upon submitting the online [Pro Bono Counseling—Client Enrollment Form](#) ([Client Enrollment Form](#)), you will be assigned a care coordinator, who will reach out to you within 5-7 business days (post form submission) to initiate the screening and connection process.
  - Detailed screening process**  
During the screening process, you will talk with a trained care coordinator and have the opportunity to discuss your behavioral health needs in depth. This information will help us connect you with a "best-fit" therapist for your specific wellness needs.
  - Review by Pro Bono Counseling Leadership team**  
After completing the screening with your care coordinator, your screening information will be shared with the Pro Bono Counseling leadership team for review. This review will consist of looking at your therapist preference, as well as the concerns you would like support with. This information is then shared with the therapist who is the best fit to support you in achieving your wellness goals.
  - Assignment of therapist**  
Within 5-7 business days of the leadership team review, you will be contacted again by a care coordinator. They will provide you with the name and contact information of your assigned therapist.
  - Learn more about your therapist**  
You can visit the "Meet Our Providers" page on the Pro Bono Counseling website to read more about your assigned therapist and their practice. This can help you familiarize yourself with your therapist before your first session.
- Look forward to supporting you on your mental health journey through our Pro Bono Counseling program.** If you have any questions or need further assistance, please feel free to reach out to Behavioral Health Clinical Director Shereshe D. Ezelle, LMHC, LPC, NCC at 206-489-4560 or shereshe@projectaccessnw.org.
- Thank you for choosing Project Access Northwest for your mental health needs.**

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## AGENDA

- Review Project Access Northwest's mission and values
- PBC Program Overview
- Review Client Enrollment Process
- Provider Role Discussion
- Review of Resources and Provider Perks

### Program partners





Recruit additional partners and providers



Share your ideas and expertise



Join our Board



Join one of our Committees

Additional  
ways to get  
involved



Questions?

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# References

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Project Access Northwest – <https://projectaccessnw.org/>

Pro Bono Counseling Program at Project Access Northwest -  
<https://projectaccessnw.org/programs/pro-bono-counseling>

[Project Access Northwest Provider Pledge Form](#)

“Ask A Therapist” Blog - <https://projectaccessnw.org/news/ask-a-therapist>

Scan this QR to Get involved – our easy to complete provider pledge form is here!



# Thank you

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**Sherese D. Ezelle, LMHC, LPC, NCC**

**Director of Behavioral Health  
Integration**

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