

DBH Team (DBHT) SOP
Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
Revised January 10, 2022

I. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the DBHDS Disaster Behavioral Health Team (DBHT) so that DBHDS can:

1. Take actions necessary and appropriate to develop meaningful opportunities for DBHT volunteers;
2. Develop written rules governing the recruitment, screening, training, responsibility, utilization and supervision of volunteers;
3. Take actions necessary to ensure that volunteers and paid staff understand their respective duties and responsibilities, their relationship to each other, and their respective roles in fulfilling the objectives of their department;
4. Take actions necessary and appropriate to ensure a receptive climate for citizen volunteers;
5. Provide for the recognition of volunteers who have offered exceptional service to the Commonwealth; and
6. Recognize prior volunteer service as partial fulfillment of state employment requirements for training and experience established by the Department of Human Resource Management.

II. Recruitment

1. Volunteers shall be recruited on a pro-active basis, with the intent of broadening and expanding the volunteer involvement of the DBHT. The sole qualification for volunteer recruitment shall be suitability to successfully carry out the mission of the DBHT. Volunteers may be recruited through a variety of means including, but not limited to, advertisement within state, local, and private, and nonprofit entities, social and traditional media, word-of-mouth, and recommendation by other DBHT members. DBHT members must be at least 18 years of age at the time of application.
2. DBHDS is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, political affiliation, disability, genetic information, age, military service/status, or other non-merit factor. We commit to a diverse and inclusive workforce that is reflective of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Reasonable accommodations are available to persons with disabilities during application and/or interview processes per the Americans with Disabilities Act.

III. Screening

Screening will be conducted in a three-step process: written application, in-person interview, and background investigation.

1. Written application:
 - i. Team membership considerations are initiated through receipt of a written application.
 - ii. Failure to complete any portion of the application may be grounds for disqualification for further consideration.
 - iii. Any false information or misrepresentation provided on the application may be grounds for disqualification for further consideration or, if discovered after being accepted onto the DBHT, grounds for removal from the team

- iv. See Appendix I for the DBHT application.
2. In-person interview:
 - i. Upon review of the application, selected candidates will be invited for an interview
 - ii. Interviews may be conducted in-person or remotely
 - iii. Interviewers may include, but are not limited to, the DBH Coordinator, DBHT leaders, and DBHT members.
3. Background investigation:
 - i. When deployed, members of the Disaster Behavioral Health Team are considered in “direct care positions” as defined by Code of Virginia § 37.2 – 416. As such, background investigations are required for all volunteers.
 - ii. DBHDS conducts background investigations that include criminal history record, sex offender registry, and crimes against minors. Other background investigations may be conducted. Disqualifying convictions may include, but are not limited to, the following: sexual offenses, violent activity, HIPAA violations, inappropriate relationships with patients (healthcare workers), and any barrier crime listed in Code of Virginia § 19.2-392.02. At their own discretion, the DBH Coordinator, in consultation with the Director of Emergency Management, will evaluate convictions on a case-by-case basis.
 - iii. Additionally, the DBH Coordinator will check references for any DBH team volunteer who wishes to serve in a leadership capacity. References may be personal or professional; however, all references should be able to attest to skills, qualifications, and personal attributes
 - iv. Background checks will be initiated using the Background Investigation Form BIUSP-167
 - v. The cost of the background check shall be the responsibility of DBHDS

IV. Training

1. Training may be conducted in formal classroom settings, through activities can range from facilitated discussions to full-scale exercises, and/or through actual event settings.
2. Knowledge, skills, and abilities obtained in each training or exercise will be documented.
3. Participation in each training by DBHT members will be recorded by the DBH Coordinator.
4. The DBH Coordinator will establish and maintain a training schedule based on the needs of the DBHT as identified by the DBHDS Office of Emergency Management and through exercise and event After Action Reports.

V. Utilization

1. Upon activation of the Disaster Behavioral Health plan, the DBHDS Office of Emergency Management may coordinate the deployment of the DBHT.
2. The DBHT is a group of volunteers who have been pre-credentialed and trained in the delivery of disaster behavioral health services.
 - i. DBHT Leader: Responsible for direction of other DBHT personnel and the integration of the DBHT into the overall incident response.
 - ii. DBHT Member: Responsible for providing front-line disaster behavioral health intervention at the direction of, or in coordination with, the team leader.
 - iii. Behavioral Health Specialist: Serve as the behavioral health subject matter expert to the DBH Team Members and Team Leader. This position will interface with other healthcare workers and support their operations as necessary with regard to behavioral health. Support first-line providers in escalation of individuals for more thorough evaluation. Evaluate (not diagnose) individuals’ current or future mental health concerns and make appropriate referral or connection to more intensive services. Assist with any mental health triage needs. Lead force protection efforts for all responders.

3. DBHT Muster and Deployment Process:
 - i. CSBs will activate mutual aid plan to meet the behavioral health obligations specific to the event. This is done via pre-established mutual aid agreements among CSB regions. DBHDS will contact the affected CSB to offer support, however, the process by which mutual aid is activated remains within the affected locality.
 - ii. If after mutual aid is activated and additional behavioral health resources are needed, the affected CSB may contact the OEM to request additional support.
 - iii. DBHDS OEM discusses behavioral health resource need with requesting agency. The Disaster Behavioral Health Coordinator will simultaneously request the DBHT provide their ability to respond and request they “standby” pending a “go” or “no go” notification.
 - iv. Upon the issuance of a “go” notification, the DBH Coordinator coordinates the following:
 - Travel arrangements, including lodging
 - Incident specific briefing
 - Establishment of team(s) of no more than 7 per team to include one Team Leader and one Behavioral Health Specialist
 - Reception at deployment site and assignment of duties
 - v. DBH Coordinator will communicate with requesting agency to determine the duration of the response and the need for additional resources for up to 14 days.
 - vi. The DBH Team Leader(s) will coordinate with DBH Coordinator for demobilization instructions inclusive of incident specific demobilization procedures and debriefing.
 - vii. Demobilization will be considered complete when all reimbursement requests have been received and processed. DBHT Coordinator will make efforts to arrange lodging in advance of deployment for team members. When this is not feasible, the Coordinator will assist with reimbursement for lodging, transportation and per diem as a part of demobilization.
4. Details not specifically addressed above will be handled by application of the NIMS paradigm

VI. Supervision

1. Upon activation of the DBH Plan, DBH OEM assumes administrative command and control only of the behavioral health assets it directly deploys. Command and control for the overall response continues to reside with the local agency (county, city, etc.), with jurisdiction.
2. Local, on-site behavioral health coordinator and/or his/her designee will provide daily operational briefings and assume command and control of behavioral health assets during the response.
3. Throughout the duration of the deployment, the DBH Coordinator will establish operational periods for daily debriefing with Team Leaders. The DBH Coordinator will work to resolve logistical issues to support incident response.

VII. Roles and Responsibilities

1. DBH Office of Emergency Management
 - i. Activate the DBH Plan
 - ii. Supervise the DBH Coordinator
 - iii. Approve and update this SOP and other relevant materials
2. DBH Coordinator
 - i. Recruit, train and maintain DBHT member roster. This includes
 1. Reviewing team application.
 2. Conduct potential volunteer interviews

3. Conduct background checks
4. Provide volunteer orientation and other training necessary for DBHDS to fulfill its obligation to the COVEOP

3. DBHT Leader

- i. Receive and maintain required training
- ii. Respond to request for deployment when requested
- iii. Supervise DBHT members
- iv. Coordinate with DBH Coordinator for demobilization instructions inclusive of incident specific demobilization procedures and debriefing

4. DBHT Members

- i. Receive and maintain required training
- ii. Respond to requests for deployment when requested

5. Behavioral Health Specialist

- i. Receive and maintain required training
- ii. Respond to request for deployment when requested
- iii. Alert the behavioral health coordinator on site to persons who may be exhibiting symptoms of an acute behavioral health emergency and require further evaluation.

VIII. Recognition

DBHDS OEM will recognize volunteers who have offered exceptional service to the Commonwealth through any of the following:

1. Letter of gratitude from the OEM, the Commissioner, or other officials
2. Public recognition

Appendix I
Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
Virginia Disaster Behavioral Health Team (DBHT) Application

To the Applicant: Acceptance to the DBHT is at the discretion of the DBHDS Coordinator, based on the applicant's suitability to successfully carry out the mission of the DBHT. Factors related to suitability are evaluated holistically and include, but are not limited to, meeting the minimum training requirements, possessing or the ability to obtain relevant experience, and the capacity to successfully provide DBH services in high stress environments.

Section I Contact Information

Name
Phone Number (Where you can most easily be reached)
Email (Where you can most easily be reached)
City/County of Residence

Section II Employment and Licensure

Current Employment
Do you hold any professional licenses or certifications in Virginia? Yes___ No___
Please List

Section III Training Requirements

Please list any disaster or crisis related training or affiliation and date received

Have you completed the Following FEMA Independent Study (IS) Courses?

IS 100 (Team Member Req.) __ Yes __ No Date Completed_____

IS 200 (Team Leader Req.) __ Yes __ No Date Completed_____

IS 700 (Team Member Req) __ Yes __ No Date Completed_____

IS 800 (Team Leader Req.) __ Yes __ No Date Completed_____

Section IV Interests & Disaster Response Experience

Please tell us a little about your interest about joining the DBHT.

Please tell us about your previous disaster behavioral health response(s) experience(s).

What activities do you do enjoy outside of work/volunteering?

Have you discussed the possibility of being deployed for several days with family and workplace? __ Yes __
No

Section V References

Please provide contact information for at least one professional and one personal reference

Reference Name	Relationship	Email	Phone
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- 1.
- 2.

Applicant Signature

Date