

# PROMISING PRACTICES



## Program increases access to care and quality of life for persons with dual diagnosis

Clinicians are rarely trained in the specialized behavioral health approaches to treat persons with a developmental disability (DD) who also have a psychiatric disorder. As a result, individuals with DD often find they are unable to access appropriate mental healthcare in their own community.

To address this gap in services, the [Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities Services](#) in Dayton, Ohio, collaborated with the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board for Montgomery County and the Boonshoft School of Medicine at Wright State University to create the Mental Health Supports and Services (MHSS) Program.

Since its beginning more than a decade ago, the MHSS Program has striven to ensure that the traditionally underserved DD population has access to innovative mental health services.

The program's psychiatric, psychotherapy, and case management services modify traditional mental health treatment methods to improve services tailored to the unique needs of persons with DD. The modifications include:

- Home-based services.
- Longer treatment periods.
- Simplification of interventions.
- Increased use of activities.
- Shortened session length.

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### About the ECS Promising Practices newsletter series

An organization receiving exemplary recognition in its CARF survey report stands out because of its professional and strategic response to a service or business need. CARF presents these ECS Promising Practices articles to encourage dialogue among service providers and to offer examples of creative solutions for improving service quality.

Find current and past issues of ECS Promising Practices at:  
[www.carf.org/ecspromisingpractices](http://www.carf.org/ecspromisingpractices)

Issues are categorized by topic: Business Practices, Community Services, and Employment Services.

- Access to crisis intervention when needed.

The MHSS Program has enabled many individuals with dual diagnosis to improve their quality of life and to experience a significant reduction in their psychiatric symptoms.

The most recent [CARE](#) survey report for the Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities Services said, “The Mental Health and Behavioral Supports and Services Program demonstrates exemplary practice for its service delivery models and strategies via its active participation in the Ohio Coordinating Centers of Excellence (CCOE) on Mental Illness/Developmental Disabilities.”

The MHSS Program was so successful that it was recognized by CCOE for “extraordinary contributions” in the field of dual diagnosis.

Clinicians, as well as persons served, benefit from the MHSS Program. The CARF survey report continued, “Program staff works to promote education/training for clinicians through presentations given throughout the state as well as publishing literature/research on the subject. Program staff has developed training modules for the Ohio CCOE that are accessible online and are intended to provide clinicians with information regarding the provision of psychiatric care, psychotherapy, and nursing services to individuals with dual diagnosis. In addition, the program is an active training site for both psychiatric residents and psychology doctoral students from Wright State University and the University of Dayton. The goal is to provide education and training to clinicians regarding the special needs of this population, with the intent of increasing the number of practicing clinicians in the community able to provide these much-needed services.”

The focus on education has led to better cooperation between the DD and mental health systems in Ohio and has helped to decrease the stigma associated with the mental health services provided to individuals with DD.

*Below: Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities staff: Standing, left to right, are Mark Cummings, LSW, mental health therapist; Ricki Decker, administrative assistant; Carroll S. Jackson, LISW-S, program manager; Chris O’Connor, RN, nurse manager; and Robert Bailey, LSW, mental health therapist. Seated is Allison Cowan, M.D., psychiatrist, Wright State University, Department of Psychiatry.*



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For more information regarding the Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities Services, Mental Health Supports and Services Program, contact Carroll Jackson, M.S.W., LISW-S, clinical and program manager, at [cjackson@mcbbdds.org](mailto:cjackson@mcbbdds.org) or (937) 457-2878. The organization's website is at [www.mcbbdds.org](http://www.mcbbdds.org).

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