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## **CRCG Events Calendar**

**January 10** – Leader Training and Bridge Call, 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. CST

**February 14** – Leader Training and Bridge Call, 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. CST

**February 20** – 2023 CRCG Recognition Awards Ceremony, 11:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. CST

**March 13** – Leader Training and Bridge Call, 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. CDT

## **State CRCG Office Updates**

### **2023 CRCG Recognition Awards: Thank You for Your Nominations!**

The State CRCG Office thanks CRCG leaders and members who submitted nominations for the 2023 CRCG Recognition Awards. We received many nominations for the CRCG Shining Star and Outstanding CRCG Awards and both awards highlight the fantastic work that is happening in local communities across the state.

Award announcements will be made during the virtual awards ceremony on February 20, 2024, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. CST.

To register for the virtual awards ceremony, visit the [GoToWebinar webpage](#). We hope you can join us for this event to celebrate the amazing work of CRCGs and their leaders and members.

### **CRCG Maps**

CRCGs, providers, and community members can now view the new interactive [CRCG Maps dashboard](#) on the [CRCG website](#). The CRCG Maps dashboard displays information about where CRCGs are located, who CRCGs serve, and provides CRCG leader contact information by county. The CRCG Maps dashboard will be updated

on a quarterly basis. We hope you find this tool helpful in sharing information about CRCGs.

## Legislative Updates

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The State CRCG Office will be preparing the biennial legislative report in 2024. It will cover calendar years 2022 and 2023. The report utilizes data gathered from local CRCGs about the number of persons served through CRCGs, information on outcomes of the services provided, a description of barriers identified on the state's ability to provide effective services to persons needing multi-agency services, and additional information relevant to improving the delivery of services.

Once the report is completed later this year, it will be posted to the CRCG website and shared with each partner agency, the Office of the Governor, and the Texas Legislature. To read previous CRCG legislative reports, please visit the [Reports and Community Impact webpage](#).

## CRCG Site Visits

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### **Williamson County CRCG**

Williamson County CRCG appointed a new chair, Candi Gadison, who works for a non-profit organization, Impact Counseling Services, Inc. The State CRCG Office met with Candi to welcome her to her new role and provide her with information about reestablishing the CRCG.

### **Bowie, Cass, and Marion Counties CRCG**

The State CRCG Office welcomed Hollye Jolley, Chair of the Bowie, Cass, and Marion Counties CRCG, and representative from the Cass County Juvenile Probation Department to her new role. At the meeting, we discussed how to recruit new members, best practices on setting up structured processes to effectively run the group, and the CRCG's role in referring youth to Waco Center for Youth and reviewing non-educational funds applications with local school districts.

### **Bastrop, Fayette, and Lee Counties CRCG**

Bastrop, Fayette, and Lee Counties CRCG appointed a new leadership team. Chair Shawna Gardner and Co-Chair Audrianna Esser from the Bluebonnet Trails Community Services Local Mental Health Authority (LMHA) have taken

the reins to lead the group. The State CRCG Office met with Shawna to go over the CRCG data entry and reporting requirements and discuss best practices with the CRCG meeting process.

### **Bailey and Parmer Counties CRCG**

The State CRCG Office was a guest at the November Bailey and Parmer Counties CRCG meeting. We conducted a CRCG 101 presentation, which covered information about the function of CRCGs, a brief history of CRCGs, the CRCG process, and the benefits of interagency coordination. Thank you to Ruby Vidaurre, Chair, who invited us to the meeting. We enjoyed meeting with the group and answering questions that they had about CRCG operations and best practices.

### **Clay, Montague, and Young Counties CRCG**

Tammi Johnson and Sabrina Caston have volunteered to lead the newly formed Clay, Montague, and Young Counties CRCG. Both individuals work for Helen Farabee Centers and have knowledge about community-based treatment and support services for persons with complex needs. The State CRCG Office met with the leaders in November and provided information about establishing the group. The State CRCG Office oriented the new leaders to the CRCG data collection system. We look forward to continuing to support the CRCG as they get off the ground.

### **State CRCG Office Available for Virtual Technical Assistance**

The State CRCG Office is available for virtual training and technical assistance, including helping to navigate virtual platforms and attending practice meetings. Please email the State CRCG Office at [CRCG@hhsc.state.tx.us](mailto:CRCG@hhsc.state.tx.us) or call (512) 206-5255 for assistance.

## Resources

### CRCG Website

The [CRCG website](#) has great resources for leaders and members, including guidebooks covering all things CRCGs, and resources for families and community members. Popular links include:

[CRCG Training Toolkit](#)

[CRCG Maps](#)

### Webinar Recordings

The State CRCG Office webinars bring valuable resources and information to CRCG partners and members.

[Restorative Practices for CRCGs Webinar Series](#)

Visit the [CRCG Training and Technical Assistance webpage](#) to view other past webinar recordings.

### Sharing Is Caring

Please share our newsletter with your colleagues or anyone who may benefit from this information!

### Contact Us

We would love to hear from you! If you have thoughts, concerns, comments, ideas, or anything else that you would like to share, please contact the State CRCG Office.

[CRCG@hpsc.state.tx.us](mailto:CRCG@hpsc.state.tx.us)

(512) 206-5255

## Spotlight on CRCGs

### CRCG County Coverage Expands

We are pleased to announce that several counties that did not have an active CRCG have been covered by neighboring CRCGs. Parmer County was added to the Bailey County CRCG. Edwards and Kinney counties were added to the Dimmit, Maverick, and Zavala Counties CRCG.

Nacogdoches County was added to the Shelby County CRCG. Sutton County was added to the Concho Valley CRCG which includes Coke, Concho, Crockett, Irion, Reagan, Sterling, and Tom Green counties.

Thank you to the CRCG leaders who volunteered to expand their CRCG's service area so that more children, youth, adults, and families can receive CRCG services.

The State CRCG Office is continuing to work with local communities to obtain full CRCG coverage across the state. The following counties do not have a CRCG:

- Bell
- Coryell
- Falls
- Gonzales
- Hamilton
- Lipscomb
- Milam
- Real

If you or someone you know is interested in helping to establish a CRCG in any of these counties or would like to add one of these counties to your CRCG's current service area, please email the [State CRCG Office](#). We are available to discuss next steps, provide individualized training on establishing a CRCG,

and can help support organizational meetings in local communities.

## **Welcome New CRCG Leaders**

A special welcome to the new CRCG leaders who volunteered to take on key roles:

- Shawna Gardner, Chair, and Audrianna Esser, Co-Chair, Bastrop, Fayette, and Lee Counties CRCG
- Hollye Jolley, Chair, Bowie, Cass, and Marion Counties CRCG
- Joi Roberts, Chair, Delta, Lamar, and Red River Counties CRCG
- Suezhanna Arredondo, Chair; Brittany Baker, Co-Chair; and Marissa Purcell, Secretary, Goliad County CRCG
- Jo Snellings, Data Reporter, Rains and Van Zandt Counties CRCG
- Annie Burwell, Data Reporter, Williamson County CRCG
- Kaitlinn Burt, Secretary, Brown County CRCG
- Isabel Garcia, Data Reporter, Anderson and Cherokee Counties CRCG
- Tammi Johnson, Chair, and Sabrina Caston, Co-Chair, Clay, Montague, and Young Counties CRCG
- Chandy Swetnam, Chair and Recorder, Gregg County CRCG
- John Vorderkunz, Chair, McLennan County Adult CRCG
- Ayleen Sanchez, Chair and Coordinator, Yoakum County CRCG

We appreciate the time and commitment these leaders devote to supporting their local CRCGs and communities.

To share success stories for upcoming newsletters, email the State CRCG Office at [CRCG@hsc.state.tx.us](mailto:CRCG@hsc.state.tx.us).

## **Upcoming CRCG Events**

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### **Monthly Leader Training and Bridge Call**

The monthly leader training and bridge call, hosted by the State CRCG Office, offers time to provide training and technical assistance to CRCG leaders and answer questions, as well as an opportunity for leaders to share ideas, discuss challenges, and network. A portion of these sessions is dedicated to regional cohort breakout rooms for leaders to connect and build partnerships with other CRCGs in their region.

All CRCG leaders are welcome and encouraged to join each month. The training occurs every second Wednesday of the month from 10:00 a.m.–

11:30 a.m. A calendar invite is sent to all CRCG leaders with the meeting information. Upcoming dates and times include:

- January 10, 2024, 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. CST / 9:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m. MST
- February 14, 2024, 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. CST / 9:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m. MST
- March 13, 2024, 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. CDT / 9:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m. MDT

For questions or additional information, please contact the State CRCG Office at [CRCG@hhsc.state.tx.us](mailto:CRCG@hhsc.state.tx.us).

## **CRCG Partner Agency Updates**

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### **Texas Health and Human Services Commission**

#### **Office of Mental Health Coordination**

#### **Mental Health Program for Veterans**

##### *Overview*

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) coordinate to administer the Mental Health Program for Veterans (MHPV). This program provides peer counseling services to service members, veterans, and their immediate family members (SMVF) through HHSC contracts with local mental health authorities (LMHAs) and local behavioral health authorities (LBHAs).

The MHPV also administers a program that provides for direct mental health services from military culturally competent licensed mental health professionals trained in military informed care, called veteran counselors. This program is currently implemented at six LMHA sites across the state, focused in rural areas with high need.

##### *How the Program Works*

The program works through coordinated delivery of direct peer services from trained peer service coordinators (PSCs) and their peer volunteers, employed or contracted by LHMA and LBHAs. Direct peer services are informal and include: one-on-one peer support, facilitated peer support groups, referrals to local mental health resources, and referrals to community-based support

organizations at no charge. PSCs are trained to engage justice-involved veterans at key intercept points within the justice system to impact jail diversion and recidivism. Additionally, TVC provides training and technical assistance to agencies and organizations spanning the Texas Criminal Justice system to improve diversion and mental health treatment options for justice-involved veterans who have suffered military-related traumas, and faith-based resources to enhance community-level supports for trauma-affected veterans and their families. PSCs and their trained peer volunteers are supported by various locations throughout Texas through local employment or contracted services of veteran counselors.

### *Eligibility Requirements*

Eligible participants for this program are: SMVF in need of mental health care. There is no wait list for this program.

### *Service Area(s)*

The Mental Health Program for Veterans is implemented statewide.

To view the Report on the Mental Health Program for Veterans for Fiscal Year 2023, visit the [HHSC website](#).

### **Mental Health First Aid**

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training introduces participants to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use concerns, builds understanding of their impact, and gives an overview of common treatments and resources.

Adult, youth, and teen MHFA trainings are available to community members across the state through the local mental health and behavioral health authorities. More information on how to enroll in a course can be found at [Mental Health First Aid | Texas Health and Human Services](#).

### **Rural Mental Health**

Texas HHSC's Rural Mental Health works to ensure that all Texans have access to care at the right time and the right place.

The HHSC All Texas Access Report Fiscal Year 2023 was released in December 2023 and highlights initiatives addressing mental health needs in rural Texas communities. All Texas Access is a collaboration between HHSC and regional groups established in 2020 which consists of 30 LMHAs and LBHAs serving at least one county of 250,000 individuals or fewer.

All Texas Access works to improve access to mental health services while decreasing metrics related to:

- Cost to local governments of providing services to people experiencing a mental health crisis;
- Transportation of people served by an LMHA or LBHA to mental health facilities;
- Incarceration of people with mental illness in county jails; and
- Hospital emergency room visits by people with mental illness.

For fiscal year 2023, All Texas Access focused on three priority projects:

- a community engagement pilot project,
- a peer support learning collaborative, and
- supporting LMHAs and LBHAs in funding and implementing jail diversion strategies outlined in the Fiscal Year 2022 All Texas Access report.

For Fiscal Year 2024, the focus is on community engagement with Anderson Cherokee Community Enrichment Services (ACCESS), Bluebonnet Trails, Hill Country Community MHDD and Spindletop Center. All Texas Access is also engaging the 30 rural serving LMHAs to complete an analysis to focus on a strategic collaboration with a community stakeholder to address unmet needs in their local service area.

For more information on Rural Mental Health and All Texas Access, visit their website [Rural Mental Health | Texas Health and Human Services](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/topics/mental-health/rural-mental-health) or email [AllTexasAccess@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:AllTexasAccess@hhs.texas.gov).

## **Texas Network of Youth Services' New Manual Combats Trafficking and Exploitation of Young People Experiencing Homelessness**

Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) recently released [\*Meeting the Needs of Children and Youth Experiencing Commercial Sexual Exploitation \(CSE\)\*](#), a survivor-centered manual for housing and homelessness providers that serve youth and young adults. Data show that homelessness and housing instability put millions of children and youth at risk of CSE. TNOYS' manual uncovers actionable guidance to identify, address, and prevent CSE that is based on the latest research and the experiences of young people and providers.

January is National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, and we encourage you to share this resource. Read more at [tnoys.org/publications](https://tnoys.org/publications), and use [\*TNOYS' toolkit\*](#) to share on social media.



## **Bexar County Children and Youth Behavioral Health System of Care Prepares for System of Care Grant**

The Bexar County Children and Youth Behavioral Health System of Care (SOC) is holding exciting and productive meetings with the Bexar SOC grant writing team. The grant writing team includes Bexar County Behavioral Health, Center for Young Minds at the Ecumenical Center, Texas Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Bexar County Juvenile Probation Department, and Engaging Voice Community Engagement.

The group is harmonizing talents and community assets to manifest the Bexar SOC, a living, breathing, compassionate alliance of individuals who systematically connect to improve the lives of those most in need. They are caring for children living in foster care, providing wraparound planning services to children and their families living with severe emotional disturbance, and intervening to help children and youth who are currently scared and confused about life.

This effort aims to raise and sustain conversations around the most significant behavioral health needs of our community's children and youth. With content experts leading the charge, they can maintain the discussions in each industry and align goals toward system change. The goal is to receive a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's SOC Grant in mid-2024 to ensure they can support the community in creating system change.

## **Other News and Events**

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### **Texas Mental Health Creative Arts Contest**

Texas System of Care, in collaboration with the Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health at The University of Texas at Austin and HHSC, is excited to announce the 2024 Texas Mental Health Creative Arts Contest. The contest aims to raise awareness of mental health experiences, challenge stigma, and provide an opportunity to express complex emotions through creative outlets. Participants may enter by submitting original, creative works in one of three categories (original artwork, writing, or photography), that draw on the contest theme: "Why Does Mental Health Matter to You?" The contest is open to Texans of all ages and is judged in four age groups— elementary school, middle school, high school, and adult—across each of the three categories. The contest is accepting individual and group submissions through March 1, 2024.

For more information, including past winners, rules, and how to submit your artwork, visit the [Texas Mental Health Creative Arts Contest website](#).

## **Autism, Intellectual or Developmental Disability (IDD), and Co-occurrence with Mental Health (MH) Disorders Webinar Series**

The Centralized Training Infrastructure for Evidence Based Practices (CTI-EBP) at the University of Texas Health San Antonio - Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences is pleased to announce the following webinar opportunities presented by Karyn Harvey, PhD:

- January 10, 2024, from 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. CST: [Autism, IDD & Co-occurrence with MH Disorders Webinar Series #2: Overview of Issues in the World of Autism](#)

This 60-minute webinar will explore issues being faced by people with autism. It will cover the history of the diagnosis, prevalence, and increases and concerns expressed by those identifying on the autism spectrum.

- February 14, 2024, from 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. CST: [Autism, IDD & Co-occurrence with MH Disorders Webinar Series #3: Mental Health Issues and People with Intellectual Disabilities](#)

This 60-minute webinar will review the history of mental health issues and people with intellectual disabilities and the impact of that history. Current approaches and controversies will be discussed, and therapeutic interventions will be reviewed.

Registration is required to participate and is a two-step process. Please follow the instructions for the GoToWebinar (GTW) registration that you will receive via email from [ctihelp@uthscsa.edu](mailto:ctihelp@uthscsa.edu) after enrolling on Centralized Training. You must complete a second registration on GTW to receive the webinar invite. The live presentations of each of these webinars provide one hour of continuing education credits for those with access to Centralized Training and the following licenses: Psychologist, Professional Counselor, Psychological Associate, Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapist, Chemical Dependency Counselor, Peer Specialist, Supported Employment Specialist, and Certified Family Partner.

For additional questions or assistance with logging in, please contact the CTI Helpdesk at [ctihelp@uthscsa.edu](mailto:ctihelp@uthscsa.edu), CTI Live Chat on the website, or by phone at (210) 567-5530.

## **Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness and Human Trafficking Webinar Series**

Educators are in a unique position to recognize, report, and help to prevent child abuse and human trafficking. Educators are vital in recognizing the warning signs of abused or neglected students and guiding potential victims to available resources and support. This webinar series is a collaboration of state and regional agencies to assist and support school leaders with fulfilling their mandated duties and requirements concerning child abuse and neglect and promoting the well-being and safety of all Texas school students.

This webinar series will be hosted by the Texas Education Agency via Zoom. It is open to all Education Service Centers, Local Education Agencies, and community partners.

To register, click on the links below:

- January 12, 2024, from 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. CST: [Labor Trafficking](#)
- March 1, 2024, from 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. CST: [After the Report: Screening and Investigation](#)
- May 3, 2024, from 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. CDT: [Internet and Social Media Safety Awareness](#)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

For questions, please email [preventinghumantrafficking@tea.texas.gov](mailto:preventinghumantrafficking@tea.texas.gov).

## **System of Care Virtual Summit 2024**

The System of Care Virtual Summit (SOC Summit) 2024 will be hosted by the National Training and Technical Assistance Center for Child, Youth, and Family Mental Health virtually on May 14-16, 2024.

The SOC Summit is an opportunity for all children's mental health partners to reunite, renew, and re-energize their efforts to support children and young people with behavioral health needs, as well as their families.

To learn more, visit the [SOC Summit webpage](#).

## **Save the Date for Texas Network of Youth Services' 41st Annual Conference**

Registration opens soon for the Texas Network of Youth Services' (TNOYS) [Annual Conference on Services to Youth Families](#), a flagship event bringing

together over 400 professionals who serve youth and young adults. Join TNOYS June 4-7, 2024, in Houston, Texas for a week of networking, inspirational speakers, and 40+ workshops led by experts and young people with lived experience. Over 14 continuing education units will be available, including for Licensed Social Workers, Licensed Professional Counselors, and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists. [Subscribe to TNOYS' newsletter](#) to be among the first to learn when registration opens.

## **27th Annual Texas Council Conference**

The 27th Annual Texas Council Conference, hosted by the Texas Council of Community Centers, will be held June 17-19, 2024, at the Grand Hyatt San Antonio in San Antonio, Texas. The conference brings together local, state, and national experts to share perspectives on best practices for integrated health, person-directed and recovery-based services, Mental Health First Aid, public policy, peer support, and other promising practices affecting people with serious mental illness, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and substance use disorders.

To learn more, visit the [Annual Texas Council Conference webpage](#).