



# Here's What's Happening...

**TEXAS PANHANDLE CENTERS**  
901 WALLACE BLVD. AMARILLO, TEXAS  
[www.texaspanhandlecenters.org](http://www.texaspanhandlecenters.org)

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## HHSC Recognizes Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

News Release—March 1, 2023 [Jennifer.Ruffcorn@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Ruffcorn@hhs.texas.gov)

Austin—The Texas Health and Human Services Commission recognizes March as National Developmental Disabilities Month by hosting a series of free statewide weekly webinars that focus on preventing childhood injuries and identifying disabilities early.

“Our goal is to promote respect, foster understanding and highlight the importance of prevention and early intervention initiatives for Texas children and families,” said Joy Borjes, associate commissioner for Family Health Strategy at HHSC. “We can change lives when we give Texans the tools to support their families.”

“Creating Connections: Prevention with Purpose” is the third virtual conference of its kind for the Office of Disability Prevention for Children. The goal is to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders, including community-based organizations, government, health care professionals, educators, families, caregivers and others to discuss and learn about strategies for implementing positive change in the lives of children and families across Texas.

Leaders and experts in health care, education and other areas will share current trends, initiatives and valuable information for attendees.

Keynote topics include connecting communities to strengthen families; supporting children diagnosed with autism, water safety education; women’s health; childhood injury prevention and the importance of newborn screenings.

The webinars take place every Tuesday in March from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and are free to the public.

Registration is required. To register for all four webinars and view the full conference agenda visit the Virtual Conference agenda, visit:

[Virtual Conference on Preventing Disabilities in Children registration website](#)

Continuing education credits for multiple disciplines can be earned for attending this event.

Governor Greg Abbot also issued a proclamation to recognize March 2023 as Developmental Disability Awareness Month in Texas. See proclamation on the following page.





STATE OF TEXAS  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

An estimated 480,000 Texans have a developmental disability. These children and adults—like all Texans—strive to be self-sufficient, to work and earn a living, to practice their faith, to interact with peers, and to contribute to their community. Although people with developmental disabilities face obstacles that their peers do not, no condition can reduce the dignity and worth they possess by virtue of their humanity. Moreover, their talent, perspective, and experiences bolster our state's rich diversity, and these Texans have long made the Lone Star State a better, brighter place.

Texas is stronger when all her citizens are fully integrated into their communities. To this end, when students with developmental disabilities are included in classroom settings outside of special education, they are more likely to achieve their full academic potential, and when adults with disabilities are given opportunities in our workforce, they are able to earn a competitive wage, work as part of a team, and support their local economy. This spirit of inclusion brings with it benefits at the societal, community, and individual levels, and it enables people with developmental disabilities to lead longer, healthier lives, engage more fully with the world around them, and give back to others.

Each year, the month of March is set aside in order to raise awareness about developmental disabilities and to highlight the importance of including people of all abilities in every aspect of community life. During this month, concerned citizens, civic groups, and government entities labor in common cause to remind all Texans that classrooms, workplaces, churches, and communities are stronger when they include all people—regardless of their ability status.

At this time, I encourage Texans to educate themselves about developmental disabilities and to support full inclusion by any means possible. As we work together to build the Texas of tomorrow, we must always cherish the time-honored value of liberty and justice for *all*.

Therefore, I, Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas, do hereby proclaim March 2023 to be

## Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month



in Texas and urge the appropriate recognition whereof.

In official recognition whereof,  
I hereby affix my signature this the  
17th day of February, 2023.

  
Governor of Texas

# HIPAA REMINDERS

Donald Newsome, Director, Quality Management & Compliance

**T**he rules and information around the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is a topic addressed in New Employee Orientation, Reorientation, and at other times in our employment at Texas Panhandle Centers (TPC). Texas Panhandle Centers views the privacy and confidentiality of the Protected Health Information (PHI) of those we serve very seriously.



HIPAA provides individuals with privacy rights and protections. The three categories of HIPAA are the Privacy Rule, the Security Rule, and the Transaction Standards. For the purpose of this article, we will look at the components which most often come into play for employees in the healthcare industry.

**The Privacy Rule** concerns privacy rights and describes when and to whom identifiable health information may be disclosed. The Privacy Rule is enforced by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S Department of Justice.

**The Security Rule** describes steps that covered entities, such as TPC, must take to protect confidential Electronic Health Information (ePHI) from unintended disclosures through security breaches. The Security Rule is enforced by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S Department of Justice.

**The Transaction Standards** are associated with administrative simplification and require standardized formatting of electronic transactions for specific financial and administrative functions (e.g., healthcare claims). The Transaction Standards are administered and enforced by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

Federal enforcement of the HIPAA rules may include fines to the organization which is in violation of the rules. One of the most common reasons that covered entities are fined is the loss of unencrypted PHI from a portable or other device. Fines can be in amounts up to \$50,000 and lead to prison sentences of up to one (1) year, when it comes to the most flagrant violations.

## WHAT IS PHI?

PHI includes all protected individually identifiable health information which is communicated orally, electronically, or on paper, related to:

- Past, current, or future mental or physical health conditions
- Payment-related healthcare information that identifies or could be used to identify an individual
- Information related to the healthcare that an individual receives

*(Continued on page 4)*

(Continued from page 3)

## CONFIDENTIALITY

- Information regarding an individual should be kept confidential except in situations of an emergent medical or psychiatric crisis, when information sharing (e.g., medications) is critical to the individual's safety.
- Information regarding an individual should only be shared with other employees when there is a "clinical or administrative need to know"
- An individual's information should not be discussed in any public place (e.g., break rooms, lobbies, or outside of buildings)
- Pictures, videos, & recordings of individuals in services of any kind, should not be taken with cell phones, except with a valid release signed by the individual or their Legally Authorized Representative (LAR)
- Information regarding individuals in services should not be discussed or posted on any social media, including personal chat sites.



## WHAT'S ZAPPING YOUR ENERGY?



Common causes of feeling tired too much of the time may include:

- Lack of sleep: Turn off the TV and get to bed on time.
- Stress: Worry wastes a tremendous amount of energy. Release tension with yoga, meditation or physical activities.
- Depression: Fatigue and insomnia are common signs of depression. If the blues and sadness linger, get help. Counseling, medication and exercise can help you feel better fast.
- Lack of exercise: Your body is like a car. It won't work right if you don't use it. Work out three or four times a week. Take a walk every day.
- Irregular diet: Skipping breakfast or lunch is asking for trouble. Sugar and caffeine give you a boost, but then send you into an energy slump after a short time.
- Low vitamin D: Can make you feel fatigued. After a long winter, get some outdoor time in the sun and eat some fatty fish like salmon or trout. Take a simple supplement.

## WHITE HAT AWARD



The IDD Service Coordination Department would like to present **Trenetra Tarver, Specialized Services**, with this month's White Hat Award. Trenetra does a wonderful job at the front desk of Specialized Services. She is very knowledgeable and ready to assist anyone who needs help. Trenetra will go above and beyond to assist the individuals at Day Habilitation and those who visit the facility. Thank you Trenetra for all that you do!

Cecilia Gallegos for IDD Service Coordination Department.

## DIG IN AND GET FIT WITH GARDENING

There's nothing like digging, hoeing and planting to build muscle and lower blood pressure. If you think gardening is for weaklings, try toting those big bags of mulch.

While spending a couple of hours in the gym can quickly become tedious, the same time spent in the garden will keep you entirely entertained and burn about 340 calories an hour in the process (based on a 150-pound person). That's almost as many calories as an aerobics class. Gardening helps your heart, makes stress fly away, and connects you with the earth.

Apartment dwellers and people without yards can still enjoy the creative benefits of working with the soil. A 16-inch-deep container will hold a cherry tomato plant and some leaf lettuces. Balcony gardens can be as elaborate as you want, and a sunny window is a great place for herbs such as rosemary and basil or a bright geranium.



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Happy  
St. Patrick's  
Day 

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# POINTS TO PONDER - DIGNITY OF RISK

Vania Beavers, Rights Protection Officer

Life experiences come with an element of risk. Whether the experience we are faced with is big or small, there often can be a risk associated with the experience. When making decisions people generally take these risks into consideration. Sometimes we make good decisions, sometimes we take risks. We have the right to make the decision that we feel is best for us.



This applies to the people that we support as well. It is easy, as staff, to fall into “parent” mode when working with adult individuals that we support. However, we must remember that it is the individual’s right to make choices for their life unless established assistance is required. We should encourage the individual to weigh the risks of a decision or experience, but trying to force the person to make the decision we think they should does not usually end well and is a violation of their rights.

It is important to note that the adults we support have the same rights we do. While we do have a duty to step in if the choice puts the person at risk of serious injury, we should allow the person we are supporting to guide their lives by making their own decisions as much as possible without imposing our will onto them. This will also help staff build rapport with the individual they are supporting.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call Vania Beavers at (806) 351-3400 or email [vania.beavers@txpan.org](mailto:vania.beavers@txpan.org).

## Reporting procedure change

Please note that DFPS is no longer the reporting agency of investigations for individuals participating in ISS services. To report a reportable event for individuals in the Individualized Skills and Socialization (ISS) programs (formerly known as the day hab programs), please call HHSC at 1-800-458-9858. Please continue to notify Vania Beavers at (806) 351-3400 or [vania.beavers@txpan.org](mailto:vania.beavers@txpan.org).

**Articles or suggestions for this publication may be submitted by the 1st of each month to:**

**Joyce Lopez-Enevoldsen • 901 Wallace Blvd., • Amarillo, Texas 79106  
Phone: (806) 351-3308 Fax: (806) 351-3345 Email: [joyce.lopez@txpan.org](mailto:joyce.lopez@txpan.org)**

## Welcome these New Employees...

Kenia Arias	Crisis Redesign
Kyla Ellis	FAYS Program
Tammy Escalante	IDD Crisis Respite
Leigh Felder	Adult Behavioral Health
Dezlyn Flores	Adult BH Service Coordination
Cinda Wulf	Accounting/Payroll
Jasmine Fuentes	Specialized Services
Alexandria Garcia	Crisis Redesign
Mariana Garcia	Hereford BH
Jim Haile	IDD Enhanced Service Coordination
Claire McCown	CCBHC Expansion
Hannah O'Brien	IDD Service Coordination
Bailee Porter	BH Intake, Screening & Crisis



*Save the Date!*



*The 3rd Annual Mental Health Awareness Event will take place on  
Friday, May 12th from 11:30am - 2pm at  
1501 S. Polk Street Parking Lot  
Stay tuned for more details!*

# COMPLIANCE CORNER

Welcome back to Compliance Corner. In Compliance Corner we will address a question that was received internally for the purpose of education. (All personal identifying information has been removed to protect the identity of the employee and/or individual).

## IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING.....

Employees are the “eyes and ears” of the organization to detect any violation of our Compliance Program. You are required to immediately report anything that you encounter at TPC that you believe may be unethical, illegal, or fraudulent to:

- Your supervisor or
- Donald Newsome, Director, Quality Management & Compliance, (Privacy Officer)  
Phone: (806) 351-3284  
Email: [Donald.newsome@txpan.org](mailto:Donald.newsome@txpan.org)

### Question:

I work in IDD services and we are supposed to make every attempt to get wet signatures on our documents. Some of the documents have to be mailed to out of town guardians. What am I supposed to do when I mail them to out of town guardians and I don't get them back?

### Answer:

In cases like this, document in iServ your efforts to obtain the required signatures. After your initial request, if you don't receive the documents back within two weeks, send a certified letter so you will have proof of mailing and proof of delivery. Send reminder letters and make sure to send them to Medical Records to be scanned into Papervision. Be sure to document every phone call and letter.

If you have a question/scenario that you would like to be considered for inclusion in the newsletter, email the information to [Compliance Corner@txpan.org](mailto:ComplianceCorner@txpan.org).

*Don't forget to spring  
forward on Sunday,  
March 12th.*







## STRESSED OUT? YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, Americans were among the most stressed populations in the world. But in a 2020 survey, about 1 in 5 U.S. adults — including 19% of millennials (ages 24 to 41) and 34% of younger adults — said their mental health was worse than it had been the previous year.

Stress can fuel unhealthy behaviors, such as:

- Smoking
- Overeating
- Physical inactivity

Over the long-term, chronic stress may contribute to risk factors for heart disease and stroke including:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Inflammation and plaque buildup in the arteries
- Depression and anxiety

## UNIQUE STRESSORS

People of color may face a greater risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and poor outcomes for heart conditions due to stress, depression and anxiety linked to social and economic inequality, discrimination and other societal factors.



## YOU CAN FEEL BETTER

Try different techniques to manage day-to-day stress, including pandemic-related stress from staying home. Build resilience with healthy habits like quitting smoking, getting enough sleep and eating nutritious foods. Try out mindfulness practices like meditation and gratitude.

Focus on:

Physical activity  
Healthier eating

Not smoking  
Better sleep quality

Practicing mindfulness

The American Heart Association has tools to help. Learn more at [heart.org/BeWell](https://heart.org/BeWell).

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## What Is a Codependent Relationship? Am I In One?

Codependency is a term that's been around for decades, but is often misunderstood. In this article, we'll explain what codependency is, how to tell if you're currently in a codependent relationship, and what you can do to heal these patterns.

### What is codependency?

Codependency is a concept that was originally used to describe the partner of someone with a substance use disorder (drug or alcohol addiction). Now, the term is used to describe any relationship that is characterized by one partner (the "sick" person) needing support, and the other partner pushing aside their own needs to take care of the other.

Codependent relationships are unhealthy and damaging. These relationships have little to no boundaries. One partner depends almost entirely on the other, and the other person revolves their life around caring for their partner. The caretaking partner develops a "need to be needed," and the two partners develop an unhealthy reliance on each other.

Although we tend to think of romantic or spousal relationships when we think of codependency, the truth is that any relationship can become codependent. For example, friendships, work relationships, and siblings can all be codependent relationships.

An individual person can also develop a pattern of codependency and bring this pattern to every relationship they become involved in until they work on healing this pattern.

According to [Mental Health America](#), some of the traits of codependency include:

- Feeling overly responsible for the emotions and actions of others
- Seeking out people they can "rescue" and confusing pity for love

- Having an extreme need for approval from others
- An inability to assert one's own needs, and an unhealthy level of guilt when doing so
- Having a hard time saying "no"
- Having an intense fear of abandonment and an unhealthy reliance on their relationships
- Chronic anger, which can be displayed through passive-aggressive behaviors
- Having low self-esteem
- Having a hard time identifying and expressing their own feelings and opinions
- Difficulty adjusting to change
- Trouble with healthy communication

When a person is in a codependent relationship, they start to lose sight of themselves. They give up everything in order to take care of their partner (who may be chemically addicted or experiencing another chronic illness) and they forget how to identify and stand up for their own needs.

Codependent people are not bad people. Codependency is always well-intentioned – you want to take care of your partner. But these patterns can become unhealthy and have lasting negative consequences on your self-image and mental health.

### What are the signs of a codependent relationship?

You might be asking yourself, "How can I tell if I'm in a codependent relationship?" Not all toxic or unhappy relationships are codependent. Here are some signs that you are in a codependent relationship.

*(Continued on page 11)*



*(Continued from page 10)*

**You feel like you need to “save” or “rescue” them.**

In healthy relationships, neither partner is focused on saving the other. If you are focused on the need to “rescue” your partner from whatever ailment they’re facing, then that may be a sign that your relationship has some codependent features. In addition, if you tend to be drawn to people who you can “rescue,” then this may be a sign that you have developed patterns of codependency that need to be addressed.

**You swallow your feelings to avoid arguments.**

Many different factors can contribute to this. But if you constantly feel like you aren’t able to express yourself, especially when you disagree with your partner, then this could be a sign of a codependent relationship. You may feel like you can never say “no” to them, or that you always need to pretend to agree with them.

**You feel responsible for them.**

Do you feel overly responsible for your partner? Do you feel like you need to manage their life for them, make important decisions on their behalf, or make excuses for them for others? For example, you might always feel like you need to call their boss when your partner is under-the-influence to explain their absence from work. You don’t trust them to take care of this themselves.

This feeling of over-responsibility for your partner may be a sign of codependency.

**You can’t be alone.**

Many people who have developed patterns of codependency have a hard time being alone. You might feel overly reliant on your relationship (or

other people), and become anxious when you don’t hear from your partner for a long time. Or you might find yourself jumping from one relationship to another. Codependency isn’t the only possible explanation for this, but it could be one reason why you have a hard time being alone.

**You feel resentful toward your partner.**

In the beginning of a codependent relationship, it might seem like everything is great; You are happy to take care of your partner in whatever way they need. But as time passes, you may start to become resentful. You might feel like your partner takes and takes, while you give and give. It might start to feel like a one-sided relationship. This could mean that your relationship has features of codependency.

**You need to be needed**

This is a core feature of codependency. You could feel like you only matter when other people *need* you. If others aren’t depending on you to take care of them, then what is your purpose in the world? This is a thinking pattern that’s been influenced by codependency. In reality, you matter in the world regardless of whether you’re needed or not.

**How to recover from codependency.**

If you are or have been in a codependent relationship, then your mental health might be impacted. But just like you learned codependent patterns, you can unlearn them as well. Here are some ways you can heal from the impacts of codependency and develop healthy relationships.

- Prioritize self-care over caring for your partner. It’s easier said than done, but try to remember that your own needs matter – and it’s important to intentionally set time aside to meet those needs.
- Learn how to set, and keep, personal boundaries. Learning and practicing assertive communication skills can help with this.
- Develop all types of relationships. Resist the



urge to become overly dependent on one person. Practice allowing a variety of different connections to meet different needs in your life.

Mental health counseling has also helped many people heal from the past and learn new relationship patterns.

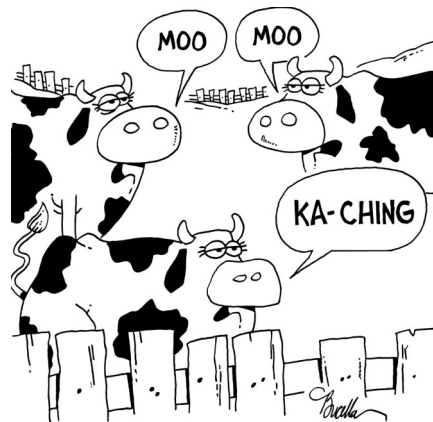
If you don't have access to a therapist, then you can reach out to MINES, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). MINES & Associates provides free and confidential counseling, and our licensed counselors are available 24/7. You can talk to us about anything, including codependent relationships, and we will walk with you step by step to get through it. We are here for you!

To your wellbeing,

The MINES Team



"I wanted an ankle tattoo, so I had it put on my thigh when I was young."



Cash Cow



**Victoria Telles , ASCI Amarillo**, answered last month's questions correctly and was randomly selected to win a \$25 gift card.

To claim your card, contact Joyce Lopez-Enevoldsen at 806.351.3308 or email: [joyce.lopez@txpan.org](mailto:joyce.lopez@txpan.org).

## Employee Assistance Program

### ★ Now Access Your EAP Services Online! ★

MINES and Associates are excited to announce MINES is now offering a new digital intake for EAP services!

This will help make accessing your EAP benefits easier than ever before. [Please click here](#) or use the link below for instructions on how to use the digital intake. Members may still access us via telephone as well.

[https://www.minesandassociates.com/Documents/MINES\\_Digital\\_Intake\\_Overview.pdf](https://www.minesandassociates.com/Documents/MINES_Digital_Intake_Overview.pdf)

Please call us at 800-873-7138 M-F 8:30am to 5:00pm MST if you have any questions about the digital intake, would like assistance completing your intake, or if we can assist with anything else.

#### Answer's to last months questions:

- 1) Rights Protection Officer 2) Audit or Compliance Investigation 3) Online Resource Library

Answer the questions correctly and your name will be entered in a random drawing to be eligible to win a \$25 gift card.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ take place every Tuesday in March from 10am—12:30pm and are \_\_\_\_\_ to the public.
2. PHI stands for \_\_\_\_\_.
3. True or False  
There has been a reporting procedure change for individuals participating in Individualized Skills Socialization (ISS) programs formerly known as the day-hab programs.



[Submit your answers to joyce.lopez@txpan.org. Deadline for responses is the 5th of the following month. You must type "Monthly Drawing" in the email subject line to be eligible. For those that do not have a computer, entries may be submitted via interoffice mail. The same requirements apply for hard copy submissions.](mailto:joyce.lopez@txpan.org)