



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

Behavioral Health Division
ACCESS



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Behavioral Health Services Act 2026–2029 Integrated Plan Public Comments and County Responses

Written Public Comment #1:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Organizations

Other (please specify): Disabled Housing, Seniors, Food Pantry

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

No

Please explain:

The number of people over 60 is expected to grow by 30% in Santa Cruz, higher than the state average. Dementia Care assisted living or just dementia care say centers are woefully low in number and/or exorbitant in price, and/or lacking in quality.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

The word equity is in there, and sorry if I missed it, but how is this plan equitable if there is no mention of vulnerable seniors with behavioral health issues?

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Define how you will address the needs of seniors with behavioral health challenges: their physical, emotional and cognitive needs.

County Response:

Thank you for your comment and for highlighting the growing need for services for older adults with behavioral health challenges. The plan addresses equity for vulnerable seniors through community-based early intervention services designed to reduce barriers to care. Pages 85–86 of the plan highlight the Family Services Agency of the Central Coast – Senior Program. This program provides Outreach, Access and Linkage (referrals and screenings), including in-home counseling for adults 60+ and bilingual, bicultural peer support at the Watsonville Senior Center. This program is intended to increase access to behavioral health services for older adults, reduce social isolation among seniors, and improve emotional well-being and coping skills by strengthening connections between seniors and community-based supports and early intervention for behavioral health concerns. It is important to note that county behavioral health departments do not provide treatment for dementia, as dementia is a medical condition typically diagnosed and treated by primary care providers and specialists. County behavioral health services focus on treating individuals with severe mental health conditions and substance use disorders, while also supporting early identification and linkage to appropriate care.

Written Public Comment #2:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Member

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Unsure

Please explain:

I do not understand this document. The budget pages are especially confusing.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

No response

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

I do not see any numbers that are easy to understand? How many people? What is the breakdown by different demographics? What are the key assumptions? What is the current funding source, and how does it change over the course of the planning period?

Any additional comments or recommendations?

Dumb it down to some core indicators.

County Response:

Thank you for your comment. We understand that the document, especially the budget section, can be difficult to navigate. The budget template is required and provided by the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), and we agree that it is complex. To support accessibility, we encourage readers to refer to the Executive Summary, which provides a more concise and plain-language overview of key priorities, populations served, and planned investments. This plan reflects Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) funding requirements and is designed to address the needs of priority populations identified by the state, including people with the most serious mental health or substance use needs, specifically those who are experiencing homelessness, justice-involved, in crisis, or at high risk and underserved. Detailed fiscal and programmatic information is included in the body of the plan.

Written Public Comment #3:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Member

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

No

Please explain:

The plan fails to distinguish between individuals who would benefit from mental health services and those with unresolvable behavioral issues. The criterion for selecting individuals to receive mental health resources should not be the severity of their condition; it should be the likelihood of their substantially benefiting from those resources.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

There is a shortage of psychiatrists and licensed clinical psychologists in Santa Cruz County. Even people with good private health insurance have difficulty finding services for a family member in need.

Any additional comments or recommendations?

The plan has too much emphasis on the needs of the poor and especially the homeless. Middle class taxpayers, the people who pay most of the salaries of the Health Services Agency, also have mental health needs and should not be ignored.

County Response:

Thank you for your thoughtful comment. County Behavioral Health (BH) departments are mandated, pursuant to California Welfare & Institutions Code § 14684(a)(6), are explicitly required to provide specialty mental health services to Medi-Cal beneficiaries whose mental or emotional conditions result in functional impairments, with a particular focus on adults with serious and persistent mental illness and children with serious emotional disturbances. This mandate is reinforced by WIC § 5600.3, which defines “serious mental disorder” as severe, persistent, and significantly impairing, including diagnoses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, PTSD, and major affective disorders. Together, these statutes ensure our county’s behavioral health plan is legally bound to prioritize individuals with severe mental health and substance use conditions, guaranteeing access to medically necessary care designed to restore functional stability and quality of life.

The eligibility requirements, defined by California law, cannot be changed by California Behavioral Health Departments. We recognize that all community members may not meet criteria for specialty mental health/SUD services (County BH services), and may still need access to other mental health and SUD services. California law specifies that “non-specialty mental health services shall be covered by a Medi-Cal managed care plan.” This applies to Santa Cruz County Medi-Cal members that have mild to moderate behavioral health care needs. The local Medi-Cal managed care plans (insurance plans) for our County are the Central California Alliance for Health (CAAH) and Kaiser Permanente. Medi-Cal members that do not meet eligibility requirements for County Behavioral Health Services should contact their primary care doctor to request a referral for services, or their assigned managed care plan (insurance plan). CAAH members may call the member services phone number at 1-800-700-3874 to obtain referrals for mild to moderate behavioral health services. Kaiser Permanente members may call their member services phone number at [1-800-464-4000](tel:1-800-464-4000) for English or [1-800-788-0616](tel:1-800-788-0616) for Spanish. Santa Cruz County community members that have commercial insurance coverage should speak with their primary care doctor about the need for services, or contact their respective insurance’s member services phone number to obtain necessary referrals to behavioral health providers covered under their plan.

Regarding the Behavioral Health Integrated Plan, on page 4 of the plan we added an overview of county BH responsibilities and statutory requirements in California to clarify this role. BHS funding has specific state requirements that define eligible populations and allowable services. These funds are intended to prioritize individuals with the highest levels of need, including those who are underserved. As such, counties are not able to serve all residents through this funding source, and services must be targeted based on state-defined criteria and available resources as stated above. We acknowledge the significant workforce shortages in behavioral health across California, including a lack of psychiatrists and licensed clinical psychologists in Santa Cruz County. This impacts access to care across all populations. While we recognize concerns about equity across income groups, BHS funding is specifically directed to state-identified priority populations, including individuals experiencing homelessness and those with the most significant behavioral health needs.

Written Public Comment #4:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the BHSI Integrated Plan. I've reviewed the plan and wanted to share my perspective as a lifetime Santa Cruz County resident.

While I appreciate the work that went into this plan and recognize the genuine commitment of county staff, I believe we aren't doing nearly enough, and I want to be direct about why.

Mental health care should be accessible to everyone, not just those who qualify for Medi-Cal or can navigate a complex system. Even as someone with insurance, I personally struggled for over six months to get care. I still don't know what it will ultimately cost me, and I'm uncertain whether I'll be able to continue seeing my provider beyond 6-8 visits. If this is the experience of someone with coverage, I can only imagine how much harder it is for those without it.

We are in a mental health crisis. The plan acknowledges this, the data on suicide rates, homelessness, justice involvement, and unmet need all confirm it.

But the response feels calibrated to what is fundable rather than what is needed. We can't continue to treat mental health as a specialty service available only to those who meet narrow eligibility criteria. Untreated mental illness affects everyone, our neighbors, our workplaces, our public spaces, our families.

I urge the county to:

Push harder for universal access - not just for Medi-Cal recipients, but for ALL residents, regardless of insurance status or income.

Address the cost barrier explicitly. The plan focuses on the uninsured and underinsured, but people with insurance are also being priced out of ongoing care. Session limits and unpredictable costs are real barriers.

Expand capacity urgently. A six-month wait for care isn't a minor inconvenience, it is a system failure. The plan's projections and timelines feel inadequate given the scale of need.

Treat this like the crisis it is. We need all hands on deck.

Thank you for reading this feedback. I hope it is taken seriously.

County Response:

Thank you for taking the time to review the BHSA Integrated Plan and for sharing your experience and concerns. We appreciate your perspective and recognize the significant barriers you describe in accessing timely and affordable mental health care, even for individuals with insurance. We agree that there are substantial unmet behavioral health needs and system-wide challenges, including workforce shortages and cost-related barriers to ongoing care. County Behavioral Health (BH) departments are mandated, pursuant to California Welfare & Institutions Code § 14684(a)(6), and explicitly required to provide specialty mental health services to Medi-Cal beneficiaries whose mental or emotional conditions result in functional impairments, with a particular focus on adults with serious and persistent mental illness and children with serious emotional disturbances. This mandate is reinforced by WIC § 5600.3, which defines “serious mental disorder” as severe, persistent, and significantly impairing, including diagnoses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, PTSD, and major affective disorders. Together, these statutes ensure our county’s behavioral health plan is legally bound to prioritize individuals with severe mental health and substance use conditions, guaranteeing access to medically necessary care designed to restore functional stability and quality of life.

The eligibility requirements, defined by California law, cannot be changed by California Behavioral Health Departments. We recognize that all community members may not meet criteria for specialty mental health/SUD services (County BH services), and may still need access to other mental health and SUD services. California law specifies that “non-specialty mental health services shall be covered by a Medi-Cal managed care plan.” This applies to Santa Cruz County Medi-Cal members that have mild to moderate behavioral health care needs. The local Medi-Cal managed care plans (insurance plans) for our County are the Central California Alliance for Health (CAAH) and Kaiser Permanente. Medi-Cal members that do not meet eligibility requirements for County Behavioral Health Services should contact their primary care doctor to request a referral for services, or their assigned managed care plan (insurance plan). CAAH members may call the member services phone number at 1-800-700-3874 to obtain referrals for mild to moderate behavioral health services. Kaiser Permanente members may call their member services phone number at [1-800-464-4000](tel:1-800-464-4000) for English or [1-800-788-0616](tel:1-800-788-0616) for Spanish. Santa Cruz County community members that have commercial insurance coverage should speak with their primary care doctor about the need for services, or contact their respective insurance’s member services phone number to obtain necessary referrals to behavioral health providers covered under their plan. <tel:+1-800-464-4000><tel:+1-800-788-0616>

Regarding this BHSA plan, it is important to note that BHSA funding is guided by state requirements (Proposition 1) that prioritize specific populations, including individuals with serious mental illness and substance use disorders, as well as Medi-Cal beneficiaries and those who are uninsured or underinsured. Counties are not able to provide universal behavioral health services to all residents regardless of insurance status within this state mandated funding structure. Within these constraints, the County is working to expand capacity, improve

access, and strengthen the behavioral health system for individuals that meet eligibility for specialty mental health services. We appreciate your feedback. A universal healthcare solution for all Californians will require voter endorsed state legislative and funding changes.

Written Public Comment #5:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply: Person with Lived Experience, Community Member, Consumer of behavioral health services in Santa Cruz County

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

Please explain:

We need more sober living housing options for those that come out of substance abuse treatment, especially young people, teens and young twenties. Some current sober living places have drugs on their premises and are not truly sober living places.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

We need more programs to address food insecurity, especially for homes with young children. It would be great to have a list of all programs that are addressing food insecurity with dates and times they are passing out food. Many of these families need help with non-food necessary items like toilet paper, feminine hygiene products, shampoo, laundry detergent and cleaning supplies.

County Response:

Thank you for your comments and for highlighting the needs around recovery housing, substance use supports, and basic needs insecurity in the community.

The County recognizes the importance of safe, stable sober living environments. The local Substance Use Disorder (SUD) continuum of care does include partnerships and access to sober living and recovery housing options, and we continue to work on strengthening these supports and identifying quality, safe housing resources. Sober Living Environments (SLEs) are not directly contracted with the County and instead operate as private entities; however, the County is exploring requirements (such as accreditation) for SLEs, which would establish stronger safeguards and standards for maintaining sober living policies. While BHSA funding can support housing-related services, much of the current BHSA allocation is being used to sustain existing, effective programs that were originally established under MHSA. These programs are not new expansions of funding, but rather ongoing services that are now subject to more structured and prescriptive state requirements under BHSA, which limit flexibility compared to prior funding allowable uses. We also acknowledge your concerns related to food insecurity and access to basic needs. The County continues to collaborate with community-based organizations and partners to support food distribution efforts and connect residents to available resources. We agree that awareness and accessibility of these services are critical areas for continued improvement.

We appreciate your input and will take your feedback into consideration as we continue to strengthen our behavioral health system and partnerships with other county departments and organizations that provide supportive services .

Written Public Comment #6:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply: Person with Lived Experience, Community Member

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Unsure

Please explain:

This is a complex issue, so it's hard to say if we are addressing the right things in the right order.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

Youth services. It's really important that youth also has access to care and that that population is considered so that these children who will eventually turn into adults no, that there is somewhere to go or someone they can talk to and that they will be heard.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

There's so much dysfunction and confusion within the system itself that rarely do the folks in need get the proper advocacy that they so need in this bureaucratic system. If we want to make progress for those in need, Identifying and taking actions to Simplify the level of complexity needs to be amplified.

Any additional comments or recommendations?

The more layers levels of organizations there are, the less money there is to dedicate to finding a financially sustainable way to the serve people in need so there is less strain on the public. Also, no war!!!! We could help the people here in our country without war.

County Response:

Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about system complexity and access to care. We recognize that navigating the behavioral health system can be challenging for individuals and families seeking services, and we agree that clarity, coordination, and effective advocacy are essential to ensuring people receive timely and appropriate support. Improving system navigation, streamlining access points, and strengthening care coordination are ongoing priorities within the County's behavioral health system. We also acknowledge the concern raised about administrative complexity. While behavioral health funding and service delivery involve multiple required components, regulations, and partner organizations, we continue to work toward reducing barriers for clients, improving alignment across programs, and ensuring resources are directed as effectively as possible to services. The opening of our Youth Crisis Center in April 2026 is a significant step forward in improving local timely access to critical mental health stabilization services for youth. We appreciate your feedback and will take it into consideration as we continue efforts to improve access, coordination, and user experience within the behavioral health system.

Written Public Comment #7:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Providers, Community Organizations, Community Member

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

Please explain:

I have gaps in my understanding, so I may be missing something, but I don't see plans or efforts to integrate shared care across FQHCs and other community orgs that have IBH. Since 2012, BH care has increased greatly in the clinics - MAT services are an adjacent example - and the silos between these entities remain. Rather than emphasizing fiscal constraints and workforce shortage, host or facilitate consortium-style convenings to maximize utilization of BH and SUD services across the continuum. Ideally orgs like mine would have MOUs to step up and step down care seamlessly which would positively impact the gaps in both finances and workforce - we need to improve shared care and better utilize existing tools like Unite Us more collaboratively.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

Attention on access to care - and hoping this results in true changes where a clinician or care manager's clinical assessment will be considered rather than what occurs now where the Access Team denies access far more than approves it. I feel badly that my lack of understanding some of the technical pieces of the plan result in me not being able to call out strengths - I trust there are many.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Wishing there would be more attention on true collaboration toward "no wrong door" - this looks like the same archaic CBOs who have not adapted their practices in years (FSA, Parent Center) are being considered rather than looking toward the more innovative FQHC IBH services as key partners and/or ECM community providers as key partners. MAT services at SCCH and Salud are not even mentioned - so it looks like huge missed opportunity to have CCAH and County BH truly come together to bridge care gaps and maximize collaborative opportunities. I'm so sad that the energy of 2012 - 2019 community-wide and led by HIP has dwindled - there are a few committees and subcommittees but who is convening all the service providers to map gaps in and bridges to care?

Any additional comments or recommendations?

I appreciate the opportunity to comment and hope to see opportunities to partner authentically and effectively. One area I feel could use attention is the issue with bottle-neck in care due to little to no attention on treatment planning (when do we close?), engagement and improvement data, and related to both of those: levels of care. How do we share care with one another with support for people to transition from place to place with ease? Yolo County - similar size - made huge progress in this arena a few years back. Let's look to them - spend some of the funds on getting leadership together to flatten the field toward true collaboration. HIP used to be a convener - and that effort has faded. What better time and way to bring it back than with this new plan?

County Response:

Thank you for your thoughtful feedback regarding care coordination and cross-system collaboration. The County agrees that stronger integration among providers, FQHCs, community organizations, and other partners is important to achieving a “no wrong door” system of care. In this current fiscal year, significant efforts to improve collaboration and coordination between County Behavioral Health and CCAH have occurred. The BHSa plan includes continued partnership development, care coordination, and system alignment efforts to meet state requirements and improve care and outcomes for those we collectively provide services to

Written Public Comment #8:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Organizations

Overall, do you feel the BHSI Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

Please explain:

we need more mental health day programs and resources.

County Response:

Thank you for your feedback. The County recognizes the importance of day programs and community-based supports as part of a full continuum of care. The BHSI budget includes funds for a day program using the Clubhouse evidence based practice model. We are in the initial planning stages and intend to release more information as we move forward in the new fiscal year.

Written Public Comment #9:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Providers, Community Organizations

Overall, do you feel the BHSI Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

Please explain:

The county is saturated with SUD services. The plan does not address how it is impacted by federal policy changes.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

The focus on youth crisis care.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

The county continues to experience a gap in its continuum of care for adult mental health crisis beds.

County Response:

Thank you for your comments. The County appreciates your recognition of the youth crisis care investments included in the plan. The recent local emphasis on expanding the SUD continuum of care will serve to better address the need of the community and a future shift in focus to address the mental health continuum will be needed. We also acknowledge the continued need for adult mental health crisis and residential capacity and will continue evaluating service gaps and funding opportunities as resources allow.

Written Public Comment #10:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Organizations, Person with Lived Experience

Overall, do you feel the BHSI Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

Overall, I commend the County for a thoughtful and community-informed plan. By strengthening prevention, culturally responsive care, and inclusive engagement—especially with fathers and underserved populations—the County can further advance a more equitable and effective behavioral health system.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Strengthen Father and Family Engagement Strategies

While the plan emphasizes families and youth, there is an opportunity to more intentionally engage fathers and father-figures as protective factors in prevention, early intervention, and long-term outcomes. Research consistently shows that father involvement improves child well-being, reduces system involvement, and strengthens family stability. I recommend including father-specific outreach, programming, and workforce training to ensure services are inclusive and effective for all caregivers.

Expand Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Services

The plan identifies disparities among Hispanic and Spanish-speaking populations, especially in access to Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS). I encourage deeper investment in bilingual/bicultural providers, community-based partnerships, and trusted messengers. Consider funding community-rooted organizations to lead engagement efforts.

Invest in Prevention and Community-Based Models

The plan highlights high demand and limited resources, with increasing need anticipated. Prevention strategies—especially those rooted in mentorship, social-emotional development, and community connection—should be prioritized. Programs that build resilience, identity, and relationships (especially for youth and young men) can reduce long-term system costs.

Strengthen Support for Justice-Involved Individuals

Given that arrest rates exceed statewide averages and disparities exist across race and gender, I recommend: Expanding reentry-focused behavioral health services, Investing in peer mentorship models (e.g., individuals with lived experience supporting others). Strengthening coordination between behavioral health, probation, and community-based organizations

Address Workforce Gaps with Lived Experience Leadership

The plan acknowledges workforce challenges. I recommend: Expanding pathways for peer support specialists and community health workers, especially those with lived experience. Investing in training models such as “fathers serving fathers” or peer-led engagement approaches

Improve Data Collection and Accountability

The plan notes gaps in data related to homelessness and cross-system coordination. I support the investment in a Social Health Information Exchange (SHIE). Recommend including clear

community-facing outcomes and dashboards to track progress on equity, access, and engagement

Any additional comments or recommendations?

I strongly encourage the County to expand investment in evidence-based parenting programs as a core prevention strategy within the BHSA framework.

The Integrated Plan highlights disparities in access to care, child welfare involvement, and behavioral health outcomes among children and families . Strengthening parenting skills and family relationships is one of the most effective ways to address these challenges upstream.

I recommend the County: Expand proven models beyond Triple P – Positive Parenting Program (already referenced in the plan), as well as other evidence-based approaches (Supporting Father Involvement(MENTors) and Positive Discipline) that support: Co-parenting and conflict resolution, Father engagement and inclusion, Trauma-informed parenting practices
Increase accessibility by offering programs: In community-based settings (schools, community centers, faith-based spaces), In multiple languages, especially Spanish, During flexible hours (evenings/weekends)

Prioritize underserved populations, including: Fathers and non-custodial parents, Families involved in child welfare or the justice system, Young and first-time parents

Integrate parenting programs across systems, including: Schools and Behavioral Health Student Services Act (BHSSA) initiatives, Child Welfare Services (CWS), Probation and reentry programs.

Include peer-led and culturally grounded approaches, where parents with lived experience support other parents—helping increase trust, engagement, and retention.

Expanding father-inclusive, evidence-based parenting programs—particularly those that create space for fathers to learn, heal, and lead—will significantly strengthen family systems and community outcomes.

County Response:

Thank you for your detailed and thoughtful recommendations. The County appreciates your emphasis on father engagement, culturally responsive services, prevention, lived experience leadership, and accountability. The plan includes equity-focused investments, school-based supports, youth and family services, and ongoing data improvement efforts, and your comments will help inform future implementation. Outside of BHSA funding, County Behavioral Health has focused services and investments for child welfare involved children and families, justice involved individuals, and student mental health as well as active collaboration and partnerships with child welfare, law enforcement, county office of education, and local school districts. Many of the recommendations mentioned are focused on prevention. State regulations under BHSA, will retain prevention funding at the state level to be administered by the California Department of Public Health. We encourage local organizations to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #11:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Member, Other (please specify): Mother of Person with Lived Experience

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Unsure

Please explain:

I only know about those behavioral health needs that pertain(ed) to my son's manic phase of bipolarism.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

My son was arrested when he should have been tended to by healthcare workers. This happened twice. I was there both times. In fact, I called it in both times. The first time a healthcare worker came along, but was off speaking to me when the officers arrested my son. Both arrests took place while he was in handcuffs - once sitting on the curb; the other in the dirt. Oddly, it was suggested the second time, where no healthcare worker was present, that my son go peacefully in the patrol car and that then he'd be transported to a healthcare facility. Although my son complied, that didn't happen. He was taken to the jail. The strength of the proposed plan is to have more trained healthcare workers as well as police officers also trained in mental healthcare on scene.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Thankfully, I am not familiar enough with the system to comment intelligently.

Any additional comments or recommendations?

Other than a general dismay over how many mentally ill people who need serious, yet compassionate help, are part of our society and of how slowly the wheels of progress turn, no.

County Response:

Thank you for sharing your family's experience. While County Behavioral Health departments do not have control over decisions made by law enforcement, we do recognize the need for mental health crisis intervention and supports as an alternative to law enforcement action in circumstances that are primarily driven by behavioral health needs. We currently have County Behavioral Health Liaisons that work in partnership with local law enforcement and co-respond to calls at the request of law enforcement. Additionally, our Mobile Crisis program responds 24/7 in the event of a mental health crisis. Any Santa Cruz County resident can call the Mobile Crisis hotline at (800) 952-2335. For more information about our Mobile Crisis services, you can visit our webpage:

<https://www.health.santacruzcounty.us/HSAHome/HSADivisions/BehavioralHealth/MobileCrisisResponseTeam.aspx>. The County appreciates your support for expanding trained behavioral health responders and collaborative crisis response models. The plan includes continued investments in crisis services, field-based response, and partnerships that reduce reliance on law enforcement whenever possible.

Written Public Comment #12:

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Santa Cruz County Seniors Commission

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April 2, 2026

Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Advisory Board
c/o Amy Rhoades
Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency
1400 Emeline Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: Public Comment on BHSA Integrated Plan – Protect Older Adult Services

Dear Chair Cabanes and Board Members,

I am writing as an individual member of the Santa Cruz County Seniors Commission. I am submitting this comment in my personal capacity and not on behalf of the full Commission.

I recognize that this is a critical moment. As counties finalize their three-year Integrated Plans under compressed timelines and reduced funding, there is a real risk that prevention and early intervention services—particularly those serving older adults—will be reduced or deprioritized.

Older adults in Santa Cruz County already face significant behavioral health challenges, including social isolation, housing instability, and barriers to accessing care such as transportation, cost, and system complexity. At the same time, older adults receive a disproportionately small share of behavioral health services, despite clear and growing need.

Given these realities, I respectfully urge the Behavioral Health Advisory Commission to take an active role in ensuring that older adults are not overlooked in the Integrated Plan.

Specifically, I urge you to:

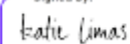
- Protect existing services for older adults, including prevention and early intervention programs such as caregiver supports, peer counseling, and community-based services.
- Oppose any reductions to programs serving older adults. This population already receives the fewest services and cannot absorb further cuts.
- Ensure older adults are explicitly prioritized in the Integrated Plan, with clear strategies, funding commitments, and measurable outcomes.
- Promote meaningful community engagement, including outreach to older adults, caregivers, and service providers during the public comment process.
- Use BHAC meetings and hearings to elevate these concerns and ensure transparency before the Plan is finalized and submitted to the Board of Supervisors.

The BHSA creates both opportunity and risk. Without intentional focus, older adults—who already experience significant unmet behavioral health needs—may continue to fall through the cracks.

I urge you to take a strong, visible role in this process and help ensure that Santa Cruz County's Integrated Plan reflects and protects the needs of older adults.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Respectfully,

Signed by:

Katie Limas
427401827500470

Vice Chair, Santa Cruz County Seniors Commission (submitted in an individual capacity)

County Response:

Thank you for your comment. A portion of BHSA funds will be used to sustain the current older adults program operated by Family Service Agency, highlighted in the Early Intervention section of this integrated plan. This program provides Outreach, Access and Linkage (referrals and screenings), including in-home counseling for adults 60+ and bilingual, bicultural peer support at the Watsonville Senior Center. This program is intended to increase access to behavioral health services for older adults, reduce social isolation among seniors, and improve emotional well-being and coping skills by strengthening connections between seniors and community-based supports and early intervention for behavioral health concerns. In addition, our Adult System of Care will have two general Full-Service Partnership programs, one in South county and one in North county, to provide a higher level of care for adults (including older adults) who need the services. To inquire about services, please call 1-800-952-2335 or 988 if you are in crisis.

Written Public Comment #13:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Organizations. Other (please specify): Positive Discipline Community Resource

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

Please explain:

This plan is addressing so much of what our community needs. I also think it could improve!

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

I see a lot of strengths in the proposed plan as it covers so many dimensions of mental health including, but not limited to, prevention programs to intervention programs.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

I would like to share an important area for improvement in the area of prevention programs. Positive Discipline Community Resources can be a great addition to the First Five of Santa Cruz program (which utilizes the Triple P approach to parenting) that is already in place. Positive Discipline is an evidence-based, trauma informed philosophy that places respectful relationships as their foundation. They offer outreach education and trainings in English, Spanish, and Mixteco. Positive Discipline aligns with the California Teaching Pyramid education program that is recommended to all California State run early education programs. Positive Discipline teaches an authoritative style of parenting and teaching as opposed to an authoritarian approach. It can prevent child abuse by educating caregivers not only on child development, but on how to build trusting and respectful relationships. Positive Discipline can be used with all children and works in all relationships.

Any additional comments or recommendations?

Please consider adding Positive Discipline Community Resources to the 3 year road map for BHSA. Thank you!

County Response:

Thank you for your thoughtful feedback and support of prevention-focused parenting programs. We recognize the need for these services in our community. While Positive Discipline aligns with prevention goals, BHSA funding restrictions limit local investment in prevention activities, which are now largely administered at the state level. The plan does include other family- and school-based early intervention services. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services, particularly for increasing early intervention access to Spanish speaking and Indigenous Language speaking residents. The County has added early intervention supports to the Plan that will focus on serving this population located in the Santa Cruz County region of the Pajaro Valley Health Care District. We will be launching a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to submit proposals. Additionally, we encourage organizations to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #14:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Other (please specify): community-based researcher

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

We appreciate the County's efforts to engage the community and develop a comprehensive, multi-year plan to guide behavioral health investments. The emphasis on community input and long-term planning is an important foundation.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

The draft BHSA Integrated Plan would benefit from greater clarity regarding the data used to inform priorities and funding decisions. As written, it is not always clear what data sources, analyses, or community-level indicators are driving key investments.

At a broader level, there is concern that gaps in available or presented data may limit the ability to fully understand need, target resources effectively, and assess whether investments are reaching the communities most impacted by behavioral health challenges.

This raises a larger issue: when data are incomplete, unclear, or not transparently communicated, funding decisions risk reinforcing existing patterns of underinvestment. A significant portion of the population—particularly communities that have historically experienced disparities—may continue to be underserved, not by intent, but by structure.

We encourage the County to:

Clearly articulate the data and criteria used to guide funding allocations

Identify where data gaps exist and how they are being addressed

Strengthen data collection efforts by incorporating primary data (e.g., surveys, focus groups, community engagement), ensuring consistent disaggregation (e.g., by race/ethnicity, language, age, geography), and elevating lived experience alongside administrative data

Clarify how data will be updated and used on an ongoing basis to inform mid-course corrections over the three-year plan period

Explicitly assess how proposed investments align with areas of greatest need, including communities that have experienced persistent underinvestment

Greater transparency and a stronger, more intentional data infrastructure will improve both the effectiveness and equity of the BHSA Integrated Plan.

County Response:

Thank you for your detailed recommendations regarding taking an informed data-driven approach to guide community investment and resource decisions based on need. We agree that data disaggregation and further integration of County data systems is needed to better understand current investments and needs. The current plan is informed by multiple data sources, including service utilization data, community engagement, and disparities analyses outlined in the document. We acknowledge the importance of continued improvement in data transparency and will strengthen ongoing data collection, disaggregation, and evaluation processes over the three-year period. The County, as a whole outside of Behavioral Health, is currently evaluating technologies and methods that can integrate and share data across county departments to improve client service delivery, care coordination, and data-driven decision making. The County Behavioral Health department continues to closely partner with County Public Health to understand health disparities in our community for Behavioral Health. Additionally, BHSA transformation will require California Counties over time to improve data collection and reporting to not only inform system decision but also improve transparency.

Written Public Comment #15:

As an early childhood educator and parent education teacher and trainer for 3 decades in the Santa Cruz community, I can speak to the immense value and transformational qualities of Positive Discipline. It is a global movement, not just in Santa Cruz. It deserves funding and to be recognized. It has shown over and over that its authoritative style and focus on the health of family relationships changes behaviors at the root level, not just the short term, surface level. Beside the research vouching for its proven long-term positive impact, I can personally vouch for this as a first hand witness. Despite limited funding, Positive Discipline Community Resources continues to expand over the years due to educators like myself who are dedicated to bringing this high-quality, developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed classes and trainings to families, teachers, therapists, social workers, parks and rec camp counselors, after-school programs, and incarcerated youth. We have provided early intervention, one on one private parent support via phone calls, services provided to families who speak English, Spanish and Mixteco. We have done so much with so little. I urge the Board of Supervisors to support this organization just like any other parenting program doing good work, and see the good work spread to even more people in need. It just makes sense.

County Response:

Thank you for sharing your experience and support for Positive Discipline. The County values parenting education and family supports. This plan reflects BHSA-funded priorities only. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services, particularly for increasing early intervention access to Spanish speaking and Indigenous Language speaking residents. The County has added early intervention supports to the Plan that will focus on serving this population located in the Santa Cruz County region of the Pajaro Valley Health Care District. We will be launching a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to submit proposals. Additionally, we encourage organizations to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #16:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Person with Lived Experience, Community Member, Local education agencies

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Yes

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

It seems fairly comprehensive.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

My main concern as a parent educator working with families who have infants through the teens, that parent and family engagement and out reach is limited to on parent program. A well established evidence based program that is reaching hundreds of families yearly in our county is not included: Positive Discipline Community Resources.

This program is reaching English, Spanish and Mixteco speaking families. The Positive Discipline Association is well established on the global level and has significant research to support its authoritative style program. Why not uplift, and include a program like this that is already doing the work despite limited funds?

County Response:

Thank you for your feedback. The plan includes multiple family-focused and school-based early intervention services. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services, particularly for increasing early intervention access to Spanish speaking and Indigenous Language speaking residents. The County has added early intervention supports to the Plan that will focus on serving this population located in the Santa Cruz County region of the Pajaro Valley Health Care District. We will be launching a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to submit proposals. Additionally, we encourage organizations to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #17:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Providers, Community Organizations, Person with Lived Experience, Community Member, Consumer of behavioral health services in Santa Cruz County

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

Please explain:

We need evidence based trauma informed parent and educators of this support un English, Spanish and indigenous languages. Specifically Positive Discipline Community Resource is doing work we desperately need and should be included in the plan and funding.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

We need evidence based trauma informed parent and educators of this support un English, Spanish and indigenous languages. Specifically Positive Discipline Community Resource is doing work we desperately need and should be included in the plan and funding.

County Response:

Thank you for highlighting the need for culturally and linguistically responsive parenting supports. We will continue to prioritize and strengthen culturally responsive services. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services, particularly for increasing early intervention access to Spanish speaking and Indigenous Language speaking residents. The County has added early intervention supports to the Plan that will focus on serving this population located in the Santa Cruz County region of the Pajaro Valley Health Care District. We will be launching a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to submit proposals. Additionally, we encourage organizations to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #18:

I've spent my life here in Santa Cruz County choosing to buy a home and raise my children in this amazing place, I currently live in Watsonville where we have raised or 19 yr old and 16 yr old boys from birth. They attended Alianza which we chose because it was a Positive Discipline school and then Mount Madonna which we chose for its values curriculum. We are members of Temple Beth El, and Mount Madonna School where I teach restorative justice. I am a graduate of UCSC and Cabrillo College. My son is a student at Cabrillo. My husband is a teacher at Harbor High School, where he uses the restorative practices taught by Positive Discipline, and has been a teacher in Santa Cruz county for about 25 years. My parents are active members of this community, founding members of Temole Beth El, and founder of Simcha Preschool. I am writing in support of including Positive Discipline and specifically Positive Discipline community resources' classes, materials, and heart-to-heart coaching in Santa Cruz's master plan for behavioral health support.

The trauma informed, science driven practices of Positive Discipline strengthen family bonds and focus on teaching life skills and core values to children, encouraging them to become productive and caring members of their communities. I know of no other parent education frameworks that are truly trauma informed and based on Adlerian psychology.

If we want healthier adults in Santa Cruz County I truly believe there is no better, cheaper, or simpler path than to offer Positive Discipline materials, classes and direct coaching to the parents and educators of this county in English, Spanish and Mixteco.

Feel free to reach out to me for further discussion, support or with questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

County Response:

Thank you for sharing your personal experience and support for Positive Discipline. The County values community-rooted parenting supports and appreciates your advocacy for families. This plan reflects BHSA-funded activities only, Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications for this funding and would encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. We also encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #19:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Other (please specify): POSITIVE DISCIPLINE COMMUNITY RESOURCES with their focus on English/Spanish/Mixteco parent education outreach

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Unsure

Any additional comments or recommendations?

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE COMMUNITY RESOURCES with their focus on English/Spanish/Mixteco parent education outreach and program activities. Demonstrates their focus on families, linguistic competence and outreach for early intervention services. Including the unique evidence based parenting program of Positive Discipline would allow more families access and support in developing connections with their children and community.

County Response:

Thank you for sharing your personal experience and support for Positive Discipline. While we recognize its value, this plan is limited to BHSA-funded priorities. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention services. We will also be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. The County will continue to monitor future state prevention funding opportunities and share as they come available. We also encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #20:

Hola buos días este de cuatro niños noistoy blando enara discipina positiva com discipina positiva por meastante en la comunación qu tengo con mis catro niños andendo y maudando mucho en como haceros valorar

Translation: Hello, good morning. As a parent of four children, I am talking about positive discipline; I am actively using it. Positive discipline helps me in the communication I have with my four children. It has helped me a lot in how to make them value.

County Response:

Gracias por compartir su experiencia personal y su apoyo a Positive Discipline. Si bien reconocemos su valor, este plan se limita a las prioridades financiadas por la BHSA, y los fondos flexibles disponibles no son suficientes para ampliar los servicios en este momento. El Condado continuará monitoreando futuras oportunidades de financiamiento estatal para la prevención y las dará a conocer a medida que estén disponibles. Alentamos a organizaciones como Positive Discipline Community Resources a buscar las próximas oportunidades de financiamiento estatal para la prevención. Para obtener más información, por favor consulte <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Translation: Thank you for sharing your personal experience and support for Positive Discipline. While we recognize its value, this plan is limited to BHSA-funded priorities. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. The County will continue to monitor future state prevention funding opportunities and share as they come available. We encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #21:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Person with Lived Experience

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

No

Any additional comments or recommendations?

Positive discipline workshops for parents need to be part of the 3 year plan

County Response:

Thank you for sharing your personal experience and support for Positive Discipline. While we recognize its value, this plan is limited to BHSA-funded priorities Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. The County will continue to monitor future state prevention funding opportunities and share as they come available. We encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #22:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Member

Other (please specify):

Madre de familia con 4 niños

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Yes

Please explain:

En lo personal me a ayudado bastante

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

Disciplina positiva

tanto para mi como para con mis hijos

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Yo era una mamá muy alterada y la forma en que ahora les hablo a mis niños siento que me esta ayudando más que con los gritos

Any additional comments or recommendations?

Me gustaría que hubiera más clases por zoom ya que aveces es imposible estar presente.

Translation:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Member, Other (please specify): Mother of 4 children

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Yes

Please explain:

Personally, it has helped me a lot.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

Positive Discipline for both myself and my children.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

I used to be a very stressed mother, and the way I talk to my children now seems to be helping me more than yelling.

Any additional comments or recommendations?

I would like to see more Zoom classes since it's sometimes impossible to be present.

County Response:

Gracias por compartir su experiencia personal y su apoyo a Positive Discipline. Si bien reconocemos su valor, este plan se limita a las prioridades financiadas por la BHSA, y los fondos flexibles disponibles no son suficientes para ampliar los servicios en este momento. El Condado continuará monitoreando futuras oportunidades de financiamiento estatal para la prevención y las dará a conocer a medida que estén disponibles. Alentamos a organizaciones como Positive Discipline Community Resources a buscar las próximas oportunidades de financiamiento estatal para la prevención. Para obtener más información, por favor consulte <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Translation: Thank you for sharing your personal experience and support for Positive Discipline. While we recognize its value, this plan is limited to BHSA-funded priorities. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. The County will continue to monitor future state prevention funding opportunities and share as they come available. We encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #23:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Organizations, Person with Lived Experience, Community Member, Consumer of behavioral health services in Santa Cruz County, Local education agencies

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

Please explain:

Early education and training is important and this plan lacks prevention and looks at the needs and current issues. It lacks action to prevent or mitigate the need for the services.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

Variety of services and proposed culturally appropriate services and staff.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Like my first comment states the gap in early intervention. The access and promotion of positive parenting is imperative. Positive parenting addresses the idea of continual learning and early interventions to redirect behaviors and create capable adults. Not only are children and teens positively affected but it has the parent sit with themselves and evaluate their own knowledge of their feelings and self control plans.

Any additional comments or recommendations?

I've worked at a STRP for 4 years and am a mom of a 5 year old. I am proACT trained and currently work with NMD youth that live in THP. My concurrent position as a housing coordinator working with the disabled community allows me to pour all my knowledge into my work. At every stage and place of work I've been able to implement practices learned in a positive parenting class wether it be de escalation of a 12 year old self harming, a toddler on the spectrum learning a new task, an ILS on the verge of burnout due to turnover in the industry, or a peer housing coordinator dealing with a difficult client parent due to the stress they face having a high needs child. Focusing on our primary plans to avoid or mitigate the need for more and more services would be ideal. I appreciate all my community being seen and supported but I'd like to start with reparenting education.

County Response:

Thank you for your perspective. While prevention is critical, BHSA funding shifts prevention responsibilities to the state. The plan includes early intervention services within allowable categories, including school-based and youth-focused supports, as well as some early intervention parent and family support. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. The County will continue to monitor future state prevention funding opportunities and share as they come available. We encourage local organizations to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #24:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Providers

Overall, do you feel the BHSa Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Yes

Please explain:

It helps in many ways, I have 14 children in my day care, I need help to understand each child behavior and help them to learn learned better using the plan for behavior needs.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

Lots of support to help children and families, and plan better individual lessons plans for families.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

I see everything great

Any additional comments or recommendations?

I want to thank everyone for always supporting us and our community. It feels like a great team working together to give the best to our children and families. Thank you

County Response:

Thank you for your comment. We appreciate your feedback and are glad the plan reflects helpful resources for providers and caregivers.

Written Public Comment #25:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Member

Overall, do you feel the BHSa Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Yes

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

Counseling for substance abuse is a much needed service to educate individuals caught in this cycle of harmful self-medication.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Positive parenting classes are enormously helpful and important. While remedial counseling services are great, good parenting education can prevent a lot of childhood trauma/problems that are known to cause greater health/behavioral issues down the road. Health begins at home, with the right education and the right tools.

County Response:

Thank you for your comments. The County appreciates your recognition of substance use treatment services and the importance of parenting supports. This plan balances multiple community needs within available BHSa resources and state funding requirements. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply.

Written Public Comment #26:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Organizations, Person with Lived Experience, Community Member, Health Care Organizations

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

Please explain:

A "plan" is not the same as "action" or "resources." The county doesn't have enough resources to meet the needs of our community members.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

A plan to provide resources, help and guidance for the most vulnerable members of our community.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Without enough resources, best practice cannot come to fruition.

Any additional comments or recommendations?

Our most vulnerable humans and caregivers in our county NEED a program in place to help them.

County Response:

Thank you for your feedback. The County recognizes that community needs exceed available resources. We remain committed to serving vulnerable residents through strategic investments and partnerships.

Written Public Comment #27:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Providers, Community Organizations, Person with Lived Experience, Community Member

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Unsure

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

I've been an Executive Director, a legal aid attorney and a mother of a young boy with ADHD diagnosis. Positive Discipline resources have been critical to my family and I fully appreciate them and want to see them continue. The Boys to Men community program serving at risk boys in PVUSD school needs to be county funded. I'd like to see more funds for our mindfulness and nature activities for our kids. They need to understand the risk of screen addiction, its relation to ADHD and convinced to BE IN NATURE more! Thank you!!

County Response:

Thank you for your thoughtful comments and recommendations. The County values community-based youth, family, and wellness programs and appreciates your perspective on prevention and nature-based supports. Many of the recommendations mentioned are focused on prevention. Under BHSA, the State will retain prevention funding to be administered by the California Department of Public Health. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply.

Written Public Comment #28:

Positive Discipline should be funded!

Hello,

Our country and society and our community doesn't give much support to parents. It's like "here is your baby, good luck".

If we want a better society, then parents (especially low income) need real help and assistance! We need Positive Discipline to be funded and more!

If our kids can be raised to be nice and confident and believe in themselves, then our children and future society will thrive!

Being raised well and with a good education is the only way.

Please keep Positive Discipline funded because it's real quality help and assistance to parenting; especially for the ages 1-5, as there is not really any other free/affordable help!

Parent

County Response:

Thank you for your feedback and advocacy for parents and families. The County agrees that parenting supports are valuable and has historically supported family-focused services under MHSA. In this transition to BHSA, we are using funds to sustain long standing parent education programs highlighted in the early intervention section of this plan. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. We will continue to monitor additional funding streams and share out with local partner agencies, and we encourage local organizations to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #29:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Person with Lived Experience

Overall, do you feel the BHSa Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Yes

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

Veo familias que necesitan del programa

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Si me gustaría que más padres se involucren al programa de disciplina para alludar a sus hijos en casa

Any additional comments or recommendations?

Me gustaría que anunciaran disciplina positiva en televisión o flayer o por papeles de correo para que más personas le den la importancia a este programa y cómo podemos alludar a nuestros hijos

Translation:

Identify which group of community partners you represent. Select all that apply:

Person with lived experience

Overall, do you believe the BHSa Integrated Plan addresses the most urgent behavioral health needs in our community?

Yes

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

I see families who are in need of the program.

Are there any gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement you would like to share?

Yes, I would like to see more parents get involved in the discipline program to help their children at home.

Any additional comments or recommendations?

I would like to see "Positive Discipline" advertised on television, via flyers, or through mailers, so that more people recognize the importance of this program and learn how we can help our children.

County Response:

Gracias por compartir su experiencia personal y su apoyo a Positive Discipline. Si bien reconocemos su valor, este plan se limita a las prioridades financiadas por la BHSA, y los fondos flexibles disponibles no son suficientes para ampliar los servicios en este momento. El Condado continuará monitoreando futuras oportunidades de financiamiento estatal para la prevención y las dará a conocer a medida que estén disponibles. Alentamos a organizaciones como Positive Discipline Community Resources a buscar las próximas oportunidades de financiamiento estatal para la prevención. Para obtener más información, por favor consulte <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Translation: Thank you for sharing your personal experience and support for Positive Discipline. While we recognize its value, this plan is limited to BHSA-funded priorities. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. The County will continue to monitor future state prevention funding opportunities and share as they come available. We encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #30:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Person with Lived Experience, Community Member, Consumer of behavioral health services in Santa Cruz County

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Yes

Please explain:

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

It addresses the needs of parents by enabling them to understand children's behavior and giving them the right tools to help children

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

I wish the program were available more than once because it's hard to make the appointments sometimes

Any additional comments or recommendations?

No

County Response:

Thank you for your feedback. The County appreciates your support for parenting programs and your suggestion regarding scheduling and accessibility. We are working internally to streamline access process and hope our efforts will make it easier to access care.

Written Public Comment #31:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

County Behavioral Health Representative

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Yes

Please explain:

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

It teach us how to talk to our kid, because it totally a new generation with .

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

No they do a great job they elaborate each of their lesions very well

Any additional comments or recommendations?

Thank you for taking the time for each of their classes they put it together very well.

County Response:

Thank you for your support and positive feedback. We appreciate your recognition of the value of services for families.

Written Public Comment #32:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Person with Lived Experience, Community Member, Other (please specify): Behavioral Health Advisory Board member

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

Please explain:

Within the constraints set by state law and DHCS guidance, Santa Cruz County's BHSA Integrated Plan does a thoughtful job of aligning with BHSA requirements and responding to local priorities identified through extensive Community Program Planning, particularly around Full Service Partnerships (FSP), housing interventions, and assertive field based SUD treatment. At the same time, the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) has shown that the state's restructuring of MHSA/BHSA funding categories will significantly reduce flexible county spending and lock in large shares of funding to FSP and housing, which limits the County's ability to sustain outpatient, crisis, prevention, and other locally tailored services that community members also rely on. Many of the most important changes needed to support county Behavioral Health services must occur at the state level through DHCS structural changes, the Legislature with modernization of AB 8 legislation, and statewide funding reforms.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

It's grounded in community input and data, including outreach to people with lived experience of homelessness, the justice involved community, child welfare, LGBTQ, and our senior population. It lays out detailed strategies to implement state required levels of care and Individual Placement Services supported employment, including cross training staff. It includes a housing intervention strategy that inventories local housing gaps and braids BHSA housing funds, other state and federal resources, within a Housing First framework. This plan describes a whole person, trauma informed approach and cross system partnerships which is exactly the kind of integration that statewide funding and oversight structures should support rather than complicating funding.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

My main concerns and recommendations are directed to the state level. The LAO finds that the Governor's MHSA/BHSA restructuring will substantially reduce flexible county funding by shrinking the main flexible category (Behavioral Health Services and Supports, BHSS) to 30 percent and imposing higher minimums for FSP and housing, which together reduces out outpatient, crisis, prevention, innovation, and workforce investments. I urge the Legislature and DHCS to revisit these rigid percentages and allow greater flexibility, particularly for smaller and medium-sized counties like Santa Cruz, so they can maintain a balanced continuum of care rather than being forced into a narrow set of mandated uses. Santa Cruz's Plan notes that BHSA funded Housing Interventions cannot currently be extended to people with SUD-only due to limited housing units and insufficient BHSA resources, despite clear housing gaps and a strong field-based SUD strategy. State policy changes are needed so that people whose primary diagnosis is SUD are not left out of housing supports, including through expanded MediCal housing benefits and better alignment between BHSA and MediCal Community

Supports. The Plan notes workforce shortages. DHCS and the Legislature needs to look at staffing expectations and timelines based on county input and connect BHSA mandates with ongoing workforce investments, not just one-time grants.

Any additional comments or recommendations?

Looking at Arizona's AHCCCS model alongside California's current DHCS and BHSA structure there are several reforms that could help Santa Cruz. Move toward an integrated, AHCCCS style financing model. Arizona's AHCCCS is a single statewide Medicaid program that operates under an integrated managed care model, coordinating and paying for both physical and behavioral health services through contracted health plans, and drawing from a clear mix of federal, state, and other funding sources. AHCCCS also directly funds behavioral health services for people with a Serious Mental Illness (SMI) designation regardless of Medicaid eligibility, providing a stable, statewide behavioral health safety net. California's behavioral health financing is fragmented across MediCal managed care, county specialty mental health, DMC-ODS, BHSA, realignment, and many separate grants and housing programs, each with its own rules and reporting requirements. California could benefit by moving toward an AHCCCS style model. AHCCCS shows the advantages of having a single statewide Medicaid authority that integrates behavioral health and physical health financing and administration under one 1115 waiver and a unified managed care structure. California could move in this direction. The California Legislative Analyst's Office emphasizes the need for clearer evidence that MHS/BHSA dollars are improving outcomes, and AHCCCS demonstrates how a single statewide authority can use standardized measures and public reporting to track performance across integrated plans.

Santa Cruz County's BHSA Integrated Plan is doing the hard work of integration at the local level within a fragmented state framework; state level reforms that move California closer to an integrated, AHCCCS style model could give counties the tools, flexibility, and stable funding they need to turn plans like this into real, lasting change on the ground. After reading the Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services Act Integrated Plan I used Perplexity to assist me in writing my public comments.

County Response:

Thank you for your thoughtful and detailed comments. The County appreciates your recognition of the plan's strengths as well as the challenges created by state mandated funding requirements. We will continue advocating for flexible and sustainable resources while implementing a balanced continuum of care locally.

Written Public Comment #33:**Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:**

Person with Lived Experience, Community Member, Other (please specify): Former educator with plans to return to the field once my child is a little older

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

Please explain:

See comments below re: Positive Discipline

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

Mostly it looks good except for needing the addition of Positive Discipline

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Yes. I strongly urge the addition of Positive Discipline to this plan. This method allows a much more respectful and less confrontational method of interaction. I have been an educator for 15+ years prior to pausing to raise my old child, who is now almost 3. I studied discipline in great length getting into teaching, above and beyond graduation requirements, as I had a strong interest in using discipline methods that were effective and fair. Positive Discipline is, far and away, the best method of all the many I have come across. It teaches respect and communication while still teaching and leading a child through issues. I have seen first hand how effective this method can be with groups of students both large and small, and the greatest testimony I can give is that of my own daughter. She is almost three, in an age where most consider this the "terrible twos," yet we have had ZERO major tantrums, and are finding 2 to be our favorite age yet! Why? We have been using positive discipline. We have attended classes and workshops in this method and applied our learnings directly to our daughter with wonderful results. I have seen tantrums start to build and then quickly melt away before they come out, because we are respectful of both her and ourselves, we find ways to give choices and find the yes in situations, and we recognize the importance of teaching her not just how to listen, but rather how to make good decisions. Given the state of politics lately, I especially see the importance of having Positive Discipline included throughout Santa Cruz County to teach all how to be respectful, make decisions, and avoid tantrums.

County Response:

Thank you for sharing your experience and support for Positive Discipline. The County values parenting supports and respectful family engagement strategies. This plan reflects BHSA-funded activities only. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. We encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #34:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Member

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

Please explain:

Keep positive discipline classes. Prioritize education and children and advocacy.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

Dedicated mental health resources in times of crises.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Less money needs to be going to administrative salaries of non-profits and into the needs of people. More creative investments into sustaining the future needs should be secured.

County Response:

Thank you for your feedback. The County appreciates your support for crisis services and your advocacy for children and families. This plan reflects state required BHSA priorities and available resources while balancing many competing community needs. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. We will continue to monitor additional funding sources for expansion of services and we encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #35:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Member

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Yes

Please explain:

Entre más programas esté familiarizado con el programa

Les facilitará a la comunidad

Tenga acceso a los servicios.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

Que haya más personas están capacitadas en la área más necesitada para que no esté en lista de espera

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

No

Any additional comments or recommendations?

Gracias por la información del programa

Translation:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Member

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Yes

Please explain:

The more (outside) programs that are familiar with your programs, the easier it will be for the community to access services.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

That more people are trained in the area of greatest need so that there is no waiting list.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

No

Any additional comments or recommendations?

Thank you for the program information.

County Response:

Gracias por su comentario. Nos alegra saber que el plan ayuda a mejorar el acceso y reducir listas de espera. Gracias por su apoyo.

Translation: Thank you for your comment. We are pleased to hear that the plan helps improve access and reduces waitlists. Thank you for your support.

Written Public Comment #36:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Member

Overall, do you feel the BHSa Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Yes

County Response:

Thank you for your support of the plan.

Written Public Comment #37:

please continue PDCR!!

I would like to take a moment to advocate for PDCR to remain free and available to parents in SC county. I first heard about PDCR as a foster parent. It was our second placement and we had 2.5 twin boys who had been through so much in their short life. I cannot recall what program we heard about PDCR but Im so glad we did. There were many tools that intook away from even just attending a few classes. Tools that helped me understand their behavior and helped us have better days together. Since then they have been teunified with family but I corninue to tune in to PDCR sessions now that i have two bio kiddos under 3yrs old. I just wish rheir classes were recorded because i want to revisit some of the key things i have learned that have helped me parent better.

County Response:

Thank you for sharing your experience. The County appreciates hearing how parenting supports have benefited families. This plan reflects state-mandated BHSa-funded priorities, while the County continues to value long-standing family support services historically funded under MHSA. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. We will continue to monitor additional funding sources for expansion and we encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #38:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Member

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

No

Please explain:

We'd like to see more free and accessible community programs such as Positive Discipline and other resources that make it easier to access mental health groups and 1:1 support for mothers/couples.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

We'd like to see more free and accessible community programs such as Positive Discipline and other resources that make it easier to access mental health groups and 1:1 support for mothers/couples.

County Response:

Thank you for sharing your feedback. This plan reflects BHSA-funded priorities, while the County continues to value long-standing family support services historically funded under MHSA. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. We will continue to monitor additional funding sources for expansion and we encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #39:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Member, Other (please specify): Twin Lakes Church Young family Director

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

The focus on family, and Outreach and early intervention services

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

We need an evidence-based parenting program with a focus on English and Spanish parent outreach- POSITIVE DISCIPLINE COMMUNITY RESOURCES is an incredible and life changing organization. It gives parents the tools they need to help support healthy kids, and to hopefully prevent behavioral health issues from arising in the future. I have personally had PDCR change my family's life and we are now inviting them to come and teach at our church to help impact more families. Seeing them lifted up and supported by the county will be impactful for so many families!

County Response:

Thank you for your comments and for recognizing the plan's focus on families and outreach. The County values evidence-based parenting supports and has historically supported parenting programs under MHSAs. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. We will continue to monitor additional funding sources for expansion and we encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #40:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Person with Lived Experience, Community Member

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

Veo que no incluyen a más programas de padres, es importante incluir a Disciplina Positiva!

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

Veo que es muy largo, y lo que entiendo es que les importa ver recursos para nuestra comunidad para que sean más representativos en más idiomas y en más lugares.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Si, no está PDCR la organización que provee DISCIPLINA POSITIVA. Es una organización muy importante. Me ha apoyado y me gustaría apoyar levantar mi voz para que más familias tengan acceso !

Any additional comments or recommendations?

Me gusta que este programa se trata de conexión y es más que sólo estrategias es una forma de apoyar nuestro liderazgo para fomentar una buena relación con nuestros hijos y estar preparados para una vida exitosa. Las batallas de día a día son oportunidades para aprender y disfrutar de la crianza de nuestros hijos no solo lidiar y amenazar o gritar o premiar – pero sacar cooperación y liderazgo para hoy y el futuro.

County Response:

Gracias por compartir su experiencia. El Condado aprecia la importancia de programas para padres y familias. Este plan refleja prioridades financiadas por BHSa y recursos limitados en este momento.

Translation:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Person with Lived Experience, Community Member

Overall, do you feel the BHSa Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

I see you are not including more parent programs, it's important to include Positive Discipline.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

I see it's very extensive and what I understand is that you care about providing resources for our community so they are more representative in more languages and in more locations.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Yes, PDCR the organization that provides Positive Discipline is not included. It's a very important organization. It has supported me and I would like to support by raising my voice, so more families have access!

Any additional comments or recommendations?

I like that this program focuses on connection and is more than just strategies. It is a way to support our leadership in fostering a good relationship with our children and being prepared for a successful life. Daily challenges are opportunities to learn and enjoy raising our children, not just to cope, threaten, yell or reward, but to build cooperation and leadership for today and in the future.

County Response:

Thank you for sharing your experience. The County appreciates the importance of programs for parents and families. This plan reflects financial priorities for BHSa and limited resources at this time. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply.

Written Public Comment #41:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Member, Other (please specify): Young family ministry director at Twin Lakes Church

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

Appreciate the focus on families and also that there's outreach/ early intervention services. Appreciate the linguistic competence as well

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

We need an evidence based, multi lingual parenting program, specifically "positive discipline community resources" as it offers accessible activities and education to support parents and families. These are vital to helping prevent many behavioral health issues. PDCR programs give parents the practical tools they need to raise healthy kids and can help prevent many behavior health issues from arising in the first place

Any additional comments or recommendations?

Thanks for the hard work you're doing with this project, it's appreciated

County Response:

Thank you for sharing your support for Positive Discipline. The County values parenting supports and respectful family engagement strategies. This plan reflects BHSA-funded activities only, Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. We will continue to monitor additional funding sources for expansion and we encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #42:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Providers, Consumer of behavioral health services in Santa Cruz County, Local education agencies

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

Please explain:

Within the proposed BHSA Integrated Plan, we see several opportunities to strengthen alignment between the plan's stated priorities, identified disparities, and implementation approach to ensure the greatest possible impact for children, youth, and families.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

We recognize and appreciate the significant work that has gone into the development of the BHSA Integrated Plan. The plan demonstrates several important strengths that create a strong foundation for improving behavioral health outcomes for children, youth, and families across Santa Cruz County.

Centering South County voices, including Watsonville and Pajaro Valley

The plan reflects a clear commitment to regional inclusion and community voice. The dedicated community forum held in Watsonville ensured that South County perspectives, including those of Spanish-speaking youth and families, were directly incorporated. This intentional outreach helps ensure that planning reflects lived experience, not just system-level priorities.

Explicit recognition of disparities impacting Spanish-speaking and Latino communities

The plan's Access to Care Disparities Analysis provides an important and transparent assessment of gaps in service access. The identification of "near zero" penetration rates for some Spanish-speaking and Hispanic residents highlights the urgency of improving culturally and linguistically responsive services. The plan also appropriately identifies that unhoused student experiences disproportionately impacts Latinx/Hispanic students, migrant students, and English Learners, populations that are central to the Pajaro Valley/Watsonville community and Pajaro Valley Unified School District. Naming these disparities is a critical first step toward addressing them.

Strong investment in schools as primary access points for youth services

The plan appropriately recognizes schools as the most natural and effective setting for reaching children and families. The identification of collaboration/resourcing of schools as an imperative is a critical plan strength. Recommended investments in early intervention strategies such as PBIS, parent education, wellness center/space support reflects a strong alignment with school-based models of care. This approach supports reducing barriers by providing services where students live and learn.

Expansion of youth crisis infrastructure to address a longstanding gap

The development of the Hope Forward | Esperanza Adelante Youth Crisis Center represents a major advancement in the County's continuum of care. The inclusion of both a Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) and a short-term Crisis Residential Program (CRP) allows youth to receive care close to home, addressing a critical historical gap. The addition of Mental Health

Liaisons working with the Watsonville Police Department also reflects a thoughtful approach to diversion and community-based response.

Integration of data and lived experience in planning

The plan demonstrates a strong commitment to combining quantitative data with community voice. The use of AVATAR data alongside engagement with the Youth Lived Experience Advisory Board and Lived Experience Advisory Group strengthens the design of programs in the plan.

This approach helps ensure that identified barriers, including linguistic, cultural, and engagement challenges, are addressed through community-informed solutions.

Overall, the plan is strongest in its community-informed design, its focus on equity and access, and its commitment to school-based and early intervention strategies. Building on these elements, there is an opportunity to further strengthen alignment between identified disparities, funding decisions, and implementation strategies to ensure that resources are directed to the communities and student populations where need is most concentrated, including Pajaro Valley and Watsonville.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Within the proposed BHSA Integrated Plan, we see several opportunities to strengthen alignment between the plan's stated priorities, identified disparities, and implementation approach to ensure the greatest possible impact for children, youth, and families.

1. Implementing an Equity-Weighted Funding Formula Aligned to Population Need and Geography

The plan clearly identifies significant disparities, particularly for Spanish-speaking, Latinx, low-income, and unhoused populations. A critical next step is to ensure these disparities are directly reflected in how funding is allocated.

We strongly recommend the adoption of a transparent, equity-weighted funding formula that aligns resources to both: 1) Population need, and 2) Geographic concentration of that need, particularly in Pajaro Valley and Watsonville. Without an explicit formula, there is a risk that funding may be distributed in a way that does not fully reflect the concentration of need identified in the plan.

In Santa Cruz County, this alignment is essential especially for school-based strategies. The data points shared below demonstrate that the majority of the County's highest-need students are concentrated in Pajaro Valley/Watsonville and attending Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD). PVUSD serves the following % of students in the County:

- 45.83% of all students
- 66.69% of Latinx students
- 68.13% of low-income students
- 87.8% of students experiencing homelessness

A proposed weighted formula should include factors such as:

- Poverty
- Language barriers
- Behavioral health risk
- Unhoused students/families/youth
- Access barriers

Such a formula would ensure that funding follows students/schools/districts and communities

where need is greatest, rather than being distributed evenly across regions with significantly different levels of need.

This approach is consistent with models used in counties such as Fresno and San Mateo, where funding is explicitly aligned to concentrations of need and flows to those high-need schools/districts as a priority.

2. Clarifying How Investments Will Reach Priority Populations

The plan includes a number of important programs and initiatives. There is an opportunity to strengthen clarity around how these investments will specifically reach priority populations and high-need geographic areas, including Pajaro Valley and Watsonville. More explicit identification of target populations, service locations and expected reach would help ensure that investments translate into measurable.

3. Prioritizing Direct Investment in Existing, High-Access, Trusted Systems

The plan appropriately emphasizes schools as primary access points for youth services. Building on this, there is an opportunity to prioritize direct investment in systems that are already reaching the highest-need students at scale. PVUSD has the systems and structures to provide services, and we respectfully ask that our district be named in the plan as a directly funded partner for all plan elements related to positively impacting students, families and schools as well as any capacity or infrastructure investment for schools/districts.

Pajaro Valley Unified School District has established systems, infrastructure and partner relationships that provide site-based service/programs in behavioral for students and families.

- MTSS frameworks and supporting school-based teams and district supports
- Wellness centers/spaces schools at 10 providing over 12,000 points of service annually
- Healthy Start staff supporting unhoused and low-income students
- Integrated referral systems and community partnerships (e.g. Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance, Positive Discipline Community Resources, Triple P, Encompass, Effective School Solutions)

PVUSD respectfully requests direct funding supports to strengthen and scale the above which would allow the County to expand services quickly and efficiently, rather than creating parallel systems.

4. Ensuring Data Practices Support Care While Protecting Students

The plan's emphasis on data-informed decision-making is a strength. There is an opportunity to further clarify how data sharing will be structured and measure outcomes:

- Directly supports service delivery and care coordination
- Is limited to necessary and appropriate use
- Protects student privacy and institutional data sovereignty

Clear expectations around data governance, purpose, and use will help ensure that data practices remain aligned with the plan's collective and primary goal of improving outcomes for students and families.

5. Maintaining Clear and Collaborative Roles in Implementation

As the plan moves into implementation, it will be important to maintain clear and collaborative roles between County oversight and local service delivery.

An effective model includes:

- County Behavioral Health oversight, compliance, and accountability

- Direct implementation through schools/districts that already have daily access to students and families

This approach supports both accountability and responsiveness, ensuring that services remain grounded in trusted, community-based structures serving the populations of greatest need.

6. Maximizing the Impact of Public Investment

There is also an opportunity to consider how funding structures can maximize the proportion of resources directed to direct services. For example, direct investment in districts such as PVUSD, which operate with a low indirect cost rate (4.39% for 2025-36 – regulated by the California Department of Education), can ensure that a greater share of funds is used for direct services rather than administrative overhead. Aligning funding pathways with both need and efficiency can further strengthen the impact of BHSA investments.

Overall, the plan provides a strong and thoughtful, data and needs aligned foundation. The opportunities outlined above are intended to support the County in fully operationalizing its commitment to equity by ensuring that:

- Funding aligns with demonstrated need and geographic concentration through a weighted formula
- Services reach priority populations and institutions serving in Pajaro Valley and Watsonville
- Existing, effective systems/institutions are leveraged and scaled
- Implementation remains efficient, accountable, and responsive

By strengthening these areas, the County can significantly increase the impact of BHSA investments for the children, youth, and families who need them most.

Any additional comments or recommendations?

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback to inform an improved plan.

County Response:

Thank you for your comprehensive comments and partnership. The County appreciates your recognition of the plan’s strengths related to South County engagement, schools, youth crisis care, and equity. Your recommendations regarding funding alignment, partnerships, and implementation will help inform future planning and implementation efforts.

In response to the public comments received, including the recommendations outlined here, the County has strengthened its approach to equitable access by adding Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Programming for the region of Santa Cruz County that falls within the Pajaro Valley Health Care District. The County will prepare a request for proposals that will focus on providing 1) culturally responsive early intervention services comparable to services provided in other areas of the county, 2) access to services in Spanish and Indigenous Languages, and 3) ensure service delivery methods have impact and reach priority populations. This addition reflects updates made to the plan as a result of direct community input. We thank you for your valued input into shaping the Behavioral Health Integrated Plan.

Your input and feedback regarding data and data informed decision making is in alignment with the County’s perspective. The current plan is informed by multiple data sources, including service utilization data, community engagement, and disparities analyses outlined in the document. We acknowledge the importance of continued improvement in data transparency and will strengthen ongoing data collection, disaggregation, and evaluation processes over the three-year period. Additionally the County is committed to ensuring and protecting Santa Cruz County residents’ data for appropriate usage, to the best of our ability while also remaining in compliance with federal and state reporting laws. The County, as a whole outside of Behavioral Health, is currently evaluating technologies and methods that can integrate and share data across county departments to improve client service delivery, care coordination, and data-driven decision making. The County Behavioral Health department continues to closely partner with County Public Health to understand health disparities in our community for Behavioral Health. Additionally, BHSa transformation will require California Counties over time to improve data collection and reporting to not only inform system decisions but also improve transparency. As we continue to make system data improvements, your input will be valuable.

Written Public Comment #43:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Person with Lived Experience

Overall, do you feel the BHSa Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Yes

Please explain:

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

As long as the proposed plan is advancing the positive discipline work through PDCR.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

None.

County Response:

Thank you for your feedback. This plan reflects BHSa funded activities, including other positive parenting programs. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. We will continue to monitor additional funding sources for expansion and we encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #44:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Other (please specify): Parent

Overall, do you feel the BHSa Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Yes

Please explain:

We all have somewhat of a familiar situation. As a parent I believe many have seen how much of an impact despite it's been 3 year's when we we're all facing Covid19 the transition effect many childrens wellness, behavior health and other concerns some parents are facing on a daily basis. With this program we as parents get to regain the supportive tools that we need when we face different challenges from our children.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

Always staying positive, calm and having a supportive community.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Not really

Any additional comments or recommendations?

I like to attend the on line workshop, as a mother of 4 and working a full-time job as a elderly caregiver. The zoom meetings are very flexible within my schedule.

County Response:

Thank you for sharing your experience as a parent.

Written Public Comment #45:

Support for Inclusion of Positive Discipline in County 3 Year Plan

Dear Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors,

I am writing to express my strong support for the inclusion of Positive Discipline Community Resources (PDCR) in the County's three-year Behavioral Health roadmap.

PDCR represents an essential and proven complement to existing parenting programs. While current offerings such as Triple P provide important behavioral frameworks, PDCR expands the continuum of care through a relationship-based approach that strengthens parent confidence, connection, and long-term family stability. This broader approach is critical to meeting the diverse needs of families across our county.

Equally important, PDCR advances the County's stated goals around culturally responsive care and disparity reduction. Their emphasis on linguistic equity, community-rooted outreach, and programming designed and delivered by educators with lived experience allows them to reach families who are often underserved by traditional systems.

Over the past two decades, PDCR has demonstrated both growth and impact, expanding from a small program to one that now serves more than 1,000 families annually across multiple languages and age groups. Their work spans early childhood through adolescence, including engagement in schools and juvenile justice settings, making them a uniquely comprehensive and trusted partner.

Including PDCR in the County's roadmap is not simply an expansion of services. It is a meaningful step toward ensuring families have choice, access, and support that reflects the realities of our community.

I respectfully urge you to consider PDCR as a valued partner in this next phase of the County's Behavioral Health planning.

County Response:

Thank you for your thoughtful comments. The County values diverse parenting supports and culturally responsive family services. This plan reflects BHSA-funded priorities only. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. . We will continue to monitor for additional funding sources to expand the work. We encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #46:

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Yes

Please explain:

People in need of good educational resources and opportunities

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

To educate more people . To make everyone involved and included

County Response:

Thank you for your support and feedback. The County appreciates your recognition of the plan's focus on education, inclusion, and opportunity.

Written Public Comment #47:

Positive discipline program run for another 3 years: As a parent of children who can be difficult to manage, I am very thankful for this program.

It has provided me with new perspectives on how to view my children. Since I have not had formal education on child-rearing, I truly appreciate that this opportunity exists, especially as a free resource that does not add any financial burden to my family.

Thank you again for this support.

County Response:

Thank you for sharing your experience. The County appreciates hearing how parenting supports have benefited your family and recognizes the importance of free and accessible resources for parents.

Written Public Comment #48:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Member

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

Please explain:

We need to support positive discipline in the 3 year road map.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

More opportunities for resources

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Yes we need to make sure that positive discipline programs stay supported. The community needs this program for parent, children and family mental health. Their services are vital.

Any additional comments or recommendations?

Please support positive discipline. So many families in our community rely on their help and advocacy.

County Response:

Thank you for your feedback. The County values parenting supports and family wellness services. This plan reflects BHSA-funded priorities only. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. We will continue to monitor additional funding sources for expansion and we encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #49:

Good evening.

I'm a mother of 2 children attending PVUSD schools and a registered nurse working the frontline in our community. I personally partook in the Positive Parenting Program while my children were students at Valencia Elementary. I have since attended Positive Discipline courses through PVUSD since my sons have grown into teenagers. Positive discipline courses are vital for parents, caregivers, teachers and anyone working with kids. Positive strategies are vital for our students to thrive.

County Response:

Thank you for your thoughtful comments. This plan reflects BHSA-funded priorities only. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. We will continue to monitor for additional funding sources to expand the work. We encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #50:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Person with Lived Experience, Community Member, Consumer of behavioral health services in Santa Cruz County

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Preventative measures and treatments create change that reduce behavioral health spending for the long term. Please preserve funding for positive discipline programs for parents.

County Response:

Thank you for your comments. The County agrees that prevention and early supports can improve long-term outcomes. Current BHSA funding rules require prioritization across multiple service categories with limited flexible resources. BHSA prevention programming is shifting to state control. For more information, please refer to

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #51:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Community Member

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Unsure

Please explain:

I never even knew there was a BHSA plan nor do I know what's in it, other than positive discipline resources.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

My husband and I have taken free positive discipline courses that have been offered so that we can support our child as best we can and these free resources matter!

Any additional comments or recommendations?

Please keep free parenting and positive discipline courses - they are super helpful and not all families would have access to them if they had to pay. Thank you!!

County Response:

Thank you for your feedback. The BHSA Integrated Plan includes a broad range of behavioral health services beyond parenting programs, including treatment, housing, crisis response, workforce, and early intervention services for individuals with severe behavioral health needs. If you would like to learn more, please refer to pages 1 and 4 for more information on BHSA and county behavioral health department's mandates and services. Additionally, your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply.

Written Public Comment #52:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Providers, Person with Lived Experience, Community Member, County Public Health Representative

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

I want to see more Positive Discipline Community Resources available to everyone in our county!

County Response:

Thank you for your feedback. This plan reflects BHSA-funded priorities only. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. We will continue to monitor for additional funding sources to expand the work. We encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #53:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Local education agencies

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Yes

Please explain:

Seems a balanced blend of adults, youth and varying severity levels are addressed.

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

I appreciate the number of Early Intervention providers and planned supports proposed.

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

I would like to advocate for the inclusion of PDCR, or Positive Discipline Parenting Courses as part of the EI or other appropriate category of support through this plan. It would create increased parity and diversity and choices in this arena to complement the Triple P funded efforts.

County Response:

Thank you for your feedback. This plan reflects BHSA-funded priorities only. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. We will continue to monitor for additional funding sources to expand the work. We encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #54:

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

No

Please explain:

Needs to include Positive Discipline Community Resources

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

Important to prioritize mental health

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Positive Discipline Community Resources is an essential service for children and parents in the county.

Any additional comments or recommendations?

Positive Discipline Community Resources is a crucial resource that lays the foundation for the youth of our county to be supported.

County Response:

Thank you for your feedback. This plan reflects BHSA-funded priorities only. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. We will continue to monitor for additional funding sources to expand the work. We encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #55:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Person with Lived Experience

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Somewhat

Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

I hope to see more access for Positive Discipline programs in our county.

Any additional comments or recommendations?

I hope to see more access for Positive Discipline programs in our county.

County Response:

Thank you for your feedback. This plan reflects BHSA-funded priorities only, Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. We will continue to monitor additional funding sources for expansion and we encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #56:

Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply:

Providers, Community Organizations, Person with Lived Experience, Community Member, Other (please specify): Positive Discipline Association

Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

Yes

What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

Collaborations

Any additional comments or recommendations?

Prioritize Community Voices. Real life testimonies

County Response:

Thank you for your comments. The County is committed to ongoing collaboration, uplifting community voice and lived experience perspectives.

Written Public Comment #57:

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Services Act Integrated Plan (IP), along with past engagement and partnerships in serving the residents of the County.

We embrace the County adding Suicide Prevention as one of its primary goals in the IP. We would like to call out that local, California, and nationwide suicide rates are higher in the over-60 population than any other age group, and are especially high among males aged 60+. Loneliness and isolation are chronic contributors and predictors of a variety of behavioral health issues, including suicide, and programs designed to counter those conditions are highly productive and even integral tools to addressing this challenge.

California's Master Plan for Aging includes *Inclusion & Equity, Not Isolation* as one of its Five Bold Goals. One of the overarching values for the Master Plan is Aging services being included in all local and statewide planning efforts, and we're very pleased to see that the IP does indeed include older adults throughout.

We would like to highlight that the Local Playbook for implementing the Master Plan for Aging in Santa Cruz County emphasizes "multi-generational volunteerism and social events", and "Maintenance of existing programs" including the Senior Companion Program (SCP).

Unfortunately, County Behavioral Health funding for the Senior Companion Program is being eliminated in the Integrated Plan. This program is very effective in countering loneliness & isolation in older adult populations, and is extremely affordable.

Volunteer programs like Senior Companion have a proven benefit for those in need of socialization, but they are equally helpful to the individuals who volunteer to be the companions. There is no better way for an individual of any age to feel engaged and less isolated (and depressed) than when they themselves volunteer to help someone in need. And measuring the impact of the program is one of the outcomes that our program actively tracks, not just those receiving services, but also for the volunteers. Because of those successes multi-generational volunteerism became a goal of our Santa Cruz County Master Plan on Aging local playbook.

Thanks again for the opportunity for public comments. We'll continue to partner with Santa Cruz County's Behavioral Health Department and look forward to doing so in the coming years.

County Response:

Thank you for your thoughtful comments and continued partnership. The County appreciates your support for older adult suicide prevention efforts and the importance of addressing isolation and connection among seniors. This plan includes older adults as a priority population, while funding constraints require difficult allocation decisions across many community needs.

A portion of BHSA funds will be used to sustain the current older adults program operated by Family Service Agency, highlighted in the Early Intervention section of this integrated plan. This program provides Outreach, Access and Linkage (referrals and screenings), including in-home counseling for adults 60+ and bilingual, bicultural peer support at the Watsonville Senior Center. This program is intended to increase access to behavioral health services for older adults, reduce social isolation among seniors, and improve emotional well-being and coping skills by strengthening connections between seniors and community-based supports and early intervention for behavioral health concerns.

Older adults experiencing a mental health crisis (or any Santa Cruz County community member) can contact our 24/7 Mobile Crisis hotline at 1-800-952-2335. For additional information about Mobile Crisis services, please visit our webpage at <https://www.santacruzhealth.org/HSAHome/HSADivisions/BehavioralHealth/MobileCrisisResponseTeam.aspx>. Additionally, any Santa Cruz County resident can call the Behavioral Health Department during business hours and be assessed for specialty mental health services. Residents can call 831-454-4170 for our Santa Cruz office and 831-763-8200 for our Watsonville office. California law defines who County Behavioral Health departments can serve - generally County residents who are experiencing the most severe mental health issues. For mild-moderate mental health needs, community members should contact their primary care doctor or their respective insurance plan for appropriate referrals to mental health providers.

Additionally, We recognize the importance of the Senior Companion Program (SCP). Historically, the SCP has operated as a prevention program. BHSA prevention dollars are no longer in local control. We encourage local organizations to apply directly to the California Department of Public Health for prevention dollars as they become available. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>.

Written Public Comment #58:

Dear colleagues,

As a public health-trained professional and concerned community member, I am writing to request a reconsideration of the contracts awarded to make progress toward the County's evolving 3-year mental/behavioral health plan's goals. Specifically, I advocate for the dignity of voice, choice, and equitable access that reduces disparities in child and family health outcomes. I ask that you consider vendors - including Positive Discipline Community Resources (PDCR), Mentors, Project Daraja, Campesino Womb Justice, and others - capable of addressing existing service gaps if given the opportunity to be included in the County's 3 year road map. For example, PDCR's mission to "replace a culture of violence with one of respect" aligns perfectly with HSA's mission to ensure a "healthy community and environment with a 'do whatever it takes philosophy'". PDCR broadens the continuum of parenting education and child/family-focused care by offering an effective relationship based program that goes beyond behavior based approaches to strengthen parent competency, connection, and confidence. These help reduce instances of child abuse. PDCR also fosters cultural and linguistic equity organically; most of its trainers are immigrants, bicultural speakers of Spanish or Indigenous languages, working class folks deeply committed to family wellbeing who understand their peers' reluctance to seek support through mainstream health and human service providers.

The 3year plan has a goal of "culturally responsive care and disparity reduction." I respectfully suggest that the budgeting process include new contractors capable of promoting trauma-informed positive parenting & mentoring skills development alongside early intervention and prevention programs (workshops, classes, trainings, playgroups) serving very young children 0-5, school age 6-12, and youth, whether in juvenile hall or school settings.

County Response:

Thank you for highlighting the need for culturally and linguistically responsive parenting supports. We will continue to prioritize and strengthen culturally responsive services. BHSA funding priorities are limited by state requirements. Many of the recommendations mentioned are focused on prevention. Under BHSA, the State will retain prevention funding to be administered by the California Department of Public Health. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage local organizations like the ones you mention to apply. We encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #59:

Behavioral Health Services Act Integrated Plan

Public Comment Form

Thank you for taking the time to review and provide feedback on the County's Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Integrated Plan (IP). Your input will help ensure the plan reflects community needs and priorities.

The public comment period for this IP is March 18, 2026 to April 16, 2026. All feedback submitted during the public comment period will be reviewed and considered prior to final submission.

1. Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Providers | <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer of behavioral health services in Santa Cruz County |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Organizations | <input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Person with Lived Experience | <input type="checkbox"/> Continuum of Care representatives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Representatives from LGBTQIA+ communities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans or active military service | <input type="checkbox"/> Managed Care Plan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County Public Health Representative | <input type="checkbox"/> Local education agencies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County Behavioral Health Representative | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Welfare Agencies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care Organizations | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): |

2. Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

- Yes
 Somewhat
 No
 Unsure

1a. Please explain:

I truly feel a greater emphasis is necessary in the funding of 65yrs & older BH programming

Behavioral Health Services Act Integrated Plan

Public Comment Form

3. What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

Effort to fill funding gaps

4. Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Senior specific programming is vital!

5. Any additional comments or recommendations?

Keep up the efforts to help those in need!

Thank you for helping shape the future of behavioral health services in our community.

County Response:

Thank you for the feedback. We agree, senior services are essential and needed in our county. This plan highlights a senior counseling program operated by Family Service Agency and details Full-Service Partnership programs tailoring to adults/older adults. For access to county behavioral health care, please call 1-800-952-2335 or 988 if you are in crisis.

Written Public Comment #60:

Behavioral Health Services Act Integrated Plan

Public Comment Form

Thank you for taking the time to review and provide feedback on the County's Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Integrated Plan (IP). Your input will help ensure the plan reflects community needs and priorities.

The public comment period for this IP is March 18, 2026 to April 16, 2026. All feedback submitted during the public comment period will be reviewed and considered prior to final submission.

1. Please identify which community partner group you represent. Select all that apply.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Providers | <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer of behavioral health services in Santa Cruz County |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Organizations | <input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Person with Lived Experience | <input type="checkbox"/> Continuum of Care representatives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Representatives from LGBTQIA+ communities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans or active military service | <input type="checkbox"/> Managed Care Plan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County Public Health Representative | <input type="checkbox"/> Local education agencies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County Behavioral Health Representative | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Welfare Agencies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care Organizations | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): |

2. Overall, do you feel the BHSA Integrated Plan addresses the most pressing behavioral health needs in our community?

- Yes
 Somewhat
 No
 Unsure

1a. Please explain:

Behavioral Health Services Act Integrated Plan

Public Comment Form

community connections → serves both santa cruz +
watsonville (Bi-lingual)

3. What strengths do you see in the proposed plan?

focus on: restorative justice, mental healthcare → first episode psychosis,
TAY, Family mental Health support, crisis support/ment(y),
peer supports/clubhouses, youth crisis services.

4. Are there gaps, concerns, or areas for improvement that you would like to share?

Expanded community mental health services. Focus on continuation
of care after first episode. Adult mental health care community
services to be utilized to cover gaps in residential/post crisis care.

5. Any additional comments or recommendations?

Please consider ^{*}community connection/volunteer center of santa cruz^{*}
county for additional support services including adult mental health
services (opportunity connection), resilient living (keep folks in housing MH support)
post incarceration groups/counseling to keep MH individuals out of jail.
Thank you for helping shape the future of behavioral health services in our
community.

It's an honor to serve the community of Santa Cruz and their
Mental Health committees → thank you for all your hard work
to ~~create~~ create this comprehensive plan with targeted/quantitative
goals.

County Response:

Thank you for sharing your feedback and highlighting some strengths of the plan. The county plans to increase awareness of services, especially those operated by contract providers, like Community Connection with The Volunteer Center.

Written Public Comment #61:

Submitted by Behavioral Health Advisory Board

ROUGH DRAFT
Behavioral Health Services Act Integrated Plan

We would like to comment on how good the plan turns out. It provides a well balanced reporting of what is working and what needs more attention. It does reflect much of what we have been recommending, particularly the establishment of club house services and peer support. All of which is particularly encouraging.

We recommend continuing focus on improving the penetration rate, specifically in the latin community. This can likely be accomplished with increased community outreach workers and peers.

The report points out there is often poor coordination between providers and services as well as difficulty for the consumer to navigate the fragmented services. It is noteworthy that once consumers access services, they tend to be very satisfied with their care. Therefore we continue to support and reinforce mounting efforts to make behavioral health services increasingly consumer friendly.

We feel that a topic not addressed in the plan is the issue of looking at improved participation in treatment and re-establishing participation for those who prematurely terminate services.

We agree with the finding that there is insufficient numbers of treatment facilities. Given the current funding crisis there is not much opportunity for improvement in this area. For this reason, we advocate more aggressive service development to make up for the lack of facilities.

County Response:

Thank you for your feedback. The County plans to strengthen outreach and re-engagement efforts for individuals who drop out of care in FSP and outpatient services through proactive follow-up and barrier reduction strategies. The County is also working to improve access and integration across programs to increase penetration rates, with targeted outreach to underserved communities and a focus on culturally and linguistically responsive care.

Written Public Comment #62:

I am a parent and a teacher, and an involved community member based in Watsonville, and I'm calling to leave a comment. that I would like to see positive discipline community resources. PDCR, included as one of the providers in the county department. I say this from my experience as a parent who has benefited so much. My whole family has benefited so much, from positive discipline, and also as an educator, I, I was trained to be a facilitator with other parents, because it made such an impact on me, and also how to use it in the classroom. I've seen its impact on my children, on other children. I've heard testimony from so many parents. I taught Positive Discipline for a while and then I took a break and one reason I decided to go back to teaching it is because I ran into some parents who told me that that them being in my class changed their life and that's the power of the positive discipline program and positive discipline community.

County Response:

Thank you for your feedback and sharing your personal experience with PDCR. The county values parent education programs. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. We encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>

Written Public Comment #63:

I am a Santa Cruz County resident, and I have personally benefited from the positive discipline curriculum. I took a 6 session course. It was very helpful, meeting in person, and a group was great, and I know they have a lot of other offerings. I have since referred friends to take these classes. I love this opportunity in our community and I want that to continue. And I really support including funding for the positive discipline center and all the resources they provide in the 3 year roadmap and any other future plans for Santa Cruz County Behavioral health and learning opportunities. Thank you so much for considering.

County Response:

Thank you for your feedback and sharing your personal experience with parent education. The county values parent education programs. Your feedback in combination with other feedback received during the comment period, have helped to put greater focus on the local need for culturally relevant and equitable early intervention services; we have made updates to the plan to include funding for Culturally Responsive Early Intervention Services. We will be releasing a request for qualifications and encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to apply. We encourage organizations like Positive Discipline Community Resources to pursue upcoming state prevention funding opportunities. For more information, please refer to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>