



Washington State is starting a program to support Washington called Washington Listens

What is Washington Listens?

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak and to provide support, the state of Washington is standing up a Crisis Counseling Program (CCP) called Washington Listens. Washington Listens will provide non-clinical psycho-education based support to people experiencing elevated stress due to COVID-19.

Washington Listens will staff a support line for anyone in Washington to call to speak to a support specialist. The person will receive support and connection to community resources in their area. The program is anonymous and no identifying information is maintained. Service encounters and the nature of the encounter is tracked, but only to ensure that the needs of people using the support line are met.

How does Washington Listens function?

Anyone in the state can call into the line to receive anonymous support. No personal information is kept by support specialists. The caller will have the option to select a language preference or accessibility options or to be routed to a live person for assistance. If the person needs further support or is in crisis, the specialist will work to get the person connected to more resources.

In order to reach out to our most vulnerable populations, support specialists will reach out to their communities and offer help. This includes reaching out to health care workers, school districts, spiritual groups, and community centers in Washington.

Regional Outreach

All support specialists will be trained in how to respond to the needs of people affected by the outbreak. Washington Listens is working to have a team in every region to outreach communities affected to check in and offer support. Tribal providers will work closely with their leadership to build connections and support their tribes and partners. The following is a list of providers and tribes who will be partnering with Washington Listens for the first part of the program.

- Crisis Connections
- Community Integrated Health Services (CIHS)
- American Indian Community Center (AICC)
- Swinomish Tribe
- Colville Tribe
- Frontier Behavioral Health (FBH)
- Okanogan Behavioral HealthCare (OBHC)

Washington Listens is working to add more regions and teams as the program expands.

Operations and oversight

Teams will be working remotely due to precautions to slow the spread of COVID-19. Oversight will need to be done remotely through routine daily check in meetings with staff. The supervisor should ensure services are being tracked, as well as issues and resolutions. The supervisor should make sure that staff are following guidelines. Team leaders should check to make sure call logs match service tracking.

During check-ins the supervisor should provide support to any specialist experiencing stress whether it is related to the job or not. We are asking a lot from our teams who are working with individuals experiencing difficult moments while our specialists are experiencing stress themselves. Washington Listens will conduct regular weekly check-ins with team leaders and any specialists to support them.

More information coming soon

Washington Listens will be operational soon to provide anonymous support to anyone in Washington who needs it. We will release more information about how to access the support line and support specialists.

As the program develops, further capability to contact support specialists will be added to accommodate the diverse needs and presences of Washington.

Contact:

Matthew.Gower2@hca.wa.gov or

Amanda.Lewis@hca.wa.gov with questions