Brand Guidelines

October 2026

DBHDS

Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services

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Brand Story

The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) facilitates a complex system of community-based behavioral health care and services for individuals with developmental disabilities as well as operating nine behavioral health facilities, one training center, one medical center, and one behavioral rehabilitation center. DBHDS also licenses and contracts with Virginia's 40 locally-run community services boards and licenses thousands of private providers of community services. The Commonwealth of Virginia is home to the oldest mental health hospital in the nation and founded the first mental health hospital for people of color. Historically, services for behavioral health and developmental disabilities were delivered while separating individuals from society. Today, however, the goal is to deliver compassionate and person-centered services within the community whenever possible.

The behavioral health and developmental disabilities system involves many different stakeholders working together with the common purpose of helping individuals receiving services. This system includes public community-based services provided by the state's community services boards, state-operated hospitals and centers, and licensed private providers working together across Virginia. Each year, hundreds of thousands of Virginians receive public behavioral health or developmental disability services through this system.

The passionate and dedicated workforce of DBHDS creates change by focusing on the overall system of care to advance our mission of supporting individuals by promoting recovery, self-determination, and wellness in all aspects of life. This is a system focused on people, partnership, and possibility.

Mission and Vision

Mission: Supporting individuals by promoting recovery, self-determination, and wellness in all aspects of life

Vision: A life of possibilities for all Virginians

Values

Focus first on the individual receiving services.

Our decisions and actions consider first the best interests of individuals receiving services and their families. We respect the potential and capacity of each person who receives services. We value and support the healing and recovery process.

Be responsive to our external and internal customers.

We seek input and involvement from our customers. We share ideas and remain open to different opinions. We listen to and respect what our customers say and respond promptly to their requests.

Promote partnerships and collaboration.

We create opportunities for partnerships, encourage teamwork, and support each other to succeed. We accept shared ownership and seek win-win (mutually acceptable) solutions. We communicate openly and clearly. We are willing to take risks as we look for creative solutions and new ways of solving problems. We make decisions and resolve problems at the level closest to the issue.

Be good stewards of our resources.

We manage the assets and protect the interests of the entire services system. We value and take care of staff. We use the Commonwealth's resources in the most effective and efficient manner.

Maintain professionalism, integrity, and trust.

We recognize and celebrate individual and team successes. We use valid data that reflects best practices and positive results and outcomes. We take responsibility for ourselves, for our actions, and for how these actions affect others. We develop a supportive and learning environment and work continuously to improve the quality of the services we provide. We keep our word and deliver what we promise. We incorporate our values into everyday decisions.

Language and Tone

Name and Abbreviation

In most communications, the first mention of the Department should be fully written out as “The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS).” After that, “DBHDS” may be used. “VaDBHDS” is not an acceptable abbreviation for the name. Do not shorten the name to “The Department of Behavioral Health.” In order to promote a “One DBHDS” philosophy, communications in Central Office should be written from DBHDS rather than individual offices or divisions.

Tone

DBHDS strives to communicate with a tone that can be described as professional but empathic, with a focus on the dignity and humanity of every person. Language should aim to be accessible and responsive to many different audiences and needs.

Audiences

In all communications, always consider the audience and the language they would be familiar with. DBHDS communicates with many audiences, including but not limited to:

- Individuals living in Virginia
- Potential employees
- Individuals receiving services
- CSB staff
- Individuals in need of services
- Elected officials
- Advocates
- Community partners
- Other state agencies
- DBHDS staff
- Reporters/media

Language Guidance

AP Style

DBHDS communications utilize AP style. For questions of grammar or structure, visit the AP Style Guide.

Plain Language

Most communications should be written in plain language in order to reach a wide audience. Exceptions would include legal documents or communications to specific audiences with knowledge of industry terms.

Sensitive Topics

DBHDS communicates about a number of topics that could at times reference sensitive material. Whenever communicating about such topics, check with a subject matter expert to ensure you use the most accurate and person-centered terminology.

Language Access

Virginia populations include people who speak many different languages, so it is important to consider language access when communicating. Consider the primary languages of your target audience. Critical information, updates, and alerts that are relevant to a wide group of consumers should be communicated in multiple languages.

ADA Compliance

DBHDS communicates with a variety of audiences across the Commonwealth, including those who may have a disability that would require alternative means of communication. Whenever possible, try to consider multiple ways to share information, such as providing alt text on images and checking the reading order of documents.

DBHDS Logo

Story

The arrows in the DBHDS logo and the transition from blue to green symbolize words commonly used across DBHDS systems and services: possibility, recovery, forward movement, progress, growth, and hope. The dots that make up the arrows symbolize both the individuals DBHDS serves and the people who contribute to a system of care across the Commonwealth. The shades of blue and green inspire feelings of calm, positivity, and modernity.

DBHDS

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Logo Usage

The DBHDS logo may be used on any official DBHDS communications. The logo should not be altered or edited in any way, including separating the acronym from the arrow design. The only exception is the profile image for social media platforms, which may show the arrows without the acronym. The two-color version of the logo should be used whenever possible. However, if the background is too dark for the colors to show clearly, the solid white version may be used.

Individual offices, divisions, or programs may NOT have or use logos other than the official DBHDS logo unless specifically approved by the Commissioner. DBHDS facilities, however, may use their own logos.

Important Reminders

DO NOT change the color. Use colors in the palette.

DO NOT separate the DBHDS arrows from the Acronym. The only exception to this is for social media icons.

Do not reproduce the logo in a solid color, other than the approved white version.

DO NOT add shadow or any effects.

DO NOT add text to the logo.

DO NOT crowd the logo with other logos or design elements. Leave appropriate space to make it clear that the DBHDS logo is a stand-alone image.

DO NOT change the proportions or placement of any part of the logo.

DO NOT add a box or other embellishments around the logo.

Seal of the Commonwealth

The Seal of the Commonwealth should only be used on the state-designed and approved business cards and official DBHDS letterhead. Letterhead should only be used on official DBHDS communications, such as communications from the Commissioner, cover letters for reports due to the Governor's Office or General Assembly, and constituent correspondence. Letterhead should not be used for informal communications such as newsletters or announcements.

Colors

Both the logo colors and secondary colors can be used for most design elements. However, readability is key. When using a dark background, make sure a lighter font is used, and vice versa.

Logo Colors

Pantone: 7690
RGB: 0 104 154
CMYK: 100 56 19 2
HEX: 00689A

Pantone: 576 Adjusted
RGB: 117 161 66
CMYK: 62 21 100 0
HEX: 75A142

Secondary Colors

Pantone: 425
RGB: 83 87 90
CMYK: 66 56 53 29
HEX: 53575A

Pantone: 7405 C
RGB: 232 185 0
CMYK: 0 18 91 9
HEX: E8B900

Pantone: 359 C
RGB: 151 209 98
CMYK: 23 0 44 18
HEX: 97D162

Pantone: 2915 C
RGB: 72 174 225
CMYK: 60 20 0 12
HEX: 48AEE1

Pantone: 2955 C
RGB: 7 67 105
CMYK: 100 75 35 22
HEX: 074369

Fonts

Logo Fonts

DBHDS: Helvetica Neue (Light)

Name: Acumin Variable Concept (Light)

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Secondary Fonts

Font families may be used. For example, instead of Helvetica, you may choose to use Helvetica Light. Make sure to choose a font size that is large enough to easily read.

- Stylized Documents (Presentations, Posters, Graphics, Newsletters, etc.): An easy-to-read sans-serif font such as Helvetica, Calibri, Verdana, or Arial
- For Web-Based Communications (emails, etc.): Calibri or Arial
- For Official Communications appearing on Agency Letterhead: Times New Roman

Photography and Videography

When using images in DBHDS communications, try to focus on the solution, not the problem. For example, if the communication is about substance use, you might use a stock photo of a group meeting. If confusion about the topic might be a concern, you can always add a caption.

When sharing pictures or videos of real people, it is DBHDS policy to obtain their permission before sharing publicly. This is critical for pictures of individuals from outside of the agency as well as employees of DBHDS. The DBHDS photo release form can be used for events where people may be photographed with the intent to share the photos publicly. **DBHDS does not allow images or video of individuals receiving services from DBHDS.**

Use approved stock photos and video clips. Avoid using copyrighted images, video, or audio.

Artificial Intelligence

DBHDS does not use AI-generated images or graphics. Images and graphics created using AI do not meet accessibility standards, are often cluttered and text-heavy, and do not reflect the authentic tone DBHDS strives for. Additionally, AI does not implement branding correctly; even when the logo is uploaded, it often alters it in the returned image.

AI may be used to generate ideas, assist with drafting, or streamline processes in accordance with the DBHDS AI policy. When AI is used to assist with DBHDS communications, staff are responsible for reviewing and revising the content as appropriate to ensure the final communication is original, accurate, appropriate for the intended audience, and consistent with DBHDS language, tone, and brand standards.

Contact the Office of Communications

If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to reach out to:

Lauren Cunningham

Chief Communications Officer
Lauren.Cunningham@dbhds.virginia.gov

Cassie Grillon

Director of Strategic Communications
Cassie.Grillon@dbhds.virginia.gov

Bowen Monroe-Mihailoff

Public Affairs Manager
Bowen.Monroe-Mihailoff@dbhds.virginia.gov

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