

COVID-19 UPDATES

NEW CDC DATA CAST FRESH LIGHT ON PANDEMIC'S MENTAL HEALTH TOLL

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) recently released [data](#) that show the increased impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental wellbeing, substance use disorders and overdose. Over the last year, more than 93,000 people in the United States died from a drug overdose, a 30% increase from 2019, with every state seeing significant increases. Read reactions from Chuck Ingoglia, (President & CEO, [National Council for Mental Wellbeing](#)) in recent [Politico](#) and [NPR](#) stories.

NYS HEALTH FOUNDATION PUBLISHES NEW "STILL RECOVERING" REPORT, HOSTS WEBINAR ON COVID-19 MENTAL HEALTH DISPARITIES

As a follow-up to previous research, a new [NYS Health Foundation](#) report uses survey data from the U.S. Census Bureau to analyze the mental health of New Yorkers from the start of the coronavirus pandemic through May 2021. The report examines rates of anxiety and/or depression by race and ethnicity, age, income, income loss and food security status. For example, in May 2021, twice as many food-scarce New Yorkers reported symptoms of anxiety and/or depression as food-secure New Yorkers (57% compared with 29%). The report also studies the relationship between anxiety and depression and

COVID-19 vaccination status. Finally, it measures the unmet need for mental health services.

Read the report [here](#).

NYSHealth also hosted an August webinar with Lisa Furst (Chief Program Officer, [Vibrant Emotional Health](#)) and Sophie Wheelock (Policy and Research Associate, NYSHealth) that addressed these mental health disparities. The panelists discussed the report's findings and provided recommendations on strategies that can be implemented to improve the emotional wellbeing of all New Yorkers.

The webinar was recorded and can be streamed on-demand [here](#).

VACCINE EDUCATION FOR NYS OMH/OASAS SERVICE RECIPIENTS & PROVIDERS

The [NYS Offices of Mental Health](#), (OMH) and [Addiction Services and Supports](#) (OASAS) are continue to host informational COVID-19 vaccine webinars specifically designed for service recipients. These sessions include participants to ask questions of expert panelists. Service providers are encouraged to recommend attending to their unvaccinated service recipients.

The next webinar in this series is scheduled for August 25th from 10:30am-12pm. Register [here](#).

NYC DOHMH ISSUES NEW VACCINATION GUIDANCE FOR PREGNANCY/FERTILITY

On July 27th, the [NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene](#) (DOHMH) published a new "Dear Colleague Update" guidance document summarizing COVID-19 vaccination recommendations for health care providers serving people who are thinking about becoming pregnant, are pregnant or are postpartum. Read their guidance in full [here](#).

FUNDING & PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

NYS OMH RFPs FOR YOUNG ADULT & YOUTH ACT TEAMS

The [NYS Office of Mental Health](#) (OMH) has released two distinct Requests for Proposals (RFP) to:

1. Develop a Young Adult Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team in Brooklyn or the Bronx; and
2. Expand the Youth ACT teams throughout NYS via 10 awards across five regions statewide.

The Young Adult ACT team will serve 48 individuals, ages 18-25, that:

- Have serious mental illness (SMI);
- Have not been successfully engaged by the traditional mental health treatment and rehabilitation system; and
- Can benefit from the specialty ACT team's goals, including helping young adults become independent.

The team will provide comprehensive treatment services, support the development and implementation of vocational or educational plans and focus on enhancing “real-world” skills such as financial literacy and time management. Eligible applicants are not-for-profit 501(c)(3) agencies that have experience providing mental health services to individuals with SMI through programs that are licensed by OMH.

The full RFP for the Young Adult ACT team is available [here](#). Required Letters of Intent are due on September 16th and applications are due on September 29th.

Meanwhile, the Youth ACT teams will serve children and youth (ages 10-21) with Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) who:

- Are returning home from inpatient settings or residential services;
- Are at risk of entering such settings; or
- Have not adequately engaged or responded to treatment in more traditional community-based settings.

Youth ACT teams will deliver intensive, highly coordinated, individualized services and skilled therapeutic interventions through an integrated and multi-disciplinary team. OMH-licensed Residential Treatment Facilities (RTFs) may be given preference for funding.

The full RFP is available [here](#). Applications are due on September 28th.

NYC DHS HOUSING RFPs

The [NYC Department of Homeless Services](#) (DHS) has released two distinct open-ended Request for Proposals (RFP) to:

- 1) Expand the number of Safe Haven beds for unsheltered New Yorkers; and
- 2) Expand the number of short-term stabilization beds and support services citywide by procuring contractors to locate and secure beds throughout the city where street homeless adults can safely sleep.

The Safe Haven RFP allows applicants to propose to develop and operate new stand-alone Safe Havens, and emphasizes that greater consideration will be given to applicants who:

- Identify space that allows for clients’ pets to be kept onsite; and
- Propose to specialize in handling clients with issues around violence, which should include increased security, monitoring plans and working with clients to reduce violent behaviors.

The payment structure for both awards will be line-item reimbursement. Contracts will last for five years with an option to renew for four additional years. Applicants must be not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organizations with at least three years of experience working directly with the target population.

Applications will be accepted and reviewed on an ongoing basis until the units

necessary for the program have been met. Questions may be submitted to [Cinnamon Warner](#). Both funding opportunities may be accessed on the NYC Passport website [here](#).

NYC HASA SCATTER-SITE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING RFPs

The [NYC HIV/AIDS Services Administration](#) (HASA) released two RFPs for qualified applicants to operate and maintain scatter-site permanent supportive housing for individuals with HIV/AIDS and their families. This housing model provides case management and other related social service supports in combination with rental assistance in either a congregate building or in scatter-site apartments. HASA will fund existing service areas where current clients reside.

The maximum cost per unit will be based on the rental rate and service award rate. HASA will provide \$11K-\$11.5K annually per unit for social services. Awarded applicants will be expected to achieve a 95% occupancy rate within six months and maintain this occupancy rate throughout the contract’s term. Contracts will last for five years starting on July 1, 2022, with the option to renew for up to four additional years.

Eligible applicants are not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organizations with at least five years of experience providing case management and permanent supportive housing to individuals who are diagnosed with HIV or AIDS and who have a history of mental illness, substance use disorder or

mental illness with a co-occurring substance use disorder. Applicants may apply to serve more than one service area; however, a separate and complete application for each service area is required.

Clients who are current residents of emergency Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels and transitional congregate housing facilities will be given the highest priority consideration by HASA for referral into any one of the housing models.

Applications are due on September 15th. Questions may be submitted to [Susan Jung](#). The funding opportunities may be accessed on the NYC Passport website [here](#).

CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE IN NON-PROFIT MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY

[Adelphi University's Center for Nonprofit Leadership](#) is now accepting registrations for its Certificate of Excellence in Nonprofit Management program. The Certificate Program prepares mid-level managers, program directors, supervisors and practitioners for management and leadership success.

This year's program is virtual and therefore available to anyone in any region, but CBC IPA members receive a 10% discount—once enrolled, simply let Adelphi staff know that you are a member of the CBC IPA during payment plan discussions to claim your discount. Check out the [e-flyer](#) and register [here](#).

FREE ONLINE NURSES' SUBSTANCE USE EDUCATION TRAINING MODULE

Purdue University has developed a Nurses' Substance Use Education training module via its [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) (SAMHSA)-funded Prac-Ed grant program—and made it freely available. The course was originally developed for Nursing Schools, and is available [here](#).

IN THE NEWS...

NATIONAL COUNCIL SELECTS DR. PETIT FOR PRESTIGIOUS MEDICAL DIRECTOR INSTITUTE

The [National Council for Mental Wellbeing](#) has selected CBC President and Chief Executive Officer Jorge Petit, MD, to join its Medical Director Institute (MDI). Established in 2015, the MDI leverages its breadth of diverse knowledge and experience to advise National Council members on best clinical practices and develops policy and initiatives that serve organizations focused on mental health and recovery from substance use challenges. Its statements and publications—most recently “Resilience-Oriented COVID-19 Navigation,” published in May 2021—identify and create concrete calls to action to ensure that all people in the U.S. have access to a comprehensive, integrated continuum of care with the expectation of recovery for mental health and substance use challenges.

For more on the National Council's Medical Director Institute, visit the National Council's [website](#).

DISMANTLING INSTITUTIONAL RACISM RESOURCES

The [National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives](#) has authored a 40-page booklet of factsheets documenting evidence for structural racism across societal systems. Experts from a wide range of fields present data on the negative impacts of racist practices on the health and well-being of children and families and recommend public policies therein. Read the booklet [here](#).

Meanwhile, [SAMHSA's](#) National Network to Eliminate Disparities in Behavioral Health (NNED) is hosting a Virtual Roundtable on Wednesday, August 18th at 1pm to hear about how community-based organizations are working to diversify the behavioral health workforce including recruiting and retaining racially/ethnically diverse staff. Panelists will present professional pathways and programs/trainings that support racially/ethnically diverse people in behavioral health careers. Register for “Creating & Enhancing Pathways to a Racially/Ethnically Diverse Behavioral Health Workforce” [here](#).

CBC IPA AGENCIES AWARDED SAMHSA FUNDING TO CURB SUBSTANCE USE

Congratulations to CBC IPA member agency [Bridging Access to Care](#) (BAC),

which SAMHSA selected for a \$4M grant to implement the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) model for care delivery. CBC board member agencies [Ohel Children's Home and Family Services](#) and [WellLife Network](#) were similarly selected for \$2M CCBHC ARP and expansion grants, respectively.

BAC will use their funds to expand services to operate as a “one stop-shop” for mental health, substance use treatment and other health care services in their communities. Read BAC’s press release for this award [here](#).

CATHOLIC CHARITIES AWARDED SAMHSA FUNDING TO PREVENT SUICIDE

Congratulations to CBC IPA board member agency [Catholic Charities Neighborhood Services](#) (CCNS), which SAMHSA selected for a \$800K COVID-19 Emergency Response grant to help communities prevent suicide during the pandemic. The Suicide Prevention, Response, and Recovery Initiative will serve adults in Brooklyn and Queens who have attempted suicide or experienced a suicidal crisis after being discharged from emergency departments and inpatient psychiatric facilities, as well as impacted household members. CCNS will create a dedicated, specialized team of behavioral health professionals at its Behavioral Health Clinics to address a potential suicide crisis exacerbated by the pandemic and dedicate resources to community outreach in both boroughs over the 16-month project period.

Read CCNS’s press release for this award [here](#).

SERVICES FOR THE UNDERSERVED AWARDED VA FUNDING

Congratulations to CBC IPA board member agency Services For The UnderServed (S:US), which the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) selected for a near-\$8M grant as part of its Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. The grant will expand S:US’ successful SSVF program, which aims to improve low-income veteran families’ housing stability by providing outreach, case management services and other core supports that empower program participants to meet their housing stability goals. With this renewed support, S:US will provide homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing support to more than 500 homeless veteran families in 2022.

Read SUS’s press release for this award [here](#).

WELLIFE NETWORK ARTSHOW BENEFIT

[WellLife Network](#) raised more than \$130K at its first annual “Art of Wellness” event. The virtual fundraiser featured the magnificent art of WellLife program participants, interviews and guest speakers, in a communal celebration of the arts’ power to promote a positive environment for mental health.

Stream the event on-demand [here](#).

CARE COORDINATION SERVICES

HEALTH HOME 2021 REDESIGNATION AUDIT RESULTS

Having completed its Redesignation Audit for Health Home Serving Adults and Health Home Serving Children programs in May, CBC Health Home (HH) can now share its final scoring.

The highest weighted domain—“Network Management”—was also our highest score, with HHSA scoring 100% and HHSC 94%. This domain includes CBC HH policies and procedures, and training and technical support activities to ensure the network is in compliance with NYS Department of Health (DOH) policy. The CBC team is extremely proud of the Health Home, Quality Performance Management and Finance departments for their committed efforts to ensure a best-in-class Health Home for care management agencies (CMAs) and members. Kudos to the HH CMAs who adhere to this high quality, person-centered approach to services delivery for our membership.

HH Serving Adults: 88%

(Score Level 4: 2-year designation period)

HH Serving Children: 74%

(Score Level 3: 1-year designation period)

CBC will submit an Enhanced Oversight Plan (EOP) to NYS DOH to address all areas of improvement identified in the

Audit and will provide an update at the next QMT/CQMT meeting in September.

HEALTH HOME PLUS OPERATIONS MEETING

CBC HH held its first Health Home Plus (HH+) Operations meeting on July 7th. Staff from 17 Specialty Mental Health (SMH) CMAs were in attendance as [Healthfirst](#)'s Director of Behavioral Health Clinical Programs Alan Boardman and Strategic Initiatives Specialist Zachah German-Koufalis presented on the Performance Opportunity Project (POP). POP is a Medicaid initiative created by the [NYS Office of Mental Health](#) (OMH) for high need/acute recipients of mental health services. POP members are considered high-risk and are eligible for Health and Recovery Plan (HARP), HH+ or Care Coordination enrolment.

The CBC HH+ Operations slide deck, as well as the Healthfirst POP slide deck, are available for review [here](#). The audio recording of the meeting is available [here](#). CBC HH will reconvene its quarterly HH+ Operations on Thursday, October 7th at 11am.

ADULT HOME PLUS OPERATIONS MEETING

On Monday, August 23rd, CBC HH will host its Adult Home Plus (AH+) Operations meeting, exclusively for all designated AH+ providers. This meeting is open to all AH+ staff, though CBC HH requests at least one AH+

Supervisor/Program Manager/Director from each CMA attend. Register [here](#).

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

Starting in September, CBC will reformat its standard weekly Virtual Office Hours (VOH) to spotlight one CBC department/program. This will allow for more focused updates from the respective CBC staff department/program scheduled each week. Furthermore, the new schedule should allow CMA staff to plan to attend the weekly VOH most relevant to their role.

The proposed VOH rotation is below:

First Friday—Special Populations (HH Serving Children, Adult Home Plus, Health Home Plus)

Second Friday (9/10)—Health Information Technology (HIT) and Quality Performance Management (QPM)

Third Friday (9/17)—Billing and Finance

Fourth Friday (9/24)—Training Institute/Value-Add presentation by invited guests.

Please contact CBC HH Director [Melissa Martinez](#) with any questions.

QUALITY PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT (QPM)

IPA CLINICAL/QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

CBC IPA's Clinical/Quality Improvement Committee (CQIC) convened on July 8th to discuss an exciting update for the network—CBC IPA can now be considered a clinically integrated IPA network. As a clinically integrated network, a crucial role of CBC IPA is to monitor network performance and work with member agencies to develop quality improvement activities that result in improved outcomes for service recipients. This collaborative effort affords opportunities for service providers to learn from each other, identify best practices and improve the system of care in our communities.

In the coming months, CBC IPA will be making quality performance dashboards available to IPA member agencies. Currently, CBC IPA's three best performing Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) measures for adults are:

1. Continuity of Care After Detox to Lower Level of Care;
2. Cardiovascular Monitoring for Individuals with Cardiovascular Disease and Schizophrenia; and
3. Follow-Up after Mental Health Inpatient—30 days.

And CBC IPA’s three best performing Children & Adolescent HEDIS measures are:

1. Psychosocial Care for Children and Adolescents on Antipsychotic Medication;
2. Initiation of Child ADHD Medication Follow-Up; and
3. Continuation of Child ADHD Medication Follow-Up.

This is an important and exciting time for the CBC IPA network. Our collaborative efforts together will contribute to better contracts with payers and—more importantly—improvements in service delivery and care.

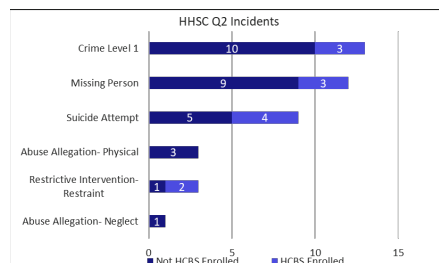
The next CQIC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 9th. If you have not received the invite, then please contact CBC Senior Director of Quality Performance Management [Tracie Jones](#).

HEALTH HOME INCIDENT REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING

In July, the CBC QPM Department hosted its Incident Review Committee Meeting (IRC) for Q2 2021. Five CMAs joined CBC HH and QPM staff to explore trends and discuss root causes for this quarter’s incident report uptick. A total of 98 incidents were reported to NYS Department of Health (DOH) in Q2—the highest number CBC has received in one quarter to date. 28 of those incidents were reported from the HHSA program, 29 from the AH+ program and 41 from the HHSC program. CBC experienced an 86%

increase in HHSC incidents from last quarter, which generated the most incidents in Q2—despite its smaller population relative to the HHSA program.

The chart below shows the breakdown of HHSC incidents by type and Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) enrollment. Relative to respective program enrolment totals, members of the HCBS Waiver program are overrepresented in HHSC incident submission. Given these data and the upcoming NYS DOH HHSC HCBS Waiver program audit, CBC QPM will prioritize additional resources and trainings to support this population.



The next IRC Meeting will occur in October. Contact [CBC QPM](#) if interested in attending.

HEALTH HOME POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL

CBC QPM is on track to issue a new HH Policy & Procedure Manual and Appendices [v1.12] to the HH network later this month, thanks to respective Adults’ and Children’s Quality Management Teams, both of which participated in the development and review of new and/or updated policies.

Once issued, each agency will be required to submit an attestation confirming receipt and appropriate distribution of the manual to internal program staff. The manual will also be housed in Box for ease of access.

TRAINING INSTITUTE



CBC TRAINING INSTITUTE ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TODAY PODCAST

In July, CBC Training Institute (TI) Director Emily Grossman sat down with “[Behavioral Health Today](#)” podcast host Dr. Graham Taylor to discuss her own mental health recovery story and how it informed her mission to support her colleagues across NYS’s behavioral health workforce, initially as a Peer Specialist and now as Director of CBC TI. Emily’s story is an inspirational one of a person who has recovered from mental illness to find passion and meaning in her life—both at work and at home. Click below to listen to “[Successful Long-Term Recovery & Peer Support With Emily Grossman—Episode 86](#).” And check out this Bulletin’s back page for our own [Staff Spotlight](#) on Emily!

SELF-CARE TRAINING SERIES

The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) (SAMHSA) COVID-19 Emergency grant provided CBC and [Coordinated Behavioral Health Services](#) (CBHS) with funding to help address the immense unmet mental health needs in NYS. SAMHSA recognized that frontline staff—especially behavioral healthcare service providers—need support to address their personal and professional experiences with COVID-19. Furthermore, CBC TI has leveraged award funding from [New York State Health Foundation](#) (NYSHealth) to expand the array and reach of its self-care trainings, and specifically target residential support staff and Peer Specialists across the state.

CBC TI has curated and facilitated these offerings, bringing nationally renowned self-care and healing experts to NYS's behavioral health workforce. This past month, NYSHealth funded trainings ranging from a “Long-Term COVID-19 Symptoms Support” group to two Financial Wellness trainings. Since the beginning of the grant's term, CBC TI has trained 184 unique individuals spanning 68 unique agencies.

SAMHSA funding also allowed CBC TI to partner with [Service Program for Older People](#) (SPOP) to bring “Bereavement, Loss and Coping in Working with Older Adults” to agency staff over “lunchtime chat” support sessions. These trainings defined basic terms related to types of grief and explored strategies for assessment and treatment. In addition, attendees received

individualized support from two of SPOP's LCSW-level trainers.

Since January, the SAMHSA grant has trained 1,202 unique attendees from 284 community-based provider agencies (54% located in NYC, 46% located in rest-of-State).

JULY TRAININGS RECAP

CBC TI also continued its ongoing [Project ECHO](#) series supporting Opioid Use Disorder treatment providers this past month. CBC resident Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) expert Dr. Bruce Trigg delivered a didactic on MAT during pregnancy, while [The Bridge and Institute for Community Living](#) staff presented current and complex case to the series' growing community of MAT experts and learners.

AUGUST TRAINING INSTITUTE CALENDAR

CBC TI's Training Calendar for the remainder of August is available [here](#). Please contact CBC TI Director [Emily Grossman](#) with any questions.

TECHNOLOGY & DATA ANALYTICS



IMSny
INNOVATIVE
MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS
NEW YORK

IMSny CLAIMS UPDATE

[Innovative Management Solutions NY](#) (IMSny)'s [CLAIMS](#) is currently reporting data from 39 agencies and 75,000 members across the CBC and CBHS IPA networks, delivering insights to both network administrators and engaged provider agencies. Over the coming months, IMSny anticipates adding additional agencies' files to the dataset. Check out IMSny's [July Update](#) for the most recent product updates, and subscribe to future monthly updates [here](#).

CBC IPA network member agencies not already connected can contact [IMSny Support](#) for access to CLAIMS.

DATA ANALYTICS BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

Earlier this month, IMSny hosted three legal info sessions for all CBC IPA member agencies to review the legal structure that will support implementation of and access to IMSny's Data Analytics Business Intelligence (DABI) platform.

The corresponding legal analysis states that CBC can ingest and share data across the IPA network so long as there is a treating relationship. Agencies will have access to DABI once CBC, with support from IMSny, implements the remaining legal guidelines.

As part of these legal guidelines two documents will need to be signed by IPA member agencies:

1. Addendum to the IPA Participating Provider Agreement (PPA), and
2. Consent Attestation.

Contact IMSNY Chief Information Officer [Elise Kohl-Grant](#) with any questions.

SOLUTIONS FOR CBC IPA MEMBER AGENCIES

Take advantage of the negotiating power of the full CBC network to secure high quality solutions at a lower cost:

IMSNY Partners	The IMSNY Deal
Zoom Virtual meetings and telehealth	\$15 per business license per month. Currently our network is using over 600 IMSNY licenses, ensuring collective annual savings of over \$30K. Learn More
Triad Education, community & career resources	Triad provides education, community and career resources for behavioral and mental health professionals, employers and organizations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam Preparation • Continuing Education Credits • Targeted Recruitment (Jobs Marketplace) Learn More
Ride Health Client transportation solution	Connect with Ride Health to reduce dependence on costly fleets and/or the staff time spent scheduling and tracking appointments. Schedule A Demo
Relias Learning Management System with content library	Discounted price for a full agency solution, giving agencies access to a large behavioral health learning library with tools to support training assignment and reporting requirements. Schedule A Demo

CBC STAFF SPOTLIGHT: EMILY GROSSMAN (DIRECTOR, TRAINING INSTITUTE)



This month, we're spotlighting CBC's Director of Training, Emily Grossman, MA, CPRP. Emily has been with CBC for almost two years and overseen remarkable growth of the CBC Training Institute (TI). The SAMHSA COVID-19 Emergency Grant has allowed CBC TI to reach thousands of NYS behavioral health agency staff with an array of self-care, grief and resilience trainings, and will soon offer continuing education units (CEUs) to LMSWs and LCSWs that attend specific trainings. Emily also recently guested on the "[Behavioral Health Today](#)" podcast! We caught up with her to hear about how she's been doing.

Hi, Emily! As a spiritual person and CBC's self-care guru, how are you looking after yourself during these turbulent times?

Self-care is so important, and I'm doing lots for my own maintenance. First is attitude. I am determined to come out of this pandemic stronger than I went into it. I'm not commuting right now, so I have more time for physical activity, including nature walks and yoga. I've been sure to follow-up on doctor appointments I had been putting off—an often-overlooked part of self-care. I attend therapy and I do my best to follow a structured food plan. I've also been getting more sleep, which I need to keep my body healthy. Finally, I find that daily meditation, active participation in my Buddhist community and my 12-step recovery program keep me centered and happy.

What's a remote day "at the office" look like? What's a day out of the office look like?

I get up at 6:30am and take a walk and listen to podcasts that help me prepare for the day. When I get home, I'll chant for 20-30 minutes. Chanting is my form of meditation—it gets me "fired up" and ready to give the day my all. Once the workday starts, my cat Kosen and I are constant companions—I call him my co-pilot, as he sits next to the computer as I work. I feel like I should give him part of my paycheck sometimes—I guess I do, in the form of cat food! My days off start much the same way, though I have several walking buddies I try to catch up with on weekends. I spend a lot of time trying to help others—I'll coach a peer client or work with a sponsor at my 12-step program. I find this work feeds me too and keeps my own recovery strong. As an extrovert, my "cup" is most full when I'm connecting with others. Finally, I love to travel and explore new places—COVID-19 has limited this, but I have tried to explore locally.

What's one professional achievement you're proud of from the past year? What's one you anticipate before the end of the year?

At the start of the pandemic, I worked hard to ensure that we could still be impactful to agency staff—I'm proud that CBC TI was able to quickly pivot from in-person trainings to remote learning. Delivering non-traditional self-care practices to the TI has also been rewarding—I especially loved connecting NYS behavioral health professionals with some of the best yoga and meditation organizations in the business. I'm really looking forward to offering CEUs to providers. This is something I've been working on since I started at CBC!

What about socially/at home? Any projects or events you're working on/looking forward to?

I'm working on publishing a book! I have a manuscript about spirituality and mental health, which incorporates my own story and "spiritual lessons learned." The book's thesis is that a mental illness doesn't have to be an albatross; it can be a "window" to one's higher self. The book is finished, and I've been sending it out to publishers. I'm optimistic it will help get my hopeful message out!