

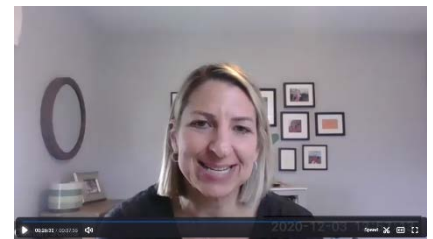
One of the most beneficial components of any NACBH conference is the opportunity to connect with fellow leaders from around the country. **The Leadership Forum** is a special component of the Emerging Best Practices Conference – held virtually in 2020 – dedicated time for open dialogue, information sharing, and keeping one another apprised of the challenges and successes providers encounter.



On December 3 over 60 different individuals contributed to the Leadership Forum through small group discussions highlighting some of the common trends, and – more importantly – how different providers have responded to these challenges proactively throughout the year.

The topics that emerged as key themes in 2020 included workforce development, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), revenue sustainability, the increased need for mental health services revealed by the global pandemic, and general observations emerging from a year dealing with COVID-19. See below for some of the key takeaways from the discussion:

- It has taken purposeful attention to maintain morale throughout the year, but staff in the behavioral health field have absolutely risen to the challenge and demonstrated their dedication in extraordinary ways.
- Varied approaches to building and maintaining team dynamic are needed in times of perpetual crisis – those already using a multi-pronged approach indicated the discussion validated their efforts.
- There are some unexpected benefits in how service delivery has been changed in 2020, from providing quality access to service for rural communities through telehealth, to improved communication among staff members – and participants noted key adaptations like these will likely be maintained over time.
- DEI efforts were underway in most provider organizations to some extent, but 2020 revealed to many that a new approach is needed – one with sustained support, and transparent vulnerability from leadership.
- The global pandemic has been traumatic to EVERYONE. Management of the impact must be both in physical projection of clients and staff and also in supporting mental health and building resiliency.
- The need for services varies based on geographic location and on the kinds of services provided – many participants noted that while referrals may be down, mental and behavioral health issues are presenting with a higher level of acuity.
- Many organizations were able to partake in federal, state, and local emergency funding to support services, with some even leveraging support from foundations for the first time.
- All of these challenges and themes are inter-connected and reflect the changing dynamics of the behavioral health landscape.



We encourage you to take part of more ongoing conversations like this through NACBH Member's Only resources – [Click here](#) to login!

Not an NACBH member? [Click here](#) for information on applying for membership!