



Meagan's Story

Hello, I am Meagan Cahoon, BSN, RN, QMHP and the nursing team leader for the BH Link. I have been at the BH Link since the BH Link opened in 2018. Prior to working at the BH Link, I worked at AdCare and CCA's ASU. The role of the nurse at the BH Link is to medically assess clients upon arrival. Clients that arrive to the BH Link may be under the influence of substances or experiencing a psychiatric crisis, which requires the nurse to do an assessment to determine their medical safety while at the BH Link. Client's vital signs are taken and the nurse sits and meets with the client in a treatment space to gather their medical history to be able to provide the next step for the client. After the client has been assessed by the nurse, the clinical team will assess client further. What I love most about my job is the ability to help those experiencing mental health and substance use crisis on an individual basis, and accommodate clients and meeting them where they are at. I love being able to keep clients out of the ER and to be able to treat them with the respect they deserve and to give them the individual attention they need.

I think that the BH Link has significantly affected the community in a positive way by allowing people to have a safe place to come, be assessed, and help determine what is needed. This has also helped clients who are seeking outpatient services have guidance in doing so without presenting to a hospital. Especially during this pandemic, the BH Link has been able to help an array of clients via both the crisis line, the lifeline, and our face-to-face contact. As noted by the governor, the BH Link crisis line was advertised to help clients who are struggling with an array of mental health and/or substance issues. Clients have been able to call the crisis line and get support over the phone, which has been able to help relieve a lot of clients' anxiety.

During the pandemic, the BH Link remained open for face-to-face contact to allow clients to have a place to go where there was less risk of exposure and needed services. While the BH Link has remained open for services, the processes have changed and every patient is screened at the door and assessed for COVID-19 symptoms. If a client is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, the client is offered transport to a hospital for further assistance.

The BH Link is a great place for clients who are not sure what services would be best for them. Clients can come in to be assessed by both a nurse and a clinician and referred to the proper place, for example a therapist, a psychiatrist, group therapies, partial hospitalization programs, intensive outpatient programs or an inpatient program. It is important for clients to know that there is a 24/7 hotline for clients to call to seek guidance if they are questioning whether to come in to the BH Link or not. As we

continue to work through COVID-19 it is important that everyone knows that there are options available for mental health treatment as many people are struggling with changes that have happened during this time.