



PRINCIPLES FOR ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

The mission of the Connection Coalition is to reach and engage behavioral health* community stakeholders in issues related to ACCESS to behavioral health services and supports.

With the goal of providing accessible, effective, sustainable, integrated behavioral health resources throughout CA that are evidence-based and recovery-focused, the following principles guide Connection Coalition's engagement and advocacy efforts:

1. **Medication:** Eliminating barriers to ensure open and unrestricted access to medication, to include: timely access, safe use, effectiveness and affordability.
2. **Parity:** Aligning mental health and substance use disorder resources with other health care, and social service offerings is fundamental to providing equal access to an effective and accessible continuum of care.
3. **Cultural Competence & Anti-Racism:** Addressing racial, ethnic, cultural, LGBTQ and age disparities across the entire behavioral health system is integral to providing effective, accessible and equitable offerings. This includes sustaining and increasing provision of Community-Defined Evidence Practices.
4. **Performance:** Measuring performance and local impact is integral to identifying, providing, and scaling of accessible and effective programs throughout CA. Data that tracks the impact of behavioral health programs on individuals and communities (Children & Youth, Criminal Justice, Employment, Hospitalizations, Housing) is key to justifying and supporting local and statewide implementation and funding.
5. **Prevention & Early Intervention:** Widespread behavioral health education, prevention programs and messaging should reach all age groups, and be integrated into institutional settings (such as: schools, senior centers, work-settings, hospitals, religious institutions, wellness-centers).
6. **Resources:** Address lack of resources, including integrated, sustainable resources. Areas where inadequate resources negatively impact behavioral health include (but are not limited to): Schools, Supported Housing, Workforce, Rural Access to Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Jails and Prisons.

* The term "Behavioral Health" includes: Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders.

Connection Coalition is a program of Mental Health America of CA, www.mhac.org