

## Introducing and Involving BHCs Routinely in Visits

Please introduce BHCs as: **Behavioral Health Consultants**

If you suspect the “consultant” term is not understood, you can use:

- Team member or colleague
- Expert on stress
- Behavioral Health Providers

\*Do **NOT** describe a referral reason as: “counseling,” “therapy,” or “psych issues” as this can prompt unwanted preconceived notions of traditional therapy.

To describe what BHCs “do,” you can use phrases/words such as, BHCs help with:

- “lifestyle change”
- “stress management”
- “healthy living”

BHC involvement same day can be described as:

- “Our BHC is a **team member** whose role is to help patients improve their overall health”  
{reassure patients that the visit will be brief and quite possibly available right away}

If a patient is **resistant** to meeting with a BHC, you can approach it as you **would approach referrals to other resources or specialists**. Most PCPs don’t experience too many problems getting a patient to agree to seeing a cardiologist or attending a diabetes education class. Use the same **approach when you refer to the BHC**.

You can say something such as, *“I’d like for you to see our BHC...*

- *... about your headaches. They can help with relaxation strategies to help us today.”*
- *...your blood pressure. It’s high and you have a lot of stress going on, I think she may have some ideas that will help us get the readings we want?”*

It is also helpful to frame the BH referral as a **routine or standard part of care** and add how it helps you (the PCP) do your job better...

- “I refer all of my patients with \_\_\_\_\_, and it would help us get other ideas for improving your \_\_\_\_\_.”

My BHC is always **busy** with patients, what should I do? Regarding interrupting BHCs:

- **“BHCs prefer interruptions and see them as part of being a team player. BHCs want to provide services/consultations at the time of need!”**

What if my **patient already has a counselor, psychiatrist or therapist?**

- Often specialty counselors have a completely different role, if you think the patient could use assistance in improving their health, a BHC may still be useful in helping you provide care by providing interventions that address lifestyle changes and health risk behaviors.

**While a BHC may be highly involved in the patient’s care, ultimately, the PCP remains the primary caretaker**