

- NSB Health & Social Services (Non-emergency): 907-852-0366

You are not alone. Help is available – any time, any day.

Section 2: Understanding Behavioral Health on the North Slope

Behavioral health on the North Slope is shaped by our unique geography, cultural strengths, and community structures. Understanding how care is provided – and how to access it – can help make the path to healing feel clearer and more connected.

WHAT BEHAVIORAL AND MENTAL HEALTH MEAN HERE

In the North Slope, behavioral and mental health are about more than just treating illness. They're about supporting the whole person – emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and socially – and helping individuals, families, and communities stay strong through connection, healing, and care.

- Mental health relates to how we think and feel inside – our emotions, thoughts, and ability to manage stress or trauma.
- Behavioral health includes how those thoughts and emotions show up in our actions – like how we cope with stress, how we form relationships, and whether we engage in healthy or harmful behaviors (like substance use).

Many programs in the North Slope support both mental and behavioral health at the same time – this might include counseling, family services, crisis support, or substance use treatment.

COMMON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TERMS EXPLAINED

You may hear different words used when talking about behavioral health services. Here's what some of them mean:

- Case Management – A service that helps coordinate care, appointments, referrals, and follow-up support.
- Case Manager – A person who helps you coordinate your care, connect to services, follow up on appointments, and navigate complex systems like housing, healthcare, or court-related services.
- CHAP – Community Health Aide Program
Behavioral Health Aide (BHA) – A village-based community provider trained to offer mental health support, education, and referrals. BHAs are part of the CHAP program and often work in close partnership with clinicians and tribal health systems.
- Crisis Intervention/ Crisis Stabilization – Immediate help and/or short-term care during a mental health emergency or time of distress to help someone get safe, calm, and connected to longer-term support – can include therapy, medication, or observation.

- Dual Diagnosis – When someone experiences both mental health challenges and substance use issues at the same time.
- IBH – Integrated Behavioral Health: a program (often part of NSB HSS) offering therapy, psychiatric care, case management, and substance use support.
- Outpatient – Services that don't require you to stay overnight (like weekly therapy or group counseling).
- Referral – When a provider sends you to another person or program that offers a specific type of care, like a residential treatment center or a telehealth counselor.
- SMI – Stands for Severe Mental Illness. May require long-term support or specialized services.
- Substance Use Recovery – Services that help individuals reduce or stop alcohol or drug use and support long-term healing. May include counseling, residential treatment, peer groups, or support from a case manager or sponsor.
- Title 47 – A legal process for placing someone in emergency mental health care when they are a danger to themselves or others.
- Walk-in – You can show up for services without an appointment (e.g., NSB Integrated Behavioral Health in Utqiagvik).

COMMON COMMUNITY ENTITY ACRONYMS DEFINED

AEF Arctic Education Foundation	ICAS Iñupiat Communities of the Arctic Slope
ANTHC Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium	IHLC Iñupiat History, Language, and Culture Department
ASNA Arctic Slope Native Association	IPK Fred Ipalook Elementary School
ASRC Arctic Slope Regional Corporation	NSB North Slope Borough
AWIC Arctic Women in Crisis	NSBSD North Slope Borough School District
BHS Barrow High School	NVB Native Village of Barrow
HMS Hopson Middle School	PSO Public Safety Officer
IBH Integrated Behavioral Health	SSMH Samuel Simmonds Memorial Hospital
IC Iḷisagvik College	TNHA Taġiuġmiullu Nunamiullu Housing Authority

If you're unsure what a word means, ask a provider.

You deserve to understand your care.

AT A GLANCE: WHAT SERVICES DO EACH OF THESE ENTITIES PROVIDE ON THE NORTH SLOPE?

North Slope Overarching Behavioral Health Service Organizations

SERVICE TYPES				
	NSB Health & Social Svcs (including IBH)	ASNA	NSB School District	ICAS
	<i>Serving all NSB Communities as either primary or secondary (Point Hope & Anaktuvuk Pass)</i>	<i>Serving all NSB Communities</i>	<i>Serving all NSB Communities</i>	<i>Serving Tribal Members in all NSB Communities</i>
General Behavioral Health Clinical Services	Integrated Behavioral Health (IBH) services include crisis line, clinical assessments, psychotherapy, psychoeducation, medication management, and case management.	Screens co-occurring clients with a focus on physical health to provide referrals for behavioral health services. Pharmacy for medications.	Provides a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for all students and can connect families to IBH services upon request.	Services for tribal members only
Substance Use Counseling Services	SUD assessments, individual & group counseling, case management, psychoeducation, and referrals to residential care.	Supports referrals to treatment.	Support connection to IBH.	–
Mental Health Services	24/7 Crisis Line, behavioral health & psychiatric assessments, individual, couples, family, & group psychotherapy, case management, village outreach, school-based mental health support, psychoeducation, referrals & support for admission to residential treatment services for BH issues.	Provides parent classes, grief groups, suicide prevention (QPR) training, and supports school-based crisis response for youth as requested.	School guidance counselor and/or Student Services team members support students (individual or group) with social emotional skills and where necessary Support connection to IBH.	Grief Groups and cultural connection groups. Vocational Rehabilitation and Veteran's Services. School Crisis Response for youth, as requested.
Psychiatric Services	Psychiatric assessments, medication management, psychiatric nurse case management, psychoeducation, skill building.	Emergency psychiatric assessments, medication management, and coordinates Title 47 involuntary placement as needed.	Where appropriate, school guidance counselor and/or Student Services team members support student with connection to IBH or SSMH.	Assessments for Medical and Psychiatric referral services to qualify Vocational Rehabilitation programs.
Social Services	AWIC domestic violence shelter, CYs, prevention, EMCS	Family Preservation programs, Healthy Family Advocates, ICWA services in select villages, and Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) assistance.	Employs school Social Emotional Coordinator and Social Workers; supports warm handoffs and connections to providers, Migrant Education Program.	ICWA consultation and representation (some sites), Family Preservation services
Other	Gathering Place, HOPE Living, coordinates prevention efforts	Assisted living (via NSB), MTFA, Recurring Classes for a variety of Life Areas	Conducts screenings, IEP assessments, coordinates services for educational and behavioral needs. Teaches Social-Emotional Learning curriculum to students to build a foundation for wellbeing.	Offers year-round classes in several Life Domains, Employment Services for Disabled Individuals.

Community-Specific Behavioral Health Service Organizations

SERVICE TYPES	 Tanana Chiefs Conference	 MANIILAQ ASSOCIATION	
	TCC	Maniilaq	NVB
	<i>Serving Anaktuvuk Pass</i>	<i>Serving Point Hope</i>	<i>Serving all NVB tribal Members</i>
General Behavioral Health Clinical Services	Range of behavioral health services for Anaktuvuk Pass residents, with a 24/7 after-hours crisis line available for immediate help.	Broad array of culturally grounded programs for all ages to support mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness in Point Hope.	Provides services to Native Village of Barrow (NVB) tribal members. See below for specifics.
Substance Use Counseling Services	Offers various levels of outpatient telehealth treatment for adults with substance use challenges. Provides referrals to residential treatment programs, including the Old Minto Family Recovery Camp.	Outpatient treatment for individuals struggling with substance use, as well as prevention programs for youth and support for court-referred individuals.	May provide financial assistance for housing, food, or supplies to tribal members 14 and older who are enrolled in a substance abuse or behavioral health treatment program.
Mental Health Services	Person-centered individual therapy with licensed clinicians for clients ages 4 and up to explore thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.	Individual, family, and marital therapy, along with specialized play therapy for young children and crisis response services.	Ability to apply for access to online therapy with a licensed therapist through Talkspace (note: funding limited for this, first come first served)
Psychiatric Services	Psychiatric evaluations and medication management support for both children (ages 4+) and adults	Medication management for clients through telehealth with licensed psychiatrists, including monthly check-ins with a therapist	—
Social Services	Case management for adults with serious mental illness (SMI) to help with daily living skills, housing, appointments, and financial aid. Also offers supportive housing programs for those with SMI.	Operates a therapeutic children's home for emergency stabilization and offers vocational rehabilitation to help individuals with disabilities prepare for employment.	Provides child protective services, foster care licensing and support, and a Victim Advocate to assist victims of crime.
Other	Utilizes telehealth to increase access to services. Operates a Behavioral Health Aide (BHA) program to provide village-based support, education, and advocacy. Partners with other programs on prevention services.	Integrates behavioral health into primary care clinics and focuses on community-wide wellness through suicide prevention, recovery support, and cultural healing activities.	Tribal Court that provides culturally appropriate legal services for child welfare, juvenile justice, and guardianship cases, guided by Iñupiaq values (ICWA). Provides childcare assistance.

Did You Know? While some services overlap, others fill key gaps – NSB IBH is the only walk-in provider for all residents, while tribal programs often focus on services for Alaska Native members.



WHY SERVICES MAY COME FROM DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONS

In the North Slope, behavioral health services are provided by multiple entities working in parallel – each with a slightly different role:

- North Slope Borough Health & Social Services (NSB HSS) provides care for all residents, including IBH, crisis response, shelters, and prevention programs.
- Arctic Slope Native Association (ASNA) provides health care and emergency psychiatric assessments, medication management, and coordination of Title 47 involuntary placement services for tribal members, operating Samuel Simmonds Memorial Hospital, and many social service programs.
- Maniilaq Association serves the Native Village of Point Hope.
- Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) serves the Native Village of Anaktuvuk Pass.
- ICAS, NSBSD, Tribal Courts, and Village-based programs also contribute specialized services.

These systems exist side by side and often collaborate behind the scenes. Who provides your care may depend on:

- Your tribal affiliation
- Where you live

- Whether a service is funded or staffed locally
- The type of care needed (clinical, emergency, housing, school-based, etc.)

That said, being in one organization's service area doesn't mean you can't use services from others.

For example:

- If you're a resident of a village that receives ASNA health care services, you can still access care from the NSB Integrated Behavioral Health (IBH) program, which serves all North Slope residents regardless of tribal affiliation.
- You might also receive telehealth services through ANTHC or be referred to programs operated by other partners across the state.

The goal is to help you get the right care – whether it's nearby, over the phone, or in partnership with another provider. You don't need to figure it all out alone – many programs will help guide you to the right place.

While it may seem complicated, many providers work together to make sure you can get the care you need – regardless of which “system” you’re in.

TELEHEALTH VS. IN-PERSON SERVICES

In many North Slope communities, behavioral health care is available both in person and via telehealth. Understanding your options can help you choose what works best for you.

In-Person Care

- Available in Utqiagvik and sometimes during village outreach visits
- May include walk-in counseling, emergency support, group services, or court-ordered evaluations
- Good option when privacy or home internet access is a concern

Telehealth Services

- Available by phone or video call (sometimes from your home, or from a local clinic or office)
- Often used for follow-up care, counseling, or psychiatric medication appointments
- Offered through ASNA, NSB IBH, ANTHC, and other partners

Scheduling & Access Tips

- Some services (like crisis lines) are available 24/7
- Others require scheduled appointments and may have waitlists

- Ask whether you need a referral or can self-schedule
- If you're not sure where to start, call the NSB Crisis Line at 907-855-0833

Your Privacy

All behavioral health providers are required to protect your information by law. Services are confidential, and many providers offer private spaces for telehealth or in-person visits.

You have a right to access care in a way that feels safe and respectful to you.

Section 3: Pathways to Support – What to Expect When You Need Help

Knowing where to start or what to expect when you or a loved one needs behavioral health support can feel overwhelming. This section is designed to make that process clearer and less confusing.

On the following pages, you will find simple, step-by-step guides that show the path to getting connected with care in three different situations:

- **When an adult is experiencing a behavioral health crisis:** This can include situations where someone is at immediate risk of harming themselves or others, experiencing psychosis, or is overwhelmed by extreme distress that they cannot manage on their own. For example, a person might be actively considering suicide or experiencing a severe panic attack.
- **When a youth needs support at school:** This could involve a student who is struggling with anxiety about schoolwork, showing signs of depression by withdrawing from friends, or having behavioral issues like frequent outbursts in class. These are situations where a school guidance counselor can provide initial help.
- **When a community-wide event occurs that affects the well-being of many residents:** This refers to large-scale events like a natural disaster, an act of violence, or a tragic event that impacts the entire community. Following such events, widespread feelings of grief, anxiety, and stress are common and may require a coordinated support response.

These visual maps help take the guesswork out of the process by showing you who to contact first and what the likely next steps will be.