BHARP

Strategic Communications Plan

Mission Statement

To explore, develop and/or enhance specialized services for complex, high need populations through the workgroup structure.

To advocate for and develop the capacity to advance the philosophy and practices of recovery and resiliency in our rural communities.

BHARP will accomplish this mission through the dedication, determination and hard-work that characterizes its membership.

Executive Summary

This Strategic Communications Plan aims to increase brand awareness over the next 12 months. Through targeted communications efforts, BHARP will position itself as a trusted leader in rural behavioral health services, dedicated to advancing equity, access and recovery across 24 counties.

Objectives

The following objectives support the overall goal of raising brand awareness:

- Establishing and maintaining a stronger social media presence
- Positioning BHARP as a trusted leader in rural behavioral health
- Amplifying stakeholder voices

Situational Analysis

As BHARP focuses on raising its regional profile, it must confront internal and external challenges to effectively and consistently communicate with providers, communities and other stakeholders.

In response to economic pressures and funding challenges, this communications plan focuses on highlighting a critical need for ongoing investment to sustain behavioral health programs in rural areas.

To secure funding and build public trust, it is crucial for BHARP to raise awareness of rural health disparities and position itself as a collaborative, credible leader across 24 counties.

Currently BHARP utilizes the following communication materials and channels:

- Limited social media
- A quarterly printed newsletter
- A series of targeted emails, typically around 10 per year
- A public website serving providers and members
- Informational packets

Social Media

BHARP's current social media reach is limited. Duplicate Facebook and Instagram accounts cause confusion, with the website linking to the outdated pages (@BHARPofPA) instead of the active accounts (@theruraldifference). Additionally, the content strategy relies heavily on graphics that lack distinctive branding elements.

Due to limited resources and staff, there is restricted capacity for content creation and social media management. However, social media could be better utilized to increase brand awareness and engage stakeholders.

Quarterly Printed Newsletter

The quarterly newsletter is a valuable tool for BHARP to share news, updates and events. A more targeted and streamlined approach would enable the organization to better serve its audiences. Recommendations for improvement include:

- Segment content by audience (provider, community member, funder) to increase relevance and appeal.

- Prioritize photographs, infographics and skimmable text. Avoid copy-heavy content for readers who need or prefer visuals to gather information quickly.Calls to action also would be more prominent and not buried in text-heavy content.

- Transition to a monthly format to provide regular, consistent updates to audiences. This format also would ease the burden on limited staff by making it easier for the team to produce shorter, more manageable content.

- Transition to an email format for a cost-effective approach that allows BHARP to track metrics like open rates and clicks, and offer opportunities for reader feedback.

Targeted Emails

Targeted emails are an effective communication tool, specifically when they are segmented for specific audiences. Currently, only 10 emails are distributed each year; an email content calendar or timed campaigns may help to increase frequency despite limited staff capacity.

Public Website

The BHARP website is a central tool for providers and partners, and it includes downloadable materials such as the newsletter and other resources.

Recommendations for improvement include: an updated design, a user- and mobile-friendly layout, and accessible language for users who are unfamiliar with the behavioral health field and terminology. Incorporate more visual elements like an interactive county map to illustrate BHARP's regional impact.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Strong, Community-Focused Mission

BHARP is defined by a mission that advocates for recovery, resilience and equitable behavioral health care in rural communities. With a commitment to serving complex, high-need populations, BHARP's mission and work are driven by community insight, partnerships and collaboration.

Foundational Regional Footprint

With a reach spanning all 24 counties in the North Central Region, BHARP has a strong foundational presence and regional credibility. This allows the organization to act as a trusted resource and leader in advocacy, service coordination and regional leadership. This foundation will allow BHARP to engage diverse stakeholders and build or maintain partnerships.

Supportive Executive Leadership

Despite limited resources and staff, leadership supports communication efforts and plays an active role in reviewing external messaging, aligning efforts with organizational priorities and goals.

Weaknesses

Lack of Dedicated Communications Staff

With no central Communications position, BHARP is limited in its ability to manage social media, strategic communication, media relations and crisis response planning. A dedicated focus to communication could expand BHARP's reach, track metrics, and strategically communicate its mission, goals and brand to external audiences.

No Formal Communications Process or Policies

Without a dedicated communications process or staff, there are no policies guiding campaigns, content development, crisis response and branding. Formal communications planning could

raise brand awareness and help BHARP effectively articulate its mission and services to stakeholders.

Lack of Storytelling

Communication materials, such as the newsletter and social media content, tend to be informational and generalized. Without storytelling to illustrate the success of its programs, BHARP misses opportunities to connect and resonate with the communities it serves.

Storytelling through testimonials, interviews and provider insights could humanize the BHARP mission while positioning the organization as a leader of change within the region.

Opportunities

Social and Digital Media for Outreach and Brand Awareness

A more active and strategic approach to social media and targeted email campaigns is a cost-effective method for BHARP to raise brand awareness, connect with stakeholders and promote itself as a leader in the field.

These platforms have the potential to reach a wide audience, and they allow for timely communication, two-way engagement, crisis response planning and creative storytelling.

Community and Provider Engagement

Incorporating and promoting a participatory approach in communication efforts offers an opportunity for BHARP to strengthen relationships with members and providers. Listening sessions, testimonials, surveys and interviews have the potential to amplify voices and involve community members so that the organization isn't just talking at them but with them.

Threats

Economic Challenges and Competition

Uncertainty regarding sustained funding is a pressing issue for BHARP. This competitive environment threatens the sustainability of BHARP initiatives and programs and requires the organization to repeatedly advocate for funding.

Health & Digital Literacy Barriers

Health and digital literacy barriers can affect an audience's understanding of health terminology and systems, and digital resources. In all communication efforts with community members, BHARP needs to be mindful of these challenges and prioritize culturally aware, easy-to-understand and accessible content.

Target Audiences

Audience	Communication Needs	Preferences	Most Effective Channels
Providers	Information on: • Programs • Policies • Partnership updates	Consistent and professional	• Targeted emails • Digital newsletter • LinkedIn • BHARP website • Meetings and webinars
Community Members & Families	• Details about available resources and how to access them • Information about events • Real-life impact stories	• Accessible • Credible, empathetic language • Testimonials • Trusted sources • Participatory	• Facebook • Printed flyers • Community events and listening sessions • Traditional local media (radio, newspaper) • Surveys for feedback
Funders/Policy makers	• Success stories • BHARP's regional impact • Data and outcomes • Why long-term funding is necessary • How BHARP meets a critical need within various communities	• Clear and timely • Storytelling to demonstrate impact • Calls to action	• Email • Events • Formal presentations • Website • LinkedIn

Key Messages

Message 1: BHARP is a trusted regional partner in building a rural behavioral health system focused on ensuring access, dignity and recovery for all.

Audience: *Providers*

Message 2: BHARP partners with local providers and leaders to ensure you and your loved ones have access to compassionate, high-quality behavioral health care, no matter where you live.

Audience: *Community members/families*

Message 3: BHARP doesn't just provide services—it builds systems that last. Ongoing support strengthens the behavioral health foundation rural Pennsylvania depends on.

Audience: *Funders*

Strategies and Tactics

Objective: Establish & Maintain a Stronger Social Media Presence

Goal: Increase social media engagement by 10% on Facebook and LinkedIn over the next 12 months.

Tactics:

- Deactivate outdated Facebook and Instagram accounts
- Update social media links in website footer and any print materials to ensure users visit active pages
- Develop a monthly content calendar with 1-3 posts per week on Facebook and LinkedIn
- Use themes like Provider Spotlights or Member Testimonials to maintain content consistency
- Create branded templates for infographics, announcements and statistics to ensure branding consistency
- Encourage employees, partners and executive leadership to like and share posts to expand reach

- Use built-in platform tools or free service like Buffer to schedule posts in advance
- Encourage partners and providers to tag BHARP in related content
- Engage with other organizations, community leaders and policy makers by interacting with their content to expand reach and build relationships online
- Designate one or two staff members to monitor social media accounts three times per week and respond to comments or messages

Channels/Tools: Facebook, LinkedIn

Evaluation/Measurement: Engagement rates, follower count, direct messages

Objective: Position BHARP as a trusted leader in rural behavioral health

Goal: Increase social media mentions and press coverage by 15% within 12 months.

Tactics:

- Share compelling success stories and outcomes on social media, in newsletters and website
- Develop and distribute blog/LinkedIn posts that position partners and executives as thought leaders
- Arrange interviews with local radio, podcasts and newspapers, and promote these appearances on social media
- Build relationships with local media and journalists
- Pitch 12 stories in the next 12 months to highlight BHARP as a credible resource in rural communities

Channels/Tools: LinkedIn, Facebook, blog posts, press releases, website and newsletters

Evaluation/Measurement: Mentions on social media and in media, email click rates, web traffic, number of press releases, and number of calls, emails or meetings with local journalists

Objective: Amplify stakeholder voices

Goal: Feature one stakeholder profile per month on social media, website and newsletter.

Tactics:

- Create themes for stories and a content calendar based on awareness months and other campaigns
- Develop a Q&A template using a tool like Google Forms to gather stories from community members, providers and families. Include an informed consent form to respect privacy
- Ask regional partners to help identify stakeholders who are willing to be featured
- Hold listening sessions and other public events to connect with stakeholders, gather insights and feedback, and include them in communication efforts
- Follow up with stakeholders previously featured about the experience and what could be improved

Channels/Tools: Google Forms, content calendar, listening sessions, phone calls, emails, LinkedIn and Facebook

Evaluation/Measurement: Number of profiles, number of questionnaire responses, number of events, event attendance