

Access Psychology Foundation Awards \$83,000 in Grants to Two New York Schools for DBT Training

The grants were awarded to Democracy Prep Public Schools in the Bronx, New York, and Hawthorne Cedar Knolls Union Free School District in Hawthorne, New York

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Psychology Foundation has awarded grants to Democracy Prep Public Schools in the Bronx, New York, and Hawthorne Cedar Knolls Union Free School District in Hawthorne, New York, for Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) training for the 2024/2025 school year. These grants will allow the staff to receive training and ongoing consultation in DBT to help them identify and effectively intervene with youth presenting with social, emotional, and behavioral challenges impacting their academic and family function. As schools and community-based organizations are the de facto mental health frontline for youngsters, APF prioritizes partnering with their dedicated teachers, principals, administrators, youth counselors, and other direct service providers, who are eager for proactive ways to address children's mental health issues before they require more serious treatment.

"We are thrilled to award grants to Democracy Prep Public Schools and Hawthorne Cedar Knolls Union Free School District," said Damian Travier, Access Psychology Foundation Executive Director. "Through these grants, we can provide the tools necessary to impact the lives of thousands of children and adolescents while addressing equity in mental health treatment, training, education, and prevention in underserved communities."

The grant for the Democracy Prep Public Schools is for a multi-tiered five-day DBT Training valued at \$45,000, which covers Five Day Foundations of Universal Classroom DBT (UC-DBT), and



Democracy Prep Public Schools Training

Comprehensive School-Based DBT (CSB-DBT) training, Orientation/Commitment meetings, and an implementation meeting. The training includes an overview of DBT as a multi-tiered intervention, emphasizing how Universal Classroom DBT and Comprehensive DBT can reduce unrelenting crises in schools and proactively teach effective coping strategies to prevent school-staff burnout.

Destony Stewart, Democracy Prep's Director of Social & Emotional Wellness shared she has already seen a noticeable shift in how the staff approaches challenging situations with students, emphasizing empathy, validation, and skill-building. "We are so appreciative of having Access Psychology Foundation here to help us bring DBT to our staff, faculty and students as we build these skills together! We're happy to have the resources and excited to see where this journey takes us as a school," Stewart said.

The Hawthorne Cedar Knolls Union Free School District grant is for a Comprehensive School-Based DBT valued at \$38,000 to cover the Foundation of Universal Classroom DBT and Skills Instruction, an Orientation/Commitment ceremony, and a post-training implementation meeting. As part of the Comprehensive School-Based DBT, staff receive four days of virtual training for those implementing Universal Classroom DBT in the classroom setting, a two-hour consultation meeting to address implementation obstacles and solutions, and ongoing training and consultation to offer problem-solving, ensure program adherence, and support curriculum implementation and strategies for teaching mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotion regulation, interpersonal effectiveness, and Walking the Middle Path skills.

"For years it's been a dream of mine to bring DBT to our schools at Hawthorne Cedar Knolls," shared Michele Pisarz, Supervisor of Special Ed at Hawthorne Cedar Knolls UFSD. "We were confident that DBT would have a great impact on our students, but none of us could have predicted the great impact APF's training had on our staff! They've told me that they now feel supported and included, and that's a great gift to the dedicated people we work with!"

Access Psychology Foundation offers grants to schools and organizations nationally that serve underrepresented populations to help them access high-quality training and consultation in evidence-based therapies. From universal to targeted training, these grants allow school staff training in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) to help all



(Left to Right: Michele Pisarz Albert, Supervisor of Special Education Hawthorne Cedar Knolls, Dr. Alec L. Miller, Aisha Prendergast, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Hawthorne Cedar Knolls)

students, while also providing training for evidence-based interventions. To learn more about the eligibility requirements or to apply for a grant, please email info@access-psychology.org.

About Access Psychology Foundation: Access Psychology Foundation (APF) is a nonprofit organization founded in 2022 by Alec L. Miller, PsyD, and Lara K. McGinn, PhD, with a mission to increase inclusion, equity, and diversity in the field of mental health by providing historically underrepresented communities with access to evidence-based prevention and treatment and by training racially diverse providers. To learn more about APF's vision of equitable access to successful mental health services and training for all communities, please visit their website at www.access-psychology.org.

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