

There is **NO** health without mental health



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- The purchasing process and products are exactly the same on AmazonSmile as they are on Amazon.

Donating has never been as quick and easy! Please share with your friends and family and help MHALC continue to provide our much-needed services.



MHA News

There is **NO** health without Mental Health!

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A special thank you to our amazing donors



From The Executive Director

and family to do the same. It's so important for everyone to understand their mental health and to make it a priority in life. Mental Health America of Licking County is here to help find the resources you need.

Speaking of change, MHALC's Board of Trustees and staff have been working on a new strategic plan for the agency. With the help of a wonderful facilitator, Bobbi Noe, we have put lots of thought into the services we provide for Licking County and how they fulfill our updated mission which is to promote good mental health and wellness through education, prevention and advocacy, and to eliminate the stigma of mental health issues.

I am so proud of all of the great work MHALC's dedicated staff is doing to enhance the mental health of Licking County. Their jobs are not easy but they are so passionate about what they do, we routinely share laughter and tears over their successes. Here are just a few examples of recent changes they've been instrumental in achieving. Buses are taking Bridges Out of Poverty program graduates to jobs at the New Albany Beauty Park,

thanks to coordinator Donna Gibson's collaboration with United Way and Ohio Means Jobs. Since having Becky Lawrence, Licking Valley Middle School counselor as an extern through the Summer Teacher Externship Program at MHALC in June, the Girls In Progress program with coordinator Shari Johnston and the Suicide Prevention program with coordinator Justina Wade will have a presence at Licking Valley Middle School for the first time. YES Club has recently welcomed new director Bethanne Leffel-Ployhar, LISW and all of us at MHALC look forward to the fresh perspective and renewed energy she brings to the program.

While change can sometimes be intimidating, it also signals growth. Here at MHALC, we embrace change as it means we can offer new ideas and programming to the community. We can always use your help to sustain these programs since we don't charge anyone for the help we offer, so feel free to make a change in your giving. MHALC is a cause worthy of your time, talent and treasure!

Here's to your good mental health!

Penny Sitler

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SUMMER EVENTS

The 2015 Lou Mitchell Memorial Golf Outing took place on Monday, June 29th and was a huge success despite the rain! Sixty-eight golfers participated in raising awareness of the Suicide Prevention Program. Once again, thank you to the Mitchell family for their overwhelming support for this important event! A big THANK YOU goes out to all of the sponsors this year including Tournament Sponsors The Energy Cooperative, The Mitchell Family and Fidelity Investments; Cart Sponsor Denison University; and Tee Sponsors Ann Schroeder-Edward Jones Investments, Englefield Inc., Havens Limited, Hometeam Properties, Hope Timber, Park National Bank, Waste Away Systems, and Rusty Riders. MHALC would also like to thank the volunteers, Moundbuilders Country Club staff, and each participant for not allowing the rain to dampen our spirits and for your amazing outpouring of support!



Mental Health America 2015 Annual Conference *Intervention and Innovation* *B4Stage4*

The Mental Health America 2015 Annual conference took place June 3-5 in Alexandria, Virginia. MHALC's Executive Director Penny Sitler attended, bringing back many valuable ideas for improving mental health in Licking County. The conference's platform this year is *B4Stage4*. We would never wait until the critical stage 4 to begin treatment for any physical illness like cancer, diabetes or heart disease. Why, then, do we so often wait until those with mental illnesses are a threat to themselves or others? No one should ever wait until then to seek treatment for mental health disorders. Give Penny a call for more information on this important campaign.



Executive Director Penny Sitler and Miss Mississippi Teen USA 2015 Andrea' Hightower



The inaugural 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament in memory of Lou Mitchell took place on July 18th at Newark High School. A total of thirteen teams competed in three divisions. MHALC would like to thank Jeff Quackenbush and all of his volunteers for making this year's event such a success! The day was such a triumph, we look forward to holding it again next year.

Pictured are the Shot Girlz, winners from the 11-13 year old girls division: Flair Sands, Morgan Bently, Peyton Lunsford, Chiara Black, and Tonyonna Childress. Congratulations to all of the winners and to all of the athletes who competed this year!

Free Support Groups

Autism Caregivers.....2nd Wednesday each month from 12 Noon to 2pm
Depression & Bipolar.....Each Wednesday 3:30pm to 4:30pm
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.....2nd and 4th Thursday each month from 7:00pm to 8:00pm
Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse...2nd and 4th Thursday of each month from 7:00pm to 8:00pm
Survivors after Suicide Loss.....2nd Tuesday of each month from 7:00pm to 8:00pm.
Teen Support.....Each Monday from 4:00pm to 5:30pm



THANK YOU!

TO ALL OF OUR DONORS!

Mental Health America of Licking County would like to recognize the following individuals and organizations for their support received from January 1, 2015 through June 31, 2015.
We make every effort to accurately reflect donations. Please call Jill Goddard at 740-522-1341 if you feel we have inadvertently left your name out and please accept our apologies.

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“We must find time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives.” *John F. Kennedy*

62nd Annual

Dinner & Celebration

Save The Date

November, 2015

MHALC’s 62nd Annual Dinner will be held on Thursday, November 12th. The dinner and awards presentation begins at 6:00pm. More information will follow in the coming months, but please mark your calendar for this important event.



MHR is sponsoring the 3rd annual Art of Recovery Exhibit. This very meaningful and beautiful event celebrates the power of art in our lives and how writing, making art, and expressing ourselves has helped in recovery. **THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO TELL YOUR STORY. WRITE IT. PAINT IT. COLLAGE IT. TANGLE IT. DO IT!** The show will open in Mount Vernon in September and Newark in October, and will be a great Compeer event celebrating how far we have come together! For more information contact Shari Johnston at 740.522.1341 or www.compeer@mhalc.org

SUICIDE PREVENTION 5K WALK AND CANDLELIGHT VIGIL

Tuesday, September 8, 2015

6:00 pm

The 5K walk will begin and end at the Rotary Pavilion located on Sharon Valley Road across from the Gib and Lou Reese Ice Arena. There will be helpful information on suicide prevention, a time for people to share their experiences, and candles to honor family members, friends and loved ones who have died by suicide. Anyone who has lost a loved one is welcome to bring a photo to honor their memory.

- We light this candle of **HOPE** to dispel the darkness of discouragement and despair.
- We light this candle of **GRACE** to dispel the darkness of guilt, blame and loss.
- We light this candle of **TRUTH** to dispel the darkness of stigma and misinformation.
- We light this candle of **JUSTICE** to dispel the darkness of inequities and injustice.



Sponsored by:

Mental Health America of Licking County,
Licking County Suicide Prevention Coalition,
Survivors After Suicide Support Group, and Mental Health &
Recovery of Licking and Knox Counties



YES Club Announces its New Director, Bethanne Leffel-Ployhar, LISW!

There have been a few changes at YES Club over the summer. Director Vee Hottle retired after 22 years of service at YES. MHALC congratulates Vee on her retirement and thanks her for her years of dedication to the program. Program Director Amanda Vozzella has transitioned to a position with Big Brothers Big Sisters,



and we wish her well. After an extensive search, MHALC is thrilled to welcome Bethanne Leffel-Ployhar as the new Director of YES! Bethanne’s impressive background in social work paired with her warm and energetic personality present a perfect fit for YES. Stop in for a tour and make her feel welcome.

YES is so proud of its class of 2015 graduates! YES held a graduation party for eight seniors who graduated from Newark High School in June attended by many other YES members and family members. Education is an important focus at YES, and we couldn’t be happier for our students!



MHALC Welcomes Becky Lawrence with BCAC’s STEP Program

Becky Lawrence, school counselor from Licking Valley Middle School, spent the week of June 22-26 learning more about the important work done at MHALC. The STEP (Summer Teacher Externship Program) Program “invites an educator to STEP into the business world to gain first-hand knowledge of business operations for the purpose of incorporating workplace competencies into the classroom setting,” according to The Licking County Educational Service Center. www.lcesc.esu.k12.oh.us



During her week at MHALC, Becky learned more about all of the programs and services offered by the agency. “I am amazed at all the resources provided by MHA to support Licking County,” says Becky, “and I plan on sharing all my new information with the Licking Valley community.” Executive Director Penny Sitler and the Program Coordinators worked closely with Becky and many new relationships were formed. With Becky’s help, both the Girls in Progress and Suicide Prevention programs will be launched for the first time this fall in the Licking Valley school system.

Bridges Out of Poverty Making a Difference

MHALC and the Bridges Out of Poverty (BOP) program received awards for our commitment to advancing financial literacy education from Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel’s office in May. Many Licking County community members gathered to hear a presentation given by Dan Risko from Mandel’s office and Donna Gibson, BOP program coordinator. The event took place at Crossroads Baptist Church in Newark. Mr. Risko provided helpful information on the importance of financial literacy as well as straightforward methods that can be applied immediately to improve lives. Graduates of BOP spoke about how the program helped them to make wise financial decisions and positive changes in their lives, resulting in an improved quality of life and level of independence. Ohio Representative Scott Ryan commended BOP for the positive impact it makes in the community. MHA greatly appreciates Judges Stansbury and Marcelain and Newark City Councilman Jeremy Blake for attending this inspiring event.



BOP is excited to be part of a new employment initiative in Licking County! Working with Ohio Means Jobs and United Way, we have arranged interviews and transportation to the Beauty Park in New Albany to help put Licking County to work. *The Newark Advocate* is following this story. Pictured from the left is Windy Murphy from Ohio Means Jobs, Deb Dingus from United Way, Donna Gibson from MHALC/BOP, and Anna Jeffries from *The Newark Advocate*. For more information, please contact Donna Gibson at MHALC at (740) 522-1341.



The YES for Solar project is in full swing! This project began with The Licking County Solar Cooperative of the Concerned Citizens for Public Health and Environment collaborating to install solar panels on the YES Clubhouse roof as a way to promote solar energy use in our community. This project was featured in the 5/16/2015 edition of *The Newark Advocate* and since its kick off in May, YES for Solar has really taken off. The students at YES really enjoyed learning from project coordinator Richard Downs how to reduce energy cost through solar energy. They also love being part of something unique in Licking County. The fundraising campaign for this project is run by members of Licking County Concerned Citizens for Public Health with funds deposited at the Licking County Foundation. A Progress Report is available at lccconcernedcitizens.org or at MHALC's website www.mhalc.org.



Richard Downs demonstrating a solar panel to YES Club

LCconcernedcitizens



Mental Health First Aid and Mental Health First Aid for Youth are trainings offered to the community to develop the first response skills necessary to identify and respond to an individual experiencing a mental health crisis.

The Newark Advocate featured an article spotlighting this important training on July 1, 2015. Penny Sitler, Shari Johnston, Kay Spergel, Kim Foster and Todd Feasel administer the training to businesses, school teachers, or any local organization interested in taking a more proactive approach in helping to recognize and assist individuals experiencing the symptoms of a mental health crisis. For more information contact Kim Foster at (740) 522-1234 or Penny Sitler at (740) 522-1341.

Destigmatizing mental illness through sharing stories

By Seattle Times editorial board
The Seattle Times

FOR Susan Fox, the social stigma of mental illness today recalls the collective silence around breast cancer in 1974. That was the year first lady Betty Ford and second lady Happy Rockefeller both disclosed their breast cancers and mastectomies. The disclosure emboldened millions of women to break their collective silence and spurred a revolution in cancer research.

That's what's needed today on mental illness. We need to talk more about it. "You're never going to get enough money going into that system until you have power brokers and rainmakers come out," said Fox, a successful nonprofit executive who is open about her recovery from addiction, depression and anxiety.

Saturday, a new Seattle-based advocacy group, called The Stability Network, is trying to do just that with a storytelling event, cheekily titled "Not Dead Yet!" Katherine Switz founded the group last year with simple principles: Participants had to be successful professionals and industry leaders willing to publicly share their recovery from mental illness. Switz has bipolar disorder, as well as a Harvard MBA and a résumé that includes her current job as a senior adviser at the Gates Foundation. She's lived the stigma. When she needed psychiatric hospitalization while working as an executive at General Electric, she told her boss that she had a thyroid problem. She's open today, but said the launch of The Stability Network hasn't received the response she expected. "It's not because we're not tapping into a nerve," she said.

Untreated mental illness is one of the nation's challenges. Stigma discourages people from seeking needed treatment for fear of professional or social consequences, even though their neighbors or colleagues might also be keeping the same secret.

Wayne Lynch, news director of Northwest Cable News, has used his personal experience to influence his profession. His brother's suicide "sharpened all the sharp edges" of his psyche prone to depression and anxiety. Now, he pushes his newsroom to more sophisticated explanations of mental illness. "We would like people in power positions in community businesses or agencies to say, 'I've struggled with this and have had a good career,'" said Lynch.

Please enjoy two articles written by members from our community who chose to share their personal stories of life with mental health issues.

Coming Out of The Mental Health Closet

By Gleb Tsipursky

My hand jerked back, as if the computer mouse had turned into a real mouse. I just could not do it. Would they think I am crazy? Would they whisper behind my back? Would they never trust me again? Would they think I am a slacker? Would they think I am gaming the system? These are the kinds of anxious thoughts that ran through my head as I was about to push the "Send" button for an email that asked the administration at The Ohio State University's Newark Campus, where I am an assistant professor, to grant me medical leave to deal with my mental health challenges.

Such anxious thoughts are not rational. My brain suffers from a mood disorder characterized by high anxiety. If unchecked, the anxious thoughts I described are profoundly debilitating. They really impair my ability to interact with the administration, my colleagues, and students.

What did I do wrong? Did I do something offensive or upsetting? How do I fix this? What do I do? Where can I hide?

These are the kinds of anxious thoughts racing through my mind whenever a student walks up to me after the end of a class session. Such thoughts are not pleasant, functional or rational. They result from my mood disorder. If unchecked, the anxious thoughts are profoundly debilitating. They really impair my ability to interact with students well and undermine my ability to connect and engage with them.

This mood disorder also results in occasional flare-ups of fatigue symptoms. Here is how it looks in the classroom. Imagine yourself as the teacher standing in the middle of a class, orchestrating a flowing and rich class discussion. You are at the top of your game, the students are deeply engrossed in the topic, and everything is going great.

Suddenly, you feel a wave of weakness spreading from your head into your chest and thighs. You need

to sit down. You tell the students to keep talking, while you find a seat. They are looking at you, confused by what is going on, the topic forgotten. You try to revive the discussion while managing your fatigue symptoms. You find it hard to raise your hand and point to students to call on them to talk. You are even struggling to speak yourself. Believe me, it is not fun.

The mental health condition I experience, an "adjustment disorder," is relatively minor, compared to some others out there. However, it was very disturbing to me when I first discovered I developed this condition in fall 2014.

Let me give some background for context. Early in 2014, I co-founded a nonprofit with my wife, Agnes Vishnevkin, a nonprofit professional with an MBA. This nonprofit, Intentional Insights (www.intentionalinsights.org), draws on my own scholarship and that of others to popularize research-based strategies for improving our thinking, feeling, and behavior patterns.

Unfortunately, Agnes suffered a nervous breakdown in July 2014. She and I collaborated together to apply many of the research-based methods promoted by Intentional Insights to her mental health condition, and when she visited a therapist three weeks after her nervous breakdown, the therapist recommended keeping 90 percent of what we developed together for Agnes going, because it worked really well for her needs.

However, I found myself in a tough situation in the fall 2014 semester. I spent a great deal of attention and efforts to help Agnes along her way to improvement. I lost count of the many nights we stayed up to 5 a.m., when I helped her talk through the issues she was experiencing, or simply held her as she sobbed in my arms. I take great pride in my teaching and responsibility for the experience of my students, always striving to teach them in a way concordant with the latest research in educational psychology. While maintaining my focus on teaching, I dropped some minor service commitments. I also took over the day-to-day operations of Intentional Insights, which Agnes had previously managed.

By late October, my own mental health condition began to emerge. Fortunately, my knowledge of psychology and cognitive neuroscience and the content from

Intentional Insights helped me develop research-informed coping strategies for these everyday teaching situations. I worked to develop the capacity to notice anxious thought patterns, and challenge them. I learned to notice my sensory experiences and catch waves of fatigue before their full-scale onset.

These coping skills proved a great solution for everyday challenges in the classroom, but did not address the underlying causes of the situation, or prevent the exacerbation of my own mental health challenges. Knowing the stigma against mental illness in the halls of academia, I had a great deal of anxiety about applying for a leave. Nonetheless, my desire to preserve my own mental health and prevent a nervous breakdown for myself pushed me to apply for the leave.

I hope this article can help others who suffer from mental illness. I want to convey to them that they are empowered to learn effective strategies for managing their conditions and serving as advocates for themselves within their institutions. Likewise, I hope that sharing my story will help those who do not suffer from mental health conditions be more understanding and sympathetic to their colleagues who do so. I also aim to encourage supervisors to be more thoughtful and considerate to their employees who suffer from mental health challenges.

Regardless of your own mental health condition or the lack thereof, please consider sharing this article with your colleagues and supervisors if you wish to advance these goals.

Gleb Tsipursky is an Assistant Professor at The Ohio State University, Newark Campus.



Why I Volunteer

By Daniel Ambrus

I have worked and volunteered at Mental Health America of Licking County since 2001, as well as volunteered at the Mental Health Association of Michigan prior to that. I enjoy volunteering and feel it is a way that I can give back to the community.

I have been battling bipolar illness since my freshman year in high school. I knew something wasn't right back then, but my illness went undiagnosed for years. I self-medicated with alcohol before ever being diagnosed. At the age of 42, I stopped using alcohol and eventually became so ill that I could barely function. At that point, I was diagnosed with bipolar illness and began the search for the right combination of medications. Today, after trying over 60 medications and being hospitalized twice, I take four different medications and regulate my daily routine so that my illness stays under control. My illness was especially difficult to treat because I was what the doctor called a "rapid-cycler," at times cycling several times in one day.

My work ethic was always very strong, allowing me to go from trainee to senior Merchandising Manager while working at J.C. Penney. I then started and successfully operated my own transportation company, MSA Expediting & Delivery Service, which served the automotive industry in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Canada. I know now that my bipolar illness was in a highly manic state at that time, but it was also then that I stopped using alcohol and became so ill that I had to sell my business.

In 1995, my wife and I moved back to Ohio where I have been able to work part-time and volunteer. We are members of First Community Church of Buckeye Lake where we co-chair the Sanctity of Life Committee. My volunteer work also includes helping out at Heartbeats of Licking County.

Daniel Ambrus is a volunteer at Mental Health America of Licking County. For information on becoming a volunteer, visit our website at www.mhalc.org, or call (740) 522-1341.