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MHA Message

There is *NO* health without Mental Health!

From The Executive Director



Do You Know What Mental Illness Feels Like? By Penny Sitrler

We often hear the clinical terms used by doctors and other professionals to identify the symptoms of mental illnesses but if someone hasn't gone through it, would they know how to recognize it? So often, clinical terms don't do justice to what life with a mental illness feels like.

We know that two people with the same diagnosis can experience the same symptom and describe it in very different ways. Understanding the signs of a mental illness and identifying how it can feel can be confusing—and sometimes can contribute to ongoing silence or hesitation to get help. It's important for people to talk about how it feels to live with a mental illness.

May is Mental Health Month and Mental Health America of Licking County (MHALC) is raising awareness of the importance of speaking up about mental health issues. We know that mental health issues are common and treatable, and help is available. But not everyone knows what to look for when they are going through those early stages, and many simply experience symptoms differently. We all need to speak up early — Before Stage 4 — and in real, relatable terms so that people do not feel isolated and alone.

MHALC wants everyone to know that mental illnesses are real, that recovery is always the goal, and that the best prospects for recovery come when we act Before Stage 4 (B4Stage4). Addressing mental illnesses B4Stage4 means not burying feelings and refusing to talk about them, and not waiting for symptoms to clear up on their own. B4Stage4 means more than wishing that mental health problems aren't real, and hoping that they will never get worse. B4Stage4 means more than thinking that someone on the edge of a crisis will always pull himself or herself back without our help, and praying that someone else will intervene before a crisis occurs.

B4Stage4 means, in part, talking about what mental illnesses feel like, and then acting on that information. It means giving voice to feelings and fears, and to hopes and dreams. It means empowering people as agents of their own recovery. And it means changing the trajectories of our own lives for the better, and helping those we love change theirs.

So let's talk about what life with a mental illness feels like, to voice what we are feeling, so others can know they are not alone. Through "Life with a Mental Illness" MHALC is asking individuals to share what life with a mental illness feels like by tagging social media posts with #mentalillnessfeelslike. Posting with our hashtag is a way to speak up, to share your point of view with people who may be struggling to explain what they are going through—and to help others figure out if they too are showing signs of a mental illness. "Life with a Mental Illness" is meant to help remove the shame and stigma of speaking out, so that more people can be comfortable coming out of the shadows and seeking the help they need.

Whether you are in Stage 1 and just experiencing and learning about early symptoms, or are dealing with what it means to be in Stage 4, sharing how it feels can be part of your recovery. You are not alone!

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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

BRIDGES The Bridges Out of Poverty (BOP) program offers Getting Ahead classes to provide skill-building strategies to individuals and families to move them out of poverty. Important program elements include financial literacy, reaching personal goals and engagement opportunities for the entire community. As the BOP Program Coordinator, Donna Gibson works with each participant to help them make a positive change in their lives.

Recently, Donna and the BOP program were integral in what 10 TV called the “Buses for Hope” initiative. Working closely with Ohio Means Jobs and the Licking County United Way, job fairs, interview assistance, transportation and even lunches are provided to help people who are struggling to find work connect with the employers who need them.



Pictured are Kourtnee Derflinger, Commissioner Rick Black and graduates of Getting Ahead.



Pictured are Windy Murphy, Supervisor of Business Services at Ohio Means Jobs; Deb Dingus, Executive Director of United Way; Donna Gibson, Bridges Out of Poverty/Parent Support Coordinator; Anna Jeffries, reporter with the Newark Advocate.

As BOP continues to grow to meet the demands of the community, new projects are always being explored. This winter, Donna Gibson organized a “Food Ride” to help gather non-perishable food and other items for the Salvation Army. A special thank you goes out to Licking County Commissioner Rick Black and Kroger on Deo Drive in Newark!



The Compeer program at Mental Health America of Licking County is a social integration and wellness program for people with severe and persistent mental illness that aspires to improve their quality of life. Compeer Program Coordinator Shari Johnston facilitates a variety of activities to encourage participants to take charge of their health and wellbeing.

Eliminating isolation and encouraging socialization are key focuses in the Compeer program. Activities such as Art Journaling and Lunch & Linger are two of the regular events that participants enjoy. Shari holds weekly Art Journaling classes at The Main Place in downtown Newark and Lunch & Linger throughout the area. In October, many participants of the Compeer program shared their artistic talents in Mental Health & Recovery for Licking and Knox Counties’ Art of Recovery exhibit. *The Newark Advocate* highlighted the opening event in an article titled “Recovery Celebrated through Art-work” (October 20, 2015).



Victoria Marvin displays her “Symphony of Courage” at *Art of Recovery*



Compeer participants at Lunch & Linger

Free Support Groups
At MHA

Autism Caregivers
2nd Wednesday each month
from 12 Noon to 2pm

Circle of Hope/Teen Support
Each Monday from 4:00pm
to 5:30pm

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 each
month from 7:00pm to
9:00pm

Survivors after Suicide Loss
2nd Tuesday of each month
from 6:30pm to 7:30pm.

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 July 1, 2015 through December 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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COMMUNITY MATTERS

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death for all ages; there is one death by suicide every 12.3 minutes; there is one suicide for every estimated twenty-five suicide attempts. (Center for Disease Control)

We've all heard the statistics about suicide and, unfortunately, suicide probably already has or will touch your life in some way. Those who are bereaved by suicide are known as survivors.

Suicide, for me, was always a subject to tip-toe around. My grandfather died by suicide when my dad was only seventeen and I learned from an early age that this was an uncomfortable topic for him.

Today, I am an undergraduate student at the Ohio State University and have been fortunate to receive an internship with Mental Health America of Licking County. Within the first few weeks with MHALC I was invited to sit in on the Licking County Suicide Prevention Coalition meeting and have attended two more since.

The people who are a part of the Suicide Prevention Coalition take their positions seriously but are also very comfortable as a group. Many members of the group are more relaxed than others, I assume because the shock has worn off. However, as the deputy coroner reads and discusses what happened in these unfortunate circumstances everyone in the room looks down at the table and listens with hard looks on their faces. Even though I did not know the identities of these people, my heart was heavy while imagining the shock and pain felt by those who survived. I sat there quietly while discussions went on about details surrounding each situation such as if they had mental health concerns and if they were addressed, anything in their life that could have affected the situation, and possibly how they were found.

While I was sitting in our most recent meeting I was thinking a lot about my dad and how hard it must be to be a survivor of suicide. I have so many unanswered questions as I sit in that room; most of the questions start out with "why." I can't imagine the incredible amount of unanswered questions he has about his father.

My mentor asked me how I felt after the first meeting and it is hard to identify my feelings. Everyone in the room is trying to find the answer: when did suicide become the only option?

By Jessica Phillips

Jessica is a student from OSU Newark working as an intern for MHALC.



Mark your calendars for the LOU MITCHELL MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS

Moundbuilders Country Club
125 N. 33rd Street, Newark, Ohio
Monday, July 25, 2016

Sponsorship Information

Event Partners: \$2500
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Team: \$400
Tee Sponsor: \$200
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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Youth Self-Advocacy, a partnership with Mental Health America and the Licking County Board of Developmental Disabilities, educates students with developmental disabilities how to speak up, request help, negotiate, understand personal rights and responsibilities, and utilize resources.

Beginning June 20th, Youth Self Advocacy will hold a summer day camp. This camp is an opportunity for students to learn about emotional and mental health and wellness, identify skills to cope with life's situations and develop empathy. For more information on dates and times, please call Program Coordinator Justina Wade at (740) 522-1341, or visit www.mhalec.org.

**Inside Out
Summer
Day Camp**

The Girls In Progress (GIP) program is finishing its third year of mentorship and empowerment classes for middle school girls in Licking County. A significant component of the program has been the exposure to professional, successful women in our community who are able to share the tools and life lessons that have helped them find their path and their vocation.



It was a rare treat for 29 Licking Valley Middle School girls to attend a Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) presentation prepared just for them by Sheila Miller, Director of Development at LMH. Speakers included Debbie Young, R.N., M.S., C.C.M., Vice President of Patient Care Services; Veronica Link, Vice President Development & Public Relations; Lorei Reinhard, B.S., M.T., (A.S.C.P.)S.H., Director of Laboratory Services; Anne Peterson, Vice President Human Resources & Support Services; Alene Yeater, M.D., F.A.C.O.G., Licking Memorial Women's Health; and Holly Slaughter, Director of Human Resources.



Program Coordinator Shari Johnston leads art journaling at Wilson Middle School

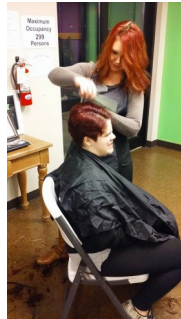
Art journaling is another integral component of GIP. Through this artistic medium, students are able to express themselves as Program coordinator Shari Johnston leads them through critical conversations around identity, self-esteem, body image, future hopes and plans, healthy relationships, and mental health and wellness.

The Parent Support program offers educational programs designed to address parenting topics including discipline and communications. Program Coordinator Donna Gibson holds classes such as 1-2-3 Magic, Asset Building, Parenting Wisely, 1-2-3-4 Parenting, and Incredible Years at MHALC and the Salvation Army. Due to the overwhelming needs in this community, Parent Support has expanded to include classes at the Licking County Jail and Flying Colors Preschool. The program's goal is to eliminate out of home placement and/or reunite families as quickly as possible to minimize the traumatic effects on every member of the family.



In addition to parenting classes, Donna has partnered with Holy Trinity Lutheran Church to offer a Parent Support group that meets each Monday at 4:30pm at the church. This support group is open to anyone, including grandparents raising grandchildren, and offers participants opportunities to explore alternative parenting approaches. Immediately after the group, members of the church offer a free dinner, followed by a Getting Ahead class from the Bridges Out of Poverty program.

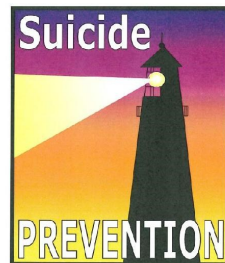
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



The Youth Engaged in Service (YES) Club is a free afterschool program for middle and high school students in Licking County. This 23 year old program experienced many positive changes in 2015 and has enthusiastically moved forward into 2016 thanks to the overwhelming support of the community! YES Club's new director Ethan Pound along with Program Manager Craig Loudermilk, Activities Manager Palma Kollar, and Activities Coordinator Lanie Risbon are adding some exciting activities to the programming. During the winter and early spring months, YES Club began a career exploration experience with the students. This exploration helps students identify attributes, talents and interests for future life planning. Presentations from representatives of C-TEC, Port Authority, The Works and many more gave each student first hand knowledge of potential careers.



The staff at YES are always ready to make every activity fun, and the warmer weather offers many service opportunities for the students. In April, YES partnered with the South Newark Civic Association to help with their annual Neighborhood Clean Up. A new collaboration with Together We Grow will teach the students about gardening and healthy eating options.



The Suicide Prevention program at MHALC educates students about mental illnesses and raises awareness about preventing suicide through Signs of Suicide (SOS) classes. Program coordinator Justina Wade teaches SOS in schools throughout Licking County. In addition to educating youth, Suicide Prevention offers Gatekeeper Training to organizations and businesses.

The Suicide Prevention 5K Walk and Candlelight Vigil took place on September 8th at the Rotary Park Pavilion on Sharon Valley Road. Nearly 100 people gathered to remember loved ones who died by suicide and help spread awareness. The Youth Leadership Council (YLC) led the group in a balloon release commemorating those lost to suicide. Others read poetry and shared their stories as a way to honor the memories and to help bring healing.

In April, MHALC's Suicide Prevention program in collaboration with the Licking County Suicide Prevention Coalition launched this community's first Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors (LOSS) Team. This team, made up of community volunteers, is among the first responders when a death by suicide occurs in Licking County, bringing comfort, resources and understanding during this difficult time. Upon arrival, members of the LOSS team will respectfully offer support to these individuals.

The LOSS Team is still looking for volunteers. For more information, or to volunteer for this important outreach, please contact Program Coordinator Justina Wade at (740) 522-1341.



Chris, Grayson and Elle Peterson at the Suicide Prevention Candlelight Walk and Vigil



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. 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. For more information contact Kim Foster at (740) 522-1234 or Penny Sitler at (740) 522-1341.

HOW CAN I HELP?

All of the programs and support groups at Mental Health America of Licking County are free to the Licking County community. MHALC wants to continue to meet the needs of Licking County, but we need your help. There are many opportunities to volunteer with each program or with the agency such as making dinner at YES Club, helping with consumer transportation, becoming a member of the LOSS Team, and so much more. If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information, please call Jill Goddard at (740) 522-1341 and get plugged in today!

If you would like to **Become A Friend of MHALC**, please fill out the form on the back of this newsletter and mail with the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Your monetary donations help us to further our mission to promote and continually reinforce mental health and wellness through education, prevention and advocacy, and eliminate the stigma of mental health issues in our community.

MHALC also offers online giving! This is such an easy way to give. Simply go to www.mhalc.org and click on the **DONATE** button located on the homepage (this button is also located under the *How To Help* tab). Once logged into PayPal, you may choose the amount you would like to give. You may also choose **monthly giving** by checking the box. **Every dollar helps! Thanks for making a difference!**



TWO MORE WAYS TO HELP MHALC

HOW THE KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM WORKS FOR ALL OF US!

We are so excited about the Kroger Community Rewards Program and its potential impact for MHALC! **Your information must be renewed each year so please follow the directions below.**

Every time you swipe your Kroger Plus card, while you still receive fuel rewards and coupons, MHALC receives a portion of every dollar you spend. This is such an easy way to contribute to our programs.

Please follow the easy instructions below to become part of the MHALC community. If you have signed up in the past, please renew your community information each year. If we can be of any assistance, please call our office.

Go to www.kroger.com.
Go to Community tab.
Click on Community Rewards Program.
Click on the COLUMBUS Enroll Now button.
Put in your information and Kroger card #.
Be sure to link your card to MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF LICKING COUNTY, Group # 91467.
Don't forget to buy gift cards at Kroger when you are going out to eat or shopping at stores such as Lowe's, Kohl's or Best Buy or when you start your holiday shopping, AND BE SURE TO SCAN YOUR KROGER CARD WITH EVERY PURCHASE!



Shop on Amazon and Support MHALC!

Through the AmazonSmile program, 0.5% of your purchase will be donated to the charity of your choice.

Sign-up is simple:

- Go to smile.amazon.com and sign into your existing Amazon account.
- Search and select Mental Health America of Licking County to make it your charity of choice.
- 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.

Thanks for your continued help and support!