



MHA Message

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

From The Executive Director

(WE ARE STILL OPEN FOR BUSINESS WHILE WORKING REMOTELY!)



It's ironic that I typically caution against being consumed by social media. Now we're being told to "socially distance" so social media is being encouraged. I would like to reframe that to say we're physically distancing but staying connected socially and emotionally. As human beings, we crave and require connectivity. Because of COVID-19 we must maintain connectedness virtually, not through direct contact with other people. This is a stressful situation for all of us. Feeling stressed about the future is a normal reaction. Staying connected to others will help.

Isolation has been proven to be detrimental to our overall wellbeing so be sure to reach out to others who are alone, showing them that you care about how they're doing. Ohio's Director of Health, Dr. Amy Acton, urges us to assume that we and everyone in our homes have the virus. "Stay close and take care of your village." Check out Ohio's Strive for 5 campaign on page 5 of this newsletter.

So how do we engage while keeping our distance? Options for virtual contact have become popular. Some examples are meetups using the Zoom platform with groups of friends and colleagues. Games can be played virtually, from euchre to Scrabble. Connect with far-flung friends and relatives.

We're allowed to go outside and exercise while maintaining six feet of separation from people outside of our household. Bike/walking paths are numerous in our community and perfect places to get moving while adhering to physical distancing. Stay away from playgrounds and other equipment where the virus can live for days. Don't engage in contact sports. Exercise is an important protective factor, helping build our ability to handle the things in life that come at us that are out of our control. We call that resilience and we all need it to get through this difficult situation.

Compassion for our community is being elevated all around us. Our family chooses one cause each week to support, including the United Way of Licking County's COVID-19 Relief. Did you know that helping others is proven to improve mood, overall wellbeing and resilience? Studies show that when we participate in kind, compassionate acts, we benefit as well. If we all give a little, it will go a long way toward a positive rebound locally when we get to whatever normal will look like.

Please stay connected. Converse virtually with a coworker, friend or relative that you haven't talked to recently. Connect via email, Facebook, Google or other platforms. Be sure to laugh and celebrate life's moments. Email psittler@mhalc.org if you need to connect and don't have other options. I'm happy to help! For more resources, see [@MHALCounty](#) on Facebook.

To your mental health,

Penny C Sittler

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MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

It's MEMBERSHIP time! Mail the enclosed form to us or go to www.mhalc.org to join today. Thank you for your ongoing support!

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Do You Know Your Tools2Thrive?



While 1 in 5 people will experience a mental illness during their lifetime, everyone faces challenges in life that can impact their mental health. The good news is there are practical tools that everyone can use to improve their mental health and increase resiliency – and there are ways that everyone can be supportive of friends, family and co-workers who are struggling with life’s challenges or their mental health.

May is Mental Health Month and Mental Health America of Licking County is highlighting #Tools2Thrive – what individuals can do daily to prioritize their mental health, build resiliency in the face of trauma and obstacles, support those who are struggling and work toward a path of recovery.

One of the easiest tools anyone can use is taking a mental health screen at mhalc.org when they need answers. It’s a quick, free and private way for people to assess their mental health and recognize signs of mental health problems.

This May, we are also exploring topics that can help you build your own set of #Tools2Thrive – recognizing and owning your feelings; finding the positive after loss; connecting with others; eliminating toxic influences; creating healthy routines; and supporting others – all as ways to boost the mental health and general wellness of you and your loved ones.

When it comes to your feelings, it can be easy to get caught up in your emotions as you’re feeling them. Most people don’t think about what emotions they are dealing with but taking the time to really identify what you’re feeling can help you to better cope with challenging situations. It’s ok to give yourself permission to feel. We also know that life can throw us curveballs – and at some point in our lives we will all experience loss. It may be the end of a relationship, being let go from a job, losing a home or the death of a loved one. It is natural to go through a grieving process. By looking for opportunity in adversity or finding ways to remember the good things about who or what we’ve lost, we can help ourselves to recover mentally and emotionally.



It also is true that connections and the people around us can help our overall mental health – or hurt it. It’s important to make connections with other people that help enrich our lives and get us through tough times, but it’s equally important to recognize when certain people and situations in life can trigger us to feel bad or engage in destructive behaviors. Identifying the toxic influences in our lives and taking steps to create a new life without them can improve mental and physical health over time. And we know that work, paying bills, cleaning, getting enough sleep and taking care of children are just some of the things we do each day – and it is easy to be overwhelmed. By creating routines, we can organize our days in such a way that taking care of tasks and ourselves becomes a pattern that makes it easier to get things done without having to think hard about them.

For each of us, the tools we use to keep us mentally healthy will be unique. But Mental Health America of Licking County wants everyone to know that mental illnesses are real, and recovery is possible. Finding what works for you may not be easy but can be achieved by gradually making small changes and building on those successes. By developing your own #Tools2Thrive, it is possible to find balance between work and play, the ups and downs of life and physical health and mental health – and set yourself on the path to recovery.

VISIT MHALC.ORG

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



The Bridges Out of Poverty (BOP) program has made great strides towards reducing poverty in the Licking County community. Getting Ahead (GA) classes offered through BOP promote financial literacy and develop opportunities for job training and career advancement.

Out of Poverty
of Licking County

A PROGRAM OF MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF LICKING COUNTY

BOP has maintained steady growth and the classes were well attended throughout the winter until physical distancing began. Consequently, Program Coordinator Donna Lee has provided a home study syllabus to Spencer House, Courage House and Adult Probation's Day Reporting Program. She will also be facilitating Day Reporting classes using the Zoom platform and hopes to be able to initiate this for the Spencer and Courage Houses as well.

@mhalcBridgesOutOfPoverty

Self-advocacy is speaking up for yourself, asking for what you need, negotiating for yourself, knowing your rights and responsibilities, and using resources that are available to you.



The Youth Self-Advocacy program is designed to help youth with developmental disabilities cultivate self-advocacy skills as they transition from high school into adulthood.

Program Coordinator Christina Peña has been focusing on updating the program due to schools being closed. She plans to provide fresh and stimulating material once school resumes. In the interim to help stay connected with program participants, Christina has created a Youth Self-Advocacy of Licking County Facebook page to share information and activities. @MHALCYouthSelfAdvocacy

The Compeer program's mission is to reduce isolation and stigma for individuals who live with severe and persistent mental illness and to improve their quality of life.



Compeer members at The Main Place

Compeer members had a wonderful winter season. In December they attended the 20th Anniversary of The Main Place, had a Christmas craft night, and hosted a Snow Ball. During January when the weather was still warm, they were able to complement their Lunch and Linger event with an afternoon stroll around downtown Newark and they hosted a bingo night. In February they experienced an amazing self-care evening.

Since social distancing was implemented in March, Compeer Coordinator Donna Lee has been busy organizing group FaceTime chats, conducting live-streamed art classes, forming many messenger subgroups and encouraging members to stay active and connected on Compeer's private Facebook group.



YES Club had a great holiday season, beginning with a full Thanksgiving meal cooked by the YES staff. Santa also made a stop at the Clubhouse (thanks to The Licking County Board of Realtors and other donors), and the members were treated to personalized gifts and a special meal.

YES Club took on many art and crafting projects in the recent months, including bird feeders, upcycled art journals and a new and improved sea-themed mural. In addition to the regular programming promoting healthy life choices, the members also kept up on their community service, keeping the downtown area clean and working with The Center for Visual Impairments and The Lookup Center.



YES Club members visit Dawes Arboretum

February was an eventful month for YES members. They participated in Share the Love which promotes awareness of suicide and depression through social media outreach. They held their annual Valentine's Day Dance, thanks to the generosity of The Skylight in downtown Newark. They also worked with artist Amanda Love on her art exhibit called The Tree Whisperer, and were then guests at Dawes Arboretum to see the exhibit and take in some nature.

In March the Clubhouse closed its doors in the interest of public safety. The staff has risen to the challenge, taking the regular programming online. Members can view informational videos, get help with their homework and interact with staff to complete art and writing projects at home among many other activities and discussions. @YESClub

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



2019-20 has been a year of continued growth for Girls In Progress (GIP). This year approximately 300 girls met together in 26 classes each week while school was in session. GIP is comprised of many evidence based “kernels” which, when put together as a whole, insure an organic and holistic approach to each class, meeting the specific needs as presented. Those kernels include mentoring, belonging, art-making, trauma

informed care, peer to peer support and prevention education.

The GIP program was awarded a \$2,000 grant from Women United for its peer-to-peer care blanket project, which started in 2018. Fleece tie blankets are made by GIP classes, along with anonymous notes of encouragement from each student. These blankets are then given to children and teens who are currently placed in foster care through The Village Network. It is a powerful outreach, allowing GIP students to share their strength and encouragement, as many members reside in foster care themselves. They are very grateful for the generous support of Women United of Licking County.



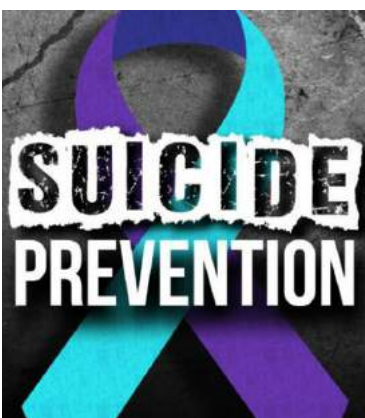
During these times when students have been practicing online learning, GIP Program Manager Shari Johnston has been connecting with members via Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube and Zoom. Additionally, she is able to message girls directly to see how they are doing. A Facebook GIP group is in place with daily posts about self-care, stress relief, art and writing projects, fun links and videos, and suggestions for apps and websites that can provide additional support. Shari continues to search for the girls in GIP and engagement continues to grow. @GirlsInProgress is the public Facebook page



MHA’s Parent Support program continues to connect with people mainly through the use of social media at this time.

Parent Support

Triple P Parenting classes are now available online through Facebook @MHALCParentSupport. If you are interested in a parenting class, please see the post “Looking to raise healthy resilient children?” On the post you can sign up for free personalized Triple P (Positive Parenting) strategies that can help you and your children. Parent Support Program Coordinator Kitty Roahrig will then call you and share the Triple P strategies that are most helpful to you and your family! If you are unable to access Facebook, please call 740-919-6905.



The Suicide Prevention program is reaching out to educate youth and adults on the signs and symptoms of suicide in Licking County to help save lives. Whether it’s teaching Signs of Suicide (SOS) in area middle and high schools or offering Gatekeeper Suicide Prevention training to adults, this critical program is working hard to improve the mental health of the community.

The SOS program continues to grow and is now being facilitated at nine high schools and seven middle schools throughout Licking County.

Due to the required social distancing, Suicide Prevention Program Coordinator Christina Peña has established online support groups. She frequently posts updates and information regarding COVID- 19 as well as positive uplifting articles on the Suicide Prevention page and in the Depression & Bipolar Support Group Facebook group. @mhalcsuicideprevention

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

OHIO'S STRIVE FOR 5 CHALLENGE



Ohio's "Strive for Five" initiative challenges each of us to reach out to five people who could use support over the next 30 days. The idea was borrowed from the New York Coalition for Behavioral Health and is led by Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) and the Mental Health, Addiction and Recovery Services Board of Lorain County. Please accept the challenge!



Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Service

April 13 at 6:30 PM · 🌐

The challenge is simple: find five people to check-in with every day for the next 30-days. Reach out and comfort each other while we work our way through the COVID-19 crisis.

#OHStrive5 #InThisTogetherOhio #StayHomeOhio
#COVID19OhioReady

To learn how to make a charitable contribution to MHALC from an IRA, please read the following information from Park National Bank:

Charitable Contributions from IRAs

Background

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 first allowed taxpayers age 70½ or older to make tax-free charitable donations directly from their IRAs. Technically, these taxpayers were allowed to exclude from gross income otherwise taxable distributions from their IRA ("qualified charitable distributions," or QCDs), up to \$100,000, that were paid directly to a qualified charity. These gifts are also known as "Charitable IRA rollovers." The law was originally scheduled to expire in 2007, but was extended periodically through 2014 by subsequent legislation, and finally made permanent by the Protect Americans from Tax Hikes (PATH) Act of 2015.

How QCDs work

You must be 70½ or older in order to make QCDs. You direct your IRA trustee to make a distribution *directly* from your IRA (other than SEP and SIMPLE IRAs) to a qualified charity. The distribution must be one that would otherwise be taxable to you. You can exclude up to \$100,000 of QCDs from your gross income each year, thereby avoiding taxation on those amounts. If you file a joint return, your spouse can exclude an additional \$100,000 of QCDs. Note: You don't get to deduct QCDs as a charitable contribution on your federal income tax return — that would be double-dipping.

QCDs count toward satisfying any required minimum distributions (RMDs) that you would otherwise have to receive from your IRA, just as if you had received an actual distribution from the plan. However, distributions that you actually receive from your IRA (including RMDs) that you subsequently transfer to a charity cannot qualify as QCDs.

As indicated above, a QCD must be an otherwise taxable distribution from your IRA. If you've made nondeductible contributions, then normally each distribution carries with it a pro-rata amount of taxable and nontaxable dollars. However, a special rule applies to QCDs — the pro-rata rule is ignored and your taxable dollars are treated as distributed first. (If you have multiple IRAs, they are aggregated when calculating the taxable and nontaxable portion of a distribution from any one IRA. RMDs are calculated separately for each IRA you own, but may be taken from any of your IRAs.)

Caution: *The gift cannot be made to a private foundation, donor-advised fund, or supporting organization [as described in IRC Section 509(a)(3)]. The gift cannot be made in exchange for a charitable gift annuity or to a charitable remainder trust.*

If you would like additional information, please contact Park National Bank or your financial advisor.



It's membership time at MHA!

More than a membership, it's a partnership. On the previous pages you read about all of the amazing things MHA is doing to impact the lives of the people in Licking County, but none of it would be possible without you! By renewing your membership or becoming a new member of MHA, you can help us reach thousands of your community's members by promoting and continually reinforcing mental health and wellness through prevention, education and advocacy, and eliminating the stigma of mental health issues.

See the enclosed membership form. For more information, to renew your membership or become a member, call 740-522-1341. We'll return your call.

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." – Helen Keller

MHA's Night of Hope

A big *Thank You* to everyone who made MHA's Night of Hope a huge success! Stay tuned for information about Night of Hope 2021.



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, 2019 through December 31, 2019.

We make every effort to accurately reflect donations. Please call 740-522-1341 if you feel we have inadvertently left your name out and please accept our apologies.

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“No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks.”

—James Allen

Thank you!

Partner Agencies and Funders



TWO MORE WAYS TO HELP MHALC



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

Every time you use 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 we can be of any assistance, please call our office.

- Go to www.kroger.com.
- Go to the Main Menu.
- Click on Savings.
- Click on Kroger Community Rewards.
- 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 # AX606.

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. **BE SURE TO SCAN YOUR KROGER CARD WITH EVERY PURCHASE!**

Thanks for your continued help and support!



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.