



# MHA Message

There is *NO* health without Mental Health!

## From The Executive Director



I just read this post from a friend: “Do you know who’s going through a lot right now? Literally everyone. Be kind.”

All around us, we’re hearing about people who are struggling with stress and managing their mental health. Mental health issues don’t discriminate; they are equal opportunity concerns that can affect anyone regardless of where they live, how much money they have or what their occupation is. Some well-known people are publicly taking a break from their routines and allowing themselves time to tend to their mental health so I hope we average Americans will understand that it’s okay for any of us to do the same.

American gymnast Simone Biles stepped back from the world stage this summer and withdrew from most of her Olympic events because her mental health needed attention. World class tennis player and multiple Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka has taken time away from tennis, even withdrawing from some of the biggest events, to give herself time to manage mental health concerns. Many Ohioans remember when Cleveland Cavaliers star Kevin Love brought the conversation about taking care of our mental well-being front and center several years ago.

The journey has not been easy for these athletes. Expectations of them are huge and there are people who have been critical and judgmental about the choices they have made. Self-care is an individual practice and every person has the right to decide what they need to feel safe and healthy. That includes you. Life gets messy for all of us and, as much as we like to be in control, things happen that we can’t foresee or prevent and as we navigate life, we should understand ourselves well enough to know when a break is needed.

Every person needs to figure out what feeds them, and I’m not talking about mealtime. We need to understand what makes us happy, what helps us relax and what we need to regroup from difficult times to be refreshed, balanced and ready to tackle what comes next. Sleep, exercise and healthy eating are the cornerstones of self-care. Layer on the activities that we enjoy doing with family or friends and what we need to do alone to generate peace within ourselves. For some, it’s gathering with others for meals, playing team sports, being part of a book club or worshipping with a group. Other people are soothed by reading, knitting or painting, running or doing crossword puzzles solo. What is your thing? Find it and build it into your life even for a few minutes if that’s what you can manage some days.

Understand that those around you also need time to care for themselves. We’ve had a rough couple of years and you may not know what challenges others are experiencing. “When you take a break, or as I call it ‘deliberate rest,’ it’s important to realize you’re not doing nothing,” says Frank Lipman, M.D. “Rather you are actually giving yourself a chance to rebuild and return to balance.”

Let’s show empathy for others and for ourselves. Take time to breathe, do something that grounds you and, above all else, be kind.

To your mental health,

*Penny C Sitrler*

Penny C. Sitrler  
Executive Director

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# Protect Yourself From The “Winter Blues”

With the winter months quickly approaching, there will be more talk of the winter blues, seasonal mood changes or seasonal affective disorder (SAD). All of these are common phrases to describe the lack of energy, sad feelings and changes in behavior that people feel during the cold, gray central Ohio winters. In this area of the country, we average 180 gray days a year — that’s half of the year! 20% of people in the United States report having seasonal affective disorder or changes in mood when the weather gets colder. Four out of five (80%) of those who struggle with these changes are women.

The winter blues are caused because of a lack of serotonin and when our circadian rhythm (internal clock) is off. This is due to the lack of sunlight and the changing hours. Think about earlier times in this country’s history, when 75% of the population worked outside during the daylight hours and slept when it was dark. In modern times, we work the same hours throughout the summer and the winter and live busier lives. It is no longer a societal norm to regulate our bodies by the sun, but rather by the time on our clock.

So what can be done to prevent the winter blues? You may not be surprised that a lot of the ideas below are behaviors we should use during every season.

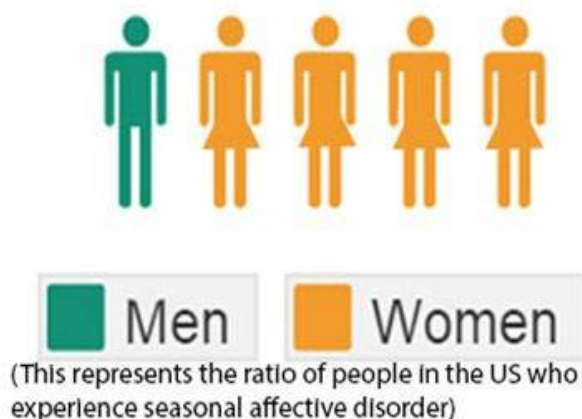
- Exercise
- Eating nutritious foods that are high in vitamins and minerals
- Surround yourself with friends and family
- Spend time outside (bundle up, take a walk, soak up the natural vitamin D)
- Listen to music and sing along
- Learn a new hobby
- Practice mindfulness

These are just a few of the activities everyone can do to protect themselves from the winter blues. If these are not proving effective for you or someone you know, here are a few additional things to try:

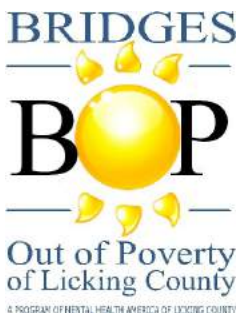
- Light therapy (MHALC has a light like this in our office; stop by and try it out)
- Talking with a primary care physician for assistance
- Reaching out to a therapist

The saying “a long, hard winter” exists for a reason but hopefully this winter we will experience less winter blues and continue to look forward to the warm summer months.

## Ratio of Men to Women in US with SAD



# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



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

The program is thriving with classes resuming in person at Behavioral Healthcare Partners' Spencer and Courage Houses, Adult Court Services Day Reporting and The Main Place. Program Coordinator Donna Wayt has seen some profound changes in some of the BOP graduates including a woman who has maintained three years of clean living and is currently working in the field of recovery, another who is in her third year at OSU working toward her LSW certification and a man who was recently hired by The Main Place in peer support.

@mhalcBridgesOutOfPoverty

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.



Mental Wellness Starts With Friendship


Program Coordinator Donna Wayt is excited about the reopening of the Recovery Art Class at The Main Place held on Thursdays from 12:30-3:00 pm. Compeer members have formed a committee to plan a Recovery Art Show. They are working on a theme and looking for possible venues. The show will also be available virtually on their Facebook group page.

Compeer members have continued their Audio Book Club and Care Club groups which are keeping their fragile and unvaccinated members involved with the group. Their Lunch and Linger group is thriving and continues to meet monthly at various restaurants. Walks around downtown Newark, the bike path by the county jail, and the Indian Mound Mall have all been frequented by their walking group. This group has also been taking walks with The Main Place clients.

Other activities include meeting for potlucks once a month outside at local parks and holding a small drum circle and barbeque recently at Newark Earthworks.

Compeer's public Facebook group: Compeer Circle of Friends

### Youth Self-Advocacy



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-Whittington has expanded to include the Individualized Transition Education to Careers (ITEC) program at C-TEC which allows high school students to gain work experience. She has been excited to return to schools this year after the year long hiatus.

@MHALCYouthSelfAdvocacy



This spring, YES staff, members and alumni experienced a devastating setback in the form of a fire at The Clubhouse. Programming continued uninterrupted, however, as the community rallied to provide the support needed and the members showed great resilience. After spending the last week of the school year as grateful guests at The Works, the program moved into an awesome space at Second Presbyterian Church in downtown Newark for the summer. An eventful season followed with field trips to The Hollander Pool, the Heath Water Park, Lake Hudson, Blendon Woods, Blackhand Gorge, Flint Ridge and Lobdell Preserve. The Midland Theatre provided an amazing week-long magic camp, and YES worked with The Ohio State University Extension, The Center for Visual Improvements, Together We Grow Gardens and Family Health Services of East Central Ohio. There was also lots of tie-dyeing, kick ball and good food. YES Club has recently moved into the Boundless building and will be offering programming there for the remainder of the school year or until our building is renovated, whichever comes first.

MHA, YES staff and members are extremely grateful for those mentioned above as well as the Licking County Foundation, United Way of Licking County, Park National Bank, Newark City Schools, Snapshots Lounge, First Presbyterian Church of Granville, Madison Collins Stephens Agency and everyone else who donated or lent a hand.

@YESClub

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Grit Integrity Presence (GIP) classes are off to a great start for the 2021-22 school year with 18 classes meeting or scheduled to begin in person in 6 schools. The middle schools include Heritage and Wilson in Newark, Licking Heights, Licking Valley and Watkins. In addition, we have begun a much requested freshman program at Newark High School.

The core socio-emotional curriculum remains unchanged with added focus on areas of need based on individual schools or classes, such as classes with several girls in foster care due to parental absence and/or addiction. The schools have been very supportive and appreciative of the program for targeted students who truly need this additional support.

In addition, classes will be working on the GIP Care Blankets, a peer-to-peer outreach to children and teens in foster care throughout Licking County. Lack of in-person meetings put a temporary stop to the tying of fleece blankets in the GIP classes last year, but we are hopeful to be able to distribute finished blankets to local foster care agencies this fall through the winter.

GIP is excited to announce that the program has recently received a grant from The Boeing Company and would like to thank them for their support and generosity!

@GirlsInProgressLC is the public Facebook page

## Parent Support

Parenting can be challenging and Program Coordinator Kitty Roahrig is available to help parents stay positive. She is engaging with parents of young children to deliver evidence-based programming at schools, participating in Licking County Adult Probation's Day Reporting Program and Behavioral Healthcare Partners Spencer House, and parents who are referred to the program by Licking County courts or Child Protective Services. The program's goal is to help parents learn positive ways of communicating with their children, safe discipline methods and how to provide a healthy home environment.

Triple P is a parenting program option that can help individuals from all walks of life get more of the behavior they like from their children.

Kitty is also offering a "Monday Morning Moms" group via Zoom to discuss various parenting topics and tips along with sharing parenting experiences.

For more information, contact Kitty Roahrig at 740-919-6905 or [kroahrig@mhalc.org](mailto:kroahrig@mhalc.org).

@MHALCParentSupport

## Family Peer Mentoring Services

Our Family Peer Mentors are nationally certified by FREDLA (Family Run Executive Director Leadership Association), a national organization providing resource development, training and technical assistance on topics including parent peer support. Family Peer Mentors have lived experience navigating multiple child serving systems. They offer hope, guidance, advocacy and support for parents and caregivers of children receiving services for mental health, substance use disorders, juvenile justice, child welfare and other service systems.

Family Peer Mentor Katie Burkhard shares her lived experience with families as a parent who has navigated a variety of child serving agencies in and around Licking County for over 20 years. Katie delivers Family Peer Mentoring services that are tailored to the specific strengths and needs of each family. This confidential, focused partnering with primary caregivers and their families is delivered with respect, determination and hope. Contact Katie at [kburkhard@mhalc.org](mailto:kburkhard@mhalc.org) or 740-267-5932 for more information.



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.

Suicide Prevention Program Coordinator Christina Peña-Whittington has returned to facilitating the SOS program in person with the option for virtual classes. She is excited that the program is being offered for the first time to C-TEC as well as offering a one-day mental wellness program to high school students. The annual Suicide Prevention Walk and Candlelight Vigil took place during Suicide Prevention Awareness Month at the downtown Newark Canal

Market District Pavilion and square, complete with a biodegradable balloon release.



Support groups are meeting in person while requiring social distancing and mask wearing. The Bipolar/Depression support group meetings are held every Wednesday at the MHA office from 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm. The Survivors After Suicide support group meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm at the MHA office. Consider attending a group with peers where you can talk about challenges and find encouragement for your journey.

Christina continues to post updates and resources on the Suicide Prevention Facebook page [@mhalcSuicidePrevention](https://www.facebook.com/mhalcSuicidePrevention).

# 68TH ANNUAL

DINNER AND CELEBRATION

*Join MHALC for our Annual Dinner and Celebration on Thursday, November 11th at 6:00 pm at The DoubleTree by Hilton in downtown Newark. The evening will begin with dinner followed by awards presentations.*

*To register for the dinner, please visit [www.mhalc.org](http://www.mhalc.org) or call 740-522-1341.*

## *MHALC Accepting Nominations for the 2021 Paddy Kutz Community Mental Health Awards*

**Education:** Nominate a teacher, administrator or school program that supports the good mental health of the students of Licking County.

**Business:** Nominate a business or industry that promotes workplace wellness including mental health training and/or services in Licking County.

**Community:** Nominate a person or persons who best represent(s) the qualities and passionate commitment to good mental health that Paddy personified during her 32 years of service to Licking County.

**Nominations are due by October 22nd.**

- Fax to: 740-522-4464
- Email: Rhea Pierron at [rperron@mhalc.org](mailto:rperron@mhalc.org)
- Mail to: Mental Health America  
65 Messimer Dr., Unit 3  
Newark, OH 43055



**\*Save the Date\***

*MHA's Night of Hope fundraiser*

**March 5, 2022**

**Thirty One West**



## 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.

### What Is Mental Health First Aid?

Do you know how to help if you or someone you know is one of the one in five Americans who experience mental illness in any given year? In 2017, 19.7 million Americans had a substance use disorder. We all probably know someone with a mental health or substance use issue and we may be the people who need to offer help to them. Just as we learn how to assist people with first aid or CPR when they are injured or can't breathe, we can also learn how to respond when someone is experiencing an episode of mental illness using Mental Health First Aid techniques. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an eight-hour course that covers details about the signs and symptoms of mental health disorders and provides an action plan for response in non-crisis and crisis situations, as well as the types of professional help and other community resources that are available.

Why don't people seek help for mental illness? Often fear, embarrassment or lack of knowledge keeps individuals with symptoms of mental health disorders from reaching out. Reducing stigma around mental health concerns is another key component of MHFA. Participants learn how and when to get involved, how to listen nonjudgmentally and how to respond in a supportive way to guide someone to appropriate professional help.

Mental Health America of Licking County and Mental Health & Recovery for Licking and Knox Counties partner to offer MHFA to the community free of charge. Many corporations, agencies and school systems have provided the training to staff, volunteers and community members. People have learned how to help their family members, coworkers, neighbors and friends, commenting "this is very important information" and "there was so much I didn't know."

MHFA is available to any organization or group in Licking County. Contact Penny Sitler at 740-788-0302 to schedule your training.

# 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, 2021 through June 30, 2021.

*We make every effort to accurately acknowledge our donors.*

*Please call 740-522-1341 to report an error or omission, and please accept our apologies.*

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Every time you use your Kroger Plus card, you will still receive fuel rewards and coupons and 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](http://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!**

Thank you for your continued support!



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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](http://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.