



MHA Message

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

From The Executive Director



Normalizing the Conversation Around Suicide

Suicide is such a taboo topic to talk about, but it's so important that we do. This past year, the America Foundation for Suicide Prevention launched their *Talk Away the Dark* campaign to shed light on this leading cause of death. Many people believe that if you talk about or ask about suicide, you will encourage a person to kill themselves. Research shows the opposite is true. People who are having thoughts of suicide have reported feeling a sense of relief when someone asks them in a caring, nonjudgmental way. Research also suggests that acknowledging and talking about suicide may reduce rather than increase suicidal ideation.

Suicide can impact anyone, regardless of socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc. The most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control released that there has been an increase of over two percent in the number of deaths by suicide from 2021 to 2022. But, instead of focusing on data and statistics, I want to offer some insight and tips on asking the question about suicide to someone you care about.

Ask the question directly. "Are you thinking of killing yourself or are you thinking of suicide?" Try to stay away from asking the question, "Are you thinking of harming/hurting yourself?" While it can feel more comfortable for the person asking the question, it's important for us to be intentional about the wording we use when doing so. The person who is thinking about suicide does not want to hurt or cause any more harm to themselves, they want the pain to end. While it may be difficult and scary to ask someone you love about such a taboo topic, remember it may be a relief for them.

It's also important that when we ask the question, we ask it without dread or judgment. We want to remain as caring and nonjudgmental as possible. Think about your tone of voice and even body language. Are you sitting with the individual? Are you in a safe, private setting?

Our language matters. Instead of saying "committed suicide", say "died by suicide." First and foremost, it's more medically accurate. We don't say that a person "committed a heart attack" or "committed cancer". There are also negative connotations with the term "committed". In our society, people commit crimes and sins. The more judgement we take out of the conversation and our language around suicide, the more open and safe people may be with having the conversation.

Educate yourself. There are wonderful training and resources in our community for educating folks on recognizing and responding to the warning signs of suicide. Two of the evidence-based programs that Mental Health America of Licking County (MHALC) offers to Licking Countians free of charge include Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and Question Persuade Refer (QPR). MHFA teaches the skills to respond to the signs of mental illness and substance use. There is an adult and youth (for those 18 and older who work with youth ages 11-17) curriculum. The adult curriculum takes seven hours to complete, and the youth takes six hours, either in-person or virtually.

If folks can't commit to a six to seven-hour training, QPR is another great suicide prevention resource. It is a one-hour training where you learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help. If you are interested in attending any of these trainings or scheduling one for your organization or school, please send me an email at chendon@mhalc.org.

To your mental health,

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Executive Director

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2023 Lou Mitchell Memorial Golf Outing

The 10th Annual Lou Mitchell Memorial Golf Outing was held on July 24th at Denison Golf Club. Thanks to the 100 golfers who took to the greens on a beautiful Monday afternoon! Following a fun day of golf, the group gathered for dinner at the shelter and a presentation by Executive Director Colleen Hendon. The funds raised from this event help provide education and training to thousands of Licking County students and community members, raising suicide prevention awareness.

Thank you to Denison Golf Club and MHA Board volunteers for making this day happen!

Special thanks to our generous sponsors and donors!

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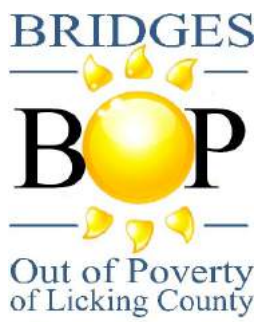
11 Eagles Energy Exploration Ltd.
John and Sarah Wallace



Save The Date

Next Lou Mitchell Memorial Golf Outing
Monday, July 22, 2024

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



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

The program is growing with over 150 people served at classes offered at Adult Probation's Day Reporting, The Main Place, the Licking County Newark Library and Behavioral Healthcare Partners' Courage and Spencer Houses. Program Coordinator Donna Wayt is also offering a much needed trauma component called ACEs and PACEs to New Beginnings and Day Reporting. This new course uses art to cope with the stress of discussing uncomfortable subject matters while learning techniques to regulate emotions, turn off fight or flight response systems and become more resilient.

@mhalcBridgesOutOfPoverty



Mental Wellness Starts With Friendship

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 is off to a new fun-filled fiscal year. They, along with Program Coordinator Donna Wayt, have planned some fun road trips to places such as Blackhand Gorge and Old Man's Cave. Members attended the Newark Ohio Pride Festival in October; they have decided as a collective to reach out to a more diverse friend group. Advocating for marginalized people suffering negative stigmas is their "jam". They love being a presence in Licking County that fights stigma and befriends the vulnerable. Their holidays will be filled with community service acts and gift exchanges.

Compeer's public Facebook group: *Compeer Circle of Friends x2*



YES Club has had a fantastic start to the 2023-24 school year! They have seen so many familiar faces since school started and have met so many new members as well! They have also had an awesome turnout with attendance this year. Some of the members' favorite activities have been related to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math), Art Club and Prevention Jeopardy. Staff members are gearing up for the holiday season and looking forward to sharing those experiences with the youth!

If you are interested in enrolling your child (6th grade through 12th grade) into YES Club, call 740-522-0YES (0937). Member packets are also downloadable at <http://mhalc.org/programs/yes-clubhouse-youth-engaged-in-service/>.

@YESClub

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 kicked off the school year with several new fun activities.

@MHALCYouthSelfAdvocacy


Family Peer Mentoring Services

MHA's 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 Mentors share their lived experience with families as parents who have navigated a variety of systems of care in and around Licking County. Family Peer Mentoring services are tailored to the specific strengths and needs of each family. This confidential, focused partnering with caregivers and their families is delivered with respect, determination, and hope. For more information, contact Family Peer Mentor Joe Workman at 740-306-3688 or email jworkman@mhalc.org.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Parent Support



Positive Parenting Program

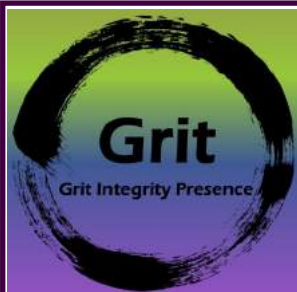


Is this for you?
Do you enjoy parenting, but wish you knew how to deal with specific problem behavior?

Triple P can help you

- Encourage behavior you like
- Deal with problem behavior
- Become confident as a parent
- Be realistic about parenting
- Take care of yourself

For additional information on free classes being offered at various times and locations contact:
Mental Health America of Licking County
740-522-1341 mhalc.org



The 2023-24 school year marks the 10th year of the Grit Integrity Presence (Grit) program! It has grown from 15 students to almost 300 in several Licking County school districts with the addition of more classes and schools. A new dedicated freshman Grit at Newark High School will include two classes offered to Grit alumni, as requested by students over the years.

Grit Camp met for a week in June in collaboration with Newark City Schools SEAS (Social, Emotional, Academic Support) team. The camp focused on supportive and encouraging breakout sessions, creative activities and powerful guest speakers. It was a great week with very positive student feedback!



Grit Summer Camp Participants

Grit's public Facebook group: [@GirlsInProgress](#)

MHA's Parent Support program continues to grow. Coordinators are certified and accredited to provide multiple levels of Triple P workshops. The most recent accreditation includes "Positive Parenting with Teenagers". Individual and group sessions are offered to parents, grandparents, and caregivers to share evidence-based parenting strategies and solutions virtually and/or in-person. Topics include getting along with others, hassle-free holidays, healthy bedtime routines, making the most of family meals, and setting limits and boundaries. For more information, call 740-522-1341.

@MHALCParentSupport



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.

July's Lou Mitchell Memorial Golf Outing at Denison Golf Club was a success! September's annual Suicide Prevention Walk and Candlelight Vigil took place during Suicide Prevention Awareness Month at the downtown Newark Canal Market District Pavilion. The Walk and Vigil celebrates the lives of those individuals lost to suicide by including a special biodegradable balloon release as well as allowing survivors to share their experiences.



New Suicide Prevention Coordinator, David McElroy, is excited to start helping make a difference in the schools and community!

Consider attending a group with peers where you can talk about challenges and find encouragement for your journey. The Depression and Bipolar support group meetings are held every Tuesday at the MHA office from 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm. The Survivors After Suicide Loss (SASL) support group meets on the second Thursday of each month from 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm. New attendees should call 740-522-1341 two business days before the SASL support group to register.

@mhalcSuicidePrevention

5 Things To Do When the Holidays Aren't Exactly Uplifting

By Danielle Fritze, MHA National Senior Director of Public Education & Visual Communications

Here are five things you can do if you find yourself stressed or depressed this holiday season.

1. Say “No” If You Feel Overwhelmed.

There are only so many functions you can attend (or host), especially if you are busy with your day-to-day obligations and have limited time off. Trying to be too many places or get your house looking pristine for company can make get-togethers that are supposed to be enjoyable end up overwhelming.

If trying to be everything to everyone is sucking the joy out of the holidays, don't be afraid to RSVP “no” to a few invitations or opt not to throw your annual party. This gives you the opportunity to reach out and suggest spending one-on-one time with friends or family in the new year when calendars are a bit more open and interactions can be more intimate and meaningful.

Alternatively, if you have social anxiety, you may send your mental health into a tailspin by pushing yourself too hard to participate in events or go to crowded places that trigger your symptoms. If stores swamped with too many shoppers are your nightmare, rely on trusted websites for online gift shopping. You can increase the impact of your gift giving by selecting a charity on Amazon Smile – a portion of what you spend will be donated to your designated charity.

2. Be Kind To Your Wallet.

If finances are a source of anxiety, decline gift exchanges in favor of low-cost activities that you can share with loved ones. Offer to have someone over for a home-cooked meal, or plan a coffee date. It's also not unreasonable to set spending limits or make homemade gifts if you can't avoid a gift exchange.

Travel costs can be prohibitive; if appropriate request that your family or friends help cover the cost of your travel for the holidays instead of giving gifts. Use technology to get face-time when you can't be somewhere in person. Skype and Google Hangouts are two free ways to make video calls with one or more people. Facetime is also an option for iPhone users.

3. Know When To End Unwanted Conversations.

Many families have that one toxic member (or maybe there are a few of them) who can turn a seemingly fine conversation into a family feud.

When you see things start to take a turn for the worse, **DO NOT POKE THE BEAR.**

There is no shame in removing yourself from the situation—leave the room or step outside until cooler heads prevail.

If your dread is more centered around being grilled by friends and family about things like your relationship status, weight gain, or a tough life event you've faced recently, you have a few options.

It may help to rehearse any replies to anticipated questions in advance of gatherings, so you don't find yourself struggling to figure out what to say. You can change the subject of the conversation if you don't feel like having a particular discussion, but try not to do so in a provocative or defensive way.

For example, don't respond to, “How are you doing since the breakup?” with “How are you doing since you got passed over for that promotion at work?”

Lastly, you can simply inform someone that the topic they are bringing up is a sensitive one that you would rather not discuss.

4. Honor Those Who Have Passed On.

Remember that it is okay to be sad. There is no way to replace the presence of a loved one who has passed away, but one way of coping is to honor their memory rather than mourn their absence.

Some ideas include:

- Donating time or money (if able) in the name of your loved-one to a cause that was near and dear to them;
- Setting a place at the table for them;
- Looking at old pictures or videos with other friends and family to remember the good times; or
- Stepping in to carry on a tradition that the departed used to take the lead on.

If continuing old traditions is too painful, opt to create new ones that you think your loved one would have enjoyed.

5. Don't Be Alone If You Don't Want To.

If you prefer to spend the holidays by relaxing in solitude or engaging in self-reflection, there is nothing wrong with that. However, if you find yourself feeling lonely and without friends or family to spend time with, there are other people out there who are also looking for or open to having company:

- Talk to co-workers and neighbors to let them know you'll be alone and would like to get together.
- Find a volunteer opportunity—it's a great way to meet new people who also want to give their time to good causes, and to connect with people (or animals) who are in need during the holidays.
- Look online for others who are looking for people to hang out with—Searching for events in your area on social media can help you find people who share your interests.

Here's wishing everyone a safe, healthy, and fulfilling holiday season.

If you find yourself in crisis, call 988 or text “MHA” to 741-741 24 hours a day/7 days a week to connect with a trained Crisis Counselor.

70TH ANNUAL DINNER AND CELEBRATION

MHALC is hosting our Annual Dinner and Celebration on Monday, November 16th at 6:00 pm at The DoubleTree by Hilton in downtown Newark. The evening will begin with dinner followed by awards presentations.

Save The Date

MHA's Night of Hope fundraiser

March 9, 2024

at Thirty One West

Stay tuned for more details!



Free Support Groups at MHALC

(New attendees should call 740-522-1341 two business days before the support group to register.)

Depression & Bipolar

Tuesdays

3:30 pm to 4:30 pm

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

1st & 3rd Wednesday

6:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Survivors after Suicide Loss

For those who have lost a loved one.

2nd Thursday

5:30 pm to 6:30 pm

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, 2023 through June 30, 2023.

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

—James Allen

Thank you!

* Signifies MHALC member

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TWO MORE WAYS TO HELP MHALC



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- Click on Kroger Community Rewards.
- Click on the COLUMBUS Enroll Now button.
- Enter your information and Kroger card #.

Be sure to link your card to MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF LICKING COUNTY, Group # AX606.

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If you shop on Amazon, you can 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.

Thank you for your continued help and support!