



MHA Message

There is *NO* health without Mental Health!

From The Executive Director



As we step into May, a month dedicated to recognizing and fostering mental health awareness, I am excited to delve into this year's theme: "Turn Awareness into Action." This month offers a prime opportunity for each of us to not only reflect on the importance of mental health but also to actively engage in practices that improve our personal well-being and contribute to the broader mental health movement.

Taking Personal Action

Mental health is a vital component of our overall health that cannot be overlooked. It is essential that we each take proactive steps to support our mental well-being. Here are some effective ways to take action:

- **Set Boundaries:** Protect your mental space by defining clear personal boundaries. This can help reduce stress and prevent burnout.
- **Reach Out for Support:** Whether it's talking to a friend, joining a support group, or seeking professional help, reaching out can provide necessary assistance and comfort.
- **Practice Self-Care:** Engage in activities that bring you joy and relaxation. This could be as simple as reading a book, taking a walk, or meditating.

These actions, while seemingly small, can make a lasting difference in your life. This Mental Health Month, I encourage you to explore these practices and see the positive impact they can have on your mental health.

Beyond personal action, Mental Health Month is an opportunity to engage in a larger movement advocating for mental health awareness and support. By participating in community events, supporting mental health organizations, or simply starting conversations with those around you, we can create a more inclusive and understanding society for those facing mental health challenges.

To assist you in taking meaningful action this month, we are excited to share our Mental Health Month Action Guide (<https://mhanational.org/mental-health-month/action-guide/>). This guide is designed to provide practical tips and resources for both personal mental health improvement and community involvement.

Here's what you'll find inside:

- **Personal Wellness Strategies:** Explore activities and practices that can enhance your mental health.
- **Community Engagement Ideas:** Learn how to participate in local events and support mental health initiatives.
- **Resource List:** Access a comprehensive list of mental health resources, including hotlines and support groups.

Let us all commit to making mental health a priority, not just this month, but every day. Together, we can make a significant impact and support each other in leading healthier, happier lives.

To your mental health,

Colleen Hendon
Executive Director

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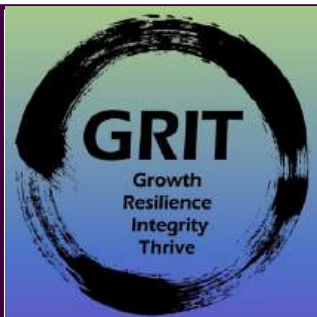
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MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

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

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Growth Resilience Integrity Thrive (GRIT) is a school-based mentoring and empowerment program for middle and high school age students.

The program continues to flourish, with students demonstrating remarkable growth, responsibility, kindness, and compassion. Our new Program Coordinator, Amelia Lewis, has embraced her role and built strong connections with her students. Thanks to the mentorship of former Program Manager Shari Johnston, Amelia has smoothly transitioned into her position and is now developing projects that support students' mental health needs.

GRIT has expanded to include YES Club, where middle and high school students engage in discussions on mental health, empowerment, and art. We are excited about the continued growth of GRIT and the positive impact it's making!



GRIT Participants



Amelia Lewis, MHA's GRIT Program Coordinator

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.

This school year has been exceptional! Program Coordinator Christina Peña-Whittington added another middle school to her programming schedule and anticipates further growth in the upcoming 2025-2026 school year.

@MHALCYouthSelfAdvocacy



Our YES Club holiday program was a huge success this year bringing gifts to over 60 YES Club members. We had the privilege of partnering with the Licking County Board of Realtors, Granville's Three Tigers, and numerous individual donors to bring holiday cheer to some of our local youth. It was one the best YES Club holiday celebrations to date! 2025 has been off to a great start at the club house as well. We have had the opportunity to incorporate another one of MHA's programs




YES Club Members

Growth Resilience Integrity Thrive (GRIT) sessions weekly with GRIT Program Coordinator Amelia Lewis, exploring our social and emotional learning through art and conversation. YES Club will also be partnering with the Village Creative Dance to provide dance classes starting every Monday at the end of March! We're looking forward to finishing out the school year strong with our members. Then, on to a fun summer break filled with field trips to the pool and a whole lot of rest and relaxation!


Download the YES Club application packet for any middle and high schoolers you think would enjoy being a member by visiting www.mhalc.org. @YESClub

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 Parent Support program provides you with proven strategies to help your child(ren) reach their potential. We all want our kids to be happy, confident and successful. Every parent and caregiver can use a little support! **Triple P** is one of the world's best evidence-based parenting programs and it's available free to parents throughout Licking County. MHA's certified and accredited Parent Support Program Coordinators can give you tips and strategies that really work to make family life more enjoyable and less stressful. To get started, call 740-522-1341 or email info@mhalc.org.

[@MHALCParentSupport](https://www.instagram.com/MHALCParentSupport)



Elise Lenhart, MHA's Suicide Prevention Program Manager



The Suicide Prevention program strives to educate youth and adults on the signs and symptoms of suicide in Licking County to help save lives. Whether its teaching Sandy Hook Promise curricula 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.

Another key component is the Licking County Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors (LOSS) Team, whose members are available to provide immediate support to those who've lost a loved one to suicide. If you're interested in becoming a LOSS Team member, please call 740-522-1341.

MHA is thrilled to announce that Elise Lenhart is the newest member to join our team, serving as the Suicide Prevention Program Manager. She most recently worked as a prevention facilitator at Ohio Guidestone for five years. Elise is an Ohio Certified Prevention Specialist Assistant and ultimately plans on obtaining her Ohio Certified Prevention Consultant licensure.

Starting this June, the Survivors After Suicide Loss support group will be meeting monthly at the Hope Valley Wellness Retreat Center. If you're interested in learning more, please visit their website at: www.hopevalleywellness.org.

For additional information, please contact Elise Lenhart at elenhart@mhalc.org or 740-522-1341.

[@mhalcSuicidePrevention](https://www.instagram.com/mhalcSuicidePrevention)

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

How can I improve my mental health on my own?

(from MHA National's website: www.mhanational.org)

Therapy and medication aren't the only ways to improve your mental health. There are lots of things that you can do on your own! Taking steps to educate yourself, learn your mind and body, and make changes over time in your life can improve your overall well-being.

Learn all you can about mental health

You can find lots of great mental health information online, on this site and many others. Read all you can about mental health. Understand mental illness — what it is and how it works. If you've been diagnosed with a mental health condition, you can also look up information on that specific condition. (Otherwise, start by taking one of our mental health tests!)

It also helps to find stories about people who have lived with mental illness. You can read blog posts or memoirs, watch videos, or visit forums like Reddit or other online communities. Hearing about other people's experiences and mental health journeys will help you feel less alone. It can also help you identify exactly what's going on and get good ideas about what might work for you.

Learn all you can about yourself

Your mental health is intertwined with your thoughts, feelings, and actions. It's a part of who you are, and it's hard to work on your mental health without learning more about yourself.

You might feel like you already know yourself pretty well, but we all have things we're unaware of — or are too uncomfortable to admit. Here are some ways to get to know yourself better:

- **Track your moods.** Every day, or even multiple times a day, just write down how you're feeling. If you can identify what made you feel that way, write that down too. After a while, you'll be able to identify patterns. Maybe depression hits you harder on cloudy days... or maybe you get super anxious when you interact with new people. The more you can predict your moods, the less they can take you by surprise — and the better you can cope with them. Be sure to track positive moods as well as negative ones!
- **Pay attention to your thinking.** Your thoughts influence your feelings, which influence your behaviors. Be on the lookout for negative self-talk and unhelpful beliefs.
- **Identify your coping skills.** We all have different ways of coping with our emotions. Do you stress-eat? Do you drink when you're upset? Do you go for a run, play video games, listen to music, or call a friend? These are all coping skills, and they all have pros and cons. Try not to label your coping skills as "good" or "bad". Instead, think about how well they work—short-term and long-term.
- **Get feedback from people you trust.** When you're at your lowest point, you'll probably need support and encouragement more than anything. But once you're in a place where you can handle it, you'll also want to get some more constructive feedback. Try to find people who will deliver it in a sensitive way... but be prepared to hear some things that might be uncomfortable.

Make small changes over time

As you learn more about yourself, you'll probably notice some thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors you'd like to change. Pick one or two to work on at a time, and start with really easy ones. Once you've made progress on these, you'll start feeling more confident. Eventually, you'll be able to tackle bigger things. If you try to make too many changes at once, you'll get overwhelmed.

Keep an open mind

As you're deciding what kinds of things to try, keep an open mind about what might work. Sometimes the things you're most resistant to are things you could really benefit from! (And yes, sometimes that includes things like therapy and medication.)

MHA EVENTS

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 our community's members to promote mental wellness and help fight stigma.

See the enclosed membership form. For more information, call 740-522-1341 or visit www.mhalc.org.

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

SAVE THE DATE

LOU MITCHELL MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION



Denison Golf Club
555 Newark-Granville Road, Granville, Ohio

Monday, July 28, 2025

Check in: Noon ~ Simultaneous Start: 1:00 pm ~ Dinner 6:00 pm

Register Online at www.mhalc.org



**Please contact Rhea Pierron at rpierron@mhalc.org
or 740-522-1341 for more information.**

SAVE THE DATE

MHA's Night of Hope fundraiser

March 7, 2026

Stay tuned for details!

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, 2024 through December 31, 2024.

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!

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

Program Participant

Testimonials

*"I can tell my problems and
because it is calming and I can
relax from worry." —Heritage
Middle School 6th Grader*

*"I feel safe, and open to talk to
trusted people." —Licking Valley
Middle School 7th Grader*

*"It teaches us how to be
comfortable with ourselves and
learn how to let others inside while
still having boundaries." —Wilson
Middle School 8th Grader*

*"GRIT has helped my mental
health extremely. I have felt very
helpless and like I have no one to
talk to and GRIT has solved that
for me tremendously." —Newark
High School 9th Grader*

*"It's an amazing program. I feel
every parent needs it." —Parent*

*"I like how (the program) shows
you ways to help yourself that also
translates to stuff you can teach
your child." —Parent*

*"I enjoyed the information
presented in a user-friendly way. I
picked up some great tips and
tricks for connecting with my
kids!" —Parent*

*"I love the content. The
administrator presented the content
wonderfully and the interactive
nature of the program was super
helpful! We are so grateful to have
found Triple P. We will definitely
be going to more trainings."
—Parent*



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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!