What’s New at MHA?

This month we want to sing the praises of our wonderful Business Manager, Dona Mesko, who is retiring at the end of May. Dona has worked at MHA for almost 27 years, and her career has been a true asset to the agency. Dona’s organization, attention to detail, work ethic, institutional knowledge and smart and ethical accounting and business practices have allowed MHA to thrive for many years, and also helped the agency to keep pace with expanded services and Delaware’s evolving needs around mental health. We will greatly miss our friend and colleague, and are sad to see her go; but, we are very happy for her and wish her the very best as she enjoys this next, well-deserved chapter of her life! Thank you, Dona, for all your work to support the mental health of Delawareans; it has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with you!

Pictured above: Dona Mesko (center) and colleagues celebrating the retirement of another wonderful staff member in 2019—our former Director of Development, Laurie McArthur (left)
Dear Friends and Supporters,

For most of us, the advent of springtime brings hope and renewal. The added sunlight and warmth draw us outdoors and energize us. But did you know that suicide rates, rather than spiking during the holidays and wintertime as popularly believed, are actually highest in the spring? My own life has been touched by this phenomenon as I lost my older brother to suicide in the spring of 2011.

There are various theories as to why suicide rates are highest in spring; one is that the very energy that the extra daylight brings can actually give a very depressed person just enough energy to carry out a plan for suicide. Other research suggests that inflammation from seasonal allergies can actually worsen depression; people with rhinitis and other inflammation are shown to be at a significantly higher risk for depression. Additionally, a person who feels dark and sad may find themselves at odds with their environment during the rejuvenation of springtime, exacerbating feelings that they do not belong in the world.

Regardless of the reason, this is a good time to talk about warning signs for suicide and what can be done to prevent it.

It is important to consider how to reach out to those who are vulnerable to suicide, and may find themselves at a point where they are unable to keep themselves safe. Our partners at the National Institute of Mental Health state, “Suicide is complicated and tragic, but it is often preventable. Knowing the warning signs for suicide and how to get help can help save lives.” The attached graphic from NIMH shows common warning signs of suicide.

If you or a loved one is thinking about suicide, it is important to speak openly about it. It is important to ask clearly and directly about thoughts of suicide, and connect with resources that can help.

If your loved one is a child under the age of 18, you can call crisis services at 800-969-HELP (4357). If your loved one is an adult, you can call Crisis Intervention Services at 800-652-2929 in northern Delaware, or 800-345-6785 in southern Delaware. These are both services that will help you decide on a course of action, which often includes having someone from these programs come to your location and do an evaluation with your loved one, and think about a plan of safety. Another great resource for anyone in crisis is the Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which can be reached at: 800-273-TALK (8255). You can also text “DE” to 741741 to be connected to a trained counselor. All of these resources are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Here at MHA Delaware, we work with individuals and families to educate, raise awareness and provide support around mental health. Some examples of our education include evidence-based training in suicide prevention, such as Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, a free, two day, in-person intensive training for any adult who wants to learn more about suicide prevention. We teach practical skills you can use with someone who is at risk of suicide, including how to ask about suicide, engage with the person at risk, and help develop a plan for safety.

Our calendar of events on the homepage of our website, mhainde.org, includes links to register for upcoming trainings like ASIST and QPR. We hope that as we enter the beauty and renewal of spring, we will also remember to reach out to those who may not feel the sense of hope that we expect during this season. Equipped with information and resources, each of us can help keep people safe from suicide this season.

Warmly,
Emily Vera
MHA is offering a free QPR Suicide Prevention Training that will be held virtually on Zoom. QPR stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer — the 3 simple steps anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide. Check out our calendar of events for upcoming offerings of QPR, and other training opportunities.

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**WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE:**
The behaviors listed below may be some of the signs that someone is thinking about suicide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TALKING ABOUT:</th>
<th>FEELING:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▶ Wanting to die</td>
<td>▶ Empty, hopeless, trapped, or having no reason to live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Great guilt or shame</td>
<td>▶ Extremely sad, more anxious, agitated, or full of rage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Being a burden to others</td>
<td>▶ Unbearable emotional or physical pain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHANGING BEHAVIOR, SUCH AS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▶ Making a plan or researching ways to die</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Withdrawing from friends, saying good bye, giving away important items, or making a will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Taking dangerous risks such as driving extremely fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Displaying extreme mood swings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Eating or sleeping more or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Using drugs or alcohol more often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If these warning signs apply to you or someone you know, get help as soon as possible, particularly if the behavior is new or has increased recently.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-TALK

Crisis Text Line
Text “HELLO” to 741741

www.nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention
How Donating to MHA’s Spring Annual Campaign Can Help You as Well as Us

There’s nothing like a breath of spring to make us feel revitalized and more connected to life. After the long, cold winter, the warmth, sunlight and new growth, brings with it a new mindset and uplifted spirits.

MHA continues to offer many avenues of support and help with those struggling with their mental health. We have many wellness groups both in person and via Zoom for Depression & Anxiety, People of Color, LGBTQ, Disability Haven, Karaoke Night, Survivors of Suicide and more. We will be holding our 21st Annual Empowering Community Wellness Symposium on May 5 IN PERSON!! We offer Master Your Stress Workshops, monthly MHA Zoom Chat Series, Peer Certification Trainings and Suicide Prevention Trainings. We also have Mental Health Court Peers helping clients daily. Please visit our website at mhainde.org to view all of our services.

We are here to help and serve the community, but we need your help to continue providing our valuable services. With this season of hope and renewal upon us, won’t you please consider donating to the Mental Health Association in DE? The National Institutes of Health found that when people give to charities, it activates the pleasure center of the brain, creating a “warm glow” effect. Your body releases endorphins, creating this “warm sensation”, which leads to feeling happy after giving to charity or by being generous.

With thanks and best wishes for you and your loved ones and a season of good health, hope and continued safety!

Contribute here!

Roberta Fishgold, Development Manager, MHA

Roberta has a long work history with MHA after a career in the corporate world of Human Resources Management in NYC. She is enjoying the time with her MHA family, being able to have an impact on mental health awareness in addition to watching the agency evolve through the years. Her hobbies are cooking, baking and collecting inspirational quotes (which are hung all over her office)!
On May 5th, 2022, MHA is very excited to welcome you to our 21st Annual Empowering Community Wellness Symposium (ECWS), formerly known as the Community Mental Health Conference. Our theme this year will be “The Pandemic State of Mental Health” with Priscilla Murphy and Lisa Savage each delivering an extended keynote address. Join this special event to celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month with us!

Date & Time: Thursday, May 5th, 2022  8:00am – 12:00pm
Location: Riverfront Events Center (760 Justison St, Wilmington, DE 19801)
Cost: $10 (please be aware that the registration fee is non-refundable)

Visit our website to register or sponsor this outstanding event!

Lisa Savage, LCSW, (above) is the Co-Founder of Clinicians of Color, LLC, an online platform that provides guidance, resources, and support to BIPOC providers and clinicians.

Priscilla Murphy, MS, MEd, BSN, RN, LPCMH, (right) is the Founder and CEO of Nylex Educational & Counseling Services Inc. During her 31 years of professional nursing experiences, her dedication motivates her to ensure there’s equity as a healthcare advocate.
At MHA, we provide a variety of evidence-based and research-based courses to assist participants in learning about mental health, suicide prevention, peer services and other important topics. Check out our home page for a calendar of upcoming trainings at mhainde.org.

One of the most important training courses we offer is Peer Certification Training. This 40-50 hour training prepares participants to become Certified Peer Recovery Specialists. Participants must also pass a national exam and complete required hours providing peer services to become certified with the Delaware Certification Board.

**A Peer Recovery Specialist is:** An individual who has lived experience with mental illness, addiction, or co-occurring conditions, AND recovery. Peer Recovery Specialists are specially trained professionals who support others going through similar life challenges they once experienced. They assist individuals in developing the skills and resources they need to live an independent and productive life in the community.

**Peer Certification Training** is for people currently working in peer support who want to become a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist in the state of Delaware. This course provides participants with all of the information needed to take the Certified Peer Recovery Specialist exam. Additionally, participants will gain knowledge and practice skills to strengthen their abilities as peer supporters.

[Register Here!](#) For more information about peer training and services, email kdirnardo@mhainde.org.
Supporting Loved Ones through a Mental Health Crisis

Do you have a loved one that you’d like to support through a mental health crisis? Come learn techniques that may help, in addition to hearing peoples stories on how they feel when they are going through a mental health crisis and what has helped them feel supported by their peers. Participants will receive 3.0 CEUs for this training.

This course will be taught by Golda Duncan, who is a second-year Public Ally interning at The Mental Health Association of Delaware. She has dual Associates degrees in both Human Services and Drug and Alcohol Counseling. She has also completed her Bachelor’s degree in Psychology with a certificate in a trauma-informed approaches. She has a passion for the mental health field and wishes to continue to help educate the community to further advocate and spread awareness.

Take a Mental Health Screening Online.

If you are feeling sad, anxious or overwhelmed, take a free, anonymous mental health self-assessment from our homepage—www.mhainde.org.
For more information about wellness group offerings, click here
To view our schedule of wellness groups and register, click here

A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT AWAITS YOU

Depression & Anxiety Support Group

Wednesdays 6pm-7pm

Callers welcome: 1646 876 9923
Zoom Meeting ID: 363 573 9664

Contact Rochelle at rbalan@mhainde.org
or Shynia at (302) 597-8130 for more information
Master Your Stress Workshop

Learn what stress does to your body, mind and spirit by identifying good stress, acute stress and chronic stress.
- Learn how to utilize your stress for peak performance.
- Learn techniques to master your stress through the relaxation response, progressive relaxation, meditation, laughter and gratitude.

Apr 29, 2022 12:00 PM EST  
Register here

Elizabeth Davis, Psy.D., was born and raised in Wilmington, DE. She graduated from the University of Delaware with a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology and a Master’s Degree in Counseling. She then attended the Florida Institute of Technology and earned her Master’s Degree in Clinical Psychology and then a Doctoral Degree (Psy.D) in Clinical Psychology. Elizabeth completed her internship at the Manhattan VA and Bellevue Hospital in New York City with a specialization in Behavioral Medicine, including Stress Management. She had a private practice in New York City on the Upper West Side and then returned to Delaware. She has been working at the Mental Health Association in Delaware helping to coordinate National Depression Screening Day and Master Your Stress Workshops.

This newsletter is funded through the Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health by the Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, and/or Substance Abuse Block Grant.

Mission:

The Mental Health Association in Delaware promotes improved mental well being for all individuals and families in Delaware through education, support and advocacy.

In pursuit of our Mission, we strive to:

- Improve the community’s understanding of mental health and the mind-body connection between mental and physical health.

- Provide education and opportunities for individuals to identify early warning signs of mental illness and subsequently provide programs and an environment that supports recovery and improves resilience for these individuals.

- Assure that those who request information and need mental health care referral have confidential access to the appropriate information and know how to obtain care.

- Advocate for improved support and treatment particularly at the state and federal levels, especially where reform is needed.