What’s New at MHA?

2023 Mental Health America Annual Conference

The Mental Health America hosted their annual conference from June 6th to 10th in Washington, D.C. With the focus on *Next Gen Prevention*, the conference promoted well-being, resilience and recovery through sessions on lived experiences, health equity, social determinants, intersectionality, inclusivity and more. Centered around highlighting initiatives and voices, the conference designated one day on June 7th for affiliates to share their exciting accomplishments, including the Mental Health Association in Delaware. Emily Vera, the Executive Director, and Natalie Klaus-Rogers, the Manager of Education for the Department of Corrections, had the opportunity to share their presentation on “Developing a Career Path for Justice Involved Individuals in Delaware.”

During the presentation, they both first shared their personal stories of recovery with the intention of demonstrating the importance of storytelling in peer support. Setting the foundation, they then discussed the development and implementation of our newest program - Department of Corrections (DOC) Peer Education. The presentation instilled a sense of hope and inspiration to embrace vulnerability in storytelling, and curiosity to learn more about the DOC Peer Education program. The remainder of the conference was informative and motivating, and instilled a sense of community and purpose. The MHA staff members, Emily Vera, Natalie Klaus-Rogers, Nicole Perefege and Jaycee Wendell, had a blast attending in person!
Dear Friends and Readers,

I hope that you have all had a pleasant and rejuvenating summer, and that as we gear up to get ready for the fall, you are caring for your mental health. Between back-to-school purchases, fall work events, students returning to campuses, and extracurricular activities beginning, this can be a stressful time for many. This is why it’s important to plan ahead now and think about how we will stay healthy and well during the back-to-school rush.

One way to do this is by building time into your schedule to care for your mental health. This looks different for everyone – it may mean planning regular therapy sessions; carving out downtime every day; ensuring exercise is part of your routine; making sure social events are on the calendar; scheduling time to pray, meditate, or simply breathe; or connecting intentionally with your family for one meal every day. However it looks for you, the importance of maintaining these healthy routines as life gets busier cannot be overstated.

If you would like some extra guidance on managing your stress, MHA in Delaware provides a workshop called “Master Your Stress” that can help. Check the calendar on our website, or email us at information@mhainde.org to find or schedule a training. If you are diagnosed with depression or anxiety and would like some extra support, we would love to have you in one of our free, peer-led wellness groups. These can be a great source of mental health support and comradery with others who may experience similar symptoms.

Here at MHA in Delaware, we are also gearing up for a busy fall season, with many upcoming events and conferences. We hope you will join us for our main annual fundraiser, E-Racing the Blues, taking place in two locations this year. You can join us in Rehoboth Beach on September 17, and/or at Glasgow Park on September 30 for this important and fun walk. Our Suicide Prevention in Higher Education conference will take place on September 26 at Goldey-Beacom College, and our Military and Veterans Mental Health Summit will be September 12 at Riverfront Events. We hope you can join us in learning information and resources to support these two special populations that are near and dear to our hearts at MHA.

Finally, we plan to have another important event - our annual Empowering Community Wellness Symposium - on Zoom on November 9th. (This conference also takes place annually in-person in May.) We hope to see you there!

As always, we are grateful for the support and encouragement we receive from the community, and especially for our dedicated board members, hardworking and creative staff, wonderful volunteers, generous donors and the all of the gifted individuals who help us help others here at MHA!

Warmly,
Emily Vera
According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), in 2021, an estimated 21 million adults, aged 18 and older, suffered at least one major depressive episode. Moreover, an estimated 14.5 million adults, aged 18 and older, suffered at least one major depressive episode with severe impairment. A major depressive episode is defined as lasting at least two weeks with the following symptoms: Sadness, loss of interest in activities, empty feeling, feelings of worthlessness, guilt, irritability, loss of energy, problems with sleep, sleeping too much or too little, eating too much or too little, weight gain or loss, difficulty concentrating, suicidal thoughts, aches and pains. The good news is that according to the NIH, an estimated 61% of individuals with Major Depression received treatment and an estimated 74.8% of Individuals with severe impairment received treatment. That leaves 39% and 25.2% respectively without treatment. Fortunately, National Depression Screening Day was instituted in 1992 to reach those with depression who were not receiving treatment.

National Depression Screening Day (NDSD) 2023 is on Thursday, October 5th. MHA coordinates sites throughout the State of Delaware to provide education for depression, screening for depression and referral to treatment for depression. This year, we already have 21 sites including college campuses, senior centers, community centers, health clinics, disability treatment centers and resource centers. Many are hosting screenings on days other than the 5th of October. In addition to the sites, we also have online screening with a choice of 13 different screens including depression, bipolar disorder, generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), psychosis, substance abuse and others. To access the online screening go to https://screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/mhainde. To locate sites around the State of Delaware providing screenings, go to www.mhainde.org. If you have further questions or know of a site that would be interested in participating in NDSD 2023, contact Elizabeth Davis at edavis@mhainde.org or call 302-654-6833, Ext. 214.
From the Blog: The Benefits of Dance on Mental Wellbeing

A little over a year ago, I walked into a local dance studio, wanting to get my body moving in a fun, healthy way after two years of sitting on the couch from COVID and writing papers in grad school. I thought I would just be learning a few new moves, all while hoping I would finally figure out my left foot from my right, but little did I know I would be beginning a new hobby that I would become incredibly passionate about. Not only did I take up an activity that has led me to having a lot of fun, dance and dance classes has had a major impact on so many aspects of my wellbeing, including my mental health. While there is a myriad of ways that dance is beneficial, below are just a few of the different ways that dance has increased my quality of life.

**Mood:** Dance releases endorphins, a naturally occurring “feel-good” chemical in our brain that increase feelings of pleasure and decrease pain. Endorphins help reduce depression, anxiety, and improve your self-esteem. I always leave the dance studio, and dance socials with a big smile on my face, even if I didn’t do all the moves perfectly – I still had fun!

**Community:** Social interaction is incredibly important for mental health, and with dance you are always meeting new people. Meeting and socializing with people with a common interest helps foster connection and a sense of belonging. I have met some wonderful people through dance that have become very close friends!

**Reduces stress:** Raven Gibbs, a mental health professional and dancer, says, “As dance raises your heart rate and works your body, it also releases certain chemicals in the brain. It reduces cortisol, the natural stress hormone or what is more commonly known as the fight or flight hormone. Cortisol, in excess, can lead to high blood pressure, anxiety, depression, and other health problems.” – Blochworld. My massage therapist has seen a large decline in the stress held in my body since I have begun dance!

**Memory and Cognitive Function:** It gets harder to remember certain daily details as we age, and learning new things, such as names of dance moves, can help keep our brain sharp and nimble. In a 2017 study done by Burzynska et al, they recruited older adults to walk, stretch, or country line dancing 3 days a week for 3 months. The group who learned to dance had greater density in the white matter of their brains (the part that processes memory) than those in the other groups. Although I am in my late 30s, my brain still gets a good workout during class as I try to remember all the steps and other details needed for a good dance!

Whether it be country line dancing, belly dancing, tango, or the waltz, there is likely a form of dance that will meet your interest and your physical ability. So go look up a local dance studio, find some free videos on YouTube, and begin to reap all the health benefits of dance! See you on the dance floor!

To read more MHA blog posts, click [here](#)

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**Staff Blogger:** Stephanie Reaves, Peer Services Educator II

Stephanie Reaves grew up in the Philadelphia area and earned her Bachelor’s degree in Political Science from Princeton University in New Jersey. She is earned her Master’s in Social Work (clinical concentration) at Bryn Mawr College in the Philadelphia area in 2023.

Stephanie enjoys being active in her community, and began volunteering at health fairs and other community events with MHA in 2017 after healing from her own struggles with mental health and substance abuse. Stephanie officially joined the team as a Peer Educator in 2019.

Stephanie enjoys hiking, cooking, writing, salsa/bachata dancing, and reading anything she can get her hands on. She believes in the power of kindness and empathy to make a difference in the lives of others, and is involved in various community groups in the area.
MHA Peer Training & Outreach Services

2023 Peer Internship Program

Peer Internship Program
Brought to you by MHA Peer Training & Outreach Services
Sponsored by DSAMH:

About Us
Peer Training and Outreach Services is part of the Mental Health Association in Delaware (MHA). We are DSAMH’s approved peer workforce training provider. MHA provides Peer Certification Training, Continuing Education Units, Wellness Recovery Action Plan Workshops and Facilitator Training, Supervisor of Peer Specialist (CSPS) training and many other opportunities for peer workers’ professional development. In addition, we collaborate with DSAMH to bring you the first Project ECHO specifically for the Peer workforce in five states.

Benefits for Peer Interns:
• 500 hours of work experience
• A monthly stipend
• An opportunity to master skills and concepts that are needed to become an effective Peer Recovery Specialist
• “Recovery oriented” Supervision
• Information & Bi-weekly professional development
• Career Planning

Benefits for Partnering Agencies:
• Mentorship and Supervision from MHA
• A full time Peer Intern
• A one-time lump sum business stipend

For more Information: 302-654-6833 To Apply to be an Intern: https://mha-in-de.corsizio.com/

Accepting resumes now (send to sbaldwin@mhainde.org )
Interviews are being held July 5th – August 30th
Fall Session starts on October 16th
MHA Events & CEUs

Peer Specialist Career Information Session -

August 2023

Do you have personal experience with mental health and/or substance abuse and consider yourself in recovery? Are you looking for a way to use your lived experience to give back to others, and turn it into a career? The profession of Peer Support might be for you! Please join us at a Peer Support Career information session (formerly known as Peer 101), where Peer Educators at the Mental Health Association in Delaware will take you through the roles and responsibilities peers face, requirements needed for employment, training opportunities, our yearly Peer Internship program, and other relevant opportunities. See you there!

Register at: Mental Health Association in DE — August Peer Specialist Career Information Session

Roadblocks to Recovery: CEU

Everyone deserves a fair chance to recover from their substance abuse and mental health issues, but there are often times systemic issues that can hinder a person's progress and success. Join us for a two-hour CEU where we identify roadblocks that often impede people's recovery, and how to navigate through them with clients.

This CEU will take place on Zoom on Thursday, September 7 from 2-4 pm. Participants will receive 2.0 credit hours upon participation.

Register at: Mental Health Association in DE — September 2023 CEU: Roadblocks to Recovery
THE ANNUAL
E-RACING THE BLUES
FOR MENTAL HEALTH

FAMILY FRIENDLY WALKS
with snacks, prizes, raffles, & entertainment!

SOUTH WALK
SEPTEMBER 17, 2023
REHOBOTH BEACH BANDSTAND
REHOBOTH, DELAWARE

NORTH WALK
SEPTEMBER 30, 2023
GLASGOW PARK, PAVILION #1
NEWARK, DELAWARE

10 AM: Registration check-in
10:15 AM: Event begins

$30/Adult, includes T-shirt
(pre-registration required to guarantee adult t-shirt)
FREE for children under 12

REGISTER AT WWW.ERACINGTHEBLUES.ORG
We can only accept cash or check payment on day of registration.

TO BENEFIT THE
MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION IN DELAWARE
JOIN US!

TUESDAY, SEPT. 26TH
8AM-12:15PM
IN-PERSON
FREE!

2023 HIGHER EDUCATION SUICIDE PREVENTION CONFERENCE

GOLDEY-BEACOM COLLEGE

TO LEARN MORE & REGISTER, CLICK BELOW

"YOU MATTER: HOW TO NAVIGATE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH"
KEYNOTE SPEAKER, PANEL SESSION, SELF-CARE ACTIVITY AND MORE!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT JAYCEE WENDELL AT JWENDELL@MHAINDE.ORG

SPONSORED BY: SUN Behavioral Health

ADVOCATE EDUCATE SUPPORT
MILITARY & VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT

FREE TO ATTEND
REGISTRATION REQUIRED

CEUS PENDING

BREAKFAST INCLUDED

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

KEYNOTE ADDRESS:
"SUD TREATMENT IMPLICATIONS AMONGST VETERAN POPULATIONS WITH CO-OCCURRING DISORDERS"

DR. JESSICA M. MARTIN
OKLAHOMA CITY VA

SEPTEMBER 12, 2023
8:00 AM - 12:30 PM
RIVERFRONT EVENTS CENTER
760 Justison Street
Wilmington, DE 19801

REGISTER HERE

ADVOCATE EDUCATE SUPPORT
Come join our MHA's Wellness Groups

To view more information

MHA offers a variety of peer-led wellness groups for adults, including Depression & Anxiety, Survivors of Suicide for Grief and Healing, People of Color, LGBTQ+, Disability Haven, Seeking Safety, Men’s and Women’s Wellness Groups

- Virtual (via Zoom) or In-Person (Newark, Pike Creek and Lewes)
- Free
- Offered Mondays - Thursdays
- All groups are closed- registration is required*
- To register, contact Jaycee Wendell at jwendell@mhainde.org

*Seeking Safety Wellness Group does not require registration
**Mission:**
To strengthen knowledge, resources and support around mental health and recovery.

**Vision:**
To create an environment in which everyone feels supported throughout their mental health and recovery journey.

**Core Values:**

**Dignity:** We respect the dignity and worth of every person. We all have the right and responsibilities to achieve our full potential in our society.

**Compassion:** We treat every person compassionately, free from stigma and prejudice.

**Community Understanding:** We persistently promote community understanding of mental health.

**Elevating Voices:** We advocate for those with lived experiences to have their voices heard.

**Collaboration:** We collaborate with others, and we actively look for partners to strengthen mental health.

**Integrity:** We work together with integrity and a sense of purpose.

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**Back to School: Resources**

- Mental Health America’s Back to School Toolkit, which looks at issues youth face that could impact their mental health and offer tips on how to deal with them (available in English and Spanish). [https://mhanational.org/back-school](https://mhanational.org/back-school)
