What’s New at MHA?

Thank you for checking out this issue to find out what’s new at MHA. In the following pages, you will find information on our programs, services, upcoming events, and resources for you and your loved ones.

In our note from the Director, you can find out about a new program we are beginning in collaboration with our partners at the state, to introduce training into correctional facilities in Delaware.

We hope you will join us for our upcoming fundraisers—a restaurant night at Red Robin in Middletown, on September 1st, and our annual fun-walk, E-Racing the Blues, which will be held on October 1st at Glasgow Park. Mark your calendars to join in the fun, and to help provide critical financial support to our mission of promoting mental health through advocacy, education and support.

We also want to highlight the launch of the new, 3 digit number to the Suicide Prevention Lifeline—988. Dial this number 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to receive support for a mental health crisis for yourself or a loved one. More information can be found on page 5.

Read on to find out about upcoming opportunities for training, including our suicide prevention training that is happening regularly, both in person and online.

Our training for Peer Specialists and those interested in a career in peer services is also ongoing, and you will find descriptions and links to register in the pages that follow. Check out our upcoming Continuing Education Offering on Power of Attorney and Guardianship for people with mental health disorders.

Finally, find information about our wellness groups happening in-person and online throughout the state, and information on how to check your mental health through a quick, anonymous, online screening.
Dear Friends and Supporters,

Thank you for your ongoing support of MHA as we continue to grow and respond to the changing needs of our community. We strive to create innovative solutions to the complex challenges to our mental health systems here in Delaware. One such innovation is a new program we are piloting in the Delaware Correctional System.

According to a 2017 report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, approximately two-thirds of female inmates in prisons and jails and around a third of men in prisons and jails report having been diagnosed as having mental health disorder by a mental health professional. Of those who enter jail each year with a serious mental illness, an estimated three quarters have a co-occurring substance use problem.

Addressing mental health and substance use concerns in an incarceration setting can be complex and challenging, not to mention costly. Release from incarceration is a high-risk time when the connection to community-based treatment and services for brain health disorders may not occur, contributing to poor long-term outcomes for individuals involved with the criminal justice system. (Identifying Practices for Reducing Incarceration of Those with Mental Illnesses—A Study of “Stepping Up” February 25, 2020)

Studies show that adult education and vocational training reduce rates of recidivism significantly. Of course this is no surprise, as education and training often lead to better employment opportunities.

The efficacy of peer support in improving the health of those with brain health disorders has been evaluated through over 50 published studies, which show that they reduce hospitalizations, decrease risky behaviors, help patients to be more active in their treatment, and improve the quality of life for many patients.

Based on this information, MHA in Delaware has embarked on a new program that will develop and implement a peer training program for inmates in Delaware Correctional Facilities. This program will target inmates with the required interest, skills, and life experience, who may choose to pursue a career in peer support upon release into the community.

Our long term goal is to reduce rates of incarceration among those with mental illness by providing a two-fold benefit: peer support as an integral resource for those with brain disorders within the criminal justice system; and Peer Certification Training for those reentering the community and interested in a peer support career as a means of contributing to society and thriving independently in the community outside of the criminal justice system.

We plan to work together along with our Delaware partners to mobilize peer specialist involvement in reentry programs and related systems of support for those returning to the community, and we firmly believe that this will reduce recidivism rates.

Based on the successes and lessons of the pilot program, we hope to expand to include regular training in all the correctional facilities throughout the state of Delaware, and roll out the program to the rest of the state. Stay tuned for more information as we move forward with this important work.

We sincerely thank our supporters once again for valuing people who experience mental illness, and for helping us achieve our mission of advocacy, education, and support for mental health in Delaware.

Warmly,

Emily Vera, LCSW
20th ANNUAL
E-RACING THE BLUES
FOR MENTAL HEALTH

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1st, 2022

WALK and FUN FEST
GLASGOW PARK, PAVILION #1

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

$25 Adults includes T-shirt
(pre-registration required to guarantee adult shirt)
FREE for children under 12

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

Join us after the walk for snacks, prizes and children's entertainment.

TO BENEFIT THE
MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION IN DELAWARE

ADVOCATE EDUCATE SUPPORT
WELCOME, BURGER FRIEND.

BRING THIS FLYER TO RED ROBIN® ON THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 1ST BETWEEN 5-8 PM AND WE'LL DONATE 15% OF OUR PROCEEDS BACK TO MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION IN DE MIDDLETOWN.

TAKE OUT ORDERS WELCOME MAY NOT BE COMBINED WITH ANY OTHER COUPONS OR OFFER.
Dear Community Partners,  
The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline number went live on July 16th, 2022. And there is tremendous need, given:

- In 2020, the U.S. had one death by suicide every 11 minutes.
- For people ages 10–34, suicide is a leading cause of death.
- From April 2020 through April 2021, over 100,000 people died from drug overdoses.
- Here in our small state of Delaware, we lose someone to suicide about every 3 days.

Behind each of these data points, there are people, families and communities who have been impacted. Yet, in the face of these urgent realities, there is hope.

On July 16, 2022, Delaware joined the rest of the United States in beginning to use the 988 dialing code. 988 is the new three-digit number for call (multiple languages), text or chat (English only) that connects people to the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, where compassionate, accessible care and support are available for anyone experiencing mental health–related distress.

The chat feature will be available through the Lifeline’s website. People can use 988 if they are having thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crises, or any other kind of emotional distress. People can also dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.

The Lifeline works! Since the Lifeline began in 2005, it has served as an invaluable resource, helping thousands of people overcome suicidal crisis or mental health-related distress every day. With the transition to 988, these life-saving services will be even easier to reach.
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.
Suicide Prevention Training

At MHA, we provide several evidence based courses including two that can now be provided virtually: Mental Health First Aid and QPR. We have also begun to provide our ASIST training in-person once again.

Mental Health First Aid is a day-long skills-based training course that teaches participants about mental health and substance-use issues. Topics covered include depression and mood disorders, anxiety disorders, trauma, psychosis, and substance use disorders.

QPR stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer — the 3 simple steps anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide. QPR can be learned in as little as one hour. As a QPR-trained Gatekeeper you will learn to recognize the warning signs of suicide, know how to offer hope, and know how to get help and save a life. QPR is an emergency intervention intended to identify and interrupt the crisis and direct the person at risk to the proper care.

On August 9th and 10th, and again on August 23rd and 24th, we will be providing ASIST training at the Community Services Building in Wilmington. Visit our featured events page for registration information.

ASIST is a two-day training for anyone who want to feel more comfortable, confident and competent in helping to prevent the immediate risk of suicide. Over one million people have participated in this evidence based two-day, highly interactive, practical, practice-oriented workshop. ASIST is the most researched suicide prevention skills training world-wide.

The emphasis of the ASIST workshop is on suicide first aid, on helping a person at risk stay safe and seek further help. Attendance at the full two days is essential.

Learn how to:
- Recognize invitations for help
- Reach out and offer support
- Review the risk of suicide
- Apply a suicide intervention model
- Link people with resources

Evaluations have shown that the ASIST workshop increases knowledge and confidence to respond to a person at risk of suicide, that intervention skills are retained over time and that they are put to use to save lives.

Register today to join us in preventing suicide in our community.
What is the MHA Peer Internship Program?

Are you looking to develop your career in Peer Support? MHA is now accepting applications for our annual internship program. MHA is committed to providing highly informed, skilled, and professionally trained Certified Peer Recovery Specialists. The Peer Internship Program helps prepare dedicated individuals to step into this role. As a Peer Intern, you are investing eight months with a mental health care provider and receiving valuable professional experience, training, and networking opportunities. You will use your skills and training to help strengthen the organization you partner with and build a career path for yourself.

MHA will provide each Peer Intern with:

- 1,000 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

Who can Apply?

We work toward a diverse representation of Peer Interns. The program is available to anyone who meets our minimum requirements regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, and disability.

The minimum requirements for participation are as follows:

- Have personal (direct) lived experience with mental health and/or substance use disorder
- Successfully in recovery for at least 1 year
- Be 18 years of age or older
- Be a US Citizens or permanent resident
- Have a High School Diploma or GED
- Basic computer literacy required.

Interested?

Please contact Shynia Baldwin, Peer Internship & Outreach Coordinator at sbaldwin@mhainde.org or 302-597-8130

Application inquiries must be received by Friday, August 26th, 2022 The program will begin in October.

Congratulations to our peer interns of 2021/2022, who recently celebrated their graduation from the program!
Join us for a Peer Support Wellness Group—
Available Online or In-Person

The Mental Health Association in Delaware offers a variety of virtual and in-person wellness groups.

Registration is available through contacting Jennifer Wendell at jwendell@mhainde.org.

Here are descriptions of the different types of groups that are available through MHA.

**Depression & Anxiety Wellness Groups**
The Depression and Anxiety Wellness Groups are peer-led groups for individuals experiencing depression (Clinical Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Seasonal Affective Disorder, or Dysthymia) and/or anxiety (Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Panic Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and/or specific phobias). These groups explore new ways of overcoming negative thoughts and feelings, and provide a safe haven for mental stability.

**Disability Haven Wellness Group**
The Disability Haven Wellness Group is an inclusive, peer-led group that brings individuals with disabilities (physical, sensory, intellectual/learning, developmental and/or neurological/neurodevelopmental) together in a safe environment to share life experiences and receive support. The group provides once-a-month opportunities for caregivers to join and engage in educational conversations.

**LGBTQ+ Mental Wellness Group**
The LGBTQ+ Mental Wellness Group is a peer-led group for individuals in the LGBTQ+ community. This group offers a safe space for LGBTQ+ individuals to receive support and connection.

**People of Color Wellness Group**
The People of Color Wellness Group is a peer-led group for people of color. This trauma-informed group creates a supportive environment for people of color to connect over shared experiences, heal in community, and receive support.

**Survivors of Suicide (SOS) for Grief & Healing Groups**
The SOS Groups are peer-led groups for individuals who have lost a loved one or friend to suicide. These groups provide insight and comfort to individuals dealing with the trauma and tragedy of a loss to suicide.

**Women’s Wellness Group**
The Women’s Wellness Group is a peer-led group for women. This group creates a supportive environment for women to connect over shared experiences and receive support.

For more information and to see a calendar of the wellness groups being offered, please visit our wellness group schedule page.
**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.

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**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](http://www.mhainde.org).