What’s New at MHA?

We would like to introduce you to two of MHA’s new hires! Sydney has joined the Community Education and Support Team and Anthony has joined the Mental Health Court Team. Welcome to MHA; we are happy to have you working with us!

Sydney Elliott
Sydney Elliott is a Support and Education Associate at MHA, working particularly with the Wellness Groups. She enjoys interacting with the Wellness Group members and hearing them share stories and advice. Outside of MHA, Sydney is in her last semester at the University of Delaware, where she will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with minors in Neuroscience and English. At UD, Sydney is the secretary of the Nu Rho Psi Neuroscience Honor Society and is a research assistant at the Center for Training, Evaluation, and Community Collaboration. In her free time, Sydney enjoys reading, watching reality TV, and traveling.

Anthony Jackson
My name is Anthony Jackson. I am a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist. I was released from prison in the spring of 2023 after being incarcerated for twenty-one years.

Three months prior to my release, MHA held their first peer recovery specialist training in the Department of Corrections. I was in that first class. I had never heard of peer support prior to that but let me tell you— it changed my life. And it can change yours. The opportunities in this field are limitless once you get certified. And keep in mind, your criminal record is not a strike against you in this field; it can actually be a plus.

Currently, I work overnights on the Delaware Hope Line, providing resources, and talking to individuals that are in crisis, or maybe just need someone to listen to them. During the day I work part-time at MHA as a mental health court peer.
Director’s Note

Dear Friends of MHA,

How are your levels of stress lately? Did you know that some studies estimate that up to 80% of doctor’s visits are due to stress-related concerns? When does stress go from being healthy to chronic, and how do we keep ourselves healthy when experiencing stress?

These are all important questions, and here at MHA we are hoping to help Delawareans master their stress and stay healthy through awareness and education. We provide Master Your Stress workshops throughout the state, to help individuals understand how stress effects the body, and strategies they can use to bring their bodies from the “fight or flight” response, to the “rest and digest” response that will help them stay healthy. The research-based workshop was created by Elizabeth Davis, PsyD, and is provided to community members throughout the year.

One strategy that helps with stress management is being intentional about what we put into our bodies, including nutritional food and limiting caffeine and alcohol. There is also a clear link between nicotine and mental health, with those who smoke being at increased risk for depression and anxiety. Additionally, vaping is perceived as less harmful than smoking, but is also clearly linked with mental health disorders and other serious health problems.

Many young adults in particular, view vaping as a safe alternative to smoking, and even as a practice that can help them cope with things like depression and anxiety. Unfortunately, the truth is that research has shown a clear link between vaping and increased risk for disorders including depression, anxiety, psychosis and eating disorders. One study of more than 2500 young people found that those who vape with nicotine only, those who vape with THC only (the psychoactive component in marijuana), and those who vape with both nicotine and THC were all more likely to report significantly more anxiety symptoms, depressive symptoms and suicidal thoughts when compared with their peers who do not vape.

Part of the reason for this connection could be due to some of the ingredients found these products. For example, lead has long been known to cause brain damage, and is found in many vaping devices. Additionally, nicotine dependence and THC can cause disruptions in brain development and chemistry, especially among young people whose brains are still developing into their late twenties. The majority of young adults report that they started vaping to help them cope with stress. Unfortunately, while vaping delivers a temporary increase in serotonin that creates a short-lived calming sensation in the body, it also creates increased feelings of irritability and tension due to the body’s craving for more nicotine, ultimately worsening stress.

Marijuana in low doses has been shown to decrease anxiety in some individuals, while high doses often cause anxiety and paranoia. This is important because those who vape THC, rather than smoking or eating it, receive very high levels of THC, putting them at a significantly increased risk of developing a psychotic disorder such as schizophrenia. Once a person has developed a smoking or vaping habit, it can be challenging to break since withdrawal symptoms often make them feel depressed, irritable and anxious. However, the challenge is not insurmountable — there is support available and the cycle can be broken. Research shows that people, including people with mental health challenges, want to and are able to quit. For more information on quitting, visit www.lung.org.

We all experience stress, and sometimes that stress can be chronic. It’s important to be proactive in reducing stress levels through things we can control, like reframing negative thinking patterns, learning techniques to bring relaxation to our bodies, and being mindful of what we consume. To learn more or request training, visit www.mhainde.org.

Warmly,

Emily Vera, LCSW
Executive Director
MHA Events & Fundraising

March 7, 2024- March 8, 2024

Do More 24 is a 24-hour day of giving designed to help non-profits raise more money and engage new donors.

Do More 24, March 7 at 6 PM-March 8 at 6 PM is a fun and easy way for the entire Delaware community to impact philanthropy and be inspired to donate to nonprofits serving Delaware such as MHA. Do More 24 Delaware is designed to help nonprofits increase capacity and engage new donors. Hope you can support us by clicking the link below.

HTTPS://WWW.DOMORE24DELAWARE.ORG/FUNDRAISERS/MENTAL-HEALTH-ASSOCIATION-IN-DELAWARE
THE MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION IN DELAWARE PRESENTS - FUNNY BONE

LIVE STAND-UP COMICS
AND RAFFLE DRAWING!

FRIDAY, APRIL 26TH, 2024
7:30PM - 9:30PM
DOORS OPEN AT 7PM

THE CANDLELIGHT THEATRE
(2208 MILLERS RD, WILMINGTON, DE 19810)

TICKET: $30 (INCLUDES COMPLIMENTARY REFRESHMENTS DURING INTERVAL)

DONATIONS ARE WELCOME

REGISTER ONLINE UNTIL APRIL 24TH, OR AT DOOR THE NIGHT OF
FOR $35 BY CASH/CHECK ONLY

FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT ROBERTA:
RFISHGOLD@MHAINDE.ORG

MHA - MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION IN DELAWARE

ADVOCATE EDUCATE SUPPORT
23rd Annual Empowering Community Wellness Symposium

Empowering and improving our community

Wednesday, May 1, 2024
8:00 AM - 12:30 PM
Riverfront Events Center
Wilmington, DE

Theme: "The Intersection of Firearms and Mental Health"

Presented by:
Mental Health Association in Delaware

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Wilmington VA Medical Center

Coalition for a Safer Delaware
CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!
We need help running the concession stand at the Blue Rocks Baseball game on Sunday, May 19, 2024, starting from 12 pm - end of game.

To sign up to volunteer, click [here](#).

The money we raise goes towards hosting our Kickin’ the Stigma fundraiser for MHA! The 2nd Kickin’ the Stigma kickball tournament is on October 20th at 9 am at Big Oak County Park.
417 Big Oak Rd, Smyrna, DE 19977

Questions? Email kickinthestigma@gmail.com
The Mental Health Association in Delaware presents:
Restaurant Day on Wednesday, May 22, 2024 (11:30am-midnight)
Dine-in only, lunch, dinner, happy hour as well Café at Bar Reverie 7:00a-11:00a

Bar Reverie
4017 Kennett Pike
Greenville, DE 19807

BBC Tavern and Grill
4019 Kennett Pike
Greenville, DE 19807

Just tell your server you are dining for MHA and 10% of your food check will be donated to the agency!

Contact rfishgold@mhainde.org with any questions.
Save-the-Date

Military & Veterans Mental Health Summit

“Unraveling the Web of Homelessness”

Tuesday, September 10, 2024
Riverfront Events
Wilmington, DE
8:00 am - 3:00 pm

Details and registration to follow.

Delaware Suicide Prevention Coalition
Come join our
MHA's Wellness Groups

CLICK ME!
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 Sydney Elliott at selliott@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.