

Help is Available

Contact Mental Health America in Allen County at (260) 422-6441 for help with finding local mental health providers and other resources in your area.

Go to our website at mentalhealthallencounty.org

Since 1954, Mental Health America in Allen County has been providing education, advocacy and support to help those individuals struggling with mental illness.



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Mental Health Insider

Mental Health & Early Identification in Children

Mental illness does not discriminate by age. It can affect anyone of any age, even children as young as two or three years old. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), when a mental disorder begins and can be diagnosed in childhood, it is called a childhood mental disorder. The CDC states, “[mental] disorders among children are described as serious changes in the ways children typically learn, behave, or handle their emotions.” Examples of childhood mental disorders include anxiety disorders, ADHD, autism spectrum disorder, eating disorders, mood disorders, and schizophrenia. In fact, the CDC reports that 13 -20 percent of American children have a mental disorder in a given year.

Diagnosis of a childhood mental disorder most often happens once a child enters school. This diagnosis is extremely important, as an undiagnosed childhood

mental disorder can have serious ramifications for a child’s development that will continue into adulthood. Unfortunately, diagnosis can be tricky for multiple reasons, according to the Mayo Clinic. For one, mental illness manifests very differently in children than it does in adults. Also, children often do not have the vocabulary or thought development to properly explain their feelings or experiences. Finally, the stigma around mental illness can leave an adult denying signs of mental illness in his or her child. Despite these difficulties, a diagnosis must be made if a childhood mental disorder is present so that the child can continue to develop correctly.

It is the responsibility of the adults in a child’s life, most notably parents or guardians and teachers, to watch for warning signs of a childhood mental disorder. There are many warning signs to childhood mental disorders, and most of them consist of a



sudden change in a child. The Mayo Clinic describes some warning signs to look for. Changes in mood or feelings is one warning sign. If a child is sad or withdrawn over a period of more than two weeks, that may be cause for concern, as well as the child having intense feelings for no reason. Childhood mental illnesses may also manifest in changes in behavior or personality, as well as a sudden habit of not being able to concentrate or sit still. Unexplained weight loss and evidence of self-harm can also be signs of a mental disorder. Finally, children may experience headaches or stomachaches similarly to how adults with mental disorders experience anxiety or sadness. These warning signs are particularly telling if they happen in multiple places, such as

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Two Organizations Make A Match

Mental Health America in Allen County, Inc. (MHAAC) and Cedars HOPE, Inc. were officially merged effective April 30, 2015. Both organizations will continue under Mental Health America in Allen County.

Cedars HOPE will continue to provide permanent, supportive housing for 15 women living with serious mental illness. These women voluntarily live in shared housing where they receive support 24/7 from case managers and their peers to remain independent,

permanently housed, and psychologically stable.

There are many benefits to be had with this merger. First and foremost, the community benefits with this merger. With the pooled resources of Cedars HOPE and MHAAC, the two organizations can continue to make a big difference in the lives of those living in Allen County with a mental illness. Cedars HOPE can continue to grow, and MHAAC can keep supporting those living with mental illness, both directly and

indirectly. Secondly, other local agencies benefit from seeing the partnership between these two organizations. Partnership is extremely important among non-profits, and Cedars HOPE and MHAAC can set a good example of how it can work. Finally, Cedars HOPE joins a broad array of services at Mental Health America, including advocacy, education, adult guardianship, and our school-based program, Kids on the Block. "Together, we will be able to offer innovative

and cost-effective services in our community," said Lisa Smith, executive director.

MHAAC remains committed to providing individuals and families with advocacy and support so that they get the help they need to rebuild their lives. These organizations are excited to work so closely together to better the lives of those in Allen County.

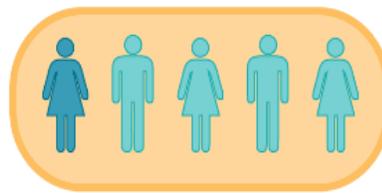


B4Stage4: Changing the Way We Think About Mental Health

When we think about cancer, heart disease, or diabetes, we don't wait years to treat them. We start before Stage 4—we begin with prevention. When people are in the first stage of those diseases and are beginning to show signs or

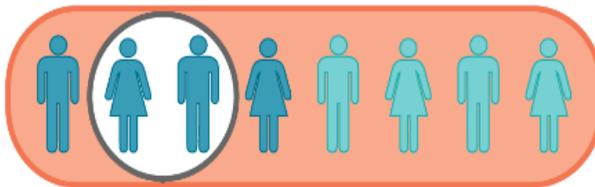
symptoms like a persistent cough, high blood pressure, or high blood sugar, we immediately try to end these symptoms. We don't ignore them. In fact, we develop a plan of action to reverse and sometimes stop the progression of the disease. So why don't we do the same for individuals who are dealing with potentially serious mental illness?

Mental Health Matters For Everyone



1 in 5

American adults will have a diagnosable mental health condition in any given year¹



50 PERCENT

of Americans will meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental health condition sometime in their life, and half of those people will develop conditions by the age of 14.²



Get informed.	Get screened.	Get help.



Our impact in 2014

Advocacy and Support

Advocates provide answers and guidance to navigate the mental health system. Callers or family members receive help with determining their best treatment options and personal support during difficult times. MHAAC works closely with local agencies, hospitals, law enforcement, and support groups to help people access the right services. Information about mental health topics and treatment options are also available.

492 individuals & families received support for mental health issues

94% of callers used the information given & received help

Education and Outreach

Education and awareness of issues affecting the mentally ill can equip families, friends, and organizations with possible solutions. Workshops on a variety of mental health topics are available to businesses, caregivers, social service agencies, schools, and civic organizations.

1,100 individuals attended workshops

84% of participants learned new skills they can use in their daily life

Guardianship Services

MHAAC offers permanent guardianship and advocacy for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to insure their health, safety, and wellbeing. Staff monitor the care of these individuals in the areas of residence and behavioral and medical therapies.

63 adults with disabilities received guardianship services

93% of service providers agreed that MHAAC improved the quality life for these individuals

Cedars HOPE (Merged in 2015)

Cedars HOPE offers permanent supportive housing for 15 women as the first step toward addressing homelessness and the debilitating symptoms of serious mental illness. These women live in a shared home that offers peer and staff support, long-term stability, personal safety, and permanent housing.

21 women received services

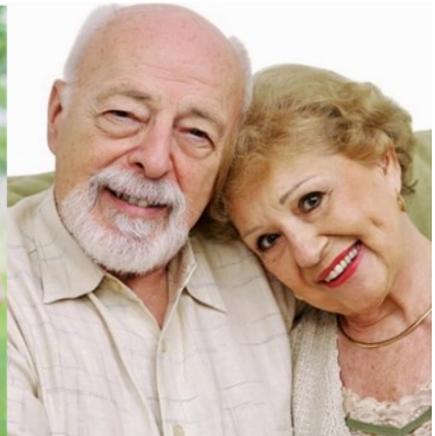
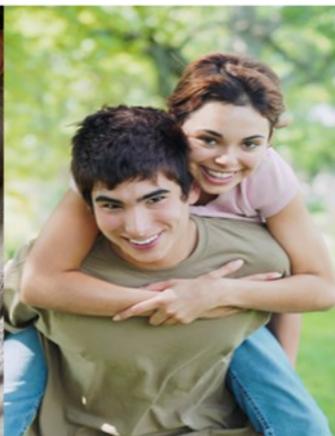
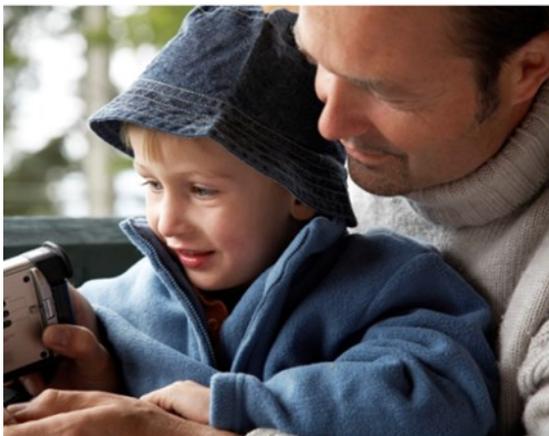
95% of residents remained stable & did not require inpatient services

Kids on the Block™

Kids on the Block™ is a school-based program for local 3rd grade school children. Puppet skits are intended to teach children respect for those with a physical or developmental disability. The children learn to handle feelings and challenging situations in their daily lives, including bullying, peer pressure, and self-esteem.

1,616 students learned about children with disabilities & how to end bullying in their schools

94% of teachers agreed students were better able to accept & understand other students with differences



Thank you to our generous 2014 donors!

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Simply put, if it wasn't for our faithful supporters like you, we wouldn't exist. So thank you for providing the funds that we need to make a difference in the lives of individuals and families who live with mental health disorders right here in our own community.



**Early Identification
continued ...**

at school, home, and at friends' houses, for instance.

What should a parent do if these warning signs are seen in his or her child? According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the first thing a parent should do is ask other adults in the child's life if they see similar behaviors when interacting with the child. This will help the parent decide if there's another cause to the problem that is centralized around one person or place. If

other causes can be found, the doctor may direct the parent to a specialist who will be able to diagnose the child.

There are several resources that parents who have a child with a mental disorder can access. Locally, parents can obtain resources from their doctor or their child's school. Local mental health organizations, such as Mental Health America in Allen County, may also be able to provide resources. Turning to credible websites can also be beneficial; the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the National Institute

their extremely credible websites.

The process of noticing abnormal behavior in a child, talking with others who have seen the behavior, and taking the child to the doctor for a potential diagnosis can be a daunting experience for parents and children. If a child has a childhood mental disorder, these steps must be taken for the child to grow up healthy and happy. Doing research, being informed, and having patience can go a long way in helping a child receive a correct diagnosis and begin treatment for a childhood mental

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Improvement in the mental/behavioral health condition for children, youth and adults with mental illness

other adults notice the behavior, the parent may want to speak to a doctor about the behavior. The doctor can help the parent explore other causes of the behavior, and if no

for Mental Health (NIMH), the Mayo Clinic, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) all offer resources for parents and others on

disorder.

Sources:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "Children's Mental Health - New Report."
2. CDC.gov. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 21 May 2013. Web. 3 July 2015.

B4Stage4

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Mental health conditions, such as depression or anxiety, are real, common and treatable. And recovery is possible. But not all of us think about our mental health enough. Taking a screening test is one of the quickest and easiest ways to determine whether you are experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition.

Take a screening test online at www.mentalhealthamerica.net/mental-health-screening-tools and discuss the results with a provider. These online screening tools are not a substitute for consultation with a health professional. Regardless of the results of a screen, if you have any concerns, see your doctor or mental health professional.

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Consider a financial gift to help Mental Health America in Allen County (MHAAC) continue providing the vital advocacy, education and support services that improve the lives of so many adults and children who live with mental illness or disability. We depend on the contributions of individuals and organizations to continue services in northeast Indiana.

Honor the memory of a loved one or celebrate a special occasion with a gift to MHAAC. Each gift is recognized with a letter to the individual or family you designate.

Please use the enclosed envelope, donate online, or contact us at (260) 422-6441 for giving opportunities.

MHAAC is a tax-exempt, charitable organization. All gifts made to Mental Health America in Allen County, Inc. may be tax-deductible within the terms of the IRS code. Federal Tax ID: 46-1326514.

**There is no health without
good mental health**

~ SAVE THE DATE ~ **4th Annual Gala: Revealing the True Face of Mental Illness**

**Please join us for our 4th annual Gala on
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event includes a prime rib dinner, silent
auction, and dancing to the sound of The
Primetime Band.**

**Contact us about sponsorship opportunities at
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MentalHealthAllenCounty.org.**

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