

THE FRONT DOOR

Mental Health America of Northeast Indiana Newsletter

Summer 2016

Mental Illness and Violence: Is There a Connection?

Was the perpetrator mentally ill? This is often the question on the nation's mind whenever a shooting or other act of violence happens.

More than one third of the American public believe that individuals struggling with mental health challenges are more likely to be violent than those who are not. Actually, people with mental illnesses are more likely to be the **victims** of violent crimes. According to the MacArthur Violence Risk Assessment Study, which explored the possible linkage of mental illness and violence, simply having a mental illness doesn't make someone more violent.



Freeimages.com/Konrad Baranski

Somehow a perceived link between mental illness and violence has been formed in the public mind. It would be difficult to tease apart what has caused this inaccurate perception. Most likely it is a combination of different factors, from misconceptions born from the horrible treatment of patients in asylums, to media's portrayal of those with a mental illness.

What are the consequences for those who have a mental illness? They face more stigma. If they admit to having a mental illness, people might start acting differently around them because they don't feel safe. Due to this stigma, those who are open about having a mental illness might find it difficult to get or keep a job. It might be harder for them to make friends or connect with others, since people may be fearful or wary around them.

Also, those who suspect they have a mental health condition or have been diagnosed with one may be unwilling to seek help and treatment due to the stigma. They might be worried that if they actively seek treatment and others find out, that they will be treated differently or thought of as a violent person. Leaving mental illness without treatment is a bad idea, and the person's well-being can quickly deteriorate because of it.

Therefore, we need to encourage better understanding of mental illness and its connection to violence. Education is key to reducing stigma and debunking the misconceptions that people have about those with a mental illness. Really, there isn't a scientific connection between mental illness and violence, and these misconceptions can be extremely harmful to those living with a mental illness.

"It's a knee-jerk reaction to judge people when they're vulnerable. But there's nothing weak about struggling with mental illness. You're just having a harder time living in your brain than other people."

- Kristen Bell

Are you interested in giving to our organization?

There are many ways to donate. You can give your money, time, talent, or other resources to help those facing a mental health challenge.

Turn to page 5 to learn more.

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FRONT DOOR

We Offer Hope

From the Executive Director



Lisa Smith, Executive Director

On June 12, the country was deeply hurt by the massacre at Pulse Orlando. Our hearts go out to everyone affected by the Orlando shooting tragedy, especially the 49 victims who were killed and the loved ones that were left behind.

Following a trauma of that magnitude, individuals may experience poor mental health. They may be dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety. Symptoms of a mental illness they had before the trauma may flare up. Even if survivors don't have a

diagnosable mental illness, they may still be unwell as they struggle with the horrors they witnessed or the loss of a loved one.

National Mental Health America and affiliates in the Orlando area (particularly the Mental Health Association of Central Florida) moved into action to help survivors and loved ones as they cope with the tragedy. If you have been affected negatively by the Orlando tragedy, please call us. We will be happy to help you connect with local resources where you can get the support you need.

A technique that may prove extremely helpful to the survivors of the Orlando shooting is peer to peer support. At the beginning of June, I attended the national Mental Health America conference in Washington, D.C. During my time there, I was able to learn more about what other affiliates are doing to better serve our communities. At the conference, it became clear that the trend in mental health services is moving towards peer to peer support—a program we are working on implementing right here in Northeast Indiana.

What is peer to peer support? It means that an individual struggling with his/her mental health works with a peer who has a similar lived experience and is in recovery. This system works because the peer knows what that individual is going through, and the individual has a role model to follow for treatment and recovery. It works well in conjunction with mainstream mental health services. Individuals gain strategies, confidence, skills, and personal responsibility to manage their own wellness.

Having peer support programs in place can help people make tremendous strides in recovery from a mental illness. It can also help in situations following a traumatic event, such as the Orlando shooting. Being able to talk to a fellow member of the LGBTQ community, for example, might make all the difference in the world.

Lisa Smith, Executive Director

SAVE THE DATE

Annual Gala 2016

October 8, 2016

See back of newsletter for more details

Summer is Here!

What That Means for your Mental Health

The first day of summer has officially come and gone! We can look forward to warmer weather, sunnier days, and fun summertime activities from festivals, to swimming, to cookouts, and everything in between.

But what does the advent of summer mean for your mental health? Summertime improves mental health in general. We have a greater chance of getting out in the sun to absorb vitamin D, spending time with friends and family, and participating in physical activities. These summer activities can lead to healthier minds and bodies and make isolation less likely.

However, that doesn't mean that you can ignore your mental health during the summer months. While you may feel better during the summer, you should continue any current treatments. And, as with any other time of year, it's important to eat well, drink plenty of water, exercise, and get enough sleep to be as mentally healthy as possible.



Two Events on May 12th a Success!

On May 12th, 2016, MHANI had the honor of hosting Paul Gionfriddo at our Legacy Breakfast and evening lecture which took place at Hotel Fort Wayne. Paul is President and CEO of national Mental Health America. Paul shared the struggles of his son Tim who has schizophrenia.

Attendees at the Legacy Breakfast were left with a feeling of inspiration following Paul's moving speech. Paul spoke to the trouble the mental health field faces in treating mental illness from a young age. Many young children with mental health struggles are not receiving the help they need to succeed. However, he was hopeful that changes could be made, and the system can improve.

Local members of the community also spoke at the Legacy Breakfast. Victor Torres, board president, was the Master of Ceremonies. The Honorable Wendy Davis made opening remarks. She discussed the impact that organizations like MHANI have on people with mental illness who get involved with the justice system. Mayor Tom Henry proclaimed May 2016 as Mental Health Month in Fort Wayne.

Two awards were given that day. The Alida Cunningham Award was presented to Sarah Bridgwater for her advocacy for women with mental illness. The Mental Health Legacy Award was presented to The Lutheran Foundation and accepted by Marcia Haaff, CEO. They have been instrumental in advancing the mental health and well-being of individuals and families in northeast Indiana.

Thank you again to our sponsors for helping us spread awareness about mental health issues.



Paul Gionfriddo,
President & CEO of

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Also brought to you by:



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INDIANA TECH



SAVE THE DATE for our Annual Gala 2016

on Saturday, October 8, 2016

See back of newsletter for more details

CEDARS HOPE

Did You Know?

Cedars Hope residents love to be involved in the community - since January, they have contributed 4,589.5 hours to volunteering and employment! That's over 191 solid days of work!

Cedars Hope is also now serving two men living in the community.

What is Cedars Hope?

Cedars Hope offers safe, affordable, and supportive housing for homeless women living with mental illness in addition to support services to men living off the premises. Cedars Hope's supportive housing is organized into a group living environment that encourages peer support and community engagement.

Our goal is to help the individuals we serve break the cycle of psychiatric crisis and homelessness, increase self-sufficiency, and learn to self-manage the symptoms of their mental illness and physical health challenges.

Now housing 15 residents.

Poet in Residence Kathryn Young

"What I do when I don't have to determines what I am when I can't help it."

- Kathryn Young



Kathryn Young has been living at Cedars Hope since 2004. She enjoys writing poetry, reading, walking, spending time with friends, going to eat, and watching movies. Her favorite movie is *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

She has a long list of wonderful accomplishments. She's had her books of poetry published; she graduated from St. Louis University in 1974 with a BA in American Literature 1900 to present. Also in 1974 she won the Missouri Women's poetry award. Her accomplishments show that having a mental illness does not prevent someone from achieving their goals and dreams. Living a fulfilling life is possible with a mental health condition, and Kathryn is proof of that!

Mary Cassatt's White Cat
sits, lids half-lowered in pleasure
sipping cream.

...she follows me everywhere
like death

casting no shadow
if the sky is equal.

From *The Spinster's Madonna* by Kathryn Ann Young

Volunteering is Better with Friends!

For the past couple of months, some of the Cedars Hope residents have been coming regularly to our Lake Avenue office to assemble our STOP Suicide toolkits. We have thousands of toolkits to put together before we can distribute them to the community. (PDF versions are available at both stopsuicidenow.org and MentalHealthFrontDoor.org.)

We would like to thank the residents who take time out of their day to help us get these potentially life-saving toolkits out into the community as soon as possible. The residents at Cedars Hope are avid volunteers, and we deeply appreciate the fact that they are more than willing to help us with these toolkits.

With their help, the boxes and boxes of assembled toolkits will get into the hands of community members who are struggling following a suicide attempt or loss, or need help preventing suicide. Thank you, Cedars ladies, for being so helpful in this endeavor!

About Us

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Donor Spotlight

Thank you to the following donors for their generosity:

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Ways to Give to MHANI

Thank you to our generous funders, donors, and volunteers who give their time, talent, or resources to our organization and support our cause of good mental health for all. Our organization would not be where it is today without your commitment to us and the people we serve.

There are multiple ways to give to MHANI.

1. Make a monetary donation—online through PayPal on our website (MentalHealthFrontDoor.org) or by mailing the enclosed donation envelope.
2. Commit to a pledge to give a certain amount of money over a period of time.
3. Volunteer in one of our departments. We currently need volunteers for our peer support program, guardianship, and marketing. Your time is valuable to us!
4. Is there a specific item you would like to donate? In-kind donations will be put to good use at our organization. In the past, we've had a stove, washer and dryer, arts and crafts, and various other items donated for our Lake Avenue office as well as our two Cedars Hope homes.

Whatever donation you're willing and able to do, we are grateful for it. Please contact us at 260-422-6441 with any questions or ideas.

**Interested in giving right away?
Mail in the donation envelope included in this newsletter!**



2200 Lake Avenue, Ste. 105
Fort Wayne, IN 46805

SAVE THE DATE

Annual Gala 2016

October 8, 2016

Look below for more details

Mark Your Calendars!

What: Annual Gala 2016

When: October 8, 2016

Cocktail hour—5 pm

Dinner—6 pm

Program and auctions—7pm - 10 pm

Where: Mirro Center for Research and Innovation
10622 Parkview Plaza Dr, Fort Wayne, IN 46845

Why: To enjoy dinner, lively conversation, and auctions while supporting members of our community who struggle with their mental health

Contact us or visit [Eventbrite](#) to order tickets!

Support Groups

Parent and Caregiver

Suicide Loss

Anxiety

Adult ADHD

Please call us at 260-422-6441 to learn more about our support groups.

Trainings

Parent2Parent Family Training on ADHD® (Begins August 25th; \$65 fee and registration due Aug. 1)

Lunch and Learn: Sept. 27, Light Therapy presented by Leslie Wade, RN, LCSW

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Contact Us

Mental health advocates offer mental health support and information about local resources in northeast Indiana.

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of Northeast Indiana**
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Fort Wayne, IN 46805

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Visit us on the web at
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