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# Mental Health America of Jackson County

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## Addressing Mental Health Before Stage 4

May is Mental Health Month. Mental Health America's (MHA) theme is "Addressing Mental Health Before Stage 4, Changing the Way We Think About Mental Illness". It calls attention to the importance of addressing mental health symptoms early, identifying underlying disease, and planning an appropriate course of action on a path towards overall health.

When we think about cancer, heart disease, or diabetes, we don't wait ten years to treat them. We start before Stage 4. We begin with prevention. So why don't we do the same for individuals who are dealing with potentially serious mental illness?

Mental health matters for everyone. One in five American adults will have a diagnosable mental health condition in any given year. About half Americans will meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental health in their life, with first onset usually in childhood or in adolescence.

Risk factors for mental illness: Genes - traits we inherit from our families; Biology - balance of chemicals in the body and the patterns of cell communication; Environment - exposure to traumatic events like sudden loss, violence, abuse and neglect, unsafe communities, and low socioeconomic status; Lifestyle - Poor diet, substance use or abuse, lack of exercise, and irregular sleep patterns.

Symptoms and warning signs of mental illness are: too much sleep or trouble sleeping; trouble focusing or having racing thoughts; changes in appetite; isolating yourself from others, losing interest in the things you once enjoyed; irritability or having a short temper.

Research shows that ignoring mental health symptoms, we lose ten years in which we could intervene in order to change people's lives for the better. During most of these years most people still have supports that allow them to succeed - home, family, friends, school, and work. Intervening effectively during the early stages of mental illness can save lives and change the trajectories of people living with mental illness.

The stages of mental health conditions: Stage 1 - mild symptoms and warning signs; Stage 2 - symptoms increase in frequency and severity and interfere with life activities and role; Stage 3 - symptoms worsen with relapsing and recurring episodes

## Addressing Mental Health Before Stage 4 Cont.

accompanied by serious disruption in life activities and roles; Stage 4 - symptoms are persistent and severe and have jeopardized one's life.

Like any other chronic condition, mental health conditions can get worse if left untreated. This often results in crisis like inability to work hospitalization homelessness or incarceration. The good news is mental health conditions are not only common, they are treatable – especially when they are treated early

When people first begin to experience symptoms of mental health conditions, they shouldn't be ignored or brushed aside in hopes that they go away. One of the quickest and easiest ways to determine whether you are experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition is to take a mental health screening. Go to [www.mhascreening.org](http://www.mhascreening.org) to take a screening for depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder.

If you are having trouble sleeping lately, if you have been experiencing racing thoughts, or you are just curious - the screens below can help you understand more about your mental health. If you unsure which screen to take, here are some guidelines:

The Depression Screen is most appropriate for individuals who are feeling overwhelming sadness.

The Anxiety Screen will help if you feel that worry and fear affect your day to day life.

The Bipolar Screen is intended to support individuals who have mood swings - or unusual shifts in moods and energy.

The PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) Screen is best taken by those who are bothered by a traumatic life event.

You may take all four screens. Following screens, you will be provided with information, resources and tools to discuss with a provider. Our screens are for adults only, The screens are not a diagnostic instrument. It is only for people 18 years of age and older.

MHA goal is to get every American screened and aware of their mental health so they can address it #BStage4.

Use the screening results to start a conversation with your primary care provider, or a trusted friend or family member and begin to plan a course of action for addressing your mental health. There are a variety of treatment options ranging from talk therapy to medication to peer support. The earlier we treat mental health conditions the easier it is for people to recover and the less it costs.

For more information [www.mentalhealthamerica.net](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net)

### Available for Speaking Engagements

Bob Dembek, Director, is available to come speak to any group on the agency or if they would like to learn more about mental health. Please contact him at 812-522-3480 or [mhajc@cabjackson.org](mailto:mhajc@cabjackson.org).

## **First Quarter Activities:**

Head Start I'm Thumbody classes: "Making Good Decisions", "Telling the Truth", "Being a Good Buddy", average 70 children; Attended the United Way Annual Meeting, MHAJC Valentine Social; Met with staff of Child Care Network Kid's Club Staff on presenting I'm Thumbody curriculum to their after school program. Presented to Emerson School Kid Club, 8 students served. I also scheduled two more presentations for April; Had a table at the Transition Fair for Special Needs Students in the county, who are transitioning out of school into the community at Seymour High School, spoke to 50 students; Spoke to representative from Centerstone about cooperation between the two agencies. Scheduled a social for April; Spoke before the Sons of the American Revolution Chapter, 10 people; Participated on the Jackson County Drug Free Council Board; Wrote three columns for the Jackson County Banner: "Conduct Disorder", "Coping with Mental Illness", "Stress: Learning to Relax"; Met with United Way Director to talk about the direction of MHAJC; Met with Director of ARC Jackson County about documenting the work MHAJC does; participated on Planning Committee for Kid's Fest.

## **MHAJC Membership Drive**

May is Mental Health Month and is also the beginning of our of our Membership Drive. I and the Board Member will be contacting members in the community to support our programing by becoming a member. Membership categories range from \$5.00 to \$25.00. The money helps supports our programming: the "I'm Thumbody Self-esteem Classes for preschool and school age children, our educational programs, and the socials for our clients. If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact Bob at 812-522-3480 or [mhajc@cabjackson.org](mailto:mhajc@cabjackson.org)

## **MHAJC Garage Sale**

The MHAJC Garage Sale will be Friday May 15th from 8:00AM - 6:00PM and Saturday May 16th from 8:00AM - 3:00PM in the Basement of First Presbyterian Church, 310 Walnut Street in Seymour. If you have any items that you would like to donate for the sale, please contact Bob at [mhajc@cabjackson.org](mailto:mhajc@cabjackson.org) or 812-522-3480 before May 13th. The money from the sale will help with our socials and educational programs

## **Our Kids and Suicide: A message every parent should hear**

The Bloomington Local Council of Women are sponsoring "**Our Kids and Suicide: A message every parent should hear**" on **Sunday May 17th from 2:00PM - 4:00PM at Bloomington High School North**. A panel of local professionals and two teenage presenters will discuss this important issue.

**There is no registration required for this event.**

**Panelist:** Becky Rose, MSW LCSW - Director of Student Services Monroe County Community School Corporation, Monroe County Suicide Prevention Coalition Member.

Timothy Donovan, LMHC - Private Practice Therapist

Joel Griffith, MD - Psychiatrist, Bloomington Meadows Hospital

Lisa Davis - Indiana Chapter Director for American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

Two Teenage Presenters

## **HIV CORE Training**

The Indiana Family Health Council in cooperation with the Indiana State Department of Health will sponsor a free in-depth training about HIV facts, risk factors, transmission routes, prevention and treatment options. The training will also provide tools for educating others on HIV facts. **It will be Tuesday May 19th from 9:00AM - 3:00PM** at Scott Memorial Hospital Conference Center. It is targeted for clinicians, service providers, school personnel, church leaders and concerned citizens.

**The training is free; lunch is on your own. Please register before May 11th by sending your information to 812-752-8507 or shannon.carroll@smhl.org. Sign up right away. Training is filling up fast.**

## **Disposal of Medications Appropriately**

All unwanted medications, tablets, capsules and liquids both for human and animal consumption can be turned over to the following locations for safe disposal: Jackson County Sheriff's Department 24 hours a day, Seymour Police Department 24 hours a day, Crothersville Police Department by appointment.

## **Upcoming Events**

### **May 1 - May 29 - MHAJC Display at Seymour Library for Mental Health Month**

May 2 - Freetown Christian Church Sale and Fair, 10:00AM - 2:00PM

May 4 - Free Meal, Community Diner, at First United Methodist Church, 4:30PM - 5:30PM

### **May 11 - MHAJC Board Meeting, Community Agency Building 12 Noon**

May 11 - Free Meal, Community Diner at First United Methodist Church, 4:30PM - 5:30PM

May 11 - Presentation on "Special Needs Trusts", ARC of Jackson County, The Point Family Life Center, Free and open to the public, RSVP arcjacksoncounty@gmail.com or 812-525-7589, 6:30PM - 8:00PM

May 12 - Jackson County United Way Day of Caring

May 12 - Jackson County Drug Free Council Meeting, Community Foundation Building 4:00PM

May 13 - Jackson County Service Council Meeting, Seymour Library, 12 Noon

### **May 15 - MHAJC Garage Sale, First Presbyterian Church, 8:00AM - 6:00PM**

### **May 16 - MHAJC Garage Sale, First Presbyterian Church, 8:00AM - 3:00PM**

May 17 - Training "Our Kids and Suicide" Bloomington High School North, 2:00PM - 4:00PM, Free

May 18 - Free Meal Community Diner, at First United Methodist Church, 4:30PM - 5:30PM

### **May 19 - MHAJC I'm Thumbbody classes at Head Start**

May 19 - HIV CORE Training, Scott Memorial Hospital Conference Center 9:00 - 3:00PM, Free

May 20 - Mobile Pantry, Anchor House, First United Methodist Parking Lot, 10:00AM - 12:00PM

May 25 - Free Meal, Community Diner, at First United Methodist Church, 4:30PM - 5:30PM

June 1 - Free Meal, Community Diner, at First United Methodist Church, 4:30PM - 5:30PM

June 8 - Free Meal, Community Diner, at First United Methodist Church, 4:30PM - 5:30 PM

June 9 - Jackson County Drug Free Council Meeting, Community Foundation Building 4:00PMs

June 10 - Jackson County Service Council Meeting, Seymour Library, 12 Noon

June 15 - Free Meal, Community Diner, at First United Methodist Church, 4:30PM - 5:30PM

June 17 - Mobile Pantry, Anchor House, First United Methodist Church Parking Lot 10:00AM—12:00PM

June 22 - Free Meal, Community Diner, at First United Methodist Church, 4:30PM - 5:30PM

June 29 - Free Meal, Community Diner, at First United Methodist Church, 4:30PM - 5:30PM