

Warren County
Stigma Free Newsletter

STIGMA TIMES

MAY 2024 | VOL 9

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

The Warren County Stigma-Free Communities Initiative is a county-wide program which aims to eradicate the stigma associated with mental illness and substance use disorders. We are dedicated to bringing people together to be stigma-free in order to facilitate inclusive communities and individual healing by bringing awareness, building knowledge and fostering compassion through advocacy.

**WARREN COUNTY
PROUD TO BE
STIGMA FREE**

**Mental
health
matters**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Mental Health Month
What is "Stigma?"
Agency Spotlight
Healthy Activities
Mental Health Resources
Recovery Journey
Upcoming Events
Who to Call



MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

TAKE SOME TIME TO
LOOK AROUND, LOOK WITHIN

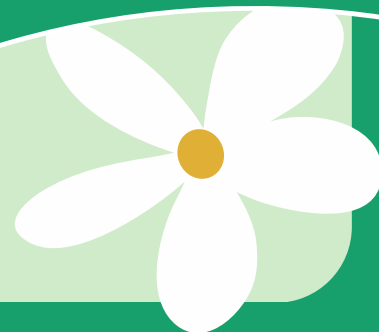
[MHANATIONAL.ORG/MAY](https://mhanational.org/may)

Many factors come into play when it comes to mental health. Take some time to look around and make note of your surroundings, and look within to see how they might be affecting you.

A strong sense of community within neighborhoods protects mental health through shared support, resources, and joy. Be kind to others and be kind to yourself.

If you constantly feel worried or sad about where you live, 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 at mhascreening.org.

Warren County Stigma Free



What is Stigma?

Stigma is a mark of disgrace which results from the judgment by others. When an individual is labelled by their illness they experience judgment and prejudice. Stigma brings experiences and feelings of shame, embarrassment, distress, hopelessness and reluctance to seek or accept help.

As a result, stigma is the primary reason individuals do not seek help when they experience symptoms of mental illness.

“you are”
NOT ALONE
• in this •

If you are interested in learning more about how to get involved in Warren County's Stigma Free Initiative, please contact humanservices@co.warren.nj.us or call 908-475-6331.

Agency Spotlight

Tri County Care Management Organization

Tri County Care Management Organization is a non-profit organization under the NJ Division of Children and Families and the NJ Children's System of Care. CMO's provide intensive in-home care management services without barriers related to income, language, insurance coverage or citizenship.

Tri County Care Management Organization (CMO) takes a family focused and community-based leadership role in supporting the needs of youth in Warren, Hunterdon and Somerset Counties who are experiencing complex behavioral, emotional, social, developmental and mental health challenges. Tri County CMO's work is grounded in keeping youth safe, healthy and connected and keeping families strong. We do this by building support systems comprised of family, friends, and community partners all working towards the same goal. We coordinate services and create plans tailored to every child's individual needs and based on the strengths of all team members involved, in order to positively impact the youth's wellbeing. Ultimately, we aim to empower families with the voice, tools and support they need to be successful by utilizing the Wraparound Model of Care.

When you don't know where to turn, Tri County CMO is here to assist your youth and family. Youth served through Tri County CMO have complicated needs involving significant mental health and behavioral challenges that may show as high levels of anxiety, reactions to past trauma, or acting out through physical aggression or destruction of property. Our youth may also experience depression, perhaps even thoughts of or attempts at suicide. Our care managers will help to identify the specific strategies to be implemented to provide the needed mental health support for the youth so they can be successful in their home, in their school and in their community. Tri County CMO also assists youth with substance use challenges, developmental disabilities, youth involved in the juvenile justice system and youth having challenges with school.



Agency Spotlight

If you know a youth who can benefit from Tri County CMO support, getting started is easy. The first point of entry is contacting PerformCare (NJ's contracted system of care) at 1-877-652-7624 twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

In addition to our care management services, Tri County CMO also provides a wide range of information about support, resources, and services for families in the Tri County area via the Tri County ResourceNet website-www.TriCountyResourceNet.org. You can search for local summer camps, mental health providers, free and affordable events, and more!

Tri County CMO's training department is happy to teach our community of parents and educators the Nurtured Heart Approach. The Nurtured Heart Approach is a philosophy of creating healthy relationships with people in your life. It consists of strategies that assist children in further developing self-regulation and can help transform the way children perceive themselves. This training is offered virtually or in-person and can be done individually or as a group. Check out Tri County ResourceNet to find out when our next training is offered.

For further information or questions, please contact Tri County CMO's information line at 908-526-3900 prompt # 8 or email us at info@tricountycmo.org.

Scan the QR Code to learn more about Tri County CMO!





Healthy Activities

Did you know that Warren County has many activities that are great for your mental health?

Here are just a few:

Walk/Hike or Have a Picnic at one of the Warren County Parks:

- Port Murray Preserve - Morris Canal Green Way
- Oxford Mountain Natural Resource Area
- Mount Rascal Park
- Marble Hill Natural Resource Area - Phillipsburg
- Garret D. Wall Park - Belvidere
- Merrill Creek Reservoir

Fish at one of the Warren County Parks:

- Port Warren Park - Phillipsburg
- White Lake Natural Resource Area
- Lock Street Park - Phillipsburg

Be sure to follow all local and state instructions when fishing.

Visit www.warrenparks.com for additional information!



Check out this article about Forest Bathing before visiting one of the parks!

[Have You Tried Forest Bathing? | Atlantic Health](#)





Mental Health Resources

Mental Health Toolkit:

- [2024 Mental Health Month Toolkit Download | Mental Health America \(mhanational.org\)](https://mhanational.org/2024-mental-health-month-toolkit-download)

Educational Events, Mediation Series, and More:

- <https://www.atlantichealth.org/conditions-treatments/behavioral-health/cultivate-kindness.html>
- **Spanish Edition:**
https://espanol.atlantichealth.org/conditions-treatments/behavioral-health/cultivate-kindness.html?utm_source=tv-screen&utm_medium=print&utm_campaign=mh-awareness-month&utm_content=vanity

Things Likely Affecting Your Mental Health

1. Current Events
2. Loneliness
3. Technology
4. Social Drivers

What You Can Do About Them

1. Find Your Support System
2. Set Tech Limits/Boundaries
3. Change What You Can
4. Find Healthy Coping Skills

Learn more by clicking this link!

[Where to Start 2024 MHA May Toolkit \(mhanational.org\)](https://mhanational.org/2024-mental-health-month-toolkit-download)

Mental Health Resources

Daily Mindfulness Calendar

31 Days of Kindness

Adult Daily Mindfulness Calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
May is Mental Health Awareness Month For information on these topics and more, visit atlantichhealth.org/grow  Atlantic Health System			1 Loving Kindness Practice loving kindness every day for your well-being.	2 Increase Your Kindness Quota Take small steps to increase your kindness and see how it makes you feel.	3 Kindness Everywhere Send loving kindness messages to people you love.	4 Kindness in Hard Places Send loving kindness messages to people who are difficult to love.
5 Kindness for Everyone We can offer kindness even to strangers we don't know.	6 May I Be Safe Start this week with a message of safety. Quietly offer this message to yourself at the start of your day.	7 May I Be Safe In order to feel well, we must feel safe. Look around your space and see if there are areas that could be made safer. Decluttering can increase safety in your space.	8 May I Be Safe Notice if you are watching too much TV or scrolling too much social media. This can increase fears and feelings of not being safe. It's ok to take a break.	9 May I Be Safe Notice your thoughts today. If they are too negative, this can increase false feelings of not being safe. Learn about changing distorted thoughts to more realistic thoughts.	10 May I Be Safe Take action. When worry and fear take over, action can help. Get up and move, join a group, seek out others to make small changes.	11 Be in Nature Take a walk today and notice the ground is there to meet you, the air is free to breathe, the birds are singing.
12 Kindness for Someone You Love Send kindness to someone who took care of you in your life.	13 May I Be Healthy Physical and mental health go together. Take time to care for both this week.	14 May I Be Healthy Check to see if you are up to date on your medical appointments. This will help you take care of your health.	15 May I Be Healthy Take care of your mental health. Notice if you have been feeling down or anxious. You can talk to your medical provider about these things.	16 May I Be Healthy Get moving. Choose something you find fun and do it. Walk, swim, stretch or dance.	17 May I Be Healthy Make a healthy shopping list and try cooking something full of healthy foods.	18 Restore Take some time to sit quietly today. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths before jumping into your day.
19 Nature Look up to the sky and notice the colors all around you. Nature helps us feel connected to the natural rhythm of life.	20 May I Be Happy Happiness can come in small quiet ways. You have the right to be happy.	21 May I Be Happy "Happiness is not in another place but this place" Walt Whitman.	22 May I Be Happy Gratitude helps increase happiness. Try writing down a few things for which you are grateful and see if your happiness increases.	23 May I Be Happy Did you know that healthy boundaries helps increase happiness? Try setting some healthy boundaries on your space, time and resources and see if your happiness increases.	24 May I Be Happy Bring nature inside. Buy yourself some flowers today!	25 Planting Seeds Planting a garden or putting flowers in pots brings joy and happiness. Planting mental seeds of happiness is good for your well-being.
26 Gatherings Social connections are good for our mental health. Look for ways to connect with friends and loved ones.	27 May I Be at Peace Sit quietly today. Let your breath slow down. Repeat the phrases: May I be at peace.	28 May I Be at Peace Notice the places inside that are in conflict. Sometimes we have an argument going on inside our minds. Try writing down both sides and see if a peaceful solution arises.	29 May I Be at Peace When we are struggling with strong emotions, peace can seem far off. This can be a good time to reach out to a counselor to help sort things out.	30 May I Be at Peace Bring to mind a place you felt most at peace; a beach, the mountains, or your cozy house. Just imaging a peaceful place can help increase feelings of peace.	31 Loving Kindness for All Practice loving kindness for yourself and for all beings everywhere.	 Let's Stand Together to Raise Mental Health Awareness

St. Luke's is conducting their Community Health Needs Assessment and is looking for the community's input. Please click the link below to complete the survey, and share with your networks!

[CHNA Survey](#)

Recovery Journey

*Life,
unashamedly, enthusiastically, overwhelmingly
Poured out in episodes of energy,
Release of joy
recovered in strength,
sobriety and steadfast persistence,
The knowledge and understanding
of mysteries unraveled...*

The thought of finding joy in the day to day struggle of living life with a serious mental health condition represents an ordeal that could seem impossible. And yet, in the context of fighting stigma, particularly during this month where we celebrate mental health awareness, learning to embrace the difficulties we all face becomes an essential step in unlocking inner fulfillment.

I have bipolar disorder. It's a condition that requires constant and consistent attention. It's caused turmoil, crisis, and upheaval through the course of my adult life. Though it's usually well-managed through medication and regular treatment, it nonetheless remains an inescapable presence.

That presence doesn't simply exist as a matrix of symptoms and behaviors, though. It manifests itself in unshakable emotion, feelings ranging from doubt even to self-loathing. The nature of living with bipolar disorder is agonizing. It forces me to question my every emotion, each thought, any random inclination; it all warrants scrutiny.

I constantly work to maintain a sense of being grounded and in touch with my senses and perception. Mood swings are often a part of life. But in my case, does such a thing mean I'm ill?

It's not easy to live my life questioning everything that makes me who I am. And yet, there's something quite remarkable about always asking questions: they often lead to answers. So in doing the hard work to maintain my mental health, I can absolutely confirm the vast amount of insight I've been able to tap into: knowledge about my self, awareness of those around me, understanding of the nature of how the world works and all the intricate, intertwined, and commingled patterns of what we call "life."

Considering all that, I suppose I would have to say that living a life of forced reflection and introspection has been an incredible blessing in disguise. If you've read up to this point, you might think this is the part where I say that I wouldn't trade my experiences for anything. That, however, couldn't be further from the truth.

If a genie suddenly appeared and offered me one wish, I wouldn't have to think twice: I'd ask for a normally functioning brain.

In spite of it all, I like to think I've done the best that I could. I've achieved some measures of success to balance my epic failures. And I've learned to value and appreciate some essential things: the importance of family, of community, of living life with a purpose, always striving to give back, and hoping to leave a lasting legacy.

Stigma certainly is a thing that exists, but by experiencing life to the fullest, I do all that I can to break through. Through the trails I've traveled, I try to live, learn, and lead by example.

Recovery Journey

Whether or not you have a mental health diagnosis, or personally know someone who is struggling, or simply want to be a good ally, I hope these reflections help shape your thinking in the same way they've influenced my own life's path.

...Fulfillment found in emotional harvest,

*The bounty a benefit
unleashed by labors
of the heart and mind and soul and body,*

*A balance achieved
as light suppresses shadows
lingering within and among and around.*

The joy cannot be stolen.

*Self-care my self-defense
against twists and turns,
Ups and downs,
Tumultuous toils
traversing the roads less traveled*

I walk the path,

My journey, my joy.



Aaron Hyndman

Chair, Warren County Mental Health Board

The Warren County Mental Health Board (MHB), a 12-member, volunteer citizen advisory group appointed by the Warren County Board of County Commissioners, is responsible for planning, program development, monitoring and coordination of community-based mental health services.



Upcoming Events

REACH Family Health Night

Thursday, May 16 5:30-7pm

Phillipburg Middle School (200 S Hillcrest Blvd. Phillipsburg, NJ)

The REACH Program at the Phillipsburg Middle School will be hosting a Family Health Night featuring community providers, activities, and more!

LGBTQ+ Humility 101 Training

Wednesday, May 15 7-8pm Virtual

The Jefferson Twp. Youth Coalition, in partnership with EDGE New Jersey, is hosting a virtual informational webinar on LGBTQ+ Humility. Participants will learn to be mindful of the use of pronouns, gain insight about stigma, and more. Click here to register:

https://us02web.zoom.us/join/8A6qD_tOJ#/registration

Adolescent & Youth Clinical Training for Suicide Prevention

Thursday, June 6th 8:30am-5pm

Tri County CMO (3040 Route 22 West suite 210 Branchburg, NJ 08876)

Designed for outpatient providers who see youth under 18 years old. Training topics include understanding youth suicide, gathering information & documentation, and more. For more information, please visit SPTSUSA.ORG/NJACTS.

Hackettstown Library First Friday Series

June 7 Mental Health Services 3:30pm

July 12 Health Department 3:30pm

August 2 Addiction Services 3:30pm

Hackettstown Public Library (110 Church Street Hackettstown, NJ)

The Hackettstown Public Library is hosting a First Friday Series throughout 2024 to spread knowledge about the services Warren County Department of Human Services provides. These events are free and no registration is necessary.



Upcoming Events

Wellness Walks

June 9 at Bilby Road 10am

July 21 at Marble Hill 10am

Jennifer Correa-Kruegel, a Warren County Park Naturalist, will be hosting free Wellness Walks at various Warren County parks. The length and time-frame will vary for each. Please contact Jennifer Correa-Kruegel for registration at jkruegel@co.warren.nj.us or 908-763-8013.

Nurtured Heart Approach Training

Wednesday, July 17 10am-1pm, Virtual

The Nurtured Heart Approach focuses on self-regulation, transforming the way children perceive themselves, their caregivers, and the world around them. To register, please contact Nicole Del Duca at ndelduca@tricountycmo.org or text 908-256-0254.

Summer Playground Program

June - August, 2024

Various Locations

The Town of Phillipsburg, Borough of Alpha, Phillipsburg Housing Authority, and Firth Youth Center are partnering to bring the Summer Playground Program to youth! This is a FREE program for Phillipsburg and Alpha youth ages 6-12. An FYC Membership/Emergency Contact form must be completed. For additional information and playground locations, please visit www.firthyouthcenter.com/programs.



Who to Call



Center for Family Services
Family Crisis Intervention
Services

24 hour hotline

908-454-5141

Parent to Parent
Recovery Support Services

908-223-1951

New Hope IBHC
Withdrawal Management,
Short-Term Residential

732-946-3030

Children's Mobile Response
and Stabilization Services
24 hours, 7 days a week

1-877-652-7624

Domestic Abuse & Sexual
Assault Crisis Center of
Warren County Hotline
24 hours, 7 days a week

908-453-4181



Center for Family Services
Intensive Outpatient
Services

908-689-1000

NEW JERSEY ADDICTION HELPLINE **1-844-REACHNJ** **REACH NJ**
reachnj.gov (1-844-732-2465)

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

GET HELP 24/7:

 TrevorText Text START to 678678	 TrevorChat TrevorChat.org	 TrevorLifeline 866.488.7386
--	--	--

THE TREVOR PROJECT
Saving Young LGBTQ+ Lives

 **Veterans Crisis Line**
DIAL 988 then **PRESS 1**

2NDFLOOR
888-222-2228 YOUTH HELPLINE
www.2NDFLOOR.org

→ WHERE TO START ←

Mental Health America has partnered with Happy Color this Mental Health Month to advance mental health awareness through art. [Download the app](#) to find a special collection of color-by-number pictures and spark mindfulness as you care for yourself and others.



**Happy
Color**

