

Warren County
Stigma Free Newsletter

STIGMA TIMES

NOVEMBER 2023 | VOL 7

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**

For more information on the
Warren County Stigma Free Initiative,
please email humanservices@co.warren.nj.us

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Agency Spotlight



The mission of the **Rotary Club of Mental Health Advocates** is to work with the Rotary clubs of District 7475 to bring awareness of Mental Health issues and substance use disorder to our communities. They intend to accomplish this through partnering, collaborating, and supporting organizations and agencies dedicated to Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder.

A relatively new club model, the Rotary Club of Mental Health Advocates is a **cause based** Rotary Club. Unlike traditional Rotary Clubs that align themselves with a community, they align themselves with a cause. In this case, Mental Health. They meet twice monthly virtually but conduct training, presentations and participate in events in person.

Rotary District 7475 is an eighty club, nine county district that includes the counties of Essex, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Morris, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren. The origin of the club goes back to 2019 when a group of Rotarians came together to bring awareness to the Opioid Epidemic. This group, known as CCI (Community Connections Initiatives) conducted in-person and virtual presentations regarding addiction and provided Naloxone training through 2020. Speakers included Morris County Sheriff Gannon, Dr. Joshua Sharfstein from the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins, Sara Whaley, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, Special Agent in Charge Susan Gibson from the Drug Enforcement Agency as well as others.

In 2021, the District declared itself to be Stigma Free on March 24th and issued the District 7475 Stigma Free toolkit. During 2021, CCI conducted or participated in seven Stigma Free Walks. Reducing stigma is crucial to support those in need.

By the end of 2021, it became apparent that all Mental Health concerns should be addressed. A decision was made to start the process of creating a Mental Health Club. An interim satellite club was formed and approved in June of 2022. By the beginning of 2023, the required number of members to charter a Rotary Club, twenty, had been reached. In March of this year, the new club had been approved and chartered by Rotary International.



Coincidentally, this year's Rotary International President, Gordon R. McNally, has made mental health a priority this year and has put out a call to action to all Rotarians.

"As Rotary President for 2023-24, I am placing a special focus on global mental health.

Mental illness and emotional wellness can be difficult topics for anyone to discuss, and I know that there are some places in the Rotary world where those conversations are especially difficult.

I have already seen in my travels around the Rotary world that these conversations foster connection and safety between us. They can help build stronger interpersonal relationships while supporting the well-being of the communities we serve.

As President, I am asking you to help Rotary make progress towards these three critical goals:

1. Erase the stigma associated with discussions of emotional well-being
2. Raise awareness of mental health needs
3. Improve access to mental health services"

- RI President Gordon R. McNally



**Ray & Suzanne Freaney with
RI President Gordon McNally and wife Heather**

The club is currently making club /public presentations and coordinating county wide meetings to address mental health issues and concerns. A meeting for Warren County is being planned for the first quarter of 2024. In September of this year, the Club participated in and supported the First Annual Drug Awareness Day in Phillipsburg.

Bringing mental health awareness, education, and resource guidance continues to be the mission of this diverse club of 25 members. The long term goal is to grow the membership in order to serve the 200 plus communities in their District.

"There has been tremendous interest in our Club from Rotarians across our District. However, members can only belong to a single club. With that in mind, we have established a District Chapter in the Rotary Action Group of Mental Health Initiatives. Membership in the Action Group is open to everyone – Rotarian or not. For those with a background in social work, recovery, therapy or a passion to improve the mental wellness of our communities should consider joining us " says current President Ray Freaney.

Annual Membership in the Rotary Club of Mental health Advocates is \$160.00. The fee to belong to the Rotary Action Group of Mental Health Initiatives is \$10.00 per year.

For more information, please email 7475stigmafree@gmail.com or call Ray Freaney at (908) 803-4602

Veterans Service Officer

Warren County/Division of Aging and Disability Services has hired a new Veteran Services Officer (VSO), Michelle McCloskey. Michelle joins the division with over 10 years of experience in both the federal government and the non-profit sectors working with Veterans and connecting them to vital resources.

Warren County Division of Aging and Disability Services will be following the Veterans Affairs Veterans Service Officer guidelines. Veterans Affairs states a Veterans Service Officer should be an accredited representative and who can help veterans and their families understand and apply for VA benefits such as financial support (monthly payments), education, veteran readiness and employment (VR&E), home loans, life insurance, pension, health care, and burial benefits. These trained VSO representatives can also help with gathering supporting documents (like a doctor's report or medical test results), file a claim or appeal on your behalf, and provide added support, like helping with transportation to medical appointments or emergency funds.

VSO Mission Statement

"To provide quality advocacy for all US Veterans, Armed Forces members, their dependents and survivors, through benefit counseling and programs, claims, and outreach services."

**For more information, please contact
the Division of Aging and Disability Services
at 908-475-6591.**



National Veterans and Military Families Month

Veterans & Military Families Month was established in 1996 by the Armed Services YMCA, with the U.S. Government recognizing the occasion every year since. Each November, the President signs a proclamation declaring November National Veterans & Military Families Month, and with hundreds of thousands of service members deployed overseas, recognizing the daily sacrifices made by active duty, Guard, and Reserve military families has never been more important.



Upcoming Veteran's Events in Warren County:

The Warren County War Memorial Corporation members are having a Veterans Eve Ceremony on November 10 at 6pm at the War Memorial on Second and Mansfield St. in Belvidere.

Two Quilts of Valor will be presented to combat veterans William Tietjen and David Cribb by the Evening Star Quilting Guild members during the ceremony. They cordially invite everyone to attend the ceremony, especially our fellow veterans and their families. A special treat will be given to all veterans there.

The American Legion Carl D. Archer Post 528 of White Twp. is holding a ceremony on 11-11-23 at 11am in the Brookfield Development in White Twp.

Veterans Services

Veterans Crisis Line

24/7, confidential crisis support for Veterans and their loved ones
You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect.
Dial 988 and then press 1

Transportation for Veterans Services

Transportation to medical appointments are available to Warren County Veterans through Easton Coach Company. Call Easton Coach Company at (908) 454-4044 or Toll-Free at 1-866-594-4044 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m at least three working days in advance of the day of the needed trip. Easton Coach can transport to appointments at VA facilities in East Orange, Lyons, Morris Plains, Newton and Allentown, PA.

Veterans Haven North

Veteran's Haven North operates a two-year transitional housing program. The ultimate goal is to support veterans in developing a permanent solution to their homelessness. 908-537-1980 for more information.
200 Sanatorium Rd Suite 101, Glen Gardner, NJ 08826

American Legion

Belvidere

122 Greenwich St, Belvidere, NJ 07823
(908) 475-5133

Stewartsville

323 Greenwich St, Stewartsville, NJ 08886
(908) 619-5301

Hackettstown

450 Willow Grove St, Hackettstown, NJ 07840
(908) 852-9878

Phillipsburg

321 Marshall St, Phillipsburg, NJ 08865
(908) 859-6256

VFW

33 Springtown Rd, Washington, NJ, United States, New Jersey
(908) 689-6762

Holiday Blues

Have you ever heard of the terms "holiday blues" or "seasonal depression?"
Did you know that there is a difference between the two?

Holiday blues are what people usually refer to as the stress and depression that is felt particularly during the holiday season. This usually starts from Thanksgiving until after the New Year. The holiday blues are strictly situational. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is clinical depression that is a result of personal biology. Seasonal Affective Disorder brings many physical and physiological symptoms such as difficulty falling asleep, or sleeping too much, low energy, difficulty with memory, irritability, and/or isolation.



How can we better prepare for the Holiday Blues?

What are some strategies we can use to battle these low feelings that come after the holidays are over and we are back to our usual routine?

- Embrace the joy of the season from within yourself, not from the commercial gift giving aspect. Be generous, not just with gifts but with kindness, laughter, smiles and empathy. Remember others may be going through the same feelings you are.
- Plan ahead! If you feel like you have too many obligations or feel overwhelmed in the crowds, don't be afraid to say no sometimes. Be selective on how you spend your time.
- Focus on the positive. Remember these feelings of holiday blues are temporary and you will get through it!

(Information from PsychologyToday.com article by Rose Sword and Phil Zimbardo)

However, if you need to talk to someone:

Atlantic Behavioral Health- 888-247-1400 (Cost may be dependant on insurance)

Center for Family Services- 908-689-1000 (Cost may be dependant on insurance)

Zufall Mental Health Services- 908-452-5366 (Cost may be dependant on insurance)

Warren County 24-Hour Crisis Hotline - 908-454-5141

Saint Claire's Wellness and Recovery Center of Warren County- 908-477-2100

(Will not deny service for anyone in need based on their ability to pay. Insurance payments will be initiated when applicable.)

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline- 988

Holiday Blues

Discover 10 Habits That Will Help You Maintain Your Mental Health!



1. **Leave worries aside-** Family, work, finances and a series of other problems tend to take away our peace of mind. But losing nights of sleep because of them has never been and will never be the best solution. Do NOT let worries become the center of your life
2. **Dedicate time to yourself-** Even in the midst of the rush of everyday life, it is extremely important to reserve moments just for yourself. Go for a walk alone in the park, go shopping or do something that gives you pleasure.
3. **Prioritize leisure-** Even if your work demands too much, avoid overtime and never give up your vacation. It is extremely important to have rest periods. Only in this way is it possible to refresh your mind and prepare for new challenges.
4. **Practice physical activities-** Practicing physical exercise stimulates the release of various neurotransmitters, which function to provide well-being, eliminate symptoms of anxiety and stress, reduce the risk of mental illness. Choose an activity or sport that brings you pleasure, and practice it at least 3 times a week.
5. **Sleep well-** Getting a good night's sleep is also essential when it comes to mental health. Although each person has a number of hours needed to feel good, it is recommended that this value be greater than 6 hours per day. When insomnia persists, see a doctor so that the use of medication can be considered.
6. **Cover yourself less-** Don't compare yourself to other people, escape from extremely competitive environments, don't follow social standards.
7. **Forget about social media-** With this, comparisons arise to models of "perfect life," displayed by digital influencers and which, in fact, are nothing more than appearances. If using these applications is harmful to you, it may be time to reduce your browsing time or even delete them from your cell phone. Whenever possible, seek guidance from a nutritionist to follow a diet suited to your body's needs.
8. **Get therapy-** Undergoing therapy with a psychologist is a healthy way to organize your thoughts and maintain your mental health. Contrary to what many think, this professional does not only need to be sought when there is a disorder. on the contrary, therapy can be a way to prevent anxiety and depression
9. **Seek Help-** When your mental health isn't where you want it to be, it may be time to seek medical help. Look for a professional you trust and request assistance. Mental illness deserves to be investigated and treated appropriately.

Written by Victor DeSousa in consultation with Sabrina Costa



The Warren County Stigma Free Committee wants to share some of their favorite things to do to get through the holiday blues!

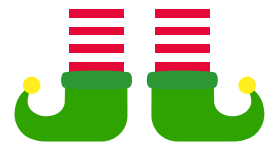


The holidays can be tough! Sometimes just listening to music or putting on a happy movie can help you to relax

Finding a dog-friendly Christmas Tree Farm so my pup can join the festivities-
Stephanie



I enjoy watching holiday movies-my favorites include "Scrooged" "Love Actually" and "Elf"- Jessica.



Any Christmas songs sung by Harry Connick Jr or those that are from the 1980s-like "Last Christmas, I Gave You My Heart"- Jessica



Throw blankets - who doesn't love cuddling up on the couch wrapped in a blanket next to the fireplace? Whether I'm watching a cheesy Hallmark Christmas movie or a classic like "It's a Wonderful Life" and "Miracle on 34th Street," I am definitely in my happy place.- Samantha



I love decorating the tree with my family, and seeing everyone's decorations around the neighborhood. -Keely



I love all of the classic Holiday songs such as "Let It Snow!", "Rocking Around the Christmas Tree". Spotify has a really good playlist called Christmas Classics!- Keely



I love going to Koziar's Christmas Village in Bernville, PA every year.-
Jessica

I like to begin the Holiday Season by watching "Planes, Trains, & Automobiles" on Thanksgiving and then several viewings of "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" and "Elf" in December!- Cindy

I like to ice skate on the lake and watch Christmas movies with my family- Nicole



autumn word search



C	I	D	E	R	D	L	P	U	M	P	K	I	N
Y	P	U	K	E	I	P	R	E	T	A	E	W	S
E	A	P	Y	E	H	S	I	Y	K	R	C	R	E
K	P	I	I	A	O	T	U	I	E	I	Y	L	A
R	E	N	M	E	P	O	A	M	T	K	P	F	A
U	K	U	L	R	N	O	F	E	P	P	A	R	A
T	A	H	U	R	D	B	K	A	A	E	I	O	O
A	H	K	O	T	A	A	H	P	L	L	M	T	L
I	I	C	B	L	R	N	R	F	H	A	Y	R	R
E	A	N	S	N	I	I	A	A	F	E	R	K	S
H	O	L	I	D	A	Y	S	L	E	E	E	A	C
K	O	A	L	K	Y	Y	Y	L	P	C	R	R	A
Y	S	O	O	A	O	I	A	U	I	F	R	E	R
R	Y	S	L	L	K	A	C	E	T	R	E	E	F

- FALL
- TREE
- SWEATER
- SCARF
- BOOTS
- RAKE
- PIE
- HAY
- APPLE
- HOLIDAYS
- ACORN
- CIDER
- TURKEY
- LEAF
- PUMPKIN



color me!



Upcoming Events

Telling Your Own Story, Beginning Your Advocacy Journey November 11 at 9am-12pm

Center for Family Services

492 Rt 57 W, Washington NJ 07882

Presented by Juliet and Aaron Hyndman of NAMI Warren County, guiding you in creating a concise and compelling version of your story that will serve as the springboard for your advocacy. Please contact Susan Whitehead at susan.whitehead@centerffs.org to register.

Bridges of Hope November 12 at 1pm-3pm

Pilgrim Presbyterian Church

750 Belvidere Road, Phillipsburg NJ 08865

Presented by Juliet and Aaron Hyndman of NAMI Warren County, a program designed to bring awareness about mental illness to people of faith, to equip them with tools to become strong safety nets of welcoming communities for persons affected by a mental illness and their families. Please contact Pastor Rich Gelson, 908-914-2042 or revup2015@gmail.com to register

Addiction and Recovery Information Program November 16 at 6pm

Trinity House, 212 E Moore St, Hackettstown, NJ 07840

Sponsored by Centenary University, Hackettstown Stigma Free Task Force, Atlantic Health Medical Center. Contact Kerry Mullins Kerry.Mullins@CentenaryUniversity.edu for more information

Healthy Beginnings- Free Community Baby Shower November 18 at 12pm-3pm

Phillipsburg Early Childhood Learning Center

459 Center St, Phillipsburg, NJ 08865

Open to new and expectant mothers or anyone planning to become pregnant soon. Siblings and partners are also welcome! No registration is required. Food and resources available while supplies last. Questions? Contact Margie Ramirez, Zufall Health Case Manager, at 973-879-1928 or mramirez@zufallhealth.org

Recovery Stressors at the Holidays Program November 30 at 6pm

Trinity House, 212 E Moore St, Hackettstown, NJ 07840

Sponsored by Centenary University, Hackettstown Stigma Free Task Force, Atlantic Health Medical Center. Contact Kerry Mullins at Kerry.Mullins@CentenaryUniversity.edu for more information

Narcan Training December 13 at 6:30pm

EnVision Center

545 Fisher Ave, Phillipsburg NJ 08865

The Opioid Overdose Prevention Program provides individuals at-risk for overdose, their families, friends, and professionals with naloxone kits, education and training on how to prevent, recognize and respond appropriately to an opioid overdose. Contact pclark@mcpik.org for more info

Warren County Department of Human Services
& Community Partners

PROJECT HOMELESS COMMUNITY CONNECT

Are you homeless?

At risk of becoming homeless?

In need of services?

**WEDNESDAY,
JANUARY 24, 2024
10:00 am - 2:00 pm**

*** No Cost**

*** Free Lunch**

2 LOCATIONS:

**St. Philip & St. James
Church**

(Mercy Hall)

**430 South Main Street
Phillipsburg, NJ 08865**

AND

Trinity Church

(Starr Hall)

**213 Main Street
Hackettstown, NJ 07840**

Available Services/Resources:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| ◆ Social Services | ◆ Health Screening |
| ◆ Senior Services | ◆ Mental Health & |
| ◆ Housing Assistance | Substance Use |
| ◆ Various giveaways | ◆ Veterans Services |
| ◆ Transportation Info | ◆ Community Agency |
| ◆ Free Flu Shots | Resources |

**FREE ONE-DAY EVENT TO
PROVIDE A BROAD RANGE
OF SERVICES FOR PEOPLE
EXPERIENCING, OR AT
RISK OF EXPERIENCING
HOMELESSNESS.
NO I.D. REQUIRED**

***SNOW DATE: JANUARY 26, 2024
PLEASE CALL (908) 475-6331 TO CONFIRM**