



THE STIGMA FREE ZONE NEWS OF NJ

Bringing the Mental Health Conversation to New Jersey

We report on a volunteer initiative of organizations, nonprofits, schools, libraries, hospitals, First Responders, and houses of worship working independently or with local government to make NJ free from the stigma of mental illness. Anyone can form a SFZ Task Force to educate. Just pledge to "do something about mental illness."

ASSEMBLY, No. 3926
STATE OF NEW JERSEY 218th
LEGISLATURE
INTRODUCED MAY 10, 2018

Sponsored by: Assemblyman HERB CONAWAY,
JR. District 7 (Burlington)

Assemblywoman PAMELA R. LAMPITT District 6
(Burlington and Camden)

Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY District 7
(Burlington)

Co-Sponsored by: Assemblyman Benson,
Assemblywoman Valerie Huttie, Assemblyman
Verrelli and Assemblywoman McKnight.

Requires public schools to administer written
screenings for depression for students in
certain grades.



Assemblywoman Carol Murphy Supporting

Mental Illness Screenings in NJ Schools

By Cynthia Chazen

Very rarely will a politician personalize their experiences for their constituents. But Assemblywoman Carol Murphy (D) of NJ's 7th Legislative District is out there, in a most amazing way. As soon as we connected via phone, Assemblywoman Murphy was enthusiastically answering my questions as only a true mental health advocate could. I called to ask her why she was tweeting about mandating mental health screenings in school for NJ students in grades 7-12. She countered with the latest stats about teen and youth suicide, and citing concern over the growing numbers of young people dying. As a legislator, she said, her mantra is "Education is the resolution of all things." She spoke passionately about improving mental healthcare and was open about coming up in a family with a mentally ill mom, and her own past dealings with anxiety, that she added, "are 100% in control." I was inspired by her bravery and forthrightness in making such a personal statement. "We have to remove the stigma and talk about mental health," she replied, nonchalantly.

NJ A3926 aims to lessen suicide and aid treatment of teen depression, and Murphy said, "I want to do as much as I can to combat this, parents can't do everything for their kids". It's her hope that the required screenings will get youngsters who are developing serious mental illness into treatment as soon as possible ; a lofty goal, when we consider it has been proven it takes, on average, 10 years for people with serious illness to find help. She said with kids in school 8 hours a day, "It's natural to have school personnel as partners in this [screening]," adding "We have to take away negative labels ... mental illness means someone is sick."

I asked if she had further plans to get NJ to follow the lead of states like NY and Virginia in mandating a state mental health curriculum. She said that she has been meeting with mental health educators in school settings and talking with other legislators and she is "100% sure we will be doing more work in the area of mental health." A3926 was introduced by Assemblyman Herb Conoway: who Murphy noted used to be a primary care physician. It is also supported by Assemblywoman Valerie Huttle, who has been an active supporter of the Stigma Free Zones in Bergen County since their inception.

Since serious mental illness develops in mid-late teens in boys, and early twenties in girls, having our high schools and colleges actively screening for developing illness, and referring teens to medical treatments and family and personal education (in a way that doesn't make the sufferers fear they will lose educational opportunities) is a great challenge for all going forward. But, if you think like Carol Murphy, you know moving towards these goals is the right thing to do, and will ultimately save lives.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Around 2007, I adopted a dog and named him Boo Boo. He has enhanced my coping skills and is the love of my life. I try to get out of my apartment as much as possible and usually bring him. When I receive bit parts in the acting field in Manhattan, any time I go out he's here welcoming me at the door when I return home. It makes life so much better. I still have my dream of a family of my own with my dog and bigger acting parts. Although, for now, this will do.

Joseph DeSanctis
Bergen County



NJ LIBRARIANS AIM FOR GREATER MENTAL HEALTH INCLUSION

By Cynthia Chazen

Ordinary citizens probably never consider how often librarians brush up against the worlds of addiction, homelessness, and untreated mental illness. I learned recently that this actually happens quite often. As public institutions that exist to help, libraries are often approached by persons in crisis, families in crisis, or just by peers who hope to find their troubles reflected somewhere in print. NJ's library system now recognizes that they have as much a part to play in fighting stigma as social workers, healthcare providers, and other public servants.

Len Lopinto, of the Paramus branch of BCCLS, has been an involved SFZ member for many years, supporting the display of mental health resources, and as an event host. He said, "Stigma free training has helped library staffers to be more empathetic to the needs of all, creating equality among all library visitors." The Ridgewood branch has also recently designated itself as an official Stigma Free Zone. Overall, NJ libraries are becoming more openly inclusive for persons with mental health challenges, and more accessible to those seeking mental health information.

Sara Rimassa, Children's Librarian and the Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Librarian at the Fort Lee Public Library, spoke to The SFZ News. On the topic of mental illness she said, "The topic isn't discussed much among librarians, but recently I have seen an uptick." She explained a recent national trend where libraries are hiring social workers as staff in order to better understand the needs of clients looking for mental health and social service information. While LCSW staff is not yet widespread in NJ, Rimassa said the East Brunswick library is now partnering with Rutgers Social Work students in order to better serve their diverse population. Sara also noted we can expect more mental health events soon at many libraries in the region.

Sara recently reached out to other NJ librarians after a recent rash of celebrity suicides convinced her to ask : "What can libraries do to help stop this pattern?"

Her suggestion - "We can start by helping to erase the stigma our communities have [against] people suffering with mental illness." Sara was concerned by a lack of representation of individuals with mental illness, and too little stock on topics such as suicide, on the local library shelves.

In an email to colleagues she wrote, "People of all ages—including children—need to be exposed to this topic. Though there may be push back to have these topics featured in children's literature in our collections, it is necessary to remove stigmas of mental illness early. It goes without saying that books are not substitutes for actual conversations between adults and kids. But books can and should be catalysts for, and important components of these conversations."

To help libraries expand their collections on the topic of mental illness, Sara, with Kristin Nelson of the Fairview Library, working with assistance from the BCCLS Diverse and Underserved Populations Committee, created the following book lists :

- [Alone in the Dark](#)
- [Best Picture Books for Mental Health](#)
- [Children's Fiction on Depression and Mental Illness](#)
- [29 YA Books about Mental Health that Actually Nailed It](#)
- [Suicide and Depression in YA](#)
- [30 Powerful Books About Depression](#)
- [6 Novels Featuring Mental Illness for World Suicide Prevention Day](#)
- [11 Books That Will Change Your Perspective on Mental Illness](#)
- [10 Books That Will Change Your Perspective on Mental Health](#)

According to Len Lopinto, "Libraries are the perfect place to help support the stigma free movement as we are the heart of the community where all gather."

The SFZ Mission, after all, is to educate locally about mental illness and stigma. Our hearty thanks and congratulations to Sara, Kristen, Len and all the others who are reaching out and helping to make NJ's libraries more inclusive and stigma free!

[Contact Us About a Free SFZ Library Subscription.](#)

Mental Health First Aid

Allwood Branch Library

44 Lyall Road, Clifton, NJ 07012

October 6th and October 13th 2018

Time: 10:00am to 2:00pm

Course is for adults 18+...What you will learn:

- How to recognize signs of mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, psychosis and addiction
- How to approach and support someone in a mental health crisis until appropriate professional help arrives
- How to be supportive, diffuse the situation, and encourage professional help
- Understand what to do if someone is suicidal, harming themselves, or refusing help

Become certified in this five-step process which includes; assessing risk, respectfully listening to and supporting an individual in crisis, and identifying appropriate professional help and other supports.

A commitment to attending the ENTIRE 8 hours is required. This course is typically \$170, but being offered for \$25 to residents and community leaders as part of the Clifton Stigma-Free Initiative. *bagels and coffee will be provided in the morning *working lunch – please bring your own lunch

To register contact: leon@mhapassaic.org or [CLICK HERE](#)





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Visit us at: www.asapnj.org

**33rd Annual ASAP-NJ Conference
February 28-March 1, 2019
Call for Speakers**

Dear Colleague,

The Association of Student Assistance Professionals of New Jersey (ASAP-NJ) is now accepting applications for speakers for our annual conference on **February 28-March 1, 2019**, with an early registration and networking event in the evening on February 27. The conference, entitled *Stressed for Success: Helping Students Find Balance*, is designed to provide participants with the highest level of professional development, with a simultaneous emphasis on rejuvenation and wellness.

We are interested in all topics that are relevant to school-based counselors. Common themes include: substance abuse, mental health issues (anxiety, depression, eating disorders, self-injury, etc), bullying and social aggression, and any related therapeutic approaches that can be used in counseling or school-wide programs.

The conference will be held at the *Ocean Resort in Atlantic City, NJ*.

If relevant, there will be opportunities to showcase your services/programs at an exhibition table, and/or sell any books or programs that you would like to promote.

In order to be considered to facilitate a session, please complete the application at:

<http://www.event.com/d/hbq7r3/4W>

APPLY NOW for your participation to be considered in this important event! **The deadline for applications is November 1, 2018.**

If you have any questions or would like to confirm your interest while completing the application process, please contact either of us at the address below. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Kathleen Ketofsky (kketofsky@mountsaintmary.com)
April Lutzky (amcgrath@brrsd.k12.nj.us)

ASAP-NJ Conference
Speakers Committee Co-Chairs



Mental Health Editor @cynchazen · 4/30/18

Who can I talk to about mental illness today?

#Keeptalkingmentalhealth

#normalizetheconvo



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Bergen County Children's Interagency Coordinating Council
CIACC Education and Mental Health Liaisons

Emotional Wellness...World of Resources



Free workshop for Bergen County Schools and Community Based Organizations

Agenda for October 12, 2018 Training

- 8:30 - 9:00 - Registration
- 9:00 - 9:10 -- Welcome and Introductions - Maureen Kerne
- 9:10 - 9:30 -- CIACC Liaison 101 - Who, What & Why of the CIACC Liaison Project - Maureen Kerne (Region V) and Michele Hart Loughlin (BC MH Coordinator)
- 9:30 - 10:45 - Promoting Wellness in Children and Adolescents
Justin R. Misurell, Ph.D., NYU CSC (see page 2)
- 10:45 - 11:00 - Break
- 11:00 - 12:00 - NYU CSC Presentation continued
- 12:00 - 12:45 - LUNCH --- *Bring Your Own* - there are limited options nearby
- 12:45 - 2:45 - Speed Resource Networking
 1. Round Robin Resource Connections - [rotate around each resource table]
 2. Employment Resources- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Bergen One Stop Career Center
 3. Basic Needs and Benefits - Bergen County Board of Social Services
 4. Housing & Homelessness Prevention - McKinney Vento Homeless- Diahann Ruggerio & BC Housing, Health and Human Services - Julia Orlando
 5. Substance Abuse Resources- Keith Robertson, Student Assistance Counselor
 6. Emotional Wellness and Stigma-Free in Schools - Suzanne Bassett, Tenafly School District
Including, Emotional Wellness School Assessment - Lorraine Gehrig-Mullins, Care Plus Mary Davey, West Bergen
 7. Children's System of Care- Bergen's Promise-Christa TenCate
Mobile Crisis - Jaime Arlia (Care Plus)
Family Support Organization- Ro Lobretto
 8. Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCPP-formerly DYFS)- Sandra Parente
 9. Truancy and Division of Family Guidance Resources- Kristen Ambrosio and Stephen Carenza
 10. Things You Can Do *Now* for Students - EPIC youth group - Shelley Stuart,
Youth Mental Health First Aid - Stephanie Hartman, Dating Violence Prevention -ADV,
Nurtured Heart - Nikki Chiarello, LGBTQIA Programs - Sue Heugy (Care Plus)
- 2:50 - Wrap-up - Evaluations, PD Certificates

To register go to www.regionv.org, login-regionv, password-1234. Click on interregional tab to register.

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ALL OF OUR LINKS ARE LIVE !

STAY CONNECTED



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