

Suicide Prevention Awareness Month



THE STIGMA FREEZONE NEWS OF NJ

Bringing the Mental Health Conversation to New Jersey

We report on an initiative of volunteers, 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 local SFZ Task Force, no permission required. Just pledge to "do something about mental illness."



NJAMHAA: THE VOICE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION IN NJ AND BEYOND

It's September, people! Down to business!

The latest mental illness policy outcome? Check. What's new in healthcare in NJ? The latest legislation? Check. Need an answer to an addiction treatment question? Check. Check. Check. Debra Wentz, CEO of trade association NJAMHAA (NJ Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies) has the answer. This unassuming, soft-spoken woman lives her work through her heart, and runs one of the tightest non-profit ships in the state. She's truly one of my favorite people in NJ mental health, and the advocate I look to for guidance and information. Under Debbie, NJAMHAA is the voice of a population, concern for the untreated and an eye towards a safer, healthier future for all of NJ, not just NJAMHAA agency clients and their families.

In other words, NJAMHAA has got your back! (In a professional, upstanding way, of course).

The trick to this interview was focus. This member agency of NJ service providers in Mercerville encompasses addiction and mental health treatment, housing, social services, food, legal assistance, social security information, disability rights, advocacy, and policy. According to Debra, their role is "Advocacy and policy leadership at the state and national level to help members serve and function more efficiently and have easier access to resources needed."

NJAMHAA represents a NJ mental health and addiction workforce of 61,000 professionals. Add the clients their members service, and the people whose lives and work they touch; the number of people helped and served expounds geometrically. Additionally, they are involved with many innovative programs such as NJ Practice Groups that bring workers from agencies together to problem-solve pressing issues, and they help other countries recover from disaster under their *Sri Lanka Mental Health Relief Project*. Their outreach is truly astounding.

I asked Debra what is encouraging in the world of NJ mental health *and the news was very good, indeed*. On April 11, Governor Murphy signed the NJ State Parity Bill ensuring all state insurance companies can not treat mental illness differently from any other disease state. It expands former coverage and was updated to reflect the DSM-V (the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual that serves as a descriptive text of psychological disorders for treatment providers, worldwide). "It's policy is up to date and inclusive," she said. Asked if the bill will be enforceable, Debra told me there is a new component in the bill; the NJ Department of Banking & Insurance will be responsible for enforcement.

Ignoring my snide comments about the exceptional history of banking regulation and enforcement, Debra addressed the welcome rise of *integrated care* in NJ (incorporating mental health/addiction treatment into primary and general healthcare settings versus these services standing alone). " We feel [integrated care] is the model of the future," she said. She explained a 2017-2019 pilot program creating CCBHCs, Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics, which provide 24/7 crisis availability without geographical restrictions. Studies showed an improved access to more/better services (especially in the hiring of more staff, prescribers, and addiction specialists, which has been a trouble spot for years).

NJ was one of 8 states in the US to receive a grant to create these clinics. "We hope the current success leads to legislation to expand the scope and duration of the program," said Debra.

When asked about stigma, Debra admitted "Stigma runs deep," but eluded back to recent history saying, "What could be more stigmatizing than denial of care? Happily, we are making progress." "Education is a process and it takes time," she added hopefully, "I've seen people change attitudes towards HIV, and

cancer. Now we are seeing people share about mental illness and addiction in a more positive way. We need strong advocates."

Debra believes, as I do, that everyone can fight stigma just by being supportive, understanding, and kind to the people they encounter struggling with mental illness or addiction, and simply talking about issues rather than denying them.

Behind every great woman is another great woman (at least at your average social service agency). Shauna Moses, V.P. of Public Affairs & Member Services, also spoke to The SFZ News of NJ. She reminds our readers "NJAMHAA is a go-to organization for the media on mental illness and addiction issues." She also loves that her agency is supporting people, and for her part, she serves on a board of AIR; a NJ agency providing service animals and mental health education to schools. For Shauna, personal advocacy means involvement. She lost a close relative to suicide and turned to involvement for healing. "It's really therapeutic to educate and advocate. You help yourself by helping others," Shauna said. She has been instrumental in setting up the upcoming NJAMHAA September 23 conference, "Story Tellers" for Suicide Prevention Month. It sounds like a great event with information on suicide prevention in children, musical performances, therapy animals, and lots of healing stories. Carole Johnson, Commissioner, Department of NJ Human Services will provide the Opening Remarks.

Well done, NJAMHAA: thanks for all the help!

[REGISTER FOR SEPT 23 STORY TELLERS CONFERENCE](#)

[HEAR SHAUNA'S STORY ABOUT ADVOCACY](#)



Present:

Seventh Annual Suicide Prevention Conference

Story Tellers:

It's **Never** too Early
to Talk to Children
about Mental Health

September 23, 2019
at HOPE Tower, Hackensack Meridian Health Jersey
Shore University Medical Center
1945 Route 33, Neptune, NJ 07754

Co-Sponsored by:



Hackensack
Meridian *Health*
Carrier Clinic



American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention

New Jersey





AG Gurbir Grewal @NewJerseyOAG · Aug 6

Today, we're issuing the "Officer Resiliency Directive," a first-of-its-kind statewide directive to promote mental and emotional resiliency among NJ's police officers.

Cops have our backs, and we need to have theirs.

Read more: bit.ly/2YKGJFf

12 replies, 26 retweets, 64 likes



AG Gurbir Grewal @NewJerseyOAG · Aug 6

Our resiliency directive helps NJ's officers by:

- Reducing stigma for mental health issues
- Creating a statewide resiliency training program
- Establishing POCs in every NJ police dept
- Appointing a "Chief Resiliency Officer"

Together we can do this.

3 replies, 6 retweets, 13 likes



NJ FIRST TO PROMOTE LAW ENFORCEMENT MENTAL HEALTH PROTECTIONS

Newark – Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal today took steps to protect the physical and emotional well-being of New Jersey law enforcement officers by ensuring that they are provided with the tools they need to cope with the unique stressors of their jobs.

Addressing a rise in reported police suicides nationwide, Attorney General Grewal issued a law enforcement directive – known as the “Officer Resiliency Directive” – implementing the New Jersey Resiliency Program for Law Enforcement (NJRP-LE), a first-in-the-nation statewide program to train officers in resiliency and to become better equipped to handle the daily stress of police work that, when left unchecked, may lead to physical ailments, depression, and burnout.

In so doing, New Jersey will become the first state in the country to require that all state, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies designate a Resiliency Program Officer (RPO) who will be specifically trained in resiliency.

As part of the Directive, Attorney General Grewal announced the creation of a “Chief Resiliency Officer,” who will be responsible for ensuring implementation of the statewide program. Attorney General Grewal announced that he had selected Robert Czepiel, the Chief of the Prosecutors Supervision and Training Bureau in the Division of Criminal Justice, as the state’s first-ever Chief Resiliency Officer, who will be responsible for overseeing the statewide program.

“We cannot fully comprehend the emotional and mental stress that our law enforcement officers suffer on a daily basis,” said Attorney General Grewal. “We owe it to them to not only combat the stigma associated with seeking help, but also to give them the tools they need to deal with the stress and trauma they endure. It is our hope that this first-in-the-nation program will serve as a first line of communication allowing officers to unburden job stresses and provide them with the support they deserve. We can no longer allow them to suffer in silence.

[READ THE ENTIRE STORY ON THE STATE OF NJ WEBSITE](#)

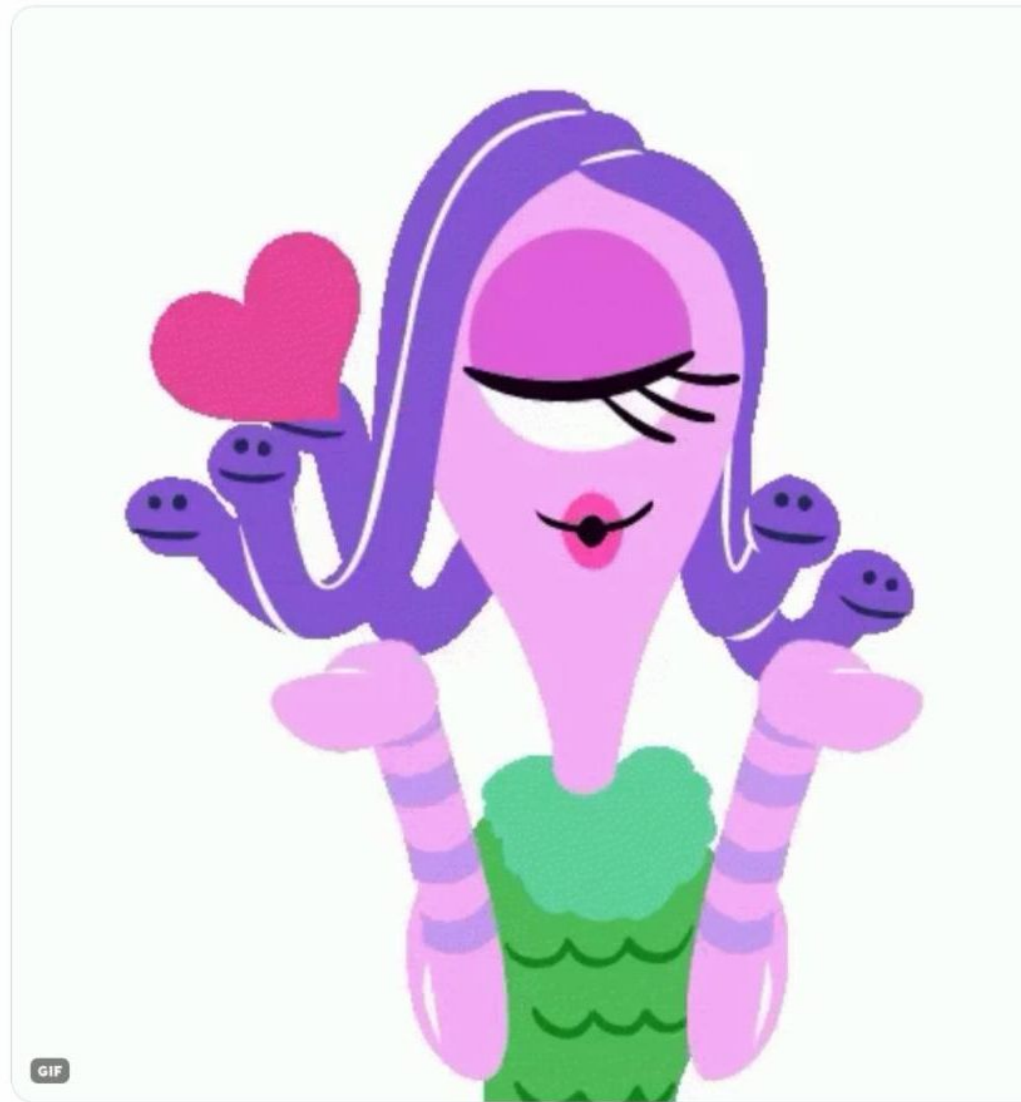


Mental Health Editor @cynchazen · 6/20/17

I will keep tweeting this til day it gets 100 likes:

People w mental illness are not bad people.

[#stigmafree](#) [#brain](#) [#disorders](#) [#epatient](#)



4

62

186



QUICKLINKS TO NEWS

[Mental Health For Us: Presidential Candidate Positions on Mental Health](#)

[Cision PR Newswire: "Mental Health for US"
Launched Ahead of 2020 Election Season](#)

[Scientific American: Anorexia May Be Linked to Metabolism](#)

[Somerset County: Seeking Performance Artists for Diversity Festival](#)

[Morris County: Stigma-Free Morris:
Butterfly Release Marks Overdose Awareness Day](#)



Is Proud to Present



FIRST ANNUAL

A WALK TO REMEMBER: Lives Lost to Addiction

Together We Can Raise Awareness, End the Stigma,
& Honor the Lives of Our Loved Ones

Sunday

October 27, 2019 - 10am

**Westvale County Park
Westwood, NJ**

**Registration will be open
July 30th - September 30th
AinRWalk.org**

**Be sure to Register and reserve
your t-shirt and personalized poster!**

For more information visit
AinRWalk.org
Visit our website
AlumniInRecovery.org
Contact us at:
info@alumniinrecovery.org



[REGISTER TODAY](#)

NJ Department of Human Services
Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Presents Its Annual

Suicide Prevention Conference
Health Care Communities:
A Crucial Setting for Suicide Prevention

September 10, 2019

9:30 AM - 3:15 PM

Trenton War Memorial, 1 Memorial Drive Trenton, NJ 08608

Keynote Speakers



Virna Little, PsyD, LCSW-R
Dr. Little is a nationally and internationally known specialist in the integration of health and behavioral health services from Concert Health and Center for Innovation in Mental Health at the CUNY School of Public Health, NY.



Shawn Christopher Shea, MD
Shawn Shea, MD, Founder and Director of the Training Institute of Suicide Assessment and Clinical Interviewing, is an internationally acclaimed workshop leader and innovator in the field of Suicide Assessment and Prevention.



Frank Ghinassi, PhD
Dr. Ghinassi is the President and CEO of Rutgers The State University of New Jersey, University Behavioral Health Care. He has extensive clinical and administrative experience working with health care systems.

We welcome primary providers, emergency department staff, first responders, and anyone interested in learning how to screen, assess, intervene, and refer patients at risk of suicide.



In Their Shoes™ exhibit by Attitudes In Reverse®



NJ Department of Human Services

Phil Murphy, Governor | Sheila Oliver, Lt. Governor | Carole Johnson, Commissioner



ALL OF OUR LINKS ARE LIVE

STAY CONNECTED



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