



## THE STIGMA FREE ZONE NEWS

Bringing The Mental Health Conversation to NJ

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**We report on an initiative of volunteers, nonprofits, schools, libraries, hospitals, First Responders & houses of worship working independently or with local government to free NJ from the stigma of mental illness. Anyone can form a SFZ Task Force, no permission required. Just pledge to "do something about mental illness."**

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## THE POWER OF SUPPORT GROUPS IN OVERCOMING SELF-STIGMA

By Cynthia Chazen

I didn't know substance abuse disorder (SUD) was defined as a mental illness. But in the DSM, a handbook titled *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* which is used in health care as *the authoritative guide* to diagnosing mental disorders, it is listed.

SUD often has roots in mental illness. A large percentage do not realize they have mi (a very real symptom known as *anosognosia*). People, especially kids and teens, will deny or misunderstand a developing mental illness, instead seeking comfort in alcohol or other substances to the point they also develop SUD. In mental health circles, this is known as a *dual diagnosis*.

According to Carolyn Davis, Coordinator at the NJ Self-Help Group Clearinghouse in Atlantic County, the self-stigma persons attach to having a mental illness or a dual-diagnosis requires our immediate attention. "Folks with serious conditions like schizophrenia often self-medicate and it totally exacerbates their symptoms, sometimes setting up them up for a cycle of hospital to institution, or even incarceration" she told *The SFZ News*. "And persons with SUD don't want to be defined as mentally ill," she added, "they often self-stigmatize to the point where they won't seek help." Young men, whose mental illness typically appears in late teen years, are impacted hard by these unfortunate circumstances. So are people in poverty, or in rural areas without easy access

to mental illness treatment. Working in a silo, mental illness treatment programs won't magically overcome barriers as strong as addiction or self-stigma. *More is required.*

It's support groups that help people accept their challenges and learn to cope.

For who wants to admit they are addicted, mentally ill, or both? Such hard truths would be beyond the grasp of most: especially youth, or someone lost in the grip of an addiction. Sufferers, families, and even professionals need to be educated on overcoming their strong attitudes creating barriers to treatment. Carolyn sees having a dual-diagnosis "makes people feel even more diminished, it makes them feel even more *less than*." The unlucky bear marks of shame and guilt from failure at school or problems within families. Society still blames the dual-diagnosed and addicted for bringing their problems "upon themselves." This stigma must be eradicated.

Every addiction program must include ruling out mental illness as part of their recovery plan. The invisible roots of SUD sprouting up from the soil of mental illness (perhaps compounded by anosognosia) is still underemphasized. For the sufferer, it's a really hard row to hoe.

There are so many problems related to addiction and mental illness that require support. Carolyn wants you to know about the NJ Self-Help Group Clearinghouse, a collection of professional and peer-led support groups with contact information for over 8,600 groups across the state. "SHC groups are based on people's successes, not shame," she said. "We talk about stigma, but to me it's the most prevalent barrier." Sharing experiences and finding camaraderie is vital to recovery. But Carolyn wonders, "Is it a lost art?" She emphasized real-life groups must be made available to kids, *and they need encouragement to join*. In her experience, she sees young people trying to get by via social media interactions, further isolating themselves.

"It [talking with others] used to come more naturally to people," she said. "Younger folks are so vulnerable and the drug epidemic is so serious ... and people keep leaning on something they think is going to solve their problems." Fixing a problem this complicated falls to all of us.

Luckily, everyone can help.

If your agency, school, house of worship, or group sees struggling persons who might benefit from a support group, contact Carolyn. She provides free presentations on starting groups, and guidance for facilitators. Facilitators who run existing groups may also benefit. She can share ideas to help sustain interest, keep things fresh, add new activities, and attract new members.

"Being in a group is often life-changing," she said, "that goes for the facilitator, too."

**Carolyn Davis is at 1-609-652-3800 or [cdavis@mhanj.org](mailto:cdavis@mhanj.org)**

Some of the groups recently launched include:

- Caregivers for Alzheimers (Cape May County)
- Emotional Freedom (Ocean County)
- Emotions Anonymous (Morris County)
- Faith-based Families of Persons with Mental Illness (Union County)
- Parents of Children with ADHD (Middlesex County)
- Shoplifters (Essex County)

**Visit The Clearinghouse**

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# Mentorship and mental health cited as priorities at Madison High School

By JESSE WINTER Staff Writer 22 hrs ago 0



[Read The Whole Story at NJ Hills Media Group](#)

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[FROM THE TWEET DECK](#)

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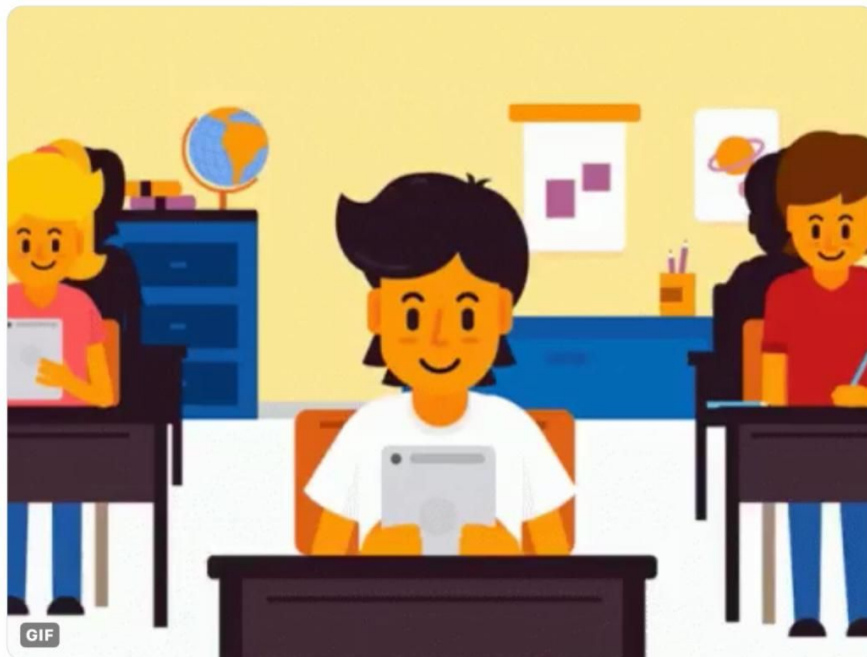
**Mental Health Editor** @TheMHEditor · 10/1/19

Just heard a new term for the first time:

Mental Health Literacy.

I love it! Let's all aim to be better educated and prepared to discuss mental illness in an informed and more respectable manner.

End Stigma. RT about mental illness.



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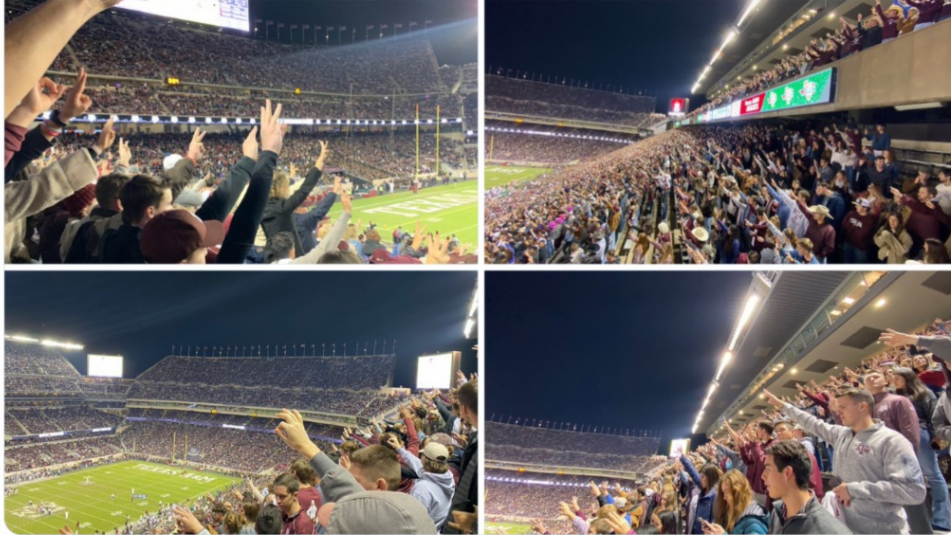


**HHK Stigma Free** @HHKStigmaFree · 56m

If you don't know the story behind the SC quarterback [@ryan\\_hilinski](#), please check it out. His family and [@HilinskisHope](#) are spreading a powerful message of supporting **mental health awareness** and [#EndTheStigma](#). [twitter.com/tamu/status/11...](#)

**Texas A&M University** @TAMU · 1d

Aggie fans held up three fingers at the start of the third quarter, showing support and solidarity with [@UofSC](#) starting quarterback Ryan Hilinski and his family. #SEC



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**2NDFLOOR** @2NDFloorNJ · 11/11/19

Whatever issue you're going through we're here to listen. Call/Text [@2NDFloorNJ](#) 24/7 at 888-222-2228. [#njyouth](#) [#youthhelpline](#) [#mentalhealthmatters](#) [#awareness](#) [#education](#) [#support](#)

ABOUT US	HELPLINE	MESSAGE BOARD
2NDFLOOR is a confidential and anonymous helpline for New Jersey's youth and young adults. We are here to help you find solutions to the problems that you face at home, at school or at play.	If you are between the ages of 10 and 24, live in New Jersey, and need to talk about an issue or problem that you are facing call 888-222-2228 anytime or text us at 888-222-2228.	<p>Nov 10, 2019, 1:44 a.m. <b>stress</b> <a href="#">View thread in forum &gt;</a></p> <p>Nov 10, 2019, 12:24 a.m. <b>grades</b> <a href="#">View thread in forum &gt;</a></p>

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## QUICKLINKS

[Governor Codey Offers Free School Workshops](#)

[NJ Patch: Westfield Declared 'Stigma-Free Zone'](#)

[MorristownGreen.Com: Patient charged with NY Eve Murder at Greystone](#)

[Stigma-Free Morris County: Skating Discounts for Youths and Families](#)

[Law.Com: NJ Judiciary Forms Mental Health Advisory Committee](#)

[CarePlus Workshop Jan 24: Mitigating the Psychological Effects of Lock Downs: Interventions for Schools](#)

[NJ.Com: NJ Schools Failing After Teen Suicides](#)



## SMART 2ND GRADERS NEVER DUCK THEIR MENTAL HEALTH!

From the Mental Health Association of Passaic County

Passaic County students never duck their mental health! They recently took the I.C. Hope – Don't Duck Mental Health Program from MHA Passaic. The free program teaches coping skills, explores mental health and feelings, and identifies where to go for help, if needed.

The curriculum includes a story with dance, an interactive discussion, plus students get to make an I.C. Hope duck puppet! I.C. Hope has a bandaged head to symbolize mental illness is real and treatable, and he has a life preserver around his neck to signify every life is worth saving.

MHA Passaic hopes to continue more early intervention programs for children in 2020, in addition to expanding existing counseling, support groups, and advocacy efforts.

Visit MHA Passaic



8 a.m. to 8 p.m.,  
seven days a week

## Callers can expect to receive:

- Support seven days per week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Assistance with a personal wellness and recovery plan
- Relapse and overdose prevention tools
- Access to recovery, wellness and treatment resources
- Access to medication assisted treatment (MAT)

For more information,  
visit [NJPeerRecovery.com](https://NJPeerRecovery.com)

This service was created for qualified Horizon NJ Health members, but no one will be turned away.

**Living with substance use or in recovery?  
Get help from someone who has been there.**



**Free, confidential peer support.**

Call **1-833-422-2765 (TTY 711)**  
8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week

Connecting through  
shared experience.

[NJPeerRecovery.com](https://NJPeerRecovery.com)





**American  
Foundation  
for Suicide  
Prevention**

New Jersey

# Community Ambassador Program

*We are looking for dedicated individuals to represent AFSP in communities throughout New Jersey.*

## What Does a Community Ambassador do?

We are a national organization organized by regionally based chapters and mobilized by volunteers. In New Jersey, we cover all counties and need ambassadors to help bring our programs into those communities. We do NOT provide crisis hotline or mental health therapy/counseling services.

Our community ambassadors will actively seek out opportunities for AFSP to "table" or have a presence at local events, i.e., street fairs, craft fairs, local special events, Wellness fairs at High Schools, universities and corporations.

They will represent AFSP at these events giving the community information on who we are, what we do, and where resources are available.

As a community Ambassador you will receive an Ambassador kit which includes:

- AFSP Hope Tee-Shirt to wear at events.
- AFSP Tablecloth
- AFSP brochures and walk information
- Wristbands/and/or other AFSP branded items to be used as give-a-ways

To apply to be a New Jersey Community Ambassador please visit:  
<https://afsp.wufoo.com/forms/skll0mq0sp954j/>

**Elizabeth Roithmayr-Clemens**  
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[www.afsp.org/newjersey](http://www.afsp.org/newjersey)

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We're all ears!**

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