

# PROUD TO BE STIGMA-FREE



## THE STIGMA FREE ZONE NEWS OF NJ Bringing the Mental Health Conversation to New Jersey

We report on a grassroots, 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."



### Interfaith Roundtable on Mental Health Awareness

#### Exhibitors

- Alternatives to Domestic Violence  
Sian Millard
- Bergen's Promise/Bergen ResourceNet  
Kathy Werheim
- CarePlus NJ  
Jerry Lozano-Rivera and Ashley Morollo
- Center for Hope and Safety  
Nicole Henriquez
- Children's Aid and Family Services  
Sara Huskling
- Comprehensive Behavioral Healthcare  
Patrice Iuzzolino
- Jewish Family & Children's Services of Northern N.J.  
Jessica Plescher and Michael Dworkin
- New Bridge Medical Center  
Dr. Maria Mora
- Michael Nicholas  
Author of "Imagining Things: Inside the Mind of a Schizophrenic"
- Vantage Health System  
Janice Driver
- West Bergen Mental Healthcare  
Mary Doney and Aly DePuch
- YCS (Youth Consultation Service)  
Janis Endo and Barbara Michals

Thank you for your participation and support!

### Interfaith Roundtable on Mental Health Awareness Caring for Our Children and Youth in Anxious Times

Wednesday, November 4, 2018



Sponsored by  
**Pastoral Care Team**  
Central Unitarian Church in Paramus  
*A stigma-free / mental health religious community*



# THE TOXIC CULTURE IS REAL

## NJ FAITH LEADERS EXPLORE YOUTH ANXIETY

By Cynthia Chazen

Faith Leaders, School Administrators, and Non-Profit Leaders working with children met in Paramus last month to discuss the rising rate of mental illness among NJ youth. The Panel, comprised of persons representing different faiths, was led by Reverend David Horst of Central Unitarian Church ; the state's first stigma-free faith community. CUC's Pastoral Care Committee organized the event.

Bergen County's Maureen Kerne, Director of Region V Council for Special Education, stated, "The mental health of kids is presenting now as the greatest concern for NJ educators." All panelists agreed they have seen a rise in mental illness among youth. Educator Mohammed Habehh described the Passaic County Muslim community as "knee-deep" in efforts to better understand mental illness and educate. He shared that they are working furiously in the Islamic Centers to create more resources. Despite this, he told of kids reaching out in secret for mental health services after being stigmatized by their families.

Paula Rozner, Community Outreach Social Worker at Jewish Family Services in Teaneck, said she has seen an increasing number of 10-13 year olds self-harming or expressing suicidality - with a real action plan attached. She hears kids speaking up about cyber bullying, social media and the age-old need to just fit in.

Who, or what can we blame? Technology is at fault, it was agreed, when it replaces human interactions. Every technological exchange is a stand-in for an opportunity to practice social skills and make real connections. And it's enveloping modern kids in a sense of isolation. Jim McCarthy, Principal at St. Peter Academy in River Edge, added the lack of family time and structure that has been with Americans for decades is still churning out "kids starved for family interaction." He stressed peer playtime creates skills such as self-control and decision-making, which he believes are being taken away because parents are over-involved in children's sports and social activities. He sees loneliness among youth as widespread. Antonio Riveras of Comprehensive Behavioral Healthcare, echoed McCarthy's concerns and said he views children's inability to develop social skills as "leading to a lack of frustration tolerance for self and others." He also cited exhausted, low-income parents and the economy as mitigating factors also building up mental illness rates.

Diana Bermudez, Parent Outreach Facilitator at Hackensack H.S, added that the "recent uptick in fear of the government over potential family deportations" is hitting her community - hard! The H.S. reaches out to children of immigrants with offers of counseling. McCarthy noted, "Kids don't know what to make of the current culture."

While the afternoon's panel and subsequent round table discussions may have unearthed more questions than they answered, Reverend Horst summed it by saying "the toxic culture is real," and "it is a scary time to be a kid." Bermudez added, " To help ... we must focus on what we have in common, all faiths share hope for our communities." Maybe Jim McCarthy put it best when he said, "If you're in the business of helping, and you've lasted for some time ... then you must have faith."

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STIGMA-FREE  
ENTER HERE »  
ZONE

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PODCAST WITH CYNTHIA CHAZEN

## MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS TO BE A GLOBAL CONVERSATION

*"There are so many facets that have yet to be explored, discussed, and understood. It's everyone's responsibility who is passionate about mental health to help make this world a better place for those who struggle."*

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BeyondYourPastRadio.com



**Matthew Pappas** @BeyondYourPast · 5d

Stigma Free Zone - A chat w/ Mental Health Editor @cynchazen goo.gl/mCQEnM #MentalHealth #Podcast - An initiative to create open dialogue & break down barriers of mental health and how you can get involved.  
@MHNRRNetwork #depression #anxiety

### SFZ MISSION DISCUSSED IN PODCAST



**Get Help 24/7**

**SERVE AND PROTECT**

**Confidential  
First Responder  
Crisis Line**

**CALL 615-373-8000**

**CHAT ON WEBSITE**

### **National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders**

**ANAD Chapter holds 2 free bi-monthly support groups**

*"Come for support, information, and a chance to meet with others choosing to recover from an eating disorder. A concurrent group is held for your family and friends who wish to support your recovery. Adolescents are welcome. The free groups are facilitated by experienced Eating Disorder Professionals, Recovered Leaders, and Parents who have helped their child recover from an eating disorder."*

**1st Saturday Morning of every Month 9:30 to 11:00 A.M.**

**THE SAINT BARNABAS AMBULATORY CARE CENTER**

**200 South Orange Avenue, Livingston, across from Livingston Mall**

**We meet the 2nd Saturday of the Month**

**Barbara Reese, LCSW, CEDS-S, Coordinator (973) 783-2292, #3**

3rd Saturday Morning of every Month 10:00 to 11:30 A.M.  
HACKENSACK MERIDIAN UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER  
30 Prospect Street, Hackensack, NJ.  
Room G.O. 14 at J Sanzari Children's Hospital  
Pia Jacangelo, LCSW, Coordinator (917) 921-6948

[ANAD WEBSITE](#)

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**CALL FOR STUDENT ADVOCATES !**

**The SFZ initiative invites them to share their achievements at the upcoming Bergen County Stigma-Free Symposium.**

**How are students in your community or school changing things to eliminate stigma?**

**What initiatives have your students made to create stigma-free cultures of caring and mental health awareness?**

**How have the students tackled the link between substance use and undiagnosed/untreated mental illness?**

**We want to hear from your students! Bergen County invites them to share their achievements at our annual Stigma-Free Symposium. Hearing students will inspire others to take real action to bring Stigma-Free Zones to life in bigger and better ways across Bergen County... and beyond !**

**RSVP ASAP if your students are interested in presenting on Tues., Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> from 9a.m. – 11a.m., at Biaggio's in Paramus.**

***If you know of a student group that should be invited to present, please forward this email.***

**Michele Hart-Loughlin, Division Director**

**201-634-2745**

**MHARTLO@CO.BERGEN.NJ.US**

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**QUICKLINKS TO NEWS & RESOURCES**

**MERCURY TEAM: PEER SUPPORT FOR NJ FIRST RESPONDERS**

**COP 2 COP : NJ CRISIS LINE**

**NJ.COM: NJ TO OVERHAUL HOW IT TRACKS POLICE  
FORCE FOLLOWING NJ.COM INVESTIGATION**

**NJ.COM: NJ HAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST RATES OF DEATH IN COUNTY  
JAILS**

**HIGH FOCUS WEBSITE : NEW EATING DISORDERS PROGRAM**

**COURIER POST ONLINE: THE SAD STORY OF TARA MURPHY,  
"UNFORTUNATE" ANCORA PATIENT**

**COURIER POST ONLINE: HERE'S WHAT NJ IS DOING  
TO FIX ITS PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS**

**NJ HERALD: MORE LEEWAY FOR STATES  
TO EXPAND INPATIENT MENTAL HEALTH**



**Stigma Free Morris  
Essay Contest for  
Jr. High and H.S.  
Students**

**[READ ENTIRE STORY ON MORRIS CTY WEBSITE.](#) Posted: 04 Dec 2018 08:16 AM PST**

**Two \$250 Prizes Offered by Stigma-Free Initiative Member and Sponsor:  
Boonton United Methodist Church & Montville United Methodist Church**

**A countywide Stigma-Free essay contest is underway in Morris County, with separate categories for junior high school and high school students who are encouraged to write about the stigma surrounding mental illness and addiction, and to offer some ways to encourage students and other county residents to come out of the shadows and get the help they need.**

**Submission Deadline: December 31, 2018**

**Who can Participate: Any junior high school (grades 6-8) or high school student (grades 9-12) attending school in Morris County.**

**Award: Two awards of \$250 — one each for a grade 6-to-8 student and a grades 9-to-12 student. A \$150 Amazon gift card will go to each selected student and \$100 will go towards a project selected by each student to further eliminate the stigma of issues, such as mental health disorders, substance use disorders, or others.**

**Primary Essay Topic: Write a 1-2 page essay (double spaced, 12-pt. Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins) on how a stigmatized issue, such as a mental health disorder or substance use disorder, has impacted you or those you**

know personally, and what suggestions you might offer to your community to help lessen the negative impact of the stigma surrounding the issue.

**Two Additional Short Writings:** In addition to and separate from your essay, using no more than 100 words, describe why is it important to be stigma-free. Also, using no more than 200 words, describe a project you would like to initiate to help eliminate the stigma attached to any of these issues, if you were awarded the prize.

Submissions should be emailed to Pastor Donald Kirschner

[pastordonaldk44@gmail.com](mailto:pastordonaldk44@gmail.com)

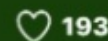
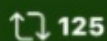
In your email, please include your name, grade level, and what school you attend when submitting your essay and short writings.



**Mental Health Editor @cynchazen** · 12/16/16

Dear Santa,

I want mental illness to be discussed, respected, treated, researched and funded at the same rate as cancer. K ?...





Raising Awareness And Providing Hope

## **TO BE OF SERVICE**

### **THE MISSION OF AIR**

**By Cynthia Chazen**

Nancy Labov created AIR (Alumni In Recovery), a volunteer, peer-led group focused on substance abuse education, to raise awareness of recovery. Very "out" with her own past struggles, Nancy's experiences intersect: a personal history of drinking and a long service career as a nurse and rehab counselor. Perhaps this led to her oft-cited motto, "To be of service is a cornerstone of recovery."

Nancy grew up with a dysfunctional family; struggling with alcohol, depression, and a sense of shame and isolation. Such stories were way too familiar in the 1970's. She says she was a "major party girl" in high school, and thought little of it until a DWI brought her around to sobriety, aided by her sister, who was also in substance abuse recovery at the time. Nancy has been involved in advocacy ever since.

Mirroring the outcomes of our own Stigma-Free Zone events, Nancy reports AIR programs give participants "permission to talk," and their current offerings give solace and outreach to grieving parents and education to kids grades 7-12. Kids in health classes love the peer-led program and ask thoughtful questions, Nancy reports, on topics as wide-ranging as cannabis legalization and mass incarceration.


I asked Nancy if she sees mental illness as a risk factor for substance abuse. "At AIR, we can't help but address it," she replied, "it's such a chicken and egg thing." She believes anxiety drives addiction, and people self-medicate instead of seeking treatment when they are uneducated about mental illness. Stigma is a big barrier.

To schedule the free, peer-to-peer led AIR program at your school, contact Nancy. They serve Passaic, Essex, Middlesex, and Bergen Counties.

[www.alumniinrecovery.org](http://www.alumniinrecovery.org)

**For more info call (201)741-6409**



Association of Student Assistance Professionals of New Jersey 

P. O. Box 373  
Allenhurst, N.J. 07711  
(732)202-2686

Visit us at: [www.asapnj.org](http://www.asapnj.org)

The Association of Student Assistance Professionals of NJ (ASAP-NJ) announces an open call for exhibitors for their upcoming conference *"Stressed for Success - How to Help Students Find Balance"* on February 28-March 1, 2019 at the Ocean Resort in Atlantic City. There will also be a special evening networking event and early registration on February 27. ASAP-NJ is looking for agencies, programs, and related resources from across the state to showcase services!

[Exhibitor Information Here](#)

[Register For Conference Here](#)



## Mental Health First Aid

Join the movement.

**January 12th & January 19<sup>th</sup> 2019**  
**Clifton Memorial Library**  
**10:00am to 2:00pm**

**Course is for Passaic Residents 18+**

Become certified in a five-step process : assessing risk, respectfully listening to/supporting an individual in crisis, and identifying professional help. Cost \$25.



A commitment to attending all 8 hours is required.

[To register click here](#)

973-478-4444 ext.116 [rleon@mhapassaic.org](mailto:rleon@mhapassaic.org)

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ALL OF OUR LINKS ARE LIVE !

STAY CONNECTED

