

THE VOICE

SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Does the Mental Health Association *really* help people?

You probably know that the Mental Health Association in Niagara County provides mental health services to individuals and families who live in Niagara County – but what does that mean? Are we really helping people?

As the Executive Director of the MHA, I owe it to our clients, collaborators, and funders to take a hard look at our programs and services to see if we are really benefitting the clients we work with, and, being good stewards of the funds, largely provided by the County's taxpayers, that allow us to work with those who need our services.

To answer my own question from above, I can honestly report that YES, we are really helping people! The examples of how we have positively impacted individuals living with mental illness would take up all of the space in our newsletters for the next decade or so. I won't get into all of the stories from our clients. However, I do think it's important to point out that what we do does in fact, change lives!

I'll share my own personal story as an example of our positive influence on the clients we serve by telling you about an interaction I had with one of our clients on my second day on the job two years ago (Has it been that long? There's an old saying that if you enjoy what you do, you'll never work a day in your life – and that is the case for me here at the MHA). I was walking through our reception area and saw a young lady sitting there while waiting to speak with one of our staff. I introduced myself as the new Executive Director, and she told me her name and that she had been involved with the MHA for a couple of years now, and we exchanged pleasantries. Seeing as she had been a somewhat long-tenured client of ours, I asked, "Well, you must get something positive out of our agency since you've been coming here for a couple of years?" The young lady's demeanor turned from cordial and casual to very serious. She proceeded to look me dead in the eyes and tell me, "If it wasn't for the MHA, I would have jumped off of a bridge years ago."

Needless to say, as it was my second day on the job, this was a powerful first impression on me of the impact that the MHA has on some of the folks we work with.

Whether it's providing friendship and recreational/social activities to lonely and socially isolated individuals through our Compeer Niagara program, or providing free childcare to worn out parents who have children with a mental health diagnosis, or providing temporary housing and peer support for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, or helping people through their mental health struggles at one of our many support groups, I am proud of our staff that do the heavy lifting to make our county a better place for those living with a mental health diagnosis.

Daniel Colpoys
Executive Director



SEPTEMBER IS
SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

There are an average of 130 suicides each day in this country. Suicide was the second leading cause of death for people ages 10-14 and 20-34. In order to create awareness and strengthen the fight against suicide, the entire month of September is Suicide Prevention Month.

In recent years, society has become more open and receptive to discussions and conversations on suicide. However, there is still a stigma surrounding it and, with suicide rates increasing, it still means that the right help is not reaching people on time and we have a long way to go. It's one of the fastest-growing epidemics around the world — The estimated number of suicide deaths in the United States rose to nearly 50,000 in 2022.

Every year during National Suicide Prevention Month in September, mental health advocates, survivors, friends and family, and mental health organizations across the country and around the world share their experiences and work towards eradicating this most tragic act.

| Call, Text, or Chat
Anytime



Suicidal thoughts can plague anyone, regardless of age, gender, or social status. Commonly linked to depression, there is no foolproof indicator of suicidal tendencies. Many people suffering from depression or suicidal thoughts cover them up quite well.

In recognition of Suicide Prevention Month, the MHA will be participating in the local Out of the Darkness Walk on Saturday, September 16th at Whirlpool Park in Niagara Falls.

The walk will begin at 11am.

We will have an outreach table set up with giveaways.

There will also be a speaker from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP).

If you would like to participate, contact our Executive Director, Dan Colpoys, at 716-433-3780 or dcolpoys@mhanc.com.

The walk is free, although donations are encouraged.

All money raised goes to the AFSP.

My Mental Health: Do I Need Help?

First, determine how much your symptoms interfere with your daily life.



Do I have mild symptoms that have lasted for less than 2 weeks?

- Feeling a little down
- Feeling down, but still able to do job, schoolwork, or housework
- Some trouble sleeping
- Feeling down, but still able to take care of yourself or take care of others



If so, here are some self-care activities that can help:

- Exercising (e.g., aerobics, yoga)
- Eating healthy
- Engaging in social contact (virtual or in person)
- Talking to a trusted friend or family member
- Getting adequate sleep on a regular schedule
- Practicing meditation, relaxation, and mindfulness

If the symptoms above do not improve or seem to be worsening despite self-care efforts, talk to your health care provider.



Do I have severe symptoms that have lasted 2 weeks or more?

- Difficulty sleeping
- Appetite changes that result in unwanted weight changes
- Struggling to get out of bed in the morning because of mood
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest in things you usually find enjoyable
- Unable to perform usual daily functions and responsibilities
- Thoughts of death or self-harm



Seek professional help:

- Psychotherapy (talk therapy) — virtual or in person; individual, group, or family
- Brain stimulation therapies
- Medication(s)

If you are in crisis, call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org, or text the Crisis Text Line (text HELLO to 741741).

For help finding treatment, visit [nimh.nih.gov/findhelp](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp)

www.nimh.nih.gov

Follow NIMH on Social Media @NIMHgov



The MHA receives financial support from the Shaun Rocco Foundation. Proceeds from this basketball tourney go to the Foundation, so that they can further their mission of bringing awareness to mental health in our community through financial support and education.

CHARITY EVENT

in support of
Mental Health Awareness & Suicide Prevention

**HUGE Basket Raffle | Chiavettas BBQ | 50/50 Raffle
3v3 Basketball Tournament**

Shop the raffle online starting 7/15 OR in person on 9/16!

4th Annual

PASS THE ROCC

Basketball Tourny & Fundraiser

www.passtherocc.com

Scan QR code
for more info



**SATURDAY 12 - 6:30 PM
SEPTEMBER 16**



**PRO TRAINING
BASKETBALL**

**875 EGGERT DRIVE
NORTH TONAWANDA, NY**

Can't make it? Shop our baskets online
ahead of time using the QR Code



The MHA offers FREE educational presentations to any groups in Niagara County that would like to learn more about the following mental health-related topics. These groups could include: businesses, community-based organizations, houses of worship, schools, or any group that wants to learn about mental health. If you don't see a topic below that meets your needs, we can create a presentation to meet your needs.

Depression and Suicide

Learn about the warning signs of depression and suicide, the associated risk factors, and what you can do to help.

Anxiety and Stress Management

Learn healthy ways to cope with stress, reduce its harmful effects, and prevent anxious feelings from becoming too overwhelming.

Bullying and Building Healthy Relationships

Build the social-emotional skills needed to treat others with respect and dignity, and to prevent violence.

Conflict Resolution

Learn how to resolve conflict by communicating clearly and working through the stages of problem-solving.

Mental Health and Wellness 101

Gain basic knowledge of mental health to help reduce stigma and promote wellness, healthy behaviors, and recovery.

Social Media and Cyberbullying

Gain a basic understanding of how social media affects self-esteem and mental health in youth, and learn about the risks and prevention of cyberbullying.

PowerPoint presentations will be sent to the host prior to the presentation. Presentations are 30 minutes to an hour based on topic, preference, and time constraints. These presentations can be combined or altered by request based on age of the audience and preference of the host. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact the **Community Education Director, Breanna Lockhart, at blockhart@mhanc.com or by phone at 716-433-3780 ext. 309**



THE COUCH:

Compeer Niagara has a free, safe, and comfortable space for
Niagara County
Tweens & Teens!

Spend time with friends, make new friends, and hang out!
Movies, videogames, board games, art supplies, and snacks will be available.

**EVERY WEDNESDAY OF
THE MONTH
2:30-6:30pm**

The Mental Health Association in
Niagara County
36 Pine Street
Lockport, NY 14094

**SECOND FRIDAY OF
THE MONTH
3-6:30pm**

Red Brick Schoolhouse
325 Onondaga Street
Lewiston, NY 14092



Participants can arrive and leave at any time during program hours.

Call Compeer Niagara at the MHA @ 716-433-3780

or email Tara Porter, Compeer Niagara Director @

tporter@mhanc.com for more details.



Compeer | Niagara

Mental Wellness Starts With Friendship

We want to thank staff, Gloria Ferraro, for filling the Compeer Niagara Assistant role during the last seven months. Gloria's commitment and contributions ensured continued quality programming while allowing us time to find our new Compeer Niagara Assistant. We are happy to share that Gloria will continue on as a Compeer Niagara Volunteer along with returning to her role as CE&R Assistant. Gloria's dedication will continue to benefit the Niagara County community.

Be sure to check out our updated Compeer Niagara page on the MHA Website and tell your friends, too! It gives information about becoming a member or volunteer. While you're on the internet- be sure to like and follow the MHA Facebook page - Compeer Niagara will be posting weekly content beginning this Fall. We'll be including submissions from our members, such as the youth participant feature, William's Quiz Questions! Be sure to check out all the fun and participate in our interactive posts.

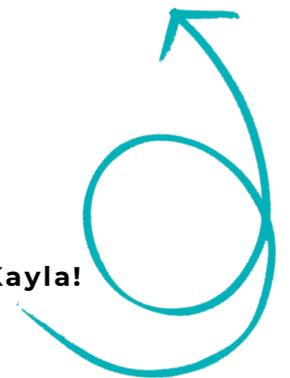
Come be a part of the awesomeness known as Compeer Niagara!

Please join us in welcoming our new Compeer Niagara Program Assistant, Kayla Snyder!

Kayla has been a Western New Yorker for 3 years now. She is currently studying psychology with an interest in social work at NCCC and has experience working with both youth and seniors. In her new role, she is excited to connect with everyone from youth to "there's not enough room on the birthday cake for that many candles". Kayla finds enjoyment spending time in nature and being active, along with staying in and watching a good movie. Now that she is a part of Compeer Niagara (and as long as "Go Bills" is her "have a good weekend"), we know she'll enjoy her time with the Niagara County community.



This is Kayla!





COMPEER NIAGARA MEMBER, TIM, SAVED THE DAY WITH HIS INCREDIBLE HUMOR ON OUR COMEDY CRUISE.



COMPEER NIAGARA MEMEBERS, TRENT AND TOMMY, EXPERIENCED SO MANY "FIRSTS" DURING DINNER AT THE FIELDSTONE!



COMPEER NIAGARA YOUTH, JOLINA, SHARES HER AWESOME CHALK SKILLS AT OUR SUMMER PARK DAYS.



COMPEER NIAGARA MEMBER, TRISHA, AND DIRECTOR, TARA, HAD A BLAST ENJOYING A CONCERT AT DARIEN LAKE.



COMPEER NIAGARA MEMBER, WILLIAM, KEEPS OUR MINDS BUSY WITH QUIZZES!

MHA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DAN COLPOYS, HAS JOINED IN ON THE FUN AND IS THE CURRENT "UNOFFICAL" CHAMPION. NOW WE'VE DECIDED TO BRING THE FUN TO ALL OF YOU! WILLIAM'S QUIZ QUESTIONS WILL BE FEATURED ON OUR MHA FACEBOOK PAGE ONCE A MONTH AS PART OF OUR NEW COMPEER NIAGARA WEEKLY CONTENT! BE SURE TO LIKE AND FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO JOIN IN ON THE FUN!



COMPEER NIAGARA MEMBERS BEGAN PAINTING ROCKS TO PLACE AT THE MEMORIAL TREE HONORING OUR LONG TIME VOLUNTEER, ERIC. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO HONOR OUR FRIENDSHIP.



INVEST • in your • MENTAL - Health -



Executive Director Daniel Colpoys pictured receiving donation from Dominique Restaino and Daniel Keleher of Niagara's Choice Credit Union.

BIG THANK YOU'S TO THESE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT DONATIONS (\$100+) TO THE MHA IN 2023:

- WILSON CENTRAL MUSIC PARENTS ASSOCIATION
- NIAGARA FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT
- ALIX + BRIAN HUTCHISON
- TOMPKINS FINANCIAL
- GREATER NIAGARA MECHANICAL INC.
- MATTHEW NATALI
- VEEVA SYSTEMS
- TERRI ARENDAS
- JAMES + KAREN GRUNDY
- NIAGARA'S CHOICE CREDIT UNION
- RONALD CARRIGAN
- JOHN MADDEN
- JASON PARRY
- REID'S DRIVE IN

