



MHAPGC Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 1

Winter 2011

Mental Health Association of Prince George's County

MHAPGC MOUNTS EFFORTS TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH IN THE SCHOOLS

MHAPGC convened in January the first meeting of the association's Task Force on Mental Health in the Schools. At this kick off meeting, attendees collaborated on identifying mental health issues in the schools, discussed "what works" in the school system, and explored strategies for supplementing and improving mental health services in the schools. Many levels of mental health care for students were represented at the meeting, which included Robert V. Hull, Karen Lynch, Valencia Sullivan-Williams and Robert Bolden, all from Prince George's County Schools; Donald Shell, Prince George's County Health Department; Sally Dorman, Maryland Dept. of Education; Norman Epstein, University of MD; Donald C. E. Ferguson, Uniformed Services University; and Mary Lehman, Prince George's County Council. MHAPGC Board Members included Jeanne Washburn, Jeanne Scammon, Martha Mihaly Black and Kadie Jalloh.

The next meeting of the Task Force will be held on March 2. Please contact us if you wish to be involved.



Task Force Members on Mental Health In the Schools discuss county schools' mental health needs and resources.



FROM THE BOARD

Martha Mihaly Black, PhD, President

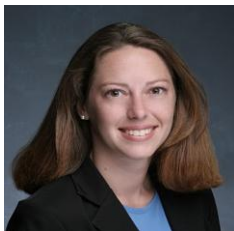
The Board of Directors of the Mental Health Association of Prince George's County has recently welcomed two new members. We are fortunate, indeed, to add these energetic and experienced individuals to our ranks! Kadie and Alyssa have enthusiastically "jumped into" the work of the Association and we welcome their input and guidance.

We are excited about the work we have recently begun, and are making plans for additional events and activities in the year ahead. You'll see a report about our recently established Task Force on Mental Health in the Schools on page 1. On page 3 you'll find information on our upcoming seminar in navigating mental health benefits. A complete list of area support groups is included on page 8. We'll be attending the annual Maryland State legislative briefing on mental health affairs in March, and we have begun to make plans for Mental Health Month in May. Information about these and other MHAPGC events are also posted online at www.mhapgc.org

Finally, please, please renew your membership dues. We are fully reliant on your financial support. Don't hesitate to contact me with your ideas and suggestions at martha.mihaly@gmail.com

Stay healthy and warm.

Kadie B. Jalloh, APRN, MSN, CRNP has been a registered nurse and has worked as a behavioral health nurse since 1993. She currently works as a case manager with Laurel Regional Hospital's Adult Partial Hospital program and as a Nurse Practitioner at the New Beginnings Youth Development Program in Laurel - a District of Columbia government facility. Kadie is involved in humanitarian services for children in Sierra Leone and looks forward to pursuing a doctoral program in Nursing. She enjoys sewing and spending time with her husband and two children, ages 16 and 18.



Alyssa Martin brings a vast amount of volunteer and organizational experience to the Mental Health Association. She has worked as a counselor in emergency financial assistance programs and as case manager and counselor for clients in recovery. Alyssa has wide experience in assisting the homeless population and in fundraising and outreach. We have already benefited from her publicity skills! Alyssa is busy as a Realtor, volunteer case manager, and bartender and plans to obtain her Masters in Social Work at the University of MD. In her free time she enjoys reading, cooking, live music, and spending time camping and rock climbing.

**MHAPGC
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
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CAN YOU HELP?

MHAPGC is frequently asked for copies of our comprehensive “Open the Door” resource brochure, a pocket-size guide to community mental health and social services. Please consider making a donation to support reprinting of this much-needed resource.

Navigating the Maze of Mental Health Benefits

Stymied about the availability of mental health benefits that you are entitled to? Unsure of where to go for help in getting the benefits that you qualify for? Wondering how the Affordable Care Act will impact your mental health care? MHAPGC will be offering a **Spring Seminar** that will provide information and guidance on gaining and accessing mental health benefits for consumers. We will have a benefits administrator, an attorney, a psychiatrist, and a social services administrator who will help guide us through the ins-and-outs of acquiring and maintaining mental health benefits. Consumers and mental health professionals are encouraged to attend. Continuing education documentation will be provided.

Join us on April 6 from 1 to 4 pm; watch our website <http://mhapgc.org/> for location.

Scholarships Offered for Mental Health America Annual Conference

SAMHSA/CMHS will be offering consumer scholarships to MHA’s Annual Conference again in 2011. This year the conference will feature a series of workshops specifically on the issues of developing peer specialist programs, the certification process, funding for peer specialist services and a specialized workshop on the development of a CPS program for Native Americans. Find the application at www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/conference. The deadline to apply is March 8th and all applications must be snail mailed to Jackee Williams at AFYA.

MHAPGC is online! Read the newsletter and find additional information, events & resources at www.mhapgc.org.

Membership renewals are due. See renewal form on the back page of the newsletter.

Meet our new board members on page 2.

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE NEWS REPORTS FROM MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA

Legendary singer Connie Francis has joined with Mental Health America in launching a new national campaign on the importance of stress and trauma in the development of mental health problems and the need to appropriately treat them in order for people to get better.

Called S.T.A.R. of Mine (for Stress, Trauma, Awareness, Recovery), the campaign will raise awareness of the impact of trauma, help remove the stigma attached to it, and inform the public and health professionals on the importance of a new generation of treatments that puts control back in the hands of the traumatized person so that they can feel safe again and achieve recovery.

Mental Health America has established a website for the campaign at <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/STAR>.

"This campaign will address itself to the millions of people in America who are currently suffering from the deleterious effects of depression and trauma of all kinds whether it be the trauma experienced by victims of violent crime, rape, domestic abuse, loss of a loved one, divorce, loss of finances or a job, and significantly in the largely-unattended area of the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) experienced by our returning veterans of our two wars," Francis said.

"You don't have to be in a war, however, to be victimized by PTSD; many people wage war everyday with their struggle to come to grips with emotional problems that often seem insurmountable."

"Having been involuntarily committed seventeen times in nine years to mental institutions it is now my intention to be a voice for those suffering from mental disorders and to make them aware that there is hope and light at the end of an often bleak and interminable tunnel."

Join an Online Mental Health Support Community

Launched by Mental Health America, this community allows you to take part in moderated discussion groups and post personal journals, enabling you to support one another through your individual journeys and experiences. Those joining the community will find coping strategies and answers to their questions, as well as vital support, compassion, encouragement, and inspiration from others sharing experiences similar to theirs. Registration is free; upon joining, you will have complete control of your privacy options and can communicate with others in a safe, secure environment.

Join the discussion at <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/community>

Winter – The Season Of Seasonal Affective Disorder

Some people suffer from symptoms of depression during the winter months, with symptoms subsiding during the spring and summer months. These symptoms may be a sign of seasonal affective disorder (SAD). SAD is a mood disorder associated with depression and related to seasonal variations of light. SAD affects half a million people every winter between September and April,

peaking in December, January, and February. The “Winter Blues,” a milder form of SAD, may affect even more people.

Prevalence

- Three out of four SAD sufferers are women.
- The main age of onset of SAD is between 18 and 30 years of age.
- SAD occurs in both the northern and southern hemispheres, but is extremely rare in those living within 30 degrees latitude of the equator.
- The severity of SAD depends both on a person’s vulnerability to the disorder and his or her geographical location.

Symptoms

A diagnosis of SAD can be made after three consecutive winters of the following symptoms if they are also followed by complete remission of symptoms in the spring and summer months:

- *Depression*: misery, guilt, loss of self-esteem, hopelessness, despair, and apathy
- *Anxiety*: tension and inability to tolerate stress
- *Mood changes*: extremes of mood and, in some, periods of mania in spring and summer
- *Sleep problems*: desire to oversleep and difficulty staying awake or, sometimes, disturbed sleep and early morning waking
- *Lethargy*: feeling of fatigue and inability to carry out normal routine
- *Overeating*: craving for starchy and sweet foods resulting in weight gain
- *Social problems*: irritability and desire to avoid social contact
- *Sexual problems*: loss of libido and decreased interest in physical contact

Causes

- As sunlight has affected the seasonal activities of animals (i.e., reproductive cycles and hibernation), SAD may be an effect of this seasonal light variation in humans. As seasons change, there is a shift in our “biological internal clocks” or circadian rhythm, due partly to these changes in sunlight patterns. This can cause our biological clocks to be out of “step” with our daily schedules.
- Melatonin, a sleep-related hormone secreted by the pineal gland in the brain, has been linked to SAD. This hormone, which may cause symptoms of depression, is produced at increased levels in the dark. Therefore, when the days are shorter and darker the production of this hormone increases.

Treatments for Seasonal Affective Disorder

- Phototherapy or bright light therapy has been shown to suppress the brain’s secretion of melatonin. Although, there have been no research findings to definitely link this therapy with an antidepressant effect, light therapy has been shown to be effective in up to 85 percent of diagnosed cases. Patients remain in light up to ten times the intensity of normal domestic lighting up to four hours a day, but may carry on normal activities such as eating or reading while undergoing treatment. The device most often used today is a bank of white fluorescent lights on a metal reflector and shield with a plastic screen.
- For mild symptoms, spending time outdoors during the day or arranging homes and workplaces to receive more sunlight may be helpful. One study found that an hour’s walk in winter sunlight was as effective as two and a half hours under bright artificial light.

- If phototherapy does not work, an antidepressant drug may prove effective in reducing or eliminating SAD symptoms, but there may be unwanted side effects to consider. Discuss your symptoms thoroughly with your family doctor and/or mental health professional.

Please consider volunteering for your Mental Health Association. Nominate yourself or a friend or colleague for a position on our congenial and hard-working Board of Directors, volunteer for a one-time event, or give a few hours of your time regularly in our office in Hyattsville, or by working at home. Particularly needed are a webmaster to update our website monthly and upload new functions and resources, amateur puppeteers for our popular Kids on the Block program, volunteer coordinator, and grants writer. Contact us at 301-699-2737 with your interests.

Nearly 20 Percent of Americans Suffer Effects of Mental Illness

According to a recent survey by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), about 45.1 million Americans -- close to 20 percent of the population -- experienced mental illness during the last year. The survey warns of a serious impact, with about 8.4 million people thinking about suicide and nearly 1 million actually attempting to kill themselves, and identifies alcohol and drug abuse as a common factor. "Too many Americans are not getting the help they need, and opportunities to prevent and intervene early are being missed," says SAMHSA administrator Pamela S. Hyde, JD. "The consequences for individuals, families and communities can be devastating."

Read more at:

<http://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/advisories/1011180411.aspx>

Looking to raise awareness about the impact of mental illness in your community? Find research-based, supportive, and accessible materials here:

<http://www.channing-bete.com/public-health/mental-health.html>

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY NETWORK OF CARE FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

The [Prince George's County Department of Family Services, Mental Health and Disabilities Administration](#) offers an informational and educational website source for information and referral for mental health problems and difficulties. The Web site is a valuable resource for individuals, families and agencies concerned with behavioral health. It provides information about behavioral health services, laws, and related news, as well as communication tools and other features. Regardless of where you begin your search for assistance with behavioral health issues, the Network of Care helps you find what you need - it helps ensure that there is "No Wrong Door" for those who need services. This Web site can greatly assist in our efforts to protect our greatest human asset - our beautiful minds. Find the Network of Care at <http://princegeorges.md.networkofcare.org>. An example of the many resources to be found at this website includes **answers** to frequently asked **questions** about Advance Directives for Mental Health, a document that you can prepare to express your desires about mental health treatment should you become incapacitated and unable to make those decisions. You will also find step by step directions on how to fill out the new Maryland Advance Directive for Mental Health at the Network of Care website.

The mission of the Mental Association of Prince George's County Inc. (MHAPGC) is to work in cooperation with the National Mental Health Association and the Mental Health Association of Maryland toward victory over mental illness through the development of a volunteer citizens' movement to advocate for improved care and treatment of persons with mental illness; for improved methods and services in research, prevention, detection, diagnosis, and treatment of mental illness; for improved public attitudes toward mental illness; and for the promotion of mental health in the community.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE

Most members have lapsed in their dues payments. Please remember that the MHAPGC relies on your dues for our activities, and renew today.

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____

Phone (indicate cell, work or home) _____

Email address: _____

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ for _____ membership.

Additionally, I would like to donate \$ _____ to the Mental Health Association of Prince George's County.

Membership categories:

___ Individual \$25 ___ Family \$30 ___ Professional \$65
___ Organizational \$65 ___ Life Membership \$500

***Please make your check payable to MHAPGC and mail to MHAPGC, 5012 Rhode Island Ave.,
3rd Floor, Hyattsville, MD 20781.***

Comments

***Thank you for your support of the
Mental Health Association of Prince George's County!***

Mental Health Association
of Prince George's County
PO Box 98
5012 Rhode Island Ave.
Hyattsville, MD 20781
301-699-2737
www.mhapgc.org



**LAUREL AREA SUPPORT GROUP
SPONSORED BY MHAPGC
BIPOLAR SUPPORT GROUP
LAUREL REGIONAL HOSPITAL
Every Thursday, 6 pm
CONTACT: MHAPGC, 301-699-2737**

**FAMILY & FRIENDS NIGHT
BIPOLAR SUPPORT GROUP
LAUREL REGIONAL HOSPITAL
THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 7-9 PM
Presenter: Dr. Sue Bregmann
Contact 301-699-2737**

OTHER LOCAL SUPPORT GROUPS:

**CLINTON AREA SUPPORT GROUP
COLONY SOUTH HOTEL, 7401 SURRETT'S ROAD
Second Tuesday of the month, 6:30PM - 8:30PM
CONTACT: Mary Heath, 301-856-8221, mcheath@verizon.net**

**NEW CARROLLTON AREA SUPPORT GROUP
HANKO BUILDING AT BECKETT FIELD, 8511 Legation Road
Third Monday, 10:00AM - 12Noon
CONTACT: Dominique Thomas, 301-385-1699, nami.dom@domthom.com**

**OXON HILL/FT. WASHINGTON AREA SUPPORT GROUP
6178 Oxon Hill Road, SUITE 201
Third Wednesday, 6:30PM - 8:30PM
CONTACT: James E. Jones, 301-894-3042, jimjonesfamu@aol.com**

**HYATTSVILLE AREA SUPPORT GROUP
Higher Calling Christian Ministries, 3311 Toledo Terrace, P. G. Professional Building
Bldg. A 201-203 (Next to Prince George's Plaza
Fourth Monday, 6:30PM - 8:30PM
CONTACT: Thelma Martin, 301-275-3330, seniors_place@yahoo.com**

**CONSUMER RECOVERY GROUP
St. Christopher's Church, 8001 Annapolis Road
Second Tuesday, 6:30-8:00PM
CONTACT: Cynthia Leslie, 240-481-5230, cynthiabieslie@yahoo.com
* Please Confirm Your Attendance with Group Facilitator(s) ***

**CLINTON AREA 'HOPE' SUPPORT GROUP
for people suffering from depressive illnesses
St. John's Parish Education Center, 8912 Old Branch Ave
Second and Fourth Sundays, 3:30PM - 5:30PM
CONTACT: Ruth McMenamin, 301-868-6180**