



Our Journey

Meaningful, relevant information for our community, published monthly.

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Northern Lakes
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Welcome to *Our Journey*. We hope you will find the articles informative and helpful. Your ideas and submissions are welcome! Please also take time to check out the Northern Lakes Community Mental Health (NLCMH) website, the flat screen monitor, information tower, and monthly calendar (in the tower) for more information on topics in this newsletter and more. Join us in the ongoing creation of this newsletter to best serve you!



Mental Health Awareness Month

Being aware of those around you and how prevalent mental health diagnoses are is just the beginning. One in five people will be touched by a mental health diagnosis. Depression, anxiety, and PTSD, to name just a few, are real in the everyday life of so many. Often times it takes a huge breakdown or event for many to be diagnosed. Stigma chases many away from getting or seeking help. Stigma is being fought on many fronts but still persists.

While looking into the never ending stories of experience I ran across another team fighting stigma while working on their mental wellness, called, "This Is My Brave." This Is My Brave (TIMB) features stories of real people on stage through essays, poetry or song, sharing their stories to help fight the stigma. People need to hear the stories, see the fight and join in by supporting or coming out themselves.

Here is an excerpt from a father: "It was Phoebe who encouraged me to audition for TIMB in 2015. We were both selected as cast members of the DC 2015 Show and the experience changed me forever. However, I was sort of showing up 'in absentia.' It took me a couple of rehearsals, but I figured out eventually that I was perpetuating the stigma; I was hiding from the spotlight (I even used a pseudonym at first)! As a small business owner, I feared that clients might react to the news that I have bipolar. Being introduced to an audience of supportive, understanding people – as someone else – well, it convinced me to get over it! The stigma may still exist, but the whole point of the organization is to reduce it!" <https://thisismybrave.org/blog/?offset=1487175300350> During Mental Health Awareness Month we need to be strong for those we love, even our self, and help eliminate stigma. Make people aware. Encourage Hope. And be Brave.

Day of Recovery Education

Come join in the day at Gaylord Tree Tops Resort with peers from the Northern Michigan Regional Entity. Registration forms are in the lobby. The event begins on Friday, May 19 at 9:00 a.m. with a continental breakfast. Listen to speakers on topics: Recovering from Childhood, Recovering from Mental Illness while embracing a LGBT Orientation, Under the Jacket, and more. Hope to see you there! For more information, call Rosemary Rokita at 800-337-8598.



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to receive
Our Journey
electronically.

Submissions may also
be accepted, space
permitting.

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High blood
pressure (or
Hypertension)
Education Month

Blood pressure
is the force of
your blood
moving against
the walls of your
arteries. Over
time, elevated
and high blood
pressure can
weaken your
heart, blood
vessels and
kidney, and
makes a stroke
or heart attack
much more
likely.

WRAP: Wellness Recovery Action Plan

The focus of this article is Wellness Recovery Action Planning, including **Triggers, early warning signs** and **breaking down**.

Triggers, early warning signs and **breaking down** are all areas we wish to avoid. Recognizing what these are can be the beginning of moving beyond or coping/managing them with ease.

What are **triggers**? Some triggers are: events that remind you of a past trauma, stress, illness, financial problems, being judged, left out, certain smells or sounds. It can be very helpful to put these down on paper and make a plan, knowing how you coped with them before. Triggers are often external and can be hard to avoid. In your planning you will want to make a daily maintenance plan and use your toolbox too.

What are your **early warning signs**? Sometimes your supporters can recognize issues before you may. For some people it is: anxiety, eating too much or not eating, lack of motivation, spending too much money, bingeing, impulsivity, irritability, and isolating, to name just a few. Do you have other early warning signs? Reviewing these can assist in becoming more aware of the signs. So what do you put in this plan? To start with, do the things on your daily maintenance plan and again look in the toolbox. Tell someone how you are feeling, do relaxation exercises, write in your journal, spend time on activities you enjoy ask other to help out with chores. How about a few other ideas like watch a funny movie, read a good book, play with your pet, surround yourself with good people, go out for coffee? These are just ideas – only do them if they feel good for you or would normally feel good for you.

When things are **breaking down** for you, it may mean crisis for someone else and it may be the other way around too! Write down the signs. A few examples might be feeling overly sensitive, having irrational responses to events or actions, overeating, sleeping all day, suicidal thoughts, spending large amounts of money, paranoia and drinking or using. Some plan ideas may be to contact your therapist or doctor, have someone stay with you or stay with them, maintain the daily maintenance list, write in your journal, have someone keep your debit and credit cards, be in a safe environment, practice deep breathing and meditation.

The main point is to just keep trying.

100 books on Sesame Street's new character Julia given to Northern Lakes to share!



Sesame Street Workshop delivered 100 books to Northern Lakes. The book is called “We’re Amazing 1, 2, 3!” and is about a girl named Julia who has autism. The books are being shared with children at their intake appointment and also being given to children whom Northern Lakes serves. Going to appointments is never a fun time for children but we are trying to make it a little better through the sharing of books.