

HELP &
H  **PE**
LAPEER COUNTY

**YOUR
MENTAL HEALTH
RESOURCE GUIDE**

December 18, 2020

VIEW *Newspaper* Group

Community conversation inspired Help & Hope, community commitment made it happen



WES SMITH

Last month I was on a Lapeer County Community Conversation Zoom meeting where the main topic was trends and concerns regarding the impact of COVID-19 on mental health needs within Lapeer County.

After only a few minutes of listening to other attendees like Lauren Emmons of Community Mental Health and Sheriff Scott McKenna, it was obvious to me that the officials and nonprofit leaders who were virtually gathered that day were gravely concerned about the general state of mental health in our county. The coronavirus pandemic has pushed many of our fellow citizens to their mental limit.

The good news is our county has resources available for citizens who are struggling to cope with the stress, loneliness,

fear, anxiety and hopelessness brought on or exacerbated by the pandemic. The bad news is people either don't know how to access those resources or are reluctant to do so because of the stigmas attached to mental illness or simply asking for help of any kind.

Immediately, I thought View Newspaper Group could help bridge the gap between those who need help and those who can provide it. I pledged that day that we would do something. Within a few days, working with Nancy Boxey, executive director of the Lapeer County Community Foundation, the plan for this Help & Hope publication came to be.

The idea was simple: Let people know where they can get Help and give them Hope that relief can happen. The Help part is in the form of a directory of services available. The Hope part is in the stories of people who themselves were once searching for help, found it, and are now coping with their challenges.

Our team reached out to local organizations and agencies to collect information on services offered and how those services can be accessed. We called our contributing writer, Krystal Moralee, who immediately got

on board with the idea for stories of hope. She found three such stories that are included herein. We also reached out to potential sponsors to invest in our efforts of gathering of information, graphic design, printing and distribution of Help & Hope. We were overwhelmed by the commitment we received from a diverse group of businesses, nonprofit organizations, government agencies and the education community. Our Community Partners are featured on the back page and our Community Sponsors on pages 17 and 18. My sincere thanks goes to all of them for making this Help & Hope publication possible.

Along the way, I had an enlightening conversation with my friend Kelly, the funeral director. Well, that's one of his hats. He wears several, including that of raconteur. He reminded me, that among other things, the coronavirus pandemic has robbed people of the celebrations and ceremonies that mark the important moments of their lives. "Hatchin's, matchin's and dispatchin's" is how he referred to some of those moments; the same events we refer to in the newspaper business as the three

times you're likely to get your name in the paper. Kelly observed that not being able to celebrate or grieve with our family and friends in those moments has ramped up the anxiety quotient for many families and individuals who are already feeling the mental strain of navigating a global pandemic. In his role of funeral director, he's seen that play out – too many times this year. His desire to help people who are trying to cope with it all is why he supported this effort.

That's just one story about the kind of community commitment that led to the publication of Help & Hope. Those stories and that commitment have inspired and humbled me as I've watched our remarkable community respond to so many causes and needs through the years.

View Newspaper Group's commitment to the topic of mental health in our community is ongoing. We see this publication as a beginning, not an end, to our reporting on mental health issues, resources and stories of hope.

Thank you for reading Help & Hope. Please share your feedback with me, request reprints or a PDF version of this publication by email at wsmith@mihomepaper.com or by phone at 810-452-2622.

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RESOURCE DIRECTORY

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

3496 Davison Rd., Lapeer, MI 48446
 810-234-0815 • aa.org

Mission statement:

The main purpose and mission of Alcoholics Anonymous members are to stay sober and help others achieve sobriety.

Summary of services offered:

Alcoholics Anonymous is an international fellowship of men and women who have had a drinking problem. It is nonprofessional, self-supporting, multiracial, apolitical, and available almost everywhere. There are no age or education requirements. Membership is open to anyone who wants to do something about his or her drinking problem.

Best way for families or individuals to access services:

Visit www.aa.org or www.lapeercmh.org

AL-ANON

al-anon.org

Mission statement: Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is a spiritually based organization that helps the families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through meetings, information, and shared experiences.

Summary of services offered: Al-Anon is a mutual support program for people whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking. By sharing common experiences and applying the Al-Anon principles, families and friends of alcoholics can bring positive changes to their individual situations, whether or not the alcoholic admits the existence of a drinking problem or seeks help.

Best way for families or individuals to access services:

Visit www.al-anon.org or www.lapeercmh.org

BLUE WATER CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING/ DISABILITY NETWORK OF THE THUMB

550 Lake Dr., Suite C, Lapeer, MI 48446
 810-664-5058 • bwcil.org • info@bwcil.org

Mission statement: DNOTT exists to open paths and remove barriers for people of all disabilities toward independence, personal choice and quality of life through resources, options, education and support.

Summary of services offered:

Advocacy - Individual and systemic

Housing Services - Homeless prevention and rapid rehousing

Independent Living Skills - Currently online classes/

virtual group activities

Information & Referral - Resources, services, accessibility, transitions, veterans.

Best way for families or individuals to access services:

info@bwcil.org or 810-987-9227 for referral to appropriate core services staff. For housing services the Centralized Housing intake line is 810-648-2555.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

700 S. Main St., #211, Lapeer, MI 48446
 810-664-4646 • ccsem.org

Mission statement:

Compelled by the love and teachings of Jesus Christ, Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan provides compassionate, quality, professional services and support to people in need.

Summary of services offered:

Adoption and foster care, All Saints Soup Kitchen, mental and behavior health, counseling, family support services, Hispanic outreach, immigration and refugee services, senior services, Project Hope (pro life ministry).

Best way for families or individuals to access services:

Call 810-664-4646

Volunteer or donation opportunities:

Visit www.ccsem.org/volunteer-opportunities

THE CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER OF LAPEER COUNTY

15 E. Genesee St., Lapeer, MI 48446
 810-664-9990 • caclapeer.org
 Director/Dept. Head: Heather Frayer
 810-664-9990 • hfrayer@caclapeer.org

Mission statement:

The mission of the Child Advocacy Center of Lapeer County is to reduce the trauma to children during the investigation and intervention of alleged sexual or severe physical abuse through advocacy, education, intervention, and treatment.

Summary of services offered:

The Child Advocacy Center of Lapeer County coordinates the investigation, prosecution, and treatment of the most severe cases of child abuse in Lapeer County. As the only child advocacy center in Lapeer County, we serve children from birth through age 17.

All services are provided in a nurturing, friendly and safe environment at no cost to a child's family.

Best way for families or individuals to access services:

Call 810-664-9990

Volunteer or donation opportunities:

The Center's volunteers dedicate thousands of hours every year to help children. Depending on the amount of direct contact volunteers would like to have with children, volunteer jobs require different levels of training. The Center is regularly in need of volunteers for: Family reception/Waiting room; Marketing & communications; Graphic design; Data entry. For more info call 810-664-9990 or visit www.caclapeer.org

LAPEER COUNTY COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

1570 Suncrest Dr., Lapeer, MI 48446
 810-667-0500 • lapeercmh.org

Follow us on Facebook for Mental Health Awareness and Resources under

"Lapeer County Community Mental Health"
 Chief Executive Officer: Lauren Emmons, ACSW
lemmons@lapeercmh.org
 Chief Operating Officer: Tina Close, MA LLP
tclose@lapeercmh.org

Mission statement:

Recovery: hope; choice; health; fulfilling dreams

Summary of services offered:

Lapeer Community Mental Health provides a wide variety of Mental Health needs to residents living in Lapeer. Emergency and Crisis services available 24 hours seven days a week by calling 810-667-0500 or walk-in during open business hours, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Visit our website for a comprehensive list of programs and services or visit us on Facebook under the tab "services."

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RESOURCE DIRECTORY

Best way for families or individuals to access services:

Call the Region 10 ACCESS line at 1-888-225-4447 for assistance and to see if you qualify for intake appointment at Lapeer Community Mental Health. If you qualify for an intake; an appointment will be scheduled as soon as possible. If you do not qualify for an intake, a referral or resources will be offered upon request.

Volunteer or donation opportunities:

Donate items such as gently used clothing, antiques, vintage, collectables, and home goods to "New To You Consignment" at 286 West Nepessing Street, Suite 4, Lapeer, MI 48446, 810-245-7272 (located downtown). Use the account name "Lapeer County Community Mental Health." Items will be sold and proceeds will be donated to this account.

LAPEER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS

287 W. Nepessing St., Ste. 2, Lapeer, MI 48446
810-667-0256 • lapeercountyweb.org
Director/Dept. Head: Pete "Top" Kirley
810-245-6829 • pkirey@lapeercounty.org

Mission statement:

The Lapeer County Department of Veterans Affairs serves the Lapeer Veteran's Community, including their families with a commitment to excellence. Our Department provides services that ensure access to federal, state and local resources and benefits due to veterans and their families with dedication and focus towards outcome based results.

Summary of services offered:

Free transportation to and from VA Medical Centers located in Ann Arbor, Detroit and Saginaw to include clinics in Flint & Yale. Request for discharge papers (DD214), military/medical records. Assist in filling out disability claims. Emergency relief through two different funds.

Best way for families or individuals to access services:

Call and make an appointment to come visit with one of the accredited service officers, to include Field Service Officers from the VVA (Vietnam Veterans of America) and the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars).

Volunteer or donation opportunities:

Volunteer Drivers Program, donate gas cards, bus tokens and/or monetary amounts.

HAMILTON COMMUNITY HEALTH NETWORK

1570 Suncrest Dr., Lapeer, MI 48446
810-406-4246 • hamiltonchn.org

Mission statement:

To be the leader in providing comprehensive, quality, community-oriented health care for the underserved of Genesee, Lapeer and the surrounding areas.

Summary of services offered:

Hamilton Community Health Network is part of a national network of primary care centers (Section 330E) aimed at improving health services for inner city populations. These centers provide comprehensive care to patients regardless of their ability to pay. Services include: Adult primary care, pediatric primary care, general dentistry, obstetrics & prenatal care, gynecology, behavioral services, podiatry services and vision services.

Best way for families or individuals to access services: Call 810-406-4246

HISPANIC SERVICE CENTER

113 N. Almont Ave., Imlay City, MI 48444
810-724-3665 • imlayhsc.org
Director/Dept. Head: Lourdes Emke

Mission statement:

To improve the lives of individuals of all ethnicities in the community by providing value-added resources and services.

Summary of services offered:

Imlay City Hispanic Service Center provides social, health, immigration, cultural and advocacy services to ALL Lapeer County residents.

Best way for families or individuals to access services: Call 810-724-3665

Volunteer or donation opportunities:

Visit www.imlayhsc.org for a list of donation requests and more info.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

1559 Imlay City Rd. Lapeer, MI 48446
810-667-7034 • hdc-caro.org
Director/Dept. Head: Lori Offenbecher
989-673-4121 • lorio@hdc-caro.org

Mission statement:

Restoring hope by helping people and saving lives.

Summary of services offered:

Early Head Start-home visiting services for families with pregnant women and children birth to three; Self-Sufficiency Program for people looking to

achieve life goals; Homeless Programs for persons referred from Bluewater Center for Independent Living; Elder Advocacy Programs for seniors who are being exploited or abused; CARES funding for assistance with rent, mortgage, and water bills for those affected by COVID-19; Q-CARES boxes for people who are directed to quarantine or are self-quarantining (delivery of food and/or hygiene supply boxes).

Best way for families or individuals to access services:

Contact Lisa Meyer at 810-667-7034 or lisam@hdc-caro.org

HURLEY MEDICAL CENTER

One Hurley Plaza, Flint, MI 48503
810-262-9000 • hurleymc.com

Mission statement:

To ensure that we are always ready when someone faces a serious injury, complex illness, or high risk condition. Today, tomorrow, and beyond, we have the dedicated, compassionate professionals, advanced technology, and state-of-the-art facilities to meet the complex health needs of our region.

Summary of services offered:

Hurley is a 443-bed premier public teaching hospital recognized as a regional leader in advanced specialized health care. Every year, more than 20,000 people choose Hurley for their inpatient hospital care and our Emergency Department handles over 80,000 annual emergency cases.

Best way for families or individuals to access services:

Call 810-262-9000 or visit www.hurleymc.com

Volunteer or donation opportunities:

Visit www.hurleyfoundation.org/volunteer

KISS (KEEPING INDEPENDENT SENIORS SAFE) PROGRAM

225 E. Fifth St., Ste. 200, Flint, MI 48502
1-855-561-5477 • imlayhsc.org

Mission statement: Keeping Independent Seniors SAFE.

Summary of services offered:

The KISS program is a free telephone reassurance program for older adults who live independently and want to feel safer and more secure. The KISS program volunteers help eliminate some fears and dangers that living independently can entail. Participants are provided with a telephone number to call Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and Noon. Those who cannot call the office because of limited calls, disabilities, dementia, etc. will be



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contacted with a phone call. Special arrangements may be made for participants that need weekend coverage. The call lets the *KISS* volunteers know that everything is ok. If any participant fails to call or does not answer the phone, it alerts the *KISS* volunteers that there may be a problem. Steps are then taken to contact that person to determine if there is a problem. If a person cannot be contacted further steps are taken.

Best way for families or individuals to access services:

Call 1-855-561-5477.

Those eligible must be a Genesee, Lapeer or Shiawassee county resident, 60 years or older and willing to notify the KISS office when away from home.

LAPEER AREA CITIZENS AGAINST DOMESTIC ASSAULT (LACADA)

P.O. Box 356, Lapeer, MI 48446
Business line: 810-667-4193
Help line: 810-667-4175
contact@lacada.org • lacada.org
Director/Dept. Head: Tracey Walker
810-667-4193 • tracey@lacada.org

Mission statement:

To provide safe shelter, independence, empowerment and supportive services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking while seeking to end violence against individuals and their families through promoting social change, community education and public awareness in our community.

Summary of services offered:

LACADA provides free and confidential support to live a life free from violence. Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault often feel alone and there is nowhere to turn. LACADA strives to empower survivors in regaining control in their lives through crisis intervention, advocacy, and support services.

Best way for families or individuals to access services: Call 810-667-4175.

Volunteer or donation opportunities:

A Help Line/ Shelter Attendant Volunteer will complete a 40 hour training. These volunteers are cross trained to provide crisis intervention, advocacy, education and practical assistance to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault either in the shelter or on the phone. Flexible day, evening and overnight shifts are available. Volunteers are asked to make a minimum 4 hour per week commitment. Contact 810-667-4193 to learn more.

LAPEER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

1800 Imlay City Rd., Lapeer, MI 48446
810-667-0448 • lapeercountyweb.org
Director/ Dept. Head: Kathy Haskins

Mission statement:

Dedicated to protecting and promoting the health of Lapeer County

Summary of services offered:

The Lapeer County Health Department is dedicated to protecting and promoting the health of Lapeer County. In order to do that the department has a number of divisions including: Environmental Health (EH), Public Health Nursing, Senior Programs, Public Health Emergency Preparedness, and Alcohol Information and Counseling Center (AICC). Well-known services within the Public Nursing Division include immunization clinics and WIC (Women, Infants and Children). Well-known services within the Senior Programs including: in-home meal services and in-home care services.

Best way for families or individuals to access services: Contact 810-667-0448

LAPEER COUNTY INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT

1996 W. Oregon St., Lapeer MI 48446
810-664-5917 • lapeerisd.org
Director/Dept. Head: Steven A. Zott, Superintendent
810-245-3964 • szott@lapeerisd.org

Mission statement:

To promote, initiate, and implement educational and support services for its constituent local districts; engage in cooperative programs with other entities; and plan, implement, and carry-out programs that promote the educational, career, and service needs of the LCISD service area.

Summary of services offered:

Lapeer ISD offers mental health services to students in each public school district and charter in Lapeer County. Through a grant from the Michigan Department of Education and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, professional mental health therapists provide individual and group therapy to students with mental health needs. Some examples of issues addressed include, grief, anxiety, ADHD, bullying, depression, friendships, divorce, etc.

Best way for families or individuals to access services: Contact your child's building principal.

LAPEER COUNTY SENIOR PROGRAMS

1800 Imlay City Rd., Lapeer, MI 48446
810-245-5866
Director/Dept. Head: Paul Walker
810-245-5866 • pwalker@lapeercounty.org

Mission statement:

LCSP provides programs designed to help seniors remain in their home and maintain their independence.

Summary of services offered:

Home Delivered Meals, In-Home Services.

Best way for families or individuals to access services: Call 810 245 5866.

LOVE, INC. (IN THE NAME OF CHRIST)

1680-B North Lapeer Rd., Lapeer, MI 48446
810-245-2414 • loveinc.org

Mission statement:

To mobilize local churches to transform lives and communities in the Name of Christ.

Summary of services offered:

Coordinates services for the needy of Lapeer County. Love, INC. works closely with churches and government and private organizations.

Best way for families or individuals to access services: Contact Love, INC at 810-245-2414.

Volunteer or donation opportunities: Call 810-245-2414.

McLAREN LAPEER REGION HOSPITAL

1375 N. Main St., Lapeer, MI 48446
810-667-5500 • mclaren.org

Mission statement: McLaren Health Care will be the best value in health care as defined by quality outcomes and cost.

Summary of services offered: McLaren Health Care, headquartered in Grand Blanc, Michigan, is a \$6 billion, fully integrated health care delivery system committed to quality, evidence-based patient care and cost efficiency. The McLaren system includes 15 hospitals in Michigan and Ohio, ambulatory surgery centers, imaging centers, a 490-member employed primary and specialty care physician network, commercial and Medicaid HMOs covering more than 588,000 lives in Michigan and Indiana, home health, infusion and hospice providers, pharmacy services, a clinical laboratory network and a wholly owned medical malpractice insurance company. McLaren operates Michigan's largest network of cancer centers and providers,

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RESOURCE DIRECTORY

anchored by the Karmanos Cancer Institute, one of only 51 National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer centers in the U.S. McLaren has 28,000 full-, part-time and contracted employees and more than 90,000 network providers throughout Michigan, Indiana and Ohio.

Best way for families or individuals to access services: Call 810-667-5500 or visit www.mclaren.org

Volunteer or donation opportunities: Various volunteer opportunities are available at our many locations across Michigan, so you can directly help the people in your own community. Whether you'd like to have direct patient and family contact or would prefer to work in a more behind-the-scenes role, your time and talents are needed and appreciated.

Visit www.mclaren.org/main/volunteer-at-mclaren-health-care to learn more.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES LAPEER OFFICE

1505 Suncrest Drive, Lapeer, MI 48446
 810-667-0800 • michigan.gov/mdhhs
facebook.com/michiganhhs
twitter.com/MichiganHHS

Summary of services offered:

Health care, food assistance, cash assistance, state emergency relief, child care.

Best way for families or individuals to access services:

Apply for benefits/manage case/explore resources: www.michigan.gov/MIBridges.

Volunteer or donation opportunities:

Email Therese Mancini-Community Resource Coordinator at mancini@michigan.gov.

SEVEN PONDS NATURE CENTER

3854 Crawford Rd., Dryden MI 48428
 810-796-3200 • sevenponds.org
facebook.com/SevenPondsNatureCenter
instagram.com/sevenpondsnaturecenter
 Director/Dept. Head: Daryl Bernard, Executive Director
 810-796-3200 • dbernard@sevenponds.org

Mission statement:

The mission of Seven Ponds Nature Center is to conserve the natural environment of Seven Ponds as a sanctuary for native plants and animals, as a living classroom for environmental education, and as a peaceful retreat for its visitors.



Summary of services offered:

350 acres with over six miles of trails to explore through woods, wetlands, prairie, fields, and the seven glacial lakes that give the nature center its name. Trails and visitor center is available to the public Tuesday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Seven Ponds members may access the trails dawn to dusk every day of the year.

Best way for families or individuals to access services:

Website, social media, call, or stop by for a visit.

Volunteer or donation opportunities:

With a small staff, Seven Ponds has greatly benefitted from the actions of thousands of dedicated volunteers over the past five decades - volunteers are always needed for trail work, invasive plant removal, garden maintenance, animal care, and more. As a nonprofit organization, Seven Ponds is fully dependent on the generous financial support of our members, donors, and the community.

SUICIDE PREVENTION NETWORK

Located within Lapeer County Community Mental Health (CMH)
 1570 Suncrest Dr., Lapeer, MI 48446
 810-667-0500
 National Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
lapeercmh.org • suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Mission statement:

Help is available for people who feel hopeless.

Summary of services offered:

Suicide prevention lifeline and walk-in help for those needing it is available at CMH 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Members of the Suicide Prevention Network are available for presentations to community agencies or groups. To find out more about suicide prevention or to schedule a speaker, please contact Betsy Felton, Tim Campbell or Stephanie Rudow at Lapeer County CMH 810-667-0500.

Best way for families or individuals to access services:

Contact CMH at 810-667-0500 or the National Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) (Press 2 for Spanish).

Volunteer or donation opportunities:

The Lapeer County Suicide Prevention Network meets the 2nd Friday of each month at Lapeer County Community Mental Health, 1570 Suncrest Drive, Lapeer.

UNITED WAY OF LAPEER COUNTY

3333 John Conley Dr., Ste. 102, Lapeer, MI 48446
 810-667-2912 • unitedwaylapeer.org
facebook.com/unitedwaylapeercounty/
 Director/Dept. Head: Kim Hebbberd
 810-895-1596 • 810-667-2912
khebbberd@unitedwaylapeer.org

Mission statement:

To unite people, develop resources and meet community needs.

Summary of services offered:

United Way is providing up to 2 months assistance with rent and all utilities.

Best way for families or individuals to access services:

Call 810-667-2912 to make an appointment.

Volunteer or donation opportunities:

For volunteer or donation opportunities please call 810-667-2912 or visit the website at www.unitedwaylapeer.org.

SUPPORT GROUPS

■ DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORT GROUP

Similarities and connections are discovered when Survivors come together to share their experiences.

Wednesdays, 5 – 6 p.m.

LACADA Outreach

1127 Clark Rd., Lapeer

810-667-4175

■ SUICIDE SURVIVOR GROUP

For individuals who have lost a loved one to suicide. This group provides families a safe place to talk about their loss, to grieve and begin to heal.

1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month, 6 – 7:30 pm

St. Matthew's Church, Upstairs Conference Room

431 N. Court Street, Lapeer

Tim Campbell, LPC

810-338-6315 | greatlakestim@gmail.com

■ GRIEF SHARE

For those who have lost a loved one.

Senior Center Imlay City in the Lambsteel Building on Third Street

Pre-register by calling Tracy at 810-724-6030 or

Ginger at 810-724-5772

■ HEARTLAND HOSPICE (LAPEER)

Grief Support through Heartland Hospice

10 a.m. Third Friday

Lapeer Market Place

700 S. Main St. Ste. 209, Lapeer

888-427-6818

■ NEW TOMORROWS GRIEF SUPPORT

Free ongoing grief education and support for anyone who has experienced the loss of a loved one.

Call 810-496-8625 for next schedules series and times.



Resources provided by
Lapeer County Community Mental Health

FOOD PANTRIES:

LAPEER COUNTY — Due to layoffs, reduced hours at work and other situations due to COVID-19 that may impact the ability of people to purchase groceries, another stress in many households this year has been providing nutritious food to feed individuals and families. But there is help available.

Numerous churches in Lapeer County provide soup kitchens and food pantries to offer assistance to people in need.



Food support can be found at:

- St. Paul Lutheran (200 N. Cedar St., Imlay City) Pantry opens on Mondays 4-5:30 p.m. Drive-up meals available while supplies last.
- First Presbyterian Church (433 N. Calhoun, Lapeer) — drive-up takeout meals Thursdays at 4-5 p.m. For Food Pantry, call 810-664-8565.
- Grace Episcopal Church (735 W. Nepessing St., Lapeer) food pantry only, call church office at 810-664-2841 to set up an appointment.
- St. Paul Lutheran (90 Millville St., Lapeer) Soup kitchen serves drive-up meals Fridays at 4 p.m. Food pantry is Thursday from 1-3 p.m., but people must first get a referral from Love INC at 810-245-2414.
- Trinity United Methodist Church (1340 N. Main St., Lapeer). Soup kitchen take-out is offered Mondays from 4-5 p.m.
- Manna Ministries Almont Vineyard (3835 Van Dyke Road, Almont) Thursdays from 3-5 p.m. for drive-thru pantry.
- Linked Hearts Emergency Food Pantry (3595 E. Main St. Dryden). Call 810-796-3407 for days and times.
- Gateway Assembly of God (2796 S. Van Dyke, Imlay Township). Emergency drive-thru giveaway from 10 a.m. to noon on Jan. 9; free grocery giveaway from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feb. 6 while supplies last.

COUNSELING

■ ACTS CHRISTIAN COUNSELING SUSAN LOVELETTE

Counseling services, psychological testing, driver's license evaluations, court ordered assessment.
Most private pay insurances, all Medicaid plans, sliding fee scale, payment expected at appointment.
4070 Huron St., SW A, North Branch | 810-270-2323
actschristiancounseling.com

■ CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

Master level social worker, psychiatrist services offered off site, adults only, Clinton Township.
Most private insurance plans, Medicaid plans, sliding fee offered.
700 S. Main St. Sw. 211, Lapeer | 810-664-4646 | ccsem.org

■ CONCEPTS IN COUNSELING

Various types of counseling, no psychiatrist offered.
Most private insurance plans, all Medicaid plans accepted, sliding fee scale.
608 Fox St., Lapeer | 810-538-0229

■ DELTA FAMILY CLINIC SOUTH

Full scale services including eating disorders and a nurse practitioner for prescribing.
Most Medicaid plans and most private plans, no sliding fee scale.
1309 S. Linden Rd. Suite C, Flint | 810-630-1152
deltafamilyclinicsouth.com

■ INTIMATE WELLNESS

Adults 18 and over, sexual concerns, complicated grief and trauma.
Most Medicaid plans and most private plans, no slide fee.
350 N. Court St., Ste. 208, Lapeer | 810-272-9036
ivcmich.com | chelsey.ivwc@gmail.com

■ JOURNEY THERAPY CENTER

Ages 2-15 Behavior Analysis-autism.
Medicaid, most private pay, sliding fee.
1100 W. Newark Rd., Lapeer | 810-358-0373
journeytherapycenter.com

■ LAPEER COUNSELING CENTER: DR. DANIEL J. KACHMAN, ED. D., P.C.

Full scale counseling services.
Most private pay insurances and Medicaid accepted.
700 S. Main St., Sw. 208, Lapeer | 810-664-4363
lapeercounselingcenter.com

■ LAPEER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Outpatient treatment for people with substance abuse and addictions problems.
Most insurance plans, sliding fee scale.
1800 Imlay City Rd., Lapeer | 810-667-0243
lapeercountyweb.org *click on Health Department*

■ LIFE RESOURCE CENTER: TIM CAMPBELL MA, LPC, BCPCC

Full scale services.
All Medicaid plans, sliding scale.
431 N. Court, SW 203, Lapeer | 810-338-6315
christiancounselinglapeer.com

■ LIST PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Various types of counseling/therapy and offers a nurse practitioner for stabilizing medications short term only. Booking is one month out.
Most private insurance and only McLaren, Meridian, Molina, and BC Complete for Medicaid plans, no sliding fee scale.
624 W. Nepeping St SW 300, Lapeer | 810-667-4500
listpsych.com

■ DR. MATHEWS PSYCHIATRIST | DR. AILLS PSYCHIATRIST

No treatment of ADD or ADHD, Adults only except for ages 12 and over.
No Medicaid or Medicaid/Medicare combination. Medicare or McLaren Medicaid. Most private insurance. No sliding fee scale.
4448 Oakbridge Dr. Ste A, Flint | 810- 230-7905

■ OAKLAND PSYCHOLOGICAL CLINIC

Psychiatrist available for ages 3 and up. Counseling for all ages, family, marriage and older adults. Most assessments.
No Medicaid plans, however most private pay accepted, no sliding fee scale, but ask about payment plan.
1455 S. Lapeer Rd., Suite 75 North, Lake Orion | 248-393-5555
oakpsych.com

■ RECOVERY PATHWAYS: DR. HEASLEY PSYCHIATRIST

Adults only, no children. Treatment for addictions and psychiatry.
Most private insurances, Medicaid, Healthy MI Plan, Medicare, CHIP and VA are accepted. Funding Assistance/Discounts.
380 Mill St., Ortonville | 248-961-3088
recoverypathwaysllc.com



Resources provided by
Lapeer County Community Mental Health



MOST COMMONLY USED RESOURCES FOR VETERANS

VA RESOURCES

Veteran Health Administration (VHA): VA medical centers and CBOC's HUD-VASH, Vet Centers

Veteran Benefits Administration (VBA): Compensation and Pension, Education Benefits, VOC Rehab.

National Cemetery Administration (NCA): Burial and memorial benefits www.va.gov

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCE FOR VETERANS

MVAA- Michigan Veterans Trust Fund: up to \$1500 for local approval (State Board reviews all appeals and claims over 1500). Requires at least 180 days of active duty service during wartime and unforeseen emergency. www.michiganveterans.com "find a benefits counselor" or by calling one 1-800-MICH-VET. 1-800-624-4838

Fallen and Wounded Soldiers Fund (FWSF): Post 9/11, requires honorable discharge (or currently serving honorably) and an unforeseen emergency. www.FWSF.org 800-397-3729

Forgotten Eagles of Michigan: up to \$500. All requests must come from a qualified BSO or VA officer. www.forgotteneagles.org

Michigan Bikers Helping Veterans: requires an honorable discharge, unforeseen emergency. Must complete entire application (leave no blanks). www.supportmiveterans.org

Pentagon Foundation: must have deployed to OEF/OIF, honorable discharge, and unforeseen emergency. Can only receive one per household. Applications found online,

www.pentagonfoundation.org.
Contact 800- 558-9224.

The American Legion Patriot Fund: up to \$500, one time only. Requires an honorable discharge and an unforeseen emergency. Contact Gary Tanner at gtanner364@gmail.com.

Local Veterans Service Organization: AMVETS, VVA, Marine Corps League, DAV, VFW, Purple Heart, and American Legion.

FINANCIAL COUNSELING/ADVISING

Military OneSource: 800-342-9647

LEGAL ISSUES

State Side Legal: Legal help for military members, Veterans, and their families www.statesidelegal.org

University of Michigan Legal Clinic: Washtenaw County only 734-763-2798

Lakeshore Legal Aid: 888-783-8190 www.lakeshorelegalaids.org

VA Claim Legal Assistance: Legal help for veterans, PLLC – 800-693-4800 www.legalhelpforveterans.com

HOUSING

National Call Center for Homeless Veterans: 877-424-3838

VA HUD-VASH/ Healthcare of Homeless Veterans (HCHV): Must have VA health care. Qualify on individual basis.

Detroit VAMC: 313-576-1580

Ann Arbor VAMC: 734-845-5058

Saginaw VAMC: 989-497-2500 ext. 11773

Battle Creek VAMC: 269-966-5600 ext. 33148

Iron Mountain VAMC: 906-774-3300 ext. 32773

Support Services for Veteran Families (SSVF): Search by county to find local providers. Eviction/ Homeless/ Social Work. Multiple other programs. www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/

Project Brotherhood Resolve: Located in Lapeer County- Founded to address the growing problem of Veteran Homelessness and Veteran Suicide through intervention: projectbrotherhoodresolve.org/

FEDERAL BENEFITS FOR VETERANS, DEPENDENTS AND SURVIVORS

Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors Online Booklet:

<https://www.michiganveterans.com/servlet/servlet.FileDownload?file=00Pt000000KvKmhEAF>

MICHIGAN MILITARY VETERANS BENEFITS AND SERVICES

<https://www.michiganveterans.com/servlet/servlet.FileDownload?file=00Pt000000KvKo5EAF>

VETERAN TREATMENT COURT

<https://courts.michigan.gov/administration/admin/op/problem-solving-courts/pages/veterans-treatment-court.aspx>

Resources provided by
Lapeer County Community Mental Health

A decade into recovery, now it's his time to help others

BY **KRYSTAL MORALEE**
Contributing Writer

Brad Chayka spent a solid 15 years of his life drinking and getting high, being hungover, or thinking about getting drunk or high. He married at age 23, and it only lasted a year and a half. He essentially abandoned his oldest daughter for the first 10 years of her life. He spent a decade without a driver's license. He filed bankruptcy, became very overweight, trashed his credit, withdrew from friends and family, and lost everything he had, and still, it took five years of going on and off the wagon before he finally made the decision, on Aug. 12, 2007, to follow the Alcoholics Anonymous program to the letter, and that combined with his faith and determination has been his salvation.

These days at 51 Chayka's life has done a complete turn. He has reconnected with his oldest daughter, remarried, became a father to

another daughter and grandpa to a granddaughter. He's improved his health, built his career, and settled in for the long haul as a recovering alcoholic. Temptation to relapse, he said, isn't strong.

"It's very rare that I even think about it and I think it's because I stay in contact with my AA program," he said. "I see what it's doing to people still. That's the importance of going to meetings, so you don't forget."

In fact, he serves as chairperson on Wednesday nights, helping others to get on the path to recovery.

Chayka said he was probably around 16 when he started drinking and experimenting with drugs. He was born and raised in the Rochester and Auburn Hills area, and said looking back, he was probably vying for his parents' attention as he repeatedly found trouble to get into. Times were different as well, he said. If the police pulled them over and they were drinking, they would just dump out their beer and send them on their way.

Eventually, he started getting in trouble with the law. Three drunken driving arrests later, it was

hard to deny he was abusing alcohol. That legal trouble, he said, is the only reason he chose to stop. It wasn't easy to make it stick, though. He gives a lot of credit to the support he received from his parents, the church and his original AA sponsor, Matt Kalahar.

"He never gave up on me," said Chayka. "He was always there to say 'hey, try again.'"

Chayka focused on his sobriety, health and recovering the life he had messed up by looking inward and taking responsibility for what had occurred, and while it has been a long 13-year process so far, he is proud of what he's accomplished and hopes his story will inspire others to believe in themselves, because it can be overcome.

"For a while I couldn't put it all together, but things are really good now, for sure," he said.

A positive change, Chayka said, happens when you evaluate where you are turning for solace. Physically, mentally, and spiritually unhealthy, Chayka turned to fitness, AA, and God, and completely turned his life around. He learned to trust himself and others again and went from not wanting to live to experiencing a full, happy, and healthy life.

If Brad's story sounds familiar, find Help & Hope with Alcoholics Anonymous by calling 810-234-0815 or visiting aa.org.



She **FOUND** a new path **FORWARD**

BY KRYSTAL MORALEE
Contributing Writer

Codependency is an insidious thing. It causes a person to believe that their only value is tied to another person – that they are unworthy on their own. It feeds into unhealthy patterns and dysfunctional relationships, which perpetuates the cycle of the codependent person not feeling like enough. It is also a difficult cycle to break because a codependent's comfort zone is lodged firmly in that dysfunction.

Misty Mitchell, 32, of Lapeer is experiencing life on the other side of codependency, and she is happier than ever.

"I have come a long way," she said.

Mitchell and her ex had been together for about seven years when they broke up, and it hit her hard. She left the abusive relationship and was sheltered at LACADA (Lapeer Area Citizens Against Domestic Assault) with her two children for more than a month.

"With the change of the breakup, I realized I was codependent," she said. "At my lowest moment, I thought I was not going to be able to provide for my kids for Christmas in 2018."

As the holidays approached, Mitchell became so distraught, she convinced herself that her children would be better off without her in their lives, and she attempted to take her own life.

"It was the first time in my life that I felt I wouldn't be able to provide for my kids," she said. "I thought, 'what kind of mother am I?'"

But Mitchell came to a better understanding in the hospital, and while the doctor was hesitant to release her to spend

Christmas with her kids, she was convinced that because she had survived the attempt, she was meant to be here with her children, and she was able to go home in time to celebrate the holidays – and a new path forward in her life.

It was through her therapy sessions at Lapeer County Community Mental

Health (CMH) that she was able to connect with a therapist, pour her heart out, and leave her chaos behind. CMH, she said, helped her help herself, and she became empowered through her own achievements.

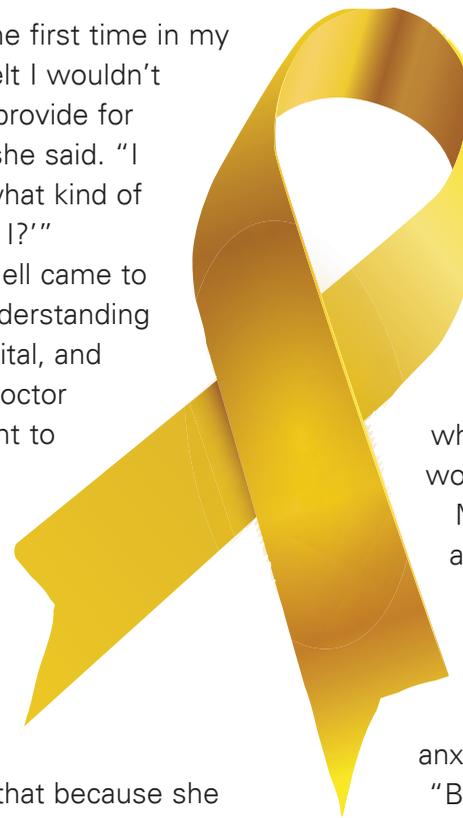
Unfortunately, that has incited her ex to come after her, but she is prevailing.

"The more I succeed, the more he tries to sabotage, but I come out every time, standing on the top of the mountain, smiling. Me and my boys," she said. "I'm very confident with myself now, where before I didn't see my self-worth."

Mitchell is advancing in her career and working toward building a house. She has also developed healthy coping mechanisms which help her when her emotions start tipping toward anxiety.

"Before, I went from A to Z really quick," she said, adding that she is now better able to ground herself when things get tense. That, she said, is making a huge difference in her life.

"I love it," she said. "It's so much better."



If Misty's story sounds familiar, find Help & Hope by contacting the Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or Lapeer County Community Mental Health at 810-667-0500 or Lapeer Area Citizens Against Domestic Assault (LACADA) at 810-667-4175.

FOCUS

ON

Resilience



Lauren Emmons

LAUREN EMMONS,
CEO

Lapeer County CMH

It is in the trying times, times like these, in the middle of a global pandemic that fatigue starts to set in. Everyone seems to be reaching their wits' end. This is when we need to draw together as a community and focus on resilience.

What is community resilience? Could community resilience be the frontline heroes and essential workers who show up to work every day. Or the volunteers who donate their time to help others. Maybe it's the kind gesture extended by a neighbor or people patiently waiting in line when the store is busy. Perhaps it's simply wearing a mask and practicing physical distancing. In the midst of the current pandemic, community resilience is the sum of all of the above. Community resilience is everyone pitching in, using the resources available, doing their part and coming together in a common cause to make a difference. It's what makes us capable of bouncing back and making our community a better place for everyone.

A resilient community is made up of individuals with strong tendencies

toward resilience. Mental health professionals see resilience as an inner strength that drives an individual to cope instead of fall apart. Individuals with strong resilience are able to rise above the circumstances at hand and maintain their cool in the difficult situations.

These individuals still feel the stress and anxieties of the situation but have developed ways to better handle their reactions to the crisis. In the words of Dr. Mollie Marti, "Resilience is not about gritting your teeth and getting through or sucking it up. Resilience is about honoring our need to ask for and receive help. It is important to remember that you are not going it alone. There is always someone who can help and there is always hope."

How does an individual develop resilience? The following is a list of ways to develop resilience.

- **Don't be afraid to seek help.**

Recognizing that you need help is showing strength not weakness. Reach out to friends or family for support. Talk to your pastor or priest. Seek professional help if you need assistance that your regular support systems cannot provide.

- **Work at being more optimistic.**

This is more than just looking at the bright side; it is tapping into your strengths to take positive action and at the same time finding ways to overcome your weaknesses.

- **Approach life with a sense of humor.**

Stepping back and finding the inherent humor in the frustrations of life reduces stress. This empowers you to bond with others especially when times are tough. Simply put, laugh more.

- **Engage in physical exercise.**

Physical exercise causes the release of natural endorphins in your body. These endorphins are the natural chemicals that help us feel energized and can assist in strengthening a positive outlook. Taking a walk, engaging in sports, playing outside with your children, hiking, riding a bike or joining a gym are ways to increase physical exercise.

- **Exercise your mind.** Be a lifelong learner. Learn something just for the sake of learning. Read about something you find interesting, watch a program about an interesting topic, engage in a new crafting

Continues on next pg

activity, learn to play a new game with friends or family, research a topic of interest, or help your children with homework.

- **Tune into your spiritual life.**

Engaging in your spiritual life plays an important role in coping with everyday life as well as the more challenging times in life. You can practice spirituality using prayer, demonstrating gratitude, reading scriptures, reading other inspirational words, or being a part of a group that shares beliefs similar to yours.

- **Engage in friendship.** Friendship exists at various levels.

Friendship includes friends who you have known for an extended period of time who know you deeply, individuals that you know more casually on a social level, people you have recently met, or the stranger who has demonstrated an act of kindness. Keep in contact with your friends or simply show kindness to a stranger.

- **Tap into your inner courage.**

Keep in mind that courage is not the absence of fear; it's deciding to face the fear and taking action while still being afraid. Being courageous develops bravery which is what builds resilience.

- **Approach life with a sense of purpose.** Having a sense of purpose is what gets you out of bed in the morning. Developing purpose does not have to involve something big or extravagant. It can be simply

making a decision to engage in something productive. Help a neighbor, clean your house, make a nice meal for your family, play with your children, do your job to best of your ability, or volunteer in your community.

- **Develop a healthy attitude.** Look at the difficulties you are facing as challenges instead of roadblocks. This simple change in attitude empowers you to take action to solve problems and moves you away from feeling like a victim.

We are a resilient community. We simply need to move forward and continue to practice resilience.

In summary here is a quote from Dr. Brene' Brown.

"Somehow we've come to equate success with not needing anyone.

Many of us are willing to extend a helping hand, but we're very reluctant to reach out for help when we need it ourselves. It's as if we've divided the world into 'those who offer help' and 'those who need help.' The truth is that we are both."



Her story of **survival** serves as a warning and *inspiration*

BY KRYSTAL MORALEE
Contributing Writer

Stephanie Bretzloff's pain was made public, as her horrific story was repeated over and over on the news channels. She didn't need the record to remember, though. The event is seared into her mind in excruciating detail.

She had been with Michael Quigley for 20 years. The couple had four children together. He had been mentally abusive at times but had never hurt her physically. That was about to change.

It was three years ago, Nov. 14, 2017, and Bretzloff was babysitting a friend's daughter. When her friend returned home from work, she took his daughter to his home, but there was a knock at the door. It was Quigley, who forced his way in and then grabbed her and shot her in the head.

Bretzloff remembers her body feeling like it was on fire, with a zapping sensation and for a moment she thought he was tasting her until she realized blood was squirting out of her head. She tried to crawl to her phone, and he slammed her hand onto the table and took the phone from her, slammed the gun into her head and pulled the trigger again to finish her off. This time, there was nothing but a click.

On the floor and going cold and numb, Bretzloff was certain she was dying. She saw her friend's daughter watching her. She saw her friend pull a towel from his own head and realized he, too, had been shot. A SWAT team rushed into the room, and the paramedics arrived. She felt every jolt on the way to the hospital. She relayed her goodbyes to be told to her mother and children and faded out of consciousness. Death, she thought, had arrived.

Later, she awoke and the truth hit her heavily –

her partner of two decades had tried to murder her, but she was alive. She had survived. Her friend had survived. It was time to heal.

Bretzloff said her parents took her and her children in, and they got her through as she began the healing process. She leaned on family and friends, and her children took special care of her, getting her water when she needed it and

“I'm continuing to recover and have moved on to a new relationship.

There are challenges to that, including trust. Yet, I'm continuing to face life with an open heart. I value every moment I have.”

Stephanie Bretzloff

providing comfort.

The incident took a physical toll on Bretzloff. Bullet fragments were removed from her head and ear canal, and some remain. The right side of her face was left paralyzed and she suffers intense headaches and post-traumatic stress.

And still, every day, she is healing, through love and forgiveness, with her family and friends

at her side.

“I'm continuing to recover and have moved on to a new relationship. There are challenges to that, including trust. Yet, I'm continuing to face life with an open heart. I value every moment I have. The things that I thought were bad before, just aren't. We only have this one life. Take the time to enjoy that beautiful blue sky, slight breeze, and the sun beating on your face. Hug those that are close and dear to you. Let go of those that aren't kind to you. They truly are not. Sometimes you can't save someone from themselves and they have to fall hard in order to learn. Everyone has a path to walk in life and not everyone is meant to stay. If something doesn't fit, that's theirs to figure out. It's their path, not yours,” she said. “Always remember, no one owns you and you don't own anyone. Control over another person is not part of any healthy relationship. You and your partner still have to be able to live your own lives. Being a team is nice, but if you're not happy and things aren't right, then it becomes time to move on. Life truly is too short. You really never know when your time is going to come. Use your heart and be nice to the person next to you. You really never know what they are going through silently.”

If Stephanie's story sounds familiar, find Help & Hope by calling Lapeer Area Citizens Against Domestic Assault (LACADA) at 810-667-4175.





**Recco Santee
Richardson, PhD**

Let sadness run its course and be kind to ourselves this Christmas



Katherine Negele

**BY KATHERINE
NEGELE**

Holidays can be a

stressful time for families and individuals. Add in the stressors of

the COVID-19 pandemic and anyone's mental health may suffer. That's why it's so important to work toward protecting our mental wellbeing from the get-go or to seek help when our usual coping mechanisms aren't quite cutting it anymore.

Paying attention to how we feel is the first step. According to Recco Santee Richardson, PhD, LPC, Clinical Therapist, of Hurley Mental Health Associates, with all the holiday commotions, it's easy to be caught off guard if we become anxious, upset or worried.

"We need to be mindful of how we're feeling and have a plan for if we do start to have such feelings. We need to be aware of any subtle or sudden changes in our moods or behaviors," he explains.

That plan he's referencing is a plan to take care of ourselves. It could involve getting enough sleep, maintaining a healthy diet, exercising, getting fresh air or just taking time to enjoy the moment.

"The things that bring a smile to our faces or make us relax, we have to

make sure we do those," Recco says. He encourages everyone to make time for activities that bring them pleasure and joy, whether it's reading, crocheting, watching movies or writing.

Although it can be depressing that many festivities are out of the question due to COVID-19, remain hopeful. Stay busy and take this time to plan for something next year, as soon as it's possible. In the meantime, use phone calls and virtual gatherings to stay connected. It's also

"We need to be mindful of how we're feeling and have a plan for if we do start to have such feelings. We need to be aware of any subtle or sudden changes in our moods or behaviors."

Recco Santee Richardson, PhD

a great time to pull out those memory books. If you do feel sad, embrace it.

"Let it run its course—it's an important feeling. Depression is the accumulation of sad experiences that were not processed adequately," Recco warns.

Since the holidays can be extra hard on children ages 8 to 12—more so than

for teens, Recco recommends listening to how those children feel and trying to accommodate them as much as possible. The elderly, who often view family as a lifeline, also may find their mental wellness hit especially hard by the physical distancing required by COVID-19 this holiday season. To counteract that, Recco encourages family and friends to send cards and make frequent phone calls to help their loved ones maintain that human connection.

Being kind to ourselves is crucial. Recco urges us to not feel shame or guilt if we can't buy everything our families deserve and to not get upset if someone can't get time off work. "Do not feel bad about what you can't do or where you can't be in person," Recco stresses. "That's nothing to feel guilty about. That's where we get holiday depression."

If you or your loved ones experience mental health difficulties, don't struggle alone. Seeking help is admirable and Hurley Mental Health Associates are here for you every step of the way. As one of Michigan's largest outpatient mental health clinics, this highly skilled team is known for customizing therapy to meet the needs of each patient, whether they're an adult, child, adolescent, teen, minority, or individual with handicaps or disabilities. Contact Hurley Mental Health Associates at 810-262-2100 or mentalhealthinfo@hurleymc.com to schedule an appointment today.

7 Signs of a Mental Health Condition

Mental illness doesn't discriminate. A mental health condition can affect anyone regardless of age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity or gender

The numbers are staggering. The National Alliance of Mental Illness reports nearly 44 million Americans experience a mental health condition every year — that's about one in five adults. And there is no doubt that everyone in the state of Michigan is living in crisis mode with the spread of COVID-19; schools and businesses closed, social distancing and most of our time spent at home. This can be very stressful. In fact, 36% of Americans say that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a serious impact on their mental health, according to the American Psychiatric Association.

Mental health affects everything — it's our emotional and psychological state of mind impacting how we think, feel and act. But when something feels out of whack, it can pose issues to your day-to-day routine and wellbeing, but unlike illnesses of the rest of the body, mental illness has been swept under the rug for many years because it hasn't been as widely accepted as a serious medical issue.

It's important to remember that everyone will experience anxiety and sadness at some moment in their life. However, when that anxiety and sadness is overwhelming and occurs regularly, a mental illness may be the cause and you should seek help. You don't have to live with the symptoms; there are resources available to feel better.

While every mental illness is different, here are seven common signs to help determine if you or a loved one may be suffering:

1. Change in feelings or demeanor

When a person is suffering

from a mental illness, they may experience increased feelings of worry, panic, sadness or hopelessness.

2. Loss of interest

They may start avoiding friends, family and activities that used to once bring pleasure.

3. Change in sleeping habits

Sleeping patterns may change to sleeping too much or too little, especially when compared to previous sleep routines.

4. Low energy

This can manifest itself as either sleeping too much or having the inability to carry out everyday activities and tasks such as work or even self-care.

5. Difficulty interacting

Many times people with a mental illness will find it hard to understand or relate to others. This may also present as extreme irritability with others or themselves.

6. Appetite or weight changes

Dietary changes, whether it is excessive eating or little to no eating, is a large indicator of depression.

7. Uncontrollable emotions

A distinct, rapid mood swing from sadness to happiness, or similar emotions on opposite ends of the spectrum, may be an indicator of mental health struggles.

If any of these symptoms sound familiar, the best thing to do is to ask for help with your family doctor or a mental health resource. By getting help, you can take control of your symptoms and in many cases, recover completely. Here are some options, if you've decided you could use some help:

- Your health insurance company. Check with your health plan to see which resources are available. For example, Priority Health provides members with information like what kind of help is available, what your plan will cover and how to find counselors or behavioral health care providers to meet your needs. An on-staff behavioral health team is available to help 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call the number on the back of your member ID card (your call is completely confidential) or log into your online account. Priority Health has also partnered with a digital health specialist to offer free access to mental wellness resources specifically focused on the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Disaster distress helpline. A 24/7, 365-day-a-year, national hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster. This multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories. Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.
 - Online or virtual care. Try an online therapy session through a website such as 7 Cups, an online emotional health service provider. The app enables users to select listeners based on their preferences/experiences and anonymously chat via the platform 24/7. In times of emotional turmoil or stress, it is highly beneficial to talk to someone and this app offers a safe space to do that. Headspace is another free mental health resource for Michiganders during the COVID-19 pandemic offering meditations, at-home workouts and other help for stress and anxiety.
 - Community resources. For Michiganders in need of free or low-cost mental health, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services has a county map of community mental health service programs.
- Whatever tools you use for help, take the time to make your mental health a priority. Your mind and health are certainly worth it.
- About the Author: Molly McCoy is the Director of Sales & Client Services, East Region at Priority Health. With more than 30 years of insurance experience, Molly is committed to growing Priority Health's footprint in the eastern region. She is also a mental health first aid instructor and is certified through the National Council for Behavioral Health.*



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Community
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810-667-0500



Lapeer County Sheriff
810-664-1801

State Police - Lapeer Post
810-664-2904

**Dryden Township
Police Dept.**
810-796-2271

Lapeer Police Dept.
810-664-0833

Metamora Township
810-798-8300

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