

# THE OUTLOOK

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER



## STIGMA, OUR GREATEST CHALLENGE

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Children's Mental Health Awareness Week is also included in the celebration. These two issues are very dear to me and causes I have supported for many years.

Stigma is our greatest challenge. Stigma about mental illness, substance use and developmental disabilities plague our communities and contribute to a decrease in individuals and families accessing assistance and vital resources. Some people still see mental illness as shameful or as a failure. Some still use derogatory language when speaking about those with mental illness. We must end stigma.

During this month and every day in the year, I encourage you to talk about mental health directly and to offer resources and suggestions to anyone who may be in need. Discuss it in the way one would speak about a medical illness. Let people know there are resources and recovery. Speak to your houses of faith and community centers about the issues and share information on how they can communicate to their members. Greater awareness and action will increase prevention and intervention, and improve mental health and well-being.

*Patricia Beshear*



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Want to be included in the next issue? Send us your stories, achievements, initiatives, events...etc!

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# MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

#FITNESS4MIND4BODY

During Mental Health Awareness Month, the **Alabama Department of Mental Health** is raising awareness about the connection between physical health and mental health, through the theme Fitness #4Mind4Body. This month, we are focused on how a healthy lifestyle may help prevent the onset or worsening of mental health conditions, as well as heart disease, diabetes, obesity and other chronic health problems. It can also help people recover from these conditions.



Commissioner Lynn Beshear said, “Every day we work to decrease stigma surrounding mental illness and to tell the stories of challenge and recovery. By celebrating Mental Health Awareness Month, we can continue to shine a light on the efforts made by local communities and the resources that are available for those in need. This month’s theme of Fitness #4Mind4Body is very important because maintaining a healthy body assists a person in achieving a positive state of mind.”

Also, May 7-13 is Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week, emphasizing the importance of an integrated approach to caring for the mental health needs of children, youth, and young adults who have experienced trauma, as well as their families







# 13TH CAPITOL SHOWCASE

ADMH CELEBRATES THE POWER OF ART AND MENTAL HEALTH

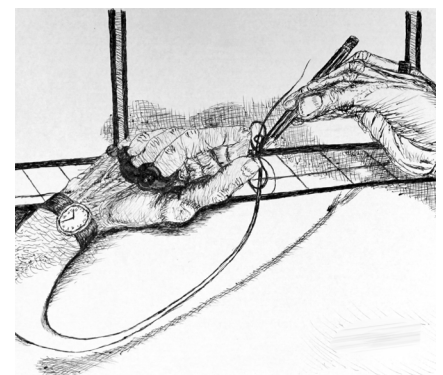
Since 2005, ADMH has hosted the **Capitol Showcase**, a consumer art show at the Alabama's State Capitol. People from around the state with mental illnesses, developmental disabilities, substance use disorders and co-occurring disorders have their abilities showcased throughout the month of May in observance of **National Mental Health Month**.



Nearly 160 pieces of art will be on display in the Old Supreme Court Library in the State Capitol from May 1-25, with a reception for the artists on May 24.



Art can offer a sense of accomplishment, meaning, and engagement when it is hard to express or put into words what a person is struggling with. Creating visual, written or musical forms of art can help to decrease anxiety and stress and offers a refuge from intense feelings and emotions.



# CURE STIGMA

NAMI America is promoting their campaign, *Cure Stigma* not just during Mental Health Awareness Month, but throughout all of 2018. Stigma is toxic because it creates an environment of shame, fear and silence that prevents many people from seeking help and treatment. The perception of mental illness won't change unless we act to change it.



1 in 5 American

adults and children will experience a mental health condition in their lifetime.

Get tested for stigma at [CureStigma.org](http://CureStigma.org)

## What Is Stigma?

People experiencing mental health conditions often face rejection, bullying and even discrimination. This can make their journey to recovery longer and more difficult. Stigma is when someone, or you yourself, views you in a negative way because you have a mental health condition. Some people describe stigma as shame that can be felt as a judgement from someone else or a feeling that is internal, something that confuses feeling bad with being bad.

Navigating life with a mental health condition can be tough, and the isolation, blame and secrecy that is often encouraged by stigma can create huge challenges to reaching out, getting needed support and living well. Learning how to cope with stigma and how to avoid and address stigma are important for all of us.



Stigma may not directly affect you, but it prevents the 1 in 5 Americans with mental health conditions from seeking help.

Get tested for stigma at [CureStigma.org](http://CureStigma.org)

# PEER SUPPORT CONFERENCE 2018

5TH ANNUAL ALABAMA STATEWIDE



June 8-9, 2018

**RAMADA BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT HOTEL**  
5216 Messer Airport Hwy  
Birmingham, AL 35212

The 5th annual statewide peer conference, "Love People to a Better Life", will highlight ways to help those with a substance use disorder with love and understanding. It will be held June 8-9, 2018. The peers will have an opportunity to share their accomplishments, knowledge, and experience working as a certified peer specialist in Alabama. An array of presentations will be offered to assist the peer in providing quality peer services, promoting the value of peer services, advocacy, and the value of collaborations.

Learning from each other will continue to transform Alabama's system of care to a delivery system everyone can find recovery with the continued promotion of "Many Pathways to Recovery". The peers lived experience will always be the foundation to help others obtain and maintain recovery from a substance use disorder to assure we continue the philosophy of:

**"We are the People We Serve"**



# PEER SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

A new program, **Peer Helpers**, found in some south central Alabama schools such as the Sylacauga school system, assists children to obtain help, validation or guidance and decrease possible negative outcomes associated with mental stress.

AltaPointe in south Alabama contracts with ThriveWay, the organization that offers the training, to meet some of the grant objectives related to the program.

Peer Helping is a variety of supportive services initiated by peers of elementary, middle, and high school students in diverse settings. Peer Helpers are young people who are trained and supervised by professionals who adhere to a code of ethics.

Peer Helper students are taught a set of core skills that empower them to assist fellow students with emotional, societal, behavioral, and educational challenges they face in day-to-day life. The 18-week course is an accredited elective for Middle and High school students. If the course is not offered, Peer Helping can be a club as it is in Intermediate and Elementary schools. The program covers several of the issues that affect our youth today, such as: bullying, parental divorce, body image, family sickness, grief, coping, and depression.



## Empowering students to be emotionally, socially, behaviorally and academically successful!

The concept of Peer Helping is based on the fact that when a young person is seeking help, they turn to a peer first and reach out to their parents much later, if at all. Therefore, it is our youth that we will continue to empower to support one another because they make the greatest positive impact.

The Foundation trained the Coordinators on the program last summer. ThriveWay, who now does all the training and support for Peer Helper Programs outside of Baldwin County, has provided further training and the schools will be provided the Peer Helper Portal. The Peer Helper Portal houses all necessary documents to implement a Peer Helper Program including all Peer Helper Skills training lessons and Prevention & Awareness Curriculum.

## ADMH IS ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

HELP US SHARE POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH STORIES



Like us on  
**Facebook**



Find our jobs on  
**LinkedIn**



Follow us on  
**Twitter**



Follow us on  
**Google+**



Subscribe to us  
on **YouTube**



View us on  
**Wikipedia**



**Check out our new Instagram account!**

Through our social media channels, we promote mental health news, events, jobs and more from around the state. Connect with us for the most up-to-date information from ADMH!

# SHOWCASE:

## HOUSING INDEPENDENCE

Client Misty Belcher walked a hard road in her lifetime. She was placed in the custody of Houston Co DHR at the young age of 5 years old due to abuse and remained under their custody until she was 21 years old, in and out of foster homes. In need of mental health care, she was admitted to Bryce Hospital in Tuscaloosa in 2004 and moved to Laurel Oaks Behavior Health Center in 2005. She was there for over three years and but transferred back to Bryce. Eventually she was stabilized and was admitted to HRDI group home in Montgomery in 2007. After a series of suicide attempts, she was transferred back to Bryce.

From 2008 to 2012, she was a patient in several ADMH and provider facilities. Misty was a client at Magnolia Wood until the beginning of 2018. She expressed



wanting to live independently on her own. Her desire was to get her own apartment along with in home support.

A housing assistance request was submitted to Region IV office in Wetumpka, AL and the housing specialist conducted a housing assessment with Misty and began a housing search in February 2018. She moved into her apartment in March 2018 and has been doing excellent along with Three Folds care providing in home support services and Montgomery board providing case management services.

We are proud of Misty and thankful to the staff who worked diligently to find the right fit for her and help her gain independence!



## QUICK READ:

### WHY MENTAL ILLNESS CAN FUEL PHYSICAL DISEASE

For people who suffer from depression or anxiety, being diagnosed with a physical health condition on top of a mental health issue can feel like the worst kind of bad luck. But recent research suggests that this type of dual diagnosis is more than just an unfortunate coincidence. Scientists are learning that seemingly unrelated psychological and physical issues may actually be closely connected.

## STEPPING UP DAY OF ACTION

May 16 is the **Stepping Up Day of Action** around the nation, and here in Alabama, we will be promoting it as well. Stepping Up is a national initiative to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails. The Day of Action is an opportunity for our community to come together to learn about the county's efforts to connect people to treatment and services instead of jails.

Please participate in the day of awareness! Check out the **toolkit** to host events in your community!



# Day of Action

May 16, 2018



# DATES TO REMEMBER

## MENTAL HEALTH RELATED EVENTS OF INTEREST

**05/18**

**Mental Health First Aid Training**  
JCCEO, Birmingham

**05/19**

**Delta/Omega #IntoMentalHealth**  
Green Acres Middle School, Birmingham

**06/01**

**ASL Coffee Night**  
Starbucks, Montgomery

**06/03**

**Five Fifty Fifty Run/Walk for Mental Health**  
Oak Park, Montgomery

**06/08**

**Peer Support Conference**  
Ramada Birmingham Airport Hotel, Birmingham

**06/15**

**ASAM Placement Assessment Training**  
Rapha Treatment Center, Atalla

**06/22**

**Treatment Planning Training**  
Rapha Treatment Center, Atalla

**07/06**

**ASL Coffee Night**  
Starbucks, Montgomery

**07/13**

**EJI No More Martyrs**  
Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, Birmingham

**07/13**

**NAMI Family-to-Family Teacher Training**  
Birmingham



## AIR CONFERENCE

**ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR!**

We had a great time at the AIR Conference in Shocco Springs! Thank you to all our sponsors and partners who make this event great! Check out all some highlights on our [Flickr Page!](#)

Contact Mike Autrey, Office of Peer Support, at [mike.autrey@mh.alabama.gov](mailto:mike.autrey@mh.alabama.gov) for more information about the conference.

# Serve • Empower • Support