

MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER

"Embrace the lows like it's a natural cycle. Life isn't linear, but more of a cycle. There's a season and time for everything." - Sonia Mao

Why is it so hard to find mental health counseling right now?

Before the pandemic, finding a therapist was difficult, but it seemed like it was mainly due to finding someone who accepted your insurance. It is also unfortunately the norm to have difficulty finding therapists for low-income and BIPOC clients. Now, even therapists who are out-of-network are difficult to come by. When you search for therapists, you get an enormously long list...so why is it difficult to find someone who is accepting new patients?

More people are seeking mental health services than ever before: "The federal government's mental health and substance abuse referral line fielded 833,598 calls in 2020, 27 percent more than in 2019, before the pandemic began. In 2021, the number rose again to 1.02 million." Mitch Prinstein (chief science officer with the American Psychological Association) and 35 colleagues wrote: "The toxic psychosocial stressors that the pandemic has created (e.g., physical risks, daily disruptions, uncertainty, social isolation, financial loss, etc.) are well known to affect mental health (and thereby also physical health) adversely, and collectively encompass many characteristics that have been identified as having the greatest negative effects." Therapists are at capacity, wait lists are exceeding 150-200 names, and many people are burnt out and simply not taking on new clients so they can focus on their own mental health.

"Traditional one-on-one talk therapy is offered by practitioners with significantly different levels of training, including clinical psychologists, who have doctoral degrees; psychiatrists, who hold medical degrees and can prescribe medication; clinical social workers, marriage and family therapists, licensed professional counselors and others. The frustration some people encounter when trying to book time with one of them points to the serious consequences of the two-year-old pandemic and a mental health system that simply isn't built to handle current demands."

WHAT'S NEW?

SOCIAL MEDIA, WAR, AND MENTAL HEALTH

How is the war in Ukraine impacting the mental health of people around the world?

MENTAL HEALTH MEDS OVERDOSES ON THE RISE

Learn about the importance of screening for self-injury and suicidal ideation before prescribing BZDs and stimulants!

FREE COUNSELING!

MHA offering free, virtual counseling to all Monmouth County educators and school personnel!



Social Media, War and Mental Health

The people of Ukraine have been living in one of their worst nightmares over the past 13 days. Social media may help to keep people connected, but it is also filling our screens with disturbing photos and videos of damage to buildings and bodies after the bombings in Kyiv and Kharkiv, people and pets huddled in shelters and more. This is not something people should become accustomed to seeing, but “Kero Lubkova, who was born in Odessa (Ukraine) and now lives in Colorado, spends their days checking news sites and social media for updates. Lubkova doesn’t do it because the updates may influence their next move, but because they ‘cannot focus on anything else.’”

Research has shown that exposure to traumatic events does negatively impact viewers mental health. Jason Steinhauer explains that “people want to educate, people want to inform, people want to bear witness...The challenge is, it’s embedded within this [social media] ecosystem and architecture which, at its heart, is problematic.” Roxane Cohen Silver also states that “the amount of media someone consumes and how graphic that content is influence its effects on mental health. Compared to people who viewed less, those who watched at least four hours of television coverage per day during the week following the September 11 attacks reported increased stress and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and were at greater risk of developing health problems years later.”

Mental Health Medications and Overdose

“The study, which was recently published in the journal Pediatrics, used a U.S. commercial claims database of privately insured teens and young adults between the ages of 15 and 24 from 2016 and 2018, to determine the number young people overdosing on prescriptions for benzodiazepines (BZD), like Xanax, or psychostimulants, such as Adderall.” “Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cited by the research team shows 727 youth died of overdoses involving (BZDs) and 902 from overdoses involving psychostimulants in 2019.”

These findings highlight the need for psychiatrists and physicians to do self-injury and suicide risk screenings each time they are prescribing BZDs and stimulants. It is also important that when someone is being prescribed mental health medications, they are also regularly checking in with their psychiatrist and/or therapist to learn coping skills to help manage their symptoms.

 **World Sleep Day**

Hosted by World Sleep Society

MARCH 18, 2022

QUALITY SLEEP | SOUND MIND | HAPPY WORLD

Free counseling for school staff!

Have you felt burnt out? Are you struggling to manage your mental health? Have you felt like you needed help, but were afraid to start counseling or were worried about the cost? Are you on board to receive free, virtual counseling now? The Mental Health Association of Monmouth County is offering free, virtual counseling through the Navigate Wellness program to educators and all school personnel in Monmouth County!

Call for more information or to start services at 732-542-6422!