



St. Clair County Community Mental Health

*Promoting Discovery & Recovery Opportunities
for Healthy Minds & Bodies*

Community Relations Department Activity Report – December 2022

COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Community Outreach/Trainings

12/09/2022: Algonac Rotary Club Presentation

Deb Johnson presented at the Algonac Rotary Club's December meeting. Topics covered SCCCMH services/programs, how to contact us, and a general update about the work SCCCMH does in the community. Community partnerships, including Mental Health First Aid, were discussed along with a folder of SCCCMH resources for each attendee. Approximately 12 members attended.

12/14/2022: Sexual Assault 101 Presentation

SCCCMH is a member of the St. Clair County Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) and hosted a second SART organized presentation on sexual assault. The presentation was free and open to SCCCMH staff and members of the community. The presentation was led by Rochelle Bannon of Safe Horizons; attendees included SCCCMH staff members and members of other county organizations.

12/22/2022: Mid-City Nutrition – Visit with Santa

Deb Johnson accompanied Santa Claus (Mike McCartan) on a visit to Mid-City Nutrition during their regular lunch service. Santa visited with children and adults, spreading cheer and providing a small treat for the holiday season.

12/22/2022: SCCCMH Giving Tree

SCCCMH collected gifts from staff and other supporters for the Giving Tree. This year's Giving Tree statistics include:

- 460 total gifts were purchased; 319 individuals benefited from the Giving Tree
- 282 gifts were for individuals under the age of 18
 - 99 individuals served under the age of 18 received two gifts each
 - 42 siblings of individuals served received two gifts each
- 178 gifts were for individuals over the age of 18
- SCCCMH purchased 139 gifts for the Giving Tree, the remaining 321 were purchased by staff and other donors

Critical Incident Stress Management Activities

- None in December

Pandemic Response Team Activities

- None in December

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Casual for a Cause

- 11/10/2022: CMH Lifeline Fund - \$436.50
- 11/18/2022: Gift of Knowledge - \$436.50
- 11/23/2022: CMH Giving Tree - \$454.50
- 12/02/2022: CMH Giving Tree - \$454.50

- 12/09/2022: CMH Giving Tree - \$457.50
- 12/16/2022: Mid City Nutrition - \$457.50

PAID MEDIA/SPONSORSHIPS/ADVERTISEMENTS

Newspapers/Magazines/Programs/Online Publications

- Blue Water Woman Magazine: Quarter page advertisement in Fall 2022 publication
- Yale Expositor: Medical Directory listing (SCCCMH West). Ad runs each week.
- Gannett/USA Today/LocalIQ: 2022 Giving Guide full page advertisement plus digital ad
- The Keel – 12/16/2022: A woman’s journey of healing from a lifetime of abuse (see attached article)
- The Keel – 12/23/2022: When grief clouds the holiday season, Community Mental Health says give yourself grace (see attached article)

Radio/TV

- Radio First (Mental Health Minute): Limiting holiday stress tips
- WGRT (Mental Health Minute): Limiting holiday stress tips
- EBW-TV: Deb Johnson discussed holiday stress, the difference between the holiday blues and depression, noticing mental health concerns in others, and New Year’s resolutions. Also, Deb highlighted the SCCCMH Creative Arts Contests & CMHA Traveling Art Show.

Billboards

- Digital and static billboards in various locations

Sponsorships/Advertisements

- Port Huron Police Officers’ Association: 19th Annual Country Music Spectacular - \$250
- St. Clair County Community Services Coordinating Body: 2022 Housing Summit - \$2,500
- Taking a Shot at Breast Cancer: Annual Calendar - \$400

UNPAID MEDIA COVERAGE

Newspapers, Newsletters & Magazines

- None in November

Radio / TV

- 12/06/2022: Radio First (WPHM), Paul Miller Show: Deb Johnson discussed handling holiday stress and setting New Year’s resolutions. Also, Deb highlighted the SCCCMH Creative Arts Contests & CMHA Traveling Art Show.
- 12/01/2022: Deb Johnson discussed holiday stress, the difference between the holiday blues and depression, noticing mental health concerns in others, and New Year’s resolutions. Also, Deb highlighted the SCCCMH Creative Arts Contests & CMHA Traveling Art Show.

SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH

Facebook Report: SCCCMH

- Number of page likes: 3,444 (31 new likes in December)
- Number of posts to page: 25 (December)
- Post with highest reach: 3,538 impressions on We are Hiring

Instagram: SCCCMH

- SCCCMH Followers: 328 (15 new followers in December)
- Number of posts: 13 (December)

LinkedIn Report: SCCCMH

- SCCCMH Followers: 227 (7 new followers in December)
- Number of posts to page: 4 (December)

YouTube Report: SCCCMH

- SCCCMH Subscribers: 62 (1 new subscriber in December)
- Number of impressions: 4,765 (December)
- Top videos viewed (November)
 - Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Contingency Management
 - 2022 Housing Summit – Panel Discussion

Website Report: SCCCMH

- Page views: 10,340
- /: (main website landing page): 2,282 views
- /about-us/careers/: 714 views

UPCOMING EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

- 01/06/2023 – 01/27/2023 – *CMHA Traveling Art Show* (8 a.m. – 5 p.m.; 3111 Electric Ave.)
- 01/09/2023 – Port Huron Northern Health and Wellness Week
- 01/10/2023 – *CMHA Traveling Art Show Reception* (4 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.; 3111 Electric Ave.)
- 01/11/2023 – Port Huron High School Health and Wellness Week
- 01/13/2023 – SC4 Nursing Student CMH Training
- 01/17/2023 – *Brown Bag Lunch-and-Learn: COVID, Flu, & RSV* (Noon; 3111 Electric Ave.)
- 01/19/2023 – *Community Forum* (5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.; BWROC – 617 10th St., Port Huron)
- 01/23/2023 – RESA Professional Development Presentation on Grief Supports
- 02/02/2023 – *Community Forum* (5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.; SCCCMH Child & Family Services – 2415 24th St., Port Huron)
- 02/03/2023 – *Creative Arts Contests* Deadline
- 02/15/2023 – *Community Forum* (5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.; Community Enterprises – 1033 26th St., Port Huron)
- 02/16/2023 – *Community Forum* (5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.; SCCCMH West – 14675 Downey Rd., Capac)

Italicized events indicate attached flyer with additional information



What's next for the Port Huron region

A woman's journey of healing from a lifetime of abuse

GABRIELLE HAIDERER | FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2022



Below is the story of Anna, whose name has been changed to protect her identity, and her journey toward healing from a lifetime of abuse with the help of therapists and the Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) program at St. Clair County Community Mental Health.

When Anna reached out to St. Clair County Community Mental Health (SCCCMH), she was at the end of her rope. She had been to treatment facilities. She'd seen a psychiatrist who took advantage of his position and suggested she clean his house naked. She had tried therapy multiple times. Anna wanted help, but she was finding it more difficult to reach for.

In a last-ditch effort, Anna says she was able to find the support she needed through the Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) program at SCCCMBH.

"This was it for me," says the Kimball Township resident. "This was the last time I was going to try."



**Alexandra Gabridge, DBT
and Outpatient Clinician
at St. Clair County
Community Mental
Health.**

Alexandra Gabridge, DBT and Outpatient Clinician at SCCCMH, says Anna is not alone in feeling that way.

“When people come in and they’re just so done, like this is the last-ditch effort, we’ll grab onto that and say, ‘Okay, we hear you. We see you ... We’ll face whatever comes next,’” Gabridge says. “I think just that validation of what you’re saying, experiencing, and how you’re acting makes sense - not that we’re condoning it, or loving everything that’s going on - but it makes sense to really help somebody open up to this idea of trying one more thing like DBT.”

While SCCCMH offers a wide variety of treatment and therapy options for those in need, the DBT program is an intensive, one-year program that requires participants to be absolutely dedicated to their treatment plan.

“We will only take people if they want this,” Gabridge explains. “We don’t want to set anyone up for failure by putting all these demands on them to attend individual therapy, weekly skills training, having homework, and keeping a daily diary card.”

She says that throughout the program participants go through four modules: mindfulness, interpersonal effectiveness, emotion regulation, and distress tolerance. Mindfulness helps you practice how to be present without judgement, focusing intentionally on the moment while interpersonal effectiveness focuses on how to ask for what you want and say no while maintaining your self-respect. Emotional regulation helps you change the emotions you want to change and distress tolerance helps you learn how to get through a stressful situation without trying to escape or seek out ways to numb your feelings.

While there are components of the program that are standard such as the four modules, there are also aspects that are tailored for each individual such as what is tracked in the daily diary card. Some participants might be tracking substance use, while others are tracking binge eating or purging behaviors.

Alexandra Gabridge, DBT and Outpatient Clinician with St. Clair County Community Mental Health, goes over skills with an individual in the Dialectical Behavior Therapy program during a group session.

The program also works with participants on life skills, such as how to engage and communicate with people who may not have been through the same life experiences.

“People who have experienced significant trauma, who have Borderline Personality Disorder, often do struggle to make friends because their normal isn’t everybody else’s normal, their normal is being neglected, their normal is being abused, their normal is being screamed at yelled at degraded and belittled... To engage with other people who have not had to deal with that type of invalidation or degradation can be challenging,” Gabridge says.

She says that, because of this, people in the DBT program tend to either overshare information about their personal life or not share at all. Those who overshare, unaware of the traditionally accepted social limits, don’t

realize how what they are saying could be perceived by the general public.

“Once they have that awareness of what the difference is between their normal and other people’s normal, we talk about the impact of discussing their normal versus other people, and how to skill them up to be able to engage in effective, healthy communication with people and then slowly, methodically, strategically open up safely,” Gabridge says.

Skills such as this have benefits for participants not only when it comes to making friends, but also when it comes to interviewing for jobs and then keeping those jobs. This is one of the skills that Anna says she learned in the DBT program because, for a long time, she experienced difficulties making friends and understanding that her “normal” was not their “normal.”

“I didn’t know how to make real friends, real commitments, because I did not understand why they weren’t involved in sexual, physical, mental abuse,” she explains. “And then when they did, I assumed that was fine because that’s just how it’s supposed to be.”

Anna thought “that’s how it’s supposed to be” because, from a young age, sexual, physical, and mental abuse had been commonplace in her life.

“My journey began very, very young - too young to remember,” Anna says.

She says she grew up in a “normal middle-class home” with her mother, father, older sister, and younger brother.

“I was sexually, physically, and mentally abused all my life by my biological sister who lived with us - she is five years older than me - and by my maternal grandfather, and then there were some boys in the neighborhood later down the road,” she says.

Her parents both worked full-time jobs, often leaving the three children at home alone.

“My mother and father, looking back, I suppose they did the best they could with how they knew how to do things,” she says. “I’m assuming that my mother was also abused from the stories I’ve heard from others, so she didn’t know very much herself. My father worked a lot.”

At the time, Anna says she didn’t know that the abuse she was enduring, particularly at the hands of her sister, was inappropriate. At home, sex or consensual touch was never talked about and at the private school she attended through eighth grade, it was never addressed. She says that as a teenager when she did open up to someone, that person didn’t help.

“The first time I came forward was to a boyfriend of mine, and he decided it would be a great thing to hear about during experiences, if you will, intimate ones,” she says. “So, I never knew it was, like, a ‘thing.’”

Anna says that during high school she started to realize her experiences weren’t normal, however, she continued to have difficulty making friends due to her experiences.

At 21, Anna gave birth to her first child. Shortly after, she spent time at Harbor Oaks Hospital, which treats mental disorders, drug addictions, and psychiatric needs. During her stay there, Anna contacted her sister and asked if the abuse she remembered actually happened or if she was making it up in her mind.

"Her response was, 'Yep.' That was it. I said, 'Can we talk about it?' She said, 'What do you want to know?' I asked her a few different things, and she said, 'Yep, but I ain't got time for this bullshit.' And hung up the phone," Anna recalls.

Eventually, Anna did tell her family about the abuse that had occurred.

"It was told to be hush-hush. We don't need to talk about this. It happened, let it go," she says.

By her mid-40s, Anna had tried various counseling and therapy programs. As a way to cope and escape from her pain, she says she started becoming addicted to surgeries.

"Every single one I needed, but I started to like the feeling of going under and being gone for a while," she says.

Then, in 2020, her brother passed away.

"It killed me because I was starting to get through to him. He was also severely abused by my sister," Anna says.

"I was 45 or 46 at the time, and I knew for a fact that if I didn't get help, I'd be dead before I was 50," she says. "No doubt in my mind - somehow, someday, either I would do it or it would just happen. And I knew this."

It wasn't long after that Anna reached out to SCCCMH and became enrolled in the DBT program. In addition to learning how to communicate effectively, Anna says she has learned how to use her voice for herself through the program.

"I've always had a voice for others, especially children, but I'm starting to understand I can use my voice not just for others, but for myself," she says. "I have cut all ties to my family, except for my children, because they have chosen to take my sister's side. Now, instead of feeling hurt, anger, or betrayal, I feel peace. I feel calm."

While the DBT program has been Anna's lifeline, it's just one of the many programs offered by SCCCMH. They have multiple programs and therapy options that meet the unique needs of individuals, and a wide variety of groups that anyone receiving services through SCCCMH can participate in – from groups focusing on coping skills to groups that teach cooking skills to groups that support setting healthy goals and everything in between.

Gabridge says these groups are a great way for people to receive mental health services and support, especially right now when there's an influx in demand for SCCCMH's services.

"Right now, people are seeking mental health services... We want to be able to meet the needs of each individual person without feeling like we're not able to provide the most quality services because we're stretched too thin," she says. "So, I think these classes are a great option for people to recognize the ways to learn information without necessarily that one-on-one individual therapy."

No matter what program or group ends up being the right fit, Anna shares that if you are struggling, taking that first step and reaching out is worth it.

"It's not easy, but it's saved my life," she says. "It has saved my life. I can say that honestly - without a hitch, without a hiccup. Nothing. I would have been dead by 50."

So, if you find yourself at the end of your rope, needing help, she has a message.

"Reach," she says. "Just one more time. Reach. If you've done it 100 times and you feel you can't anymore. Just one more time, for yourself, just reach. They'll be there for you."

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What's next for the Port Huron region

When grief clouds the holiday season, Community Mental Health says give yourself grace

GABRIELLE HAIDERER | FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2022



Grandma always led the cookie-baking marathon; but, now that she's gone, who will take it on?

Dad always handed out the gifts on Christmas morning; but, without his Santa Spirit, Christmas morning feels empty.

The dinner table was always set for six, but this year there will be an empty spot.

For many, after the loss of a loved one, the holidays just don't feel the same.

Kathleen Gallagher, Program Director at St. Clair
County Community Mental Health



"The holidays are always portrayed by the media as perfect times, perfect holidays, perfect gifts, perfect meals, and that's not true for most of us," says Kathleen Gallagher, Program Director at St. Clair County Community Mental Health (SCCCMH). "If you've lost someone or if you are no longer in contact with your family for whatever reason, the holidays can be a very lonely time."

Gallagher says one of the things that can be difficult after the loss of a loved one is continuing with old traditions because we remember past holidays when that person participated in the tradition, and then feel a wave of grief. She says that may look different for each person.

"We always say it's okay to start new traditions, and it's okay not to do some of the things you used to do because they just make you sad," Gallagher says. "It's really about giving yourself grace and giving your family the grace that you need to do things that you're okay with doing."

When Ethel and Kenneth Moore lost their 24-year-old son, Bradley, to suicide nine years ago, their holidays also began to look different. Their first Christmas without Bradley was especially difficult, but the couple found a way to remember their son on Christmas Day.

"The first Christmas we didn't really do Christmas at all because it was our first year without him," Ethel says. "What we did was, I had put a message out on Facebook that all of his friends could come leave a note on the porch about the good times they had with him and we would take them in and read them. Christmas night we took all the notes and read them and that helped, remembering all the good times he had with his friends."

"This is us with Bradley on his graduation day," says Ethel Moore. "He had gotten his GED. Probably the best day he ever had."

Now that it's been nine years since Bradley passed away, Kenneth and Ethel have found other ways to pass the holidays. However, Kenneth says their holidays just don't have the same joy as they once did.

"When he passed away, it kind of took care of our holiday spirit," Kenneth says. "I mean, it changed everything for us."

"[Our daughter] will come home Christmas Eve and spend it with us here at home and then our other son, who was our middle child, we go to his house for Christmas dinner in the afternoon. But we don't really exchange gifts at all hardly and it's just not the same," says Ethel. "I usually will light a candle next to his picture on Christmas Eve. That just lets me know that we're not forgetting about him."

The couple says one thing they have come to terms with through this is that everyone grieves differently. In addition to participating in the Survivors of Suicide Support Group offered by SCCCMMH, Ethel says she finds it helpful to talk about him.

"I like to talk about him during the holidays, maybe even a little more, with my friends," Ethel says. "It just makes me feel good and it lets me know that they haven't forgotten him and he's still close to me. My husband and my son, they don't like to talk about him."

Because everyone grieves differently and needs different things when they're grieving, Adrienne Luckenbacher, Community Relations and Outreach Coordinator at SCCCMH, says it's important to remember to let people know what you need if you are grieving or struggling emotionally – whether during the holidays or any other time.

"People are not mind readers - it doesn't matter if it's your husband of 50 years, your parent, or your best friend," Luckenbacher says. "Different people need different things at different times. You might say, 'Listen, I really don't want to go to the gathering and be around family and friends, but I would really appreciate a text or call later to let me know how the party was.'"

If you know someone who has lost a friend or loved one, or if you have a friend or family member who is struggling emotionally this holiday season, it can be difficult to know what to say to help. Luckenbacher suggests first, making sure it's the right time and place to ask if someone is doing alright to avoid calling someone out publicly such as at a family gathering, or a work party. Just talk to them privately, then open up the conversation.

"You can start out the conversation by just saying, 'I'm concerned,' and that opens the door that lets the person know that you're there," she says.

Luckenbacher says it can be helpful to add factual information about why you're concerned, such as, "I'm concerned because I noticed you've been crying a lot and you look tired. Is there anything I can do to help?" Then, if the person feels like opening up, one of the best things you can do is listen and don't feel the need to fill the quiet moments. If your friend or family member doesn't want to talk right then, leave the door for conversation open.

"Don't assume that just because the person doesn't want to talk in that moment that they don't want to talk at all," Luckenbacher says. "You can leave the door open and just say, 'If it's something that you don't feel like talking about right now, I understand, I just want to let you know I'm here if you want to talk.'"

Gallagher adds that helping someone who is struggling doesn't have to be a big, grand gesture. It can be as simple as offering a hug and saying, "I'm here if you need me," or dropping a card in the mail. She also says that while we often are told to think of others during the holidays, it's important to remember to take care of yourself as well – and to not feel guilty about it.

"Sometimes we feel guilty into doing things that don't serve us anymore, that are more difficult, and sometimes we think we have to do that because we've always done it. But I think traditions can change," she says. "Really it's about taking care of yourself. During the holidays, we're always thinking of other people and taking care of other people, but it's okay to take care of yourself too."

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CMHA PRESENTS TRAVELING ART SHOW VII

Promoting the recovery potential of art and eliminating the stigma surrounding mental illness and intellectual/developmental disabilities.

CREATIVE MINDS



CHANGING MINDS

Please join us
for a grand opening reception
Tuesday, January 10th
4 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

St. Clair County Community Mental Health
3111 Electric Ave., Port Huron

St. Clair County Community Mental Health will host the original artwork of individuals who access Community Mental Health services statewide.

Michigan's Community Mental Health organizations were asked to submit works of two-dimensional art, including paintings, drawings, prints, fabric, and photography for this exhibit.

We hope you enjoy the show!

For more information, contact Heather Hayes
(810) 966-7875
hhayes@scccmh.org



**St. Clair County
Community Mental Health**
*Promoting Discovery & Recovery Opportunities
for Healthy Minds & Bodies*

www.scccmh.org



CMHA PRESENTS TRAVELING ART SHOW VII

Promoting the recovery potential of art and eliminating the stigma surrounding mental illness and intellectual/developmental disabilities.



January 6th - 27th

during regular business hours

St. Clair County

Community Mental Health
3111 Electric Ave., Port Huron

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St. Clair County Community Mental Health

Community Forums

St. Clair County Community Mental Health (SCCCMH) invites community members, individuals who receive services, friends/family members, and other stakeholders to join us for our Community Forums. The forums will provide an opportunity for SCCCMH to update the community on programs, services, and new initiatives. Attendees are encouraged to bring questions, comments, and feedback on services, programs, and ways SCCCMH can serve the community. Questions may be submitted in advance by emailing community_relations@scccmh.org. Light refreshments will be served. For those unable to attend, community forum recaps will be provided online at www.scccmh.org.

January

5:30 - 7:00 pm

19

Blue Water Recovery & Outreach Center BWROC
617 10th Street, Port Huron, MI 48060

February

5:30 - 7:00 pm

2

SCCCMH Child & Family Services
2415 24th Street, Port Huron, MI 48060

February

5:30 - 7:00 pm

15

Community Enterprises
1033 26th Street, Port Huron, MI 48060

February

5:30 - 7:00 pm

16

SCCCMH West
14675 Downey Road, Capac, MI 48014

Date coming soon!

5:30 - 7:00 pm

SCCCMH South

135 Broadway, Marine City, MI 48039



**St. Clair County
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www.scccmh.org



With questions, or for more information, please contact Adrienne Luckenbacher at (810) 966-3531 or aluckenbacher@scccmh.org.

COVID, FLU & RSV

A "Brown Bag" Lunch-and-Learn session
from St. Clair County Community Mental Health

Tuesday, January 17, 2023

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Auditorium at SCCCMH Main Office in Port Huron

Feel free to bring your lunch to enjoy during this event.

About this Session:

This presentation will provide an overview of respiratory illness including influenza, Covid-19, and RSV. Participants will be able to identify signs and symptoms of flu, COVID, and RSV, including similarities and differences among them. Education will be provided on vaccination to prevent disease, ways to reduce disease transmission, and when to seek treatment.

Presented by: Alyssa Seidl, RN, BSN
St. Clair County Health Department
1.0 FREE Social Work CE Credit Offered

Please register by calling or emailing Tammy Lake at Tlake@scccmh.org or (810) 966-2597. Staff who are unable to attend in person are invited to join virtually with cameras on via Lifesize.

**More "Brown Bag"
Lunch-and-Learn
sessions from
SCCCMH coming
soon!**

St. Clair County Community Mental Health is an approved provider with the Michigan Social Work Continuing Education Collaborative. The approved provider number is: MICEC-0054.



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St. Clair County Community Mental Health invites students across St. Clair County to share their talents while supporting and raising awareness about mental wellness through the 2023 Creative Arts Contest!

High School Art

Theme: Keep going...keep growing

Middle School Writing

Non-fiction | Fiction | Poetry

Theme: Keep going...keep growing

Elementary School Bookmark

Theme: I Am Growing...each challenge is an opportunity to learn



Open to all students, grades K-12,
in St. Clair County

Contest Deadline: February 3, 2023

For entry forms and additional instructions
scan the QR Code or

visit www.sccmh.org/events/creative-arts-contest/





High School Art
Middle School Writing
Elementary School Bookmark



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