



MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Updates and information from the Atlantic County Office

Celebrating National Mental Wellness Month

NEWS & FEATURES

**BUSTING THE WINTER
BLUES & AND COVID STRESS**

PAGE 3

MINDFUL AND A CUP FULL

PAGE 4

A SPECIAL KIND OF COACH

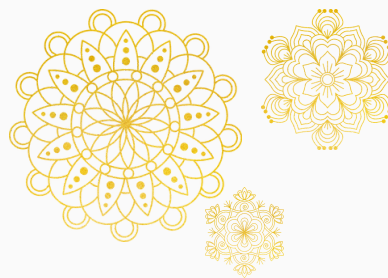
PAGE 5

**DECLUTTERING IN JANUARY
AND BEYOND**

PAGE 7

**LONELINESS AND MENTAL
HEALTH**

PAGE 9



The Gift of Gathering

By Beth Wade



Violinist and volunteer, Ian Hoblitzell, was among those who played for the holiday programming.

Some joined for great, live, online music. Some gathered around a screen with familiar faces for the camaraderie of friends. In other virtual groups, people participated in an activity, like movement, meditation, or art.

All came together in the spirit of the holiday through a new tradition - virtual groups on holidays.

"We are a community and, for some, we are like a second family," said Bern Trendler, Program Manager for ICE Wellness in Atlantic. "In light of the increased number of COVID cases, this was needed and appreciated programming."

(Continued on page 2)



(Continued from *Gathering* on page 1)

For the first time in the agency's history, online groups were provided on the recent holidays, including Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, as well as New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

A successful Thanksgiving trial for members of United By Wellness inspired a whole lineup of programming that showed both staff and consumers had a genuine interest, need, and kinship that called for holiday togetherness

Staff were not required to work, but a sign-up sheet filled up quickly. Since three offices contribute to United By Wellness, the pool of facilitators was large. In the end, there was enough interest to provide programming that included about 7 groups per day at various times.

Bern's December 25 time slot, which she called *Christmas Jamboree*, was filled with three special guests – members of her family – who agreed to share their vocal and instrumental talents. Among them was her cousin, Ian Hoblitzell, who is the Director of Orchestras at Washington Township High School. He plays violin and volunteered on Christmas Day.

"I realized people were really enjoying themselves and that was powerful," he said. "I think we all got a lot of it, including me."

Another music-themed group that was hosted by Ocean County attracted a large number of consumers. The New Year's Eve "Music to My Ears" event was attended by more than 50 people.

"The feedback has been so positive from both staff and consumers," said Bern. "The word 'fulfilling' keeps coming to mind. For me, it really made my holiday."

MHA Atlantic expresses special thanks to all the wonderful and talented members of Bern's family who generously volunteered on Christmas Day!

We appreciate all the staff members who signed up and provided programming during the holidays. From the Atlantic office, they were: Bern, Carolyn, Nikki, Britt, Brian, Mya, Stephany, Morgan, Kris, Amanda, Emily, and Devon.



A POST
WORKER IS
LIKE HAVING
A REALLY
GOOD COACH,
JUST NO
WHISTLE

One-on-one support
No cost, no insurance requirements

- Apply for SNAP, GA, SSD/I
- Linkages to resources (employment, housing, legal, other)
- Budgeting, saving, credit building skills
- Create a resume and/or cover letter
- Education on mental health, daily living skills, employment skills, socialization skills

**BUSTING
THE WINTER BLUES
& COVID STRESS**
Self-care for you in 2022



Sit in a sunny window or get outdoors

Choose an enjoyable activity to distract yourself - a show, a book, hobby, recipe

Call, text, FaceTime, Zoom or spend time with family & friends

Focus on what you can control

Attend worship or spiritual services/tune in online

Set boundaries & avoid triggers that cause anxiety or compromise your wellness

Plan a day trip or vacation for sometime in the coming year

Mindfulness Activity

(Easy to do
with a warm drink)



Drink the cup in a different room.
Slow down and savor the taste.
Warm your hands on the cup.
Notice the aroma.
Play music, not the news.
Put down the phone!
Notice any memories that pop up.



Chai Tea

- 1 tea bag - chai or black tea
- 1 stick of cinnamon
- 2 C. milk
- 2 Tbsp. sugar or honey
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1/8 tsp. ground ginger
- 1/8 tsp. cardamom

In a small saucepan, combine tea bag, cinnamon stick and 1/2 C. water. Boil, remove from heat. Cover and let stand for 5 minutes. Remove tea bag and cinnamon stick. Stir in remaining ingredients. Cook over medium heat until warm. Do not boil

Hot Chocolate

- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 C. milk
- 2 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/4 tsp. vanilla extract
- pinch of salt

Mix sugar, cocoa, salt and milk in a saucepan. Heat until warm. Stir in vanilla

Optional: caramel syrup and sea salt, whipped cream, marshmallows

*JAVA TIP: Try replacing sugar with honey in your coffee.
Pairs well with hazelnut creamer



Earning the nickname "Coach"

On the Too Much Stuff Team

By Beth Wade

The casual baseball cap usually worn by Charlie Miller is just one of many ways that makes him down-to-earth and approachable.

On the job, he doesn't just *look* the part, he really is a coach of sorts as a case manager in our "Too Much Stuff" programs and Hoarding Initiative. His patience and non-judgmental approach has earned him the nickname, "Coach" among clients.

Charlie has worked with individuals in their homes, as well as by phone, and videoconference to help them sort, discard, and make changes to change their collecting behaviors.

"People with too much stuff just don't see the volume of clutter. It grows gradually over time and becomes normal to them," he said. "The people I've met are a highly intelligent, creative people, not at all lazy or careless, which is sometimes what people think who don't know or understand, the mind works differently in people living with hoarding disorder."

Charlie's previous work, volunteer positions, and the good example of his father (a Sunday school teacher and Scout leader) are some of the reasons why he's a natural fit in his role.

He learned problem-solving skills as he trained for a post with Community Mediation Services with Atlantic County Courts, which was a volunteer position. In addition, 34 years at NJ Bell Telephone/ ATT, taught him management and interpersonal skills.

In addition to his work with MHA Atlantic, Charlie also works as a rental inspector in Brigantine. That was his first in-depth introduction to the need to help community members living with hoarding disorder. MHA brought services to the community when no local help could be found; and Charlie was asked to join the team.

"The people I've met are a highly intelligent, creative people, not at all lazy or careless, which is sometimes what people think who don't know or understand."



Charlie Miller, case manager with MHA Atlantic's Too Much Stuff program



Join our drop-in support group for individuals who have clutter challenges.

**1st & 3rd Wednesday of every month
1pm-2pm**

Call/email for Zoom meeting information or join the virtual wellness center at no cost using this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8VXP2K8>



609-652-3800



Unitedbywellness@mhanj.org



mhaac.info/ubw

This is a Group of United BY Wellness: MHANJ's Virtual Wellness Center

DECLUTTERING IN JANUARY



It's good for your mental health!

- Reduces stress
- Improves focus
- Promotes productivity
- Feel calmer
- Improves self-esteem

A neatened space is often more relaxing

TIPS TO START OUT

- Start Small
- Start three piles- "Keep", "Maybe", "Discard"
- Start a bin for donations
- Start in one drawer, one closet, one cabinet, one room
- Start with 15 minutes if you are overwhelmed



**Acute Care Family
Program serves
families in crisis
7 days per week
Available 8 am to 8 pm
609 517-8614**

Support and assistance for families with a loved one in crisis and in need of linkage to treatment and other services.

Our team engages families who are often navigating the mental health system for the first time.

Staff educate families about mental illness and offer resources and referrals that can help their loved one

*Help is a phone
call away*



THANK YOU
to all the staff
at our office and
the United By Wellness
group facilitators
statewide
who worked on
Christmas Eve,
Christmas Day,
New Year's Eve and
New Year's Day

Mental health screening is a helpful tool and a quick way to "check in" with yourself, especially during this new phase of the pandemic

www.mhaac.info/screening

Quick, anonymous, no cost



HOW LONELINESS AFFECTS MENTAL HEALTH

DEPRESSION

There is a strong relationship between feeling loneliness and depression. If you've been feeling socially isolated or lonely, negative self-beliefs and suicidal thinking may increase, while life satisfaction often decreases. Self-isolation is also a common symptom of depressive episodes.

ANXIETY

Chronic loneliness can also lead to or exacerbate already existing social anxiety. Having a strong support system is a protective factor against anxiety, so if you don't have that support, your general anxiety levels may increase and you could have a more difficult time with emotion regulation.

PSYCHOSIS

The connection between loneliness and psychosis isn't as well studied. However, loneliness has been linked to increased hallucinations and paranoid thinking, and the relationship may go in both directions (loneliness leading to psychotic symptoms, and psychotic symptoms to loneliness)

SUBSTANCE USE

Substance misuse/abuse is prevalent in people dealing with chronic loneliness or isolation - it's common to numb painful feelings with alcohol or other drugs. Loneliness is recognized as a risk factor in all stages of alcoholism. It can also have indirect effects on substance use due to increased stress.

@mentalhealthamerica



January is Mental Wellness Month

A reminder from MHA Atlantic to revisit the 8 dimensions of wellness



Like the spokes of a bike wheel, each of the dimensions is needed. If any spoke is weak, the wheel is compromised.

1

EMOTIONAL

Coping effectively with life & creating satisfying relationships

2

ENVIRONMENTAL

Occupying pleasant, stimulating environments that support well-being

3

FINANCIAL

Satisfaction with current & future financial situations

4

INTELLECTUAL

Recognizing creative abilities & finding way to expand knowledge & skills

5

OCCUPATIONAL

Personal satisfaction & enrichment from one's work

6

PHYSICAL

Recognizing the need for physical activity, nutritional foods and rest

7

SOCIAL

Developing a sense of connection, belonging & well-developed support

8

SPIRITUAL

Expanding a sense of purpose & meaning in life

Wellness is an active process that involves being aware and making choices toward a life that is healthy and fulfilling

Keep checking your wellness wheels throughout 2022

UPCOMING PROGRAMMING FROM OUR FRIENDS AT THE ATLANTIC CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

2022 VISION BOARDS

Let's visualize our goals for the new year!
5:30pm class time offered!

2022 Goals

- First Goal
- The Second
- Next One
- Fourth Goal
- The Fifth
- Next One
- Sixth Goal

January 11, 2021
1:00 PM and 5:30PM
Zoom ID: 811 7298 2370
Passcode: 513838
[Zoom Link](#)

The Atlantic Center for Independent Living supports equal access for all.
For accommodations please contact Jennifer at jburke@atlanticcil.org (609)748-2253 ext.4

JANUARY 18, 2021 | 1:00 PM

Computer Clean UP

Organize and delete old files, clear browsing data and more!

ZOOM ID: 811 7298 2370 | PASSCODE: 513838
[ZOOM LINK](#)

The Atlantic Center for Independent Living supports equal access for all.
For accommodations please contact Jennifer at jburke@atlanticcil.org (609)748-2253 ext.4

Snowflakes

Step by step ways to make paper snowflakes.

All ages are welcome! Email Jennifer for supply suggestions.

January 25, 2021 | 1:00 PM
Zoom ID: 811 7298 2370 Passcode: 513838
[Zoom Link](#)

The Atlantic Center for Independent Living supports equal access for all.
For accommodations please contact Jennifer at jburke@atlanticcil.org (609)748-2253 ext.4