

MENTAL HEALTH

MATTERS

March 2012 Newsletter



MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS in your life

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The Mental Health Bell

by Jennifer Piver

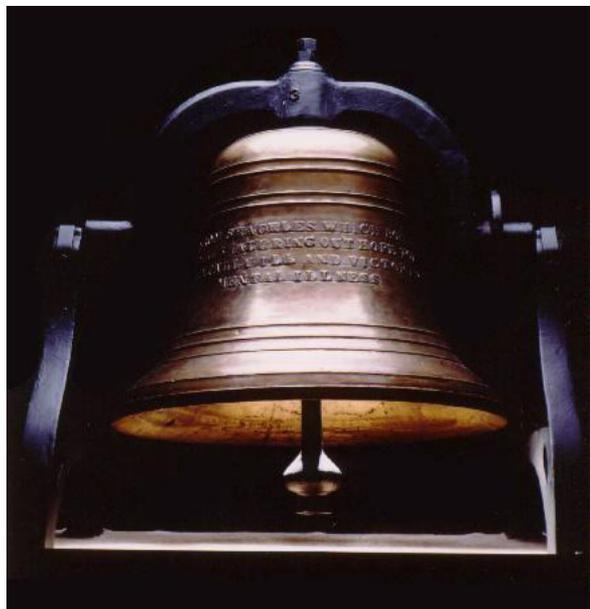
Cast from shackles which bound them, this bell shall ring out hope for the mentally ill and victory over mental illness.

—Inscription on Mental Health Bell

As Mental Health America of Greenville County welcomes the spring of a new year, we can't help but look towards MHA's past, present and future. While mental health and the treatment of those with mental illnesses have come far, we cannot forget those who made it possible. The best place to start is by sharing the story of the agency's symbol: the mental health bell.

"Promoting positive mental health for all persons in our community through advocacy, education and service."





Around the turn of the twentieth century, Clifford W. Beers, a recent graduate of Yale College and a newly-minted Wall Street financier, suffered his first episode of bipolar disorder (manic depressive illness) following the illness and death of his brother. In the throes of his illness, Beers attempted to take his own life by jumping out a third story window. Seriously injured but still alive, Beers ended up in public and private hospitals in Connecticut for the next three years.

While in these institutions, Beers learned firsthand of the deficiencies in care as well as the cruel and inhumane treatment people with mental illnesses received. He witnessed and experienced horrific abuse at the hands of his caretakers. At one point during his institutionalization, he was placed in a straightjacket for 21 consecutive nights. Upon his release, Beers was resolved to expose the maltreatment of people with mental illnesses and to reform care. In 1908, he published his autobiography, *A Mind That Found Itself*, which roused the nation to the plight of people with mental illnesses and set a reform movement into motion. On February 19, 1909, Beers, along with philosopher William James and psychiatrist

Adolf Meyer, embraced that future by creating the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, later the National Mental Health Association and what we know today as the Mental Health America.

The organization set forth the following goals:

- to improve attitudes toward mental illness and the mentally ill;
- to improve services for people with mental illness ; and
- to work for the prevention of mental illnesses and the promotion of mental health.



Above: *Maryland Gov. Theodore McKeldin and Mrs. A. Felix DuPont in 1953 pour the metal made from melted chains used to restrain people with mental illnesses to create the Mental Health Bell. Top Left: The completed bell as it looks today.*

During the early days of mental health treatment, asylums often restrained people who had mental illnesses with iron chains and shackles around their ankles and wrists. With better understanding and treatments, this cruel practice eventually stopped. In the early 1950s, Mental Health America issued a call to asylums across the country for their discarded chains and shackles. On April 13, 1956, at the McShane Bell Foundry in Baltimore, Md., Mental Health America

melted down these inhumane bindings and recast them into a sign of hope: the Mental Health Bell.

Now the symbol of Mental Health America, the 300-pound Bell serves as a powerful reminder that the invisible chains of misunderstanding and discrimination continue to bind people with mental illnesses. Today, the Mental Health Bell rings out hope for improving mental health and achieving victory over mental illnesses.

Mental Health Month: May 2012

Social connectedness is such an important component in good mental health. Because of this, the theme for the 2012 Mental Health Month in May is "Get Connected."

Mental Health America encourages you to foster several kinds of connections. The first is **connecting with family and friends**. This helps us to feel close as well as supported. Establishing and maintaining these personal connections in our lives can lead us towards a more stable, long-term mental wellbeing. MHA also encourages **connecting with your community**. This connection gives a sense of belonging and purpose. It gives our lives meaning and helps us establish and nourish our identity. Lastly, MHA encourages **connecting with professional help**. This connection is important to help us feel better when we are stressed or having trouble coping.

There will also be two focus areas for Mental Health Month: **Do more for 1 in 4** and **Healing Trauma's Invisible Wounds**.



Did you know that one in four Americans is living with a mental illness? That's more than 54 million American adults. If this seems high to you, consider that not everyone who has a mental illness has been diagnosed or is receiving treatment due to stigma of mental illness, lack of knowledge or understanding of mental illness and lack of funding.

MHAGC looks forward to a day when the number might be lower than one in four due to people seeking out help and recovering. But even those whose illnesses are chronic can lead a much better quality of life through education about mental illness and more access to treatment.



With the attention that has lately been placed on our armed forces, there is no time like the present to turn an eye on the effects of mental trauma. Just as our bodies can become injured and need to recover from physical trauma, so can our minds need to recover from emotional trauma. This kind of trauma can't be seen, so it is much harder to understand. During May, MHA would like to honor and remember those who have survived traumatic experiences, as well as spread awareness of the effects of those experiences on mental health.

for more information on Mental Health Month, please visit www.nmha.org

How Play Therapy is Used to Treat Troubled Children

by Ashley Posley



While 50% of persons with mental illnesses develop them by age 14 according to the National Institute of Mental Health⁽⁴⁾, only 14% of people have heard of play therapy as revealed by the Foundation for Play Therapy's 2011 spring survey⁽¹⁾.

Defined as the use of play to expose disturbances in children while establishing rapport, play therapy is designed for children from ages three to twelve who are diagnosed with mental disorders including oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), depression, and anxiety disorders such as obsessive compulsive disorder. Play therapy also treats children who are suffering from grief, a loss, death, or a painful life event such as divorce.

Play therapy is believed to be effective in treating children based on the concept that play allows children to communicate in a nonthreatening manner. Dr. Robert Nolan, executive director of Miami Dade's Institute for Child & Family Health expresses, "We believe that play of a certain type is a healing part for kids."⁽²⁾ Some activities used in play therapy are described below:

*Storytelling: This therapeutic activity involves the child and therapist using their imaginations and taking turns putting together the plot of a story that they recite aloud. During this process, the child is allowed to identify with the characters' emotions. (3)

*Role playing: By playful communication with puppets or dolls, a child often reveals the presence of defense mechanisms such as displacement -- where feelings for a threatening target are redirected towards less threatening dolls or puppets; and projection -- where a child attributes his or her own needs, fears, and desires toward dolls or puppets. (3)

*Drawing: When children draw their families or a timeline of their lives that include their happiest and saddest moments, play therapists develop an understanding of children's emotions. (5)

*Sand tray drawing: Rather than drawing on paper, sand tray drawing involves creating a scene in a sand tray using figurines of people, castles, animals, etc. Play therapists use this activity to surface and analyze a child's unconscious mind. (5)

*Molding clay: The manner in which children handle clay -- gently or aggressively -- gives insight into their emotions. (5)

*Computer games: Interactive video games have become useful in play therapy, especially in treating children struggling with their parents' divorce. (6)

*Blowing bubbles: Blowing bubbles allows children to practice controlled breathing. (3)



It is important to note that effective play therapy is practiced by registered play therapists who have been formerly trained. Their roles are to observe a child's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors; explore recurring themes from a child's form of expression; and challenge troubling thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

The goals of play therapy are determined based on an individual child's needs and age. Many troubled children achieve the benefits of a boost in confidence gained from having control over their play, an improvement in communication, and increased relaxation.

1 Association for Play Therapy. (2012). 2012 Report to membership.

2 Burton, R. (2012, January 3). A half century of helping children through play therapy. Miami Herald Media Co.

3 Hall, T.M., Kaduson, H.G., & Schaefer, C.E. (2002). Fifteen effective play therapy techniques. American Psychological Association, Inc.

4 National Institute of Mental Health. (2005, June 6). Mental illness exacts heavy toll, beginning in youth.

5 Play therapy activities to engage children. (2012). Counselling Connection.

6 Therapy games for children of divorced parents. (2004-2010). Zipland Interactive Ltd.



Join MHAGC on May 9th as we celebrate Mental Health Month with a FUNdraiser hosted by **Café and Then Some:**

Where is Oprah when you need her? She has moved on... and it's time for Norma, Bubba and Dot to move on, too! The house is falling apart, Bubba is taking yoga and Dot is in love. And to top it all off, Little Norma shows up at the old home place with big news. When you're facing troubles like these...Dr. Oz ain't gonna cut it!

Featuring: Jim Wilkins, Susan Smith, Maureen Abdalla, Traysie Amick and Bill Smith.

Show Tickets \$30.00, Show only seating 7:45 PM at Café and Then Some, 101 College St.
For Tickets contact MHAGC at 864-467-3344

Pennies from Heaven

Emily Wirthlin has been collecting pennies. And lots of them. Her goal: to raise a million pennies (or ten thousand dollars) to help those in Greenville County who are homeless and have a mental illness. The money will benefit MHAGC, who has partnered with Emily in this project. MHAGC will give interest-free \$500 loans to individuals who are homeless and have a mental illness as start-up funds for expenses such as deposits, rent, utilities and furniture. Along with the funds, recipients will receive help from MHAGC for budgeting and household management. Recipients will then pay the loan back to MHAGC over the course of one year, so that the funds will then be available for future recipients. Because it can be so difficult for those who are homeless and struggling with mental illness to get housing again, these funds will give those individuals a start they would not normally have.

Emily began this fundraiser as part of a girl scout project. The fourteen year old saw an artist make a million-penny sculpture on TV and thought about what she could do with a million pennies. Her mother, Stephanie Wirthlin, is a special services coordinator for the Piedmont Center for Mental Health Services in Simpsonville. MHAGC is thrilled and truly grateful to have the opportunity to work with Emily and Stephanie on this project.



2012 with MHAGC

April

16 Video Screening: The Truth About Suicide 6:30-8:00 pm Furman University

May

9 Cafe and Then Some FUNdraiser Show only- 7:45 pm Cafe and Then Some
 17 MHAGC Annual Meeting 12:00 PM-2:00 pm Trinity Lutheran Church

September

10 World Suicide Prevention Day
 10-16 National Suicide Prevention Week

October

4 National Depression Screening Day Screenings Available at MHAGC.org

November

4 National Survivors of Suicide Day Time and Location TBA

Mental Health America of Greenville County Programs: Nationally Certified Crisis Intervention Services

CRISISline | 864-271-8888 CRISISline is a free, confidential, 24/7 hotline offering a non-judgmental sounding board for people to talk about life's struggles as well as resources and crisis intervention. The line is for anyone, anytime, any reason.

TEENline | 864-467-TEEN (8336) | online crisis chat at www.TEENlineSC.org

TEENline was opened in 1995. Trained teens answer the phones Monday through Friday from 5pm to 9pm. After these hours, all calls are answered by CRISISline. An online Crisis Chat is also available.

Reassurance Line | 864-467-3350 This unique MHAGC program connects and supports clients of mental health centers through a peer to peer support line. The line promotes consumer independence, self-confidence and compliance with individual treatment plans.

Survivors of Suicide | 864-271-8888 | e-mail sos@mhagc.org

Survivors of Suicide (SOS) is a comprehensive support program for those who have lost a loved one to suicide. SOS provides an array of survivor services including an open monthly support group led by veteran survivors, support team visits, a resource library and an 8 week closed group for adults, youth and children.

Mental Health Matters! Education Programs (outreach@mhagc.org)

Outreach Programs and Initiatives

Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) is a one-hour nationally recognized suicide prevention training. It consists of 3 simple steps that anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide.

The I.C. HOPE® "Don't Duck Mental Health" campaign is a public awareness and education campaign committed to educating students about the importance of mental health.

Free and Confidential mental health screenings for a variety of mental illnesses are offered 365 days a year. Screenings are offered by appointment or on-line at www.mhagc.org.

Consumer Independent Living Support Services (864-467-3344)

Representative Payee Program provides financial management services for over 200 individuals with chronic and severe mental illnesses.

Affordable Subsidized Housing for individuals with chronic mental illness.

Operation Santa Claus is an annual holiday gift collection project for individuals with chronic mental illness.



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MHAGC and The Furman Student United Way
 Present A CLP...

The Truth About Suicide: Real Stories of Depression in College

April 16, 2012
 6:30-8:00 p.m.

at Furman University, Lecture Hall 214
 (McEachern Lecture Hall)
 3300 Poinsett Hwy, Greenville SC, 29613

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 America of Greenville County)
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 www.mhagc.org)

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 _____ A speaker for my organization _____ Other

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