

From: **Mental Health America-Augusta** mhaa@lumos.net  
Subject: August Newsletter: Children's Mental Health Matters  
Date: August 24, 2017 at 9:30 AM  
To: mhaa@ntelos.net



*ADVOCATE*

*EDUCATE*

*CONNECT*



## **When to Seek Mental Health Care for Children**

The worried mother put her arm around her daughter's small shoulders. The teenager looked up at her mom, a sad expression on her face. "She's been asking to talk to someone for a while now," the mother said. "I knew I had to do something when she started saying she wanted to hurt herself."

Sometimes as a parent – especially the parent of a teen or pre-teen in the throes of puberty, it's hard to know when mood, anxiety, conduct problems, and unusual thoughts and behavior rise to the level of needing professional help. The turbulence of adolescence, a child's fiery or tender temperament, and society's ideas that "boys will be boys" or that a child just needs to "toughen up" when faced with bad experiences can confuse caregivers about when to get help.

Every child and family is different but the following guidelines can provide some help to know when to pick up the phone to a therapist, psychologist, your pediatrician, or your child's school guidance counselor, all of whom are trained to work with children with mental health needs:

1. Your child feels distressed or is causing others significant distress with either emotional or behavior problems that don't go away despite what both the child and parent try. Or the child may not be able to do what's expected for his or her age, whether it be socially, academically, or developmentally. If your child is not using single words by age 2 or 3-word phrases by age 3, you should contact the local Early Intervention office or elementary school for free or low-cost services.
2. If your child asks to talk to a counselor. This is not a usual occurrence and means your child is struggling with an issue with no immediately evident resolution. Sometimes the child does not want to burden the parent with the problem, or hasn't been able to resolve it by telling the parent. Either way, by getting your child an appointment, you are demonstrating you care and will do what it takes to help the child feel better.
3. If your child begins to talk about wanting to die or kill him or herself or engages in self-harm. Even if your child is a "dramatic" type and you don't think he or she means it, your intervention shows you take the sentiments seriously. If you think your child may harm him or herself that day or evening and you don't already have a counselor to call, you can call the Valley Community Services Board or go to

Augusta Health emergency department to see if someone could meet with you and your child right away. In the meantime, watch your child closely, don't leave him or her unsupervised, and place any medication (even Tylenol), guns, and sharp knives where the child is unable to obtain them.

4. If your child has a mostly depressed or angry mood for more than two weeks, with low self-esteem, loss of interest in activities or people he or she used to enjoy, and also possibly disturbed sleep and appetite. Depression can strike at any age, especially with stressors like being bullied, having problems with friends or a significant other, or experiencing high levels of stress in the family. Children often have periods where they appear quite happy in the midst of a full-blown depression, so you have to look at your child's overall mood and how much distress the sadness and anger are causing.
5. If your child persistently exhibits separation anxiety, worries, does not want to go places or do things most children that age do, or engages in obsessive-compulsive rituals or especially rigid thinking.
6. If you are experiencing marital difficulty or any other major stress. Your child is likely to feel it, and have the added stress of worrying about you. All children, especially babies and toddlers because they have fewer coping mechanisms and rely so heavily on caregivers for soothing, soak up parental tension and often respond with sleep disturbance, crying, clinginess, hyperactivity, and anger.
7. If you suspect your child has experienced a trauma such as abuse, being in harm's way, or seeing a loved one be harmed.
8. If your child is doing something that is markedly odd, such as engaging in sexualized behavior at an unusual age, complains of hallucinations, such as hearing voices that tell him or her to harm self or others, or becomes unusually hyper with very little sleep and rapid speech. These serious symptoms merit immediate attention.
9. If you are getting a great deal of complaints from school, especially in more than one school year, about behavior or attention problems, as your child may need help with learning, social skills, mood, or a behavior disorder such as ADHD.

*By Lisa Rochford, PhD, Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Staunton*

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## **Music from the Heart**

White Hill Church of the Brethren was filled with music beginning with Faithful

Men's gospel music, accompanied by Orville Bame followed by Bluegrass gospel performed by High Ground on August 12th. The two groups combined to sing *Peace in the Valley* and then the finale *I'll Fly Away*. Kris Neil was the evening's Master of Ceremonies, attended by 202 people. A free will offering of \$1,200 was received.



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## 10TH ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE/CANDIDATE FORUM

The 10th Annual Legislative/Candidate Forum will be held Thursday, September 28 at the Augusta County Government Center, Board of Supervisors Meeting Room, 7:00 pm. The Government Center is in Verona. Candidates and incumbents vying for seats in the House of Delegates will be present to answer your questions regarding mental health issues.

MHA-A is collaborating with Valley Community Services Board, National Alliance on Mental Illness Shenandoah Valley, and Valley Supportive Housing.

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## Support MHA-A While Shopping at Amazon

Christmas Shopping has already begun as you comb through Amazon's online ordering site. Why not sign up with Amazon Smile while ordering. You can have Amazon donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to MHA-A. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service.



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## UPCOMING PROGRAMS—MARK YOUR CALENDARS



# AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR Suicide Prevention

### TALK SAVES LIVES

Crystal Graham with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention will present *Talk Saves Lives* on Wednesday, September 20, 5 p.m. at Panera Bread, Waynesboro. You are invited to a community-based presentation that covers the general scope of suicide, the research on prevention, and what people can do to fight suicide.

Presented by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, this presentation will be offered to Mental Health America - Augusta (MHAA) board, membership and the general public. For ages 15+.

Attendees will learn the risk and warning signs of suicide, and how together, we can help prevent it.

For more information on the presentation, [click here](#).

Please contact the MHA-A for reservations: 540.886.7181 or [mhaa@ntelos.net](mailto:mhaa@ntelos.net).

## “Taking an Outside Perspective – Coping with the Changes Dementia Brings”

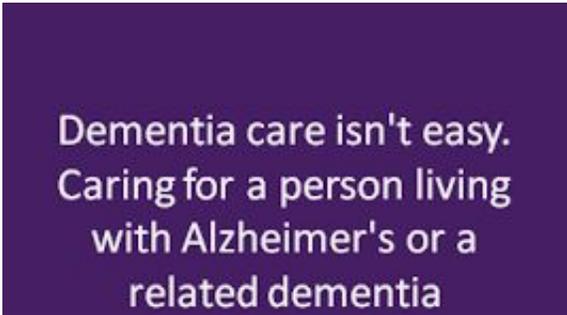
Sharon DeBoever will present an Alzheimer’s caregiving program on October 3, at Grace Lutheran Church, Fellowship Hall on the lower level, 6:30 p.m. (500 S. Wayne Ave., Waynesboro)

This is a program that will focus on the changes that occur in the various stages of Alzheimer’s and some of the other dementias. The program will offer specific tips to the caregiver on how to assist themselves and the person with the diagnosis to better manage those changes throughout the disease process.

The program will also focus on value of the caregiver caring for himself/herself throughout this process. Resources for additional outside assistance will be provided.

This program is free of charge and open to the public. RSVPs will be helpful but not required in order to accommodate seating and planning for “light” refreshments. RSVP to MHAA office, voicemail or email, 540.886.7181 or [mhaa@ntelos.net](mailto:mhaa@ntelos.net).

**Program Presenter:** Sharon DeBoever, *BS., Masters in Educational Psychology, Community Educator, Alzheimer’s Association*



Dementia care isn't easy.  
Caring for a person living  
with Alzheimer's or a  
related dementia

is difficult.  
In fact, caring is one of  
the most difficult  
undertakings that  
anyone could ever  
imagine.

Bob DeMarco  
AlzheimersReadingRoom.com



# safeTALK

## **Suicide Alertness for Community Members**

safeTALK is a 3 1/2-hour training program that prepares helpers to identify persons with thoughts of suicide and connect them to suicide first-aid resources. Most people with thoughts of suicide, either directly or indirectly, invite help to stay safe. Alert helpers know how to identify and work with these opportunities to help protect life. Powerful videos illustrate both non-alert and alert responses. Discussion and practice stimulate learning. Space is limited. Ages 15+

\*PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED\*

DATE: Tuesday, September 26, 2017

LOCATION: Panera Bread in Waynesboro TIME: 9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

COST: FREE

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## **UPCOMING FUNDRAISERS**



## BOOTS & BREWS

Put on your boots, favorite jeans and come out to help us raise funds for a critical need in our community. Mental Health America of Augusta is hosting our 2nd Annual Boots N' Brews event on Friday, October 13 from 6 p.m. - 10 p.m. at Hermitage Hill Farm and Stables. Come listen to great music provided by Brian Buchanan and The Goodson Band. Enjoy tasty victuals and a cold refreshing Stable Craft beer (wine, signatures cocktails and non alcoholic drinks will be available). The night will also include s'mores on the patio, great boots and other packages up for auction (live and silent). You won't want to miss it! Tickets are on sale now!

[Buy Tickets](#)

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### 63rd MHA-A ANNUAL MEETING

Matt Paxton, *Legacy Navigator*

The 63rd MHA-A Annual Meeting will be held Tuesday, November 14th. Matt Paxton, from Richmond and Co-founder of [Legacy Navigator](#) will be our speaker. He has appeared on the tv show, *Hoarders*, and helps people to declutter their homes. Hoarding is now listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-5. Location and time are to be announced at a later date.



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## AREA SUPPORT GROUPS

**Survivors of Suicide Loss: Peer-to-Peer Support Group**

**Location:** Staunton Augusta YMCA

708 N. Coalter St.

Staunton, Va. 24401

**Time:** 2nd and 4th Monday of each month from 6:30 pm - 8 pm

**Facilitator:** Brooke Anderson at 404.617.0448 or [brookelanderson@gmail.com](mailto:brookelanderson@gmail.com)

This group is for suicide loss survivors. Everyone in the group, including the facilitator, have had someone close to them die by suicide and knows how devastating that experience can be. The group helps those who have lost a loved one to suicide cope and help in the process of living the healthiest life possible. You can come and just listen to others, or tell your story. Either way, the choice is yours.

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### **Grandparents Support Group**

**Location:** Christ United Methodist Church

1512 Churchville Ave.

Staunton, Va. 24401

**Time:** 6 pm - 7 pm, 2nd Friday of each month (except April, July, and November)

**Contact:** Mary Engleman at 885.1257 or Maggie Campbell at 540.256.1320

This group is for grandparents raising their grandchildren enduring the stress of caregiving. Participants will receive support, education on topics and resources of interest, and feel less stressed. Childcare is provided for children age 6 months to 12 years old through the Parents Night Out Program.

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### **NAMI Family to Family Support Group**

**Location:** Augusta County Library

1759 Jefferson Highway

Fishersville, Va.

**Time:** 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm, 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month

**Contact:** Sherry Zehr, 540.447.4949

This group is for family members or close friends that have a family member living with a mental illness. Everyone in the group, including the facilitator has a family member or loved one that experiences a mental illness. This is a place that families can come together to share experience and listen to others.

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## 2017 MHA-A Membership Campaign

The 2017 Membership Campaign has begun with the MHA-A Board making their contributions and you have received a membership packet in the mail as well. Membership contributions are a significant source of income for our programs and operations. The MHA-A Board wishes to thank you for your financial resources in the past and hopes that you will continue to support our organization and attend our programs and events.

[DONATE NOW](#)

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## Website

Check out the new MHA-A website, [www.mha-augusta.org](http://www.mha-augusta.org). The Social Dynamics class at Blue Ridge Community College and Don Hawks designed the site. ADVOCATE, EDUCATE and CONNECT are the organizing themes for the programmatic material. There is also a donate button to make a contribution.



[VISIT WEBSITE](#)

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**Our mailing address is:**

101 W. Frederick St.  
Staunton, Va. 24401

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