



# What we do

Since 1962, **The Mental Health Association of Erie County, Inc.** has provided essential programs and services to adults, families and children in Erie County.

### Information and Referral Service

Individuals contact MHA via phone, email or by walking directly into the agency. Our trained staff will provide the most appropriate community resource, based on the assessment/need of the individual.

- Helps individuals and families identify and understand the mental health delivery system
- Provides up-to-date information and referrals to mental health clinics, mental health professionals and area support groups based on the needs of the caller.

**(716) 886.1242**



**Mental Health Association of Erie County, Inc.**

### Workshops and Support Groups

- Living with OCD Support Group
- Schizophrenia/Schizoaffective Support Group
- Writing and Well-Being Workshop
- OPERATION COM (Children of the Military)
- The 20-Something Group
- Family Support Group/Youth Group
- Hoarders Support Group

### Basic Emotional Skills Training (B.E.S.T.)

B.E.S.T. helps young children enter school ready to learn.

Children who develop healthy social and emotional skills have the tools they need to interact with peers, teachers and family members in a respectful, age-appropriate manner.

B.E.S.T. is a classroom-based program provided by our staff in two curriculum formats:

#### Teaching Kids to Care

Interactive lessons which improve primary grade students' classroom behavior by increasing their pro-social skills.

#### Too Good For Violence

An evidence based violence prevention program for children in Grades K through 2.

In addition, Ripple Effects, a collaborative effort between the MHA and WNY United, provides extra social emotional support for students at BPS # 27.

### Child and Family Support

A peer-run program that offers a variety of services to include support, advocacy, and education to those who have a family member suffering from a mental illness.

**CHILDREN:** Facing the reality of having a child with significant emotional and/or behavioral challenges is often an overwhelming experience for families. CFSP helps the child's caretaker learn necessary skills and information to effectively advocate for their family.

**ADVOCACY:** Family Advocates work with families on reaching their self-identified goals. Advocacy is multi-faceted and may involve:

- Learning to navigate the mental health system.
- Understanding and learning to pursue appropriate educational accommodations.
- Discussions with the child's treatment team.

**Phone Support:** Family advocates are available Monday through Friday to provide an understanding ear and a wealth of information about services and supports in Erie County, your family's rights and the mechanics of the system.

**Respite:** Short-term respite provided by a trained, experienced, background-cleared respite worker can help. This program is available for children 4-18 years of age. An assessment is completed to determine eligibility for the program.



### **Legal Services and Advocacy**

The mission of Legal Services and Advocacy is to help mental health consumers obtain and retain the benefits necessary to live independently in the community and to protect the rights of consumers in Erie County.

- Provides legal advocacy and consultation to mental health consumers, their families and professionals.
- In order to be eligible for our legal advocacy services, a person must live in Erie County and have a psychiatric diagnosis.
- Now representing Child SSI cases.
- Provides representation in Social Security Disability, Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid, Public Assistance, student loans, debt collection, utility problems, and limited landlord/tenant problems.

For more information on any of these programs, please

**716-886-1242**



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### **Court Appointed Special Advocates (C.A.S.A.)**

The mission of Erie County CASA is to speak for the best interests of abused and neglected children in the Courts.

A child at risk, who finds him or herself caught up in the foster care system, faces a confusing and often intimidating court system and child welfare bureaucracy. CASA works with family courts to make sure that each child's voice is heard. CASA volunteers come from all walks of life—ordinary citizens with an extraordinary commitment to helping children secure a safe and permanent home.

- CASA promotes and supports quality volunteer representation for children, with volunteers advocating to provide each child a safe, permanent, nurturing home, as quickly as possible.
- CASA believes every child deserves to have the opportunity to thrive and reach their potential.

### **Operation C.O.M. (Children Of the Military)**

This group provides support for our children of the military with their own heroic journey. Our mission is to help your child establish positive coping skills, encourage positive expression, strengthen self-confidence & resiliency and most importantly to have fun with other military children! For questions contact Mary at 886-1242 x 326 / mcparlane@eriemha.org

### **Community Advocacy in collaboration with Compeer of Greater Buffalo**

Today there is an increased awareness of mental illness and how it affects individuals. It not only touches people personally but it also has an effect on companies in terms of profitability and employee productivity. Research has shown that depression is the number one cause of absenteeism in the workplace.

The Community Advocacy program at the Mental Health Association of Erie County in collaboration with Compeer of Greater Buffalo provides a variety of workplace wellness trainings to businesses and organizations in the Western New York area.

Currently there are five programs being offered:

- Mental Health First Aid
- Workplace Bullying
- Self-Care
- All Work and No Play
- Mental Health in the Workplace

These workshops are meant for both the profit and non-profit organizations.

Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour certification program designed to help individuals identify the signs and symptoms of mental illness as well as raise awareness of mental health and fight stigma.

The remaining workshops are 60-90 minutes in duration.