Way to go Katy!

I grew up with serious mental illness in my family. My mother’s suicide when I was 13 was devastating for all of us. As I got older, I struggled being a single mom with bipolar disorder that went undiagnosed until I lost my job and our home in 1999. That year, I moved us to Prescott, AZ, got a wonderful doctor and received help for my bipolar disorder. It was a challenge to raise my two sons by myself and deal with my mental illness, but the three of us were a close knit family and we coped with what life threw at us. I joined a support group in 2000 and started experiencing the miracle of peers helping and encouraging each other. I started working as a Peer Support Specialist for NAZCARE, the consumer run agency in Northern Arizona, and in 2006 I became a Peer Support Specialist for West Yavapai Guidance Clinic in Prescott, where I work now.

My peers who work in mental health are the most dedicated and brave people I have ever met. It takes a lot of courage to take their own personal struggles with mental illness to help others who are struggling. I feel strongly that we should come together and support each other in our often difficult and stressful jobs.

In 2011, I started the League of Peers, a support and networking group for those of us working as Peer Support Specialists. I also serve as President of NAZCARE’s Board of Directors and as a member on the DBHS OIFA Advisory Council.

My message to all of you out there – join together to further recovery and fight stigma. To join the League of Peers, email your contact information to leagueofpeers@yahoo.com.

ADHS Partners with Arizona EDs to Help in the Path towards Recovery

ADHS is now offering At-Risk for Emergency Department Staff, an online training simulation designed to prepare medical staff to screen patients at risk for alcohol abuse, drug use and suicide, to all Emergency Departments (EDs) in Arizona. The At-Risk training uses the same gaming technology as many video games, including emotionally responsive avatars that simulate real-life and stimulate conversations.

This training program is free to all Arizona hospitals and can be completed 24/7 from any computer with online access. It awards 1.50 CMEs or CEUs, increases patient safety and reduces re-admission rates. For more information on At-Risk for ED, please visit https://az-ared.kognito.com.

The Behavioral Health Vision: All Arizona residents touched by the public behavioral health system are easily able to access high quality prevention, support, rehabilitation and treatment services that have resiliency and recovery principles at their core, which assist them in achieving their unique goals for a desired quality of life in their homes and communities.

DBHS manages Arizona’s publicly-funded, statewide behavioral health system. Learn more at www.azdhs.gov/bhs/.
Cenpatico Peers Celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month

The Safford Peer and Family Advisory Council this year did something new to promote community wellness during Mental Health Awareness Month by holding a 5K Run/Walk. The Council had traditionally hosted a picnic at the local park for peers and staff from the Opportunity for Recovery and Empowerment Center, Arizona Counseling and Treatment Services (ACTS) and Southeastern Behavioral Health Services (SEABHS), but its membership wanted to do something different for 2013. The Council wanted the community to become involved, and peers formed a planning committee. Corporations and businesses were contacted for donations, the Run/Walk was advertised throughout Graham and Greenlee counties, and the event was held on at Eastern Arizona College Discovery Park Campus in Safford on May 18, 2013, with 119 registered runners, 100 peers, and 50 volunteers. A community picnic with a raffle and prizes was held after the Run/Walk.

The committee is already planning their 2014 event and promise to make it even better than this year! Many thanks to Southeastern Arizona Consumer Run Services, Inc., SEABHS, Cenpatico and ACTS!

CPSA Hosts 13th Annual Recovery Wellness Community Forum

The annual Community Forum was held in Tucson May 9, 2013 on the 50th anniversary of President John F. Kennedy signing the Community Mental Health Act into law. This law provided federal funding for community mental health centers, as well as funding for research and treatment of mental illness. This was the last bill the President signed into law before his assassination.

Mr. Charles “Chick” Arnold, a distinguished attorney specializing in mental health law, provided the opening keynote address and urged the attendees to continue their advocacy work. Mr. Pat Benchik, Assistant Director for the Department of Health Services, Division of Behavioral Health Services, shared his experience and insight regarding the advancement of mental health services over the past 50 years, as well as the importance of recovery and resiliency in the current system. The morning and afternoon panels featured peers and family members who spoke of their positive experience in the behavioral health system and how the Mental Health Act has impacted the system, with a focus on hope and recovery as we move forward.

In addition to the informative sessions, a wellness clinic offered Reiki, energy work, and acupuncture to support the mind, body and spirit. The RISE Health and Wellness Center’s Camp Wellness also offered some fun ways to improve one’s health and gave out prizes. The Resource Fair was well represented, with more than a dozen local providers who shared information about services in Southern Arizona. It was a great day for everyone to learn, network, and have fun!

PSA Art Awakenings Mother’s Day Mental Health & VIP Celebration!

Showcasing the talents of artists, poets and musicians, PSA’s fifth annual event was attended by nearly 150 people. The Mother’s Day celebration was held to raise awareness of mental health issues and celebrate mothers supporting those on their recovery journey. The refreshments were catered by Stand Together and Recover (S.T.A.R.). Special guest speaker Emily Jenkins, Chief Executive Officer of the Arizona Council of Human Service Providers, gave a moving testimony as a mother of a family member with mental illness and their struggle to excel while fighting stigma. This inspirational event shows the true healing power of the arts and how PSA Art Awakenings fulfills its motto of empowerment and recovery through creativity.
Heart Health Linked to Mental Health

Depression sometimes follows a heart attack or angina attack. Depression may make symptoms of heart disease worse and having depression increases your risk of death after a heart attack.

Research suggests the biological and chemical factors that trigger mental health issues also could influence heart disease. One study released earlier this year identified biological factors in the brain that make an individual vulnerable to stress-induced depression and heart disease. Heart disease and depression will be the number one and number two leading causes of disability in developed countries by the year 2020, according to the World Health Organization.

But regular physical activity is a good way to fight heart disease and depression. Exercise reduces blood pressure and helps you maintain a healthy weight — important factors in preventing heart disease, the leading cause of death in men. Research suggests an exercise training program is as effective as medication in improving the symptoms of depression among older adults diagnosed with the disease.

Exercise offers multiple benefits. Here are some tips to boost your physical fitness:

- Start walking just 10 minutes a day and build up to 30 minutes.
- When walking, pick up the pace from leisurely to brisk. Choose a hilly route.
- Mix it up. Walk one day, swim the next, and then go for a bike ride on the weekend.
- Join a team. There are adult leagues of all levels in all sports. The social aspect of playing team sports is another boost to heart health and mental health.

Healthy Recipe

Raspberry-Chocolate Chip Frozen Yogurt

Ingredients:
Prep: 5 Minutes | Total Time: 35 Minutes
3 cups fresh or frozen (not thawed) raspberries
2 cups low-fat plain yogurt
1/3 cup sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/2 cup chocolate chips, preferably mini

Instructions:
Place raspberries, yogurt, sugar and vanilla in a food processor and process until smooth.
Transfer the mixture to an ice cream maker. Freeze according to manufacturer’s directions, or until desired consistency. Add chocolate chips during the last 5 minutes of freezing.
Transfer to an airtight container and freeze until ready to serve.

Tip: No ice cream maker? Pour the mixture into a 9-by-13-inch pan and place in the freezer. Stir every few hours, until the mixture is firm along the edges and semi-firm in the center, 2 to 6 hours (using frozen berries will shorten the freezing time). Transfer to a food processor and process until smooth.
Transfer to an airtight container, stir in chocolate chips, cover and freeze until ready to serve.

Source: WebMD

Guys, Time to Take Care of Yourselves

Men need to take better care of themselves. Consider:

- Men are 24 percent less likely than women to have visited a doctor within the past year.
- Men are 32 percent more likely than women to be hospitalized for long-term complications of diabetes.
- Men are 24 percent more likely than women to be hospitalized for pneumonia that could have been prevented by getting an immunization.

Regular medical screenings are important to the prevention and early treatment of a variety of diseases, including heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Screenings are tests that look for disease before you show symptoms. You should regularly have your blood pressure and cholesterol levels checked, for example.

National Men’s Health Week is June 10-16 and is a great time to schedule the following medical screenings:

- **Colorectal cancer.** Men should celebrate turning 50 by having a screening test for colorectal cancer. Those with a family history of the disease may need to be screened earlier. There are a number of screening tests, including the colonoscopy.
- **Diabetes.** You should especially get screened for diabetes if you have high blood pressure.
- **High blood pressure.** Have your blood pressure checked at least every two years. High blood pressure increases your risk for stroke, heart attack, kidney and eye problems, and heart failure.
The Profound Effect of Stigma on Individuals and Communities

While many in Arizona work hard to reduce the stigma of mental illness, a recent study shows just how much work remains to be done.

Less than 30 percent of people with psychiatric disorders seek treatment because they do not want to be labeled a “mental patient” and suffer the discrimination that comes with that label, Amy Watson, Ph.D. and Patrick Corrigan, Psy.D conclude in their article *The Impact of Stigma on Service Access and Participation*. Fear of stigma contributes to a lack of participation in treatment, the authors say. More than 40 percent of those getting anti-psychotic medication don’t comply with prescribed regimens and about half of those with serious mental illness don’t show up for outpatient appointments after being discharged from inpatient care.

The human costs are enormous – as are the financial costs. Millions of dollars are wasted on treatment that isn’t completed or maintained. Millions more are spent when people with untreated mental illness wind up in emergency rooms, courts and correctional facilities.

In Arizona, educating the public about the myths of mental illness continues with events such as “Ride the Rails” during Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week and the ongoing work of the regional stigma reduction committees across the state.

**Tribal Warm Line Removes Cultural Barriers to Recovery**

American Indians living in Gila and Graham counties can now connect with others sharing the same culture and belief system through a Tribal Warm Line.

The Tribal Warm Line is a toll-free support line staffed by tribal members. The Tribal Support Partners are local members of the tribe who understand the local culture and community norms – redefining peer-to-peer counseling. Community members are encouraged to call for a variety of reasons, including emotional support, relationship issues, anxiety, depression and referrals to other community resources.

The Tribal Warm Line is part of the services provided by Cenpactico, the Regional Behavioral Health Authority for Gila and Graham counties.

The toll-free number for the Tribal Warm Line is **855-728-8630**. The line is staffed 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Monday-Friday and 9 a.m.-11 p.m. Saturday-Sunday. Calls made outside these hours will be answered by the Cenpatico Crisis Line and arrangements will be made for a return call from Tribal Support Partner.
Mindfulness May Boost Health

It may sound silly, but “living in the moment” for just a few minutes every day may ease symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression.

Studies have shown that a form of meditation called mindfulness can also improve mood, in addition to easing stress and depression. A study released earlier this year showed mindfulness exercises significantly eased the symptoms of military veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder.

What is mindfulness? It is a form of meditation that trains your mind to focus only on the present. What are you sensing right this moment?

It is easy to fit mindfulness exercises into your day:

- Find a quiet place and focus your attention on your body, starting with your feet and ending at your head. Take time to notice how each part feels during the body scan.
- When you first step outside, take a few deep breaths. Is the air warm or cold? Do you smell cut grass? Flowers? Traffic fumes?
- Eat a meal in silence. Don’t do anything but focus on your food. Look at the color. Inhale the scent. Eat slowly, and savor each bite.
- Take a yoga class to learn breathing exercises and stretches.

Find Your Purpose

Helping Others

Helping others is a good way to help yourself – in addition to finding a sense of purpose.

Decades of research shows that volunteering provides health benefits beyond a warm and fuzzy feeling. Those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability and lower rates of depression than those who do not volunteer. States with a higher rate of volunteers have lower rates of heart disease.

People with chronic pain experienced less pain and less disability and depression when they began to serve as peer volunteers for others also suffering from chronic pain.

The benefits are greatest among older adults. A study of adults age 65 and older found that the positive effect of volunteering on physical and mental health comes from the personal sense of accomplishment and sense of purpose that may fade when someone stops working.

And volunteering has benefits for people still in the job market. Volunteering can help you:

- Make job networking contacts.
- Learn or develop skills.
- Enhance your résumé.
- Gain work experience.
- Show others that you are ambitious, enthusiastic and care about the community.

You can start looking for volunteer opportunities here.
Aurora Behavioral Health System Presentation

When: June 25, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Where: 6350 South Maple Ave., Tempe

Aurora Behavioral Health System will host an interactive presentation titled “The Use of Art Therapy and Pet Therapy in an Inpatient Setting.” For more information, and to register, go online at http://auroralunchandlearn.eventbrite.com.

NAMI’s Annual Valley Walk

When: October 19, registration starts at 8:30 a.m.
Where: State Capitol Grounds, 1700 W. Washington St., Phoenix

NAMI conducts their annual Valley Walk with walkers having choice of two routes. For more information, visit www.namivalleywalk.org.

Save the Date: Southwestern School for Behavioral Studies

When: August 18-22
Where: Loews Ventana Canyon, Tucson

The beginning of June marks the start of online registration of the 45th Annual Southwestern School for Behavioral Studies featuring more than a dozen confirmed speakers. The theme of the conference is “Embracing Recovery and Wellness – Where Hope Stems from Within.” Register online at www.azsws.org. For more information, contact Michele Brown at 480-784-1514, extension 1508.

The DBHS Blog Connection — now you can connect with our blog by email (sign up here)!

The Arizona Parents Commission on Drug Education and Prevention, part of the Governor’s Office of Children, Youth, and Families has arranged to provide scholarships for the 14th Annual Summer Institute. The scholarship covers your conference registration fee (you would still have to pay out of pocket for your travel, meals and stay).

A limited number of scholarships are available for the 14th Annual Summer Institute to be held at the Sedona Hilton Resort July 16-19, 2013. These are on a “first-come first-served” basis so long as they have seats available. Awardees will be notified via email.

This year the Division will offer several workshops/presentations on various behavioral health topics, including Mental Health First Aid, during the Summer Institute...for your convenience, here’s the conference agenda listing all the sessions available. This and other blog posts available here.

Interested? Apply for a scholarship here.

To submit an article: email your article to DBHSCommunications@azdhs.gov no later than the 15th of each month for publication the following month, pending on space available. Maximum length is 200 words, must be in an editable word document and picture(s) included within the document. By submitting an article you authorize the Editorial Board to edit as appropriate. Bylines or independent writers’ names are not included in the publication, instead you can include a link to your website or resources within the article. Thank you!

Mental Health: Everyone Has It!