

MONTVILLE TOWNSHIP

PROUD TO BE

STIGMA-FREE

THE STIGMA FREE ZONE NEWS OF NJ

Bringing the Mental Health Conversation to New Jersey

SPECIAL ISSUE ON NEGOTIATING TOUGH TIMES

FREEHOLDERS OFFER 50K IN FUNDS FOR SFZ- NJPRA CONFERENCE FEATURES SFZ EDUCATOR KEN ROTA - BERGEN TEEN WRITES ON ANXIETY- MARY CONNOLLY RAISES MONEY FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION - BERGEN COUNTY OFFERING FREE TRAININGS

NJPRA 2017 Annual Conference presented Bergen and Passaic Stigma Free Zone leaders speaking on

How To Build a Stigma Free Zone

The experienced panel, below, spoke on strategies for advocacy and creating change in local communities on Nov. 17, 2017 at the conference.



By the end of the session, volunteers from Camden and Hunterdon Counties, and the state of Maryland had come forward, asking for ideas and assistance in approaching government and community leaders to create new Stigma Free Zones in their municipalities ! The Bergen and Passaic SFZ leaders are aiming to have every NJ County join the effort to build a **Stigma Free New Jersey!**

Here are links to tools every interested advocate is welcome to use:

[STIGMA FREE ZONE TOOLKIT](#)

[ORADELL SFZ FACEBOOK PAGE](#)

[PARAMUS SFZ WEBSITE](#)

[MHA PASSAIC WEBSITE](#)

How To Build a Stigma Free Zone

**Panelist: Mary Ann Uzzi, Founder, Paramus SFZ and Bergen County Initiative
Member, Board of Trustees, CarePlus Bergen**

**Panelist: Ken Rota, Superintendent of Schools, Fort Lee, NJ
Founder, Fort Lee School District SFZ**

**Panelist: Julia Orlando, Director of Housing, Bergen County, NJ
Founder, Oradell SFZ**

**Panelist: Irene Maury, LCSW, Human Services Director
Division Head, Paramus Health and Human Services
Member, Paramus SFZ**

**Panelist: Joanne Green, Executive Director,
Mental Health Association, Passaic County
Founder, Clifton SFZ**

**Moderator: Cynthia Chazen, Editor, SFZ News of NJ
Founder, Demarest and Central Unitarian Church SFZs**

Anthony's Journey by Anthony Orlando

Constantly dealing with the aching pain and overwhelming fear from anxiety has been my greatest struggle. I have had a challenging life for the past few years, as I've struggled with chronic anxiety over a variety of things. For example, I'd usually worry about normal things like school and my social life. While this may sound like a problem almost every teenager has experienced, my worries were on a whole other level. I have worried about things that are totally ridiculous, such as getting sick or hurt when I'm outside, or whether or not I did something immoral. These thoughts would swarm inside my head like flies throughout the day with barely any relaxation. Life for me was tough, but I have still managed to live happily. To cope with my stress, I joined my school cross-country team, and it



changed my life.

For months, I would wake up early in the morning and run three to five miles a day with my team. My heart was pounding, my body was aching, and I was always out of breath; I felt the same way running as I do worrying. After just four days, I felt ready to give up. However, my teammates encouraged me to push myself and continue running. Their support helped me get through those first few months of practice. My coach told me to always try my best when running despite how much I want to give up. He told me that if I kept running until the very end, I would feel good knowing that I ran the full distance. As a result, I always tried to run as much and as fast as I could, and I was amazed at what I had accomplished.

These achievements from running have enabled me to overcome my anxiety. I've stayed determined and hopeful that I'll have a wonderful life. I've learned that I don't need anyone to feel sorry for me because pity won't help me get anywhere in life, including cross-country. Only a strong will can help me have a better future, and so far, I'm already on the right track. I now feel more relaxed than before because I'm channeling my energy for running instead of worrying. I can feel all of my worries float away like clouds in the sky while I'm running. I'm spending time with my friends on the team, I've developed a strong body, and I've become part of something greater than myself. I feel more confident in myself than I have in my entire life. Also, while I still managed to be a great student in school despite my anxiety, running has helped me become an even better one because of how I'm more relaxed. For these reasons, I joined the track team during the winter and spring as well, and I continue to run to this day and will for many years to come. I've even given back to my community by participating in a race for Habitat for Humanity. I feel overjoyed not only because I'm less anxious, but also because I'm finally living in the moment as I race around the world with my friends.

In conclusion, my chronic anxiety has been a thorn in my side for many years. Fortunately, after training and become a



runner for my school, I'm now able to control my worries, remain calm, and enjoy my life to the fullest. Alongside running, I regularly attend therapy sessions in order to maintain control over my thoughts, and this helps me a great deal as well. Also, my family and friends have been very supportive through my entire struggle, and I cannot thank them enough for what they've done for me. While I still tend to stress out, I am still doing my very best to control it. I can only get better at dealing with my anxiety if I continue to persevere, and this gives me hope that my life will become even better as well. After all, if I can finish a race like a strong runner can, then I can surely overcome my anxiety.

Bergen County Freeholders Offer 50K in Funding for Stigma Free Projects Led by Consumers

From Michele Hart-Loughlin
 Director, Bergen County
 Department of Health
 Division of Mental Health

Bergen County is "Promoting the Stigma-Free Initiative ...to enhance a culture of caring in our communities so residents living with the disease of mental illness feel supported, rather than ashamed, in seeking treatment and their recovery can begin".



COUNTY OF BERGEN
 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
 One Bergen County Plaza, 4th Floor, Hackensack, New Jersey 07601
 (201) 634-2600 • FAX (201) 336-6086
www.bergenhealth.org
healthdept@co.bergen.nj.us

Date Received: _____

James J. Tedesco III
 County Executive

Hansel F. Asmar
 Director/Health Officer

Bergen County Resolution No. 704-17

Date of Adoption: July 26, 2017

The Bergen County Board of Chosen Freeholders has authorized \$50,000.00 in funds to promote mental health awareness, wellness and linkages to resources. The Bergen County Department of Health Services has been directed to utilize the funds specifically to:

- Provide direct assistance to consumers of *community mental health services* to promote his/her own individual wellness and recovery wherein his/her specific needs cannot be addressed by other sources;
- Address and remediate issues created by hoarding behaviors;
- Promote the Stigma-Free Initiative throughout the county to enhance a culture of caring in each of our communities so residents who are living with the disease of mental illness feel supported, rather than ashamed, in seeking treatment so their recovery can begin;
- Support our first responders, schools and communities during and after tragic events.

APPLICATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS, WELLNESS AND LINKAGES FUNDS

All applications will be reviewed by a subcommittee of the Bergen County Mental Health Board in partnership with the Mental Health Administrator. Decisions to fund all, a portion or none of the items requested on this form will rest with the Board's subcommittee. Submission of this form does not guarantee funding. Applications that are incomplete will not be processed. Deadline for submission is December 15, 2017. Applications will be considered in order of date received.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____

I certify that I live with the disease of mental illness and am currently receiving treatment for my disease. I am requesting these dollars to help promote my wellness and recovery. I am requesting these dollars as I am unable to find any other way to pay for the need I detailed on the reverse side of this form.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please have the person who helps you work towards, or maintain recovery, sign below to verify that you are actively leading and participating in your wellness and recovery.

Name of Treatment/Support Provider: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Agency/Practice Name: _____

Signature: _____

Your signature verifies that the person requesting your signature is actively engaged in your service to promote his/her wellness and recovery.

Complete the reverse side of this form.

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addressed by other sources.

- Address issues created by hoarding behaviors.
- Promote the Stigma-Free Initiative to enhance a culture of caring in our communities so residents living with the disease of mental illness feel supported, rather than ashamed, in seeking treatment so their recovery can begin.
- Support first responders, schools & communities during and after tragic events.



Mental Health Editor @cynchazen · 6/20/17

I will keep tweeting this til day it gets 100 likes:

People w mental illness are not bad people.

...



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190



Rutgers School of Health Professions is offering instant decision admission to the new Masters of Science in

Healthcare Management, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Track for conference attendees. If you are interested in consideration for admissions to this program, an Enrollment Services representative and faculty member from the Department of Psychiatric Rehabilitation and Counseling Professions will be available to assist you. Please plan to have the following documentation with you:

- Resume
- Transcript: non official must be reviewed at event; the official can be submitted later
- Application: \$70.00 cash or credit card
- Professional Reference- if not available, this can be submitted later

The program Application will be available on site. All applicants will be asked to briefly meet with the program director and a written personal statement will be requested later. This instant decision admission will be conditional as the official transcript, letter of recommendation and personal statement must be reviewed prior to officially offering admission to the program.

For more information, email Dr. Amy Spagnolo at amy.spagnolo@shp.rutger.edu

12 Ways to Survive and Thrive After the Loss of a Spouse

By Mary Connolly, The Cause Coach





Several of my friends have lost their spouses over the last couple of years, and I've lost a few Facebook friends as well. You naturally assume that when people get to a certain age, this would not be an uncommon occurrence, and therefore expected. But we are not of "a certain age." These were people in their fifties or sixties with presumably years left to live.

How does one go on after losing a spouse they had planned to be with for years, if not decades, to come? When I was the CEO of Gilda's Club (a cancer support organization), we referred to our members – people living with cancer – as the experts. The idea was that the experience of someone with cancer, or living with the reality of a loved one's diagnosis, made him or her an expert in living with that experience. The medical community was certainly experts in treating the disease, but without the experience of actually "living with cancer" they were not experts in living, only in medicine.

So why am I telling you this? Well, after an eight-year period in which I lost both of my parents, a close aunt and uncle, four jobs, my dog, and my spouse too, I consider myself an expert of sorts in managing grief. So for those of you dealing with this type of loss (and this may apply to someone dealing with an unexpected separation and divorce as well), here is my "expert" advice.

First, surviving...

Welcome help from everyone and anyone willing to give it. I was always very stoic. When my dad died, I scheduled his funeral around work obligations, and repeatedly told people it was no big deal and we were "fine." When my husband died I recognized that I was in over my head. My friends filled my refrigerator with food. My

sisters came all the way from Ireland and even cleaned my house. I didn't stop any of them. For someone like me who always bordered on control freak, this was huge. But my ability to let go was so important. I didn't honestly have the mental capacity those first few weeks to take care of the simple things. Allowing others to help is good for your mental health. And people like to feel needed when they are feeling out of control and their heart is breaking for you. Let them help. It will do you all good.

Don't be shy in asking for help even if it wasn't offered. There will be times, especially as you begin to take on responsibilities that used to belong to your partner, when you will have more than you can handle. My husband died in October and by mid-November I was looking at a yard full of leaves. The town's pick up schedule was telling me I had about a week to get them to the curb and I was so overwhelmed. Feeling a little like Tom Sawyer, I created a Facebook event for a leaf-raking party and invited my fiends. Blowers and rakes and many hands descended on my yard and the leaves were gone in less than 2 hours. Everyone stayed around and shared hot chocolate and snacks, stories and jokes. It served as a nice reminder of the wonderful people I had in my life, some who I thought were only Facebook friends.

Seek professional help. I dealt with an unbelievable amount of stress in my life before I decided to see a therapist. It wasn't until after my cancer diagnosis that I realized maybe I needed more than my morning runs to cope. And while I have had my share of experience in dealing with grief and call myself an expert for the purpose of this blog, I'm not a licensed therapist, counselor or psychologist. Everyone grieves in their own way, in their own time, and professional help can better evaluate whether your reactions are normal or not. I never went the support group route but know people who have found tremendous help in connecting with others in groups facilitated by mental health professionals.

Know that it's okay to feel like s* but don't let it stop you.** I went through waves of emotion. There were days when I didn't feel like getting out of bed. I blamed myself for what happened. I experienced survivor's guilt, anger and plan old loneliness. I found I cried a lot in the first few days and then it subsided. I made it a point to get out of bed every morning, shower and dress, and make the bed. Even if I accomplished nothing else, that was something. Usually getting that far kept me going. And as the weeks and months rolled on, I found just doing one small thing everyday kept me in a forward motion. My therapist helped me deal with the guilt and I stopped blaming myself. I was surprised sometimes when I'd cry out of nowhere or have relapses of my guilt months, even years, later. This, I have found, is normal. And okay (pay close attention to #8).

Know that it's okay to run away...a little. There will be times you will just want to run away. As long as you don't find yourself checking out completely, beginning to recognize triggers or difficult situations and avoiding them is reasonable. I knew the first Christmas would be difficult. On top of that, his birthday was a few days later. So right after his death, I booked my daughter, his mom and me on a trip to Cancun for five days starting with Christmas Eve through the day after his birthday. It wasn't perfect, or completely without emotion, but it avoided staring at an empty seat at the holiday dinner table. I still avoid the old holiday traditions. Last year I had a bunch of friends - also without nearby family connections - for Thanksgiving.

Get back to your routine. Whether that's running or going back to work or school or whatever. I entered a 5k the Sunday after the funeral. My daughter went back to school on Monday. I had been working on a consulting project. I negotiated a new deadline for the project, but got back to working on it within a week or two as well. I was president of my running club and kept on top of my duties. I trained for a half marathon. Things were different, obviously, and we were beginning to build a "new normal" which now, almost three years later, just feels normal.

Spend time alone to reflect...but not too much. Long walks in the woods, a day at the beach, going to places that are meaningful and relaxing for you is good.

SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME ALONE, THINKING TOO MUCH, I FOUND WASN'T GOOD. I LEARNED THIS AFTER MY PARENTS DIED. IF I THOUGHT TOO MUCH ABOUT THEIR ABSENCE, I'D DEVELOP A CRUSHING PAIN IN MY CHEST. I WAS SELF EMPLOYED, WORKING FROM MY HOME WHEN MY HUSBAND DIED. BEING IN THE HOUSE WITHOUT HIM THERE WAS WEIRD FOR A LONG TIME. I'D GO TO STARBUCKS OR PANERA TO WORK SIMPLY TO GET OUT OF THE HOUSE. I ALSO TOOK ADVANTAGE OF INVITATIONS FROM FRIENDS, AND STARTED GOING TO THE MOVIES FREQUENTLY WITH MY DAUGHTER (GOOD FOR HER TOO). IT'S NOT WEIRD ANYMORE. AND ADOPTION OF A MEDITATION PRACTICE WAS ALSO SOMETHING I FOUND HELPFUL.

Then thriving...

Understand that there will be set-backs and triggers. After a few months I started feeling really good. I said to myself, "I got this." And I did. But there were triggers in that first year. Holidays. Anniversaries. A warm day that reminded me of something and I'd find myself feeling overwhelmingly sad. It passes. It never completely goes away. Almost three years later and sometimes out of no where the wind blows a certain way or a song comes on or a military band plays taps at the beginning of a Memorial Day weekend race in Chicago. Embrace the moment. Cherish the memory. Give yourself credit for how far you have come. Live in your humanity. Feel. Facing your feelings, not denying your need to feel, I have found, is part of moving forward. It's essential to find a balance between the life you've lived and the life you're living. Meditation, again, was helpful in teaching me to embrace the present in all it's glory...and despair.

Find ways to honor your loved one's memory. Some people raise money for a charity of personal significance to their spouse, or plant a tree in their memory or do something else that is meaningful. When my husband died, I was registered for the Chicago Marathon the following year. I decided to use my participation to raise money for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention in his memory. The marathon fell one year and five days after his death. The training and the fundraiser served as a countdown (and a distraction of sorts) to the one-year anniversary. It also served as a vehicle through which I could tell the story. There are also two days each year that I reserve for acknowledging my husband's memory a little more privately. One is the anniversary of his death. Since he was buried at sea, on the first anniversary my daughter and I went to the beach. On the 2nd Anniversary we went on a dinner cruise. Coming up with new ways each year to "visit the sea" will be interesting. His ashes were spread near the Straight of Gibraltar off the coast of Spain, so that's on our list of potential destinations. The other day is our wedding anniversary. I write him a letter every year that I put in the mail. Now in the 3rd year since his death I have a small collection of sealed, postmarked letters that if ever opened will be a chronology of how far I've come.

Create new traditions. I've already discussed 2 small private traditions I've created. My daughter and I also host two annual holiday celebrations. The first holiday season after my husband died, my daughter and I threw a big party about a week before Christmas. It was a way for us to begin to create a new life for just the two of us - and a way to thank all our friends who had helped in the first few weeks and months. When summer rolled around we hosted an Independence Day Barbecue. We also created some small new traditions around meals and weekends away.

Do what you couldn't do before. We make sacrifices even in the best of relationships. It maybe a conscious and willing choice and an easy one to make while they were around. But is there something you gave up doing, or maybe never tried, because it didn't interest your spouse? My husband wasn't very social and didn't like to entertain beyond having our immediate family for holidays. That was part of the reason my daughter and I started entertaining more. We also took a few big vacations (and one spectacular European one!) and continue to honor our interest in travel. There were also simple things like burning scented candles all over the house, making the bathroom more "feminine" and some other redecorating. I also began parenting in a way that I thought better matched by personality, values and everything I learned from my parents.

Do something spectacular. Adjusting to life without someone, especially a spouse, is also a time of self-discovery (or maybe re-discovery). It's probably the first time you've been alone in twenty, twenty-five, or thirty years. Start by trying some new things. Venture into new experiences. Check off some bucket list items (since you just got a lesson in how short life can be). Then set the bar high. Dream. Stretch to something you think is unachievable and make it happen. As I said, I navigated the first year without my husband training for the Chicago Marathon and raising money for charity. That was a productive way to spend my time, but for me it really wasn't anything new. My two dreams were to write a book and to figure out a way to turn my passion for running into a living. I started this blog over 18 months ago as a way to become more disciplined about my writing. I became a certified running coach two months later. I began my education and training as a life coach as well last year. I formed a new business last fall, a mere two years after my husband's death. My book isn't published quite yet. I'm still evolving.

Somewhere on this journey I went from surviving to thriving and you can too.

BERGEN COUNTY TRAINING RESIDENTS AND LEADERS FREE OF CHARGE

**By Michele Hart-Loughlin, Division Director
Bergen County Department of Health Services**

The recent tragic events that have sadly occurred across our nation *and* here in Bergen County focus a spotlight on the topic of mental health. While thoughts and prayers are with the victims and survivors of the these horrific events, the members of the Mental Health Board and I wish to remind residents and community leaders of our County's Mental Health First Aid Training Corps [MHFA].

The certified instructors who form the Bergen County MHFA Training Corps deliver an 8-hour, evidence-based course valued at \$175.00. The course is offered to residents and county-based groups *free of charge*. The training educates participants on the signs and symptoms of mental illness. In addition, course participants learn an action plan to use to assist someone who may be experiencing a mental health crisis. The course also raises awareness of resources that are available locally to provide treatment to residents so that recovery can begin. *Eliminating the stigma associated with mental illness and giving people the words they can use to start a conversation about mental health may be two, simple, yet vital, steps that we can take in an effort to prevent tragedies from occurring.*

As you prepare for the holiday season, please considering hosting a Mental Health First Aid Training course. The gift of knowledge participants will receive will be one gift that will be remembered well after the holiday lights dim and season's frost melts. *The knowledge you offer may help to save someone's life and offer hope for brighter tomorrows!!*

**Click here to request a training for your Mayor and Council, PTO, school board, police and fire department, scout leaders, coaches, volunteers AND all residents --
-- www.co.bergen.nj.us/1350/Mental-Health-First-Aid**

PLEASE forward this to all of your contacts!!

Quicklinks to News

[NJ Mental Health Hotlines](#)

[NJ SpotLight: Battling Addiction Should be a Fair and Colorblind Fight](#)

[NJB Magazine: County of Bergen Unveils New Name of NJ's Largest Hospital](#)

[North Jersey.Com: New Bridge Name Not So New for Bergen County Hospital](#)

[CHCC Blog: Monica Lyzzette; A Personal Journey to Mental Well-being](#)

[North Jersey.Com: Bergen Can Provide Affordable Housing](#)

CHURCH SUPPORTING FAMILIES LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

Great News.....

The Church of The Presentation has created a support group for our family members living with mental illness.

They will have their first meeting next Monday evening, November 20th at 7:30PM at Church of the Presentation, 271 W. Saddle River Road, Upper Saddle River, NJ 07458. We will be meeting the second Monday of each month.

The Church has supported its local NAMI Family to Family education courses for many years, and has dedicated time, space and heart to recognizing mental illness is a part of many people's lives. Kudos to it's members, and especially Peg Whelahan, who has volunteered countless hours of personal time to these honorable efforts. Blessings to you and the church, Peg.



LEADING *the* Change
ANNUAL APPEAL 2017
CarePlus Foundation

Click Here
TO DONATE TODAY

From crisis response to case management, to preventative services and education - we connect the pieces to help lead those we serve through the most complete and effective continuum of care.

Did you know...

Mood disorders, such as major depression and bipolar disorder, are the third most common cause of hospitalization in the U.S. for adults ages 18-44.

CarePlus operates two major emergency crisis programs for Bergen County: the Psychiatric Emergency Screening Program (262-HELP) and Children's Mobile Crisis and Stabilization Response to assess the need for hospitalization, coordinate care, and assist in stabilization.

You can support our life-saving efforts by contributing to our

2017 Annual Appeal: www.CarePlusNJ.org/Appeal2017

Any questions should be directed to the Foundation office at
201-986-5070 or Foundation@CarePlusNJ.org.

Visit SFZ News on FaceBook

ALL OF OUR LINKS ARE LIVE !

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