



## **THE STIGMA FREE ZONE NEWS OF NJ SPECIAL SCHOOLS ISSUE, PART II**

**Bringing the Mental Health Conversation to New Jersey**

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**NJ SCHOOL PROGRAMS ON MENTAL HEALTH - MENTAL ILLNESS ONSET IN TEENS -  
MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS - COLLEGE OR GAP YEAR ? -  
ESPN REPORTER KATE FAGAN - CAREPLUS INNOVATES IN-DISTRICT MH SERVICES**

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**We report on a volunteer initiative of healthcare and peer organizations, nonprofits, schools  
and houses of worship working with local government to make NJ free from the stigma of  
mental illness. Anyone can form a SFZ Task Force to educate locally and take action.**

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**MENTAL HEALTH ED FOR SCHOOLS  
WHEREFORE ART THOU?**

## CAREPLUS NJ Innovating With School-Based Services

By Cynthia Chazen

Every high school kid knows the plot. But do they understand suicide is never the answer to a broken heart? How can you teach that suicide isn't glamorous or pain free? In over 17 NJ school districts, CarePlus NJ now collaborates with teachers to turn rights-of-passage, like the reading of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, into teachable moments about mental illness as part of their innovative School-Based Programs. CarePlus Districts receive custom-tailored services on site for mental health including; student counseling, support groups, school clearances, case management and wrap-around resources. Families of students can use CarePlus services like a help line, in-home services and outpatient programs, which make it easier for everyone involved, and reduce the likelihood of students falling into crisis.

"Engaging youth in positive activities ... and providing counseling and intervention can be extremely challenging," said Tara Augustine, Senior VP at CarePlus. "It's our goal to create an environment that's safe and free of stigma." CarePlus Director of School-Based Programming, Lorraine Mullins, reports "The younger generation *really wants to talk about mental health.*" She says that by educating staff through activities and a counselor on-site, CarePlus has helped teachers normalize mental health conversations and help the kinds of kids who used to just fall through the system's cracks.

The CarePlus program at Manchester Regional H.S. in Haledon, began in 2005. Students responded positively to a relaxing drop in space, "Falcon's Lounge," which was funded by a grant to start counseling services on the school campus. The safe hangout provides an accessible, safe space for kids and has been widely replicated. Kids are active there in a peer-based program. CarePlus' program at Ramsey High led to genuine interest and involvement from students and faculty, and Stigma Free Zone assemblies, fundraisers and Parent Academies have become popular adjuncts to the mental health education offered at school.

In some districts, mental health stresses come from bullying or high academic pressure. In others, a crime-ridden location or a dysfunctional family cause trauma. CarePlus Consultant at Ramsey High, LCSW Eileen Corvelli, and Mullins both agree they are seeing *more students reach out at school for help.* Corvelli blames the comparison culture alive on social media for increasing anxiety, and shares she believes social media is especially hard on young girls. She points out it is common for adolescents to compare themselves to others, but girls look at it differently than adults and can get lost in the world of posted party photos or valuing themselves based on online "likes." Mullins noted, "You can't separate student's mental health from their lives. Addressing this [mental health] in the school setting affords a natural opportunity, and it's preventative, too."

Bringing services onto school grounds seems to be a growing trend. It makes mental health care available and increases awareness. Students feel the benefits of a supportive school environment and get help connecting to others, building self-esteem and can feel safer when openly expressing their fears or needs.

Whether it feels natural or not, open discussions of sensitive mental health topics at school have become an accepted and desired part of Millennial culture.



**Save The Date: May 3**  
**Hills Valley Coalition Parent/Teen Evening Program**

**May 3 Pascack Hills High**  
6:00 pm **Mental Health Resource Fair**  
7:15 pm **Keynote Speaker**

**SPLIT**  
**I M A G E**  
**Secret Struggles of Teens**

 Kate Fagan, ESPN Journalist and Author of **WHAT MADE MADDY RUN**

[www.hillsvalleycoalition.org](http://www.hillsvalleycoalition.org)

*“Everyone presents an edited version of life on social media. People share moments that reflect an ideal life, an ideal self...People are also often encouraged to put filters on their sadness, to brighten their reality so as not to “drag down” those around them. The myth still exists that happiness is a choice, which perpetuates the notion of depression as weakness.”*

Fagan, Kate. “Split Image.” *www.espn.com*, 7 May 2015

**HVC Evening Parent/Teen Program**  
**To Be Hosted At Pascack Hills Supported By The PVRHSD**

- 6:00-7:00 pm– Mental Health Resource Fair
- 7:15-8:30 pm– Keynote Kate Fagan
- 8:30-9:00 pm– Optional book discussion and dialogue in library
- Mental health providers will be invited to stay for the discussion

**Hills Valley**  
**Coalition**

**The Hills Valley Community Coalition will present this dynamic, stigma-free program at Pascack Hills H.S. Keynote speaker, Kate Fagan, ESPN Journalist**



and Author of *What Made Maddy Run*, will speak on social media, performance perfection and the toll it has taken on youth. Educators and students are invited to attend.

For information regarding sponsorship email:

[Pam Martorana](#) or [Gale Mangold](#)

Hills Valley Coalition Co-Coordinators



Free Event Registration



## School Education Programs in Mental Health

**NAMI NJ School Education Programs provide educators with tools and strategies that help children and teens succeed in school and life. Its programs were developed in partnership with the NJ Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the NJ Psychiatric Assoc.**

Approximately 13 percent of youth ages 8-15 live with mental illness severe enough to cause significant impairment, but only 1 in 5 receive treatment. Students with mental illness have the highest dropout rate compared to other disabled students.

The “Educating the Educators” Program is a 1 day, 3 hour professional development program led by a physician, an educator and a parent of a child with mental illness. **It is the only NJ program dedicated to educating educators about mental illness in the classroom.** ETE provides tools to motivate children with disorders (ADD, ADHD, Bipolar, Depression, Schizophrenia, Anxiety Disorders, OCD & Autism), but doesn’t expect teachers to be diagnosticians. Presentations can be tailored with respect to cultural competency, disorders addressed, team composition, etc.

“Every Mind Matters” is an **affordable, interactive toolkit for all educators** who work with kids, nurses, guidance counselors, school psychologists and social workers. It enhances student’s coping strategies for stress. It addresses bullying, stigma, and mental and physical health topics. EMM correlates with the NJ Dept. of Ed. Core Curriculum Content Standards and is intended for use in Health or Phys. Ed. to meet Standards for Wellness.

**2 versions, for grades 4-8 or 9-12 are available for purchase and include a binder of resources, a Powerpoint, activities, videos, quizzes, etc.**

**NAMI NJ is registered with the New Jersey Department of Education as a Provider of Professional Development Credit Hours. They present workshops in public and private schools, Juvenile Justice Commission Schools, NJ Department of Child and Family Services Schools, Traumatic Loss Coalitions, Youth Services Commission and NJEA. Their mental health toolkit for educators, "Every Mind Matters", has received the Ambassador Award from the Governor's Stigma Council.**

**To learn more contact Lorrie Baumann, NAMI Director of SEP  
908-685-0206 or email [schoolprograms@naminj.org](mailto:schoolprograms@naminj.org).**

**Visit Nami NJ website**

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**The New Jersey Governor's Council on Mental Health Stigma is recognizing "School Based Professionals" who provided effective supports, services or programs that reduce stigma against people with mental illnesses.**

## **Congratulations to this year's honorees!**

**Lawrence P. Booth, East Mountain School Teacher and  
Department Coordinator for I.R.T.S & P.C.H**

**Danielle Cooper, MPH, Manager, School Health Leadership Program,  
New Jersey Collaborating Center for Nursing**

**Barbara A. Correnti, Director of Student Personnel Services,  
Belleville School District K-12**

**Kerry DiGiacinto , Director of Special Services,  
Mountain Lakes Public School District**

**JoAnne Kleine, Student Assistant Coordinator,  
Gateway Regional High School**

**Dr. Rebecca McLelland-Crawley  
Gifted and Talented Teacher Resource Specialist,  
West Windsor-Plainsboro School District**

**Meryl Orlando, Family and Consumer Science Teacher,  
South Brunswick High School**

**Pascack Valley High School, Hillsdale, New Jersey**

**Pathways School Based Youth Services Program, Carteret High School**



## **EDUCATORS MUST UNDERSTAND FIRST EPISODE PSYCHOSIS**

**By Cynthia Chazen**

This NAMI video, above, presents experts explaining how the onset of psychotic illness is treated. Any adult working with children must understand what serious mental illness looks like *when it is developing*, and understand the need for *immediate medical intervention*. **The average age of onset of serious, mental illness is late teens in boys, and early 20's in girls.** Close to 20% of all children will suffer from some type of mental illness, including anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, personality or eating disorders (in both sexes). Understanding the onset of serious illness aids educators working with young people in middle school through college. It should be fully understood by every educator in NJ.

Teachers cannot be diagnosticians, but they are often first to notice aberrant mood or behavior changes in students, even before family. If educators understand psychosis, students presenting with serious health-related behaviors won't be written off as "troublemakers" or worse, ignored if suicidal. As with other medical emergencies, **if treatment is delayed, mental health recovery may be lessened.**

Psychosis is a symptom of mental illness characterized by radical changes in personality and a distorted sense of reality. Kid in psychosis can't distinguish inner experience from reality. They have no idea hallucinations and/or delusions they are experiencing are not real. Most will isolate. Behavior and communication may appear inappropriate, incoherent, or sometimes just exaggerated or out of character. Psychosis can be a symptom of a medical condition, or it can appear if substance-induced. Psychotic episodes always represent a medical emergency and must be treated as such. They should never be ignored or treatment delayed.

The first appearance of psychotic illness, termed "first episode" is now recognized as the optimal time to treat people. In the past, educators and health providers were hesitant to apply labels, for fear of stigma or halting a child's educational progress. With the success of clinical programs aimed at first episode treatment, it is now accepted that serious mental illness becomes more much more treatable, and less entrenched over the lifetime, if treated immediately.

## **Read more on why early treatment is critical.**

**The onset of serious mental illness such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder develops differently in the sexes. It commonly starts in late teen years in boys, often blindsiding them during the crucial last 2 years of high school. Girls also develop serious illness at this time, but tend to present with psychosis more often in their early 20's, often while at college. Any educator encountering a good student whose progress has suddenly become impaired or problematic, should speak with colleagues and parents and refer struggling students for a health check.**

**While educators are becoming justifiably more concerned with general anxiety and depressive disorders in kids, the need for a basic understanding of psychotic illness is just as crucial, and deserves a place in preparing educators for careers where they may end up as the person on the "front line" who saves a child's health, or life.**

**No educator will end his or her career without encountering this issue.**

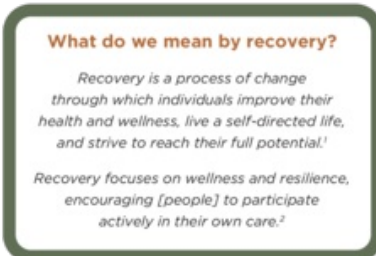
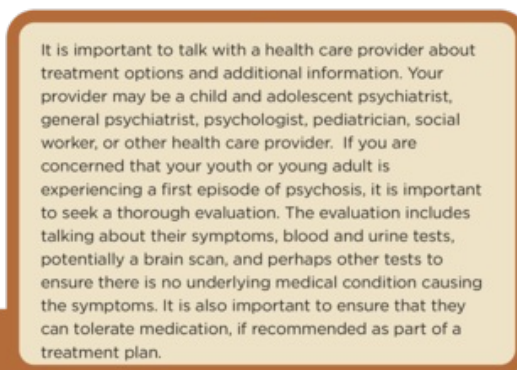
# UNDERSTANDING A FIRST EPISODE OF PSYCHOSIS

Caregiver: Get the Facts



“ It can be scary at first— learning your child has a mental health diagnosis. But, once you really think about it, it is no different than learning your child has asthma or diabetes. You become educated about the condition, you find the resources and professionals your child needs to be healthy, and you continue to love your child just as much as you ever did.

—Malisa, Parent



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
**SAMHSA**  
www.samhsa.gov • 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)

## MENTAL ILLNESS RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

[Teen Mental Health: Free Educator Resources on Mental Illness](#)

[CAMH: Talking About Mental Illness - Teacher's Resource](#)

[NIMH Website: Resources on Mental Illness in Kids](#)

[AFSP: A Model School Policy on Suicide Prevention](#)

[MHA: Early Identification of Mental Health Issues in Young People](#)

[Healthline: Should Schools Screen Kids for Mental Health Problems?](#)



## **QUICKLINKS TO SCHOOL NEWS**

[HuffPost UK: A Letter To The Teacher That Saved My Life](#)

[NBC News4NY: SWAT Teams Swarm NJ School  
After Student Threatens Shooting](#)

[NorthJersey.com: Nutley School Threat  
Suspect Posted Minecraft School Shooting Scenario](#)

[Tap Into Net: Bayonne Schools Receives Third Shooting Threat](#)

[District Adm: NY State Requires Mental Health Education](#)

[Jersey City Patch: Elementary School Student  
Attempted Suicide at Jersey City School](#)

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# What is a Stigma-Free Zone?

1 in 4 adults experience a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year, yet more than half will not seek treatment. Why? The main reasons cited are shame and fear of judgment from friends, family, and co-workers. In other words, there is a STIGMA associated with mental diseases.

However, they are diseases like any other. It is our goal to build a society where people are free of stigma and can get the help they need.

We can build that society by banding together as a community, breaking down the walls, and showing others how they can do the same.

**1** IN **4**  
adults  
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There is  
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health



## Prevalence of Mental Illness

Approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S.—43.7 million, or 18.6%—experiences mental illness in a given year.<sup>1</sup>

Approximately 1 in 5 youth aged 13–18 (21.4%) experiences a severe mental disorder at some point during their life. For children aged 8–15, the estimate is 13%.<sup>1</sup>

Among the 20.7 million adults in the U.S. who experienced a substance use disorder, 40.7%—8.4 million adults—had a co-occurring mental illness.

## Social Stats

70% of youth in juvenile justice systems have at least one mental health condition and at least 20% live with a serious mental illness.<sup>1</sup>

Half of all chronic mental illness begins by age 14; three-quarters by age 24. Despite effective treatment, there are long delays—sometimes decades—between the first appearance of symptoms and when people get help.<sup>1</sup>

## Consequences of Lack of Treatment

Mood disorders, including major depression, dysthymic disorder and bipolar disorder, are the third most common cause of hospitalization in the U.S. for both youth and adults aged 18–44.<sup>1</sup>

Over one-third (37%) of students with a mental health condition age 14–21 and older who are served by special education drop out—the highest dropout rate of any disability group.<sup>1</sup>

1. National Alliance on Mental Illness. Prevalence of Mental Illness. Retrieved January 16, 2015, from <http://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-By-the-Numbers>

**“Don’t Let Stigma Stop You Or Your Family From Seeking Help.”**

**Join The Hills Valley Coalition To Promote Stigma Free Mental Health.**

**Hills Valley  
Coalition**  
[www.hillsvalleycoalition.org](http://www.hillsvalleycoalition.org)

# BRING SAY SOMETHING TO STUDENTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Sandy Hook Promise is proud to provide no-cost, easy-to-implement, downloadable gun-violence prevention programs and trainings to schools and youth serving organizations.



When it comes to threats of violence or suicide, most are known by at least one other individual BEFORE the incident occurs. Given the growth of digital platforms, many are learning about threats via social media. Say Something teaches students, grades 6-12, how to look for warning signs, signals and threats, especially in social media, of an individual who may be a threat to themselves or others and to say something to a trusted adult to get help.

## How Does This Program Work?

Say Something is a no-cost, easy-to-implement, and life-saving program that can be delivered in classes, assemblies or via student ambassadors. Training takes 50 minutes or less with a wide range of post-training activities and events

## **RAMSEY H.S. WALK- AND-TALKATHON to end the stigma of mental illness. MAY 1, 2018 at Ramsey H.S.**

**The first 100 participants will receive the  
official Ramsey Stigma Free Swag Bag!**

**[INFORMATION & FORM HERE](#)**





# HELP RAISE SOME DOUGH

For

Ramsey Stigma Free Program  
sponsored by the Ramsey Junior's

Every Thursday in April

Join  
Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza  
to give back to  
Ramsey Junior's.

20% of all tracked Dine In or  
Take Out sales will be donated to  
Ramsey Junior's.



RAMSEY

201-818-2625 | 984 Route 17 North



## COLLEGE OR A GAP YEAR ?

Links for Guidance Counselors and parents  
of college-seeking students with mental illness.

[Download Document Here](#)

The Chicago chapter of DePaul ensures that all students, even those with special needs, get the help they need. Participants can seek out help at the Office of Students with Disabilities, but for additional support, the school's PLuS Program, The Productive Learning Strategies Program, is designed to assist with learning disabilities, ADD, Asperger's, OCD or bipolar disorder. Students in PLuS get support, tutoring, advocacy and counseling with an LD specialist.

[Best Colleges.com: College Guide for Students With Psychiatric Disabilities](#)

[College Confidential Thread: Which Universities are Suitable for Mentally Ill Students?](#)

**Psychology Today: Guidance Counselors  
Should Reconsider the Gap Year**

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*You Are Not Alone*

Saturday, May 19, 2018 | Boardwalk at Seaside Park  
Check in 9-9:45 a.m. | Walk Starts 10 a.m.

Every journey begins with a first step. More than 50,000 people in more than 80 communities across the nation will join NAMI and walk to raise awareness of mental illness and raise funds for NAMI organizations.

Join by signing up your family or team at [www.namiwalks.org/newjersey](http://www.namiwalks.org/newjersey)

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The Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health



College of Education and Human Services • 1 Normal Avenue, Montclair, NJ 07043 • 973-655-4000

## Seventh Annual Todd Ouida Children's Foundation Conference

*Mindfulness in Infants, Children and Those Who Care for Them:  
What the Stress-filled World Needs Now.*

**Thursday, May 10, 2018**

8:30 am – 4:00 pm

Montclair State University - University Hall Conference Center

Honoring **Michael J. Tozzoli**, CEO, West Bergen Mental Healthcare, with the  
Todd Ouida Children's Hero Award  
and **Sunday Gustin** with the Roots and Wings Award

### Rebecca Shahmoon-Shanok, LCSW, Ph.D.

Founding CEO and Dean, Collaborations for Growth;  
Senior Research Associate, Center for Attachment  
Research, The New School for Social Research; Former  
Board Member, Zero to Three

*Mindfulness: The Heart of Our  
Practice at Every Level*



*everything is  
fine  
UNTIL IT'S NOT*



### Kate Rosenblum, Ph.D.

Clinical Professor, Department of  
Psychiatry and Comprehensive  
Depression Center, Department  
of Obstetrics and Gynecology  
Michigan Medicine  
University of Michigan

*From Zero to Thrive!  
Nurturing Reflective Parenting*



A humorous, musical, & heartfelt one-woman show  
that explores the relationship between mothers and  
their children, and the ability to accept those you  
love, even if they're not who you expected.

Written, produced & performed by **DOREEN OLIVER**

Co-sponsored by:

Children's Aid and Family Services - Interdisciplinary Council on Development and Learning  
New Jersey Association for Infant Mental Health - West Bergen Mental Healthcare - Youth Consultation Service

General registration fee - \$50.00 (\$55 at the door)

includes breakfast, lunch, parking and a resource flash drive.

For more information, please call 973-655-6685 or email [caecmh@montclair.edu](mailto:caecmh@montclair.edu)

Attendees eligible for Social Work CEUs in accordance with #N.J.A.C. 13:44G-6.4(b)4 & professional development hours for NJ teachers

To register, click on:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/seventh-annual-todd-ouida-childrens-foundation-conference-may-10-2018-tickets-43070625400>

**ALL OF OUR LINKS ARE LIVE PLUS A NEW VIDEO MONTHLY !**

**STAY CONNECTED**



