

Fighting Stigma, Finding Strength



What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candor, and more unashamed conversation.

-Glenn Close



The Stigma-Free Newsletter

April 2026

A Message from the Stigma-Free Task Force

The transition from Winter into Spring can be a time for renewal and reflection, and it is often a quieter time for events. However our commitment to breaking the stigma surrounding mental health and substance use never slows down. In this issue of the newsletter, we look back on meaningful moments from the end of Fall all the way into the early Spring, share a powerful recovery story, and offer resources to support you or someone you care about. Thank you on behalf of the Stigma-Free Task Force for continuing to stand with us as we build a stigma-free Hunterdon County!

**HUNTERDON COUNTY
PROUD TO BE
STIGMA-FREE**

What is Stigma?

Stigma is defined as the negative attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that society, institutions, or individuals hold toward others' experiences or characteristics.

Stigma instills silence and fear on those that may need help, need access to treatment, or even just need to speak openly about their experiences. This fear reinforces a cycle of misunderstanding, isolation and may lead to worsening outcomes.

Spotlight Story

No matter the season, recovery and hope remain at the center of our work.

Everyone's journey in overcoming mental health and substance misuse challenges looks different from one another. By sharing community members' stories, we want to emphasize the importance of why providing a stigma-free environment matters, and why recovery is possible.

We are honored to share an anonymous recovery story from a Hunterdon County resident with over 40 years in active recovery.

What was it like to be in active addiction?

"I didn't know it was as bad as it was... even though I had hit and run accidents, was getting suspended and was constantly in detention, I thought I was "fine". Waking up in the mornings I would dread the day though, and had an unrest inside that simply would not subside, unless I was drinking or using some kind of mind-altering chemical. So I suppose it was invisible torture."

What was your journey to recovery like?

"I got in enough trouble to have to do something drastic. Not to truly "quit", but to get out of trouble so I could go back to what I was doing. I went to rehab to get out of trouble. To make a statement that "I changed". Rehab changed me. It was a 6-8-week program. Between a nasty detox and the whole peer-recovery environment, I had a mental shift into a reality check. Wasn't planning to go abstinent forever (certainly not 40+ years). I said I'd try it for a while and if my life didn't get better, I would go back. Never went back. That's what "one-day-at-a-time does."

What does recovery look like to you now?

"Looking at my life today compared to where it was headed, (and looking at where so many peers who relapsed have ended up), I am grateful every day. My life is full. I get to be of service. My worst challenges, difficulties, "failures" (so to speak), have become gifts. Sitting across from another struggling fellow, there is magic that happens when I can say "I know how you feel/I understand", especially when they are sharing something painful, traumatic even. Suddenly my darkest moments turn into light. That's one of my favorite parts of recovery. That and the good police record!"

Fall Highlights

Prevention Resources Conference

At the end of October, Hope One hosted a table at the annual Prevention Resources Conference at RVCC, "Addressing Mental Health and Substance Use to Empower Communities." The conference featured engaging and knowledgeable speakers who addressed important topics such as the connection between ADHD and substance use, the impact of stigma, and mental health and substance use among adolescents. The event provided an opportunity to connect with agencies from across the county and surrounding areas, share resources, and continue building strong partnerships, along with handing out a few fun giveaways as usual. Inspired by the presentation on ADHD and substance use, several county agencies collaborated on the flyer found at the end of the newsletter to further highlight the importance of this intersection and continue the conversation in our community.

What is Hope One?

Hope One is the county's mobile outreach unit, in which we attend community events and connect the community with a range of local resources, including resources for mental health and substance misuse challenges.

A proud collaboration between Hunterdon County's Human Services Department and the Sheriff's Office, our goal is to spread the stigma-free message, break barriers, and build hope.



Interested in joining the Task Force?

We meet on the third Tuesday every other month at 12:00pm.

Contact Amy Belle Molina to join!



amolina@co.hunterdon.nj.us



908-806-4184

Winter Highlights

Pancakes with Maple

Members of the Stigma-Free Task Force, along with numerous county agencies and volunteers, came together this winter to host our annual Pancakes with Maple breakfast. The event welcomed families into a warm, winter-themed space focused on breaking the stigma surrounding mental health and substance misuse. Throughout the morning, community members stopped by to enjoy endless pancakes and maple syrup while connecting with agencies such as One Voice, Rutgers EISS, and GenPsych, and also programs such as NAMI Hunterdon and Hope One whom are all committed to education, prevention, and support. Many participating organizations offered hands-on crafts and activities for youth, creating opportunities for meaningful engagement and conversation at every table. With the help of dedicated volunteers, the event was a great success, and we were grateful for the chance to highlight and share the wide range of resources available across the county.





Spring Highlights

Disability Expo

The Hunterdon County Human Services Advisory Council is proud to have hosted their first Disability Expo in mid-April. While Hope One did not attend this event, there were still many programs and providers present that support individuals with disabilities in our community. It is important to keep in mind that individuals with disabilities may also face stigma and judgment, reinforcing the need for continued education, inclusion, and the commitment to building a truly stigma-free community.

The event had a great turnout from the community. Notably, there was someone able to make wheelchair adjustments for those in need, inspiring speeches were made, and valuable information on the resources in the county were shared. We received positive feedback from those who attended and look forward to hosting again next year!



Looking Ahead

With Spring brings fresh ideas and more opportunities. Stay connected and also see below for upcoming events and more ways to get involved as we transition out of this long and cold Winter!

Thank you for your dedication to breaking barriers and building hope in a stigma-free environment.

HUNTERDON COUNTY
• BREAKING BARRIERS
• BUILDING HOPE

STIGMA-FREE

• SINCE 2023 •

Be a voice for those impacted
by mental health challenges



The Hunterdon County
**MENTAL
HEALTH
BOARD**



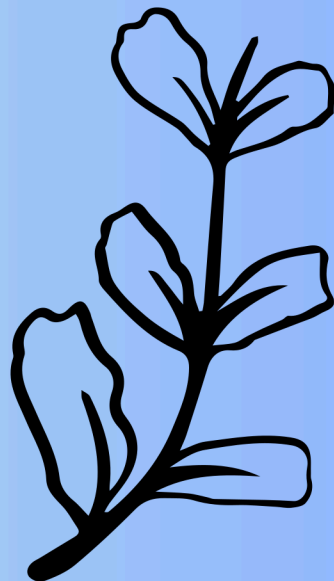
Scan for needs you!
meeting
information
(pg 5)



Scan for
Board
Member
Application

join as a board member or come to the
◆ meetings as a community member◆

Contact Amy Belle Molina with any questions at
amolina@co.hunterdon.nj.us





NAVIGATING THE INTERSECTION: Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Substance Use

People with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder or ADHD, may find it challenging to regulate attention, manage time, and control impulses, yet they often demonstrate notable strengths such as creativity, problem-solving, and the ability to intensely focus on tasks that interest them. Because ADHD exists on a spectrum and varies widely between individuals, creating an environment that supports how the ADHD brain functions best is essential, keeping in mind that no single strategy works for everyone or even for the same person all the time.

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental condition marked by patterns of inattention, impulsivity, and/or hyperactivity that can affect

ADHD is simply a different way the brain is wired. - Roberto Olivardia, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist, Lecturer in the Department of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School.

It is important to recognize that education and self-directed learning about ADHD and its impact on individuals are essential, as informed understanding supports more effective advocacy and helps foster self-esteem. Recognizing the diverse experiences of people with ADHD also helps clarify their vulnerability to challenges such as substance use, which is outlined in the following sections:

ADHD and Substance Use Often Go Hand-in-Hand

01. Children and teens with ADHD are two to three times more likely to develop substance use disorder compared to those without ADHD. This includes alcohol, nicotine, caffeine marijuana, and other drugs (3).

Early ADHD Treatment Does Not Cause Substance Use

02. Research shows that properly prescribed ADHD medications (like stimulants) do not increase the risk of later drug or alcohol problems. In fact, when ADHD is well-treated, youth may be less likely to self-medicate with substances (2,4,6).



More Vulnerable to Addiction

03. Kids with ADHD tend to experience the effects of all substances more intensely. They may also progress to addiction faster than “neurotypical teens” (1).

Family Communication Protects

Since ADHD puts one at an increased risk, having open supportive family conversations are among the strongest defenses against substance use. Children and teens with ADHD who can talk openly with their parents about stress, peer pressure, and choices are less likely to experiment with drugs or alcohol. Healthy communication includes:

- 04.**
- Building trust and maintaining a positive relationship with your child.
 - Not over-accommodating; teaching coping skills for stress and frustration.
 - Creating structure and predictability.
 - Teaching self advocacy skills.
 - Reducing shame and secrecy around mistakes (1,5).








Scan the QR code for useful Parent Toolkits!




Help and Hope Are Available

05. With early intervention, family support, and coordinated care, youth with ADHD can go on to experience positive outcomes and may change to thrive in school, work, and relationships (5).

Substance Use Resources

988 Lifeline 	CrisisLifelinefor free, 24/7 mental health and emotional support.	Dial 988 https://988lifeline.org/
Hope One 	Provides education, resources, and outreach to individuals and families who may have difficulty in accessing services.	908-788-1253 https://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/451/Hope-One
NJ 2-1-1 	Free, 24-hour information and referral service connecting residents to local behavioral health and substance use resources.	Dial 211 https://nj211.org/
One Voice of Hunterdon 	Prevention agency focused on reducing substance misuse and promoting mental health among adolescents and young adults in Hunterdon County.	(609) 921-4498 https://www.onevoicehc.com/
Prevention Resources 	Early intervention, counseling, recovery support, and prevention education for youth and families.	(908) 782-3909 https://njprevent.com/
Perform Care NJ 	Connects youth and their families to behavioral health, intellectual/developmental disability, and substance use treatment services across NJ.	(877) 652-7624 https://www.performcarenj.org/
Reach NJ 	24/7 confidential helpline for anyone seeking help with substance use in New Jersey. Provides treatment referrals regardless of insurance or ability to pay.	1-844-REACH-NJ (1-844-732-2465) https://nj.gov/humanservices/reachnj/

ADHD Resources

Children and Adults with ADHD (CHADD)	National organization, provides education, advocacy, and support to individuals with ADHD, their families, and professionals.	 (301) 306-7070 https://chadd.org/
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Where to Start & What to Expect:

1. Start with your PCP: Your primary care doctor is a great first step for initial screening and guidance.
2. Comprehensive Evaluation: A formal diagnosis involves interviews, standardized rating scales, and ruling out other conditions, often with a mental health specialist.
3. Medication: Only licensed medical doctors can prescribe medications.

Finding a Provider:

- Use directories like [Psychology Today](#) or [CHADD](#).
- Check with your insurance for in-network providers.

Mental Health Resources

NJ Department of Education	Provides information and links to school-related mental health supports, guides, screening and coping tools to help students, families, and educators promote positive mental health.	 https://www.nj.gov/education/safety/index.shtml
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1. Frank, C. (2024, November 19). ADHD and substance abuse: Why teens with the disorder are at higher risk for addiction. Child Mind Institute. <https://childmind.org/article/adhd-and-substance-abuse/>

2. Molina, B. S. G., Kennedy, T. M., Howard, A. L., Swanson, J. M., Arnold, L. E., Mitchell, J. T., Stehli, A., Kennedy, E. H., Epstein, J. N., Hechtman, L. T., Hinshaw, S. P., & Vitiello, B. (2023). Association between stimulant treatment and substance use through adolescence into early adulthood. *JAMA Psychiatry*, 80(9), 933–941. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2023.2157>

3. National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2024). Co-occurring disorders: ADHD & substance use. National Institutes of Health.

4. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2015). Adults with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and substance use disorders (Advisory, Vol. 14, Issue 3). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

5. Tourjman, V., Louis-Nascan, G., Ahmed, G., DuBow, A., Côté, H., Daly, N., Daoud, G., Espinet, S., Flood, J., Gagnier-Marandola, E., Gignac, M., Graziosi, G., Mansuri, Z., & Sadek, J. (2022). Psychosocial interventions for attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder: A systematic review and meta-analysis by the CADDRA Guidelines Work Group. *Brain Sciences*, 12(8), 1023. <https://doi.org/10.3390/brainsci12081023>

6. Wilens, T. E. (2004). Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and the substance use disorders: The nature of the relationship, subtypes at risk, and treatment issues. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 27(2), 283–301. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0193-953X\(03\)00113-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0193-953X(03)00113-8)

Crisis Services

National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline 9-8-8
988lifeline.org

Hunterdon Behavioral Health 908-788-6401
Psychiatric Emergency Services
Family Crisis Intervention Unit
<http://www.hunterdonhealth.org>

SAFE in Hunterdon 908-788-4044
Domestic Violence Hotline
www.safeinhunterdon.org

PerformCare 877-652-7624
Mobile Response and Stabilization Services
(Children and Adolescents)
<https://www.performcarenj.org/>

Rutgers UBHC 908-358-6175
Early Intervention Support Services
<https://ubhc.rutgers.edu/clinical/emergency/-/acute/acute-and-emergency-services.xml>

Veterans Services

Veterans Haven North 908-534-1999
Residential Program
www.nj.gov/military/veteranshavennorth

Veterans Services Office 908-788-1361
Hunterdon County DSDVS
www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/523/Veterans-Service-Office

Community Hope 973-463-9600
Housing, Families, Mental Health
<https://www.communityhope-nj.org/>

Trenton Vet Center 609-882-5744
<https://www.va.gov/trenton-vet-center/>

Hampton Counseling Center 908-312-4580
Outpatient Therapy

Case Management

Bridgeway Behavioral Health Services 908-835-8660
Program in Assertive
Community Treatment (PACT) 908-894-5311
Residential Intensive
Support Team (RIST) 908-237-2577
Supportive Housing Program
www.bridgewayrehab.org

Easter Seals 855-215-4541
Integrated Case Management
<https://nj.easterseals.com/>

Rutgers UBHC 732-235-6184
STAR Program
<https://ubhc.rutgers.edu/clinical/community/community-based-programs.xml>

Fisherman's Mark 609-397-1094
www.fishermansmark.org

Educational Vocational

Greater Raritan Workforce 908-237-0016
Development Board
www.thegrwdb.org

Hunterdon County 908-782-2371
One Stop Career Center
www.careerconnections.nj.gov

Contact Us

humansvs@co.hunterdon.nj.us
Human Services Administrator
908-788-1372
Asst. Mental Health Administrator
Drug & Alcohol Director
908-806-4184

Hunterdon County

Mental Health & Substance Use
Disorder Resource Guide
2026 Edition



Advocacy

HC Dept. of Human Services 908-788-1372
Mental Health and Substance Use
Flemington, NJ 08822
www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/282/Mental-Health-Services

National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline 9-8-8
988lifeline.org

Legal Services of Northwest Jersey, Inc 908-231-0840
www.lsnwj.org

NAMI Hunterdon 908-284-0500
National Alliance on Mental Illness
<https://namihunterdon.org/>

NJ Addictions Services Hotline 844-REACHNJ
844-732-2465

Hunterdon Helpline 800-272-4630
908-782-4357
www.helplinehc.org

Disability Rights New Jersey 800-922-7233
www.drnj.org

NJ 2-1-1 2-1-1
www.nj211.org

Support and Services for Youth, Children, and Families

Hunterdon Behavioral Health 908-788-6401
Adolescent Partial Hospitalization
Adolescent Intensive Outpatient
Intensive Family Support Services
<https://www.hunterdonhealth.org/>

Portum Behavioral Health 866-798-5556
Adolescent Mental Health & Substance Use
<https://portumbehavioralhealth.com/>

TriCounty Care 908-526-3900
Management Organization
Hunterdon/Somerset/Warren
www.tricountycmo.org

Prevention Resources 908-782-3909
Girls Circle Group
Harvest Family Success Center
Sharing the Hope Family Support Center
Law Enforcement Adolescent Program
Violence Intervention Program for Adolescents
<https://njprevent.com/>

Catholic Charities 908-782-7905
Outpatient for Adolescents
www.cdom.org

Family Support Organization 908-223-1191
Hunterdon/Somerset/Warren
<https://fso-hsw.org/>

Family Promise 908-782-4685
Housing & Financial Support
<https://familypromisehc.org/>

Hackensack Meridian Health 800-933-3579
Carrier Clinic
Inpatient for Children & Adolescents
<https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/en>

One Voice 609-921-4498
Adolescent and Young Adult
Community Engagement and Prevention
<https://www.onevoicehc.com/>

Residential Programs

Easter Seals 855-215-4541
Residential and Supportive Housing
<https://nj.easterseals.com/TurningPoint> 973-380-0905

Anderson House for Women
Freedom House 908-537-6043
Halfway House for Men
www.freedomhouse.nj.org

Hackensack Meridian Health 888-631-2811
Carrier Clinic
Substance Use Residential
<https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/eSoberfit2> 908-442-0475
<https://soberfit2.com/>

Inpatient Programs

New Hope IBHC 800-705-4673
Detox Program
Website
Hunterdon Behavioral Health 908-788-6401
Mental Health Inpatient
website
BlueCrest Recovery 973-543-9280
Detox Program
website
Hackensack Meridian Health 888-631-2811
Carrier Clinic
Mental Health Inpatient
Detox Program

Other Recovery Support

Prevention Resources 908-782-3909
Community Wellness Center
Open Door Recovery Center
Safer Together Harm Reduction Center
<https://njprevent.com/>

Intoxicated Driving Resource Center 908-704-6304
12 Hour Program for Hunterdon/Somerset

Partial Care/Partial Hospitalization

GenPsych 855-436-7792
Mental Health and Substance Use
<https://genpsych.com/>

High Point Partial Care 908-788-5979
Mental Health and Substance Use
<https://www.highpointpartialcare.com/>

Hunterdon Behavioral Health 908-788-6401
Substance Use
www.hunterdonhealth.org

Intensive Outpatient Programs

Hunterdon Behavioral Health 908-788-6401
Mental Health & Substance Use
<http://www.hunterdonhealth.org>

GenPsych 855-436-7792
Mental Health and Substance Use
<https://genpsych.com/>

High Point Partial Care 908-788-5979
Mental Health and Substance Use
<https://www.highpointpartialcare.com/>

Charlie Health 732-880-9449
Mental Health
www.charliehealth.com/

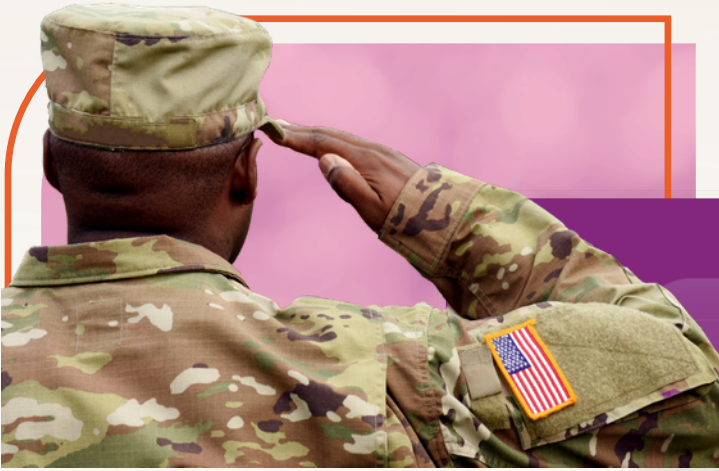
Freedom House 908-617-5765
Substance Use
www.freedomhouse.nj.org

Hackensack Meridian Health 800-933-3579
Carrier Clinic
Substance Use
<https://www.hackensackmeridianhealth.org/en>

Outpatient Services

Catholic Charities 908-782-7905
<https://ccdom.org/hunterdon>

Ellie Mental Health 908-923-3969
<https://elliementalhealth.com/locations/flemington-nj/>



Mental Health FIRST AID

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELLBEING

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID FOR MILITARY, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES

So many people are out there wishing for something better, hoping that help will show up. That's what Mental Health First Aid is – it is help to get people connected to care and ultimately to get them to a better place.”

— **Tousha Paxton-Barnes**,
U.S. Army Veteran

WHY MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

Mental Health First Aid for Military, Veterans, and their Families is an evidence-based and early intervention training program developed for adults to learn how to assist and support members of their community who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge.

This training specifically addresses the relevance of mental health to military culture, information on risk factors such as mental and physical trauma faced by many service members and their families, how to break down stigma and how to reach out to those who suffer in silence and are reluctant to seek help.

Nearly
1 IN 4*
activeduty members showed signs of a mental health condition.

The suicide rate for veterans is
57% GREATER*
than non-veterans.

88%*
of veterans' caregivers report increased stress or anxiety.

*the original research for the displayed statistic is linked

REGISTER TODAY!

Delivery Format:

7.5 hour in-person training, valued at \$170 per learner, offered free of charge thanks to a grant from the N.J. Dept. of Veterans Affairs

Date and Time:

Wed. May 20, or Tues. May 26, 2026 | 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Location:

Hunterdon Health Department, 1 Walter E. Foran Blvd, Flemington

Where to Register:

www.njha.com/njvetsmhfa (or email MHFA@njha.com)

Lunch to be provided by host.

The course will teach you how to apply the MHFA Action Plan (ALGEE):

- **Assess** for risk of suicide or harm.
- **Listen** nonjudgmentally.
- **Give** reassurance and information.
- **Encourage** appropriate professional help.
- **Encourage** self-help and other support strategies.

Ignite your job search!
Attend the FREE

2026 Job Fair



Tuesday
May 19, 2026
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Hindu Temple and Cultural Society

Balaji Temple Auditorium,
North Hall, Banquet Hall,
1 Balaji Temple Drive
(off of Route 202-206),
Bridgewater, NJ, 08807

- Meet and network with up to 100-plus employers from Hunterdon and Somerset Counties and the surrounding region.
- Share resumes with employers for hundreds of full-time, part-time and internship positions.
- Attend a career workshop to learn about the many services offered by partners of the Greater Raritan One-Stop Career Center.

The list of attendees will be updated here on the www.thegrwdb.org throughout the month of May.



This is a free event. Walk-ins are welcome, and registration is optional. Register at <https://bit.ly/4ccDu11>, or use the QR code. Questions? Email info@thegrwdb.org.



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