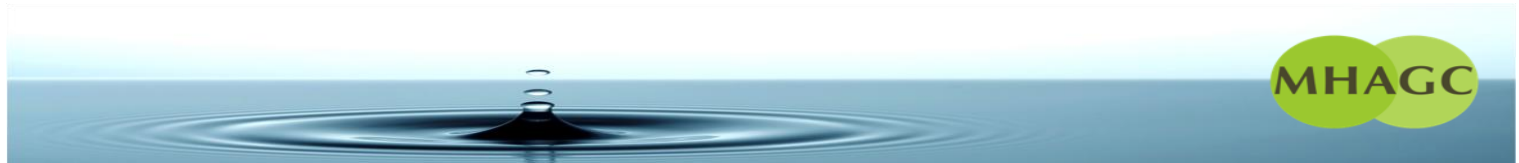




Mental Health Association of Greater Chicago



We provide Education, Advocacy, Support, Empowerment!



Our Services

- Educate children, adolescents, school administrators, employees and the general public to preserve and strengthen their mental health
- Support the mental wellness of our communities by promoting prevention and education
- Advocate innovation in research, practice and services
- Support policy to end discrimination against people with mental and addictive disorders
- Provide referrals for support to individuals & families living with mental health and substance use problems for access to effective care



MHAGC

We provide the L2L (Learning 2 Live) program, with a focus on mental health awareness and education, to schools and companies in Chicago and suburbs. Counselors and social workers take part in the process and come to know individuals better. We provide an avenue for support and help students and employees to feel more comfortable asking for and receiving support when they need it.

The L2L educational program is also provided in corporate settings in Employees Assistance Programs (EAP), for parents, teachers, caregivers, religious organizations, homeless centers, and other organizations.

Mental and Behavioral Health Awareness Education

Our cornerstone programs include the Learning 2 Live™ (L2L™) formerly The Mental Health Awareness in Education (MHAE), Behavioral Health Awareness (BHA) and 1st Response. They include a "10 days in 10 weeks" curriculum designed to educate health professionals, law enforcement officers, teachers, counselors, school staff, company employees, parents and students about 13 most common mental health disorders, helping people identify what may be going on and finding avenues for support.

Since 2005, we have been educating students, parents and teachers in Chicagoland communities. Last year we partnered with a number of schools reaching over 2500 students, 300 teachers, and 250 parents.

We partner with companies such as Northrop Grumman, Grant Thornton others to provide mental health education and information to schools and to over 2500 employees.

Investing in a mentally healthy workforce is critical for business success. Mental illness and substance use are much more common and costly to employers than we realize¹.

- According to the Surgeon General, 1 in 5 adults experience a diagnosable mental illness in any given year.
- Among those of working age, it is estimated that mental illness and/or substance use approaches 25% per year.
- Mental illness and substance use cost employers an estimated \$80 to \$100 billion annually.
- More workers are absent from work because of stress and anxiety than of physical illness or injury.
- Stress and depression have been reported to be the main cause of at least 30% of heart attacks.
- Mental Health short term disability claims are growing by 10% annually.
- Medical illness and mental illness are strongly linked.
- Mental illness ranks near the top of the list for lost productivity.

1. www.workplacementalhealth.org

Topics covered:

- Stress management
- Anxiety
- Depression
- 2strong2bully™
- Suicide
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Substance Abuse
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Panic Disorder
- Self-Injurious Behavior
- Obsessive Compulsive Behavior
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Bipolar Disorder
- Schizophrenia and Psychosis
- Eating Disorders
- Conduct Disorders
- Autism
- Secondary Illness from a Primary Disease
- Nutrition and our Brain
- Mental Health and counseling: Seeking Help
- Balancing Work, Life and Family
- Being the Caregiver
- Social Emotional and Behavioral Self Control and Self Management Skills
- Personality Disorders: Dealing with a Hidden Agenda
- Managing after Trauma
- Dealing with Grief
- Substance Use Challenges
- Human Relations and Group Dynamics
- Communication Skills/Social Emotional Learning

➤ All topics are customizable to specific requirements

For Parents



- Communicating with your child
 - The three keys to successful listening
 - Becoming a better communicator
 - Powerful ways to use discipline effectively
 - Using authority without becoming authoritarian
 - Engaging cooperation
 - How to complete childhood developmental stages
 - Appropriate expressions of feelings such as anger and remorse
 - Developing courage
 - How to end children's complaining
 - Ways to build trust and honesty
 - Setting healthy boundaries
- Other topics
 - Too Strong to Bully™
 - How to stop the yelling in the home
 - Ending violence in the schools
 - Helping your child deal with emotional issues (Social Emotional Learning)
 - Calming the home
 - Dealing with grief

Jesse's Story



Although I did well in school, I struggled desperately, both intellectually and emotionally. There were hours of homework every night, textbooks of totally unfamiliar material, and few friends. After months of this stress, I became almost totally unable to function. The thought of attending school filled me with indescribable terror. My heart would race; I would hyperventilate; tears streamed down my face; I was excessively agitated. I remember feelings of extreme emotional agony. I felt as though my heart and soul were being ripped in two.

I seem to be in the middle of a never-ending nightmare of blackness and despair, so fatigued both physically and emotionally I don't know where to turn. Many days I long for death. It seems the only doorway open to me. As my self-confidence has eroded under the unremitting pressures of fear, depression, and guilt, my ability to establish friendships has disappeared. Dating has been difficult at best. People would ask me out to a movie, a party, or some other social event. Time and time again I would agree, but as the hour drew near, I would be choked by fear and doubt and have to back away. Now I have little social self-confidence left. My loneliness is almost more than I can bear.

I was once asked, "Who has died in your family; why are you in mourning?" At first I couldn't understand. Nobody had died in our family. But now I know there has been a death. In a very real way, I am the deceased. My talents, potential dignity, sense of self-worth, hopes of marriage and children—all have been killed by the illness, which has smashed my life.

Finally, someone reached out to me. They didn't assume it was just "Jesse" or that I should just get over it.. They noticed that there was something really wrong. With the knowledge and support I have now been given, understanding that I am ill and I can get better, I am moving towards life again. Thank you MHAGC.

Hello MHAGC Friends and Supporters,

I want to tell you what a mom, Cheryl, told me. “When my daughter first showed signs of mental illness, I kept denying that there was anything wrong”. “I wanted her to just get over the outbursts, the dis-organized thinking, and the bizarre behaviors. Through the persistent encouragement and support from my company and some very close friends, I finally sought help for my daughter and found some solutions.”

A father of a daughter with schizophrenia said: “When I realized the true impact of my daughter’s illness on her life, I lost all hope. That was a very dark and helpless place. But as I allowed others to reach out to me, teach me, and offer me their strength, my hope was restored.”

We all need hope to go about the business of living our lives. For those suffering from mental illness, though, hope is the only way out of the darkness. The problem of mental illness is very real, and more common than one may think. In the Chicago area, 30% of students in grades 9 through 12 suffer from clinical depression and that is just one of several very difficult mental disorders. Many of us do not realize how widespread mental illness is, partly because it shows few physical signs. An employee from one company stated, “Victims of mental illness, for the most part, look normal. They don’t limp or stutter. The scars are on the inside.” Yet, the pain and confusion can be so great that life can become almost unbearable. In addition, the family members of the victim often suffer isolation and grief as they struggle to understand their loved one’s illness and search for ways to help.

Our cornerstone program, L2L (Learning to Live), offers a “10 days in 10 weeks” curriculum, designed to provide education to students, teachers, health professionals, law enforcement officers, counselors, school and corporate employees, parents, and students. The sessions cover 13 mental health disorders in adolescents, including suicide, depression, self mutilation, anxiety and eating disorders. Importantly, the course helps participants understand when they need to protect their mental



how and when to seek professional help and how to access it. Jocelyn, a student-participant in the program, reports: “I know a lot of kids my age who were depressed and tried to kill themselves. I now know the signs to look for and try to help.” Reducing the stigma so that students are not afraid to ask for help or support someone else is critical to overcoming this health challenge in our society.

The L2L Program in the Chicago area in the past four years has reached over 5,000 students, 200 teachers, 450 parents in a number of Chicago schools and 2,600 corporate employees. Daniel Zimmerman, Principal of Forman High School reports: “The . . . association provides relevant curriculum that increases awareness of many mental health topics that affect adolescents. Through this understanding, teenagers become able to recognize and empathetically respond to mental health challenges that they themselves may face, or that they recognize in their friends or family. Most importantly, this program helps to break down the stigma attached to mental illness and to foster proactive ways to effectively address mental health concerns.”

There are also partnership programs, which offer classes designed to facilitate discussions between parents and teachers on the sources of mental illness problems, how to resolve them, and how to interact effectively with adolescents. The aim of the classes is to enable adults to build their own self-confidence and learn effective coping techniques, in order to be better prepared to support young people in need of their help.

For employees, many report that the parenting and behavioral health sessions have been invaluable.

There's a ripple effect, in all that we do. What you do touches me, what I do touches you.
Author Unknown

While there has been unqualified success in the various outreach programs, much, much more needs to be done. New initiatives, such as the development of a Spanish and Mandarin Chinese language versions of the classes and a proactive internship program in conjunction with Chicago-area universities, are already recognized as being very successful.

Even with all the activities orchestrated to reach children, adolescents, teachers, individuals and families, we are constantly confronted with the realization that we are not doing enough. Far too many people are still not informed of the options for them and those close to them who may need help. Knowledge of the symptoms of mental illness and the treatment paths available has a direct correlation to the choices individuals make. Of equal importance, is the task of getting to the core of the causes of many of the symptoms of mental illness.

Employee and manager awareness programs about behavioral health education have a positive impact in work success. People with positive expectations and knowledge about the effectiveness of behavioral health education, support and treatment are less impaired at work. In fact, it has been found that people who are depressed or had other disorders, but, saw themselves as able to work did indeed stay on the job and were productive members of their organizations.

All of these efforts, as effective as they are, require funding. For those groups and associations involved in the grass-roots educational efforts, the funding that comes from federal, state, and local governments, as well as the funds coming from corporate and individual donations are absolutely essential. Otherwise, our ability to fulfill our missions would be severely limited. Those kind of severe limitations in funding, in this case, would leave all of us without hope—without a light to look towards the future.

To help us reach more children, adolescents, families and individuals we ask for your continued support.

Stella Kalfas, President and CEO
Mental Health Association of Greater Chicago

VISION

The Mental Health Association of Greater Chicago is working to ensure that the youth, families and adults in our community live fuller lives, free from stigma and prejudice, by understanding how to protect and improve their mental health and know when to seek help for themselves or someone close to them.

MISSION

To maximize the mental wellness of the youth, adults and families of our communities by empowering them through our education, collaboration and support programs.

Board of Directors

Officers:

Steve Ethington
Dan Hales
Howard Schwedel

Directors

Noreen Abbasi
Susan Altman
Dr. John Blattner
Michael Cimarusti
Dr. Robert (Uri) Heller
Stella Kalfas
Robert Kauffman
Brad Mueller
Phillip J. Olzen
Michael Stuart
Dr. George E. Smith

MHAGC

Mental Health Association of Greater Chicago



310 S. Peoria, Suite 404

Chicago, IL 60607

Phone: (312) 781-7780

www.mentalhealthchicago.org