ADDICTION • ANGER • ANXIETY • CONFUSION • DEPRESSION GRIEF • HUNGER • MENTAL HEALTH • STRESS

HELP8 

### YOUR MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE GUIDE

#### **MAY 2022**





## Help & Hope

### **Memo from the Publisher**

fficials around the globe are concerned about the rise in suicides. I join in sounding their alarm.

In 2020, suicide was among the top 9 leading causes of death for people ages 10-64, and the second leading cause of death for people



Glen Head MailMax Publisher

ages 10-14 and 25-34, according to the CDC. The added stress of the pandemic and the increased availability of drugs seem to be major factors.

In recent years, a client of mine took his own life. The son of another client took his life. A young girl that attended my wife's daycare took her own life. Sadly, I could go on with this list, and I'm sure you could add to it as well.

I felt driven to put the power of the pen to work, letting our community know about all the resources that are available here in Berrien County to offer help and hope to anyone struggling with addiction, anger, anxiety, depression, grief, hunger and more. If just one life is spared out of the 50,134 weekly *MailMax* readers, this *Help & Hope* project will have been worth it.

I'm grateful that Riverwood Center has partnered with MailMax to present *Help & Hope*.

Please read these pages. Save this tabloid. Be inspired. Be equipped to point others in the direction of help. Be encouraged to take steps to reach out for your own help and hope.

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## Riverwood Center Joins to Offer Help 😽 Hope

hen presented with the opportunity to reach thousands of homes in our community and provide topics and resources related to mental health, it was not one that we could pass up. May is Mental Health Awareness Month and with the struggles our community has endured related to the past and on-going effects of the COVID 19 Pandemic, now more than ever Riverwood Center wants to share with our community the resources that Berrien County has to offer.

Mental Health impacts individuals in our community on varying levels. Experiences can be either direct or indirect through our work, family life, social network, school, what we see in the media, or what we read in the news. Promoting mental health in our community is essential in reducing negative stigma related to seeking out mental health treatment, building resiliency, and supporting the improvement of our resident's overall wellbeing.

Berrien County offers a variety of resources within our community. Part of our job as your community mental health provider is to educate individuals on the resources we have, encourage residents to seek out support and acknowledge that they are not alone in experiencing mental health struggles. Our work towards addressing mental health within our community will continue to evolve and change over the years. We want to encourage our residents to access the resources Berrien County has to offer, to have open conversations about mental health, and to support one another in asking for help.





### **Mental Health Awareness**

ental health conditions can adversely affect anyone, regardless of age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or gender. All individuals are impacted by mental health on some level, whether it be directly and/or indirectly through work, family, friends, school, etc. As we have come to realize, there can be negative attitudes and beliefs, called "stigmas," surrounding mental illness, which can unfortunately be common in our communities. One of the best ways to address negative stigma is to get help, seek out support and treatment, and advocate in your community regarding the importance of taking care of our mental health.

It's important to remember that recovery is possible and there are resources out there to assist individuals and families in dealing with mental illness. As a community, we are all in this together!

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), founded in 1979, is the nation's largest mental health organization dedicated to improving the lives of persons living with serious mental illness, and their families. The NAMI website, which can be found at nami. org/Support-Education, includes many helpful resources to assist those struggling with mental illness.

Often times, family members, friends and the general public are unsure how to help individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a training



For help 24/7, call Riverwood Center at 1-800-336-0341

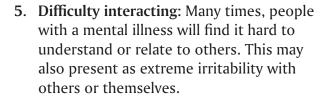
program designed to teach individuals how to help a person experiencing mental health and substance use issues. Similar to traditional First Aid, MHFA is designed to train individuals on how to offer initial support until professional help is received during a mental health crisis.

For more information on the benefits of MHFA, please visit: mentalhealthfirstaid.org or thenationalcouncil.org.

Every mental illness is different and each person it impacts has a different story to tell. Seven common signs that may be experienced by someone suffering from a mental illness include:

- 1. Change in feelings or demeanor: When a person is suffering from a mental illness, they may experience increased feelings of worry, panic, sadness, or hopelessness.
- **2.** Loss of interest: They may start avoiding friends, family and activities that used to once bring pleasure.
- **3.** Change in sleeping habits: Sleeping patterns may change to sleeping too much or too little, especially when compared to previous sleep routines.
- 4. Low energy: This can manifest itself as either sleeping too much or having the inability to carry out everyday activities and tasks such as work or even self-care.





- 6. Appetite or weight changes: Dietary changes, whether it is excessive eating or little to no eating, is a large indicator of depression.
- 7. Uncontrollable emotions: A distinct, rapid mood swing from sadness to happiness, or similar emotions on opposite ends of the spectrum, may be an indicator of mental health struggles.

This information was obtained through the ThinkHealth - Priority Health website.

If you or someone you love is experiencing a mental health crisis, please call us immediately at **(269) 925-0585 or (800) 336-0341** (24 hours a day) for resources to figure out what help you need.

Riverwood Center provides a wide range of services for adults and children residing in Berrien County, and we are here to help you with your mental health needs. If you are in an emergency situation, please dial 911 right away and/or visit the nearest Emergency Room.



### About Riverwood Center

iverwood Center has been delivering quality mental health services and programs since 1975. We provide a wide variety of caring and confidential services to children, families and adults with mental illnesses, intellectual/ developmental disabilities and substance use disorders. It is a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic.

#### VISION

Every person has an exceptional experience... every time.

#### **OUR HISTORY**

Riverwood Center was founded in the early 1970s. In those early years, the State Department of Mental Health provided most of the mental health services to people in Michigan. Back then most of those services were provided in large state institutions, and more than 150 people in Berrien County were institutionalized. Gradually, the state gave the responsibility for meeting the mental health needs of its citizens to the local county mental health agencies. Over the years Riverwood Center has strengthened its belief that people are better served close to home. Today, less than 10 people from Berrien County require long-term care in state-run facilities.

#### **MISSION**

We provide personalized effective behavioral health services to build a stronger and healthier community.

#### **INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE**

Integrated healthcare means we believe your mental health is closely tied to your physical health. If you receive community mental health services, Riverwood Center will work with your primary care doctor to coordinate your physical and mental health services. If you do not have a primary care doctor, Riverwood will help you find one. Our goal is that together we will be able to meet your needs.

#### **QUALITY**

Riverwood Center is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). CARF is an independent, nonprofit organization that promotes the quality, value and good results of mental health services. CARF does this by setting high standards for services that enhance people's lives. Accreditation shows that Riverwood is committed to high quality care. We believe Riverwood is a valuable resource, and our CARF accreditation proves our commitment to our community.



- 1. Community Living Supports (CLS): Individual or group services delivered in your own home or in the community. Services are designed to train or assist you or your loved ones with achieving goals such as living as independently as possible, learning new skills such as cooking or budgeting, participating in community activities and assuring health and safety.
- **2. Outpatient Clinic Services:** Individual, family or group counseling.
- **3. Psychiatric Services:** Medication management to reduce and control symptoms of mental illness.
- 4. **Respite Services:** Provides temporary relief for a family or unpaid caregiver so you can continue to live in your family home.
- 5. Self-Determination: Self-determination is an optional way to deliver services in a way that gives you or your loved one more choice and control over your services. Find out more about the Self-Determination option.

### **Additional Need-Specific Services Including:**

#### **SERVICES FOR MENTAL ILLNESS**

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT): A team approach to help adults in the community who are having trouble living independently due to ongoing symptoms of their mental illness. The team helps you manage your medications without supports and helps if you frequently use inpatient hospital emergency services or crisis residential services. Physicians, nurses, social workers, peers and other specialists work together to reduce unnecessary hospital stays and increase your well-being.

**Behavior Management Review:** Support to create a behavior management plan that helps you or others you work with to change behaviors caused by an illness or disability. The behavior management plan is developed during person-centered planning and then is approved

and reviewed regularly by a team of specialists to make sure that it is effective and dignified, and continues to meet your needs.

**Case Management:** Assistance with planning, linking and monitoring specialty services. For those who are vulnerable and/or have multiple service needs and are not able to arrange or access these services independently.

**Community Inpatient Services:** Hospital services used to stabilize someone experiencing a significant change in their symptoms, or in a mental health emergency. Community hospital services are provided in licensed psychiatric hospitals and in licensed psychiatric units of general hospitals. **Crisis Residential Services:** Short-term alternatives to inpatient hospitalization provided in a licensed residential setting.

**Employment Connections (Supported Employment):** Help overcoming the challenges that a mental illness or developmental disability can have when finding and retaining a job. The Employment Specialists build relationships that foster opportunities for people with disabilities to get hired. Employment Connections matches the employer's needs with your abilities. Job development and long-term, follow-along services are available. In follow-along services, a job coach works with you for as long as you need support to maintain your job.





**Health Services:** Includes assessment, treatment and professional monitoring of health conditions that are related to or impacted by your mental health condition. Your primary doctor will treat any other health conditions you may have.

Nursing Home Mental Health Assessment and Monitoring: A review of a nursing home resident's need for and response to mental health treatment, along with consultations with nursing home staff.

**Peer-Delivered and Peer Specialist Services:** Services delivered by your peers, including drop-in centers, are entirely run by people like you who use community mental health services. They offer help with food, clothing, socialization, housing and support to begin or maintain mental health treatment. Peer Specialist services are activities designed to help those with serious mental illness in their individual recovery journey and are provided by others who are in recovery from serious mental illness.

**Residential Care Services:** Residential care options range from staff assistance so you can remain in your own home to total supports in a structured, group home facility. The type and level of residential supports is based on your needs. Riverwood Center Supports Coordinators will discuss options and assure you live in the most independent and least restrictive settings possible.

**Substance Use SUD Services:** A person's physical, psychological, social and spiritual life can be affected by substance abuse. Our goals are to help consumers:

- Maintain abstinence
- Learn healthy boundaries and improve interpersonal relationships
- Establish a sober support system
- Improve persons overall wellbeing
- Learn new healthy coping skills and relapse prevention
- Decrease the person's negative involvement with the legal justice system

#### SERVICES FOR INTELLECTUAL & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Applied Behavior Analysis: Behavioral services provided by a team consisting of a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and a Behavior Technician/Aide. A treatment plan is developed to focus on reducing challenging behaviors and teaching skills in the areas of communication, play, socialization and daily living skills.

**Community Inpatient Services:** Hospital services used to stabilize a mental health condition in the event of a significant change in symptoms, or in a mental health emergency. Community hospital services are provided in licensed psychiatric hospitals and in licensed psychiatric units of general hospitals. **Crisis Interventions:** Unscheduled individual or group services aimed at reducing or eliminating the impact of unexpected events on mental health and well-being. Emergency mental health prescreens may be accessed at either Riverwood Center location during business hours or Lakeland Emergency Departments anytime.

**Environmental Modifications:** Physical changes to a person's home, car, or work environment that are of direct medical or remedial benefit to the person. Modifications ensure access, protect health and safety, or enable greater independence for a person with physical disabilities. Note that other sources of funding must be explored first, before using Medicaid funds for environmental modifications.

**Family Training Supports:** Psychological services including consultation and training for family or staff members on how to improve quality of life by reducing maladaptive behaviors.

Riverwood Center is available 24/7. Mental health professional, call **(269) 925-0585**. Children's Mobile Crisis Line, call **(269) 934-0747**. If you are in an emergency, call **911** right away.

Nursing Home Mental Health Assessment and Monitoring: A review of a nursing home resident's need for and response to mental health treatment, along with consultations with nursing home staff.

**Occupational Therapy:** Evaluation by an occupational therapist of an individual's ability to do things in order to take care of themselves every day, and treatments to help increase these abilities.

**Residential Care Services:** Residential care options range from staff assistance so you can remain in your own home to total supports in a structured group home facility. The type and level of residential supports is based on individual needs. Riverwood Center Supports Coordinators will discuss options and assure individuals live in the most independent and least restrictive settings possible.

Skill Building Assistance: Vocational training to prepare for entering the general competitive workforce. Training is focused on areas such as increasing attention to task, interpersonal skills, accepting direction or constructive feedback, etc. Skill Building services must be related to a realistic goal of eventually entering the general competitive workforce. **Supported Employment:** Assistance to search for, obtain and maintain meaningful paid employment in the community.

**Case Management:** Case Management can help you determine what is important for you and what services you may be eligible for. Case Management facilitates a support circle including family, friends and clinicians to develop a Person-Centered Plan. Other responsibilities include: linking with service providers, coordinating, advocating and monitoring services.

#### **SERVICES FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

**Case Management:** Help for people who are vulnerable and/or have multiple service needs and can't arrange or access these services themselves. Includes help with service planning, linking and monitoring specialty services.

**Community Inpatient Services:** Hospital services used to stabilize someone experiencing a significant change in their symptoms, or in a mental health emergency. Community hospital services are provided in licensed psychiatric hospitals and in licensed psychiatric units of general hospitals.

**Crisis Interventions:** Unscheduled individual or group services aimed at helping people cope with unexpected events. Access emergency mental health prescreens at either Riverwood Center location during business hours or Lakeland Emergency Departments anytime.

**Functional Family Therapy (FFT):** An intensive, short-term, family-focused therapy program. A major goal of FFT is to improve family communication and supportiveness while decreasing the intense negativity. Other goals include helping family members adopt positive solutions to family problems, and developing positive behavior change and parenting strategies.

Home-Based Services: Intensive services for youth and families, provided in your home and in the community. Services promote normal child development, healthy family functioning, and supporting and preserving families. Services help give you the strengths you need to succeed, emphasize parent involvement, parent and worker teamwork and partnering with other service providers as necessary.

**Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST):** An intensive short-term treatment program that addresses all the factors in a child's environment that impact chronic and violent juvenile offenders -- their homes and families, schools and teachers, neighborhoods and friends. Each factor plays a critical role in a youth's world. And each factor requires attention when effective change is needed to improve the quality of life for youth and their families. MST works with high-risk and intensive cases, ages 9 through 17, who have a long history of arrests.



## A Story of Help & Hope

### From Suicidal to Successful The Journey of PJ Sando

#### <sup>44</sup>The only thing I saw was death in my future and I knew it was coming at me fast.<sup>77</sup>

That was the thought running through PJ Sando's mind as he made a life-changing decision.

Growing up in the Watervliet area, PJ was raised in a stressful home environment. His parents separated at a young age, and addictions of both parents were stressors playing a role. By the time PJ was thirteen, he was dabbling with drinking alcohol and getting high. In many ways, his parents were dealing with their own struggles and didn't notice the warning signs as young PJ turned from a good student to failing in school. By the time he reached the 9th grade, this once bright, promising young student and athlete was more interested in skipping school to get high than he was in learning.

Soon, Sando was running with the "wrong crowd" and ended up selling drugs. During his teen partying years, PJ got more involved with other drugs including getting hooked on cocaine. Some nearby relatives were cooking meth, and PJ got wrapped up in selling and using that as well. At age 17, he fathered a son with his girlfriend; and they dropped out of school altogether.

A year later he was doing well, wasn't using any drugs or alcohol and he went to night school to get his diploma. He married the mother of his son and things were looking up. He was able to quit using for a while, but eventually slipped back into his self-destructive behavior. After moving next door to a drug house, he soon found himself selling drugs once again, which led to an escalation in his drug usage by expanding into crack and heroin. "I would sometimes be gone for days, using all sorts of drugs. I liked it. I didn't have to think about anything, didn't have to think about life or any responsibilities."

Sadly, this led to his wife leaving him. The next few years were a series of on again–off again, attempts to "clean up" on his own, and he was in and out of jail during this time. In 2010, he was in jail nine different times in just six months.

PJ's longest clean stretch, two years, came crashing down when he fell 36 feet off a roof, landing face first onto concrete. He fractured ribs, a knee, his jaw and knocked multiple teeth out of his mouth. The doctors prescribed Norco and Fentanyl to deal with the pain but didn't give him a plan to wean himself off these strong opioids. After the prescriptions ran out, he went right back to the heroin and meth to ease his pain.

In 2015, PJ was arrested and convicted of possession of meth and spent nine months in the Berrien County jail. After being released, he successfully completed probation and met his current wife. For a moment, things were looking up for him.

"She got pregnant almost immediately and I relapsed almost immediately, the worst relapse I've ever had in my life," PJ reflected.

Despite the arrival of a baby girl in April of 2017, PJ had escalated his drug use to include shooting up (injecting heroin into one's bloodstream via a syringe) and mixing drugs. He became homeless and reached a point of such deep hopelessness that he even contemplated suicide.

PJ remembered thinking, "The only thing I saw was death in my future and I knew it was coming at me fast." On July 3rd of 2017, he had a friend drop him off at Sacred Heart, a rehab facility in Berrien Center, but PJ didn't have an appointment scheduled, so they weren't allowed to accept him at that time. The staff at Sacred Heart called the police when PJ got belligerent with them.

"I remember hiding in the woods and watching as the cops came and left. As soon as they left, I went back up and started pleading with the staff at Sacred Heart to let me in.

"I need help now! I'm going to die if I go back out there," Sando recalled. "They threatened to call the cops again, so I just left and started walking aimlessly through the night on back country roads for five hours. I had been awake for seven days straight at this point.

"I got on my knees in the middle of the road and cried out to God and surrendered my life to Him in that moment. I promised to do His will for the rest of my life if He saved me from my addictions. Then, I heard a voice telling me to get up and go back [to Sacred Heart.] When I got there, they met me in the parking lot and said, 'We've been waiting for you.' I've been clean ever since. July third of this year will be five years of sobriety."

PJ's wife suggested that he apply for a job at Red Brick Café in Baroda. Despite showing up for the interview wearing a rag on his head and his sleeves cut off to show his tattoos, he got the job. The owner, Joan Litke, said that everything was telling her not to hire PJ, but her heart was saying to give him a chance. PJ worked there for two years. Each morning, Joan and her husband Larry had a Bible study and time of prayer with him. "This was my path of recovery. Everyone's path is different," PJ stated.





During this time PJ and his family attended Road to Life Church in St. Joseph. Pastor Mike Schoeplein challenged him one day to start a class for people coming out of incarceration and addiction problems. Pastor Mike

asked for an outline and plan for the class. PJ didn't know where to start to put a class outline together. PJ and the Litke's prayed together that the help he needed would

become apparent. Within days, a customer at the café was talking to PJ about recovery and suggested he volunteer at Carol's Hope, a crisis intervention facility in Scottdale that provides support and a plan for individuals with substance abuse and co-occurring disorders.

PJ's original intent was to volunteer a few hours a week at Carol's Hope to get the experience and knowhow needed to facilitate a class at his church. Carol's Hope, however, hired PJ; and for several years, he worked with the staff at Carol's Hope, assisting people who wanted to enter rehab. Eventually, PJ applied for and landed a position at Riverwood Center as a Peer Counselor where he has been working for four months now. "It is a blessing to be able to help others. I try to live my own life as an example to

<sup>44</sup>I learned how to forgive myself for all of the dumb things I'd done in the past.<sup>77</sup>

those I am now helping," PJ beamed. "There is not a better feeling. It feels great to help others succeed in their own recovery.

"At one point, I just didn't care. What's the worst

you're going to do to me, put me in jail? I've been there, it didn't matter to me. Now, I DO care. I learned to love myself again. I learned how to forgive myself for all of the dumb things I'd done in the past. I've learned how to be a better husband, father, son, and friend."

PJ's one piece of advice to others struggling with any kind of addiction is to just get help. Do not let shame or guilt keep you from seeking the help you need. It is not a sign of weakness. Getting the help to become stronger is strength, never a weakness.

#### **PJ's Help:**

Sacred Heart Center 6418 Deans Hills Rd. Berrien Center 269-815-5500 www.sacredheartcenter.com

> Road To Life Church 3800 Niles Rd, St. Joseph 269-429-1106 www.roadtolifechurch.com

Carol's Hope 4032 M-139, St. Joseph 269-556-1526 www.communityhealingcenter.org

**Riverwood Center** 1485 M-139, Benton Harbor 269-925-0585 www.riverwoodcenter.org

PJ Sando Riverwood Center Peer Recovery Coach

### Alcohol Addiction B WARNING SIGNS of ADDICTION

RECOVERY

Pain

Sorrow

Drug

#### 1. Hiding your substance use

Drinking secretively or lying about your drug use when confronted by a loved one indicates feelings of shame, which means it's becoming a problem.

#### 2. Using as a coping mechanism

Many addictions begin with drinking alcohol or smoking a joint after a stressful day. If you feel like you can't truly relax without taking a substance, you might be using alcohol or drugs as an emotional crutch.

#### 3. Failing to use in moderation

If you can't open a bottle of wine without finishing it, or you regularly have so much to drink that you black out, this indicates that you may have an addiction.

### 4. Continuing to use, despite the negative consequences

Your alcohol or drug use may be interfering with your work, causing trouble at home, or affecting your physical or mental health, yet you continue to use despite these problems.

#### 5. Experiencing withdrawal symptoms

If you feel shaky, sweaty, tired, nauseous, or depressed when not using, you are exhibiting physical withdrawal symptoms resulting from addiction.

#### 6. Needing more and more

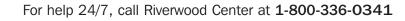
This is known as building a tolerance. It means your body is exposed to a harmful substance so regularly that it has adapted to cope with it better.

#### 7. Losing interest in activities

When all you want to do is drink or use drugs, life can become very one-dimensional. You may trade healthy pursuits you once enjoyed for the comfortable feeling of being drunk or high.

#### 8. Trying to quit without success

Perhaps you realize your substance abuse has become a problem, so you decide to quit. However, the drugs or alcohol have taken their hold, and attempting to quit alone is extremely difficult. You get down on yourself for your perceived "weakness" and start using again to cope. The vicious cycle continues, and you feel trapped.







Riverwood Center CEO

he past several years have been incredibly stressful with the COVID-19 pandemic. Many people have experienced job loss, physical isolation, fear, anxiety, illness and even death of someone they know or love as a result of COVID-19. Mental health professionals would say that people have been experienc-

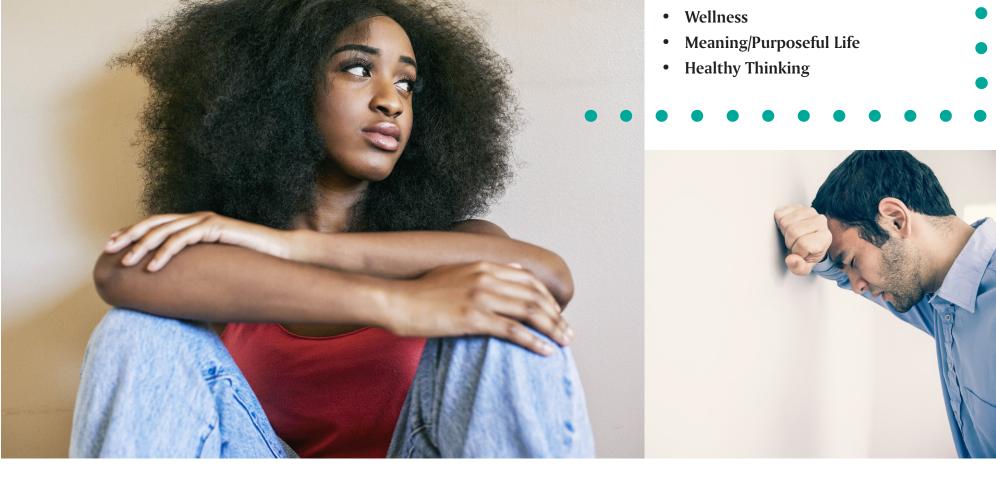
### **The Roadmap for Resilience!**

ing trauma. Trauma is defined as the result of extraordinary stressful events that shatter your sense of security making you feel helpless in a dangerous world. Trauma can impact both the psychological and physical health of individuals. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or shell-shock were the precursors and effects of trauma on the mind from war. Learning from this, we know that trauma can affect all people regardless of age, gender, or socio-economic status. Mental health professionals would also tell you that you can develop a roadmap for adapting to trauma and other life changing situations through developing resilience.

What is resilience? Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress or trauma. Each change affects people differently, bringing a unique array of thoughts, strong emotions, and uncertainty. Generally, over

time, people adapt well to life changing and stressful situations – in part thanks to resilience! While life changing events like serious health problems, workplace and/or financial stressors are certainly painful and difficult, they don't have to determine the outcome of your life. There are many aspects of your life that you can control, modify, learn from, and grow with. That is the role of resilience. Becoming more resilient not only helps you get through difficult circumstances and events; it also empowers you to grow and even improve your life along the way. People that are resilient will have trouble and distress. People who have suffered major traumas and adversity in their lives commonly experience emotional pain and stress. The road to resilience is full of emotional potholes! The good news is resiliency can be learned! Resilience involves behaviors, thoughts, and actions that people can learn and develop. The roadmap for resilience takes time and intentionality – this journey has four main core components:

Connection



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For help 24/7, call Riverwood Center at 1-800-336-0341

### **Building your Resilience Roadmap!**

#### • Connection:

- 1. Build your connections and prioritize relationships: One of the great tragedies of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the increased isolation of people. Connecting with empathetic and understanding people can help remind you that you are not alone during challenging life situations. Developing connection with trustworthy and compassionate individuals who validate your feelings will help establish resiliency. The human connection with loved ones, friends and family that can provide support and acceptance is important to everyone and particularly people experiencing trauma. Communication with people in person, via zoom, phone or a weekly lunch – the important thing is to stay connected and supported!
- 2. Be part of a Group: Some people find the source of human connection in groups. Many people find resilience, support and connection in a civic group, religious group, volunteer group or social groups.
- **3.** Do not be afraid to seek help: Recognizing that you need help is a sign of strength not weakness. Seek professional help if you need assistance that your regular support systems cannot provide.

#### **Wellness:**

- Take care of you! Everyone likes to talk about wellness and the first step to wellness is to take care of the "physical you.". Trauma and stress affect both your mental and physical health. Promoting healthy physical lifestyle factors like proper nutrition, regular exercise, adequate sleep, and hydration can help strengthen the physical you and help your body adapt to stress and the tolls of mental illness.
- 2. Mindfulness: Another buzzword Mindfulness or the ability to focus solely on the present moment can help build resilience. People who practice yoga, journal-

ing, meditation, or spiritual practices like prayer can build connections and restore hope. The "attitude of gratitude" is a concept that people follow and focus on positive aspects of life by recalling things that they are grateful for, which in turn, develops mindfulness and resilience.

#### **Meaning or a Purposeful Life:**

- 1. Help Other People: The act of helping others also helps yourself by developing a sense of purpose, connection with others, fosters self-worth and empowers you and those you help.
- 2. Be Proactive: Help foster self-discovery by asking yourself, "What can I do about a problem in my life?" How can you break the problem down into manageable pieces if the problem seems too big or overwhelming? For example, if you would like to find a new job – you could work on developing new job skills, participate in a new training, or work on your resume to reflect the new skills or trainings you developed. Taking the initiative will help remind you that you can create motivation and purpose even during stressful periods in your life.
- 3. Move toward Goals: Develop realistic goals for things you would like to accomplish and do something regularly, even if it is a small try to keep moving forward. Ask yourself – "What one thing can I accomplish today or this week that would help me move in the direction of my goal?" It is important to continue to try even if you have taken a break. The old expression of "getting back up on the horse, when we have fallen" applies to accomplishing goals.
- 4. Approach Life with a Sense of Purpose: Having a sense of purpose is what gets you out of bed in the morning. Developing purpose does not have to involve something big or extravagant. It can sim-

ply be deciding to engage in something productive. Clean your house or room, help a neighbor, make a nice meal for your family, play with your kids, or volunteer in your community or church.

#### **Healthy Thinking:**

- 1. Accept Change: Change is a part of life! Some even say, "Change is the spice of life." Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on situations that you can alter.
- 2. Work at Being more Optimistic: This is more than just looking at the bright side of life or that the glass is always half full. Tap into your strengths to take positive action and at the same time find ways to overcome your weaknesses.
- 3. Develop a Healthy Attitude: Look at the difficulties of life as challenges instead of roadblocks. This simple change in attitude empowers you to take action to solve problems and develop resiliency!

The Resiliency Roadmap above can help people through many of life's challenges by using the strategies and their own resources for building resiliency. Remember to seek professional help when you need it. No one person is an island, seeking help is noble and brave!

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## A Story of Help & Hope

### Mental Health Challenge Doesn't Mean Weakness Valerie's Strength through Encouraging Others

alerie wanted to share her story with readers in hopes that her journey to seek help will inspire others in need to do the same. Valerie was born and raised in Benton Harbor. At a noticeably early age, she and her family noticed that she had severe mental health issues. Because of this, she did not have the easiest time growing up. She found herself being the brunt end of other peoples' physical and verbal abuse.

In her early twenties, after going back to school and obtaining her high school diploma, Valerie realized that she needed some more assistance to help aid her in overcoming her mental disabilities. That is when she decided to become a client of Riverwood Center. Riverwood Center is a mental health service and program providing a wide variety of caring and confidential services to children, families, and adults who suffer from a wide variety of disabilities. Its main goal is to create a stronger and healthier community. Through this rehabilitation center, Valerie was able to start therapy and began taking daily medications, which helped calm her mind and focus on bettering herself. Riverwood Center also helped her to develop everyday skills. Valerie said, "Working through my issues at Riverwood helped me to feel more confident in myself and led to a chance for me to help others by, leading some of the group classes and workshops."

Valerie didn't just stop there. She also sought out help through The Center for Growth and Independence (formally known as GateWay Services) now located in Benton Harbor. The Center for Growth and Independence is a center built towards just that...helping individuals grow as a person and learn how to do things on their own. The center's main goal is to promote inclusion and independence in not only the mentally challenged, but everyone in need. It helps to keep the individuals socially active in a healthy and stable environment while learning.

#### I try to stay positive with a smile on my face and look forward to my future, even when it is hard.<sup>77</sup>

Another great organization that Valerie is a part of is the MI-Journey Drop-in Center, also located in Benton Harbor. MI-Journey is a no commitment organization, meaning that you can come as often as you would like without any attendance obligation. Its main goal is to provide a safe, non-judgmental place for individuals to feel socially connected with others, build social networks, learn about self-care, participate in support groups, enjoy community activities, build resiliency, and facilitate further recovery. Through MI-Journey, Valerie was able to take some anger management classes and learned healthy ways to control her anger. One of these coping techniques is to journal her feelings down when they feel overwhelming. She found that newly acquired skill particularly helpful. Valerie said with a great big grin, "I try to stay positive with a smile on my face and look forward to my future, even when it is hard."

Being a part of these organizations created a sense of community and family for Valerie. They gave her jobs and tasks to do within the facilities and gave her fun activities and events in which to participate. Valerie said that the groups have gone to the movies, bowling, the Air Zoo in Kalamazoo, taken classes such as cooking, sewing, and baking, and get to play Bingo.

"I love when we go bowling. Although, I need the bumpers," Valerie chuckled. "I'm not very good...but it sure is fun!" Valerie even got to deliver a speech to others at the State Capitol's "Walk a Mile in my Shoes" rally, which is put on by the Community Mental Health Association of Michigan.

"During my journey, I have realized that helping others who are like me find help actually helps me to feel better," she beamed. This encouragement to others is a big reason why she loves being part of these organizations as much as she does. She can help lead others in classes and workshops and share her story with others. That is Valerie's hope for today, that you will read her testimony and be inspired to find the help that you may need. All you need to do is take that first step, even if it may seem scary. The other side of whatever it is that is swallowing you up is so much brighter, and Valerie wants you to know that you can reach that other side.

Valerie chooses to be the voice for others who have not found theirs yet. When asked if there was one thing that she could tell all the readers, her response was straight to



the point. "Pick up the phone and call for help. No matter what you are going through, mental illness, drugs, alcohol, abuse, just pick up the phone and call anyone." She hopes to inspire all others who think that they cannot overcome whatever it is that they are facing to find the help that they need.

#### Valerie's Help:

**Riverwood Center** 1485 M-139. Benton Harbor. 269-925-0585 www.riverwoodcenter.org

**The Center for Growth and Independence** 1440 E. Empire Ave, Benton Harbor 269-487-9820 www.thecentergi.org

MI-Journey Drop-In Center 1286 Pipestone Rd, Benton Harbor. 269-363-4271 www.mijourneybh.weebly.com



### **RESOURCE DIRECTORY**

### **Addictions**

Alano House Southwest MI 4162 Red Arrow Hwy, Stevensville 269-429-9153

Al-Anon 4162 Red Arrow Hwy, St. Joseph 269-429-3310 www.al-anon.org

Alcoholics Anonymous Southwest MI 269-281-4939 www.southwestmichiganaa.org

Carol's Hope Engagement Center 4032 M-1349, St. Joseph 269-556-1526 www.communityhealingcenter.org

Celebrate Recovery Groups https://locator.crgroups.info

Families Against Narcotics 910 E. John Beers Rd. St. Joseph 269-580-8290 www.familiesagainstnarcotics.org

Gamblers Anonymous 855-222-5542 www.gamblersanonymous.org

> Narcotics Anonymous 818-773-9999 www.na.org

Porn Addiction -Hinman Counseling Services 640 St. Joseph Ave. Berrien Springs 269-558-4002 www.hinmancounselingservices.com

> Riverwood Center 1485 M139, Benton Harbor 115 S St Joseph Ave, Niles 269-925-0585 www.riverwoodcenter.org

Sacred Heart Center 6418 Deans Hills Rd. Berrien Center 269-815-5500 www.sacredheartcenter.com

### **Children's Advocacy**

Boys and Girls Club – Benton Harbor 600 Nate Wells Sr. Dr. Benton Harbor 269-926-8766 www.bgcbh.org

CASA of Southwest Michigan, INC. 38 W. Wall St. Benton Harbor 269-934-3707 www.casaswmi.org

> Children's Advocacy Center of Southwest Michigan 4938 S Niles Rd, St Joseph 269-556-9640 https://swmichigancac.org/

Children's Mobil Crisis Line 269-934-0747

Family Solutions 185 E. Main St. Benton Harbor 269-757-7433 www.bestfamilysolutions.com

Lory's Place 445 Upton Dr. St. Joseph 269-983-2707 www.spectrumhealthlakeland.org/ lorys-place/lory's-place

United Way of Southwest Michigan 2015 Lakeview Ave. St. Joseph. 269-928-1700 www.uwsm.org



For help 24/7, call Riverwood Center at 1-800-336-0341



### Domestic and Sexual Abuse

The Avenue Family Network, INC. 2450 M139 #A. Benton Harbor 269-925-1725 www.theavenue.ngo

Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services 800-828-2023 www.dasasmi.org

National Human Trafficking Hotline 888-373-7888 www.humantraffickinghotline.org

### **Food Assistance**

Fairplain Seventh Day Adventist Church – Food Pantry 140 Seneca Rd., Benton Harbor 269-926-8891

Feeding America West Michigan -Benton Harbor 1488 E. Empire Ave., Benton Harbor 269-927-7195

Harbor Country Emergency Food 301 N. Elm St., Three Oaks 269-756-7444

Living Water Food Pantry at Watervliet Free Methodist 7734 Paw Paw Ave. Watervliet 269-463-8280 www.wfmchurch.org

Oakridge Community Church – Food Pantry 766 Oakridge Rd., St. Joseph 269-429-7141 www.oakridgebc.org/food-pantry

**Our Lady Queen of Peace – Food Pantry** 3903 Lake St., Bridgman 269-465-6252

Road To Life Church – Road To Hope 3800 Niles Rd., St. Joseph 269-429-1106 www.roadtohopefoodpantry.com Soup Kitchen Inc 233 Michigan St., Benton Harbor 269-925-8204 www.soupk.org

**St. Augustine's Church – Food Distribution Center** 1753 Union Ave., Benton Harbor 269-925-2670

One of every six people in the USA have some level of food insufficiency. Sadly, one in five children in the United States suffers from food insufficiency.

### Mental Health and Counseling

Behavioral Health Inpatient Services 1234 W. Napier Ave. St. Joseph Lakeland Medical Center 269-983-8316 www.spectrumhealthlakeland.org/ medical-services/mental-health

Berrien County Suicide Prevention Coalition

4750 Beechnut Dr. St. Joseph 269-588-1133 www.berriencares.org



Bright Hope Counseling Center, PLLC 1101 Broad St. St. Joseph 269-944-7331 www.brighthopecounseling.com

The Center for Growth and Independence 1440 E. Empire Ave. Benton Harbor 269-487-9820 www.thecentergi.org

Family Solutions 185 E. Main St. Suite 502. Benton Harbor 269-757-7433 www.bestfamilysolutions.com

Freedom Counseling Center 1901 Niles Ave. St. Joseph 269-982-7200 www.freedomcounselingusa.com

Hinman Counseling Services 640 St. Joseph Ave. Berrien Springs 269-558-4002 www.hinmancounselingservices.com

Lighthouse Behavioral Health 811 Ship Street Suite 4B. St. Joseph 269-985-3618 www.drhackworth.com

Light House Counseling 521 State St. St. Joseph 269-408-6031 www.lighthousecounselingandmediation.com

MI-JOURNEY Mental Health Recovery Center

1286 Pipestone Rd. Benton Harbor 269-363-4271 www.mijourneybh.weebly.com

Peace of Mind Counseling 3573 Hollywood Rd. St. Joseph 269-428-4789 www.peaceofmindcounselingsj.com

Pine Rest Lakeland Clinic 3950 Hollywood Rd. Suite 200. St. Joseph 616-557-7839 www.pinerest.org/locations/lakeland-st-joseph

Psychiatric & Psychological Specialties 1030 Miners Rd. Suite D. St. Joseph 269-408-1688 www.psychspecialties.com

> Riverwood Center 1485 M139, Benton Harbor 115 S St Joseph Ave, Niles 269-925-0585 www.riverwoodcenter.org

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For help 24/7, call Riverwood Center at 1-800-336-0341

Southwestern Medical Clinic Counseling 5675 Fairview St. Stevensville 269-429-7727 www.spectrumhealthlakeland.org/ southwestern-medical-clinic

Thrive Psychology Group 1030 Miners Rd. Suite A. St. Joseph 269-408-8474 www.thrivepsychgroup.com

Trilogy Counseling Center 3408 Niles Rd. St. Joseph 269-429-3324 www.trilogycounselingmi.com

#### **Senior Care**

Cartel Inns St. Joseph 3905 Lorraine Path. St. Joseph 269-428-1111 www.caretelstjoseph.com

Comfort Keepers Home Care 2800 Niles Rd. St. Joseph 269-390-3311 www.comfortkeepers.com

Confident Care LLC 1008 St. Joseph Dr. St. Joseph 269-235-1839 www.confident-care-llc-home-health-careservice.business.site

Golden Age Manor 4167 N. Roosevelt Rd. Stevensville 269-921-8468 www.golden-shore.com/golden-age-manor

> Home Sweet Home In-Home Care 3904 Stonegate Park. St. Joseph 269-849-9252 www.homesweethomeihc.com

North Berrien Senior Center Inc. 6648 Ryno Rd. Coloma 269-468-3366 www.northberrienseniorcenter.org

Pine Ridge Rehabilitation and Nursing Center 4368 Cleveland Ave. Stevensville 269-983-6501 www.spectrumhealthlakeland.org/ pine-ridge-center Provision Living at St. Joseph 3351 Niles Rd. St. Joseph 269-247-5635 www.provisionliving.com/st-joseph-mi

**Right at Home** 1111 Main St. Suite A. St. Joseph 269-428-9100 www.rightathome.net/southwest-michigan

> Royalton Manor 288 Peace Blvd. St. Joseph 269-556-9050 www.cienahealthcare.com/ locations/royalton-manor/

Serenity Shore Assisted Living Facility

1883 W. Glenlord Rd. Stevensville 269-408-8547 www.serenity-shore.com

Stately Living 2824 S. State St. St. Joseph 269-408-8424 www.statelylivinghome.com

St. Joseph Lincoln Senior Center 3271 Lincoln Ave. St. Joseph 269-429-7768 www.sjlsc.org

West Woods of Bridgman Nursing Center 9935 Red Arrow Hwy. Bridgman 269-465-3017 www.peplinskigroup.com/ locations/west-woods-of-bridgman

> Whitcomb Senior Living Tower 509 Ship St. St. Joseph 269-983-2513 wwwwhitcombretirement.com

> The Willows Assisted Living 3440 Niles Rd. St. Joseph 269-428-0715 www.willowsassistedliving.org

Woodland Terrace of Bridgman 8850 Red Arrow Hwy. Bridgman. 269-465-7600 www.woodlandterracebridgman.care Woodland Terrace of Saint Joseph 168 Peace Blvd. St. Joseph. 269-932-0595 www.woodlandterracestjoseph.care

### **Suicide Prevention**

Berrien County Suicide Prevention Coalition National Hotline 800-273-TALK (8255) 269-588-1133 www.berriencares.org

> Link Crisis Intervention Center 2450 M-139, Benton Harbor 269-927-1422

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline **800-273-8255** www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

### **Temporary Shelter**

Emergency Shelter Services 645 Pipestone St., Benton Harbor 229-277-5055 www.essberrien.org

The Salvation Army 233 Michigan St, Benton Harbor (269) 927-1353 centralusa.salvationarmy.org/bentonharbor

### **Veterans Services**

Benton Harbor VA Clinic 115 W. Main St. Benton Harbor 269-934-9123 www.va.gov

Berrien County Veterans Services 701 Main St. St. Joseph 269-983-7111 ext 8224 www.berriencounty.org/874/Veterans-Services

This list of resources does not reflect an endorsement or recommendation by Riverwood Center and/or MailMax. This compiled list may not be complete.





### **Secondary Traumatic Stress**

taff within a Community Mental Health facility undoubtedly face numerous interactions daily with trauma survivors. It would be hard pressed to imagine that these interactions would not, somehow, leave a long lasting, if not indelible, impression on staff. Perhaps Dr. Naomi Remen summed up the concept of Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) best by stating, "The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet."

Riverwood Center has adopted the stance that Trauma Informed Care is a valuable asset that allows us to best serve those in our community and the staff that serve community members. Understanding and acknowledging the implications that STS can have is incredibly important as STS can impact all aspects of life: emotional, physical, behavioral, professional, cognitive, spiritual and interpersonal.

STS can negatively appear in 4 specific ways: Stress, Vicarious Trauma, Compassion Fatigue, and Burnout.

- 1. Stress is simply the overwhelming response to a situation that a person perceives they cannot handle. There are several ways to deal with the many stressors that come about daily.
- 2. Vicarious Trauma is work related trauma exposure which may create trauma in an individual simply by what they are ex-



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posed to. Compassion fatigue is a result of the ongoing, empathetic response to the pain that others have experienced. Staff can easily, and often do, carry the pain of others with them. Human beings can only take some so much of this before the impact is felt in a variety of areas in one's life.

- 3. Compassion Fatigue has a myriad of symptoms such as ruminating thoughts, emotional hypersensitivity, irritability, and physical reactions such as rapid heartbeat, body pain, among many others. If compassion fatigue is unchecked and not dealt with, it can very easily lead to Burnout.
- 4. Burnout is the response when the demands of the environment are too demanding or stressful. Burnout is real and it is dangerous as it could lead staff towards being more harmful than helpful. Symptoms typically associated with burnout may include lack of motivation, poor work performance, time problems, cynical, and general dissatisfaction with the job.

Inevitably, staff are going to have ongoing exposure to trauma within the workplace. This is the nature of all Community Mental Health Facilities. Thus, the question we need to answer is - What can we do? There are a multitude of things that can be done on both an organizational level and personal level. Organizationally, as an agency we must create strategies to build resiliency such as provide adequate clinical supervision, maintain trauma caseload balance, support workplace self-care groups, include STS training and have ongoing dialogue with staff. Individually, we have to step up and be willing and able to practice resiliency which may include using supervision to process STS, increase awareness of STS, maintain a healthy work/life balance, stay connected, continue to receive more trauma informed care training. The strongest antidote is self-care! This comes in a multitude of forms. Self-care exists when we combine the 3 components that make each

Center MailMax

one of us who we are: Mind, Body and Spirit.

At Riverwood Center, we have embraced the spirit of being a Trauma Informed Agency over the course of the past 5 years. We have done this by acknowledging ongoing trauma in the community, experienced trauma for the individuals we serve, along with the trauma experiences that each staff may bring. Riverwood Center has implemented a variety of things to combat STS. Beginning at orientation, each new employee, regardless of title, completes a trauma orientation which outlines Trauma Informed Care. STS and selfcare. This training has also been added to annual required training as a reminder that we all play a part in Trauma Informed Care and the important role that self-care plays in getting better and being better. Riverwood Center also offers a self-care group that meets monthly called Support Our Self (SOS), which is a process group that offers a safe place to process the challenges that we may face. Riverwood Center offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for all employees that may need help, and all staff have access to the MyStrength app. This app allows daily checkins on a person's mental health and offers daily reminders to live the best life.

Embracing the spirit of STS is an ongoing movement, and a movement that the staff at Riverwood Center continue to encourage by supporting and encouraging one another to be better by doing better.





## We Are Looking For You!



Are you looking for an exciting new opportunity within the Mental Health field? Want to make a difference while working for a great place with excellent benefits? We have a place for you at Riverwood Center.



We are looking for compassionate, driven, and dedicated individuals to come join our team. For more information please view our open positions.

APPLY AT WWW.RIVERWOODCENTER.ORG/EMPLOYMENT

# Stress? Anxiety? Depression?

WE ARE AVAILABLE 24/7! If you need to speak with a mental health professional, please dial **269-925-0585**, or contact us at **1-800-336-0341** 



#### **BENTON HARBOR**

Main Offices: 1485 M139, Benton Harbor, MI 49022 Local Calls: (269) 925-0585 Or: (800) 336-0341

#### **NILES OFFICE**

115 S. St. Joseph Ave., Niles, MI 49120 Local: (269) 684-4270 Or: (888) 686-3670

#### **NORTHSTAR CENTER**

Lakeland Outpatient Center www.northstarcenter.org

## Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic

Open 8:30-5:00 Monday - Friday for Services Open 8:30-7:00 Monday - Thursday for Women's & Family Specialty and Substance Use Services Closed Fridays for Substance Use Services Closed Saturdays and Sunday