

HELP & HOPE

YOUR
MENTAL HEALTH
RESOURCE GUIDE



MailMax
Your Good News Paper

**ADDICTION • ANGER
ANXIETY • CONFUSION
DEPRESSION • GRIEF
HUNGER • MENTAL HEALTH
SUICIDAL THOUGHTS • STRESS**

MAY 2023



Memo from the Publisher

ang it! Last year, MailMax teamed up with Riverwood Center to educate the public on how to help those struggling with mental illness and to provide a list of resources available to those who need help. I launched the *Help & Hope* publication due to my concern about rising suicide rates. Sadly, two additional acquaintances of mine lost loved ones due to death by suicide in recent months.

As a community, we must work together to identify and help people at risk. Many of the most vulnerable live in isolation and do not have a strong social circle to reach out to. It is incumbent upon all of us to look for those who may just need a helping hand.

Please do not skip past this section just because you think you don't need help. Read it

and learn, so that you may be the person who saves another's life.

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*.



Glen Head,
MailMax Publisher

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Riverwood Center proudly supports

Help & Hope



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. That is why we continue to partner with MailMax to publish *Help & Hope* for National Mental Health Month.

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.



Beth Aurand,
LMSW, CAADC
Riverwood Center
Director of Behavioral
Health Services

Mental health first aid

Mental illness is no one's fault. Having a mental health condition doesn't mean that you're broken or that you, or your family, did something "wrong". This was probably the most comforting thing that I learned when mental illness touched my own family. For many people, recovery — including meaningful social lives, school and work — is possible, especially when you start treatment early and play a strong role in your own recovery process.

Mental illness is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling, behavior and mood. Left untreated, these conditions can deeply impact an individual's day-to-day life. If you have, or think you may have, a mental illness, the first thing you must know is that you are not alone. Mental health conditions are far more common than you think. In our society there has been a negative stigma surrounding mental health reducing the likelihood of people seeking appropriate treatment.



- 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year
- 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year
- 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year
- 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24

(This information was acquired from
NAMI – National Alliance on Mental Illness)

Often, families are first responders and can be a person's primary support network, whether they are ill with a medical or mental illness. I became a Mental Health First Aid Instructor because I am passionate about Mental Wellness and Recovery. I want people to know that recovery is possible and that there are resources in our community to help people and families in dealing with mental health. Mental Health First Aid teaches about recovery and resiliency – the belief that individuals experiencing these challenges can and do get better! Just as CPR helps you assist an individual having a heart attack, Mental Health First Aid helps you assist someone experiencing a mental health or substance use-related crisis. In the Mental Health First Aid course, you learn risk factors and warning signs for mental health and addiction concerns, strategies for how to help someone in both crisis and non-crisis situations, and where to turn for help.

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. Riverwood Center is available 24 hours a day and can be reached at (269) 925-0585 or (800) 336-0341. Additionally, 988 a three-digit number for mental health crisis and suicide prevention services is available 24/7 and can be reached by simply calling or texting "988".



Leanne Adams
Riverwood Center
Customer Service
Representative

May is

National

Mental Health

Month



Riverwood Center MailMax

About Riverwood Center

Riverwood 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 option to deliver services in a way that gives you or your loved one more choice and control over your services.

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.

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.

Additional Riverwood Center services

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.

Screaming success

“I was looking up at rock bottom. That is how low I had become on that day.”

That is how John Thomas Kuczmarski, also known as “Kooz,” described his condition on June 28th, 2013, nearly ten years ago. It was the pivotal moment in his life. He was found screaming wildly, chaotically, and viciously in a forest bog in Buchanan.

“It’s not a proud moment in my life. It’s obviously an embarrassing, chaotic, scary moment, and memory. All three forms of emergency response were there. There was an ambulance with paramedics. There were police officers, and there was even a fire truck with firemen. Although I didn’t want to be found, my screams were so loud that a disturbance was reported out in the woods. It was mentally the lowest day of my life. It was an unpleasant day to put it mildly.”

Flash forward 10 years later, and John is living in a high-rise apartment overlooking Lake Michigan and working as a Certified Peer Support Specialist.

“I’ve done a lot of work to get to where I am now in just the past 10 years. I realized that I was lower than rock bottom and I had to get well.”

John’s mental challenges began with a minor manic episode at age 16. Over time, he found himself trying to manage his mental disorder on his own. He was dealing with paranoia and isolation as he holed-up in a cottage from 2011 to 2013. Everything unraveled and manifested in a full-blown manic episode that day in the bog.

“That day is so important because you can’t get more of an extreme wake up. It was like

‘Hey, you need treatment now!’ It wasn’t a nice little letter saying, ‘You needed help.’ It was police, ambulance and firemen finding me in a bog screaming uncontrollably.”

John was hospitalized that day. He was diagnosed with a disorder that causes disorganized thinking, as well as a bipolar mood disorder. John has been back to the hospital voluntarily and involuntarily since then.

From there, John stayed in all three different types of adult foster care (AFC). There’s semi-independent, normal adult foster care, and the strictest, when you really need structure, is a residential treatment center.

“Spending time at the assisted living facilities really put me in the driver’s seat of my life. That’s when I started getting my life back together.”

John started unofficially doing peer support work, without knowing what it was, at the various AFC residences. As he grew mentally more stable, he realized he was feeling fulfillment by trying to encourage others in these facilities. Eventually, John was certified through the State of Michigan as a Peer Support Specialist, kind of like a Peer Support Coach. He now works professionally at MI-JOURNEY in Benton Harbor. The MI-JOURNEY website describes it as “a safe, non-judgmental place for individuals who have a mental health diagnosis 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.”

“In my profession, I provide hope, encouragement, acceptance, guidance, and understanding to members of the mental health community. It could be just giving some inspiration, helping them fill out a form to

get food stamps, or helping them get housing. Often, it’s just talking...talking through a problem with them. Often, I see their eyes go “WHOA!” when I’ve given people an answer that they’ve been seeking for years. Just being able to provide that answer to a person is incredibly empowering, inspiring, uplifting, fun, and rewarding. I feel like I’m shaking hands with paradise when I go to my job at MI-JOURNEY and know that I’m helping a person.”

There were many that helped John on his success journey. Corewell Health-Lakeland was where he was hospitalized and received essential critical care. Riverwood Center provided him with a large portion of the care he needed. He utilized services from Riverwood’s ACT team (Assertive Community Treatment), which is a team approach to help adults in the community who are having trouble living independently due to ongoing symptoms of their mental illness.

“I’ve graduated from the ACT team and am now fully independent...things are good, and I am thankful. I’ve sort of experienced it all regarding mental health care. My personal path is now an invaluable tool as a Peer Support Specialist because I’ve been there. I know what it is like. I empathize with them at every level, wherever they’re at in their journey. Empathy is highly accessible to me.”

John believes that one cannot obtain meaningful fulfillment, success and happiness solely from medicine (a pill) but it can offer stability. Once a person is mentally stable, the sky is the limit. You can tackle your mental health challenge and thrive.

“The richest man in the world right now is Elon Musk. That’s a fact. It’s also a fact that he’s a member of the mental health community. He was diagnosed with high functioning Asperger’s, which is an intellectual disability

John Thomas Kuczmariski's story of Help & Hope

in the category of mental health challenge. He is a perfect example. If you have a mental health problem, you can still impact the world. You can still exceed these great, great accomplishments.”

John has not had symptoms of disorganized thinking in quite some time, but still takes medication and sees a therapist to manage his bipolar disorder.

Therapy was another cornerstone in building and continuing John's success. He logged many hours of one-on-one sessions. John felt that it was important to find a therapist with whom he connects. Sometimes one therapist is a better fit than another but has little to do with the therapist's skill or capabilities.

Finally, three resources John has utilized and will continue to utilize for perpetuating stability are daily exercise for 20-30 minutes every day, healthy communication with

family and friends, and his commitment to practicing the craft of kindness - kindness to oneself and to others. Respectively, those resources keep the body and mind healthy, your connections strong, and your heart warm.

Through this column and John sharing his private struggles, he hopes to encourage people who are struggling to think clearly, or have frequent mood swings, or are trapped in depression to reach out for help. One can manage their mental health without reaching the extreme depths in which John found himself.

“There are certainly people who have had it worse than me, but I am incredibly proud of the progress that I have made since that pivotal day. The fulfillment I now have helping others has made me feel on top of the world.”



John Thomas "Kooz" Kuczmariski,
CPSS, CPC, B.A.



1. Hiding your substance use

Drinking secretly 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.

Community mental health history and Riverwood Center



Ric Compton
CEO, Riverwood Center

“I am proposing a new approach to mental illness and to mental retardation....When carried out, reliance on the cold mercy of custodial isolation will be supplanted by the open warmth of community concern and capability. Emphasis on prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation will be substituted for a desultory interest in confining patients in an institution to wither away.” Those words were spoken by President John F. Kennedy in 1963 to Congress on Mental Illness and Mental Retardation and led to a renewed responsibility for the care of our brothers and sisters experiencing mental illness and who have Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in community-based care. President Kennedy also proposed steps to improve care in State Institutions, increase training for mental health professionals, and increase research on mental illness. Moreover – the term “mentally retarded” is no longer used, another example of how the environment has changed. The President Kennedy also proposed increased prevention, community care centers and further research into the causes and treatment of People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. The importance of mental health treatment and recovery is as important today as it was when President Kennedy spoke!

The past 60 years have seen many advancements in the care of people with mental illness, due in part to the signing of the Community Mental Health Act of 1963 by

President Kennedy. By the 1970s, the deinstitutionalization philosophy did result in the downsizing of large state hospitals and the transfer of people with mental illness to group homes, nursing homes and Community Mental Health centers for outpatient care. Riverwood Center (Berrien Mental Health Authority) was established in July of 1975 by the Berrien County Commissioners as the Community Mental Health Center in Berrien County. Riverwood Center currently provides services to People with Serious Mental Illness, Children with Serious Emotional Disturbance, People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and People with Substance Use Disorders. Riverwood Center recently received a three-year certification (Highest Honor) from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation or (CARF) for the clinical and administrative services. Last year, Riverwood Center provided services to over 5,000 unique consumers through over 20 evidence-based practices. Services at Riverwood Center have helped reduce the number of monthly Berrien County Residents in State Psychiatric Hospitals from over 200 in the 1980's to currently less than 10 individuals. Plus Additionally, Riverwood Center's Children's programs of Home-based, Multisystemic Therapy, and Function Family Therapy have drastically reduced the number of Berrien County youth residential placements over the past two decades.

During the 1980s and 1990s the evidence-based practice movement arose from effectiveness research and the evidence-based medications that helped people find better outcomes – reduced symptoms and fewer adverse side-effects from their medications. The recovery movement also sprang

from the challenges of the mental health system itself. Users of the Mental Health System have argued that some goals of the mental health system do not correspond to their aspirations for “recovery” – a concept defined by each individual but often includes opportunities for work, education, independent living, friendships, and community participation. Users or consumers of Mental Health Care have rightfully argued for meaningful roles in their care decisions and the elimination of coercion in the treatment plan and course of care. The recovery movement has influenced the treatment by Community Mental Health Professionals and has led to improvements in philosophy and mission but still needs more work in implementation across the mental health system.

During the 2000's Community Mental Health care in the United States has been dominated by attempts to control costs through the managed care system. However, more recently parity legislation and healthcare reform legislation have recognized the importance of mental healthcare in the overall health of an individual. The recent pandemic has placed a greater emphasis on Mental Health care for all. The importance of Community Mental Health has never been more important than it is today. Simply put – you cannot have good health without good mental health!



Self-Care: What is it and why is it important?

The term Self-Care is a widely used term, however it is often misunderstood. Self-Care can be a challenging concept to grasp and even more challenging to practice. The starting point of Self-Care is to be mindful. Mindful is simply being present in the moment- aware with all senses. Overall, self-care is a general way one prioritizes their well-being to live a healthy and balanced life.

It has been clinically proven that the routine practice of self-care has many benefits such as: reduce anxiety and depression, reduce stress, improvement concentration and performance, minimize frustration and anger, improvement in energy and happiness. In order to live a healthy and balanced life-one full of self-care, we have to go deeper and break self-care into 3 parts: physical (body), mental (mind) emotional (soul). Physical self-care includes improving physical health with such things as: eating healthy, exercising, regular medical checkup and getting proper rest. Mental self-care includes activities that will reduce stress levels and declutter the mind such as unplugging from technology, reading, taking a walk. This part of self-care can be a struggle due to life being busy. There is not wrong way to take care of the mental part

or self-care, as long as you are doing something that makes you feel relaxed. Emotional self-care is caring for your emotional health in order to attain emotional well-being. The aim of this is to get in touch and connect with your emotions. This can be done through meditation, connecting with others, practicing gratitude and creating positive Mantra's for yourself. The goals is work on all three of these parts while practicing self-care in order to have balance. Starting and maintaining a routine self-care practice can offer challenges when life gets busy. However, the benefits of taking a few minutes a day to focus on yourself has great benefit. Here are 10 ways you can begin to practice self-care.

1. Stay active. This may be as simple as parking far way when you go to the store.
2. Do something that helps you relax. (watching the sunset, etc.)
3. "Take 10 to be Zen." Stop within your day and take 10 mins to just be present in the moment. This may include deep breathing, walking or sitting outside and using your senses (feel the sun or breeze on your face, smell in the air, etc.) or using a meditation app
4. Connect with others: Take time to chat with friends

5. Take a break from technology and social media. Resting your brain from the information of technology can allow the brain to slow down.

6. Listen or read something that brings you joy
7. Declutter your spaces- having a space around your that is clean and clear can help your mental status be clean and clear. (Keep desk clear, keep car clean and tidy, etc.)
8. Surround yourself in positivity and things that are uplifting
9. Do something you enjoy each day. (crafts, gardening, baking, etc.)
10. Allow yourself to feel what you feel in the moment without stuffing or ignoring.

As Anne Lamott said "Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you." There are incredible benefits to adding self-care to your daily routine! The great thing is, that there truly is no right or wrong way to practice self-care, so long as we are practicing self-care by being present in the moment, balancing our lives by including the 3 parts: our body, mind and soul.



Michelle Olson,
LMSW, LCSW, LCAC, CADACII
Practice Manager, Niles



Disabled and determined

Help and hope is needed by everyone at some point or another. While Riverwood Center is often only thought of as helping those with mental challenges, it does so much more. Such is the case with Katie Frayer, an Engineer at Whirlpool.

Katie was born with a congenital birth defect called Arthrogryposis which basically means that her joints didn't form properly. This leaves her with very limited motion, and it is very difficult to build muscle.

"I guess I never really learned to live with it because it's just always been how it is," Katie chuckled. "I was just joking with my family the other day because this just seems so normal to me. I was talking to someone and they said they had never been in a hospital before and that just seems so crazy to me. X-rays are like an every-three-month thing for me."

Indeed, Katie has been in and out of hospitals and doctors' offices her whole life. She had her first surgery in kindergarten and her most recent surgery was her freshman year of high school. But that didn't stop her from graduating from Michigan State University and last year obtaining her master's degree from Purdue University in a one-year accelerated program.

Katie moved to Southwest Michigan after she graduated from MSU to work at Whirlpool.

Katie thought, "How am I going to make this work? I require help 24 hours a day, so paying for that, even with a good engineer's salary, is not going to work."

After talking to some people at work and getting some suggestions of different agencies in the area, she reached out to Riverwood Center first.

"I went over there and from the first time I talked to Riverwood, all the way through,

they've been nothing but helpful every step of the way," she recalled.

Buffy DeLong, Katie's Case Manager at Riverwood explained that Katie hires people to be with her all the time.

"This is known as Self-Directed Services, where you can hire your own staff," Buffy shared. "Katie is her own guardian, so she can sign off on time sheets and other needed forms. She is very resourceful, and she has found all of her staff on her own that she has chosen to hire."

Riverwood Center connected Katie with a fiscal intermediary who basically does the payroll taxes, issues paychecks, and makes sure that everyone is current on their training. All of her staff has to have several different segments of training each year; CPR, recipient rights, compliance, and more. Basically, Katie is considered the employer and her caregivers are employees.

Buffy continued, "As her Case Manager, I am the one to put in goals and objectives that Katie has agreed to that her staff will help her with. Then I request the authorization for Medicaid to cover the expense for those services."

"I know I have big goals... I want to do things, but how do we make this happen?"

"I've had anywhere from like 4 to 13 care providers per week, so it's a challenge. Figuring out my schedule and my staff and all the different agencies is like a giant puzzle," Katie beamed. "I know I have big goals...I want to do things, but how do we make this happen? And luckily when I needed help, I've been able to find it or find people to help me find the help I need."

One of Katie's caregivers is Ashley Hmurovich. She is attending college full-time at Southwestern Michigan College to become a Registered Nurse. When her schedule allows, she works for Katie taking care of her immediate needs. When she is at Katie's home, she tries to treat it like it is her own home, looking for little things here and there that may need to be done. There is a big need for caregivers like Ashley in this area.

Katie has a great sense of humor, but when she speaks of "big goals" she is not joking around.

"From the time I was little, I always liked to tinker with things. I had to adapt the world to me, and I got tired of doing that and I thought, 'You know, not all of my friends can do that.' So, I wanted to actually make the adaptations that I needed available for everyone and try to make the world a little more accessible," Katie stated. "At Whirlpool I get the opportunity to help design appliances with that perspective in mind."

Through Whirlpool, Katie is part of an employee resource group known as AVID (Awareness of Visible and Invisible Disabilities). She says that this aspect of her job is where her passions can be found.

Katie is not only a dynamic player in the corporate world, but she also takes her ambitions to the hockey rink. That's right...hockey.

Katie's face lit up, "I've been playing wheelchair hockey for 13 years now. I grew up playing in the driveway and then in junior high, I started going from Lansing down to Detroit to play in a league. Right after I graduated from high school, I played on a team from Texas for the US Championship and then I made the Michigan team. I've been really involved in organizing hockey over in Detroit and I thought 'Why not here?'"

Katie Frayer's story of Help & Hope

Last summer, with Katie leading the way, six wheelchair hockey clinics were held at John and Dede Howard Ice Arena. She got all the equipment donated so that people could come out at no cost to them. She is in the process of planning four additional clinics this summer.

“Hockey is really cool because anyone, from someone in a manual chair to someone who can only drive their chair with their head or can't hold a hockey stick can play. We can attach the stick to their chair, and everyone can play together competitively. It's a lot of fun. For many it is the first sport that they can play competitively. Adaptive sports are a fun way for people with disabilities to connect outside of a doctor's office waiting room,” Katie elaborated.

According to Katie, 9.7% of Berrien County's population under 65 is disabled, which is higher than the national average. But how often do you see a group of people with disabilities together? Giving people a chance to connect with other people who are like them is important, and it helps people feel less isolated. Connecting people with disabilities helps people feel more normal because they know they're not alone.

Katie seldom turns down an opportunity to share her amazing story in public, especially at schools. She feels as though by sharing she can help to break down a lot of the social barriers that still exist today. People with disabilities can do a lot if given the opportunity and Katie's the perfect example.



Katie Frayer is front and center with Ashley Hmurovich (L) and Buffy DeLong (R)

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The helped becomes the helper

When Wanishea Marlowe's son was six years old, she started noticing a lot of behavior issues. It began with just mood swings and him wanting to be alone.

"He would be laughing one minute, then angry or sad, then back to happy. His mood would change like the weather. At first, I figured he was just going through a phase, but things got worse to the point that I knew there was something not quite right. No mother wants to admit that about one of her kids, so I kind of just ignored it because I didn't know what to do about it and hoped he would just outgrow it."

At age nine, Wanishea's son was diagnosed with ADHD and a bipolar disorder. That was the moment she conceded that her son needed help. He began to see Dr. Christensen, a psychiatrist at Riverwood Center, and some medications were prescribed to help.

As her son grew older, however, the symptoms worsened.

"He started to lash out a little more... started getting in trouble at school and a 504 Plan was put in place for him."

A 504 Plan is a formal plan for how a school will provide support and remove barriers for a student whose disability interferes with the child's ability to learn in a traditional classroom. In his case, it meant going to a different school than his siblings.

"This was difficult for me to accept...that my son needed special schooling and was not going to go to the same school as my other kids. I thought I was doing the right thing by sending him to a normal school, but he was not doing well there. He was quiet and stand-offish which made other kids pick on him. This treatment made his behavior worse."

The mood swings and aggression only intensified, and charges were brought against him for assault and battery based on an incident at the new school.

"I didn't know what to do. All these things were happening with my son, and I felt like I couldn't even breath. I didn't have anyone to talk to. I was trying everything in my power to keep it together myself and trying to figure out how to best help my son. I was struggling myself because I couldn't explain to others what was going on, and I didn't want my son to see how I wasn't coping with his situation. I was just trying to hide it. So, I ended up sheltering myself and keeping away from people. So many people said so many hurtful things about my son. One teacher even said that a diploma for my son was not likely. I didn't know how to respond. I wanted to get angry, but mostly I was just hurt and felt hopeless to be able to help my child."

**"I didn't know what to do.
All these things were
happening with my son,
and I felt like I couldn't
even breath."**

The charges were eventually dismissed, but her son had to attend school at the courthouse. This made Wanishea feel like they were treating her son as a criminal instead of someone in need of help due to a disorder. She had to quit her job to be able to get the kids off to two different schools and be at home when her son was home because nobody wanted to watch him.

Eventually, her son was transferred to Lighthouse Education Center where he started to show some improvements. Lighthouse Education Center provides special education

programs for students with severe emotional impairments and types of autism. Over time, the cycle repeated and Wanishea's son began to become difficult at school again. This time, the disturbing behavior was happening at home as well, becoming aggressive with his siblings. Wanishea ended up signing an Incurability Petition with the court. This is when a juvenile under the age of 17 repeatedly disobeys the reasonable and lawful commands of parents or guardians, and the family has exhausted all non-court options. Through the Incurability Petition, he was put on probation with specific guidelines and rules to follow. Her son violated terms of his probation and was sent to Boys Town for a residential program to live and continue school. Within two months, however, he got into a fight and was again charged with assault and battery. He was sent back to Berrien County Juvenile Center to serve some time.

He was still required to complete a residential program, so he was sent to Wolverine Work and Learn in Vassar, Michigan. This was a turn in the right direction.

"My son was able to complete the required residential program and actually graduated a year early. He is now 18 years old, stays current with his medications and continues therapy at Riverwood. He has his own apartment and continues to head in the right direction. He now acknowledges that he has a disorder and knows when to reach out for help or needs adjustments in his medications. The greatest mom moment for me was when he called to tell me sorry and to ask for forgiveness."

Her son's long road to stability began at Riverwood Center. The staff helped Wanishea understand her son's diagnosis, and how to respond and handle him. It was there that the first seeds of hope were sown.

Wanishea Marlowe's story of Help & Hope

Wanishea was finally able to go back to work and was working as a Certified Nurses Aid at Spectrum Health Lakeland, now Corewell Health Lakeland. She enjoyed her six-year stint at the hospital, but it never felt like it was her calling.

“I began praying that God would provide a different career where I could have passion for what I was doing and that is when I learned of an opening at Riverwood. I read the job description and thought that it sounded like I’d be helping people that are going through what I went through. I decided to apply online. Within five minutes after I hit ‘send’ my phone rang! In the interview, I told them that I was a former client and shared how they had helped me. Within a few weeks, I was working side by side with the same people who helped my son and me.”

Wanishea works in Riverwood Services’ Home Base Department. The Home Base Department deals with helping families who have children with behavioral challenges, forms of autism, or are mentally challenged.

“I work primarily with parents by offering them support and help when they feel overwhelmed and stressed. I know what they are going through because I lived through it. I try to listen to them and then offer encouragement and solutions for whatever challenge the parents are currently facing. This is my passion. I feel good about what I do...helping people and being there for them. I try to be the person that I didn’t have in my circle when I was going through my son’s difficulties. I felt alone, and I don’t want any family that I work with to feel alone and helpless. I love what I do.”

Her advice for parents is to pay close attention to your children, their behavior, and how they interact with others. It is important to reach out for help as soon as you suspect that your child may be struggling behaviorally, emotionally, or mentally. Seeking help is not a sign of weakness or failure as parent but is a sign that you really love your child and want the best for them.



Wanishea Marlowe
CNA, Riverwood Center

RESOURCE DIRECTORY

ADDICTIONS

Alano House/Al-Anon

4162 Red Arrow Hwy, Stevensville
(269) 428-3310

Alcoholics Anonymous Southwest MI

(269) 281-4939
www.southwestmichiganaa.org

Carol's Hope Engagement Center

4032 M-1349, St. Joseph, MI.
(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

Harbor Town Treatment Center

1022 E Main St, Benton Harbor
(269) 926-0015

Nairad Health

3134 Niles Rd, St. Joseph
(269) 408-8235

Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center

641 Deans Hill Rd, Berrien Center
(269) 815-5500

ANGER MANAGEMENT

Men in Crisis

P.O. 105, Baroda
(269) 422-2120

BENEFITS COUNSELING

Disability Network

(269) 345-1516

CHILDREN/ADOLESCENTS

Boys and Girls Club

600 Nate Wells Sr Dr, Benton Harbor
(269) 926-8766
www.bgcbh.org

RESOURCE DIRECTORY

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

YMCA - Benton Harbor/St. Joseph

3665 Hollywood Rd, St. Joseph
(269) 429-9727
www.bhsjymca.org

YMCA - Niles

905 N Front St , Niles
(269) 683-1552

COMMUNITY LIVING SUPPORTS

The Center for Growth and Independence

1440 E Empire Ave, Benton Harbor
(269) 487-9820

Living Alternatives for the Developmentally Disabled (LADD)

300 Whitney St, Dowagiac
(269) 782-0654
www.laddinc.net

Help At Home

1221 S Eleventh St, Niles
(269) 684-7380

DAY PROGRAM SERVICE

The Avenue

2450 S M139, Benton Harbor
(269) 925-1725
www.theavenue.ngo

DENTAL (MEDICAID)

Niles Community Health Center Dental

122 Grant St, Niles
(269) 262-4364

InterCare

800 M139, Benton Harbor
(269) 927-5300

Brite Dental

401 Ferry St, Berrien Springs
(269) 471-7970

Harbor Dental

143 E Main St, Benton Harbor
(269) 927-1313

DIVORCE SUPPORT

Cooperative Parenting and Divorce Berrien County Council for Children

4938 Niles Rd, St. Joseph
(269) 556-9640

Citizens Mediation Service, Inc.

811 Ship St., #302, St. Joseph
(269) 982-7898

Friend of the Court

(269) 983-7111 ext. 8332

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Avenue Family Network, INC.

2450 M139 #A. Benton Harbor
269-925-1725
www.theavenue.ngo

Battered Women's Justice Project, Civil and Criminal Justice Resource

(800) 903-0111

Cora Lamping Center

24 Hour Domestic Violence Hotline
(269) 925-9500

24 Hour Sexual Assault Hotline

(855) 779-6495

Department of Human Services, Adult Services

401 Eighth St, Benton Harbor
(269) 934-2000
Hotline: (269) 934-2300

Domestic Assault Shelter Coalition

PO Box 402, Three Rivers
(269) 273-6154
Hotline: (800) 828-2023
www.dasasmi.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline

Hotline: (800) 799-7233
www.ndvh.org

ELDERLY

Area on Agency on Aging

2900 Lakeview Ave, St. Joseph
(269) 983-0177

Senior Center

3271 Lincoln Ave, St. Joseph
(269) 429-7768

Senior Nutrition Services

1708 Colfax Ave, Benton Harbor
(269) 925-0137
www.snsmeals.org

Legal Hotline for Michigan Seniors

221 North Pine, Lansing
(517) 372-5959
Hotline: (800) 347-5297
www.michbar.org

EMPLOYMENT

The Center for Growth and Independence

1400 E Empire Ave, Benton Harbor
(269) 487-9820
<http://gatewayviro.com>

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) Michigan Department of Career Development

499 West Main, Benton Harbor
(269) 926-6168

Michigan Works

499 W Main St, Benton Harbor
(269) 927-1064
www.miworks.org

FOOD/FURNITURE/CLOTHES

211 Help line

www.211.org

Fairplain Seventh Day Adventist Church Food Pantry

140 Seneca Rd., Benton Harbor
(269) 926-8891

Feeding America West Michigan

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

Neighbor to Neighbor

9147 US 31, Berrien Springs
(269) 471-7411
www.NeighborToNeighborOnline.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 Hope at Victory Life Church

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

Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency

185 E Main St, Ste 200, Benton Harbor
(269) 925-9077

RESOURCE DIRECTORY

Women, Infant, and Children (WIC)
Berrien County Health Department
2149 E Napier Ave, Benton Harbor
(269) 926-7121

GED/LITERACY

Andrew's University GED Counseling and Testing Center
123 Bell Hall, N US-31, Berrien Springs
(269) 471-3470

Benton Harbor Street Ministries
(269) 925-4333

GED-ON-LINE
www.GEDonline.org

Michigan Works
Benton Harbor Service Center
499 W Main St Benton Harbor

GRIEF

Lory's Place, Edgewater Center
445 Upton Dr, Ste 9, St. Joseph
(269) 983-2707
www.lorysplace.org

GUARDIANSHIP

Guardianship & Alternatives
(269) 782-2953

Michiana Guardianship
(269) 683-0408

West Michigan Guardianship
(269) 934-9333

HOMELESS

The Ark Community Services
990 W Kilgore Rd, Kalamazoo
(800) 873-TEEN
www.arkforyouth.org

Emergency Shelter
645 Pipestone, Benton Harbor
(269) 925-1131

Salvation Army
232 Michigan St, Benton Harbor
(269) 927-1353

HOUSING

Community Management Associates
(877) 796-8883

MSHDA Housing Locator
<http://www.michigan.gov/mshda>

Section 8 Housing
Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency
185 E Main St, Ste. 200, Benton Harbor
(269) 925-9077

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
(269) 408-9156
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

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

PREGNANCY

Birthright
2700 Niles Ave, St. Joseph
(269) 983-0700

Women's Care Center
621 E Main St, Niles
(269) 684-4040

SEXUAL ABUSE

Children's Advocacy Center
4938 S Niles Rd, St. Joseph
(269) 556-9640

National Sexual Assault Hotline
(800) 656-HOPE

SUICIDE PREVENTION

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
Dial 988 24/7

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

TRANSPORTATION

Dial-A-Ride
(269) 927-4461

Berrien Bus
(269) 471-1100

VETERANS SERVICES

Benton Harbor VA Clinic
1275 Mall Dr, Benton Harbor
(269) 934-9123
www.va.gov

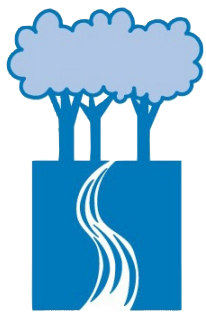
Berrien County Veterans Services
701 Main St. St. Joseph
(269) 983-7111 ext 8224
www.berriencounty.org/874/Veterans-Services

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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**



Riverwood Center

**Certified Community
Behavioral Health Clinic**

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

