MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH!

Mental Health Awareness month has been observed in the United States since 1949. Here at Behavioral Health Services, we strive to provide an array of services, supports, and prevention activities to build awareness of and support for mental health needs and challenges in our community. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the mental health of people of all ages. We encourage you to check out the 2021 Mental Health Toolkit from Mental Health America available online: https://www.mhanational.org/mental-health-month

Lake County, California and US Suicide Rates per 100,000 2018 - 2020

![Graph showing suicide rates per 100,000 for Lake County, California, and USA from 2018 to 2020.

NATIONAL PREVENTION WEEK: MAY 9TH TO 15TH

During the week of the 9th to the 15th, LCBHS will join communities across the country in celebrating the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) National Prevention Week (NPW) 2021 to increase public awareness of, and action around, mental health and substance use disorders. Be on the lookout for information on virtual events and activities taking place this week and check out the LCBHS website! http://www.lakecountyca.gov/Page776.aspx

Did You Know?

- On average, Americans wait about 11 years before getting help for mental health issues.
- In June 2020, 40% of U.S. adults reported struggling with mental health and/or substance abuse issues.
Located in Clearlake Oaks, the Big Oak Center (BOC) serves as a center of learning and resource for self-improvement as well as a link to behavioral health services for people in Lake County. The BOC focuses on outreach, engagement, and services to unhoused people and provides a variety of groups and other supportive or wellness activities throughout the month, most of which have gone virtual since COVID-19. All Centers are funded through the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) was passed by California voters in 2004 as Proposition 63. You can learn more about MHSA and how Lake County Behavioral Health leverages these funds based on input from the community here: Lake County Behavioral Health Services MHSA webpage.

Located in Lakeport, the Circle of Native Minds (CNM) provides culturally-relevant, wellness-oriented services with a focus on the Native American communities of Lake County. All members of the community are welcome at the center. The CNM provides outreach and engagement to local tribal communities, training for suicide prevention, and a community meeting place that includes a tribal history and culture library. The CNM offers several talking circles monthly, as well as traditional workshops and trainings. The staff at CNM provide a welcoming, culturally-sensitive environment, allowing visitors an opportunity to connect with their elders and begin the road to recovery. The CNM is offering groups online - check out their Facebook page. From July 2019 to June 2020, CNM served 189 unique visitors a total of 7,868 times!
La Voz de la Esperanza (The Voice of Hope), located in Clearlake, provides culturally-relevant and wellness-oriented services with a focus on the Latino communities of Lake County. All members of the community are welcome at the Center. Staff at La Voz link visitors to community resources and supports or provide informal, community-based supports. La Voz offers English classes, Latina support groups, mental health support groups, and youth groups. La Voz staff help break down the language barrier that often prevents people from seeking help and provides referrals to behavioral health services when appropriate or requested. From July 2019 to June 2020, La Voz served 648 unique visitors a total of 46,848 times! Visit them on Facebook!

The Family Support Center (FSC) is the newest center, having opened in 2019. Located in Middletown, the FSC provides support and resources to families in Lake County. The FSC boasts a clothing closet and has monthly activities for caregivers and kids alike. Check out the FSC’s Facebook page for more information about upcoming events and available resources. From July 2019 to June 2020 the FSC served 63 unique visitors and is scaling up to provide more services this year.

Located in Lakeport right on Main Street, The Harbor is a wellness center for Transitional Age Youth (15-24 year olds) that provides outreach, engagement, and support from peers. The Harbor provides daily activities, support around life skills, and homework help. The Harbor is a hub for information, resources, and support for the youth of Lake County and is operated in partnership with Redwood Community Services. Check out The Harbor’s Facebook page to learn more about what they have going on! From July ‘19 to June ‘20 The Harbor provided 13,170 services, had 1,278 visits, and served 174 unique visitors!
MAKING A DIFFERENCE ONE PERSON AT A TIME...

At the Family Support Center in Middletown staff are privileged and proud to support families in Lake County. The clothing closet was initiated in November 2020 and has generated a lot of community support. Melissa Farrell, lead staff and Parent Partner at the Center reports, “We were getting so many donations and most of it was brand-new clothing!” This generous outpouring from the community was a gift to struggling families, especially those trying to make ends meet in the wake of COVID-19. Melissa recalls a mother coming in to utilize the clothing closet, “She told me she lost her job due to COVID-19 and things had been a little hard. This mother was able to fill two large garbage bags full of mostly new clothes for her family. She was also able to find some Christmas gifts for her children.” Down the road at the Big Oak Center, staff work diligently and tirelessly to continue to support food giveaways that take place monthly. Staff understand that our community needed this support more than ever during COVID-19. They also found safe ways to continue to host the shower trailer in partnership with Adventist Health. Over at The Harbor on Main, staff assisted several young mothers find clothing and other supplies for their newborns. Staff at the Harbor also supported three youth with creating a resume that best portrayed their skills and qualities as part of job development. The Harbor also held four financial literacy classes for young people and helped two youth successfully file their taxes and apply for housing. Together, these programs improve the lives and wellbeing of hundreds of Lake County residents.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am so grateful and excited to share with you the amazing work we do here at Lake County Behavioral Health Services! I look forward to sharing more about the vast array of programs and services we offer in future editions of this newsletter. I hope you are able to join in some of the activities we have planned for Mental Health Awareness Month and National Prevention Week.

As the graphic on page one illustrates, Lake County has, historically, experienced higher suicide rates than the rest of California and the nation. In the most recent Community Health Needs Assessment, substance misuse treatment and prevention as well as mental health and homelessness were identified as top areas of need. We are not taking this call to action lightly and understand the critical impact behavioral health has on our community’s wellbeing. I encourage you to check out the resources below. Behavioral Health Services is the lead administrative entity for the Lake County Continuum of Care, which focuses on serving unhoused people and developing housing resources in Lake County. Below you will also find a link to an incredibly comprehensive resource guide that was developed by the Health Leadership Network in partnership with many other community agencies. Please, if you or someone you care about are in need of support, reach out. There is help and there is hope.

Improving the quality of life for the people of Lake County experiencing mental illness or substance use disorders by offering recovery-oriented services.