

Community Support Journal

Montgomery County Community Support Program Committee *Newsletter*

August 2024

Volume 8



CSP Logo designed by Chris Ford

Montgomery County Announces \$18 Million Investment in Behavioral Health Crisis Center

From: Montco Press Release

July 22, 2024 - Today, the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners formally announced a \$18 million investment in an Emergency Behavioral Health Crisis Center. This new center will provide Montgomery County residents with the critical support, crisis intervention, and stabilization services needed during mental health emergencies.



"The launch of the Emergency Behavioral Health Crisis Center marks a significant step forward in Montgomery County's commitment to serving our most vulnerable residents in their most vulnerable moments," said **Jamila H. Winder, Chair of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners**. "The investment in this crisis center means that, once the center is operational, anyone in the County can walk in and receive comprehensive mental health support, no questions asked. By offering 24/7 access to crisis intervention and stabilization services, we are ensuring that residents receive the help they need, when they need it most."

The center, which aims to be operational in the fall of 2025, will offer immediate help in a safe environment for those experiencing behavioral health emergencies, including mental health issues and substance use disorders. The center will serve children, adolescents, young adults, adults and seniors, and receive those who walk-in, are referred by the mobile crisis team, or dropped off by ambulance, fire, and police.

"Addressing the mental health crisis is a top priority for this administration, so I am proud that we are leading the way with this bold investment in emergency mental health services," said **Neil Makhija, Montgomery County Commissioner**. "Once open, this center will be a best practice standard for care and intervention. Our goal is to create a coordinated system of care that supports the whole community and becomes a model for others in the region to follow."

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The Ferns Peer-Run Respite is Open

By: Kathie Mitchell, CSJ Editor

After many years of hard work and planning, The Ferns Peer-Run Respite is open.

"I'm happy to announce the opening of The Ferns Peer-Run Respite, and have been honored to be part of a group of people working over the past 7 years to help make peer-run respite a reality in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania," said Kathy Laws, HopeWorx Board Member.

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Laws, who serves on the The Ferns Peer-Run Respite Council, said The Ferns Peer-Run Respite is a non-clinical mental health resource in Montgomery County, PA.

“We aim to be a crisis alternative resource for any individual experiencing emotional distress that identifies with needing a break but may not want to, or cannot, interact with currently available clinical resources,” Laws said. “The respite is located in a residential home, in a rural community, that has 24/7 trained staff available at all times. We’d love to have you as a guest!”

If you are someone who feels burnt out, stressed, overwhelmed and just need an opportunity to get away from it all, The Ferns Peer-Run Respite is for you, said Olivia Kripak, Director of The Ferns.

“We offer a residential home with 24/7 staff available to help you take that big exhale that you have been holding in,” Kripak said.

Guests will have private rooms, can come and go as they please, have access to trained mental health staff around the clock, and stay free for a maximum of 7 days at a beautiful, residential home.



The Fern's Peer-Run Respite Mission:

To offer a welcoming environment for people experiencing distress in their lives that recognizes each individual as the expert on themselves while also providing time, space, and connections that support their self-determination, healing, and growth.

For more information on this initiative and potential resource-sharing questions, please contact Olivia Kripak, The Ferns Director at okripak@theferns.org.

If you are interested in being a guest, you may call 610-705-8797 or email at: info@theferns.org.

Additional information on peer respites and The Ferns can be found on the HopeWorx website:

<https://www.hopeworxinc.org/services/ferns-peer-respite/>



BH Crisis Center from page one

The need for this investment is clear—in 2023, the Montgomery County Mobile Crisis Team received 5,500 new calls regarding someone in a mental health crisis. In the same year, the 988 national Suicide and Crisis Lifeline received 5,435 calls from Montgomery County residents. In addition, every week, the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety's Emergency Communications Center receives dozens of 9-1-1 calls from individuals reporting mental and behavioral health emergencies, overdoses, and other related incidents.



The crisis center is funded by a combination of sources, including state American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds earmarked for mental health services; the county's ARPA funds; portions of the County's opioid settlement funds; and MCS Reinvestment funds. Connections LLC of Phoenix, AZ, will be the county's service provider. Connections specializes in behavioral health emergency services programming, with emergency centers in five states across the country, including now in Pennsylvania.

"By providing early, effective treatments to people experiencing mental health or substance use issues, we can prevent further crises in the future," said **Tom DiBello, Montgomery County Commissioner**. "This investment is a strategic use of a variety of funding sources in order to ensure that Montgomery County residents have the support they need to lead full, healthy, and productive lives in our community."

The center will also be part of the County's broader diversion strategy to help individuals with significant mental health and/or substance use challenges avoid entering the justice system. It will be a place to go for those in need of immediate support and treatment, with the goal of preventing crises from escalating into situations that might involve law enforcement. It will also provide Montgomery County residents in crisis a safe and supportive environment, reducing the need for incarceration as a default solution.

"No one should go to jail simply because there aren't better options available," said **Commissioner Winder**. "The new crisis center will help those individuals experiencing mental health crises receive appropriate care instead of being incarcerated. It will give our police departments, law enforcement officers, EMTs, and emergency room hospitals a place to divert people in crisis, where they can receive treatment from staff who are living examples of recovery and mental wellness."

"We're honored to partner with Montgomery County to improve access to emergency behavioral health crisis care," said Matt Miller, chief growth officer for Connections Health Solutions. "Connections has made it our mission to ensure that anyone in need knows they have a safe place to go to receive high quality treatment and care without having to leave their community. We look forward to collaborating with local leaders, law enforcement, first responders, providers, and community-based resources to bring these life-saving services to the area."

About Connections Health Solutions

For over 15 years, Connections Health Solutions has been helping communities architect and operate behavioral health crisis care systems that provide help to people when they need it most. As the leading innovator in immediate-access behavioral health crisis care, Connections strives to make behavioral health work better, delivering improved quality of care and cost savings across all behavioral health populations. Throughout the United States, Connections' crisis response centers and mobile crisis units serve as the hub of the crisis system, offering services to all individuals in need in the safest and least restrictive setting. The Connections Model, recognized by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the National Council for Mental Wellbeing as best practice, combines both medical and recovery-oriented treatment designed to get people connected to resources and back to their lives faster. For more information and crisis resources visit connections.shs.com.

From: July 22, 2024 Press Release at www.montgomerycountypa.gov

SE Regional CSP Report: The Importance of Media and Reporter Relations in Mental Health Advocacy

Brittany O’Neill, Vice President of Advocacy and External Affairs at Mental Health Partnerships, was the guest speaker at the July Southeast Regional CSP Committee Meeting. In her introduction, O’Neill shared her recovery story and explained how her lived experience helped to shape her career, first in politics and then in government and advocacy at MHP.

Her presentation was titled: **“The Importance of Media and Reporter Relations in Mental Health Advocacy - Enhancing Awareness, Reducing Stigma and Driving Change.** O’Neill started her presentation with an activity that helped the committee walk through a newspaper article - learn how to capture readers’ attention with headlines and understand how listing facts, quotes and a photo can keep the readers’ interest. Committee members created stories based on the instructions and shared them with the group for feedback.

“News is everything and anything,” O’Neill said. “How you structure a story to get people interested. Getting firsthand lived experience. Facts matter.”

In addition to sharing photos and creating engaging headlines, O’Neill said make sure headlines tell the most information because many people don’t read the entire article.

Why do media and reporter relations matter? O’Neill said it helps make your cause visible, creates awareness, can reduce stigma and influence policy. “Bad press is really bad,” she said, adding that last year in PA the governor decided to change how vocational and charter schools work. Advocacy stopped it from happening. O’Neill gave another example using the Olympics, currently in the spotlight, and how Olympic Champion Simone Biles helped to reduce the stigma of mental health by sharing her past issues.



A survey by the APA demonstrated the power of media in mental health advocacy. O’Neill said the survey results showed that 87% of adults agreed that having a mental health disorder is nothing to be ashamed of. The shift of public opinion shows the impact of media and public discourse in reducing stigma. She said we’re not in silos. Social media and other media can connect people everywhere.

How do we build strong media relations? O’Neill said it’s important to identify key media outlets, build a media list and develop relationships. Local newspapers are still a good resource. Some people read news online, watch CNN and read the New York Times for national news. O’Neill said find bylines (reporters’ names) and email addresses. Go on Twitter or X and send them a message. Call the news hotline. For example, Fox local news.

“If you have a reporter that you’ve worked with in the past, follow them, email them, thank them for articles they wrote that you liked,” she said. “Once a reporter does a story, remember to say thank you and stay in contact.”



In addition, when crafting your message, be clear, concise and impactful. Be personal and data-specific driven. Write effective press releases to announce events, milestones and news. Prepare comprehensive media kits with background info, bios and facts. Media kits are like a “First Aid Kit”. Leverage social media platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn and develop a content strategy with engaging posts and hashtags to increase visibility and engagement.

The Election is
November 5, 2024



VOTE

WHERE TO FIND **State Election Info**

***From AARP Bulletin July/August 2024**

Looking for reliable information on the candidates and issues appearing on your ballot this year? Here are six nonpartisan election resources that can help.

- **AARP Voter Guides** provide information on the voting process, from registration, to Election Day poll hours. They cover 50 states, two territories and the District of Columbia. aarp.org/electionguides.
- **Ballotpedia** features a tool (on the left, under Ballotpedia's Sample Ballot) that allows users to enter their address to see the candidates and issues they'll vote on in November. It includes information on individual races as well as relevant ballot measures. ballotpedia.org.
- **OpenSecrets** rigorously details how money is raised and spent by candidates and political action committees—and who their donors are. opensecrets.org.
- **Vote411**, from the League of Women Voters Education Fund, lets users enter an address to find information about their upcoming elections. Vote411 also offers information on statewide races, plus guides to help navigate the registration and voting process. vote411.org.
- **USA.gov**, official website of the U.S. government, has resources and answers to common election-related questions, with detailed information on state and local voting procedures. usa.gov/voting-and-elections.
- **VoteSmart** allows you to enter a politician's name to find information, including voting record, past speeches, funding sources and interest-group ratings. Information on ballot measures and voter registration is under Navigation, then Elections & Candidates. votesmart.org.

Annual Election of Committee Chairs

Montgomery County CSP Chair Descriptions

Nominations for Committee Chairs are held every August and the elections are conducted in September. Once a year, an Executive Committee will be elected. Each Member will cast one (1) vote per candidate, and the candidates receiving the highest number of votes will serve on the Executive Committee. Anyone currently serving as chair or subcommittee chair wishing to stay on as chairs are welcome to do so.

The Executive Committee of the CSP will include a person with lived experience co-chair, a provider co-chair, a family member Co-chair.

The Executive Committee of the CSP will include:

- three facilitators' co-chairs.
- a Treasurer
- two Conference Subcommittee facilitators
- two Advocacy Subcommittee facilitators.
- two Community Connections facilitators
- Sue Shannon- HopeWorx Director

Co-Chair duties

The three Co-Chair's duties include rotating running monthly CSP meetings: attending Executive Committee meetings once a month and assisting in executive committee decisions and guest speaker ideas.

Subcommittee Chairperson duties

Assist in keeping the subcommittee working on its assigned tasks; attend Executive Committee meetings each month; give reports on the work of the subcommittee as requested.

Treasurer Duties

The Treasurer will keep accounts of the CSP's financial transactions, and report on all transactions and the financial condition of the CSP.

For more information, contact Penny Johnson:
pjohnson@hopeworxinc.org.





Mindful Metaphors

Open Mic Night!

 Hosted by:
NAMI Montco PA
& MCYPL

 August 20th
6 - 8 pm

***Open to anyone to share original
or recited poems/writings around
mental health and recovery***



This event hosted by NAMI Montgomery County and the Montgomery County Poet Laureate is a space for individuals to listen and/or share their experiences and stories on mental health and recovery. This event is open to all and will feature poets from the MCYPL and NAMI signature program In Our Own Voice.

A chance to win fun prizes!

Refreshments Included!

Location:

Eclipse Center for Creative Community
30 Vine Street Lansdale, PA 19446

To register, click [here](#).

To register for the event, click [here!](#)



SOUTHEASTERN
REGIONAL
COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Annual Wellness Event

September 9th, 2024
10:00AM-2:00PM

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
HORTON BROTHERS

JOIN US FOR:
KARAOKE
ART PROJECTS
HENNA
SOUND BATH
REIKI
GAMES
COMMUNITY RESOURCES

JENICE'S EVENT AND CONFERENCE CENTER
301 EAST GODFREY AVE
PHILADELPHIA , PA 19120

EVENT REGISTRATION LINK

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
KARLEEN.CAPARRO@RHD.ORG



Creating Increased Connections
A program of Resources for Human Development

CREATING INCREASED CONNECTIONS (CIC) GROUPS



TAKING BACK OUR POWER

Taking Back Our Power is a peer support group for individuals with lived experience of sensory phenomena (like hearing things others don't hear) and unusual beliefs

BEGINING MONDAY, AUGUST 12TH

MONDAYS 3:00PM-4:00PM
Hopeworx
1210 Stanbridge St #600, Norristown, PA 19401

TUESDAYS 2:30PM-4:00PM
Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church
625 Montgomery Ave
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

THURSDAYS 1:00PM-2:00PM
Trinity Reformed Church
60 N. Hanover St
Pottstown, PA 19464

CIRCLE OF HOPE

Circle of Hope is peer-to-peer led discussion group. Join us for lively conversation about how we are feeling, our successes and challenges, our recovery, and how we maintain our wellness. Everyone is welcome.

WEDNESDAYS 10:00AM-11:30AM
Willow Grove Baptist Church
3600 Welsh Rd
Willow Grove, PA 19090

THURSDAYS 10:30AM-12:00PM
Hopeworx
1210 Stanbridge St #600, Norristown, PA 19401

LIVE ANOTHER DAY

TUESDAYS 12:30PM-1:45PM
Lansdale Library
301 Vine St
Lansdale, PA 19446

Alternatives to Suicide groups are intended as non-judgmental spaces where people can share some of their darkest thoughts without being assumed to have an illness or being assessed for involuntary interventions. Openly exploring these thoughts - and the feelings and experiences underneath them - is often the key to moving toward something different.

COMPAÑEROS (AS) CON VALOR Y EXITO

CIC se enorgullece de ofrecer nuestro grupo de discusión Compañeros Con Valor y Exito. Únase con nosotros para un conversación animada sobre cómo nos sentimos, nuestros éxitos y desafíos, su recuperación y cómo mantenemos nuestro bienestar. Todo lo que se dice en grupo es confidencial y todos son bienvenidos.

Pronto

WOMENS IDENTITY AND EXPERIENCES GROUP

This group was created for women as a safe environment to voice & openly share our life stories as women & to empower ourselves to find greater meaning & purpose in life.

WEDNESDAYS 3:00PM-4:30PM

[Zoom Link
https://rhd.zoom.us/j/83638683076](https://rhd.zoom.us/j/83638683076)

For more information Contact Sheila.HallPrioleau@RHD.org 215-906-0453
www.ciconnections.org



Walk & Talk

Mutual Aid on The Move

Join us for a time to work on our wellness together.
Enjoy eachother's company as we exercise together.
Walking not required

Meeting every other Friday at King of Prussia Mall
Beginning Friday, August 23rd at 11:00AM
Meet at Food Court on 1st Floor

Schedule

Friday, August 23rd
Friday, September 6th
Friday, September 20th

Questions: Contact
Karleen Caparro at
Karleen.Caparro@RHD.org



Creating Increased Connections
A program of Resources for Human Development



Creating Increased Connections

A program of Resources for Human Development

Taking Back our Power

Taking Back Our Power is a confidential peer led support group for those who hear, see, feel, or believe things not shared by others. Anyone with these experiences is welcome to join.

Mondays

3:00PM-4:00PM

Hopeworx

1210 Stanbridge St #600
Norristown, PA 19401

Starting

Monday, August 12th



Visit Our Website

www.CIConnections.org

Questions Contact

Hugo.Lopez@RHD.org

484-374-0904

RECOVERY IS FOR EVERYONE WALK

Every Person, Every Family, Every Community



Save the Date!

Saturday, September 21, 2024 | 9:00 AM
741 N. County Line Road | Souderton
(Next to Harleysville Bank/Across from Jesse's Barbeque)

Following the walk, enjoy free food, music, kids' activities, giveaways, and more at Hope Festival 2024, sponsored by Sweatshirt of Hope.

More Details to Come

Visit our website – PennFoundation.org – and Facebook page for updates.

Volunteers Needed

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Ryan Schweiger at 267-718-1464 or Ryan.Schweiger@sluhn.org.



PMHCA INVITES YOU TO:

2nd Annual Recovery Conference



PMHCA RECOVERY CONFERENCE
**UN-MASQUERADE
BALL 2024**

SCAN THE QR CODE



TO LEARN MORE!

REGISTRATION OPENS: JULY 1

Website: www.pmhca.org

Email: pmhca@pmhca.org

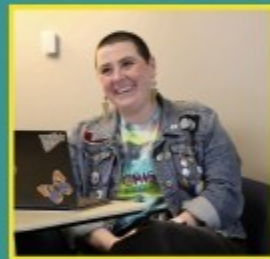
QUESTION PERSUADE REFER

September marks national Suicide Prevention Month. Join us for this training to learn how you can help save lives!

TRAINERS: ACCESS SERVICES



Jessica Fenchel
Senior Vice President & Chief Operating and Program Officer



Lindsay Meehan Mayo
Crisis Community Liaison & Trainer

QPR Training Overview

QPR stands for Question, Persuade, Refer, or 3 steps that anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide. Gatekeeper Training prepares attendees to:

- Recognize the warning signs of suicide
- Ask someone about suicidal thoughts
- Offer and connect to help



September 17



2:00-4:00pm



2506 N. Broad St
Lansdale, 19446



Subcommittee Reports from July 2024

Advocacy Subcommittee: The subcommittee discussed the Grant Pass law which essentially criminalizes being homeless. People who are unhoused and forced to sleep outside can be fined and if fines are not paid, people can be jailed for being unhoused. The committee talked about ways to help support people in this situation. Mark Boorse from Access Services and Street Outreach will be the guest speaker In August to talk about what Street Outreach will be doing to help. Also, Beacon of Hope is breaking ground.

Community Connectors - The subcommittee approved 1 community connection grant in the amount of \$75. They also discussed editing community connection grant to say priority will be given to people willing to write how their community connection grant helped them get out into the community. There is no longer a “gas grant” but if someone needs help with cost of getting to an event they can apply for a community connection grant. The subcommittee also discussed way to get information about grant out into the community.

Conference Subcommittee - The subcommittee did not meet.

CSP MEETING
CALENDER
2024-25

Meetings are held every third Thursday, monthly from 12: 00-2:30pm

The next meetings will be:

August	15
September	19
October	17
November	21

Meetings are held in person and via Zoom.

Montgomery County CSP Executive Committee

2023/2024 Tri-Chairs
Provider Member: Jim Markey
Person in Recovery: Justin Chamrin
Family Member: Kathy Laws

2023/2024 Sub-Committee Chairs
Community Outreach: Dion Despaigne, Julie Whitmore
Advocacy: Akilah Williams, Michelle Gonzalez
Conference: Danny Kuchler, Stacey Volz

2023/2024 Treasurer
Dion Despaigne



County Liaison -
Tracey Riper-Thomas

Fiduciary - Hope Worx, Inc.

1210 Stanbridge Street,
Suite 600
Norristown, PA 19401
610-270-3685

CSP Principles

- * Consumer Centered/
Consumer Empowered
- * Culturally competent
- * Able to Meet Special Needs
- * Community Based with Natural Supports
- * Flexible
- * Coordinated
- * Accountable
- * Strength Based

Organizations who regularly send representatives to CSP:

Central Behavioral Health, AdvocacyWorx, Community Satisfaction Team of Montgomery County, Magellan Health Services, Montgomery Co. Department of Behavioral Health, Montgomery County Emergency Services (MCES), NAMI Montgomery County, Norristown Vet Center, Resources for Human Development, Salisbury Behavioral Health

Meetings:

12:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

3rd Thursday of each month

HopeWorx

1210 Stanbridge St.

Suite 600

Norristown, PA 19401

In person & Zoom

Kathie Mitchell, Newsletter Editor

Join our Mailing list!

We have an email list as well as a regular mailing, to join:

Send an e-mail to:

pjohnson@hopeworxinc.org

Or send your contact info to this mailing address:

Statement:

Montgomery County's Community Support Program (CSP) brings together individuals that receive mental health services, their family members, providers and the Department of Behavioral Health in an equal partnership to promote recovery and excellence in the delivery of community-based mental health services.

The committee strives to include a balance of people who use services, people who provide services, family members, and interested members of the community at large. The CSP initiatives continue to grow state, regionally and county wide. As the involvement increases CSP has become a place that feedback can truly be given to the county from individuals that receive services and information can be given that suits the needs and requests of those that attend.

CSP Subcommittees:

- * **Advocacy Subcommittee**—Works on legislative, policy, communication, budget, voter education and other issues related to mental health services in the county, statewide and at the federal level when relevant. At the direction of the CSP Committee, the Advocacy Subcommittee gathers information on issues, plans advocacy events and creates a monthly newsletter to provide information to the stakeholder network as well as the community at large about the work of CSP. The newsletter also provides updates on new and changing mental health services provided in Montgomery County. The newsletter editor can be contacted at: kathiemitchell8221@gmail.com.
- * **Community Connections Subcommittee**—Works on facilitating opportunities for people in the CSP community to be more involved in the Montgomery County community. This includes implementing the Community Connections grants, which provide funding for people to participate in a variety of activities. The committee also implements transportation grants that provide gas cards and SEPTA day passes to CSP community members. The annual CSP Poster Art contest is also organized by this committee.
- * **Conference Subcommittee** – The conference subcommittee will plan and fundraise for the annual Montgomery County CSP Conference.

We invite all peers, family members and providers/professionals to attend.

Website: www.montcopacsp.org

<https://www.facebook.com/montcopacsp/>