

THE SEEKER

A Newsletter of Mental Health Association of South Central Kansas



Mental Musings

We've all heard people say they can speak Italian because they know the words ravioli and spaghetti. And even those of us who never took any Spanish classes could probably ask where the bathroom was in a restaurant in Mexico City. But in truth, it is estimated that only about 10% of people who live in the Wichita metro area are bi- or -multi-lingual.

In our day-to-day lives, that's not a problem. We don't need to express complex and nuanced thoughts in a language that we didn't grow up speaking. But what about the nearly 77,000 south central Kansans who speak a language other than English in the home because it is the language that feels most comfortable to them? And what if - instead of ordering a hamburger or asking the location of the nearest restroom - they need to express the anxiety of career uncertainty or the depression of the loss of a loved one?

For many of these individuals, the prospect of getting the mental health care that we all need from time to time may not even seem like an option because they don't expect to be able to find a practitioner who speaks their language of choice. **Luckily, thanks to an anonymous donor, MHA has found a solution that opens the door to thousands of households throughout the region to get the care they need without regard for language.**

20 real-time language translation devices recently arrived at our office to be shared by our Outpatient Counseling center, residential staff, adult and children's community-based services, medication management office, and other programs. Paired into sets of up to four devices through an app on a phone or tablet, these units - roughly the same size of a large hearing aid hung over the ear - have the capacity to translate forty-two languages back and forth into natural masculine and feminine voices in accordance with the preferences of the consumer, and to do so in real time. This capability means that thousands of individuals can now express the full scope of their health concerns in whatever language is most comfortable for them, and understand our practitioners in that same language even if our therapist are speaking English.

Amazingly, this entire initiative cost less than \$2,000, and yet has the ability to massively impact access by minority populations to mental health care across the region. **Please do not ever underestimate the influence you can make with your investment in our mission.** Visit www.MHASCK.org/invest to see how YOU can make a difference.



In these difficult economic times, MHA asks you to consider giving the nickels and dimes that would otherwise collect in your couch or change jar. We have partnered with www.RoundUpApp.com to allow you to round-up your credit card purchases to the next dollar, and send the remaining change to MHA. Your spare change makes a tremendous difference in our ability to serve thousands across south central Kansas each year.



Follow MHA on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for the most recent updates!

Do You Have Your Tickets Yet?

Over 450 people have expressed their desire to attend the 2022 Beautiful Minds Gala, and nearly 50 tickets have already been sold...for a room that only holds 300 and isn't being held until October! This means that if you haven't yet gone to www.MHASCK.org/events to reserve your tickets or your table, time is already running out.

In addition to the tickets and tables sold, many spots have been allocated to our maximum of 45 Gala sponsors for their financial support. And those sponsors have received well over 1,000 mentions on our social media feeds that are seen by a following of over 6,700 business professionals. They have been mentioned on television on KAKE and KWCH, radio on KMWU, and in dozens of speaking engagements at PEC, Delta Dental, FlightSafety, BCS, and many more. They have also been talked about publicly at the Mayor's weekly press briefings, Rotary meetings, local university and church groups, etc. And while many of our corporate partners don't ask for this recognition, they deserve to be publicly thanked for their commitment to ensure that mental health resources remain available to their staff, customers, and the community they serve.

All of this advance interest means that barely over half of the 300 seats remain available **seven months before the event!** So don't wait to claim the last few sponsor slots or the few remaining event tickets. Visit www.MHASCK.org/events now!



Outpatient Counseling Services Has Expanded

It is no surprise that the need for therapy has expanded significantly over the last two years, and we have been fortunate to be able to hire some fantastic counseling staff to meet that demand. If you haven't met them, make sure you follow our Facebook and Twitter (@MHAofSCK) feeds for a quick introduction. In fact, we've had to hire so many staff that we ran out of room at our recently remodeled counseling center at 9415 E Harry, Ste. 800!

So what was the solution? Simple. Several clinical staff have moved to our main office at 555 N Woodlawn, Ste. 3105 into a newly renovated wing with a private entrance, offices, and even a dedicated playroom for our younger clients. We are thrilled to offer this additional space to expand our already comprehensive services and ensure that everyone in south central Kansas who needs mental health care has the ability to receive it.

This area in the main office was only available because of another recent transition. With MHA being the largest non-profit housing provider in the state of Kansas for people living with mental illness, our Residential Care staff had consolidated into our downtown facility on South Main just before the pandemic kicked into high gear. Those vacated offices opened this space to our new therapist, and therefore to the hundreds of clients who will be seen there every year.

These adjustments to our service offerings are only possible because of the financial support from companies like Rusty Eck Auto Group, ComfortCare Homes, Foulston Construction, and many more. The businesses that support our programs have demonstrated year after year that their commitment to the health of our community is more than just lip-service, and we are so thankful for everything they do.

One Suicide is One Too Many

Last August, MHA officially signed-on to a new national initiative formed by a partnership of several suicide prevention groups. The resulting Zero Suicide Framework was formed with the recognition that 95% of those who engage in suicidal action have seen a healthcare professional within the preceding 12 months. However, the fragmentation and distraction of the healthcare system in the United States too-often leads to those individuals falling through the cracks.

The Zero Suicide model requires transformative change that should not be borne solely by practitioners. Instead, it is a system-wide approach to close the gaps, and a commitment to patient safety and support for care providers toward the common goal of eliminating suicide through utilization of seven basic tenants:

- Lead culture change dedicated to reducing suicides
- Train a competent and caring workforce
- Identify suicide risk through screenings and assessments
- Create a suicide care management plan for at-risk individuals
- Treat these individuals with evidence-based practices
- Transition individuals through warm hand-offs at all points in the treatment plan
- Regularly collect and examine data with an eye toward continuous quality improvement

Creating this change will not happen quickly, but it must happen. Every life lost to suicide costs society a unique set of gifts, skills, and talents that no one else in the world can offer. This is just one more reason why one suicide is one too many, and we hope that you will support our efforts in this initiative with your time, talents, and treasure. Call 316.651.1241 to learn how.

MHA would like to show our sincere gratitude to all of the supporters that have and/or are currently supporting our mission financially!



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