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Tri County Community Connections

***From the Desk
of...
James
Parauda, CEO***



How to address challenging topics with children...

The 24/7 news cycle can make it difficult to get away from all the headlines. Given the huge storylines of 2020, the news can have a big effect on our emotional well-being. It can also be difficult to explain the news to curious children. Experts recommend addressing such heavy topics as race and death openly with youth as opposed to avoiding the subject in an attempt to shield them from the real world. Avoiding these emotion-provoking conversations, that youth will inevitably experience, will leave them ill-prepared for when they are faced with the topics from peers. Rather, be straight with children because they want to know, and they will feel less anxious if they know they have you as a support during these difficult times. Children want to feel like their emotional needs are being met by a trusted parent or caregiver. You may be more than willing to talk about it and realize it is the right thing to do for your child/children, but it may be easier said than done. That is why I would like to offer you some tips.

Children will approach these subjects in different ways depending on their ages and personalities. Some will ask questions about the story and some may listen and then leave the room or look over to you to gauge your reaction. Either way it is important that you address the subject with them to reduce any potential anxiety. Ask them about what they heard and ask probing questions about how they might be feeling. Here are some resources to use when talking about death to your children.

- www.newswise.com/coronavirus/how-to-talk-to-children-about-death-during-the-covid-19-pandemic
- kidshealth.org/en/parents/coronavirus-how-talk-child.html
- <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/talking-to-children>

Topics related to race relations, inequality or police brutality can be similarly hard to process. There are strong opinions about the topics that might be confusing to children. Here are some resources related to talking about race with your children .

- www.parenttoolkit.com/social-and-emotional-development/advice/social-awareness/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-race-and-racism
- www.readbrihtly.com/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-race-books-and-resources-that-can-help/

For youth or young adults that are feeling emotionally fragile, there might be a need to seek professional help to manage emotions. Let them know this is alright as everyone goes through emotional challenges and getting help now is a good way to set yourself up for when you need it in the future. If you feel your child is struggling with anxiety beyond what is normal and expected during times like these, please seek professional consultation.

James Parauda, LSW
Chief Executive Officer

Youth Success Story



Everyone experiences unique challenges in life, and some people have a harder go of it than others. In this field, we meet a lot of children who have experienced more trauma in their short time on Earth than some adults will have experienced in their entire lives. These young people inspire us and others with their resiliency and determination to overcome obstacles. One such young person, Jeneryt, has faced more than her fair share of challenges. Instead of resigning herself to a life of unhappiness, she chose to take control of her situation, learn from it, and grow. Jeneryt took her destiny into her own hands and with support from her family and TCCMO, she was able to cut ties with the hurtful people in her life. Although some of her most valuable life lessons were learned outside of the school environment, she didn't allow these outside events to prevent her from completing her high school education. Jeneryt kept her focus on the future and graduated with her class despite her personal challenges and the collective trauma of a worldwide pandemic. While reflecting on her experience in the past year, Jeneryt said "Sometimes we are tested not to show our weaknesses, but to discover our strengths." These are wise words that everyone should take to heart, especially during times like these. It is important to remember that at even at our lowest moments, we always have the potential to learn what we are truly capable of achieving.

Summer is NOT cancelled!!

We asked to see how you and your families are spending time together and we had a great response!! These are our participating recipients of a gift card! From hiking, swimming, kayaking, cooking and baking, to eating sweet treats and being creative they are all captured here!! Enjoy!







Pride in Partnership

Children's Interagency Coordinating Council *(Hunterdon, Somerset, Warren)*

The Children's Interagency Coordinating Council (CIACC) is comprised of local planning bodies that foster cross-system service planning for youth with behavioral and emotional health needs, substance use and/or intellectual/developmental challenges. Each CIACC serves as a mechanism to develop and maintain a responsive, accessible and integrated system of care for children with special social and emotional needs and their families, through the involvement of parents, consumers, youth and child-serving agencies as partners. It provides a forum where the system of services can be developed, reviewed, revised and/or redirected through a collaborative decision-making process with the Children's System of Care to promote optimal services provided in the least restrictive and most appropriate setting possible.



The CIACC also afford opportunities to serve on subcommittees such as education partnership and youth with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Youth and family members are particularly encouraged to participate to inform service planning and collaborations in service delivery.

For additional information on CIACC in –
Hunterdon – contact Gregor Thomas gthomas@ccdom.org
Somerset – contact Linda Porcaro at porcaro@co.somerset.nj.us

Community Corner

Celebrating the success of a Virtual Field Day!!



Warren County's Addiction Task force had been working hard to create an event to demonstrate that Warren County Cares and that residents are not alone when it comes to mental health and addiction needs. Their mission is to create more public awareness of the current mental health programs and resources throughout their county. Leading this task force are Kelly Shelton and Doug Steinhardt as co-chairs, serving under James Pfiffer, Warren County's Acting Prosecutor. Also a key member to the team, Laura Richter, Warren County's Mental Health Administrator/Coordinator of Addiction Services works with community volunteers to provide insight in areas of mental health needs. This team incorporates the collaboration of providers from Norwescap, Family Guidance Center, Family Support

Organization, and Tri County Care Management Organization to create the county wide event. This event is an ongoing initiative designed to take place annually. Due to the current state of affairs in relation to Covid-19, the task force felt that their goals of increased Mental Health initiatives not be derailed. Doug Steinhardt credits Kelly Shelton with the conception, organization and fruition of a virtual platform event. The event was highlighted utilizing Facebook Live, as well as incorporating other social media platforms such as Instagram and Twitter for scavenger hunt postings, and finding kindness rocks throughout the municipalities of Warren County. A TikTok challenge was hosted by TCCMO to encourage #WELLinWARREN and outlined the platforms mental health supports, some tips to increase communication in families with youth currently engaged in the platform, as well as guided music selection to utilize, encouraging creating safer interactions.

You can check out the event's Facebook page and watch the videos presented and STILL be a part of the day... <https://www.facebook.com/wellinwarren/>

Yoga and mediation were presented by Mary Ellen Cappetta, she is a licensed professional who started the event with a stretching yoga video and then closed out the day with a mindfulness mediation video. Michael Kirschner presents and keeps you entertained while talking about bullying. Elise Drennon, local graduating Senior from Warren Hills High School addresses body image and eating disorders in her video presentation, FSO shares about Kindness Rocks and is also featured in greater detail in this newsletter, and T.O.N.E.-z was the featured special guest. He is an Emmy nominated Rapper/Actor who shares openly about his own mental health and encourages the use of supports services.

How To Submit A Resource To The Tri County ResourceNet

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KINDNESS ROCKS!

Community Outreach Specialist, Penelope Griffin, with Family Support Organization of Hunterdon, Somerset and Warren Counties uses her creative gifts to engage communities through these challenging times. Penelope recently prepared 77 rocks for distribution during Warren County's Virtual Wellness Field Day initiative. This initiative was directed by Kelly Anne Shelton, Domestic Violence and Mental Health



Units of Warren County Prosecutor's Office and supported by Family Guidance of Warren County, NORWESCAP in Phillipsburg, Kristen Lichter and Co-Chair of Virtual event Doug Steinhardt/Representative. Each municipality in Warren County was provided rocks, the "hiders" would post pictures of the rock and a clue to where they could be found. Youth and families were encouraged to look for, find and post to be entered to win a prize. Penelope also went Facebook live on the day of the event to explain how she makes these fun rocks.

You can visit her post by clicking this link-

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=249496453167501>

The rocks were distributed and recorded for posting by the following Police Departments and individuals, Blairstown PD, Greenwich Township PD, Lopatcong Township PD, Mansfield Township PD, Pohatcong Township PD, Washington Township PD, Lori Ciesla from the Warren County Addiction Awareness Task Force, Jeff Greenfield of School based Youth Services Program of Warren Hills Regional HS and Middle School, Joe Irwin, Samantha Irwin, Amanda O'Neill Tri County CMO, Isabella Terick and Ashley Wyckoff. So be on the look out for these cute rocks in Warren County or be inspired to create your own to drop around your community. Also be on the look out for a new date for a Wellness Field Day when it is safe to gather in Warren County. Mental Health Initiatives are a top priority for these providers as well as community partners working hard to get people connected to services they need. For more information on this event please read the article highlighted in our Community Corner.

Picture of a Kindness Rock



Picture of a clue...can you guess where the Kindness Rock is?



Promising Path to Success 2.0



In 2015, the NJ Children's System of Care (CSOC) embarked on an exciting and important initiative. New Jersey applied for and was awarded a grant that had significant impact on the way it worked with children, and with incredible results. And now it's moving on to Part 2! The original *Promising Path to Success* initiative (2015-2019) provided trauma-informed, healing centered coaching to all Children's System of Care funded Out of Home (residential) treatment programs across New Jersey, using the evidence-based *Six Core Strategies* framework in combination with the relational *Nurtured*

Heart Approach® (NHA) . Outcomes included reduced lengths of stay in OOH treatment programs with increased successful transitions home, reductions in incidents and physical restraints, improved debriefing processes, reductions in staff call outs, and development of Youth Advisory Boards.

During the first part of the grant, NJ engaged in five phases that involved 21 counties, 21 CMOs/FSOs/MRSSs, 131 residential sites in 39 different organizations. More than 21,500 individuals from providers to parents were trained in NHA; more than 400 NHA trainers were certified statewide; over 1,100 people attended 6 Core Strategies training; and all Executive Directors and Directors of Operations of CMOs & FSOs, as well as CSOC leadership, received NHA Leadership training.

Due the success of the initial four-year grant, and in an effort to continue to ride the wave of success, at the completion of the first grant New Jersey applied for the PPS 2.0 grant in 2019. Over the next several years through 2023, CSOC will aim to:

- Improve youth and family engagement and satisfaction within the Children’s System of Care while ensuring Wraparound Fidelity
- Reduce restraints and disciplinary incidents within out of home treatment schools and DCF schools
- Increase youth and family participation and voice within CIACCs (Children’s Inter-Agency Coordinating Councils)
- Reduce placement disruptions within kinship and resource homes

In order to achieve these goals, the PPS 2.0 initiative includes coaching for all of New Jersey’s Care Management Organizations, Family Support Organizations, Children’s Mobile Response Programs and the DCF Office of Education and Out of Home Treatment program schools. Additionally, all DCP&P staff as well as kinship and resource parents will be trained in The Nurtured Heart Approach®, and support provided to CIACCs in elevating youth/family voice and increasing youth participation. PPS 2.0 also includes support to CIACCs via a Lead Family Coordinator focused on elevating meaningful youth and family voice in decision making. Growth and change are on the horizon systemwide!

For more information about PPS 2.0, or to inquire about participating in a Nurtured Heart Approach® training, call Stephanie Suriani at 908/526-3900 x152, or email ssuriani@tricountycmo.org .

Find your interest!



Click on the New Jersey's Kids' Guide image to access our Tri County CMO Resource Net for an updated listing of all types of activities to participate in, including camps, outdoor activities and virtual activities.

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month



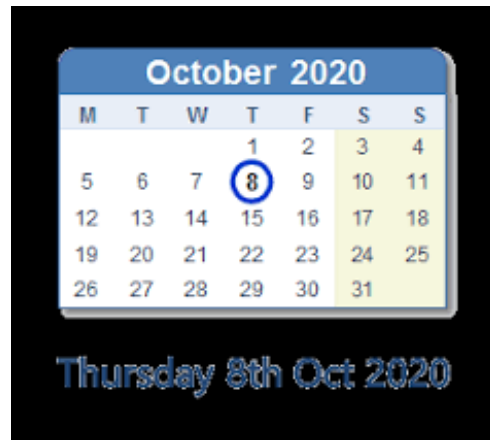
September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Every year, thousands of individuals die by suicide, leaving behind friends and families to bare the tragedy and loss. "Suicidal thoughts, much like mental health conditions, can affect anyone regardless of gender, age or background. In fact, suicide is often the result of an untreated mental health condition. Suicidal thoughts, although common, should not be considered normal and often indicate more serious issues" (NAMI.org). Unfortunately, there is a stigma and shame attached to the topic of suicide, which causes individuals to not speak up about

their thoughts and experiences. September is a time to share stories, support and resources with others in an effort to shed light on this taboo topic. September should be an opportunity to reach out to those affected by suicide, raise awareness, and connect individuals with suicidal ideation to treatment services. It is also important for individuals, friends and families that have endured a loss, to have access to necessary resources to discuss their grief and to be informed on suicide prevention. For more information and resources, visit <https://www.nami.org/get-involved/awareness-events/suicide-prevention-awareness-month>.

For Your Information...

National Depression Screening Day

Roughly 40 million adults in the U.S. struggle with depression or anxiety. Not to mention, the family, friends, and coworkers of those individuals are also impacted. However, the stigma of depression is often burdensome to many, and something far too many individuals feel needs to be kept hidden. National Depression Screening Day looks to fight against this stigma. Held annually every October, the National Depression Screening Day helps those experiencing depression, receive an informed diagnosis and learn how to manage the symptoms of depression. For those individuals not experiencing symptoms of depression, this day permits those individuals to learn how to help and support someone else. Most importantly, this day promotes understanding. It promotes community empowerment, by distributing resources to individuals, families, and communities. Even those who aren't suffering from depression can be impacted by it. Please don't allow the stigma of depression to remain hidden any longer. However, be encouraged and empowered by those who walk with and support you. Get screened on **October 8th, 2020**.



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How to Get Referred to Tri County CMO

PerformCare can help a parent or guardian connect their child to Children's System of Care services. PerformCare staff are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide assessment and guidance to families facing challenges to their functioning and well-being.

PerformCare / Contracted Systems Administrator (CSA)

1-877-652-7624

<http://www.performcarenj.org/>

<http://www.performcarenj.org/families/index.aspx> (video guide)



Tri County CMO

Tri County ResourceNet

How To Submit A Resource To The Tri County ResourceNet

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