

MHA NEWSLETTER

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About PTSD Awareness

After a traumatic event, most people have painful memories. For many people, the effects of the event fade over time. But for others, the memories, thoughts and feelings don't go away - even months or years after the event is over. Mental health experts are not sure why some people develop PTSD and others do not. If stress reactions do not im-

prove over time and they disrupt everyday life, it is important to seek help to determine if PTSD is present. The National Center for PTSD promotes awareness of PTSD and effective treatments throughout the year. In 2010, Congress named June 27th PTSD Awareness Day (S. Res. 455). In 2014, the Senate designated the full month of June for National PTSD Awareness (S. Res. 481). Efforts are underway to continue this designation for the third consecutive year in 2016.

The purpose of PTSD Awareness Month is to encourage everyone to raise public awareness of PTSD and effective treatments. We can all help those affected by PTSD.

Raise PTSD Awareness

You can make a difference!

"Greater understanding and awareness of PTSD will help Veterans and others recognize symptoms, and seek and obtain needed care." - Dr. Paula P. Schnurr, Executive Director of the National Center for PTSD



Commitment to Veterans and Others

VA provides effective treatment for our Nation's Veterans and conducts research on PTSD, including the prevention of stress disorders. Our campaign supports Veterans, their families, and all those who have experienced trauma to get care. Be a part of PTSD Awareness Month.

"Raising PTSD awareness is essential to overcoming the myth, misinformation and stigma surrounding this mental health problem" said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. "We encourage everyone to join us in this important effort."

PTSD: National Center for PTSD. (2016, March 1). Retrieved May 17, 2016, from http://www.ptsd.va.gov/about/ptsd-awareness/ptsd_awareness_month.asp

Safety Planning

For many people who have been impacted by sexual assault, current and long-term safety can be an ongoing concern. Safety planning is about brainstorming ways to stay safe that may also help reduce the risk of future harm. It can include planning for a future crisis, considering your options, and making decisions about your next steps. Finding ways to stay and feel safer can be an important step towards healing, and these plans and actions should not increase the risk of being hurt.

Safety planning when someone is hurting you:

Lean on a support network. Having someone you can reach out to for support can be an important part of staying safe and recovering. Find someone you trust who could respond to a crisis if you needed their help.

Become familiar with safe places. Learn more about safe places near you such as a local domestic violence shelter or a family member's house. Learn the routes and commit them to memory. Find out more about sexual assault

service providers in your area that can offer support.

Stay safe at home. If the person hurting you is in your home, you can take steps to feel safer. Try hanging bells or a noise maker on your door to scare the person hurting you away, or sleep in public spaces like the living room. If possible, keep the doors inside your house locked or put something heavy in front of them. If you're protecting yourself from someone who does not live with you, keep all the doors locked when you're not using them, and install an outside lighting system with motion detectors. Change the locks if possible.

Keep computer safety in mind. If you think someone might be monitoring your computer use, consider regularly clearing your cache, history, and cookies. You could also use a different computer at a friend's house or a public library.

Create a code word. It might be a code between you and your children that means "get out," or with your support network that means "I need help."

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App(s) of the Month:

PTSD Coach - The PTSD Coach app can help you learn about and manage symptoms that often occur after trauma, providing you with facts and self-help skills based on research. Features include: reliable information on PTSD and treatments that work; tools for screening and tracking your symptoms; convenient, easy-to-use tools to help you handle stress symptoms; direct links to support and help; and always with you when you need it.

iPhone: <http://apple.co/23VbnHM> or Android: <http://bit.ly/1Titwpx>



Why I Run: Mike

Editor's Note: The "Why I Run" Series is a three-part series featuring survivors of sexual assault and their loved ones who include physical fitness as part of their healing process.

(May 3, 2016) ~ "I began running as a way to get physically healthy, but it became much more," Mike said. "I run to have a healthy outlet for the memories, and to support my recovery."

Mike is a survivor of child sexual abuse. Traumatic memories from these experiences led to addiction, crime, homelessness, and eventually prison.

In time, Mike dedicated himself to finding a different path. He explored different options to help him recover and found that some strategies worked better than others. For Mike, physical activity became an integral part of his recovery process.

Today, Mike regularly runs marathons and ultra-marathons to support his healthy lifestyle. Aside from the physical benefits, Mike enjoys running because it acts as a natural antidepressant for him. "I do the work to keep myself healthy and happy."

More than that, it's a way for him to raise awareness about crimes of sexual violence and supporting other survivors. In September 2016, Mike will be participating in his first 24-hour long endurance race in Ohio to raise awareness and funds for children who have been sexually abused. While running, Mike often wears a special blue and white shirt that honors child sexual abuse survivors. He cites it as a source of inspiration.

"Running reminds me that being a survivor is about more than overcoming the past," Mike said. "It's about celebrating both the joy of being alive and the knowledge that within me is everything I've ever needed to thrive and stop the devastating crime of rape for good."

Today, Mike is a business executive, and enjoys spending time with his spouse and three children. He believes in sharing his story through public speaking and awareness efforts to help fellow survivors feel more comfortable about speaking up when something isn't right.

"After six years of childhood [sexual] abuse and a lifetime of pain, I like to show myself and others that I can do anything even after all of the trauma that I suffered."

If you or someone you know has been affected by sexual violence, it's not your fault. You are not alone. Help is available 24/7 through the National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-HOPE and online.rainn.org, y en español: rainn.org/es.

Why I Run: Mike | RAINN | Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network. (n.d.). Retrieved May 17, 2016, from <https://rainn.org/news-room/why-i-run-mike>



<https://rainn.org/statistics>



We are a volunteer Board of Directors that act to initiate and promote advocacy services, educational presentations, prevention programs, and information and resource referrals.

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To learn more about the Cortland MHA visit:
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or contact:
mhacortlandny@gmail.com

Safety Planning continued...

Prepare an excuse. Create several plausible reasons for leaving the house at different times or for existing situation that might become dangerous. Have these on hand in case you need to get away quickly.

Safety planning when someone is stalking you:

Tell someone you trust. Stalking shouldn't be kept a secret. Tell your parents, loved ones, a trusted adult, or the local police to determine if a report can be made.

Be prepared to reach out. If possible, keep your cell phone charged and have emergency contact numbers programmed ahead of time. You may want to save these contacts under a different name. Memorize a few numbers in case you don't have cell phone access in the future.

Change your routine. Be aware of your daily routine and begin to alter it overtime. Switch up the way you commute more often, taking different routes or different modes of transportation.

Visit the Stalking Resource Center (<http://victimsofcrime.org/>) for more ways to stay safe.

Safety planning when leaving the person hurting you:

Make an escape bag. Pack a bag that includes all important papers and documents, such as your birth certificate, license, passport, social security card, bills, prescription drugs, and medical records. Include cash, keys, and credit cards. Hide the bag well. If it's discovered, call it a "hurricane bag" or "fire bag." If you are escaping with children, include their identifying information as well.

Prepare your support network. Keep your support network in the loop. Let them know how to respond if the perpetrator contacts them.

Plan a destination. If you're not going to stay with someone you know, locate the nearest domestic violence shelter or homeless shelter.

Plan a route. Then plan a backup route. If you are driving, have a tank of gas filled at all times. If you rely on public transportation, know the routes departure times. Many public transportation systems have mobile apps that update their schedules and arrival times.

Important Safety Note: If the dangerous situation involves a partner, go to the police or a shelter first.

Safety Planning | RAINN | Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network. (n.d.). Retrieved May 16, 2016, from <https://rainn.org/get-information/sexual-assault-prevention/safety-plan>

The **Tompkins/Cortland VA** Community Based Outpatient Clinic offers: Cognitive processing therapy and group therapy specifically for the treatment of PTSD Telehealth services, allowing veterans to connect with providers through the use of secure technologies, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, psychotherapy, Mobile Outreach and psychiatric services for the treatment of behavioral health conditions including post-traumatic stress disorder
For more information or referral, please contact:

Tompkins/Cortland VA Outpatient Clinic
1451 Dryden Road
Freeville, NY 13068
Phone: (607) 347-4101 Fax: (607) 347-4110

Additional services for the treatment of PTSD are offered through the behavioral health outpatient clinic:

Syracuse VA Behavioral Health Outpatient Clinic
620 Erie Boulevard West
Syracuse, NY 13204
Phone: (315) 425-4400 ext. 53463



Addressee

Questions, comments, or feed-back on the MHA Newsletter?
We appreciate your thoughts!

EMAIL OPTION:

If you'd like to receive the MHA Newsletter electronically **in color** as a PDF, please send your full name and email to:
erin@sevenvalleyshealth.org

Community Events & Support

"Cortland LGBT Men's Group"

Monthly group for LGBT men and their allies at
Cortland LGBT Resource Center, 73 Main Street.
Contact 607-756-8970 for more information.

Parents & Change Support Group

This support group is for parents and caregivers of
children, teens and adults with mental health conditions.
Meetings are from 6:00pm to 7:30pm at 90 Central
Avenue in Cortland. For more info please contact
Becky Tripp at parentsandchange@yahoo.com

2016 Meetings:

Jun 13	Jul 11	Aug 8	Sep 12
Oct 10	Nov 14	Dec 12	

21st Annual Enrichment Day

Presented by:

Cortland County Area Agency on Aging & SUNY Cortland

Tuesday, June 7, 2016

8:00 am - 3:15 pm

SUNY Cortland - Corey Union Building

Registration fee of \$15 includes:

lunch, keynote & workshops

For more details and to register, call: (607) 753-5060

Support of Local Survivors of Suicide Group (SOLOS) Come

join us in a safe, comfortable environment to talk about
your lost loved one(s).

The support group is sponsored by the American
Foundation For Suicide Prevention.

Meetings are held the first Thursday of every month from
5:30 pm - 7:00 pm. For more info please contact Family
Counseling Services at 607-753-0234.



If you have an upcoming community event or article you would like considered for admission to the
MHA Newsletter, send your submission to **ben@sevenvalleyshealth.org** by the 7th of the month prior.

Disclaimer: The information presented here does not constitute professional medical advice. Individuals respond to treatment for
mental health conditions in different ways, and treatment plans often need adjustment over time. Patients should work closely with
their doctor and other health professionals in order to achieve optimal control of symptoms.