

## THERAPY IN NATURE: 4 MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS OF NATURE EXPOSURE

Many people overlook the positive impact that the natural environment has on mental health. Your surroundings can vastly affect the way you think and feel – and regular exposure to nature has been shown to be healthy for the mind, body and soul. Here are four of the reasons why connecting to nature is crucial for your mental wellbeing.

### The Calming Effects of Nature

Nature has long been known to have calming effects on the mind. The beauty and serenity of nature create a sense of peace that you usually won't be able to find in busy urban environments. Thus, spending time in nature is one of the most effective ways to reduce everyday stress and mental fatigue. Being in such a spacious, relaxing environment helps your mind to recharge and put you in a positive mood. Going barefoot in nature is even more beneficial, as it allows your body to come into direct contact with the earth and truly connect with nature. Getting outside and walking barefoot has been shown to help regulate the nervous-system, strengthen immunity and reduce feelings of stress and anxiety.

### How Nature Calms Depression

The use of nature as a form of therapy has gained the interest of scientists, researchers and nature enthusiasts. Reconnecting with nature has been shown to be beneficial for easing some of the symptoms of depression. The very act of being in nature promotes mindfulness and gratitude. The inherent 'peace and quiet' of natural environments can help to clear

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## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE NO-COST, HIGH-QUALITY CARE COMING TO TOWN

Cortland County is fortunate to have the Department of Defense (DoD) Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) coming to town again to provide excellent care to residents with no resident, insurance, or identification requirements and at no cost. The DoD has special units that are made up of degreed, highly skilled doctors, nurses, veterinarians, and dental professionals, who are also active duty or reserve service members. These troops offer to provide clinical services in order to fulfill their emergency deployment training requirements. Visit the website at [www.healthycortland.org](http://www.healthycortland.org) for more info.

**HEALTHY**    
**CORTLAND**  

**NO-COST MEDICAL, DENTAL + VETERINARY CARE**

**JULY 11**  
to  
**JULY 20**

[WWW.HEALTHYCORTLAND.ORG](http://WWW.HEALTHYCORTLAND.ORG)



**Homer Intermediate / Junior High School**

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## APP OF THE MONTH: BREATHE, THINK, DO WITH SESAME

For most kids, school is out for the summer. This is a perfect time to help them manage their anxiety. This app is part of Sesame Street's Little Children, Big Challenges initiative, which aims to provide tools to help children build skills for resilience, and overcome everyday challenges and more stressful situations and transitions. This bilingual (English and Spanish), research-based app helps your child learn Sesame's "Breathe, Think, Do" strategy for problem-solving. Tap and touch to help the monster friend take deep breaths, think of plans, and try them out! Your child will enjoy silly animations and playful interactions as she is exposed to important emotional vocabulary, a calm breathing technique, personalized encouragements, and more!

iPhone: <http://bit.ly/SesameBTDi>

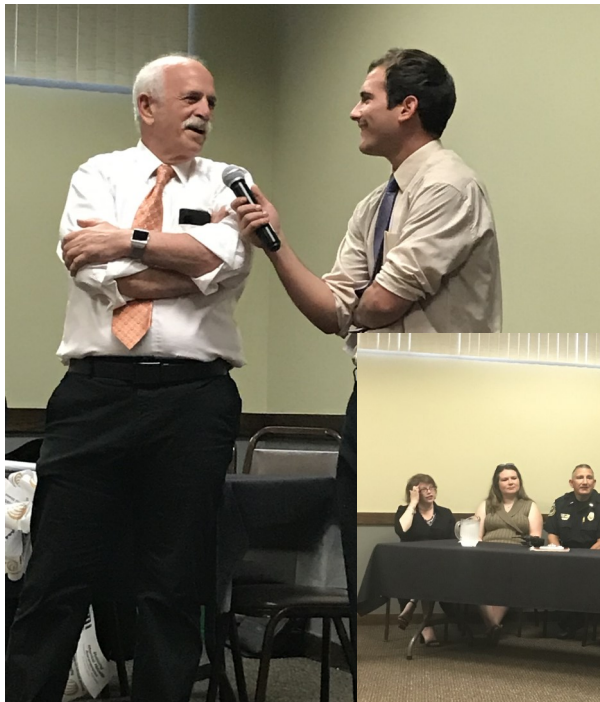
Android: <http://bit.ly/SesameBTDa>



## 2019 CORTLAND COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION ANNUAL DINNER A SUCCESS

This year the MHA Annual Dinner held a community discussion at the Cortland Elks Lodge with local Mental Health experts on how Cortland County's innovated Mental Health services have helped shape treatment and encourage recovery. Attendees had the opportunity to hear success stories from local services and participate in discussion with them. Panelists included:

- Lt. Dave Guerrero : CPD, Emotionally Disturbed Persons Response Team (EDPRT)
- Dr. Levine: Guthrie Cortland Medical Center
- Alexandra Mikowski: Liberty Resources' Mobile Crisis Team
- Julie Partigianoni: Catholic Charities' Peer Services & The Wishing Wellness Center
- Mandolin Porter: Department of Mental Health Horizon House
- Kathy Taylor: NAMI Finger Lakes
- Karen Dudgeon, LCSW, CCTP: Trauma Informed Care



*Guthrie Psychiatrist, Dr. Levine, is interviewed by Vincent Bellardini of WXHC Radio.*

Thanks to our partners, Cortland County Department of Mental Health, Liberty Resources, and Guthrie Cortland Medical Center, our panels and all attendees for a great evening!

*WXHC's News Director, Vincent Bellardini, served as emcee for the evening.*



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:

<http://www.mhacortland.com>

Or contact:

[mhacortlandny@gmail.com](mailto:mhacortlandny@gmail.com)



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your mind of unnecessary worries and reduce feelings of anger and tension. The great outdoors also encourages healthy physical activity, which is a major factor in battling depression. Not only does exercise increase your energy levels and make you physically stronger, but it also makes you feel happier. Movement produces endorphins, the natural chemicals in your body that elicit feelings of pleasure. When you combine the benefits of exercise with the mood-boosting effects of being in nature, you'll address both the emotional and physical needs of your body.

### Natural Light Improves Sleep

Poor quality sleep can have a negative impact on your mental health. Problems with sleeping are commonly linked to mental

health disorders like anxiety and depression. Spending more time in nature exposes your body to natural light – which can do wonders to improve your sleep patterns. Natural light helps to regulate your natural body clock, and having a good dose of sunlight regularly will allow you to normalize your sleep schedule and ensure you wake up feeling rejuvenated.

### Nature Encourages Social Connection

Social connection is important for your mental health and overall well-being. Getting outside in nature forces you to unplug from technology and connect with the people around you. Green spaces provide an array of opportunities for people to engage in group social activities like sports and nature-based activities. These outdoor group activities encourage social inclusion and help to build strong social communities of people. This can help provide people with a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Exposure to nature has been proven to be a key factor in maintaining good physical, social and mental health. The calming effects of the natural environment are particularly beneficial for easing stress, anxiety and symptoms of depression. Getting out into the great outdoors is a habit that you should incorporate into daily life – whether that involves hiking in the woods, going to the local park or simply sitting in your green garden. Regularly reconnecting with the natural world will allow you to live a much healthier, happier lifestyle.

By Harper Reid, published at [www.rtor.org](http://www.rtor.org)

## JULY IS MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Mental health conditions do not discriminate based on race, color, gender or identity. Anyone can experience the challenges of mental illness regardless of their background. However, background and identity can make access to mental health treatment much more difficult. [National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month](#) was established in 2008 to start changing this.

Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental health condition. Taking on the challenges of mental health conditions, health coverage and the stigma of mental illness requires all of us. In many communities, these problems are increased by less access to care, cultural stigma and lower quality care.

### STRENGTH OVER SILENCE

[Watch the NAMI docuseries](#), *Strength Over Silence: Stories of Courage, Culture and Community*. NAMI explores

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unique perspectives on mental health from the African-American and Latino communities. Through candid and courageous stories of lived experience, these mental health champions share their journeys of resiliency and recovery.

### WHYCARE

The [WhyCare? campaign](#) is an opportunity to share the importance of care in our relationships to others in mental health treatment and services and in support and education to millions of people, families, caregivers and loved ones affected by mental illness. Demonstrating how and why we care brings more to awareness by showing our actions and connections to others. Care has the power to make a life-changing impact on those affected by mental health conditions.

To read the full article visit [NAMI.org](http://NAMI.org).

## SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION

Cortland County is in the process of enhancing the Suicide Prevention Coalition. The next meeting will be held July 24, 2019 from 8:30-10:00am. If you are interested in joining the coalition please contact Patty Schaap at [pschaap@cortland-co.org](mailto:pschaap@cortland-co.org) or by phone at (607) 428-5473.

## WISHING WELLNESS CENTER: TEMPORARY CLOSURE

The Wishing Wellness Center is temporarily closed due to a plumbing issue and water damage to their building. They are working on renovations and hope to open back up in a few weeks. Due to the closing they did not share a workshop calendar for July. They are still accepting peer referrals and are currently working out of the main Catholic Charities office on Central Avenue. Please feel free to contact Julie Partigianoni, Peer Services, Program Manager or other peer staff with any questions.: (607) 423-7472

## BOOK SHARE PROGRAM CONTINUES

The Mental Health Association of Cortland County offers a book share program, developed for Mental Health related readings only. (Fiction or non-fiction.)

It's free - your client gets to keep the book, and therapists can send multiple requests for books for multiple clients! Please note, there is a cap on funding, so be mindful of your requests. For more information or to make a request, email us at: [mhacortlandny@gmail.com](mailto:mhacortlandny@gmail.com)



## COMMUNITY EVENTS AND SUPPORT

### Food for Thought

is on hiatus for the summer. Check back this fall for more great lunchtime learning opportunities or email [lbarbin@fcscortland.org](mailto:lbarbin@fcscortland.org) with any questions or suggestions.

### 607 Healing Hearts

**Monday, July 15, 6:00-8:00 pm**  
**165 Main St, Cortland**

Grief support group for parents/guardians who have experienced the death of an adult child.

For more info: [607healinghearts@gmail.com](mailto:607healinghearts@gmail.com)

### Cortland LGBT Men's Group (Monthly)

**Cortland LGBT Resource Center, 165 Main St Suite B**

For more information: (607) 756-8970

### Parents & Change Support Group

July 15 August 19 September 16

**6:00 to 7:30 pm**

**Community Center, 90 Central Ave, Cortland**

Contact: Becky Tripp ([parentsandchange@yahoo.com](mailto:parentsandchange@yahoo.com))

### Caregivers Support Group

**Thursday, July 25, 3:00-4:00 pm**

**Conf Rm B, Basement of GCMC, 134 Homer Ave, Cortland**

For those who provide support for someone aged 60 or older.

For more info: Caregivers Resource Center (607) 753-5060.

If you have an upcoming community event or article you would like considered for inclusion in the MHA Newsletter, send your submission to [kristin@sevenvalleyshealth.org](mailto:kristin@sevenvalleyshealth.org) by the 14th of the month prior, or subscribe to the newsletter via email.

**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.