

Celebrating Families Healing Through Recovery

Families are on the road to healing through family meals, guided discussions, and building resilience together through Celebrating Families, a new program offered by Children's Advantage in Ravenna. The program is unique in that it includes every member of the family to help strengthen recovery, break the cycle of addiction, and increase successful family reunification.

"My main goal," NiCole Thomas, director of the Family Center states, "is to create a safe, warm environment where families are comfortable to process some of their hardest times and create an atmosphere of hope."

Families come together on Thursday evenings for 16-weeks and begin by sharing a homecooked meal together that was prepared by NiCole and her staff. Meals are homecooked from quality ingredients, like fresh vegetables and easy enough for families to be able to replicate in their own homes. The food is donated from Duma Meats as well as the Akron Food Bank, so the menu varies based on what they receive through donations. More than just a shared meal, this is the beginning of family processing. Family meals provide an opportunity for family members to come together, strengthen ties, and build better relationships.

After dinner, participants will break off into groups of parents and the children by age group. Each week there is a different topic for the groups to focus on, such as how to create healthy boundaries in your family and with others. Topics start out gentle, and as week go on, progress to more difficult topics like the impact of addiction. As the program wraps at the end of the 16 weeks, the discussions progress to resilience, thriving, and celebrating their victories.



At the end of the night, everyone comes together to discuss the evening's topic -- what that would look like in their family, how would they implement that in their family, and to really start a meaningful conversation. Celebrating Families also offers different ways to create and learn too, with hands on activities and video demonstrations. The program allows providers and families to come together and model healthy family interactions.

"I think one of the most beautiful things about this program," stated Nicole, "is that the group really tackles intergenerational trauma, and the intergenerational impact substance abuse has on a family, while they are healing and restoring those familial relationships. I see generations of healing and just how much resilience these families have."

The program is funded by the Mental Health & Recovery Board received from the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services' State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant. Celebrating Families is available for any family with parents in recovery. If interested call Children's Advantage at 330-296-5552.

May 2022 CIT Training Class Graduates

Police officers, first responders, and victims' advocates recently completed the crisis intervention team (CIT) training coordinated by the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County.

The CIT program trains officers and others to handle incidents involving people who have a mental illness, to manage crisis situations for the safety of everyone involved, and to learn about mental illness and substance use disorders. Communication and de-escalation techniques, serious emotional problems in children, mental illness and alcohol and drug addiction, and information about local service providers, are all part of the 40-hour classroom and hands-on CIT training.

The class was led by Portage CIT Coordinator Officer Josh Bartholomew. "This session we included more informal conversations with people with mental illness and heard directly about their life experiences and also from their family members. This helps the officers to build empathy along with their knowledge on mental health conditions," explained Bartholomew.

The program is sponsored nationally by the National Alliance on Mental Illness.



Back Row from left: Officer Matthew Colvin, Streetsboro Police; Officer Leonard Kunka, Kent City Police, Officer Brandon Bridgewater, Aurora Police; Deputies Joshua Brown and Donald Cutting, Portage County Sheriff's Office; Officer Alex Dehoff, Ravenna Police, Ravenna Firefighter/Paramedic Matthew Bowery; Detective Dustin Svab, Ravenna City.

Front Row from left: Officer Ryan Miller, Streetsboro Police; Victim Advocate Jackie McCauley, Prosecutor's Office; Dispatchers Valerie Burke and Erin Smith, Ravenna Police; Victim Advocate Jennifer Stasko, Prosecutor's Office; Detective Kevin Nicolini, Ravenna Police.

Awareness for Alcohol Use Problems & Treatments

Alcohol is the most used substance by both youth and adults in the U.S. The consequences of drinking can affect everyone and poses enormous health and safety risks.

While some adults may be able to enjoy an occasional glass of wine or mixed drink at home, drinking too much can cause significant short and long-term health problems. This includes a weakened immune system, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, liver disease, digestive problems, and even types of cancer.

Binge drinking and heavy alcohol use are problematic. Some indicators of risky or excessive use include drinking more or longer than you intend, not being able to cut down or stop drinking when you want, finding that drinking often interferes with daily activities, loved ones have made comments about your drinking, and more.



Ways to Monitor Alcohol Use

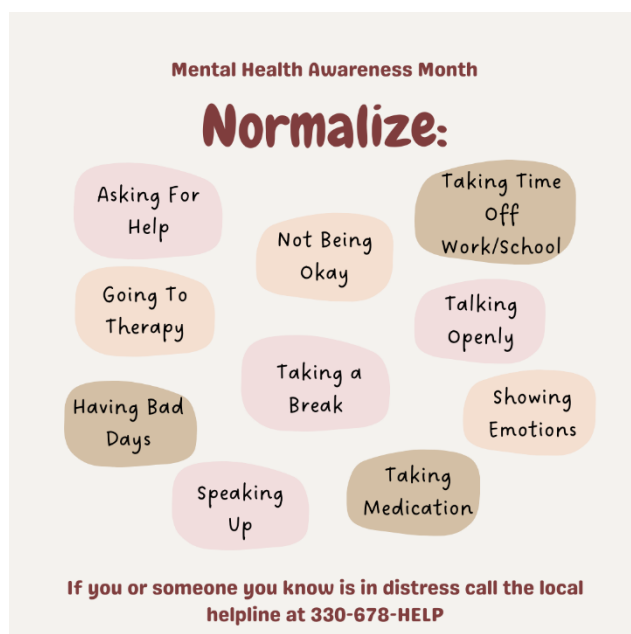
- Set a daily and weekly drinking limit. Write down your limit and keep it with you
- Pace your drinking. Have no more than one standard drink per hour
- Record how much you drink each day
- Avoid situations and triggers that cause you to drink
- Ask a friend who does not drink to help you stay within your limit
- Speak with your doctor and/or seek treatment for your alcohol use

If you or a friend is struggling and need additional support and resources call our local addiction helpline at 330-678-3006.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

People often focus much more on physical health than mental health, but both are equally important. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act, as well as helping determine how we handle stress, relationships, and make choices.

Mental health is important for all ages and can impact every area of our lives. Join us in fighting the stigma and supporting mental health.



MENTAL HEALTH & RECOVERY BOARD OF PORTAGE COUNTY

155 E. Main Street, Kent, OH 44240

www.mental-health-recovery.org

2021 HIGHLIGHTS



Portage medication-assisted treatment clinics and peer recovery supporters were able to expand services with the new SOR2 funding. New projects also began in 2021 including early diversion for at risk adolescents, an intensive home-based treatment team, family centered group treatment for substance abuse, trauma training, and tobacco cessation therapy for individuals with co-occurring opioid & stimulant use disorders.



Youth-led prevention activities at Portage high schools helped bring a sense of community and belonging for students during the stressful year. The activities are designed to increase developmental assets to help young people grow to be healthy, caring, and responsible. Youth-led activities and school-based prevention education was funded through a state grant and with local levy dollars.



Officer Matthew Kennedy of Brimfield Police was named the 2021 Crisis Intervention Team Officer of the Year by the Portage County Police Chief's Association and the Board. He received the honor for the assistance he gave to a suicidal woman this year. The Board held two 40-hour CIT classes in 2021, training 34 officers.

Mental Health & Recovery Board OF PORTAGE COUNTY

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

DIRECTOR'S DESK

Throughout the second year of the pandemic, the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County continued to enhance the community mental health and addiction system of care. As opioid overdose deaths have been occurring at alarming rates these past several years, there has also been a significant increase in the use and deaths from cocaine and methamphetamines as well. This crisis is further complicated by the presence of the COVID19 pandemic and the additional challenges it presents.



In response, the Board received over \$800,000 in federal State Opioid Response funding to develop and expand programs to prevent, treat, and help people recover from opioid use disorders and stimulant use disorders. The new funding allows us to strengthen our continuum of care with new evidence-based-practices for us to offer a full range of recovery-oriented services that will assist individuals in moving towards achieving recovery.

The Board was awarded a 5 year \$650,000 SAMHSA Mental Health Awareness Grant in collaboration with Kent State University. The grant will be used to conduct extensive suicide prevention and basic mental health training to school staff, businesses, and community groups. The Board also received other additional funding from Ohio Mental Health & Addiction Services to assist adults with serious and persistent mental illness to help pay for their recovery supports.

The Portage County Crisis Intervention Team was expanded with initial help from funds from the Criminal Justice Center of Excellence at NEOMED and was continued into 2021 with local levy dollars. With the work of our Portage CIT Coordinator, we are able to better align all the police departments in the county with best practices and solidify the relationships between the police, the community, and the behavioral health system.

These past few years having been trying for most, but we continue to take the lessons learned to improve our service delivery. We are constantly exploring different revenue streams and evaluating our services to provide for the residents of Portage County.

John Garrity, PhD, Executive Director

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FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021

HELPING PORTAGE COUNTY CHILDREN & ADULTS

402 children and teens received treatment for trauma, emotional problems, mental illness and substance use disorders.

1506 adults received treatment for trauma, emotional problems, mental illness and substance use disorders.

28,364 contacts with people through the 24-HR crisis calls, information and referral calls, incidents of walk-in counseling, crisis outreach and screening for hospitalization.

155 admissions through the Coleman Crisis Stabilization Unit.

2,427 youth and adults participated in prevention education programs.

434 students identified at risk and screened in all Portage County School Districts through a program funded by the Board. **36%** were identified as having mental health issues requiring therapy and/or psychiatry services.

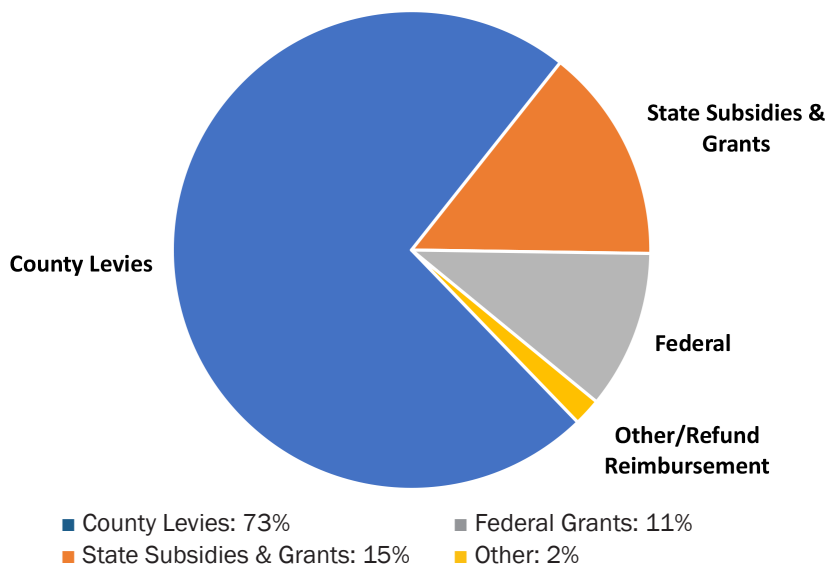
NETWORK OF AGENCIES:

Children's Advantage
Coleman Health Services
Family & Community Services
Townhall II

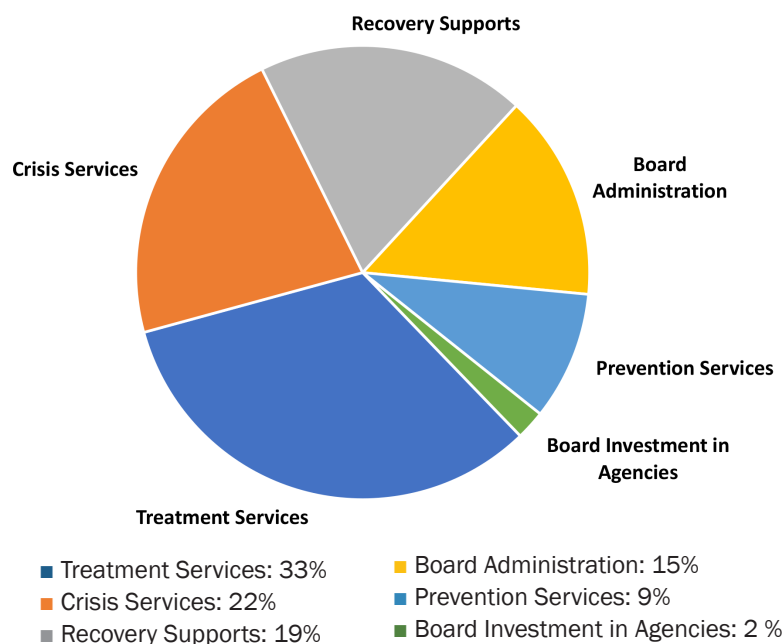


www.mental-health-recovery.org • 330.673.1756 • 155 E. Main St. PO Box 743, Kent, OH 44240

REVENUE SOURCES FOR FY2021 TOTAL REVENUE = \$8,982,144



TOTAL EXPENDITURES FOR FY 2021 = \$6,727,066



Talking with your kids about drugs & alcohol

Over 55% of Portage County youth say that their parents influence their decision whether or not to drink or misuse drugs.

- Let them know you disapprove of underage and other misuse.
- Show them you care about their health, wellness, and success.
- Talk frequently, be clear & consistent.

Learn more at www.mental-health-recovery.org/prevention-tips



Messages on safe medication disposal, the importance of speaking to young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol, and awareness of substance use disorder services were placed by the Board on grocery shopping carts, bus signs, billboards, social media, streaming video, and radio this past year through funding from the state's MAT-PDOA grant.

During this time of crisis, we're open and here to help.

Crisis Helpline 330-678-HELP
Addiction Helpline 330-678-3006
Crisis Text Line: 4hope to 741741

Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County
Your mental health is essential!



Awareness materials about local mental health resources were also distributed at food banks and drive through events during the pandemic.