

THE COM CARE

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Marilyn Cook, Executive Director



Mental Health Month is celebrated in May each year. The purpose of recognizing Mental Health Month is to have an opportunity to inform the public about the importance of good mental health, to provide data that demonstrates that treatment works and to help reduce the stigma of mental illness. The Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) recognized May as Mental Health Month by reading a proclamation at the May 13 BoCC meeting. This year's theme is "Live Your Life Well." Mental Health America has research that indicates a growing number of Americans are experiencing stress related to work and family

that is a correlation to the nation's current economic situation. Cumulative, unabated stress can have a very profound impact on our physical and emotional health and awareness of factors that can buffer the effects of that stress on our lives is essential. But of course, just knowing the mitigating factors and tools is not enough. We have to proactively adopt the tools to have them make an impact on our overall health.

The Live Your Life Well Campaign this year calls out 10 specific, research-based tools that can mediate stress and promote well being. They are:

1. Connect with others
2. Stay positive
3. Get physically active
4. Help others
5. Get enough sleep
6. Create joy and satisfaction
7. Eat well
8. Take care of your spirit
9. Deal better with hard times
10. Get professional help when you need it.

Having and utilizing these tools helps us to build resilience. It's critical to recognize that much of your physical and mental health status is entirely up to you and the choices that you make each day. No matter how stressed you are, the tools mentioned above can help you make needed changes a step at a time. I would encourage each of you to review the list of tools which are actually strategies for healthy living and decide to adopt at least one of them today. Your well being and physical health will be enhanced by it. Please take care of yourself and Live Your Life Well. It's in your hands.

Marilyn Cook



COMCARE
Sedgwick County...
working for you

"COMCARE of Sedgwick County helps people with Mental Health and Substance Abuse needs to improve the quality of their lives."

Mission

AXIS Newsletter Team Meets Governor Kathleen Sebelius

For the past four years, Community Support Services Group Leader Debbie Mattal and members of the Axis Newsletter team have attended the Annual Mental Health Advocacy Day in Topeka. This year, she and Peer Support Specialists Ron Heath and Laura Tomison, as well as six other consumers from the Community Support Services Community Integration Program made the journey. Although the House was in session, they were able to meet with many of their Senators, and even had a chance to visit with Governor Kathleen Sebelius. Consumers had the opportunity to share their stories of recovery, spoke of how working with COMCARE had improved the quality of their lives and the importance of continued funding for mental health treatment. Sebelius reported that she was aware of COMCARE and said that she had heard good things about our programs. During discussions with several Senators, it was reported that although the current state budget is hurting, the economic stimulus bill President Obama signed February 17th would allow for the state to still have funding for mental health treatment services.



COMCARE Uses A Language Line Service

The Language Line Service is an invaluable tool when someone who does not speak English calls COMCARE's Intake and Assessment Center or Crisis Intervention Services. Staff are able to dial an 800 number to the Language Line Service and they can help determine the particular language and also provide an interpreter to see that the caller gets the mental health/substance use assistance they need.

HelpDesk

When reporting problems with your computer, phone or Psych Consult, you can now call HelpDesk at 9811 for all issues.

THE COMCARE CONNECTION



A BIG thank you to the many COMCARE staff that helped plan, volunteered and even ran/walked in the 6th Annual 'Link4Life' Run for Suicide Prevention, Saturday, April 18th at the Sedgwick County Zoo. There were 1889 adults/youth who registered for this year's event along with another 1500 family members that came out to cheer their loved ones on at the finish line. What a great morning of fun, a healthy activity and an opportunity to learn about suicide and suicide prevention in our community.



COMCARE's Children's Services Opens Second "Proud of Me" Program

Proud of Me (POM) Preschool is one of Children's Services most unique and specialized programs. It celebrates its fourth year this year. Proud of Me is a psychosocial rehabilitation group for children 3-5 years of age experiencing Serious Emotional Disturbances (SED), who are not enrolled in Kindergarten yet. Children in this program are incredibly vulnerable because of their intense mental health symptoms occurring at such a young age. Most of these children cannot maintain in typical daycare or preschool settings due to their behaviors and inability to cope effectively. Each child has a unique story and individual challenges. Proud of Me works with these children and families four mornings per week to develop coping skills, learn to self sooth, find appropriate ways to express needs, and ultimately help kids feel safe and assist care takers with giving their children what they need to thrive as they enter school and continue to grow. Skills learned at Proud of Me by the children are reinforced with the caregivers in the home to provide the stability and consistency all children need. Proud of Me currently serves 12 children at a church location in Southwest Wichita. The need for Proud of Me has grown as the program continues to develop and as the children who would benefit from these services become identified. Children's Services will be starting a second Proud of Me preschool at Northridge Friends Church in Northwest Wichita due to the increase in the number of kids who are identified and are experiencing SED and the original program being at capacity. This second Proud of Me program is set to begin in June 2009.

Addiction Treatment Services Adds Kansas Certified Gambling Counselors

From 1973 to 2009, the amount of money spent on legal gambling increased 2,300% from 3 billion to 90 billion dollars annually. Americans spend more money annually on gambling than movies, recorded music, theme parks, spectator sports and video games combined. As South-Central Kansas anticipates casinos in our area, Addiction Treatment Services has been proactive in educating and training staff members to treat pathological gambling.

Kevin Hartley and Shirley Reinecke are currently Kansas Certified Gambling Counselors. David Stark and Rena Cole are taking the training and anticipate being certified by fall. The Kansas Gambling Counselor Certification requires 60-hours education which covers the topics of DSM IV criteria, treatment approaches, co-occurring disorders, psychopharmacology and family and financial recovery. Following the 60-hours training, the counselor must pass a national certification exam.

COMCARE's Homeless Program Adds Peer Specialist

When the Homeless Program received word that their competitive PATH grant (Projects to Assist the Transition out of Homelessness) was awarded a perfect score, the 2009 - 2010 funding from this grant included the addition of a part time peer support position. Melissa Crabb was hired in March as a peer support specialist and is a welcomed addition to the PATH outreach team. She has lived experience of homelessness and mental illness. Melissa says, "I am fulfilling a God-given dream and that is the best feeling in the world. If my story of homelessness and mental illness can help even just one person to have hope and start reaching for their dreams, then all the hard times will have been worth it."

PATH funded outreach not only connects people to immediate resources, i.e. shelter, food, it helps engage people to come to COMCARE's Homeless Program for an intake to mental health services. Outreach builds bridges by offering water, food, and access to community resources by connecting them to community supports.



Housing First

In March 2009, COMCARE's Homeless Program (Center City) began referring individuals to an exciting new housing program called Housing First. It is premised on the belief that vulnerable and at-risk homeless people are more responsive to interventions and social services support after they are in their own housing, rather than while living in temporary/transitional facilities or on the streets. Housing First is a national model designed to provide an apartment for a person who is chronically homeless according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD's definition of "chronic homelessness" is an unaccompanied adult who has a disabling condition (defined as a diagnosable condition such as a mental illness, substance abuse disorder, physical disability, or developmental disability) and has also been either continuously homeless for at least one year or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. The City of Wichita and Sedgwick County jointly funded 64 apartments as part of the Taskforce to End Chronic Homelessness plan. Since its inception, 32 chronically homeless individuals have obtained their own apartment, most of whom are meeting weekly with COMCARE's Homeless Program staff. Staff encourages and supports residents to explore a wide array of supportive services to meet their disability needs and to access mainstream community resources.

Payroll Team

Did you ever wonder why we ask so many questions on your timesheets? On an average, over 444 timesheets are input and authorized each payroll period. Roughly, 7% of the timesheets come to us incomplete or with errors.

The County audits COMCARE's payroll input roughly 4 - 5 times per year to make sure timesheets have been completed correctly and entered into the system accurately. In 2008, 448 employee's timesheets were audited and included 24 pay periods out of 26 pay periods. This breaks down to a total of 1,076 timesheets being reviewed. Only 1 error was found, giving us a .09% error rate. Only 2 other County Departments had more timesheets audited (1,100 timesheets with 12 errors and 1,334 with 49 errors). The goal of your payroll team is to make sure all staff are paid accurately each pay period. We could not accomplish the above numbers without your help and cooperation.



COMCARE's payroll team (back row) Tracy Lolley, Marcia Bowers, Darlene Owen, Shelli Willard, Kathy Wegner (front row) Melissa Smith, Mariann Bardebain, Jeannette Livingston, Michelle Caldwell

Etiquette Corner

A surefire way to aggravate people is to consistently respond to calls, emails and pagers when in conversation with others or in meetings. This sends a message that they are less important than the caller. Let the calls go and return them when your current conversation/meeting is over. If you are expecting an urgent call, alert those present. They will appreciate that you value their time and that you stay focused on matters at hand.



Employees Spotlight

THE COMCARE

CONNECTION



Jean Mash, staff member at COMCARE's Intake and Assessment Center was a candidate for this year's Man & Woman of the Year campaign to raise money for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS).

This event is the primary fundraiser for the LLS organization and is held across the nation. The campaign is a competition

among both men and women categories to raise the most money and honors a little boy and girl of the year who are suffering from a blood disorder. Candidates are nominated for being active in their communities and embodying the spirit of healthy competition for a common goal. Jean's campaign consisted of 16 events including a wine auction, softball tournament, Fire & Ice Ball, and a 4 mile run in honor of her grandfather, Dave Hammer, who died of Leukemia in 2007. Jean and her campaign team were able to raise over \$71,000 throughout the 10 week course and were only surpassed by one other competitor in the female category who raised over \$78,000. Jean, COMCARE is proud of you.



One morning Shirley Reinecke was driving to work on old 81 Highway. She saw in the distance clouds of smoke. She said she knew that there was a burn ban on in the area and she worried that someone's house was burning. As she drove closer she saw tall flames at the back of a house she drives by daily. She got closer and pulled

over. Turned out the home owners car was on fire. A woman with two children, the youngest not yet two were standing outside the home. Shirley said she got out and asked the woman if she and the children would like to get in her car to stay warm because it was very cold and windy out that day. The woman said she would stay out and wait for the firemen but could Shirley take her kids to her car. Shirley said the little boy was scared and she sat and talked with the children as they watched their mother and the firemen while the fire was being put out. The house wasn't damaged. Shirley then took the children back to their mother who thanked her and then Shirley drove on to work. While driving Shirley said she wondered why the mother trusted her to look after her children so easily. She happened to look down and noticed she had her COMCARE ID badge on and figured that was the reason the woman was able to trust her.

Did You Know?

On average, right-handed people live 9 years longer than their left-handed counterparts. Over 2500 left handed people are killed each year from using products made for right handed people.

Any month that starts on a Sunday will have a Friday the 13th in it.

The length from your wrist to your elbow is the same as the length of your foot.

The first account of serving ground meat patties on buns - taking on the look of the hamburger as we know it today - took place in 1904 at the St. Louis World Fair. But it was many years later, in 1921, that an enterprising cook from Wichita, Kansas, Walt Anderson, known as the "Hamburger King," introduced the concept of the hamburger restaurant. He convinced financier Billy Ingram to invest \$700 to create The White Castle hamburger chain. It was an instant success. The rest of the history, we might say, belongs to McDonald's.



Since early December 2008, Traci Campbell has completed psychological evaluations and psychological testing at COMCARE's Children's Services. Providing this level of service assists staff to better plan treatment interventions as well as has qualified a number of youth for additional services available through the Sedgwick County Community Developmental Disability Organization.

Traci attended the University of Denver to get her M.A. in Forensic Psychology and graduated in 2006. Her current credential is a Licensed Master's Level Psychologist, although it is a temporary license as she has yet to take the exam (LMLP-T).

When asked about this field of work, Traci says "I enjoy working with kids as I appreciate their openness and honesty. I feel I have a certain optimism about kids as I believe that early intervention is best for helping them become more successful in the future. Testing has been enjoyable as it is always interesting to see what you can learn about a kiddo based on how they approach the various tasks. I also love the analysis that goes into interpreting the results and creating potential recommendations, probably because it is a challenge, which I enjoy. Intelligence and personality testing are my main focuses at the moment but eventually hope to move into other areas of testing as time progresses.



Barb Buehler has been a calming presence at the Community Support Services (CSS) front desk since June 2000. She really does go above and beyond when helping others at CSS, but that is nothing compared to what she will do for friends and family. When she is not taking her neighbor's golden retriever Winston for a daily walk, she is baking up some new recipe to test out on her fellow clerical staff. Barb also likes hanging out with her girlfriends in some cabin out in the middle of no-where, frightening the local wildlife. Barb is so special to her family - like hauling American goods across the globe to Amsterdam. Barb just returned from a trip to see her son and his family including 2 grandsons who live in a little town outside of Amsterdam. Her suitcases were filled with those things they cannot obtain there

and cannot live without such as specific tennis shoes, jackets, books and movies (the last trip she brought Harry Potter to the Netherlands). She also filled up her suitcase with the unattainable cake mix and chocolate chips, Reese's pieces and apple or watermelon flavored chewing gum. We think she wore one outfit for the whole trip as there was not room for her clothes. Barb also hand carried a special request item for her son on this long 9 hour flight overseas - freshly baked pine cones (doughnuts). Hope you got on the plane okay with those pinecones!