



Stigma, Mental Health and Peer Support

One in five people live with a mental health diagnosis, yet many people suffer in silence because of stigma. Fear of being treated differently or being discriminated against can result in people avoiding or delaying seeking treatment.

The mission of the Anti-Stigma Coalition is to get people talking about their mental health, both their challenges and their successes. There are many resources available for people with mental health issues including counseling, support groups, and peer counseling. By talking about mental wellness, stigma can be eliminated.

Several Anti-Stigma Coalition members offer peer support programs, both formal and informal. Talking with someone who understands can have a positive impact when you are dealing with a mental health challenge.

Peer support provides encouragement, assistance, and emotional support while sharing knowledge, teaching skills and connecting to community resources. Peers are individuals who share the experience of living with a mental health and/or substance use disorder.

Peer support can be found through a support groups, mentor relationship, and friend connections.

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Mental Health Advocates of WNY Youth Peer Advocates are trained individuals ages 18-30 who have personally received mental health and/or addiction treatment services. They provide information, one-on-one crisis support, validation and hope to youth and their families as they navigate the mental health care system.



At **Compeer**, positive mental health is encouraged through meaningful friendships. This can take many forms—from one-to-one mentoring to group activities.

“At Compeer, friendship is crucial because it serves as the foundation for our approach to mental health support. Friendship offers a genuine connection that goes beyond clinical interactions, providing a sense of belonging and acceptance that is often transformative for individuals facing mental health challenges,” said Cheri Alvarez, CEO, Compeer of Greater Buffalo/International.

“These friendships, nurtured by our dedicated volunteers, offer mutual support, understanding, and encouragement, helping to combat feelings of isolation, loneliness, and stigma,” she said.

Through friendship, individuals at Compeer find the strength and resilience to navigate their mental health journeys with hope, positivity, and a renewed sense of community.

Spring offers a fresh start for our mental health!

HERE ARE A FEW SUGGESTIONS FOR SELFCARE FROM NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH:

Get regular exercise

Eat healthy, regular meals and stay hydrated

Make sleep a priority

Try a relaxing activity

Set goals and priorities

Practice gratitude

Focus on positivity

Stay connected



WHAT DO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT?

Is there a topic that you'd like us to cover in an upcoming newsletter or Facebook Live? Let us know!

Email info@letstalkstigma.org to start the conversation.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Coalition Featured on WBBZ Health Connection Tune in to WBBZ on Wednesday, May 22 at 8 pm for Your Hometown Health Connection featuring representatives from the Anti-Stigma Coalition.

The topic is Mental Health Challenges for Older Adults and features Matthew G. Smith, executive director of Preventionfocus, Danielle Bateman, older adult clinical specialist with Niagara County Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services, and John Jones, senior social caseworker, Town of Amherst Senior Services.

Hosted by John DiSciuolo, the show explores mental health challenges that are experienced by older adults and how the community and family members can be supportive.

Loneliness and social isolation are key risk factors for mental health conditions in later life. Mental health conditions among older people are often underrecognized and undertreated, especially depression and anxiety, and stigma surrounding these conditions can make people reluctant to seek help.

Guests discuss how older adults can experience stigma about mental health challenges and ideas for socialization.

THE SHOW WILL ALSO BE BROADCAST ON SATURDAY, MAY 25 AT NOON.

Visit letstalkstigma.org/events for more.

Open Community Mental Health First Aid Trainings

Hosted by Compeer | Wednesday, May 1 | 9 AM
1179 Kenmore Avenue Buffalo, NY 14217

An 8-hour evidence-based class, that teaches effective ways to talk to someone struggling with mental health and connect them to resources. Register.

Mental Health First Responders, Crisis Outreach Workers

Wednesday May 22 2024 Doors Open at 6 PM, music begins at 7 PM | The Cave, 77 Military Rd, Buffalo, NY

A night of music to honor mental health outreach workers who respond to crisis, featuring 10 local musical acts.

Mindful Music airing weekly on WBFO

Saturdays: 4 PM - Sundays: 8 PM
Buffalo Toronto Public Media

NAMI Programs

NAMI offers facilitated, confidential support groups for adult family members and caregivers concerned about and/or caring for a person with mental illness. Click here for full calendar and registration information.

Visit namibuffalony.org/programs/calendar.



ERIE COUNTY
ANTI-STIGMA
COALITION

ERIE COUNTY ANTI-STIGMA COALITION FOUNDING MEMBERS

BryLin Hospital • Children's Mental Health Coalition of Western New York, Inc.
Community Partners of Western New York • Compeer • Crisis Services of Erie County
Erie County Department of Mental Health • Erie County Office for People with Disabilities
Fellows Action Network • Fuerst Consulting Corporation • Jewish Family Service of Buffalo & Erie County
The Mental Health Advocates of WNY • Millennium Collaborative Care • Patrick P. Lee Foundation
Preventionfocus, Inc. • Telesco Creative Group • The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation