

## November Virtual Coalition Mini-Conference: Prevention

Since the Portage Substance Abuse Community Coalition annual conference had to be cancelled, the Coalition is hosting several mini-sessions during their monthly meetings which are open to the public. Prevention will be the topic for November. **Fran Gerbig**, the executive director of the Prevention Action Alliance, will give an overview on what prevention is, strategies, and protective factors. **Sarah McCully**, prevention and outreach director at Townhall II, will discuss how prevention services are being delivered to students during the pandemic.

**Thursday, November 12 at 1pm**

Everyone is welcome to attend! Get the Go-to Meeting link: [www.mental-health-recovery.org/portage-substance-abuse-community](http://www.mental-health-recovery.org/portage-substance-abuse-community)

## Expanding Our Crisis Intervention Team



Portage County will be able to enhance and expand the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) for police with funding that the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County received from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence at NEOMED. This is a \$40,000 sub-award for a project funded by Department of Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services to support CIT programming across the state.

The Mental Health & Recovery Board together with the Sheriff's Office have held the 40-hour CIT police officer trainings since 2006. However, CIT is more than just the training; it is a core component of our local crisis response system and community engagement. The CIT program encourages police officers to work with behavioral health partners to redirect individuals away from the criminal justice system when appropriate. The goals are to increase safety for the police officers and individuals to increase long-term treatment and recovery for the individuals.

**Officer Josh Bartholomew** is working as the county's CIT Coordinator to strengthen the CIT program in each Portage County police department. Bartholomew, an officer with the Streetsboro Police Department, has worked alongside of Sergeant Andy Suvada who has been a leader in Portage's CIT program. Kent State University Police Officer Jeff Futo who has been instrumental in the formation of Portage County's CIT is advising on this project.

Bartholomew will update and revise existing mental health policies for police departments to better align with local CIT program practices and goals. He and Gina Greenhalgh, CIT Coordinator Assistant, will work with each department on their data collection, reporting and analysis.

“We appreciate the opportunity given to us by the Coordinating Centers of Excellence to expand our CIT program,” commented Mental Health & Recovery Board Executive Director John Garrity. “Now more than ever, it is important to solidify the relationships between the police, the community, and the behavioral health system.”

## Thanking Our Behavioral Health Workers on the Front Lines!

We recognized behavioral health workers for bringing help and hope to those struggling with addictions during Ohio Appreciation Week. Counselors, case managers, recovery housing staff, helpline volunteers, children's services staff - all have made a positive difference in our community and have continued to serve during the pandemic.

Thank you to the frontline workers at Townhall II, Coleman, Jobs & Family Services, Family & Community Services, Children's Advantage, and our Recovery Outreach Team! #BringingHopeBringingHelp

If you or someone you love is struggling with drugs and alcohol, call the Addiction Helpline for support and resources. 330-678-3006



**Family & Community Services**



**Job & Family Services**



**Townhall II**



**Children's Advantage**



**Recovery Outreach**



**Coleman Professional Services**

## Suicide Loss Day Virtual Event \* Nov 21

Each year, on the Saturday before Thanksgiving those who have lost a loved one to suicide gather at events all over the world on International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day. Suicide loss survivors connect with others in their local community to share stories, gain insight about healing, and find comfort and hope in the knowledge that they are not alone.

Our Portage County event will be virtual this year on November 21 at 1pm. Call 330-673-1756 to register.



## Mental Health & Drug Courts Receive Funding

The Portage County Specialized Dockets for mental health and substance use disorders each received a \$30,000 grant from Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services through the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County.

Specialized dockets are particular sessions of court that offer a therapeutically oriented judicial approach to providing court supervision and appropriate treatment to individuals. Certified by the Ohio Supreme Court, specialized dockets recognize that offenders with mental illness, substance abuse, and trauma related injuries pose a special challenge within the criminal justice system.

In Portage County, the STAR (Successful Treatment and Recovery) Court operates in the Municipal Court with Honorable Kevin Poland presiding. The honorable Becky Doherty is the presiding judge of the HOPE (Help, Opportunity, and Progress through Education) Court which operates in the Court of Common Pleas.

“These courts are important because they recognize that people with mental illness, substance use issues, and those who have experienced trauma have challenges that are best met through treatment in a court-monitored, community-based program instead of incarceration,” commented John Garrity, PhD, executive director of the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County. “The goal is to not only reduce repeat offenses but to also help individuals achieve productive lives.”

Substance use disorder or mental illness must be a contributing factor to the individual being charged in order for them to be considered for the specialized docket and have no history of serious or repetitive violence. Participants are expected to obtain employment, have stable housing, pay court costs, and complete their mental health and/or substance use treatment goals prior to release. The funds will help support behavioral health treatment for the participants, drug screens, medications, emergency basic needs, job training, and support the specialized docket staff.

## Become a Mental Health First Aider!

Mental Health First Aid will be offered as a virtual session on Friday, Dec 11 from 9am-3pm. Prior to the class, each participant must complete 2-hours of online work.

The class is free and the deadline to register is Nov 11. Contact Laura 330-673-1756 ext 201 or [laurab@mental-health-recovery.org](mailto:laurab@mental-health-recovery.org)



## NETWORK OF CARE



Take a free, confidential mental health screening:

[www.mental-health-recovery.org](http://www.mental-health-recovery.org)