

Welcome!

Spotlighting a Local Response to Trauma: Harnessing the Power of Community to Address Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, and Trauma

Today's Presentation by

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National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: call or text 988

NH Rapid Response for mental health or substance use crisis: call 833-710-6477

A Brief Origin Story

In 2018, Dover experienced the loss of a youth to suicide

Then again in 2019

And again in 2021



Dover Mental Health Alliance

A Brief Origin Story

2019 “Mental Illness, Suicide Prevention and our Community” Summit

- Key takeaways identified from the community summit
 - **Eliminate mental health/illness stigma**
 - **Increase mental health education and awareness**
 - **Increase the community’s ability and willingness to respond with compassion**
 - **This is a COMMUNITY problem to solve!**



Dover Mental Health Alliance

Vision

A culture that understands, embraces and addresses the complexities of mental health.

Mission

To build a resilient community that is educated, responsive and conscious of the impact of mental illness.

www.dovermentalhealthalliance.org



Community Partners Engaged from the Start





Early and Continuing Initiatives Open to all

- Monthly/Annual community meetings and trainings, initiatives and events.
- Mental Health First Aid trainings
 - ◆ Youth
 - ◆ Teen
 - ◆ Adult
 - ◆ Older Adult Module
 - ◆ Public Safety
- ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) trainings
- NAMI NH Connect Suicide Prevention trainings
- A.I.D. Mental Health trainings





Mental Health
FIRST AID

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
MENTAL WELLBEING

What is teen Mental Health First Aid?

tMHFA Course Outline

tMHFA does not teach teens how to diagnose! It's information about being a supportive friend, encouraging friends to seek help and knowing when it's time to get someone else involved.

- I. Mental health in general, what mental health challenges are, how common they are in teens.
- II. Impact of mental health challenges on teens, how people with mental health challenges can get better, professionals who can help.
- III. Helping a friend who is in crisis because they are suicidal, introducing the tMHFA Action Plan, learning how it can be used in a crisis situation.
- IV. Helping a friend who is in another type of crisis, such as threatening violence or harm to others, engaging in non-suicidal self-injury, or experiencing a traumatic event such as bullying, abuse or assault. Practice using the tMHFA Action Plan in these types of crisis situations.
- V. Helping a friend who may be in crisis due to substance use and helping a friend who may be developing a mental health challenge.
- VI. Recovery and resilience.

Learning Objectives

- Recognize early warning signs that a friend is developing a mental health challenge.
- Recognize warning signs that a friend may be experiencing a mental health crisis, particularly suicide.
- Describe how to talk to a friend about mental health and how to seek help.
- Explain when and how to get a responsible adult involved.
- Discuss where to find appropriate and helpful resources about mental health challenges and professional help.
- Apply the tMHFA Action Plan to help a friend experiencing a mental health challenge or crisis.

Impact of tMHFA





Some Things We Knew from the Start

- Approach these issues as a **COMMUNITY CHALLENGE** to tackle.
- No one entity can take on these challenges - or initiatives - on their own.
- Get partners and community leadership involved from the start.
- Build a **SHARED SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY** to be part of the solution among all sectors of community.
- Acknowledge that this work will take time. **Culture change does not happen overnight.**
- **Don't let funding be a barrier.** Keep putting one foot in front of the other. If it is worth it, money will come.

This Is Your Brain on Trauma

Leveraging the Power of the Nervous System to Stop Addiction before it Starts

Presented by Anena Hansen

Project manager for Trauma Responsive Monadnock

Trauma Responsive Monadnock

- ▶ Our origin story
- ▶ Our conviction

You and your nervous system

- ▶ humans as social mammals: need for safety and connection
- ▶ threats to our safety cause stress: Fight/Flight response
- ▶ persistent threats to our safety cause *chronic* stress, which can lead to overwhelm: Freeze
- ▶ regulation vs dysregulation: rest-and-digest vs F/F/F/
- ▶ chronic stress and overwhelm make the need for safety *urgent*

“Is drug abuse self-destructive or is it a desperate attempt at self-healing?”

Felitti et al, 1998

The trauma-addiction connection

- ▶ Rest & digest (regulation) = safety
- ▶ Stress & overwhelm (dysregulation) = danger
- The predictive nervous system expects that what has felt comfortable before (familiar) will feel comfortable again, so...
- **It will return to what feels good, *even if the effects are bad*, because comfortable + familiar = safe.**

Trauma and Addiction

- ▶ This is NOT a cognitive process, and you can NOT willpower your way through it
- ▶ Someone acting on their addictive craving is experiencing an active F threat response: they have an urgent need for safety & connection
- ▶ Addictive behaviors provide the nervous system with *false* regulation, not a true regulation experience of felt safety

“So in order to prevent addiction, the question is, where *else* can you go that feels safe? And you need to do that *while it’s still a choice*, before it becomes wired as a means of survival.”

Dr. Joe Polish

How to support youth in avoiding addiction

Help them...

- ▶ **be:** able to identify their default F
- ▶ **know:** how to recreate felt safety and connection during an F
- ▶ **have:** resources to handle their Fs (emotional management plan)

Somatics: the keystone

- ▶ A daily, doable somatics practice is the foundation of strong long-term nervous system healing
- ▶ What are they in survival *from*: identify and address attachment wounds

Summary: your goal is to...

- ▶ help youth understand their nervous system and their default threat responses
- ▶ recognize that addiction becomes part of the survival instinct and they can't willpower their way through it—they need to create self-safety
- ▶ help them develop that skill now, *before* addiction begins

Thank you!

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