



Stigma

Should Never Be a

Barrier

to Wellness



CAREENOUGH
TOACT



Learn how people in our community are overcoming barriers to wellness and accessing mental health resources

A Special Advertising Supplement

Let's Work Together to **Erase Shame** in **Mental Health**

Stigma and discrimination should never stop someone from getting the care they need

by Natasha vonKaenel

Stigma is a tricky thing. Everyone is impacted by stigma differently, though there can be culturally similar patterns.

Stigma may be impacting your choices if you want to do something but are hindered by what others might think. For people suffering from mental health challenges, these thoughts and other forms of discrimination can act as barriers to seeking mental health resources they may desperately need.

"If the stigma is so great that you can't even tell your friends or family that you are depressed, or that other things are going on, then you carry that yourself and it gets worse," says Thomas Kelem, LMFT, Executive Director of Stonewall Alliance and Co-Chair of Care Enough to Act, a collaborative effort of individuals and agencies in the region to provide education and support to those affected by mental health challenges.

"STIGMA IS AN UNFAIR BELIEF THAT WE CARRY AND BY NOT TALKING ABOUT IT AND DISCRIMINATION, WE ARE PERPETUATING THE PROBLEM."

Jeremy Wilson
Co-Chair of Care Enough to Act and
Community Services Program Manager of
Butte County Department of Behavioral Health

Jeremy Wilson, Community Services Program Manager of Butte County Department of Behavioral Health and Co-Chair of CETA, says the best way to erase stigma surrounding mental health is to promote open, public conversations about mental health.

"Stigma is an unfair belief that we carry and by not talking about it and discrimination, we are perpetuating the problem," Wilson says.

More than half of Americans will experience a mental illness during their lifetime, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Silence about mental health challenges must end.

"Stigma can be very unconscious and very subtle. It is similar to racism and biases. A lot of the time you don't necessarily know you even have them until a situation comes up where you are faced by it," Kelem says.

It's important to recognize that mental health challenges impact everyone differently. Cultural ideas about mental health and barriers to treatment, like limited access to services, lack of diversity in care providers, language barriers or histories of discrimination and prejudice in the health care field, can influence the way people understand their own health and approach mental health challenges.

Starting a dialogue about these differences is the first step in equalizing access to care and services. Then people can start making informed decisions about their mental wellness and if and how they want to access care.

"If people experiencing mental health challenges are not accessing any level of service then they are not able to improve their wellness nor begin their journey to a healthier life," Wilson says.

Keep reading for inspiring stories about local people overcoming stigma and getting the care they need!

Thomas Kelem and Jeremy Wilson, Co-Chairs of Care Enough to Act, work together to bring an end to stigma surrounding mental health in Butte County and increase community access to mental health services and support.
PHOTO AND COVER PHOTOS BY EMILY TEAGUE



What is stigma around mental health?

Stigma is a set of unfair negative attitudes and behaviors toward people experiencing mental health challenges.

1 in 5 American adults experience a mental illness each year.

The green ribbon is worn for **Mental Health Awareness**.



50% of people who saw someone wearing a green ribbon started having a **conversation about mental health**.

For more information on *Each Mind Matters* or to get your green ribbon, call Jeremy Wilson at 530-891-2850.

Between **70% and 90%** of individuals receiving treatment and/or support experience a significant reduction in symptoms and **improved quality of life**.



Sources: RAND California Statewide Survey and National Alliance on Mental Illness

Sadie Longcor, with her children, says after the death of her husband and a battle with addiction, mental health services got her back on track to being the best mom she can be.
PHOTO BY EMILY TEAGUE



“MY SONS TELL ME I REMIND THEM OF A PALM TREE. NO MATTER WHAT WINDS BLOW MY WAY, I STAY ROOTED. NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS I KNOW I CAN LOVE THEM AND BE HERE FOR THEM NOW.”

Sadie Longcor
Recovering mother who overcame homelessness

A Second Chance to Be a Mom

After addiction threatens her family, mom overcomes fear and gets help

by Anna Quinlan

When Sadie Longcor’s husband died five years ago, the pain of her grief, stress of raising their children on her own and a history of mental health struggles led her down a road of addiction that threatened to take everything.

“I was using anything and everything to numb my pain,” she says. “I was on my way to being completely homeless.” Overcome with doubt during her struggle to care for herself, she had even considered relinquishing custody of her kids.

Longcor’s guilt and doubt were holding her back from getting help, until she got a phone call from an administrator at the Torres Community Shelter and everything changed.

“I didn’t know anything about Narcotics Anonymous or how to get clean,” Longcor says, “I just knew I needed to get better.” She suspects it was a neighbor who called the Torres Community Shelter and asked them to reach out to her. For that, she is forever grateful.

“We felt safe, loved and supported,” Longcor says of settling into the shelter with her two teenage sons. “The shelter staff showed me it was OK to be where I was at, and that I would also get better.”

Sadie received a referral to Behavioral Health, where she began seeing a psychiatrist and counselor, in addition to receiving day-to-day mental health support from Iversen Wellness and Recovery Center.

“I was just watching everyone live their lives and I didn’t feel like I deserved mine,” she says of her early days in recovery, “but my kids were my inspiration.”

Eventually, the triage team at the shelter helped Longcor complete an application to move into the Esplanade House, a transitional housing program for homeless families in Chico, where she and her sons have now lived for a year.

“It’s wonderful,” she says of the environment at the Esplanade House. “I’ve cleaned up my credit and I’m

working on going back to school. One of my major goals is to get off Social Security and be a working member of society again.”

After experiencing the transformative impact of the recovery programs, she hopes to one day get certified to work in drug and alcohol rehabilitation services and support others without judgment or stigma.

“My hope for my future is to give back the love and support to the people who mean the most to me,” she says. Most of all her two sons.

“My sons tell me I remind them of a palm tree,” she says. “No matter what winds blow my way, I stay rooted. No matter what happens I know I can love them and be here for them now,” she says.

“This is my second chance to be the mom they deserve.”



**Mental Health:
HOMELESS
COMMUNITY**

One challenge complicates the other

Approximately 20-25 percent of Americans experiencing homelessness live with severe mental illness, about three times higher than the general population.

Common barriers to wellness:

- Not knowing where to get treatment
- Limited access to transportation
- No form of identification
- Nervousness about forms and answering questions
- Self-conscious about appearance and hygiene
- Cost of health services

Common mental health challenges:

- Schizophrenia
- Bipolar disorder
- Substance abuse and dependence

How to support:

- Advocate for increased funding for supportive housing, which provides stability and improves access to services.
- Donate to local homeless shelters, wellness centers and supportive housing programs.

Learn more about mental health resources and support.

Iversen Wellness and Recovery Center

492 Rio Lindo Avenue
Chico, CA
530-879-3311

Torres Community Shelter

101 Silver Dollar Way
Chico, CA
530-891-9048

Source: National Coalition for the Homeless

Moving Beyond the Binary

After years of struggle with gender identity, student finds peace

Bee Crosswhite, 21, spent years struggling with depression and issues around gender identity. Today, Crosswhite identifies as neither male nor female.
PHOTO BY EMILY TEAGUE

by Kate Gonzales

It's common for young adults to hit some bumps in the road as they try to figure out who they are. For Bee Crosswhite, settling into an identity has been particularly challenging.

Crosswhite, 21, does not identify as male or female and uses the gender-neutral pronoun "they" rather than "he" or "she." As a teen, they outwardly presented as a cisgender man, a man whose assigned sex at birth matches his gender identity. But Crosswhite felt out of place in society's binary gender norms.

"All of my life, I didn't have the vocabulary and the knowledge I do now," Crosswhite says.

Gender fluidity, or less rigid adherence to gender binary and traditional gender norms, is becoming more commonplace. In June, an Oregon resident became one of the first people to be legally non-binary (neither male nor female) in the United States.

Crosswhite says in high school, they displayed masculinity the best way they knew how — through academic dominance. They were the student who knew all the answers, never asked questions and exerted power by speaking over others in class. But that confidence was really masking their insecurity and self-hate.

"I didn't ask questions because I didn't want to seem weak," Crosswhite says. "I never really asked people for help."

Crosswhite's struggle continued in college, when they became a Resident Advisor at California State University, Chico. Crosswhite was in charge of about 30 freshmen while taking a full load of classes. Their grades declined and Crosswhite started feeling uncomfortable in the men's clothing they owned.

Those feelings were about more than just clothing.

"I didn't have a way to express myself," Crosswhite remembers. "I didn't have a way to be myself."

Looking back, Crosswhite realized they had been suffering from depression and suicidal thoughts throughout their teenage years, but had never acknowledged it. When Crosswhite's college girlfriend asked if they were OK, it was the first time they admitted they were not.

Crosswhite took a break from school and moved back in with their parents. They removed their mask of masculinity, exploring their true self and examining their feelings through counseling and the support of friends.

Today, Crosswhite is back in school and expects to earn their degree in religious studies in spring 2017. Crosswhite doesn't currently receive any counseling, but they wouldn't hesitate to get help if they hit another low point.

"There's more to being you than just your gender identity," Crosswhite says. "It's OK to be vulnerable."



**"I DIDN'T HAVE A WAY
TO EXPRESS MYSELF, I
DIDN'T HAVE A WAY TO
BE MYSELF."**

Bee Crosswhite
Gender non-binary student



Don't Hate, Celebrate

Members of the Gender and Sexual Minority (GSM)* community face

the same mental health challenges as other communities but are three times more likely to experience a mental health condition due to stigma and judgment surrounding being non-heteronormative and/or non-cisgender. One example: 41 percent of transgender individuals attempt suicide at some point (compared to 4.6 percent of the general population).

Common mental health challenges:

- Substance abuse
- Depression
- PTSD
- Stress and anxiety
- Insecurity or fear of rejection
- Being isolated or not accepted
- Attempting and/or completing suicide

Be a good ally:

- Don't assume everyone is straight and/or cisgender — leave space for people to come out when they are ready.
- Visibly support the GSM community with rainbow flags or car decals.
- Engage GSM voices and include space for them to share their experiences.
- Defend your GSM friends against discrimination when they are unable to speak for themselves.

Learn more about mental health resources specifically for the Gender and Sexual Minority community, including free and low-fee counseling.

Stonewall Alliance

358 East 6th St., Chico, CA
530-893-3336 – office
530-809-2485 – counseling
center@stonewallchico.org
www.stonewallchico.org

Don't Let Fear Hold You Back

Man finds the right fit at the African American Family & Cultural Center, starts his path to success

by Natasha vonKaenel

Jamahl McMillon spent many mornings outside the African American Family & Cultural Center, without ever taking a step inside.

Recently out of prison, McMillon was staying at Oroville Rescue Mission nearby, where he had to be out the door by 7 a.m. To pass the time before his friends woke up, he sat outside AAFCC reading fantasy novels. Who knew this coincidence would change his life.

Bobby Jones, executive director of AAFCC, saw McMillon on the corner outside and began encouraging him to join them in the center.

"He would talk to me and ask me how I was doing and I just brushed him off," McMillon says. Eventually, looking for advice about re-enrolling in Social Security, he went inside, where his counselor challenged him to think bigger.

"She talked to me, like, 'I think you're better than that. I think you are capable of working, I just think you hold yourself back,'" he says.

That support "made me feel more connected than I ever felt," he says. Growing up, McMillon struggled academically and suffered from social anxiety, sporadic seizures and PTSD due to abuse he experienced as a child.

McMillon's fear of failure and nervousness about asking for help stopped him from pursuing jobs and

getting the mental health services he needed for many years. He hopes others don't make the same mistake.

"Don't be afraid to fail," he says. "Believe it or not, there are a lot more people going through what you are going through than you know." And finding the program or counselor that best suits your needs may take time.

"I talked to a whole bunch of people before I actually found the right person," he says. After he found the

center, things began falling into place. In 2014, McMillon was offered a job as a janitor at AAFCC, where he worked for two years until Jones pushed him to go even further.

"Jones came to me one day, and he said, 'I feel like you are trying to settle. I love the work you do here, but I feel like you think you need to stay here,'" he remembers. McMillon was upset at first, until he realized Jones was right.

McMillon enrolled in AAFCC's Job & Life Skills Workshop, where he learned

how to craft his résumé and properly prepare for a job interview. McMillon credits this workshop with helping him get the job he has now at Dollar Tree as a cashier. He says he wouldn't be where he is now if not for the many people who helped him and the care he received.

"I have really changed immensely with the help of the mental health services that were provided to me," he says.

Jamahl McMillon credits the mental health services and job training workshops at the African American Family & Cultural Center with bringing him closer to his local community and helping him put his life back on track.
PHOTO BY EMILY TEAGUE



**"THERE ARE A LOT
MORE PEOPLE GOING
THROUGH WHAT YOU
ARE GOING THROUGH
THAN YOU KNOW."**

Jamahl McMillon
African American Family & Cultural Center client

Reducing disparities in accessing services



African-Americans are 20 percent more likely to experience serious mental health challenges than the general population, with only about one-quarter of those experiencing mental health challenges seeking care.

Common barriers to wellness:

- Stigma around mental health
- Limited access to mental health services
- Historical disparities in the mental health system for cultural, racial and ethnic populations
- Lack of diversity among mental health professionals

Common mental health challenges:

- Major depression
- ADHD
- Suicide
- PTSD

Ways to support wellness:

- Find a mental health professional that has experience providing services that fit your cultural needs.
- Be open to conversations with your friends and family about mental health challenges.
- Many find strength in faith. If someone in your faith community needs professional support, help them to take that step.

Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness

Learn more about mental health resources and other community events and workshops available specifically for the African American community.

African American Family & Cultural Center

3300 Spencer Avenue, Oroville, CA
530-532-1205
aafcc@youth4change.org
www.african-american-family-cultural-center.org

Nrhiav Kev Zoosiab

ntawm Hmong Cultural Center

Yog ib qhov chaw rau txhua tus Hmoob tuaj koom ua kev zoosiab thiab lojhlob

Tas sau yog Natasha vonKaenel

Phuab Ham tau muaj kev nyuajsiab tag nws lub neeg. Thaum nws thiab nws tus txiv Thoob Vaj, nyob rau yeej thojnam tawgrog Thaib teb, nws xav tais tuaj mus rau lub tebchaws Ameslika tuaj nyob nrog rau tej txheeb tej ze yuav ua rau nws zoosiab duas.

Tab sis nws tus txiv tsis xav tuaj, tsis muaj ibyam abtsi yuav ua tau rau nws tus txiv kam tuaj. Txog rau xyoo

Phuab Ham nrhiav rau kev pab txhawb siab thiab lub zejzog ntawm Koomhaum Hmong Cultural Center of Butte County.
DAIM DUAB TAU POMZOO



“KUV NYIAM TUAJ SIB NTSIB SIB PAB RAU HAUV HMONG CULTURAL CENTER VIM COV NEEG UA HAUJ LWM NYOB RAU ZOOSIAB PAB QHIA TXOG KEV NOJ NYOB HAUV TEBCHAWS AMESLIKA.”

Phuab Ham
Hmong Cultural Center of Butte County tus tau txais kev pab

2000s ua yog thaum kawg cov yeej thojnam raug kaw tag nrho Phuab thiab nws tus txiv thiaj tau tuaj nrog nkawv tsevneg nyob tebchaws Ameslika. Tsis muaj hmoo thaum tuaj txog lawm, Phuab tseem tau kev nyuaj siab ntau tshaj ntxiv.

Phuab yeej tsis paub lus Askiv losyog tsav tsheb. Nws yeej yog nyob raws tej txheeb ze pab thauj nws mus los xwb, tabsis nyias muaj muaj nyias haujlwm, qhov no hajyam nyuaj rau nws txog kev mus yuav zaub mov noj thiab nqa tshuaj noj. Phuab yeej ib txwm tsis muaj tubki, thiab tomqab nws tus txiv tau nruamsim lawm, nws haistias nws nyob ib leeg kho siab khuav xwb.

Qhov Phuab raug no nws yog ib yam tshwmsim heev, raws li Xeeb Yaj tus thawj ntawm Hmong Cultural Center of Butte County hais.

“Tus kabmob kev nyuaj siab yog ib qho teebmeem nyob hauv lub zejzog, tshwjxeeb heev rau Hmoob vim peb tau raug ntau yam teebmeem,” Xeeb hais.

Coob tus laus hauv zejzog nyob nrog txoj kev kub ntxhov los ntawm kob Tsovrog Nyablaj thiab lub neej nyob yeej thojnam tawgrog. Tamsim no lawv tuaj nrhiav tau lub tebchaws Ameslika nyob nrog txoj kev tsis paub lus Askiv, tsuas muaj kev txhawb nqa pab me me thiab yam puav kev pab sab kev nyuaj siab ua yog hais yus cov lus xwb.

“Peb pom ntau tus neeg hauv lub zejzog muaj kev nyuaj siab, ntxhov siab... losyog cais nyob nws ib leeg,” nws hais. Xeeb xavtias yog muaj cov koobtseej txog kevlis kevcai, kev tsim duas tshiab kev sib koom thiab kev cobqhia nyob ntawm Hmong Cultural Center los pab sawv daws kom lawv zoo li nyob koom nrog lub zejzog loj, ua kom lawv tsis muaj kev phomsij thiab tuaj koom ua kev zoo siab nrog lawv tej tsoostsho thiab hais lawv cov lus.

Phuab nrog nws tus txiv mus rau ntawm lub koomhaum thaum nws tus txiv tseem ua neej nyob, thiab tseem niaj hnuv mus txog hnuv no. Nws nyob rau hauv qhov kev pab Zoosiab, ua yog pab cov laus, koom ua kev zoo siab daws tej kev nyuaj siab yav tas los, koom cov koobtsheej thiab tuaj koom ua kev zoosiab nyob ntawm koomhaum.

Tsis Muaj lo lus Mental Health

Kev Nyuajsiab:
**HAUV
HMOOB
ZEJZOG**

Lus Hmoob, tsis muaj lo lus Mental Health. Tsis paub piav tus mob thaum ib tug neeg raug mob lawm es nws xav lica, kev xav thiab yeebyam neeg coj yog los ntawm tus kheej cev nqaij daim tawv kev muaj mob nkeeg thiab yuav tsum tau pab xws li.

Nov yuav nyuaj heev rau cov neeg nyob hauv Hmoob lub zejzog mus nrhiav kev pab, txawm yuav xav tau kev pab npaum lica.

Muaj coob tus Hmoob thojnam tawgrog nyob rau tebchaws Ameslika, tau paub txog kev tuaj mus nyob txawv tebchaw, kev raug mob kheev loj thiab kev tau txais kev muaj mob nyuaj siab ua ntej tag nrho tej no yuav raug rau kev cojnoj cojua tsis sib to taub los ntawm kev nyuaj siab.

Kev tshwm sim teebmeem nyob rau kev Nyuaj siab:

- Tsis nyob li qub txawv tsav
- Yuajsiab txom nyem
- Nyuaj siab ntxhov siab
- Cais tawm

Cov cim teebmeem muaj rau kev Nyuaj siab:

- Yeeb yam kev coj hloov mus hloov los
- Lub suab xav nyob ib leeg xwb
- Tus kheej noj tshuaj losyog hauv cawv
- Lub suab xav tua tus kheej

Yog koj losis ib tugneeg koj paub tau raug tus kabmob nyuaj siab, hu rau Hmong Cultural Center lawv muaj kev pab rau sab kev nyuaj siab uas yog lus Hmoob.

Hmong Cultural Center of Butte County
1940 Feather River Blvd., Ste. H., Oroville, CA
530-534-7474
info@hmongculturalcenter.net
www.hmongculturalcenter.net

Promotores
10 Independence Circle, Chico, CA
530-345-1600
www.nvcss.org/butte/promotores

Dejando de ser una víctima para ser un sobreviviente

No deje que el abuso doméstico lo detenga para vivir su vida

por N. Gissela Melendez

“Tengo mucha fe en Dios y me siento feliz, ¡el mundo es mío! Tengo derecho a ser feliz y a tener una vida sana, libre de violencia”. Estas palabras resumen cómo se siente y piensa ahora Diego Cañada, quien en el pasado fue víctima de violencia física y emocional.

Hace cuatro años vino de su país, México, para reunirse con su pareja y los dos hijos de ambos, quienes ya residían en California. Desde su llegada los problemas fueron aumentando; las humillaciones, ofensas e intimidaciones por parte de su pareja se convirtieron en una costumbre, mientras ella le hacía creer él que no tenía ningún derecho.

Subsecuentemente al abuso verbal y emocional se produjo el maltrato físico. En el último año de convivencia, los golpes que Diego recibía eran habituales y más violentos, aun enfrente de sus niños. Sintiendo que ya no aguantaba más, él intentó suicidarse en dos ocasiones.

“Me sentía deprimido, solo, y que había perdido a mi familia”, asegura. Parecía que su autoestima y valor como hombre también habían desaparecido.

Sumados a lamentables experiencias como ésta, surgen los estigmas particularmente arraigadas en los miembros de la comunidad hispana, los cuales impiden que ellos busquen ayuda. El hecho de no saber inglés, no tener recursos económicos, educación académica e incluso, no poseer documentación migratoria, son obstáculos para solicitar apoyo en problemas de salud mental.

Aunado a esto existen las creencias erróneas a los desórdenes mentales, los cuales son comúnmente considerados como locura, debilidad emocional y hasta manifestaciones de brujería o hechizos. Al estigma se suman el temor al “qué dirán.”

Por otro lado, las víctimas masculinas de violencia doméstica como en el caso de Diego son estigmatizados como “carentes de hombría y carácter”, sufriendo frecuentemente burlas peyorativas. Sin embargo, en su desesperación, Diego tuvo que vencer todas las barreras y pedir ayuda. Desde hace cinco meses ha recibido terapia

“SI ALGUIEN ESTÁ PASANDO POR LO MISMO, YO LE RECOMENDARÍA QUE SE TENGA FE, AMOR Y RESPETO A SÍ MISMO; SI NO ES ASÍ, NUNCA VA A VALORARSE Y SIEMPRE VA A DEPENDER DE LA PERSONA QUE LO MALTRATA”.

Diego Cañada
Sobreviviente de abuso doméstico

psicológica, albergue temporal y apoyo del Programa Promotores-NVCSS los cuales reciben fondos del Condado (MHSA) para desarrollar técnicas de intervención y prevención a la comunidad Latina y Hmong.

“Si alguien está pasando por lo mismo, yo le recomendaría que se tenga fe, amor y respeto a sí mismo; si no es así, nunca va a valorarse y siempre va a depender de la persona que lo maltrata”.

Ahora la vida de Diego está transformándose positivamente; sigue trabajando y estudiando inglés. A corto plazo desea terminar su high school, y tener un apartamento para recibir a sus hijos los fines de semana. Buscar y recibir ayuda fue fundamental para él, pero todo comenzó con su propia resolución de cambio: “Si yo no hubiera tomado la decisión, nunca hubiera salido de esa situación”.

Diego Cañada: Antes una víctima ... ¡ahora un sobreviviente!

Diego Cañada, víctima de violencia física y emocional, ahora ha recibido terapia para continuar su transformación positiva.
FOTO DE EMILY TEAGUE



Salud Mental
**COMUNIDAD
LATINA**

Como ayudar

Reconozca las Señales:

- Sentirse sin esperanza, desesperado y atrapado
- Aislamiento
- Cambios repentinos de humor
- Estados intensos de ansiedad, estrés, preocupación u hostilidad
- Aumento en el consumo de alcohol y drogas
- Alteraciones del sueño y apetito
- Poner sus asuntos en orden
- Regalar sus pertenencias
- Expresar el deseo de morirse o de suicidarse

Escuche y Dialogue:

- Escúchelos sin juzgarlos
- Exprese su preocupación y tranquilice a la persona
- Desarrolle un plan de seguridad
- Motívelos y apóyelos para buscar ayuda:

Promotores mejora la calidad de vida de las familias mediante la promoción de salud mental y el bienestar. Proporciona educación apoyo, y referencia a los miembros de la comunidad Latina y hmong. Los servicios son proveídos en su propio idioma.

Comuníquese con Promotores para aprender más acerca de los recursos de salud mental disponibles en sus comunidades.

Promotores

10 Independence Circle, Chico, CA
530-345-1600
www.nvcss.org/butte/promotores

Once in Denial, Veteran Now Thankful for Treatment

Sharing experiences with others helps veteran accept his condition

by Matt Jocks

Encouragement, love and support weren't enough to bring down the barriers stopping Scott Mowers from getting the help he needed. For that, he has a California Highway Patrol officer to thank.

Mowers was going through an episode of hearing voices when a CHP officer recognized what was happening and stopped him from climbing back into the truck he drove for a living. After that he had to stop driving as a profession.

With the help of VA mental health care services in Palo Alto and the Iversen Wellness and Recovery Center in Chico, Mowers has learned to acknowledge and deal with the schizophrenia that had turned his life inside out.

Mowers, a veteran of the Marine Corps and the California National Guard, sustained a head injury in training that may have aggravated or triggered his symptoms. He had heard the voices for a while, but was convinced they were, at some level, real and coming from outside his head.

"I didn't think I was mentally ill," he says. "I resented it if someone talked about it. My sister said that it could be an issue with the chemicals in my brain, but I didn't want to think that."

Showing how strong the stigma around mental health can be, Mowers, 55, resisted despite being witness to what mental illness could do.

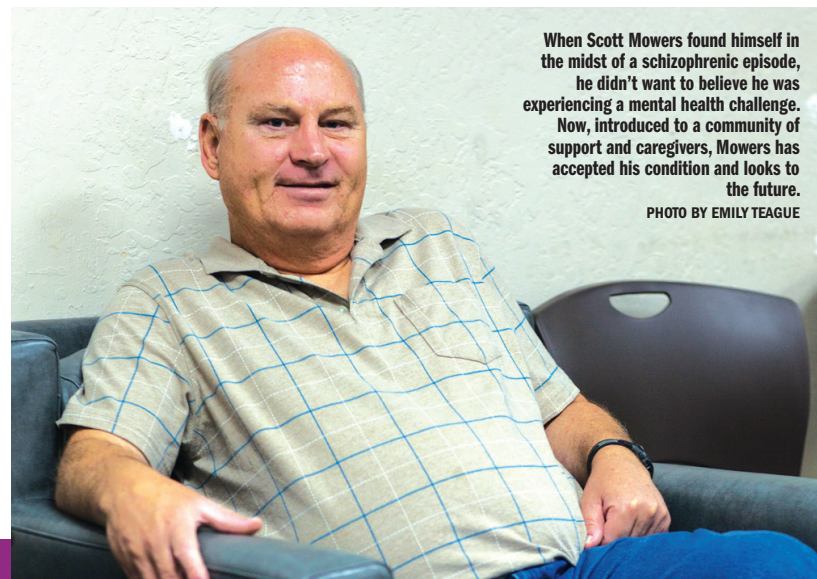
"IT REALLY HELPS TO TALK ABOUT IT AND TO REALIZE THAT OTHER PEOPLE HAVE THE SAME KINDS OF PROBLEMS."

Scott Mowers
Veteran and Iversen Wellness and Recovery Center client

"My brother lived with schizophrenia, so I understood," he says. "It's not that I had stereotypes about mental illness. I had compassion for my brother. But I just couldn't accept it."

When Scott Mowers found himself in the midst of a schizophrenic episode, he didn't want to believe he was experiencing a mental health challenge. Now, introduced to a community of support and caregivers, Mowers has accepted his condition and looks to the future.

PHOTO BY EMILY TEAGUE



For some members of the military, the soldier mentality can act as a barrier to recognizing mental health challenges and seeking professional help. For Mowers, losing his livelihood as a truck driver helped push him to take that step. What he found at the VA and Iversen was support that gave him the strength to knock down that barrier.

"The VA was very thorough in evaluating me," Mowers says. "And I was a real pain in the butt."

At Iversen, he has found the tools to deal with his schizophrenia, as well as a community of caregivers and others dealing with similar issues.

"There's a real infrastructure there," he says. "Good education, weekly classes, a chance to meet and have some coffee and socialize with others."

Mowers has taken to heart the five key recovery concepts taught at Iversen – hope, personal responsibility, education, self-advocacy and support. He says his illness makes it difficult for him to hold a steady job, but it is much more manageable. And acceptance has brought satisfaction.

"I didn't want to be mentally ill and I didn't want to discuss it," he says. "Now, it really helps to talk about it and to realize that other people have the same kinds of problems."



Mental Health:
**MILITARY
COMMUNITY**

Back home, veterans deserve care

Roughly one-quarter of active duty service members suffer from some form of mental illness, with 30 percent developing a mental health challenge within three to four months of being home. Veterans over the age of 65 are more than twice as likely to be diagnosed with major depressive disorder, when compared to the general population.

Common mental health challenges:

- High-risk behaviors
- Depression
- Substance abuse, self medication
- Hypersensitivity and hypervigilance
- PTSD
- Traumatic brain injury
- Suicide

Ways to support wellness:

- Give veterans space to acclimate back to civilian society.
- Be sensitive when asking veterans about their service — not everyone is ready to talk.
- Support legislation to improve veteran health care.
- Listen to veterans and point them to veteran resources and support groups.

Learn more about mental health resources and other support you are eligible for as a veteran.

Butte County Veteran Services Office

2445 Carmichael Drive, Chico, CA
530-891-2759
www.buttecounty.net/dess/Services/VeteranServices

Iversen Wellness and Recovery Center

492 Rio Lindo Avenue
Chico, CA
530-879-3311

Every Parent Needs a Hand

Expert encourages parents to feel comfortable seeking help

by Matt Jocks

Rewarding, fulfilling, life-changing. Those are the words usually associated with becoming a new parent. But there can be other words: fear, despair, depression.

For some new parents, it's a normal case of the "baby blues" that passes. For others, it becomes a struggle, complicated by the mental and emotional barriers that keep them from getting the help they need.

The dark side of new parenthood is talked about much less than the joy, and many new parents keep their problems to themselves.

"They don't want to be looked at as a bad mom," says Gail Garcia, LCSW, a mental health professional who works with new mothers.

Garcia says the "baby blues" are a normal part of the postpartum experience, but when it goes beyond that, new parents should seek help.

"Everyone sort of knows about the baby blues. But that should only last for two weeks," Garcia says. "Beyond two weeks, that's when it gets to be an indication of something else."

Studies show that perinatal mood and anxiety disorders affect about one in seven women. Their manifestations can vary in type and severity.

"IT'S SLOWLY GETTING OUT THERE THAT MENTAL HEALTH IS A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF OVERALL HEALTH."

Gail Garcia
Licensed Clinical Social Worker who works
with new parents



"There are some symptoms similar to those of OCD – obsessive compulsive disorder," Garcia says, describing symptoms she has seen in new moms. "She may be really anxious about checking the baby's diaper — only she checks it 15 times an hour. Some moms may be constantly checking the locks on the doors or constantly checking whether the baby is breathing OK."

In other new moms, depression is a more prominent issue. The conditions may also appear during pregnancy.

The biggest weapon in dealing with these disorders is information. Doctors and therapists should be aware of what each individual new parent is going through and make sure they know it is OK to seek help.

"In Butte County, we have done a lot of outreach and education on the issues with new mothers," Garcia says. "We've done trainings at OB clinics on having the women screened. They are screening at two months, four months, six months. They are asked 10 questions to assess how they are dealing with everything and, if needed, they are getting referrals to counseling."

Those close to the new parents also play a role, looking for warning signs. Friends and family should look for "people who are not sleeping. People who are isolating themselves. Any kind of excessive thoughts. And just a sadness that is unusual," Garcia says.

But the good news, according to Garcia, is that the stigma around seeking help is declining.

"I think it's slowly getting out there that mental health is a very important part of overall health," she says. "We are seeing the integration of therapists and primary care physicians working together."

**Take care
of yourself
and your child**


Mental Health:
**NEW
PARENTS**

A study following new moms for a year after delivery found that roughly 22 percent of new moms experienced depression. Another study found 26 percent of new dads experienced depression in the third to sixth months after a baby is born, more than twice the normal rate for men. All parental units, whether they are two moms, two dads or single parents, can have difficulty adjusting to parenthood.

Common mental health challenges:

- Anxiety or depression
- Feeling unable to enjoy their babies
- Don't feel like themselves
- Thoughts about harming themselves or their children

Ways to support wellness:

- Be open with your partner or family about the feelings and insecurities you may have as a new parent.
- Get screened during and after pregnancy for depression or other mental health challenges.
- Seek out resources for new parents. Support groups and other treatments have been proven to be very effective helping new parents adjust.

Source: JAMA Psychiatry and Journal of the American Medical Association

Learn more about mental health resources, including free support groups, for new parents.

Mothers Strong

www.helpcentral.org/mothersstrong
www.facebook.com/MothersStrong



Scott Zuschin, Chico Police Department sergeant, says a community policing model has helped officers more effectively serve people with mental health challenges.
PHOTO BY EMILY TEAGUE

A Model for Understanding

How local police are taking a broad approach to helping the community

by Kate Gonzales

A partnership that works for everybody



According to National Alliance on Mental Illness, 15 percent of men and 30 percent of women in the nation's jails have a serious mental illness.

Incarceration can exacerbate mental health issues, and the Chico Police Department has partnered with service providers, like Stairways Programming, to compassionately and effectively serve people experiencing mental health challenges.

How police are meeting the need:

- Officers spend more time in the community building rapport with citizens, including those experiencing homelessness.
- Police have a knowledge of mental health service providers and resources.
- Stairways Programming employees educate officers on de-escalation techniques and proper responses to people experiencing a mental health crisis. Sometimes, staff even accompany officers on a call.
- Officers educate citizens about how to interact with police and avoid the risk of escalation.

Learn more about the efforts to improve the mental health of our community.

Chico Police Department Target Team

Sgt. Scott Zuschin: Target Supervisor
(530) 897-4941

www.chico.ca.us/police/TARGET_team.asp

In Butte County, police officers want to find alternatives to putting citizens behind bars who do not belong there — especially when those people are experiencing mental health challenges.

That's why the Chico Police Department has adopted a community policing model that focuses on communication, relationship building and a knowledge of the services they can offer to those in crisis.

"Police these days are getting tasked with many more things that were normally outside our job description," says Chico Police Department Sgt. Scott Zuschin. "A lot of the time we're making decisions that require a certain amount of knowledge in social services, as first responders."

This includes responding to calls when a person is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, experiencing homelessness or having a mental health crisis. Police address these problems on a case-by-case basis, so it's important to understand the individual's story and get to the heart of what's causing their distress.

"A lot of it is just listening and being compassionate to their needs," Zuschin says.

To that end, the police department has built strong relationships with local service providers to ensure those who most need support are able to access it, even when that point of entry is through law enforcement.

The department has built bridges between itself and organizations like Stairways Programming, which offers transitional and supportive housing programs for people who want to get clean and sober. Stairways Programming staff have joined police on calls to prevent situations from escalating. Police officers will also refer individuals to Behavioral Health. If a person is arrested, the department works with the District Attorney's office to ensure that, when appropriate, the suspect's mental condition is considered during sentencing, and that they are offered services.

"With our partnership with the DA, we've been able to work with them on specific cases and get people into support programs in lieu of long jail terms," he says.

The progress the Chico Police Department has made has not gone unnoticed. Every year, Stairways Programming facilitates a gathering of 200 or so people experiencing homelessness or mental illness to vote and recognize someone who has positively impacted their community. The majority of them insisted Zuschin get that recognition in 2016.

Ultimately, facilitating meaningful connections between service providers and people who police have frequent interactions with make for better policing.

"Having more hands-on experience with how these resource providers work, I'm able to recommend resource providers that better fit their needs," Zuschin says.

"A LOT OF THE TIME WE'RE MAKING DECISIONS THAT REQUIRE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF KNOWLEDGE IN SOCIAL SERVICES."

Scott Zuschin
Sergeant, Chico Police Department

A New Resource for Mental Health: Your Library

Local libraries are here to help

by Natasha vonKaenel

The library is for everyone. It is a democratic institution that makes sure information is always accessible for free, to all. So why shouldn't it have information about mental health challenges – something 50 percent of people will be impacted by at some point in their lives?

It should. All libraries should. At least according to Laura-Lyn Burch, a senior library assistant at Oroville Branch Library who has worked for Butte County Library for 24 years.

**“JUST TO LET THEM
KNOW, THIS IS OK. IT'S
OK TO COME IN AND
ASK, TAKE WHAT YOU
NEED, AND TO TALK
ABOUT IT.”**

Laura-Lyn Burch
Senior Library Assistant at Oroville Branch Library



The library's training helped Laura-Lyn Burch be a better resource for people experiencing mental health challenges and opened her eyes to the importance of education in reducing stigma around mental health.

PHOTO BY EMILY TEAGUE

"I don't see why every library doesn't have mental health resources," Burch says. "It's way less intimidating. It's a lot more accessible and it's anonymous and private."

In 2015, Butte County Library received a \$25,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to increase access to mental health information and resources. With this funding, Butte County Library was able to purchase more than 600 library materials about common mental health challenges, including drug and alcohol addiction recovery, PTSD and combat trauma, bipolar disorder, anxiety, depression, and suicide.

The materials — books, e-books and DVDs — flew off the shelves. Some local libraries set up displays to showcase the new materials, but the displays would quickly become empty.

In a voluntary survey of patrons who checked out the new materials, an overwhelming 88 percent of people reported that the materials helped them with their health and wellness, and that someone close to them was living with a mental health challenge.

"Time and time again we have had people come back and tell us that they really were grateful we had the materials here," Burch says.

In addition to buying new materials, Butte County Library also provided training to its staff and volunteers about mental health challenges and how the library can act as a resource to thoughtfully present appropriate mental health information.

For Burch, the training was eye-opening, especially when she found out how pervasive mental health challenges really are.

"The sheer number of people that are being impacted, it's dramatic," she says. "So many people feel like they're the only ones in the situation, which is far from the truth."

Burch realized stigma around mental illness was holding her back from being open with her family, friends and library patrons.

"I don't have to feel embarrassed," she says. "I feel more at ease to talk about my own experiences in my own family, and even with patrons. Just to let them know, this is OK. It's OK to come in and ask, take what you need, and to talk about it."

Knowledge is key to reducing stigma



Research has shown that people who have more information about mental illness are less stigmatizing to people with mental health challenges than those who are misinformed.

The Butte County Library's new effort to educate its patrons and staff about mental health challenges with hundreds of new materials is one step toward reducing the stigma surrounding mental health.

Success!

The success of libraries promoting mental health education has led to the California State Library's plan to focus more money on mental health programs in libraries around the state.

More ways to reduce stigma:

- Educate yourself and others about mental health, and dispel false conceptions about mental health challenges when you hear them.
- Treat your friends, family and community members experiencing a mental health challenge with kindness and empathy.
- Support legislation for improving mental health services, with your vote, money and voice.

Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness

Find more resources for mental health at your local library.

Butte County Library

Information line (toll-free): 855-379-4097
www.buttecounty.net/bclibrary/Home.aspx

Never Be Afraid to Seek out Help

Mental health resources

Butte County crisis

Behavioral Health 24/7 Crisis Line

800-334-6622
530-891-2810
560 Cohasset Road, Ste. 180,
Chico, CA
www.buttecounty.net/behavioralhealth

Enloe Behavioral Health
530-332-5250
www.enloe.org/wellness

Butte County support

6th Street Center for Youth
530-894-8008
www.6thstreetcenter.org

African American Family & Cultural Center
530-532-1205
www.african-american-family-cultural-center.org

Butte County Behavioral Health
530-891-2810 (Access Line)
www.buttecounty.net/behavioralhealth

Butte County Library
855-379-4097
www.buttecounty.net/bclibrary

Butte Youth Now
530-891-2891
www.butteyouthnow.org

Care Enough to Act
530-891-2850
www.careenoughtoact.org

Hmong Cultural Center of Butte County
530-534-7474
www.hmongculturalcenter.net

Homeless/Runaway Emergency Action Response Team (HEART)

877-478-6292
www.youth4change.org

Iversen Wellness & Recovery Center

530-879-3311
www.buttecounty.net/behavioralhealth/AdultServices/IversenCenter.aspx

The Jesus Center
1297 Park Avenue Chico, CA
530-345-2640
jesuscenter.org/

Northern Valley Talk Line
855-582-5554
<https://nvcss.org/butte/nvtl/>

Mothers Strong
www.helpcentral.org/mothersstrong
www.facebook.com/MothersStrong

Butte 211
2-1-1
www.HelpCentral.org

PASSAGES
Serving older adults and their families
530-898-5923
www.passagescenter.org

Promotores
Serving Latino and Hmong residents
530-345-1600
www.nvcss.org/butte/promotores

Stairways Programming
Residential recovery program
530-809-2322
www.stairwaysprogramming.com

Stonewall Alliance

*Serving the gender and sexual minority (LGBT*Q) community*
530-893-3336
www.stonewallchico.org
center@stonewallchico.org
Free and low-fee counseling
530-809-2485
counseling@stonewallchico.org

Torres Community Shelter
Serving homeless community
101 Silver Dollar Way, Chico, CA
530-891-9048
chicosshelter.org

National crisis

24-hour Crisis Text Line - Alex Project
Text "Start" to 741-741
www.crisistextline.org

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
800-273-8255
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Red Nacional de Prevención del Suicidio
888-628-9454
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/GetHelp/Spanish

SAMHSA Suicide Safe mobile app
store.samhsa.gov/apps/suicidesafe

The Trevor Line
For LGBTQ+ youth suicide prevention
866-488-7386
www.thetrevorproject.org

Veterans Crisis Line
800-273-8255, press 1
www.veteranscrisisline.net

Statewide support

Each Mind Matters
www.eachmindmatters.org

Know the Signs
www.suicideispreventable.org

The Friendship Line
For older adults
800-971-0016
www.ioaging.org

Support at school

Butte College Student Health Clinic
530-895-2441
www.butte.edu/shc

Butte College Safe Place & Wellness Program
530-879-6185
www.butte.edu/safeplace

CSU, Chico Counseling & Wellness Center
530-898-6345
www.csuchico.edu/counseling

CSU, Chico Health Center
530-898-5241
www.csuchico.edu/shs

CSU, Chico Safe Place
530-898-3030
www.csuchico.edu/safeplace

Glenn County

Glenn County Behavioral Health
800-500-6582
www.countyofglenn.net

Tehama County

Alternatives to Violence
530-528-0226
www.atvrb.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)
Greater Sacramento Chapter
707-968-7563
rayers@afsp.org
www.afsp.org

Children First Counseling Center
530-529-9454
www.first5tehama.com

Family Service Agency
530-527-6702
www.fccredbluff.com

Head Start Counseling Services
530-529-1500 ext. 115
www.nccdi.com

Mental Health First Aid and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) Training
Available year-round through Tehama County Health Services Agency. To register, visit www.eventbrite.com and search TCHSA.
530-527-8491 ext. 3713
Kelly.Keith@tchsa.net

Tehama County Community Crisis Response Unit (CCRU)
530-527-5637
www.tehamacohealthservices.net/MentalHealth/crisis_services.htm

Tehama County Mental Health Outpatient Services
530-527-8491, ext. 3121
www.tehamacohealthservices.net

Youth Empowerment Center (YES Center)
530-527-8491 ext. 3127
www.tehamacohealthservices.net

Join us for Chico's 7th annual Out of the Darkness Walk



Sat., Oct. 15, 2016

Starting at 9 a.m.

Chico City Plaza, W. Fourth Street, Chico, CA
Register for the walk at www.AFSP.org.

Roughly 1.5 mile walk to raise awareness and decrease stigma around suicide. Free to all, but a \$1 donation is requested. Registered walkers who raise \$150 by walk day receive a free T-shirt!

