



Fall, 2020

2020 has been a particularly difficult year for all of us. Mental wellbeing as a public health concern has been given center stage. We don't need to tell you how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our world: you are living in it.

But we want to assure you: **MHAM remains committed to responding to the needs in our community by providing education, eliminating stigma and removing barriers to care.**

We are proud to share with you what we've accomplished during this year, what we are planning for 2021, and how you can help.

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MHAM became an "OFFICIAL" Affiliate of Mental Health America

Just as the pandemic took hold in March, we were notified that we were accepted as an Affiliate of Mental Health America (MHA)! MHA is the nation's leading community-based nonprofit dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness and promoting the overall mental health of all.

This affiliation allows us access to resources and educational programs from the national office, including access to the MHA online mental health screening initiative. So far this year, MHA reported a 300% increase in the number of people in Michiana who have completed online mental health screenings, as compared to 2019. The results of these screenings are clear: there is a significant increase in the number of people who's test results show an indication of a mental health issue – specifically, anxiety and depression.

People in our community want information.

They want education.

And they need help.

How you can help:

- Check out the [Mental Health America](#) online mental health screening and resources
- Tell a friend or loved one about our screening tool



Educational Programming

MHAM has significantly increased our education and outreach programs in 2020. We responded to Covid 19 by moving from in-person to virtual educational programming. Like many of you, our volunteer leaders had to learn on-the-fly how to navigate this new, virtual platform. We provided over 16 free or low-cost programs this year – up from 6 in 2019, and the community response has been phenomenal:

Over 600 individuals attended one of our 16 classes or webinars

1200 people have viewed MHAM classes on Facebook Live and the MHAM YouTube Channel.

[➤ Support MHAM](#)

MHAM
Mental Health Awareness
of Michiana

Thank you to our incredible speakers

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Georges Prosper
Yessica Lawson
Sara Sage
Margaret Jessop
Catherine Pittman
Chrystal Whitlow
Deslynne Roberts
Jennifer Hames
Don Cronk
Marla Godette
Suzanne Courtney
Sayida Peprah
Birdie Meyer
Dr. Ilana Kirsch
Erin Ward
Sally Dixon
Kelli Brien

Amid ongoing protests over unequal treatment of black Americans and police brutality, coupled with a pandemic that has disproportionately affected communities of color, we found ourselves in the perfect position to help shift the conversation. We developed two programs that highlighted the impact of racism and addressed racial disparities. Feedback about these events described their impact:

"I found this training very interesting. I have thought a lot about my own biases and how that plays out in my role in the community. I really appreciated understanding why we have the biases that we do."

Our major educational event, a Maternal Mental Health Symposium, highlighted mental health concerns in pregnancy and the postpartum period and how transgenerational trauma and systemic racism can lead to worse maternal and infant outcomes than white counterparts.

Programs are already in development for next year, including Racial Disparities in Eating Disorders and The Importance of Cultural Humility.

How you can help:

- **Suggest a Topic** for a future workshop
- **Offer to Present** on Clinical Topics or teach an Educational Workshops
- **Connect us** to great speakers and presenters on topics of interest to you and/or the community
- **Share what you've learned** with others to help eliminate stigma around mental health issues

Pro Bono Counseling Project

We are developing a program to improve access to mental health services for those who are uninsured or underinsured. This project is modeled after successful programs in Maryland and Ohio, and connects volunteer, licensed therapists with individuals in need of short-term counseling and therapy.

To date, nine professionals have signed on to help us pilot this project. We will officially kick off the Pro Bono Counseling Project with a new web-based application, referral and tracking system in early 2021. In addition, we will hire staff to help manage the program and provide follow-up resources and assistance for both the clinicians and the clients.

How you can help:

- **Contact us** (MHA.Michiana@gmail.com) to request an opportunity to receive counseling for yourself through our program.
- **Refer someone** to our program who needs help dealing with depression, anxiety, stress, etc.
- **Become a volunteer** clinician.
- **Help us get the word out** about our program

Community Support

We give thanks for all the ways the community has supported MHAM in 2020. Education, collaboration and innovation are key tenets of MHAM and we could not have achieved what we did without the support of many members of the community. Over 20 community members served on planning and advisory committees as we gathered input and feedback on two significant projects in 2020.

The Pro Bono Counseling Project and the Maternal Mental Health Symposium benefited from the advice and feedback from our advisory committee members.

Maternal Mental Health Symposium Planning Committee: The MHAM Programming Committee was joined by Kelli Brien, Jennifer Carter, Sally Dixon, Holly Farmer, Judy Giden, Elizabeth Temple and Dawn Wilkins.

The Pro Bono Counseling Project Advisory Committee: Naomi Adams, Laura Baker, Jennifer Carter, Kiana Jackson, Kent Laudman, Tom Merluzzi, Jennifer Richmond, Deslynne Roberts, Katie Uitti, Kristin Tawadros, Mark Torma, and Chrystal Whitlow.

How you can help:

- **Contact us** (MHA.Michiana@gmail.com) to learn about volunteer opportunities with MHAM
- **Like us** on [Facebook](#) and **subscribe** to our [YouTube](#) channel
- **Refer us** to resources for funding

Looking forward to 2021!

Our educational programming in 2021 will continue with public and provider education, events highlighting Racial Disparities and the importance of cultural humility, launching the Pro Bono Counseling Project, and Local and statewide advocacy.

We could not be where we are today without the help of our all-volunteer Board of Directors: Lisa Kelly, Heather Holleman, Jim Kelly, Nancy Bean, Yessica Lawson and Marla Godette.

Additionally, we are proud to introduce you to our newest board members:
Kelli Brien and Amanda Rhoades.

Amanda is a mental health provider in the community.
Kelli is a childbirth advocate and doula. Both Kelli and Amanda bring passion and experience in mental health advocacy and we anticipate will help strengthen MHAM's mental health advocacy initiatives in the coming year.

On behalf of all of us, thank you for continuing to support our mission by participating in our programs, spreading the word about mental health wellness and providing financial support.

2020 has reinforced what we have believed from our inception, that good health and good mental health are intertwined.

We wish you and your families an abundance of both!

Financial Support

MHAM is grateful to the following for financial support and event sponsorships in 2020:

Beacon Community Impact
Goodwill Industries of Michiana
Vera Z. Dwyer College of Health Sciences at IUSB
Shaw Center for Children and Families at Notre Dame
Family Medicine of South Bend.
Lisa B Kelly, LCSW, LLC
Individual donors

Please Donate Now

DONATE

What you can do?

Donate to MHAM on Giving Tuesday. Facebook will match donations made through our [Facebook page](#).

Select MHAM as your charity of your choice on [Amazon Smile](#) and we get a small percentage of your purchase.