

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

TOGETHER

for Mental Health

#Together4MH

2022

COMMUNITY SUPPORT IS KEY TO REDUCING MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA



Holly Jerome

Have you seen our signs around town and our social media videos? Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center is working to raise awareness of Mental Health within the six counties we serve. According to Mental Health America, "Whether you realize it or not, mental health plays a big role in your overall well-being. When you're mentally healthy, you are able to enjoy your life and the people in it, feel good about yourself, keep up good relationships, and deal with stress. It's normal for your mental health to shift over time – we all face difficult situations in our lives. Creating positive habits is a great way to support your mental health when you're doing well and helps you build skills to use if you do face symptoms of a mental health condition."

We know that mental illness affects our community as mental illness and substance use disorders are involved in 1 out of every 8 emergency department visits by a U.S. adult (estimated 12 million visits) according to NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness). Making sure that our local communities know where to get help is crucial in getting our community members connected with resources. With the help of a SAMHSA grant, we have been able to add on a Prevention and Promotion team. This new department will focus on raising awareness, teaching classes, updating brochures, connecting with community partners and more! They are working on getting certified to teach Mental Health First Aid as well as QPR certified. QPR stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer – the 3 simple steps anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide. The intent is to identify and interrupt a crisis and direct that person to the proper care.

During the month of May, SEKMHC will be raising awareness within our communities, and we want you to know... You are Not Alone! As a community, please help reduce the stigma and share with others that Mental Health Matters! For more information about our agency, please visit our website at sekmhc.org and check out our social media @sekmhc for fun pictures and videos all month long!!! A simple share can go a long way to help spread the word that help is available!

Holly Jerome

Director of Human Resources & Marketing
Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center

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MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY LITERALLY CHANGES THE BRAIN



Steve Murdock

The human brain is probably the most complex and sophisticated organ on the planet, if not the entire galaxy. Our brains control virtually every function of our body and mind, from how we walk, move our limbs, speak or even sneeze. From how to pick up a piece of paper on the floor to pondering the origins of the universe, it all takes place in the brain.

For around a century, mental health professionals and scientists believed that once the human brain matured into adulthood, any chance of actual cerebral physical change was impossible. The belief was that all the shaping, changing, and developing in the brain was done in childhood and adolescence only. After that, it was basically too late for any significant progress or improvement to be made. The science of the day said that adults could certainly learn and add to their knowledge base, but actual shaping of the organ itself simply didn't take place.

Thankfully, we now know this is not the case. Within the human brain, there is a phenomenon known as neuroplasticity, which, in everyday terms, means that the brain has the capacity to shape its neurological pathways to store new information. The way the neurons are firing can literally be altered along the command center of the nervous system (the brain), thus rerouting the desired message to store the new information in the hippocampus, neocortex or amygdala.

An example of neuroplasticity would be individuals who learn to walk again when part of their body is paralyzed. Another is someone who becomes blind as an adolescent or an adult but through the enhancement of the other four senses, becomes more aware of his/her surroundings and manages to become mobile again. These are the more obvious examples of neuroplasticity, or the molding of the brain.

Neuroplasticity also happens whenever we learn something new. Neurons fire to different parts of the brain and information is stored chemically to be retrieved when needed later. Whenever you learn a new diet tip, exercise routine, or coping skill for depression or anxiety, your brain is actually changing in very small but significant ways.

The beauty of this phenomenon is that people of all ages can experience it. Whether you're five or 95, your brain literally changes whenever you learn something new. Sometimes the best things we can learn are ways to cope with life's challenges, such as stress, conflict, and isolation. When we learn these things, our brains truly change.

Change your brain today. It's never too late. Talk to a mental health professional today and experience neuroplasticity firsthand as you learn new skills and change your mental health for the better. The Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center is here and ready to help you.

Steve Murdock, MA, MDiv, LPC

Mental Health Therapist

Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center

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Kylie Cromer

IT'S IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU NEED HELP

As a crisis case manager, my job is to provide immediate support when you may need it most. We are here to guide you toward ways to cope with the stresses of life, be physically healthy, have good relationships, make meaningful contributions to your community and realize your full potential. Crisis case management is here to assist with creating a safe space to thrive.

There are many different things you can do to improve your mental health at home, including:

- **Practicing gratitude**, which means being thankful for the good things in your life. It's helpful to do this every day, either by thinking about what you are grateful for or writing it down in a journal. For example, when you are stressed, you may not notice that there are also moments when you have some positive emotions. Gratitude can help you to recognize them.
- **Taking care of your physical health**, since your physical and mental health are connected.
- **Connecting with others**. Humans are social creatures, and it's important to have strong, healthy relationships with others. Having good social support may help protect you against the harms of stress.
- **Developing a sense of meaning and purpose in life**. This could be through your job, volunteering, learning new skills, or exploring your spirituality.
- **Developing coping skills**, which are methods you use to deal with stressful situations. They may help you face a problem, take action, be flexible and not easily give up on solving it.
- **Meditation**, which is a mind and body practice where you learn to focus your attention and awareness.
- **Relaxation techniques** are practices you do to produce your body's natural relaxation response. This slows down your breathing, lowers your blood pressure and reduces muscle tension and stress.

Our vision is to improve the quality of life in southeast Kansas. We provide assistance during a mental health crisis or emergency situation. Our services are always available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling one of our six-county service area office numbers or our toll-free number, **1-866-973-2241**. A crisis call will be directed to a qualified mental health professional who will consult and may refer or schedule an assessment to provide needed follow-up.

Kylie Cromer

Crisis/Adult Case Manager

Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center

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WHOLE PERSON APPROACH TO MENTAL HEALTH



Brittney Jacobs

Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center (SEKMHC) provides a wide range of services to those in all six (Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Linn, Neosho, and Woodson) counties we serve. One of the most recent additions to these services is SEKMHC becoming a Certified Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC). This aims to enhance the current services provided and offers support for expansions to improve access to care. This initiative also allows us to partner with local primary care providers in all six counties, giving us the opportunity to refer our clients for different healthcare needs. Focusing on a whole person approach, including physical, emotional, social and spiritual wellness, provides us the opportunity to see how they interconnect so we can improve treatment for each of our clients.

I recently moved back to the Allen County area and was hired as a Patient Navigator for SEKMHC. I help maintain the CCBHC status by meeting with clients to complete an anonymous, 15-minute health study assessment. Clients will first complete a baseline assessment which consists of obtaining vitals and answering assessment questions relating to physical, emotional, and social wellness. After the baseline is complete, clients will meet with a Patient Navigator every six months to complete a reassessment which includes obtaining vitals, answering similar questions from the baseline, as well as an additional Perception of Care section. This allows clients to reflect and evaluate the services they have received and share any concerns or questions they may have regarding their treatment.

Witnessing our clients' courage and vulnerability during their health studies has truly been a humbling and gratifying experience. Facing my own mental health challenges, I take pride in providing individualized support to our community and doing my part to help end the stigma around mental health.

Brittney Jacobs

*Patient Navigator (Humboldt)
Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center*

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EXPANDING SERVICES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITIES



Jeanette Rogers

At SEK Mental Health Center, we understand that even though mental health services are becoming more normalized, we recognize that it can still be hard to reach out and take a step towards getting help when it means being vulnerable.

In our mission to continue trying to offer the most effective care to our population here in Southeast Kansas, we acknowledge that there are still many barriers that exist, keeping many from getting the help that is often needed. To make mental health services more accessible to all parts of our population, we have responded by extending our hours in all our offices within our six-county service area.

Many of our therapists have begun offering extended-hour appointment times, opening at 7 am and staying open until 8 pm, and additional appointments are offered on Saturdays and Sundays. Additionally, we are offering nontraditional services in the form of Telehealth therapy for those who may not have access to transportation to the center or who may feel more comfortable having therapy take place in the comfort of their own home using telehealth through a secure video platform.

Telehealth and Extended hours can be an excellent choice for finding time for family therapy or couples therapy to promote positive communication and build stronger and more positive relationships within your family unit. Individual therapy can be beneficial in addressing stress management, anxiety, depression, trauma and many other adjustments to daily living. We offer a wide range of treatment services and work from a team modality to help provide you with all the services that might be most helpful for the current challenges you may be dealing with.

Whatever it may be that feels like it is holding you back from mental health services, we are ready to listen to your needs and work to meet the demands of your hectic schedules. Not sure if therapy services are right for you? **Call us at 1-866-973-2241 and let us provide you with a more thorough understanding of how our services might be the perfect fit for you or your loved ones.**

Jeanette Rogers

Licensed Master Level Psychologist
Outpatient Therapist, Clinical Expansion Coordinator
Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center



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Ashleigh Dooley

USING PLAY TIME TO COMMUNICATE

Kids can struggle to navigate relationships, learn how to problem-solve, facilitate adaptive coping skills, resolve conflict, tolerate stress and regulate their emotions. Trained professionals can help them achieve true mental fitness that can set them on a path towards thriving in school, relationships, and life. The Association for Play Therapy defines the practice as “the systematic use of a theoretical model to establish an interpersonal process wherein trained Play Therapists use the therapeutic powers of play to help clients prevent or resolve psychosocial difficulties and achieve optimal growth and development.”

Play therapy is a part of therapy that builds on children’s normal communication. During play therapy sessions, the therapist strategically utilizes play therapy to help children express what is troubling them when they may not always have the verbal language to express their thoughts and feelings. For example, instead of a child directly talking about a specific issue or incident, a therapist can have the child use puppets or other toys in the room to talk about their feelings around that issue or incident. The children would utilize the puppet to talk about how the puppet acts and feels without directly discussing their situation, which can be uncomfortable and intimidating at first. Play therapy provides a psychological distance from the child’s problem while at the same time still addressing their problems at hand.

Play therapy is appropriate for ages three and up. Play therapy can: repair and rebuild secure attachment between parent and child, increase emotional intelligence and resiliency, develop respect for self and others, decrease negative behaviors, increase healthy coping strategies, enhance thinking, problem-solving, creativity, healthy communication, self-esteem and confidence, engage in developmentally appropriate behaviors – to just be a kid, and optimize brain and body development.

Ashleigh Dooley, LMSW

Outpatient Therapist / Manager of Quality and Compliance

Certified Basic A.R.T. Therapist

Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center

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OFFERING CONNECTIONS AND SUPPORT



Cody Haviland

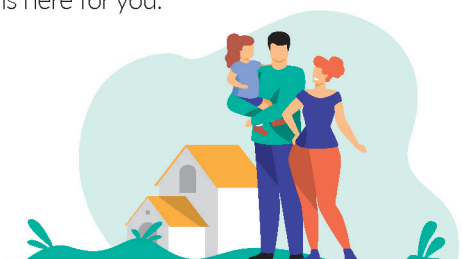
Hello, I am Cody Haviland and I have worked at Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center for over the past seven-plus years in the children's community-based services. There was one service I had never done until this past school year, and it was parent support. Parent Support is a service that Southeast Kansas Mental Health offers that provides advocacy to parents by teaching effective parenting skills if a child qualifies to be on the SED Waiver. This service also has parent support groups that meet that focus on specific topics or skills in a safe friendly environment.

Through my master's level practicum at Fort Hays State University and Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center, I have had the opportunity to work with many families this school year to come alongside them to connect to resources, connect with other community agencies, attend school IEP meetings and so much more. I did not realize the full extent of the work that parent support does until my practicum this year, and if I didn't as an employee then how many people outside of SEKMHC do? There is a growing need within rural communities and within schools to have more access to quality mental health care for all age groups.

That growing need for mental health services and the need for more providers are part of the reasons I wanted to go back to school to pursue an MSW with the support and encouragement of the Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center. Therapists have the opportunity to encourage, connect, support, advocate, assist and empower others on their mental health journeys. That is what I have witnessed over my seven-plus years at Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center and that is what I want to do for the foreseeable future. If you want to experience this level of care, Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center is here for you.

Cody Haviland

School-based Children's Case Manager Team Lead
Parent Support Liaison
Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center



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