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New Oakland NEWS

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Ex-Detroit Lion Eric Hipple advocates to help men overcome barriers to mental health care

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But he struggled with unresolved feelings about leaving the game of football, which had consumed his life from the age of nine. He also went through a divorce.

"I was at a loss, didn't know exactly what to do. I got the divorce, ended up getting remarried, starting a business, and kind of just threw myself into it," Hipple recalled. "I became successful, until it hit me about five, six years later, like, this is it? 'Is this all there is? Is this what life's going to be from now on? I lost all motivation.'"

Hipple was mulling these thoughts on his way to Metro Airport, bound for a business trip when he made a decision. He scrawled a suicide note on a paper napkin. He handed the note to his wife, Shelly, who was driving the car. Then, before she could do anything to stop him, he flung open the passenger door and jumped.

"All that stuff I'd been thinking about just kind of surfaced up, and the closer I got to the airport, I just didn't think I could go."

The darkest cloud of all

Hipple spent weeks in the hospital enduring surgeries and skin grafts. Though a psychiatrist visited his bedside, he didn't want help.

Then the darkest cloud of all passed over Hipple's life. In 2000, his 15-year-old son, Jeff, killed himself with a shotgun at his father's home in Oakland County.

Jeff's death shook Hipple to the core. How could his son have experienced the same dark thoughts he had wrestled with? How could he not have known?

Knowing first-hand the unspeakable pain to loved ones caused by suicide, Hipple no longer felt taking his own life was an option. Instead, he fought off his grief and anger with alcohol and risk-taking behaviors.

He was picked up for driving under the influence but balked at the terms of his probation. As a result, he spent 58 consecutive days in jail. It was there that he had a "moment of enlightenment."

"Coming out of that was the enlightening moment, which was, 'There is another direction I can take', which is just pour all of this energy into something positive," Hipple recalled.

"... We should start talking about it. Let's find out why this happened, but let's talk about it, too, and maybe prevent it if we can."

Hipple got help from a psychiatrist at the University of Michigan Depression Center. And he threw himself into learning everything he could about mental health and suicide prevention.

Since then, then he's traveled the country speaking to police, corrections officers, veterans, athletes and others about mental health, with a special focus on outreach to men.

In addition to voluntary efforts, he works with patients involved in "After the Impact," a treatment program for people with post-concussion syndrome, post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury and similar diagnoses.

Tailored to athletes, veterans and first responders, the program has campuses in Michigan and Florida, and is run by Ann Arbor-based Eisenhower Center.

Reprinted with permission from the January 1, 2018 edition of The Detroit News

Growing to Meet the Needs of People: New Oakland to Open in Ann Arbor



by Kevin Sendi
President, New Oakland
Family Centers

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I'm excited to announce that this summer New Oakland will be opening our newest center in Ann Arbor.

Our Ann Arbor location will be New Oakland's 11th center across the state and our sixth new location in just the past three years. Our Warren site opened in July 2015, followed in succession by our Southgate (2016), Flint (2017), Okemos/Lansing (2017) and Southfield (2018) locations.

Growth is exciting, but it's really not the most important part of the New Oakland story. Starting with my dad, Dr. Ismail Sendi, it's always been New Oakland's vision to bring our distinct brand of compassionate care to as many people as we could while still maintaining the

quality and attentiveness every mental health consumer deserves and should expect.

So our new Ann Arbor location represents more than just the growth of our organization. It's a testament to an enduring focus on meeting the needs of the individuals and communities we serve.

If you're reading this issue of *New Oakland News*, you probably know a little bit about our team of dedicated professionals. Maybe you're even someone who is receiving services from us or has received services in the past.

Starting with my dad more than 25 years ago, and extending through the milestone of our newest locations, New Oakland's story has always been the story of the people we are privileged to help and work with.

You have my promise we will do everything we can to stay true to that mission.

It's wrong to equate gun violence with mental illness



by Lea Johnston
University of Florida Law School

Less than four weeks after a gunman killed 17 students and staff at a South Florida high school, Florida Gov. Rick Scott responded by signing a public safety act into law designed to keep guns away from students with mental illness.

But traits other than mental illness are much more common in mass shootings. Nearly 40 percent of perpetrators, for instance, abuse alcohol or drugs. Most perpetrators experience deep hopelessness, feel festering anger and bitterness, and hold paranoid personality traits. Narrowing our focus to individuals with mental illness, however, is not likely to increase our accuracy.

A national poll from January 2013 reported that 46 percent of respondents believed that “people with serious mental illness are, by far, more dangerous than the general population.”

Under the new law, in Florida, referrals for mental-health services will now be treated like previous school expulsions, arrests resulting in a charge, and juvenile justice actions: The new law requires each student, when initially registering in a school district, to report any previous referrals for mental health services. This invasion of students’ privacy will likely deter students from seeking help and instead leave them to suffer alone.

Deterring treatment is the last thing we need. Of children and adolescents who we know need mental-health care,

we know need mental health care, nearly 80 percent don’t get treatment. The federal government has detailed why, noting that, of all 18- to 24-year-olds:

- Fewer than half (44.3 percent) believe that someone with a mental illness can be successful at work.
- Only slightly more than half (55.2 percent) believe that treatment can help people with mental illnesses lead normal lives.
- Only around 26.9 percent believe that a person with mental illness can eventually recover.

We need to allocate resources to countering these misperceptions so that students feel more comfortable confiding in school counselors and seeking treatment. We should avoid actions that will predictably increase marginalization and fear.

Moreover, the perception that most individuals with mental illness are dangerous is demonstrably false. Studies have reached inconsistent findings, but one landmark study found no significant difference in the rates of violence among people with mental illness and other individuals from the same neighborhood. This finding suggests that environmental and social factors — not their illness — might account for violent acts by individuals with mental illness. Recent research suggests that mental illness and violence are related primarily through the accumulation of risk factors such as substance abuse, unemployment, poverty and victimization.



To conflate mental illness with being dangerous is stigmatizing and leads to discrimination. While the surge of funding for mental-health resources in schools and communities is welcome and should provide relief to the roughly 25 percent of Floridians with a mental-health issue, these resources came at a high price. Whether the price will surpass the gains will depend on the extent the new law reinforces the falsehood that mental illness equates with being dangerous and whether students are ultimately deterred from seeking help when they need it.

Professor Lea Johnston is assistant director of the University of Florida Law Criminal Justice Center. She is an expert on mental health and criminal law and procedure. Reprinted with permission from the Orlando Sentinel, April 30, 2018.

Ex-Lions QB helps men tackle mental health stigma



by Karen Bouffard,
The Detroit News

Former Detroit Lions quarterback Eric Hipple ignored the growing depression that culminated in his decision to jump out the passenger door of a car traveling at 75 miles-per-hour down Interstate 275 near Canton Township.

Before that unsuccessful suicide attempt in the late 1990s, Hipple had never even thought about his mental health. He’d felt increasingly blue in the years following his release from the Lions in 1989, but he didn’t consider it a problem.

Even right after leaping from a moving vehicle, Hipple wouldn’t see a psychiatrist. That would be a sign of weakness, or so he thought.

“I was (thinking), ‘Ain’t no freakin’ way, I’m fine, this is over now, I’m good to go,’” Hipple said recently. “It’s part of the man thing, but it’s also part of the stigma of mental health.”

Getting men to think about mental health, and to get help if they need it, is the focus of “Healthy Men Michigan,” a statewide program to break through thought patterns that keep men from seeking mental health services.

It’s funded with a four-year, \$1.2 million grant from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

“(As a man) it’s my job to be mentally tough, so if I’m called on to run through the wall, I’ll run through the wall,” said Hipple, who has been a mental health advocate for nearly two decades and helped shape male-oriented messages for the Healthy Men Michigan project.

Men commit suicide at a rate more than three times that of women in the United States, according to the CDC. There were 20.7 suicide deaths per 100,000 American men in 2014, compared with 5.8 deaths per 100,000 women.

The focal point of the study is a website where anyone, regardless of gender, can take a quick three-minute mental health screening. About a thousand people have taken the quiz since the site launched in January 2016, about 50 percent of them male.

People found to be at risk are sent online resources, such as referrals to local mental health services, and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-8255.

Based on results of the online screenings, about 300 men ages 25-64 will be asked to participate in a study where researchers will follow up on their progress. About 150 have agreed to participate.

‘Is this all there is?’

After a painful departure from the Lions, Hipple established a successful insurance business and did pregame shows for Fox Sports from 1995 to 2000.

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Meet Christina Polk, MA, LPC, ACS: New Oakland Director of Clinical Resources



Christina Polk is New Oakland’s Director of Clinical Resources. Her job is to help New Oakland clients find the treatment and services that are best suited to their needs.

Christina is also one of the best members of the New Oakland team to reach out to with questions about the care you or your family member is receiving.

Her special role — combined with her background as a

therapist — gives her a unique perspective on the needs of the people we serve.

“Seeking mental health treatment can be a stressful and sometimes confusing time for people,” Christina said. “I feel really lucky to be able to help guide people through the process.”

Prior to her current role, Christina has held various positions since joining New Oakland in 2011, including as

the Clinical Supervisor for New Oakland’s centers in Macomb County; and as a primary FACE to FACE therapist at New Oakland’s Clinton Township Center.

She received her Master of Arts in Professional Counseling from Oakland University.

“I’m excited to be a part of a team that is helping people find the care at some of the most difficult times in their lives,” Christina said.



Former Detroit Lions QB and mental health advocate Eric Hipple supports “Health Men Michigan,” to help men seek mental health services they may need

New Oakland locations to serve you

Center Line Center
26522 Van Dyke Avenue
Center Line, MI 48015
586-759-4400

Clarkston Center
6549 Town Center Drive
Clarkston, MI 48346
248-620-6400

Clinton Township Center
42669 Garfield Road
Clinton Township, MI 48038
586-412-5321

Farmington Hills Center
32961 Middlebelt Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
248-855-1540

Flint Center
2401 South Linden, Suite A
Flint, MI 48532
810-957-4310

Livonia Center
31500 Schoolcraft Road
Livonia, MI 48150
734-422-9340

Okemos Center
2300 Jolly Oak Road
Okemos, MI 48864
517-679-2050

Southfield Center
20505 W. 12 Mile Road
Southfield, MI 48076
XXX-XXX-XXXX

Southgate Center
13305 Reeck Road
Southgate, MI 48195
734-225-2090

Warren Center
8150 E. 13 Mile Road
Warren, MI 48093
586-825-9700

FACE to FACE Crisis Services
877-800-1650
(24 hours/day)