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Mental Health Deserves the Same Attention as All Other Health Care



by **Kim Smith, LMSW**
Clinical Director
New Oakland Family Centers

Happy spring, everyone! It's finally here. (I think.)

At New Oakland, one of our most important jobs as mental health professionals is to work in our communities to end the social stigma that still faces people who seek care for mental illness and seek care.

The false beliefs of mental health stigma are obviously just wrong. In no other area of health care can you imagine there would be any kind of social disapproval related to needing care. But worse than being just wrong, stigma is also very, very harmful. The statistics tell us that mental illness and mental health care are more prevalent than almost any other kind of health care. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among people aged 10-34.

But despite the large number of people who experience mental illness every year, only about half seek and receive treatment. The other half try to ignore their needs and "tough it out."

That's a rate of care that is much lower than it should be . . . and much lower than we find in other kinds of healthcare areas — high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, cancer and others.

Why are only half of the people who need care receiving care? A big part of the reason is stigma — the belief that seeking help is a sign of weakness.

No one would ever think that getting care for a broken arm or high fever was a sign of weakness. But with mental health, it's a perception battle we still all face every day.

Spring is a season of renewal and promise. Let's make this spring a time where we all resolve to do our best to end the stigma that still surrounds mental illness!

A publication of New Oakland Family Centers

 **24-Hour Crisis Hotline**
877-800-1650



To learn more about New Oakland's state of Michigan-licensed FACE to FACE Partial Hospital Program, visit us online at www.NewOakland.org

New Oakland Launches PROPEL™ Program for Career Professionals



by Kevin Sendi
President and CEO
New Oakland Family Centers

New Oakland Family Centers is proud to announce the launch of its new Partial Hospital Program (PHP) designed specifically for professionals experiencing high levels of anxiety and mood dysregulation. Named PROPEL—short for Professionals PHP for Engagement and Learning—this innovative program is tailored for adults aged 18 and older who face work-related stress, academic pressures, and the challenges of balancing professional and personal life.

PROPEL is uniquely crafted to address the specific mental health needs of those in high-pressure environments. Whether you're a working professional coping with relentless job demands, a student navigating the pressures of career training or graduate school, or someone in transition between careers, PROPEL offers a supportive, non-residential setting to explore and manage these challenges. Operating from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday, the program provides intensive therapy and a structured environment without the need for overnight stays.

Participants in PROPEL benefit from a comprehensive approach that includes

both group-based skills-building sessions and individualized therapy. Along with these therapeutic services, the program incorporates psychiatric evaluations, nursing support, and other essential services designed to foster resilience and facilitate recovery. Drawing on the strengths of New Oakland Family Centers' well-established FACE to FACE PHP program, PROPEL places special emphasis on the unique stressors faced by professionals and advanced academic students.

By focusing on the unique stressors associated with professional or academic life, PROPEL is a tailored response to the increasing mental health challenges in today's high-pressure work environments.

For individuals interested in joining the PROPEL program, more information and details

regarding insurance eligibility are available. Simply contact New Oakland Family Centers' 24-hour live call center at 800-395-3223.

With the introduction of PROPEL, New Oakland Family Centers reaffirms its commitment to providing innovative mental health services that meet the evolving needs of the community. This program is a proactive step in ensuring that professionals and students alike have access to the support they need to thrive both personally and professionally.



New Oakland Launches New Website

New Oakland Family Centers is excited to announce the launch of our new website at newoakland.org, designed to better serve our clients, partners and community with **enhanced accessibility and user-friendly navigation**. The redesigned site offers comprehensive information about our programs, services, and community initiatives, making it easier than ever for families to access the support they need.

Visitors to the website will find dedicated sections for **family counseling, parenting resources, youth programs, and community events**. We have also integrated a blog featuring success stories and expert advice on building strong family bonds. In addition, the site provides up-to-date information on how to get involved, volunteer opportunities, and upcoming events in our vibrant Oakland community.

The new website is **mobile-friendly and features an intuitive navigation style**, ensuring that information is never more than just a few clicks away. We are committed to creating a supportive online environment where every family can find resources to help them thrive.

We invite you to explore our new digital home and discover the many ways New Oakland Family Centers is working to empower families across Oakland. Welcome to a new era of connection, support, and community engagement!

Meet Mar'Vante (Tae) Stribling: New Oakland's Tech Team Supervisor



www.NewOakland.org

For the past seven years, **Tae Stribling** has been the insightful, kind and unshakable linchpin of the transportation and behavioral health technician team at New Oakland Family Centers.

Client transportation is one of the most important (and often overlooked) direct care services necessary for a mental health organization to maintain continuity and service with its clients, especially those who are historically underserved or

may have limited access to vehicles and other transportation resources.

New Oakland is one of the few providers in Michigan that makes this service available and, without Tae Stribling, that important work would, quite simply, be impossible.

Most of those served are children and youth, who would otherwise struggle to find a way to get to scheduled care. He assures their safety and

support, but more than that, helps organize the contributions of the entire paraprofessional team as listeners, motivators, caregivers and trusted figures in the lives of the people they serve. Without the many unique direct care roles played by Tae and his paraprofessional team colleagues, New Oakland Family Centers could never be as effective as it has been serving more than 30,000 individuals across Michigan every year.

800-395-3223: One Number for All Your New Oakland Needs

New Oakland is excited to announce a new and better way to manage all your contact with our teams.

Whether it's your appointment schedule, a prescription refill, a question about billing, or any other need, you can now reach out for all New Oakland-related information and service by calling:

800-395-3223
(FACE)

We have boosted the capability of our talented team of call center service representatives and improved response times so you can get the answers you need, when you need them.

Christina Polk, LMSW, New Oakland's Director of Clinical Resources has been leading the charge to develop a better customer service experience for all New Oakland clients.

"Our goal is to make sure all your contacts with New Oakland are as smooth and helpful as they can be," Christina said.

When you dial 800-395-3223 (FACE) you will reach a menu of options that can take you where you want to go for the kind of support you need.

PRESS 1 for new appointments or to change existing appointments

PRESS 2 for billing concerns/questions

PRESS 3 for medical records

PRESS 4 for prescription refills

PRESS 5 for location addresses and FAX numbers

At any time, you can also enter the extension of the person you are trying to reach — or touch zero ("0") to reach a member of our call center team.

Addressing Mental Health Challenges in High-Pressure Careers

Professionals face unique mental health challenges . . . and require approaches that recognize their needs



by Dr. Kathy Chen, New Oakland Clinical Director, PROPEL program for professionals

High-pressure careers often come with hidden costs that many professionals experience daily. In today's fast-paced world, the mental health challenges faced by those in demanding roles have become increasingly significant. Work stress, difficulties in maintaining life balance, family conflicts, and physical health issues all contribute to a cycle that can undermine overall well-being.

The pressure to meet strict deadlines and achieve lofty performance targets frequently leads to chronic stress. Constant exposure to high expectations leaves individuals feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, and emotionally drained.

Boundary-setting is crucial

Establishing clear boundaries between work and personal life is a critical first step in mitigating these effects. Professionals benefit from structured

schedules that designate specific periods for focused work, rest, and recreation.

Simple practices such as taking short breaks, setting realistic goals, and prioritizing tasks can ease daily pressures and reduce anxiety. Achieving a healthy life balance extends far beyond simply managing work hours.

Many professionals struggle to find time for family, hobbies, and personal growth. Intentional planning is required to integrate these essential elements into one's routine. Open communication with family members about work demands helps set mutual expectations and reduces conflict. Dedicating time for meaningful interactions—whether sharing a meal or enjoying a leisurely walk—strengthens relationships and offers a welcome respite from work-related stress.

Attention to family priorities

Family challenges are particularly taxing for those in high-pressure jobs. The demands of such careers often leave

New Oakland locations to serve you

Ann Arbor

510 North Maple Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Bloomfield Hills

2520 South Telegraph Rd.
Bloomfield Township, MI 48302

Center Line

26522 Van Dyke Avenue
Center Line, MI 48015

Clarkston

6549 Town Center Drive
Clarkston, MI 48346

Clinton Township

42669 Garfield Road
Clinton Township, MI 48038

Farmington Hills

32961 Middlebelt Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48334

Flint

2401 South Linden Road
Flint, MI 48532

Grand Rapids/Kentwood

3744 28th Street, SE
Kentwood, MI 49512

Kalamazoo/Portage

8225 Moorsbridge Rd.
Portage, MI 49024

Lansing/Okemos

2300 Jolly Oak Road
Okemos, MI 48864

Livonia (main)

29550 Five Mile Road
Livonia, MI 48154

Livonia (Substance Use Disorder program)

31500 Schoolcraft Rd.
Livonia, MI 48150

Port Huron

500 10th Street, Suite A
Port Huron, MI 48060

Southfield

20505 West 12 Mile Road
Southfield, MI 48076

Southgate

13305 Reeck Road
Southgate, MI 48195

Warren

8150 East 13 Mile Road
Warren, MI 48093

Word Search

See if you can find 15 words from this issue of New Oakland News

L J F U V V S A C E L E F R E
M A V Q B W E T P L A G F L R
W Q W Y P Y E R K M W A I W N
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E C N A T C U L E R C Y O D I

Communicate
 Courage
 Family

Learning
 Narrative
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Positive
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 Reluctance

Renewal
 Service
 Stigma

Stress
 Transportation
 Website

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 **24-Hour Crisis Hotline**
877-800-1650

Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Professionals

Continued from page 3

little energy for nurturing personal relationships, leading to feelings of isolation and disconnection. Prioritizing family time, even during busy periods, is vital. Scheduling regular family activities, engaging in joint problem-solving, or seeking family counseling are effective strategies to rebuild and maintain strong bonds. Recognizing that healthy relationships require ongoing effort can empower professionals to seek balance.

Physical health, diet and exercise

Physical health is closely intertwined with mental well-being. Neglecting exercise, proper nutrition, and sufficient sleep can worsen stress and exacerbate anxiety. Incorporating regular physical activity into a daily routine not only improves fitness but also boosts mood and cognitive function. Moderate activities such as walking, cycling, or yoga serve as powerful stress relievers. Maintaining a balanced diet and a consistent sleep schedule further supports mental health, making it easier to cope with work pressures.

Accessing mental health professionals

Seeking professional support can often be a crucial component in managing mental health challenges. Counseling and therapy offer practical strategies for coping with stress, while workplace



wellness programs and peer support groups create environments where individuals feel understood and less isolated. Professional help can provide personalized guidance and equip individuals with techniques to build

resilience in the face of ongoing pressures.

Addressing mental health challenges in high-pressure careers requires a multifaceted approach. By reducing work stress, achieving a healthy life balance, nurturing family relationships, and prioritizing physical health, professionals can build a strong defense against burnout. Proactive self-care, open communication, and the willingness to seek help are essential steps toward creating a more fulfilling and balanced life.

Ultimately, investing in mental health is an investment in one's future. By taking small, consistent steps every day, professionals can not only overcome the challenges of high-pressure environments but also thrive both personally and professionally. These simple actions empower professionals to build resilience and sustain long-term success.