Hello Meeker-McLeod-Sibley Community Partners and Stakeholders,

As a collaborative we are working hard to provide you with the most current information related to the work we are doing in our community. Each quarter, Healthy Communities will distribute a media toolkit that will be shared with those we work with.

This quarter we are sharing information from our Mental Health Taskforce. Please look through the attached materials. Feel free to distribute this to your staff, partners and clients to educate them on the work we are doing to make the communities we provide services in a healthier place to be.

Also remember to share the work you’re doing around this topic or an event related to this topic with us via our website Share a Story or Share an Event. Also watch for more toolkits to come out during the rest of 2018. June 2018 will be Health Eating, September 2018 will be Senior Health and December 2018 will be Healthy Choice and Behaviors.

If you have questions about the content of this toolkit or want to become involved with the Healthy Communities Collaborative you can contact Kerry Ward at kerry.ward@co.mcleod.mn.us or via phone at 320-864-1512

Thank you,

Lori Rice
Meeker-McLeod-Sibley Healthy Communities Chair
Partners Call to Action:

As a Healthy Communities Partner, you are encouraged to talk more openly about mental illnesses. By breaking the silence, we can help our friends, neighbors, loved ones, and colleagues feel understood and supported. Just as learning about physical health or financial health has helped us create stronger families and a more caring environment, we believe that combating stigma will help us make our community and partnering organizations more supportive and accepting—and might even have a positive impact on our community at large. LET’S LEARN TOGETHER.

Newspaper Article:

Stop the silence surrounding mental illnesses

Mental illnesses are as common as silver cars, as people with brown eyes and more common than being left-handed. Despite being one of the most common illnesses, there is still a stigma attached to mental illnesses and many people struggle with talking about them.

It’s OK to have a mental illness- many of us do
One in four Americans from every walk of life experiences a mental illness. Most people live with the symptoms of a mental illness for ten years before seeking treatment, largely due to the stigma. The sooner people get treatment, the greater their chances of recovery.

It’s OK because it is a medical condition – not a character flaw
Mental illnesses are biological conditions that can be treated, just like cancer and diabetes. They cannot be overcome through “will power” and are not related to a person’s character or intelligence.

It’s OK because it’s treatable – life can get better
The best treatments for serious mental illnesses today are highly effective. In fact, between 70 – 90 percent of peoples’ symptoms are reduced and feel better when following individualized treatment plans.

Meeker McLeod Sibley Healthy Communities along with its supporting partners are addressing mental health in its Community Health Assessment and Improvement Plan. In 2014, 26.4% of Meeker, McLeod, and Sibley residents reported that they had mental health concerns (depression, anxiety/panic attacks, or other mental health problems), compared to Minnesota at 18.1% (MMS Community Health Survey). Taking a collective action approach, Healthy Communities is working together through a Mental Health Taskforce to improve mental health status by educating about mental health and discussing access to appropriate, quality mental health services.

Mental health is just as important as our physical health, which is why HCC is part of a local effort to stop the silence and the stigma. This campaign called “Make It OK,” and is designed to encourage people to talk more openly about mental illnesses and ask for help. Implementing this program will help the taskforce reach its goal of promoting mental health well-being by decreasing stigma. The taskforce will also support its partners in on-
going community education awareness efforts in the schools, churches, healthcare systems and communities across the three counties.

**Together, we can Make It OK**
Together, we can all work to reduce the stigma. This campaign along with the education being offered across our communities will drive people to the Healthy Communities website and the Make It Ok website where tool kits and other resources are available to help guide people on how to talk about mental health.

For more information about the Mental Health Taskforce, its charter and Healthy Communities visit our website at [www.mmshealthycommunities.org](http://www.mmshealthycommunities.org) and to learn more about the Make it ok campaign, visit their website at [www.makeitok.org](http://www.makeitok.org)

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**Newsletter/Blog Article: Make It Ok: Learn the Lingo**

Talking more openly about mental illnesses is one way we can reduce the stigma and “Make It Ok.” Sometimes we resort to silence because it can be hard to find the words to say.

We’re part of a local effort to stop the silence and stigma surrounding mental illnesses. Here are some of the tips from the Make It OK toolbox to get you as you become more comfortable talking about mental illnesses.

**What can you say**
Let’s pretend someone you know just told you they’re struggling with an anxiety disorder or depression.

- What do you say? Here are a few suggestions.
- “Oh no, what can I do to help?”
- “I’m here for you if you need me”
- “Things will get better.”
- “I can’t imagine what you’re going through.”
- “We’ll make it right. It’ll be ok.”
- “Can I drive you to an appointment?”
- “We love you”

**What you shouldn’t say**
Sometimes our words may reinforce the stigma. Remember that mental illnesses are biological in nature, just like diabetes, and need treatment. Avoid using derogatory or dismissing language.

- “It could be worse.”
- “Snap out of it.”
- “Everyone feels that way sometimes.”
- “You may have brought this on yourself.”
- “There’s got to be something wrong upstairs.”
- “We’ve all been there.”
- Don’t use words such as crazy, psycho, nuts or insane.
**Rule of thumb**
Although talking about mental illnesses may be uncomfortable for you at first, know that it is also a difficult conversation for your friend. Be nice, supportive and listen. Offer to help and keep the conversation going. Visit MakeItOk.org to learn more, or to start the conversation by taking the pledge.

**Facebook Post:**

_How can you help? By speaking up._

When we start talking, we realize that mental illnesses are more common and relatable than we think. And more importantly, people experiencing mental illnesses will be treated with respect, acceptance and be more apt to get the care they need.

Many of us don’t know how to respond to people when they bring up their mental illness. But the answer is that it can be very similar to what you would say to those who have cancer or heart disease.

For example:
- “What can I do to help?”
- “I’m here if you need me.”
- “Can I drive you to an appointment?”
- “Things will get better.”

Visit MakeItOk.org to learn more about the campaign to learn what you can say.

**Twitter Post:**

Learn the Lingo: Talking more openly about mental illnesses is one way we can reduce the stigma and “Make It Ok.” Sometimes we resort to silence because it can be hard to find the words to say. Visit MakeItOk.org to learn more.

**Educational Opportunities in the area:**

_Outreach to High Schools –_

The taskforce will reach out to 12 local school districts to see if there is interest in the school implementing the SAVE Linking Education and Awareness for Depression and Suicide (LEADS) curriculum. The group will also seek interest in providing a presentation/speaker opportunity for students on mental health and suicide awareness.

More information on SAVE LEADS curriculum:

LEADS is Linking Education and Awareness for Depression and Suicide for Youth is a school-based suicide prevention curriculum designed for high schools and educators that links depression awareness and suicide prevention. LEADS for Youth is an informative and interactive opportunity for students and teachers to increase knowledge and awareness of depression and suicide.
**Sunday, April 8th 2018** – Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Gatekeeper Training at the Hutchinson Event Center, 4:00pm – 5:30 pm. QPR is an evidence based training and stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer — the 3 simple steps anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide. Just as people trained in CPR and the Heimlich Maneuver help save thousands of lives each year, people trained in QPR learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help. Registration limited to 100 people.

Community Outreach Event at the Hutchinson Event Center, 6:30pm – 9:00pm. Speakers include Dick Beardsley (suicide survivor of loss), Kevin Hines (Suicide attempt survivor), and public health to give an overview of local crisis intervention services and resources. This event will also include a local resource fair.

**Monday, April 9th 2018** – Suicide and Mental Health Awareness Conference at the Hutchinson Event Center from 8am – 4pm. Will offer continuing education on mental health and suicide awareness to physicians, nurses, mental health professionals, social workers, case managers, rehabilitation workers, nursing assistants, personal care attendants, community support workers, and anyone interested in learning more about the topic. Training will include keynote speakers (Dick Beardsley & Kevin Hines), local speakers (Andrew Archer – LICSW & suicide attempt survivor, Dr. Stacy Nichols, MD., Dr. Dan Reidenberg, Psy.D., local public health), and will include a panel discussion with local healthcare professionals. CEUs will be offered. [https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2018-suicide-mental-health-awareness-conference-cont-ed-for-hcw-tickets-42723395827](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2018-suicide-mental-health-awareness-conference-cont-ed-for-hcw-tickets-42723395827)

**Other Ideas:**

- Listen to a podcast. There are many comedians and comedy writers who have battled depression in their lives. The Hilarious World of Depression, sponsored by Make It OK, looks at depression through the eyes of eight comedians. Host John Moe and the comedians he talks to use humor as way to start a conversation to help end the stigma of mental illness. You can find these at [https://makeitok.org/take-action](https://makeitok.org/take-action) under the podcast tabs.

- TPT and Make It OK have worked together to bring programming about Minnesotans from all walks of life to talk with candor and humor about mental illness. Mental illness has long been shrouded in secrecy and embarrassment and it’s time to break the stigma and talk about what each of us can do to “Make It OK”. Visit [http://www.tpt.org/make-it-ok/](http://www.tpt.org/make-it-ok/) to watch an episode or two.

**Additional Resources:**

- Meeker McLeod Sibley Healthy Communities website [https://www.mmshealthycommunities.org/](https://www.mmshealthycommunities.org/)

- Make it ok website [https://makeitok.org/](https://makeitok.org/)
2017 Community Health Assessment
COLLECTIVE ACTION PLAN: MENTAL HEALTH

Mental and chemical health promotion can improve quality of life and physical health, and early intervention services can lessen the burden of both.

Unrecognized and untreated mental and chemical health conditions can disrupt development across the lifespan, social connections, family life, education, employment and economic stability, and full community participation. Early intervention and support for families can prevent child and parent mental and chemical health problems and promote overall health and resiliency at all stages of life. When left untreated, mental and chemical health conditions can worsen and become disabling or less amenable to treatment.

Local Data
MMS Community Health Behavior Survey

IN 2014...

- 9.6% of MMS residents reported there was a time when they wanted to talk with or seek help from a health professional about mental health issues but did not, or delayed talking to someone.

- 26.4% of MMS residents reported that they had mental health concerns (depression, anxiety/panic attacks, or other mental health problems).

- 33.4% of MMS residents said they had 1-9 days, in the last 30, where their mental health was not good.

- 10.6% of MMS residents reported that they were seeking mental health care in 2014.

- 18.1% of Minnesota residents reported they had mental health concerns (depression, anxiety/panic attacks, or other mental health problems).

- 0% of Minnesota residents reported that they were seeking mental health care in 2014.
There were an estimated 43.6 million adults aged 18 or older in the United States with any mental illness.

(SAMHSA)

An estimated 16.1 million adults aged 18 and older in the United States had at least one major depressive episode.

(National Institute of Mental Illness)
Mental illness.
Let’s Start talking.

1 in 5 people will have some kind of mental illness in their lifetime, and many don’t get the help they need.

Stop the Stigma. Here’s what you can do.

Stigma perpetuates misconceptions and false beliefs about what a mental illness really is. Mental illness is more common than diabetes, yet we still struggle with talking about it compared to a physical illness. You can stop the stigma and create positive change by learning the tips for talking to someone with a mental illness.

Visit MakeItOK.org

How to talk with someone about mental illness:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DO SAY:</th>
<th>DON’T SAY:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How can I help?</td>
<td>It could be worse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can I drive you to an appointment?</td>
<td>Just deal with it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanks for sharing.</td>
<td>Snap out of it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m sorry to hear that. It must be tough.</td>
<td>You may have brought this on yourself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m here for you when you need me.</td>
<td>We’ve all been there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can’t imagine what you’re going through.</td>
<td>You’ve got to pull yourself together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love you.</td>
<td>Try thinking happier thoughts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is NEVER too early to start a conversation with someone who may be struggling with a mental illness.

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Visit MakeItOK.org for additional resources and to learn from others. If you’re in a crisis, or need immediate help, call 911.
I’m really struggling with anxiety right now...

I’m sorry to hear that, do you want to talk about it?

I have depression and I can’t seem to focus very well lately...

That must be frustrating, is there something I can do to help?

What can you say?
Complete the Conversation.

Mental illnesses are treatable health conditions.
They are not something to “get over”.
Silence makes it worse.

Join the thousands of people who have already taken the pledge and start taking action on mental health issues.

TAKE THE PLEDGE
to make it OK

By taking the pledge you will:

LEARN MORE. The more we learn about mental illnesses, the more common we realize they are.

START TALKING. The more we talk about mental illnesses, the closer we come to stopping the stigma.

PASS IT ON. Encourage others to join by taking the pledge online.