

**TIOGA COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD
MENTAL HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE**

November 3rd, 2023

9:00 a.m.

Hybrid

- **Review and approve October 2023 meeting minutes**

- **Director's Report**

- **Other Business**
December Meeting?

- **Conferences/Workshops**

Next regular meeting: TBD

TIOGA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HYGIENE

**MH SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE TIOGA COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD**

Pending Approval

Subcommittee meeting date: October 6th, 2023

Via Hybrid

Member Attendance: Fran Bialy
Tina Lounsbury
Sue Medina
Donna Corbin
Larissa Brower

Guest Attendance:

Mental Hygiene Staff Attendance: Lori Morgan, Director of Community Services
Sarah Begeal, Deputy Director of Community Services
Cathy Healy, Clinical Program Director
Sue Graves (minutes)

Category: Minutes for August 2023 approved as written

Topic: Director's Report – Lori Morgan

Discussion: Updates:

- Searching for organization to contract for Dr. Webster and Patricia Zalewski-Gibson, NP
 - Helio contract ending 12/31/23
 - All other staff switched to county positions
 - CCSI will not take 1099 individuals
 - Donna may have a lead
- SPOA/Corporate Compliance Position
 - Lori attended the work session on 10/5/23
 - Corporate Compliance/SPOA position switched to Management Confidential
 - Have a candidate but need to wait until resolution passes
 - SPOA portion is covered by State Aid
 - Individual will be responsible for training& auditing for Corporate Compliance as well
- Staff
 - Three new CSW for the clinic starting on 10/10/23

- One candidate for Tioga Central Schools in the background check process
- **Mobile Crisis**
 - Lori participated in a webinar this week
 - Counties with no mobile crisis targeted
 - 24/7 requirement
 - Currently do 24/7 Telehealth crisis
 - \$150,000 of the \$600,000 already received
 - A car will need to be purchased for Mental Health
 - Program requires a minimum of one licensed individual to cover: Lori thinking two additional staff
 - Program has to be sustainable after two years
 - Looking at rates for each service provided
 - Goal is to work with community partners to develop plan
- **Budget**
 - No new news
- **Suicide Coalition**
 - Under A New Hope Center Now
 - May hire someone part-time to run
- **Waverly Site**
 - Formal plan in development
 - Meeting last Thursday
 - County is funding the building rehabilitation
 - Looking for a 20-year lease
 - Agreed to a 1% increase per year for rent
 - Rate is the same as the previous Waverly location
 - Renovation to go out to bid with County Public Works
- Lori attending the Fall CLMHD conference in Watkins Glen at the end of the month

Status: Informational – Complete

Topic: Public Health – Sue Medina

Discussion: Updates:

- Tested 211 - works from county, personal phones
 - Routes to where you are calling from
- Save a Life Day
 - 84 Narcan kits distributed
 - Food pantries showed the highest distribution numbers

- Public Health will be doing “Holiday Stress” billboards & postings

Status: Informational - Complete

Topic: Articles

Discussion: Updates:

- October – Bullying Prevention - reprint
 - Article to Wendy Post by noon Thursdays
 - Sue to send to Wendy Post
- November – Holiday Stress reprint
- December – Family Dynamics – Sue Medina

Status: Informational – Complete

Topic: Other Business

Discussion: Updates:

- A New Hope Center has numerous events planned for October’s Bullying Prevention month.
 - October 29th 2023 “Super Smash Brothers” gaming event at the Owego Elks

Status: Informational - Complete

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:37am

Guest Editorial: October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

BY FRANCIS J. EMALY
Executive Director of A New Hope Center

"Ugh, I don't understand why she stays with him! He's such an abusive jerk!" The phrase reverberates in my skull as I sit quietly in the salon, listening to the other women talk about their mutual friend, who is clearly being abused by her husband. They discuss the bruised finger marks on her arm from where he grabbed her. They talk about the amount of alcohol that she is "allowed" to consume when they go out, before he tells her that she's had enough. They gossip over his isolation of

her life whenever he isn't accompanying her. These are all the classic signs of abuse. And yet, I know that there is so much more that this woman endures outside of what they have seen with their own eyes; parts of the abuse that she is unable to express. Parts of the abuse that she doesn't even realize is abuse anymore, because it has occurred for so much longer. Parts of the abuse that she now feels that she could tolerate, if only he wouldn't do "X", or wouldn't do "X" in front of the kids.

I know that this mystery woman that the other women in the salon are talking across the state to find shel-

ter, and many don't want to uproot their children (many of whom would already be extremely resistant to staying in a shelter). Not to mention that asking for help on its own is frightening, let alone the fear of upending your life to move to an unknown shelter with unknown people.

There's also the fear of what he will do if she leaves. Will he make egregious lies about her in court and take her children away from her? Will he hurt her dogs? Will he find her and kill her?

Other people don't understand that this woman, despite the pain, degradation, and humiliation that she suffers by this man, still loves him. And she has deep shame surrounding that. She doesn't understand why her heart continues to be drawn to someone who does awful things to her; only that it does.

So often, women only realize once they have finally gotten out of the

abuse and stayed out for a year or more that they are so much happier than they ever could have been with their abuser. An abuser has "pull" on the survivor. Aside from her love for him, there are ties that are hard to break. Even if she doesn't have fear of repercussions for leaving (and many women do), she may love his family, or fear the breakdown of friendships that they have together. She may not be able to survive financially, or have any place to go. She may worry about him pitting their children against her during visitations.

Sometimes, she loves the man that he used to be, or can be when he's not being abusive, and the signals are confusing. It's not as simple as "just leaving". As a counselor / advocate at A New Hope Center, I have seen this story mirrored in the faces of hundreds of women. Some are stories of verbal abuse (but he's never hit me), some with financial abuse (I'm

not allowed to know how much is in the bank account), and some with full on sexual assault (my mom says that all men do that to their girlfriends, and we just have to deal with it). Each of those scenarios displays different types of abuse, and not one of them is the fault of the survivor.

As the conversation between the woman wanes, I take a deep breath and let them know that their friend can contact me for help. If she wants to leave, we can work on that. If she wants to stay, we can talk about the safest way that she can stay. We can safely plan or discuss filing for custody, or even file for an order of protection. If all their friend wants to do is talk in a safe space, I can do that, too.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. If you or a loved one is struggling with domestic violence, free, confidential and local help is available. Call (807) 687-6866

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