



What's Your Wellness Plan?

The term "wellness plan" can be interpreted in many ways. To some it may mean maintaining optimum health and wellness. For others it may be developing strategies to improve health habits. Still others may consider a wellness plan to cultivate support for recovery.

In general, a wellness plan should be a plan of action, personalized to your own wellness needs and objectives, and it should take into consideration the multi-dimensions of wellness, including physical, emotional, spiritual and social. Anyone can use a wellness plan as a tool to achieve individual goals. The process begins with an assessment of one's own health and wellness and writing down where you are, where you want to be, and how to make it happen.



PA Able Savings Program

Did you know that Pennsylvania residents who have qualified disabilities (and their families) can save up to \$15,000 a year for disability-related expenses while maintaining

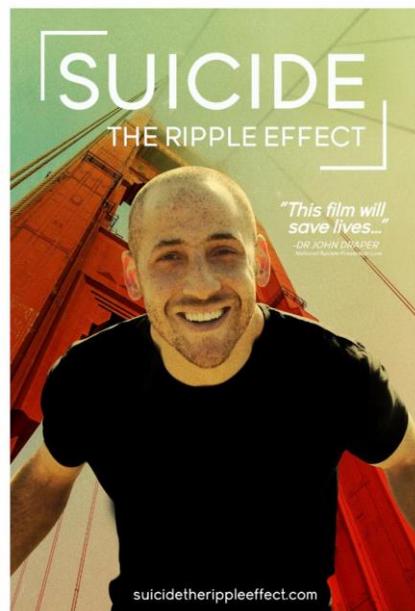
government benefits? [Learn more about this new program.](#)

Suicide Prevention in Chester County

Since the tragic deaths of designer Kate Spade and chef Anthony Bourdain last month, there has been a national spotlight on the topic of suicide.

The attention coincided with a new report on suicide from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which showed dramatic increases in suicide rates in states across the country. Pennsylvania saw a 34.3% increase in suicides from 1999 to 2016.

Chester County has expanded suicide prevention efforts to address this public health concern, but there is still much work to do. Everyone can play a role, and those who are interested in finding out more about Chester County's Suicide Prevention Task Force are invited to the next general meeting on August 8 beginning at 4:00 PM. This special meeting will be held at West Chester University's Sykes Student Union Building, 110 West Rosedale Avenue, West Chester and will feature a viewing of the new Kevin Hines' film, ***Suicide, The Ripple Effect***, which will run from 5:00 - 6:30 PM. Contact the CCSP Task Force at ccsptaskforce@gmail.com with questions.



What: Chester County Suicide Prevention Task Force Meeting /Film Viewing. Open to the Community!

When: Wednesday, August 8. 4:00 PM Meeting; 5:00 - 6:30 PM film viewing

Where: West Chester University, Sykes Student Union, 110 West Rosedale Avenue, West Chester

Mental Health in the LGBTQ Community

More than 10 million American Adults identified as LGBTQ in a Gallup poll published last year. Because this community often experiences stress related to stigma, a lack of cultural sensitivity and discrimination, its members are at higher risk of mental health concerns, substance abuse, and suicide. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) LGBTQ individuals are almost 3 times more likely than others to experience a mental health condition such as major depression or generalized anxiety disorder.

But there is good news. More than ever, LGBTQ individuals can find support and treatment focused on their specific needs. [NAMI's website](#) has information on the risk factors for the LGBTQ community and how to find appropriate help.

In Philadelphia, the [Mazzoni Center](#), founded in 1979, is a comprehensive resource. The center is a multi-service, community-based, health and social service provider aiming to advance the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) communities.

Why Is It So Hard To Talk About Mental Health?

It can be hard to talk about mental health, even if we're comfortable with other meaningful conversations. Telling someone how we're feeling may invite judgment. Asking someone how they're feeling can seem like an invasion of privacy.

But conversations about our feelings and emotions, with people we trust, are vital to our overall health and well being. If we can acknowledge our feelings when they are small, we may prevent them from becoming too big to handle. Talking about feelings can help us feel more connected to others, and help us build a network of support.

If we're concerned about someone, we should know how to start a conversation in a caring, helpful way. The public education course, Mental Health First Aid, teaches us how to recognize there may be a problem, and how to begin the conversation. The infographic to the right illustrates some conversation starters that anyone can use.

If you'd like to learn more, sign up to take a free 8-hour Mental Health First Aid class to help adults or youth. Information about upcoming classes is posted at the Chester County Mental Health [website](#). For more general information about Mental Health First Aid, use [this link](#).

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CONVERSATION STARTERS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

MENTALHEALTHFIRSTAID.ORG

-  **"ARE YOU OKAY?"**
Ask the question and mean it. Show you are listening by sitting alongside the person, maintaining an open body position and maintaining comfortable eye contact.
-  **"ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT SUICIDE?"**
If you are concerned that someone is considering suicide, ask the question directly. Asking a person if they have been thinking about suicide or have made plans will not increase the risk that they will complete suicide.
-  **"I'VE NOTICED THAT..."**
Open the conversation by explaining behavior changes you have noticed. For example, "I've noticed you have been showing up to work late a lot lately." Then, express genuine concern.
-  **"DO YOU WANT TO TAKE A WALK?"**
Engaging a friend, family member or loved one you are concerned about in a healthy activity like taking a walk together can be a great way to start a conversation. Doing an activity while you talk can take some of the nerves and discomfort out of the conversation.
-  **"HOW ARE YOU, REALLY?"**
Sometimes when someone says they're fine, they're not. Know the warning signs to look for so you can know when to offer extra support.

ADA 28

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT 1990 - 2018

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) is 28 years old! Passed by Congress in 1990, the ADA is the nation's first comprehensive civil rights law addressing the needs of people with disabilities, prohibiting discrimination in employment, public services, public accommodations, and telecommunications. [Learn more about it!](#)

Resources, Events & Classes

ChescoLife is looking for candidates for a part-time position as a Bilingual Family Support Specialist in Exton.



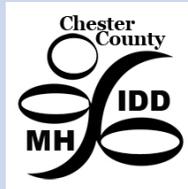
Friends wanted at Compeer, Chester County check out the website for this local organization.

PA Vision Corps offers free vision exams and glasses for low income families.

Free Mental Health First Aid classes are offered throughout the year in Chester County. Check the MH/IDD website for classes in June

Chester County Refer web is a user-friendly database for social services information.

Calendar of events - Updated! Information on local monthly stakeholder meetings and support groups.



Chester County Department of Mental Health / Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
601 Westtown Road, West Chester, PA
www.chesco.org/mhidd

Chester County Commissioners
Administrator: Linda Cox
Deputy Administrator: Candy Craig