



## VICARIOUS TRAUMA

More than 80 mass shootings have occurred since 1982, the most deadly in recent history transpired last month at a nightclub in Orlando, Florida. Like a pebble dropped into a pond, the ripple effect of trauma touches those closest and furthest from the impact.

Doctors treating the wounded reported injuries comparable to those sustained in war zones. First responders witnessed battle-like scenes saying the sight of the dead, dying and wounded was overwhelming. Family, friends, lovers and strangers felt the pain, fear and helplessness as broadcasts depicted chaos and graphic play-by-plays of the cataclysm.

Moments of silence impact those furthest from the epicenter. The National Council for Behavioral Health notes that signs of trauma don't necessarily manifest immediately.

"They may appear later. But we can help. All of us can help someone who struggles with trauma—whether you work in the medical community, you are just another caring individual or you are a mental health or addictions provider," according to a National Council press release that highlights [these resources](#).

Likewise, the American Counseling Association (ACA) released numerous informational articles addressing "vicarious trauma."

"If you relate to the person who was attacked in any way, you're going to grieve because it's also part of you...And that's perfectly normal and perfectly understandable...Even if you're far removed or living somewhere else, you can still feel traumatized," said Dr. David Kaplan, ACA chief medical officer, in this Huffington Post article ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/orlando-grief-psychology\\_us\\_575eb2f3e4b0e39a28ae1555](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/orlando-grief-psychology_us_575eb2f3e4b0e39a28ae1555)).

The ACA advises the following to navigate related trauma:

**Attend to self care.** While it may seem counterintuitive to think about taking care of yourself first, you cannot be of service to others if you are unstable. Monitor all of your physical health needs - being sure to eat, sleep, exercise, and (if possible) maintain a normal daily routine.

**Pay attention to your emotional health.** Remember that a wide range of feelings during these difficult times are common. Know that others are also experiencing emotional reactions and may need your time and patience to put their feelings and thoughts in order.

**Try to recognize when you or those around you may need extra support.** It is not uncommon for individuals of all ages to experience stress reactions when exposed (even through media) to shootings or mass violence. Changes in eating and sleeping habits, energy level, and mood are important signs of distress. Watch for regressed behaviors, such as clinging in children and intense emotional reactions, such as anxiety or a strong need for retribution in adults. When necessary, point individuals to licensed professional counselors who can provide needed support.

**Avoid overexposure to media.** While it is important to stay informed, media portrayals of shootings and mass deaths have been shown to cause acute stress and posttraumatic stress symptoms. Limit your exposure and take a break from news sources.

**Maintain contact with friends and family.** These individuals can provide you with emotional support to help deal with difficult times.

**Focus on your strength base.** Maintain practices that you have found to provide emotional relief. Remind yourself of people and events which are meaningful and comforting.

**Talk to others as needed.** It is important to ask for help if you are having trouble recovering and everyday tasks seem difficult to manage



### Our Mission

To continually improve the provision of mental health services for residents of Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties through effective coordination of services in collaboration with consumers, family members, providers and community leaders. We believe that the mental health system should assure quality, cost-effective services that meet the needs of our consumers. Consumers are the focus of MSMHS, and it is our goal through partnership with other agencies to develop a full array of easily accessible services for the consumer. We strongly believe in the empowerment of individuals, consumers, and family members to help develop their fullest potential.

### Our Vision

To develop a model rural mental health delivery system with a continuum of mental health services that are culturally diverse.

These services assure consumer empowerment, have a community focus, are cost-effective for the system and are integrated to serve the community as a whole, private and public sector, regardless of cultural or ethnic background.

## Updates from the shore

**Affiliated Santé Group's** Eastern Shore Mobile Crisis Response Team seeks a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) coordinator to implement and oversee the CIT program. This individual would create and conduct first responder and public safety education curriculum, serve as liaison with first responders in Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot counties—including but not limited to facilitation of First Responder and Public Safety Advisory Committees—and facilitation of internal and external training.

The ideal candidate would hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and two years' experience in public safety and/or with public safety; or 10 years' experience in public safety and/or with public safety and/or five years' experience as a trainer in public safety.

Ability to use the Internet and Microsoft Office software such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook. Submit an application at <https://www.thesantegroup.org/job-postings>.

**A 5k run/walk** to benefit Mind Over Music is scheduled Saturday, July 30 at Cross Island Trail in Chester. The Mental Health Matters 5k run starts at 10 a.m. followed by the walk at 10:15 a.m. Preregister on line at [www.mindovermusicmovement.org](http://www.mindovermusicmovement.org) for \$25 to receive a T-shirt. The idea is to raise awareness about mental health to further reduce stigma.

All proceeds benefit the Mind Over Music Movement, which is a nonprofit based in Jacksonville, Florida that seeks to raise awareness about mental health through music and art.





# Mental Wealth?

By H. Steven Moffic, MD

## May was Mental Health Month.

Maybe next year it should be re-named *Mental Wealth* Month. Why? With notable exceptions, as with some presidents and historical religious prophets, a decline in mental health is detrimental to the well-being of a person and society.

However, although our current presidential candidates have focused on economic wealth, little has been said about our mental wealth, which is arguably the major contributor to what has made America great.

Here are some of the ways our mental wealth might be increased:

### Prevention of mental disorders

We now know enough to prevent some psychiatric disorders. The reduction of trauma, the building of resilience, and addressing substance abuse would all have mental health payoffs.

The home, school, and integrated medical services all contribute to this wealth. The workplace needs to prevent burnout and chronic stress that detracts from the valued meaning of one's occupation.

### Early intervention

For almost any mental disorder, early diagnosis and the initiation of appropriate treatment is valuable. To do so, a diagnosis must be carefully made and unnecessary treatments avoided.

### Belief in recovery

The adoption of a recovery model over recent years has been an antidote for the hopelessness that many patients, families, and caregivers have had about the outcome of chronic and most serious mental illness.

Indeed, some can recover without extensive and ongoing treatment if they live in a supportive and understanding community that will embrace them.

### Adequate funding

Mental wealth requires adequate funding for the mental health services that range from a reduction in poverty and discrimination to the implementation of high-quality inpatient services.

### Transparency

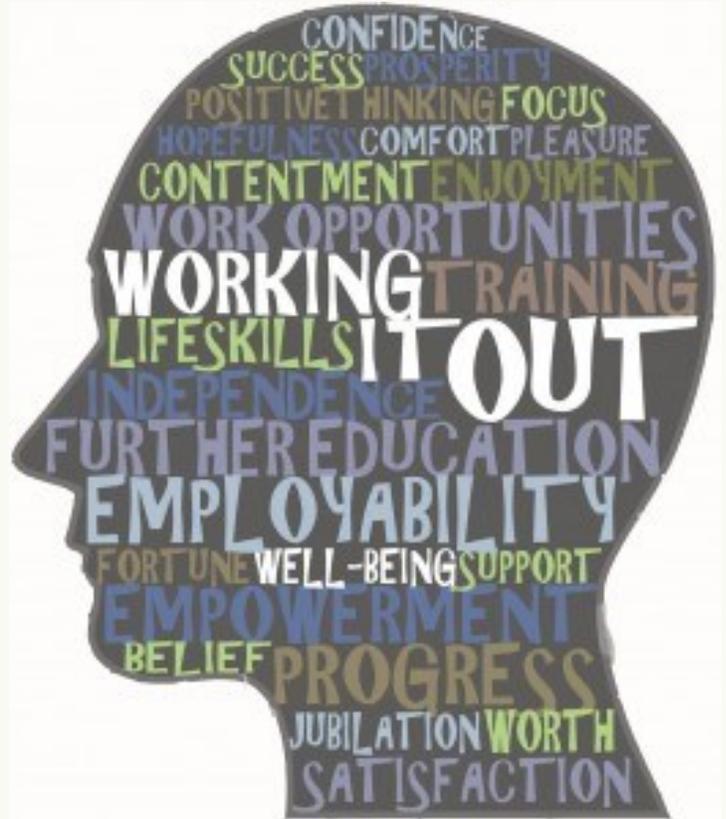
Like many social groups that face discrimination, persons with mental illness are going public to tell their stories. This helps normalize psychiatric illness and reduces stigma.

### Cognitive enhancement

Although controversial from an ethical standpoint, many people are trying to enhance their mental abilities, even if haphazardly and even illegally.

This includes using medication or street drugs to increase focus, technology to boost our intelligence, exercise to increase brain health, and nutrition or hormones to go beyond our natural abilities. The key to this quest is to determine if the benefits outweigh the risks and if they are available equitably.

Do you think we can—and should—increase our mental wealth? If so, what would you recommend?



*Courtesy of Psychiatric Times*



# REMOVED



BY [Eric Pickersgill](#)

The joining of people to devices has been rapid and unalterable. The application of the personal device in daily life has made tasks take less time. Far away places and people feel closer than ever before. Despite the obvious benefits that these advances in technology have contributed to society, the social and physical implications are slowly revealing themselves. In similar ways that photography transformed the lived experience into the photographable, performable, and reproducible experience, personal devices are shifting behaviors while simultaneously blending into the landscape by taking form as being one with the body. This phantom limb is used as a way of signaling busyness and unapproachability to strangers while existing as an addictive force that promotes the splitting of attention between those who are physically with you and those who are not. The work began as I sat in a café one morning. This is what I wrote about my observation

Family sitting next to me at Illium café in Troy, NY is so disconnected from one another. Not much talking. Father and two daughters have their own phones out. Mom doesn't have one or chooses to leave it put away. She stares out the window, sad and alone in the company of her closest family. Dad looks up every so often to announce some obscure piece of info he found online. Twice he goes on about a large fish that was caught. No one replies. I am saddened by the use of technology for interaction in exchange for not interacting. This has never happened before and I doubt we have scratched the surface of the social impact of this new experience. Mom has her phone out now.

The image of that family, the mother's face, the teenage girls' and their father's posture and focus on the palm of their own hands has been burned in my mind. It was one of those moments where you see something so amazingly common that it startles you into consciousness of what's actually happening and it is impossible to forget. I see this family at the grocery store, in classrooms, on the side of the highway and in my own bed as I fall asleep next to my wife. We rest back to back on our sides coddling our small, cold, illuminated devices every night.

The large format portraits are of individuals who appear to be holding personal devices although the devices have been physically removed from the sitter's hand. They are asked to hold their stare and posture as I remove their device and then I make the exposure. The photographs represent reenactments of scenes that I experience daily. We have learned to read the expression of the body while someone is consuming a device and when those signifiers are activated it is as if the device can be seen taking physical form without the object being present.

View *Removed* online at <http://www.removed.social/angieandme>



# July 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
	4 <b>MSMHS Closed Independence Day</b>	5	6	7	8	9
10	11 <b>BHSN Crisis Response 1:30-2:30</b>	12 <b>Roundtable on Homelessness 1:30 Consumer Council 3-4 @ CVI</b>	13	14 <b>BHSN C &amp; A 3-4 @ MSMHS</b>	15 <b>BHSN Forensic 9-11 @ MSMHS</b>	16
17	18	19 <b>BHSN Aging 11-12 @ MSMHS</b>	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27 <b>BHSN Quarterly 10-12 @ QAC HD BHSN Integration 2-3 @ MSMHS</b>	28	29	30
31						

## Mid-Shore Maryland Out of the Darkness walk

The third annual Mid-Shore Maryland Out of the Darkness walk is 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. Saturday, September 17 at the Chesapeake Heritage Center at Kent Narrows. Organizers hope to raise \$30,000 to benefit the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), which supports training, public awareness and other suicide prevention efforts in Maryland.

The local effort is led by Trish Kotzen, AFSP board member, and is one of four OTD walks on the Eastern Shore.

Register individually or in groups online at <http://afsp.donordrive.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.event&eventID=3941> Registration closes at noon Friday, September 16; however, anyone who would like to participate may register in person at the walk from the time check-in begins until the walk starts. Walk donations are accepted until Dec. 31. Contact Trish Kotzen at 410-643-7674 or email [pskotzen@atlanticbb.net](mailto:pskotzen@atlanticbb.net) for information.

It's a terrible thing, I think, in life to wait until you're ready. I have this feeling now that actually no one is ever ready to do anything. There is almost no such thing as ready. There is only now. And you may as well do it now. Generally speaking, now is as good a time as any.

- Hugh Laurie

Mid-Shore Mental Health Systems, Inc. is located at 28578 Mary's Court, Easton, MD 21601. You are invited to join us in our work to improve services on the Eastern Shore by joining the BHSN workgroups, Email [kstevens@msmhs.org](mailto:kstevens@msmhs.org) for information.