



**Mental  
Health Notes**

Mental Health Association  
in Ulster County, Inc.  
PO Box 2304  
Kingston, NY 12402

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**MEMBERSHIP MATTERS**

MHA membership is not only a source of strength and support that allows us to maintain our current services to hundreds of individuals including families and children, but also the flexibility to respond to the needs of the entire community.

MHA members are partners and ambassadors as we together advocate for optimal mental health and work toward the elimination of stigma.

We know that mental health matters to everyone. You can help us to continue our mission and to improve the mental health of our community by becoming a member of the MHA.

**BECOME A MEMBER: TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

**MHA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

- Clifford Beers
- ☐ Partner..... (\$1000 or more)
- ☐ Advocate..... (\$500 or more)
- ☐ Educator..... (\$250 or more)
- ☐ Patron..... (\$100 or more)
- ☐ Sponsor..... (\$50 or more)
- ☐ Friend..... (\$35 or more)

☐ NEW MEMBER    ☐ RENEWAL

Your donation is tax-deductible. Memberships are annual from date of inception. Please make your check payable to MHA in Ulster County and mail to PO Box 2304, Kingston, NY 12402. For more information, call (845) 336-4747 Ext. 123, or visit [www.MHAinUlster.com](http://www.MHAinUlster.com) to make a credit card donation. Thank you for your support!

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**THE MHA MISSION**

To engage all people in optimal mental health by providing innovative programs and services that prevent, heal, educate and advocate.

Mental  
**HealthNotes**

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*Family Support*

*Creating Hope  
Finding Direction  
Growing Together*



*Dedicated In  
Loving Memory to  
Pat Adesso  
1934 - 2009*





**Mental Health Association  
in Ulster County, Inc.**

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A United Way Agency

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Ellen Pendegar, CEO

During this MHA Board of Directors year, we lost one of our own, Pat Addesso. Pat, along with others, dedicated many years to MHA to ensure that the family voice was always part of the discussion. To honor her, we have focused this issue on Family Support. Family support is an important part of a person's mental health and recovery. We must not forget that only 50-60 years ago, if a person had a mental illness they were often separated from their families and expected to remain institutionalized for the rest of their life. They were thought to not "need" a family anymore and, in fact, many people believed the family was the "cause" of the mental illness and, therefore, the disconnection from one's family as "therapeutic".

Thank goodness those days have passed. It took strong voices, like Pat's, to change the perceptions of families who have a member with a serious mental illness. In the words I chose for Pat's memorial, I said: "Her love and dedication to her family served as a role model and inspiration to everyone who has a family member coping with a serious mental health illness. Her tenacious support for Mike (her son) helped him to feel love even in his darkest times. I believe that love helped Mike to find health, joy and peace despite his many obstacles."

In my mind, especially for a parent's feelings towards a child, you do not learn to "unlove" them. This love is there even when your child does the most uninviting things. If we, as mental health providers remember that, we will always respect a family's leadership role in our work together. When a person is ill, a family needs to determine how they wish to fashion their support and interventions to best help. Family must be open to change. We must let them take the lead but always be willing to "set up" to meet them as true partners whenever the "forks in the road" appear. We can point out the various options and consequences in making a particular decision.

If love is at the center, family transitions will be made to help each family member to be as healthy and well as possible. Thank you to all the family members who keep MHA doing the best job possible for people.

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is published biannually by MHA:  
the Mental Health Association  
in Ulster County, Inc.  
PO Box 2304, Kingston, NY 12402

Visit our web site:  
[www.MHAinUlster.com](http://www.MHAinUlster.com)

## Support Groups & Workshops for Family Members

### Empowering Parents Through Support

A monthly support group for parents and caregivers who are looking for help in coping with a child who is having social, emotional, or behavioral difficulties.  
DAY AND EVENING GROUPS ARE OFFERED  
Please call (845) 336-4747 Ext.128

### C.A.R.E. & C.A.R.I.N.G.

#### Coping, Awareness & Regulating Emotions (Interpersonally while Negotiating Groups)

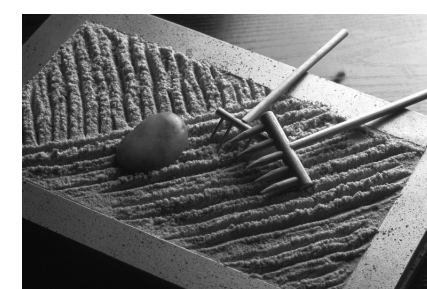
An ongoing skill-building support group for mothers with mental health challenges or who are parenting children who have mental health challenges.  
1ST & 3RD FRIDAYS 10:00AM - 1:00PM  
Please call (845) 336-4747 Ext.131

### ASD Support Group

A bi-monthly support group meeting for individuals who have children, siblings, spouses or other relatives with Autism Spectrum Disorders.  
EVERY OTHER MONTH 6:30PM - 8:30PM  
Please call (845) 336-4747 Ext. 128

### Positive Discipline

A parenting class that teaches practical solutions for encouraging positive behavior & infusing parent-child relationships with mutual respect.  
DAY AND EVENING GROUPS ARE OFFERED  
Please call (845) 336-4747 Ext.131



### Families In Crisis

This 8-week family support training is an educational support series for family members seeking more information about a loved-one's mental illness.  
WEDNESDAYS 6:00pm - 7:30pm

### NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Family Support Group

An ongoing support group for friends and family members of individuals with mental illness.  
1ST & 3RD MONDAYS 6:00PM - 8:00PM

### Crossroads

An ongoing support group for friends and family members of individuals struggling with alcohol and/or drug dependency.  
TUESDAYS 6:30pm - 8:00pm

### Eating Disorders Family Support Group

A 5-week series for individuals coping with a loved-one's Disordered Eating Behaviors, Overeating, Obesity, Anorexia or Bulimia.  
WEDNESDAYS 7:00PM - 8:00PM

### F.O.C.U.S.

**Families Organized to Cope, Understand & Succeed**  
A wellness self-management group for mothers with a focus on addressing parenting issues related to psychiatric illnesses and mental health issues.  
2ND & 4TH MONDAYS 1:00PM - 2:30PM

### Kidology

An educational program for parents & guardians of children with social, emotional and behavioral difficulties to explore child development, enhance parenting skills & help kids manage their behaviors.  
EVERY OTHER THURSDAY NIGHT, SEPT - MAY

For information & registration for these groups for family members that are listed in this column, please call (845) 339-9090 Ext.115

Additional groups & services can be found online at  
[www.MHAinUlster.com](http://www.MHAinUlster.com)

# When A Parent Has a Mental Illness

From *The Family Support Toolkit*, prepared by Helena Davis, M.A., LMHC,  
Director of the Parents with Psychiatric Disabilities Initiative, MHANYS

During the 1970's and 1980's, mental hospitals in New York State closed and former patients returned to the community for what promised to be both recovery and re-integration. Unfortunately, communities were not fully prepared to discharge their mandates in this regard. The funding that existed was organized under two headings: adults and children. The policymakers did not think about individuals living with psychiatric disabilities as being part of family units that also would need assistance if parents were to recover and their children were to thrive. During those decades, and even still today, providers who serve people living with psychiatric disabilities and their families forget that consumers are members of families and probably parents with childrearing duties.

As some consumers joined peer support and peer advocacy groups, they began to find their voices and to tell providers who were willing to listen that they wanted to succeed as parents and that with a little help and support they could do just that.

*"Parents living with psychiatric disabilities firmly believe that being allowed to parent their children and learning to do so successfully is a vital part of their recovery."*

In the 21st Century, two more variables have increased the challenge of parenting successfully while living with a psychiatric disability: Constantly shrinking financial support for community mental health services, and the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, which has placed additional pressure on providers and parents to achieve

a safe environment for the children within 18 months or possibly lose custody for good.

It is very important that we focus on parents' abilities as well as their challenges. Creating this balance of perspective will help us work more effectively to assist the parents. In addition, being able to see what parents can already do helps the parent combat stigma and low self-esteem. Parents who have been scapegoats and victims of discrimination will have a hard time seeing their strengths unless you share your observations. It is the responsibility of providers to be objective about their assessments of clients so it is imperative to make a conscious effort to take inventory of clients' strengths as well as challenges.

## In Our Own Words:

### What Consumers Need To Succeed As Parents

- Having information on my child's mental health and normal child development
- Having family unity or reunification as a primary goal
- My spouse and I taking an active part in designing the service plan
- Description of signs and symptoms that indicate treatment is needed
- A proactive recovery plan to avert crises
- Being reminded that there are things I can do well despite my diagnosis

## Facing The Facts:

75% of women with severe, persistent psychiatric disorders are mothers (Nicholson et al., 2005).

75.5% of men with severe, persistent psychiatric disorders are fathers (Nicholson et al, 2005).

Custody loss rates for parents with psychiatric disabilities are 70% to 80% (Burton, 2002).

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## May is Mental Health Month

MHA continues its tradition to celebrate "May is Mental Health Month," which began nationally in 1949. This year, the theme *"Live Your Life Well"* challenges us to promote whole health and wellness in homes, communities, schools, and inform those who don't believe it's attainable.

### The 10 Tools

These proven tools can help us feel stronger and more hopeful:

1. *Connect with others*
2. *Stay positive*
3. *Get physically active*
4. *Help others*
5. *Get enough sleep*
6. *Create joy and satisfaction*
7. *Eat well*
8. *Take care of your spirit*
9. *Deal better with hard times*
10. *Seek help when you need it*

For more information visit [www.LiveYourLifeWell.org](http://www.LiveYourLifeWell.org)

*"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one that is most responsive to change."*

*- Charles Darwin,  
adapted by Dr. Leon C. Megginson*



# The Evolution of Family Support

by Michele Bertelle

Over 50 years ago, a group of physicians and concerned citizens began a coordinated citizen's movement to promote mental health and to work toward the improved care and treatment of persons with mental illness. Despite their varied backgrounds, what many of these MHA founders had in common was that their lives had been in some way personally touched by mental illness. Their hope of improving circumstances for the people they loved ultimately became a vision that continues to motivate our mental health community. Love is certainly a powerful motivator.

Family members have been coming together at MHA to share their journeys of love and to support one another since the beginning. These original "Sharing and Caring" support groups served as an opportunity for family members to gain insight, validation and hope in their darkest times. Support groups for family members were an integral part of MHA's services and as the years passed, a variety of family support groups would be created to meet the variety of needs of group members.

Another important feature of this timeline is that the movement for deinstitutionalization was growing and by the late 1970's, many people in our community were returning home from psychiatric hospitals. Family members were becoming even more passionate about family empowerment, and expressed a need for specific mental health training and education. They wanted to know more about their loved one's diagnoses, symptoms,

treatments, and medications. They were motivated to get as much information as they could in order to best support their family members. Under the direction of Lucille Prichard, MHA's CEO at the time, MHA set its sights on acquiring an appropriate educational curriculum for family members and identifying group facilitators that could best teach it. Like many of the innovative projects that MHA has spearheaded, the answers would come by way of collaboration. An emerging curriculum was being developed outside of Albany by Sheila Le Gacy, an educator who presently coordinates curriculum and training for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). MHA embraced Le Gacy's Supportive Family Training and its three-point focus of support, education and advocacy, and sought two professional leaders that would effectively provide the training to its family members.

Martha Steuding, a Family Support Coordinator for MHA at that time, who later would become the program director for the agency's Education and Advocacy department, was an ideal candidate because of her background as an educator, her work as a NAMI member, and her deep commitment to the mental health of the community. Martha's expertise was perfectly complimented by that of her co-facilitator, Robert Hausman. A therapist with the Ulster County Mental Health Department at that time, Bob also served as the discharge coordinator for Hudson Valley Psychiatric Center, assisting individuals develop support plans as they were discharged from the center. This philosophical balance between educator and clinician would allow for accurate information and current research findings to be communicated to family members with care, compassion and respect.

It was twenty-five years ago that the duo would hold their first Family Support Training. In honor of this anniversary, I met with Martha and Bob this spring. I was privileged to hear their stories and inspired by their journeys. They recalled the magic in that first group and the tangible energy of these passionate family members. Martha and Bob recognized the enormous potential in educating and supporting family members: It had been demonstrated that individuals with mental illness recover more quickly and maintain their recovery longer when their natural supports were strengthened and empowered. The two reminisced of the "good old days," when the mental health community was bursting with radical programs and activities, and when budget allowed for them to prepare and plan for groups over a meal of good Chinese food.



## Celebrating 15 Years of Ulster County's Innovative Kids Together Program

On April 29, 2010 at the YMCA of Kingston & Ulster County's Annual Meeting, Ulster County's innovative *Kids Together* program received a certificate of recognition honoring its unique community collaboration. *Kids Together* was noted as one of the YMCA's "longest and strongest" collaborative efforts in achieving its mission to build strong kids, strong families and strong communities. Providing services to children and families for 15 years, the program's partnership between Ulster County Mental Health Department (UCMHD), YMCA of Kingston & Ulster County, and MHA: the Mental Health Association in Ulster County, Inc. allows for a comprehensive approach to group play therapy for children with social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties and their families.

The program is designed for children served by UCMHD to receive group therapy at the YMCA, which offers a natural, community-based setting that helps to reduce stigma. The MHA, with its reputation for providing outstanding psycho-educational programs, partners to provide family specialists in the children's therapy groups as well as to facilitate *Kidology*, an educational family support training offered to the program's parents. MHA's *Kids Together* staff include Tammy Carlile, Krista Frey, Laurie Morano & Michele Bertelle.

*Kids Together* was also recognized for its 15-year legacy this past winter and awarded an \$850 donation from Rhinebeck Savings Bank. The donation will serve in part as scholarships for children enrolled in the program to attend Ulster County summer camps.



Bridget Smith, RSB, Justin Ihne, YMCA,  
Brian M. Smith, RSB, Erika Scannel, UCMHD,  
Brigitte Constable, UCMHD & Michele Bertelle, MHA

## 2010 ANEMONE SALE

Our annual Anemones for Mental Health flower sale was a great success this year! We sold over 1,100 bouquets, with all profits going to support MHA programs. Despite the winter weather, our dedicated volunteers were able to bring a little early spring to everyone in the middle of a cold and snowy week.

Thank you to everyone, who purchased, sold or volunteered for our 2010 Anemone Sale!

### Compeer RN Graduation



Celebrating the 2010 Compeer RN Graduation: Ellen Pendegar with nursing students Nyala Leslie, Jessica Conklin, Taylor Archard, Martha Maines & Jessica Curran

Compeer RN was started in 2003 as a collaboration between Bernadette Ballezza, MHA's Compeer Coordinator, and Barbara Maxwell, Nursing Professor with the Ulster County Community College (UCCC) Nursing Program. In lieu of the traditional academic psych rotation required of nursing students, Compeer RN provides a unique opportunity for a nursing student to have a one to one learning experience with a person living with a mental illness in the community. The consumer acts as a mentor, teaching the nursing student about thier symptoms, diagnosis, medication, side effects, therapy, community resources, and stigma in an effort to better prepare the nurses for community medicine. The nursing students celebrated the completion of this semester with Ellen Pendegar, who supervised the students in their work.



# MHA HAPPENINGS

## ADVOCACY IN ACTION



*Rallying to Protect the Mental Health Safety Net*

On January 26, 2010 a delegation from MHA in Ulster County joined with hundreds of advocates from across the state in Albany to rally to "Protect the Community Mental Health Safety Net." While the state's finances are bad, the crowd argued that now is not the time to cut Mental Health Services. Mental Health funding has already been cut three times in the last year. The delegation rallied outside the Capital and met with our local state legislators to ask for their support and urge that we continue to provide the Mental Health Safety Net. A delegation from MHA returned to Albany in March for the Mental Health/

Suicide Prevention Legislative day organized by the Mental Health Association of New York State (MHANYS) and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). They joined hundreds of others who were briefed by state leaders on the current landscape of legislation and budget negotiations. They then rallied at the Capital and met with legislators to make sure that the voices of the mental health community are part of the discussion.

### [www.MHAinUlster.com](http://www.MHAinUlster.com) MHA's Website Redesign

We're proud to announce that MHA's redesigned website went live in February 2010! The site's new features include media clips, slideshows of photos of program activities and events, links to MHA's Facebook and Twitter accounts, and a comprehensive calendar of events. The site promises to be a valuable community resource. Visit us online today at [www.MHAinUlster.com](http://www.MHAinUlster.com)



*Mental Health Advocates Patty Griffis, Andrea Ade, Chris Decker, Ellen Pendegar & Martha Steuding*



*Ellen Pendegar Congratulates New Assembly Mental Health Committee Chair, Felix Ortiz*



*Harvey Rosenthal, Executive Director, NYAPRS Motivates the Crowd*

Some say that the future can be read in tealeaves. Martha and Bob might argue that the future can be read *on tea bags*. At their very first meeting, the co-facilitators would read a prophetic message dangling from the string on a teabag of Oolong. "The most effective way to cope with change is to help create it." That memento would remain tacked up in Martha's office for the next twenty-five years.

Twenty-eight family members filled the room on the first night Family Support Training was offered. One mother attended that first meeting with her teenage daughter, a pair completely unaware that they would go on to forever change the mental health community in Ulster County. My heart overflowed when I sat down to hear the perspective of that teenage girl, now a beautiful and empowered woman, and as it just so happens, the clinical director of the Adolescent Partial Hospitalization Program at Benedictine Hospital. Kim Adesso remembers the confusion around her brother Mike's first psychotic symptoms when he was an adolescent. When Mike was first diagnosed, "our parents spent their entire life savings on hospitals, and doctors, and counselors, and on any bit of advice they could get on how to try to fix the problem," at first. Kim so eloquently described how their mother, Pat Adesso, quickly gained insight and acceptance of Mike's mental illness as having nothing to do with "fixing" a problem. Their mother's love kept the family instead focused on "alleviating symptoms, learning how to cope, and building a life around it and in it. Somewhere underneath the behaviors, that's your family. You can't just cut them off. Mike was always my brother. Mental illness didn't change the relationship, it changed the way we function in the relationship."

Kim described MHA's Family Support Training as "the most wonderful thing we ever attended." Kim, a self-described science buff, credits the group facilitators with providing a new level of understanding, explaining what her brother's mental illness looked like at both the behavioral level and at the cellular level. Martha and Bob, however, credit the family members with having "the real magic." In fact, the personal connections that were formed in that first group would last lifetimes. When that



*Mike & Pat Adesso*



*"The most effective way to cope with change is to help create it."*

first training series ended, the group members would continue to gather and, with Pat Adesso at the forefront, formed their own support group, Wits End. This group remained connected throughout the rest of their lives. And like beautiful wildflowers this effect spread. This core group of family members would organize a multitude of other "spin-off" groups, which would evolve into Family Support Training specific to Personality Disorders, a Lemonade from Lemons group, the Ulster NAMI support group, and Kidology, an adaptation of the Family Support Training model for parents of children with mental health diagnoses. Motivated to share the model with her brother and other consumers, Kim organized and facilitated an educational group for consumers, and the Ulster Consumer Action Network was born. Members of this group would partner with others in Poughkeepsie and would eventually organize into PEOPLE, Inc..

"There's no doubt in my mind that I do this work because of my family. When you walk this road, you have knowledge that you can't read out of a book. I may be afraid of a lot of things but I'm not afraid of mental illness. I think that helps me in my work because I see it as exactly what is is: an illness. We get illnesses, like diabetes and viruses, but it doesn't mean it overtakes us and we can never do anything else." Kim emphasized the important role that family members play in offering faith, trust and encouragement. Family members help one another to "focus on what people do well, and give us a more well rounded picture of ourselves." Mike, Kim and Pat began by creating change within themselves and their family, advocating for services to support independence, such as housing, transportation and recreation. It was the love and the confidence they had in each other that fueled them to create change within the system, and a lasting legacy of helping people throughout the community with mental illness to live more fulfilled and fruitful lives every day.

"I saw my mother as someone determined to figure this all out and take care care of her son. She wanted knowledge. She also believed in herself a lot. I saw her as courageous and so giving of herself. She was so strong. This was just how it was going to be. It wasn't going to be all about Mike being sick. It never was. We were going to enjoy life, and continue to learn and grow."

*We wish to express tremendous gratitude to Martha Steuding, Robert Hausman, & Kim Adesso for sharing your stories, your mementos, & your inspiration. You are the roots & the fruit of family support.*



# Walking The Walk

## A Support Team With Heart

Today we conceptualize family support in a variety of ways. The leadership role of family members is at the core of MHA's programs, our services, and our mission. In addition to providing the original family support training program, the Education & Advocacy department offers a variety of educational workshops and support groups for family members. MHA's range of case management services in essence lighten the overwhelming load that family members traditionally carry to coordinate and manage their loved one's service plans, arrange appointments, and create linkages and referrals for appropriate services. Waiver services, for youth at risk for hospitalization and their families, include care coordination, respite opportunities, 24-hour crisis response, and parent education and advocacy. The Harbor and Harbor Light programs provide family based treatment, and family specialists work to strengthen and support birth families through training, encouragement, and education. We are a rich resource of family-driven services.

The Family Support Team is the latest addition of support services for family members. The team was started in 2009, when the NYS Office of Mental Health and the Ulster County Mental Health Department had identified a gap in services that existed for families with children in residential treatment facilities. Family members were expressing that there was a "disconnect" in communication with their child's providers while in treatment and as they transitioned home. In the planning phase to meet this community need, program director Michele Sachse described a desire to broaden the scope of the service to not only meet the needs of families with children in residential treatment facilities, but to also support families as they navigate the vast and complex community mental health system for children. Simultaneously community peer-support programs were continuing to show positive outcomes. The immeasurable value and power of receiving guidance and support from someone who has been through similar experiences has driven so many of our successful programs and services at MHA since its beginning on through today.

Out of these community needs and creative ideas to meet those needs, the Family Support Team was born and Patrice Baez, Suzen Larsen King and Carol Charest teamed up as the team's Parent Advocates. The three mothers have experienced challenging children of their own and serve as supportive and respectful peers to parents who have



*Parent Advocates Carol Charest & Suzen Larsen King*

children with identified social, emotional or behavioral challenges. The Parent Advocates focus on the needs of parents, helping families to identify individual family strengths, supports, goals, and obstacles. They provide information and assist in linking parents to services in the community, and help parents strengthen their own advocacy skills for their child and family. The team also offers The Family Support Resource Center, complete with a lending library, internet access, and support groups. Over 30 families are currently linked with our Parent Advocates and countless others have utilized the Resource Center. The Family Support Team is an inspiration and a hope to parents. These three women are reminders that our darkest times are a snapshot in time, and they symbolize the light that shines beyond them.

"In order for families to receive needed support, comprehensive services must be developed that are relevant to their needs and are family-centered and strength-based. "Adult" and "child" services must be integrated across and within systems to reduce service fragmentation or duplication, and to ensure that services are as accessible and as effective as possible."

From Factsheet: Interventions & Services for Families, Mental Health America

*MHA's Family & Youth Department (F&Y) offers more than 20 programs which seek to integrate "adult" & "child" services, including educational seminars, prevention programs, support groups, skill-building classes & community collaborations. Additionally, the department's Respite Program has been matching families with trained respite providers for over 15 years, meeting the dual need for parents to have rest & relaxation & for children to have structured activities in the community with the guidance of a mentor. F&Y continues to adapt & expand to creatively meet the mental health needs of children, adolescents & their families.*

## FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS



Creating a mentally-healthy environment for you and your family is easy. Regardless of who or how many members make up your family, there are endless ways to achieve mental wellness while relieving stress and spending time with the people you love. Here's a quick list of ideas. Feel free to make your own – the key words are FUN and EASY!

**Eat dinner together** – As so many families know, finding time to sit down for a family meal can be a challenge. But doing so once a week or even every other week is a prime opportunity to talk, listen and enjoy a good meal together.

**Get some exercise** – We all know exercise can be hard work, but it can also be lots of fun for the family and help you feel great. So get together with loved ones to shoot some hoops, go swimming or play a favorite sport.

**Go to the zoo or a museum** – Choose a free day and take a trip to the local zoo or museum to learn and explore. Afterwards, treat yourselves to lunch or a healthy snack.

**Take a walk** – Walking together can be a simple and fun way to get your blood flowing while enjoying the outdoors and the company of family members. Pick a scenic route and get moving.

**Watch a movie** – Pick up a good family film, make some popcorn and stay inside for the night.

**Get enough rest** – Mental and physical health go hand in hand and you can only be at the top of your game when you've gotten plenty of rest. Make sure you and your family members get a full seven to eight hours of sleep each night.

**Pack a healthy lunch** – Encourage the healthy eating habits of your family by packing a healthy lunch. Substitute chips and a soda with healthier snacks like carrots, raisins and fresh juice or water.

**Read a book together** – Reading a good book can be one of the simple pleasures of life and a great way to exercise your mind. Select something the whole family can enjoy and read a portion of it aloud each night.

**Plan a picnic** – Choose a sunny day, pack a nice lunch and head to the park. Bring tennis rackets or a soccer ball and challenge your family members to a game of one-on-one.

**Take a vacation** – Getting away from home and work for a couple of days or more is always a treat. Plan a fun and affordable getaway where you and your family can rest, relax and escape your busy schedules.

From Factsheet: 10 Tips for Improving Family Mental Health, Mental Health America

*"Change begets change.  
Nothing propagates so fast."*

*- Charles Dickens*