At Mental Health Advocates of WNY* (MHA), our mission is to promote mental health and wellness in our community and support individuals and families challenged by mental illness.

We take a holistic approach by offering education, awareness initiatives, prevention and early intervention programs, support groups, and much more.

Since 1962, advocacy has been at the core of what we do. When you or a family member is struggling with mental illness, it can be hard to know where to turn. If you are looking for answers, we can help navigate the mental health care system and offer links to treatment and other support services. There is hope and we are here to help.

Be Heard. Be Helped.

what we do

**BEST**

*Basic Emotional Skills Training*

BEST is a classroom-based program that helps students in Pre-K through Second Grade develop the healthy social and emotional skills they need to be successful in school and in life.

Our staff provides BEST in **two formats:**

**Teaching Kids to Care** features interactive classroom lessons that help young children develop the skills they need to make and keep friends, express their feelings appropriately and behave in the classroom.

**Too Good for Violence** is an evidence-based program that uses cooperative learning, role play, games, small group activities and class discussions to help primary school students handle their emotions, improve their interpersonal skills and reduce aggressive behavior.

**COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES**

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) is a program of trained, dedicated volunteers assigned by Family Court judges to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children.

CASA volunteers in Erie County act as an extra set of eyes and ears for the judges by visiting the children monthly, speaking to caregivers, teachers and medical and mental health providers and then providing that information to the Erie County Family Court judges.

CASA volunteers come from all walks of life. They are ordinary citizens with an extraordinary commitment to helping children reach their full potential in a permanent, safe home.

Learn how you can take the first step in speaking up for children involved in Erie County Family Court by becoming a CASA volunteer at mhawny.org.

**LEGAL SERVICES**

Legal Services has enabled thousands of people disabled by mental illness to live independently by advocating for their basic rights and linking them to appropriate community agencies for support.

This program provides pro bono civil legal services and advocacy for mental health consumers and their families, including representation in Social Security Disability, Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid, Medicare, housing, family and consumer matters.

In order to be eligible for legal services, a person must live in Erie, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans or Wyoming County and have a psychiatric diagnosis.

*formerly Mental Health Association of Erie County, Inc.*
CHILD & FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Having a family member with significant emotional or behavioral challenges can be an overwhelming experience.

The Child and Family Support Program (CFSP) offers hope and support through a variety of services, including support groups, advocacy and education to those who have a family member suffering from a mental illness. Run by peers, advocates working in the program also have a child or family member diagnosed with a mental illness.

CFSP advocates provide a wealth of information about services and supports in WNY, working with families and caregivers to reach their goals, which may include:

- Learning to navigate the mental health system
- Understanding and learning to pursue appropriate educational accommodations
- Discussions with the person's treatment team
- Working with formal and informal community supports

CFSP also assists young adults, offering youth peer support groups as well as other workshops and conferences to encourage them to advocate on their own behalf.

INFORMATION & REFERRAL SERVICE

Did you know that one in four adults and one in five children suffer from a diagnosable and treatable mental health disorder?

For individuals and families seeking help, our Information and Referral service can offer solutions. Our trained specialists can help callers understand and navigate the mental health system and provide up-to-date information and referrals to the most appropriate community resource, including mental health clinics, mental health professionals, area support groups and more.

Call (716) 886-1242 today to learn more about how we can help you!

MINDSET: A PATH TO WORKPLACE MENTAL WELL-BEING

Investing in mental health is not just good for people—it’s good for business.

Mindset is a collection of innovative, research-based programs that help organizations create mentally healthy workplaces and employees. The on-site programs range from 1-hour presentations to 12-week intensive courses. Mindset will also customize a program to fit your specific needs.

Mindset helps organizations:

- Start a conversation and reduce stigma around mental health issues
- Help employees achieve a balance between work and life
- Develop strategies for creating a mentally healthy workplace culture
- Lower barriers that discourage employees from getting help
- Increase employee engagement and productivity

To learn more, visit right-mindset.com or e-mail info@right-mindset.com.

To learn more about the programs and services of Mental Health Advocates of WNY*, visit MHAWNY.ORG or call (716) 886-1242.