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MHRAC Community Engagement Committee

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Agency: [Mental Health Response Advisory Committee \(MHRAC\)](#)

Date: Aug. 31, 2023

[See more about this meeting at Documenters.org](#)

Summary

- The meeting addressed matters, issues and concerns regarding mental health.
- Participants discussed the various components of mental health (policing, intervention, community-based programs).
- Meeting members emphasized that everyone who is in need of healthcare/mental healthcare is entitled to quality care.

Follow-Up Questions

- What can be done to remedy some avoidable causes of mental health issues (for example, stress from dealing with day-to-day racism, oppression, lack of accountability for people who cause the mental health issues of victims? Do healthcare providers discriminate (pick and choose who to provide their best service to and who not to), and how are the providers held accountable?
- How can it be better publicized that members of the community can participate in public work groups?

Notes

Committee Chair Elaine Schleiffer facilitated the meeting. Schleiffer shared information and [a link to enroll in mental health first aid courses](#).

Bree Easterling, Social Justice Outreach and Organizing specialist, [Policy Matters Ohio](#)

Easterling said five Cleveland neighborhoods are the focus of mental illness care services. They said today is [International Overdose Awareness Day](#).

Attendees shared the following links and information:

- [CareforCLE](#), a site to get involved in creating a care response program in Cleveland.
- [A care response petition](#)
- [The Cuyahoga County Suicide Prevention Coalition](#)
- [Cleveland's Positive Education Program](#)
- [The #StigmafreeCLE campaign](#)
- [LGBTQ Ohio](#)

Easterling also said there are not enough community-based programs.

Rosie Palfy, a former MHRAC member and a Cleveland Documenter, spoke on behalf of disabled veterans. She reminded those attending that dialing 9-8-8 can be significantly beneficial for disabled veterans in distress.

[Learn more here](#) about how the 9-8-8 rollout has impacted the Veterans Crisis Hotline.

Guest column about care response:

<https://www.cleveland.com/opinion/2023/08/embracing-care-response-in-cuyahoga-county-to-transform-mental-health-crisis-intervention-mark-hurst-and-scott-osiecki.html>

[MHRAC committee member Loh](#) said that mental health care needs to be available to everyone, including senior citizens and refugees, populations that are significantly underserved, Loh said. *[Editor's note: Learn more about activist and frequent public commenter Loh in this Signal Cleveland profile.]*

Loh said some individuals in their 40s, 50s, or 60s are not aware that they have health issues (for example, diabetes) or mental health issues because of their social and family upbringing.

Cassey Fye, program director, [NAMI Greater Cleveland](#)

Fye said the Cleveland Department of Public Health is working with several coalitions to collectively provide resources to community members in an effort to give community members power and say in the matter of mental health and services.

Shandra Benito, director of Diversity and Inclusion at the Nord Center

Benito spoke about the Cleveland Community Police Commission, of which she is a member, and its committees, which include groups focusing on police training, policy, community outreach, budget and grants. Benito said these committees will have assigned workgroups that are open to members of the public.

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