



Winter 2024 Edition

FOCUS

ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Prince William County Human Rights Office Newsletter

FEBRUARY FOCUS:

In observance of **BLACK HISTORY MONTH** HRC adopted a resolution ratifying and encouraging County observance of Black History Month. This year's theme is the influence of African American art.

The Human Rights Commission recognizes human and civil rights as inherent to all, regardless of color, nationality, religion, sex, or any other status.

HUMAN RIGHTS STUDENT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL COHORT 8

The Human Rights Student Leadership Council (HRSLC) develops youth leadership by allowing students to work with local government to increase community awareness and ensuring the voices of our young future leaders are heard.

On February 1st, HRSLC's session was devoted to youth mental health. Council members engaged in roundtable discussions about the impacts of culture on mental health, suicide, substance abuse, social media influence, identifying crisis indicators with peers, and mental health resources for youth.

Joined by Prince William County Community Service counselors, Natalie Lizano, Jim Wooller and Wendy Hunt, along with Mallory McKnight, PWCS' Substance Abuse Specialist, and Pat Victorson, President of NAMI; cohort 8 members were able to talk about potential intervention strategies such as a youth-adult education series to improve adult understanding and communication with teens about mental health, elective peer forums to shed the stigma associated with mental health disorders, and on-campus peer counseling clubs such as NAMI on Campus, to broaden awareness and increase accessibility to resources.

Congratulations to HRSLC Cohort 8 for taking steps towards "ending the stigma."



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HRC ON MENTAL HEALTH

DID YOU KNOW ?

Mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, bi-polar disorder and more, may be considered disabilities under the laws enforced by the Human Rights Commission.

Statistics show that 18% of the workforce have an anxiety disorder, 9.5% have depression, 4% have attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, 2.6% have bipolar disorder, 1% have schizophrenia. About 18% of workers in the U.S. report having a mental health condition in any given month. ● ●

Did you know substance abuse disorders, such as alcohol and opioid use addictions are considered mental health conditions? However, if these disorders involve current illegal drug use, the disorders are not considered disabilities under disability discrimination laws. ●

These mental health conditions and more, are protected against harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. The Human Rights Commission enforces, The Human Rights Ordinance - Chapter 10.1, Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Sections 501 and 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act) to protect residents with mental health conditions. These laws apply to government agencies, employers with at least 15 employees, labor organizations, and more; know your rights. ●

E-HRC UPDATES

The Human Rights Commission presented its free Webinar: *Mental Health in the Workforce* on January 31, 2024, with 118 persons registered.

Among presenters, Attorney, Lisa Schnall from EEOC, Dr. BrandiNicole Brooks, LICSW, PMH-C from NAMI, and Heather Martinsen, Sr. Mgr. for Health & Wellness from PWC Community Services; valuable resources and information was presented for employees and employers concerned with mental health support in the workforce.

For more information see E-HRC Webinars.