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Official News Release



For Immediate Release

MENDHAM BOROUGH JOINS MORRIS COUNTY
“STIGMA FREE” MOVEMENT
18TH TOWN ENROLLED IN EFFORT TO END STIGMA
RELATED TO MENTAL ILLNESS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE
DISORDERS

The Mendham Borough Council has voted to join the Morris County “Stigma Free” initiative, passing a resolution to make

Mendham the 18th town in Morris County to join the countywide effort to help eradicate the stigma associated with mental illness and substance abuse disorders.

Mendham joins recently announced participants, Mountain Lakes, Roxbury, and Washington Township as Stigma Free communities in Morris County.

Other participants are the town of Boonton, Boonton Township, Denville, Dover, East Hanover, Hanover, Jefferson, Long Hill, Madison, Morris Plains, Morris Township, Parsippany, Rockaway Borough and Rockaway Township

Sparta in Sussex County has joined the initiative as the first Sussex County town to do so.

“We’ve all been affected by mental illness in some way and becoming Stigma-Free is the first step in fighting this disease as a community,” said Mendham Mayor Neil Henry. “Only by removing the perception of shame or embarrassment will we erase those feelings that prevent our neighbors, friends and family members from seeking help.

“It is critical that we raise awareness and promote the available resources whose mission is to assist those challenged by this illness. Indeed, I am proud to add Mendham Borough to the list of communities who embrace the Stigma-Free movement.”

The **Morris County Board of Freeholders** in 2016 passed a [resolution](#) designating Morris County as a Stigma-Free County and asked the county's 39 towns to consider enrolling.

Morris County has created a Stigma Free website www.morriscountystigmfree.org to call attention to the initiative, provide information and resources, and a calendar of upcoming events related to mental illness and substance abuse. A Stigma Free Toolkit also is available for towns and communities.

The logo consists of three stacked rectangular boxes. The top box is light green with the text 'MORRIS COUNTY' in bold, black, sans-serif font. The middle box is dark green with the text 'PROUD TO BE' in bold, white, sans-serif font. The bottom box is light green with the text 'STIGMA-FREE' in bold, black, sans-serif font. The entire logo is framed by a thin black border.

Morris County's goal in creating a Stigma Free initiative is to disseminate information and foster a stigma-free environment where people are free from judgment and can get the help they need to recover.

“We are really heartened by the support shown for this Stigma-Free initiative by so many towns and health providers and agencies, and our county residents,” said **Morris County Freeholder Director Doug Cabana**. “This initiative is an important step in helping affected people seek recovery, without fear of stigma or reprisal.”

This addition to the Stigma-Free communities in Morris County occurs as a “Hidden in Plain Sight: Workshop on Spotting Signs of Teen Drug Use” is set for tomorrow night (Wednesday, May 24) at **Watchung Hills Regional High School in Warren** for residents in the Long Hill, Harding and Chathams area. This forum will give county residents a chance to join an informal conversation on the national epidemic. The event will take place at **7:30 p.m.**

As part of the countywide initiative, residents are urged to take the Stigma Free Pledge:

- As a supporter to those who have a mental illness or substance use disorder, I understand the importance of recognizing the high prevalence of mental illness and substance use disorders.
- I also know that when recognition is coupled with reeducation and understanding, health-seeking action can be taken. These actions lead to recovery, which is possible for everyone.
- The Three R's (recognize, reeducate and reduce) depend on each other to effectively Stamp Out Stigma surrounding mental illness and substance use disorders.
- This is what I, as an individual, charge myself to do—to fully Stamp Out Stigma and clear the path to health-seeking behavior. It begins with me.

For more information on the disease of mental illness, visit www.nami.org and for more information on NAMI's national Stigma Free effort, visit: <https://www.nami.org/stigmfree>

Stigma is defined as a mark of disgrace which results from the judgment by others. When an individual is labeled by their illness they experience judgment and prejudice. Stigma brings experiences and feelings of shame, embarrassment, distress, hopelessness and reluctance to seek or accept help.

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