



VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD

131 N. MAPLE AVENUE, RIDGEWOOD, NJ 07450

Ridgewood Stigma-Free Committee Meeting Minutes 8.19.25

Present: Beth Abbott, Karen Acker, Cynthia Chazen, Lynn Benson, Danielle Caputo, Dawn Cetrulo, Michelle Fenwick, Dan Kilday, Dr. Sarah Lenzi, Gabrielle Milani, Jen Perry, Mike Piacenza, and Corinne Scarpa

Item 1: Welcome

- Danielle asked the group to introduce themselves because there were a couple of new faces on the call today, such as Michelle Fenwick and Jen Perry, who later joined. Michelle and Jen are from Ridgewood Public Schools. Michelle is the Assistant Superintendent for RPS of Elementary and Special Programs and Jen is the Director of School Counseling K-12.

Item 2: Guest Speaker: Cynthia Chazen, Stigma Ambassador of NJ Governor's Council on Mental Health Stigma

- Cynthia is the Coordinator of Community Outreach and Partnerships for the council. She shared that she's been part of the Stigma-Free Zone since 2012. She worked with Mary Ann Uzzi when Stigma-Free first began in Paramus. She is also Demarest's Stigma-Free Ambassador. Cynthia shared that her experiences have led her to where she is today with the council. The council was created in 2005 to fight stigma in NJ. This year is the 20th year celebration. Cynthia shared that you have to be appointed by the NJ Governor and approved by the Senate in order to be part of this council. Cynthia shared that there are currently seats available to be part of the council, but it's been challenging to get people appointed due to the state. To get around this, Cynthia works with subcommittees to help with initiatives.
- The council is under the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies (NJAMHAA). The mission of the New Jersey Governor's Council on Mental Health Stigma is to combat mental health stigma as a top priority in New Jersey's effort to create a better mental health system. Through outreach and education, the council sends a message that mental health stigma must no longer be tolerated. The council currently consists of about 6 members at the moment, all volunteers, unpaid. They are not tasked with addictions. They are always actively looking for people to join the subcommittee. The subcommittee consists of a variety of professionals with different backgrounds.
- The council is currently focused on various initiatives. This includes providing education and support for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities. They also want to increase services and outreach efforts to underserved communities. They also want to develop a closer relationship with faith-based groups, for they recognize when people are

in crisis, they turn to these groups.

- Cynthia discussed a relatively new initiative, Sing! for Mental Health Project. Cynthia said she would share the flyer with Danielle. Basically, it involves adults creating videos to educate the public about stigma. The videos are diverse. They can include art, music, and dance. Only for those 18 and older.
- Gabrielle Milani from the Lukin Center was interested to learn more from Cynthia for she has experience in art and movement therapy.
- Michelle Fenwick was also intrigued by this for the RPS students aged 18-21, who are part of the STEPSS program.
- Cynthia shared that we can contact her anytime. She will share her contact information with Danielle to share with the group.

Item 3: Village Council Report

- Councilwoman Winograd was unable to attend today's meeting so there is nothing to report for this agenda item.

Item 4: International Overdose Awareness Day August 31, 2025

- The Village plans to participate in the county campaign. Danielle is waiting for another department to pick up the signs to place them at the Village Hall near the Community Center.

Item 5: Updates on SAMHSA funding cuts regarding 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline's LGBTQ+ Youth Specialized Services

- Danielle acknowledged that this lifeline had been officially terminated. Danielle wanted to make note that in NJ, there are various agencies that are still able to provide support to the LGBTQ+ community. These include Garden State Equality and Pride Center of NJ. There's also The Trevor Project.

Item 6: Save the Dates

- a. September 12, 2025 - Youth Mental Health First Aid Training from 8:30 am – 4 pm at Village Hall. Danielle will send out the flyer with the meeting minutes. This training is being facilitated by Bergen County Division of Mental Health & Addiction Services and is for those 18 and older. It is free to attend. A maximum of 30 people can register. Contact Danielle to register.
- b. September 13, 2025 - Kickoff for Mayors Wellness Campaign from 9 am – 12 pm at Memorial Park at Van Neste Square. Danielle will share the flyer with the meeting minutes. There are going to be 3 events, such as: Stroller Strides (for moms and children), Park Walk, and a Yoga class led by Fitometry Health Club. Danielle is taking registration. Please call or email her to attend.
- c. October 28, 2025 – Narcan Training from 6:30-7 pm at Village Hall. Danielle will share the flyer with the group when it's approved. This training is being facilitated by the county. Those under the age of 18 will not be eligible to receive a Narcan kit as per the county protocol. Danielle reminded the group that the Health Department has Narcan kits as

well.

Item 7: Committee News/ Upcoming Events

- Danielle opened it up for the group to share any information/ event activities. The group had nothing to report.

Meeting ended around 3:40 pm.

Next Meeting September 16, 2025 at 3:00 pm via Zoom