Our mission is to serve as the informed voice for mental health in rural America, and to provide mental health information and resources. We are working to confront mental health challenges in rural communities and the stigma that surrounds mental illness.

A Message from Rural Minds Founder and Chairman Jeff Winton

I want to begin by thanking everyone who attended and participated in our “Rural Mental Health Caregiver Challenges” webinar last month – our most well-attended webinar so far! If you didn’t get a chance to attend, you can watch the webinar at any time at this link.

We hope you can join us for our next webinar on Wednesday, June 21. During the discussion on the mental health benefits of sleep, nutrition, exercise and mindfulness, you’ll get some valuable tips on how to boost both your mind and body wellness from experts on these topics from Mental Health America (MHA), National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and the National Sleep Foundation (NSF). You can find more information about the June webinar below and a link to register for free.

Rural Minds has already had a strong and exciting start to June as we were chosen as the beneficiary of the KC Summer Kick-Off Charity Horse Show, for which we are truly grateful. More details about this event are below, along with other ways Rural Minds has been helping to raise awareness of rural mental health challenges and provide information and resources for confronting the mental health crisis in rural America.

We look forward to showcasing the work that we are doing through Rural Minds at several events and speaking opportunities in the weeks ahead, as we continue our quest to end the suffering, silence and stigma around mental illness in rural America.

Happy Pride Month!
The next webinar in our Rural Mental Health Connections Webinar Series:
“Mental Health Benefits of Sleep, Nutrition, Exercise and Mindfulness”

Rural Minds and the National Grange are pleased to present another Rural Mental Health Connections Webinar – the second FREE webinar in the 2023 series.

Wednesday, June 21, 2023
4 pm PT | 5 pm MT | 6 pm CT | 7 pm ET

Click here for more information and to register

We welcome the longest day of sunlight on June 21 as the official start of the summer season. Sunshine can improve mental health, as skin exposed to sunlight produces vitamin D, which naturally elevates your mood.

Mental health is an important part of physical health and well-being. That’s why understanding the connection between mental and physical health – and the need to care for both – is essential for overall wellness.

Similar to the positive impact of sunshine for your mental health, during this webinar you’ll learn about the mental and physical health benefits of sleep, nutrition, exercise and mindfulness and get some great tips on how to help boost your mind and body wellness. And when it comes to rural populations, are there different things to consider? We’ll talk about that, too.

This discussion – moderated by Rural Minds Vice President of Communications Julie Lux – will include the following participants:

Joseph Dzierzewski, PhD
The webinar will be presented live via Zoom with the option to hear audio as listen-only. Webinar video will be archived and available post-event on www.RuralMinds.org.

To honor confidentiality and privacy of those attending this webinar, please note:
• Attendees (those watching the webinar) will only be able to see the webinar presenters.
• No one watching the webinar will be able to see the name or image of any other person who is watching the webinar.
• Any question submitted by an attendee will only be seen by the webinar moderator or the presenter.
• Questions will not be visible to other people watching the webinar.

Register Now!
June is Pride Month – a time when people and organizations come together to celebrate and support the LGBTQ+ community. Although there has been great progress in the fight for LGBTQ+ rights, many in the LGBTQ+ community still face both personal and systemic discrimination.

During Pride Month, Rural Minds strives to increase awareness of the mental health disparities experienced by LGBTQ+ individuals, especially those who live in rural America. Accessing mental healthcare is often a challenge for many who live in rural communities throughout the U.S., but that challenge is multiplied for rural LGBTQ+ people. In addition to such issues as social and geographic isolation, shortages of healthcare professionals and transportation barriers experienced by all rural Americans seeking mental healthcare, LGBTQ+ people also risk encountering added stigma along with discrimination.

Read more

New Rural Community Peer Support Groups Are Now Available for People Living with Depression or Bipolar Disorder

We’re excited to share a new mental health resource for members of the rural
community. The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) has launched free online support groups in partnership with Rural Minds for members of the rural community who live with a mood disorder, such as depression or bipolar disorder.

Led by a facilitator from the rural community with lived experience, the groups create a safe environment for people to share stories, questions, and concerns with other people who live in rural areas. The groups meet weekly on Mondays at 7 – 8 pm CDT or Wednesdays at 6 – 7 pm CDT.

To register, create an account with Hey Peers and then click “register.”

Rural Minds on the Road – Raising Awareness of Rural Mental Health Challenges

Here are some highlights of the events that featured a presentation from Rural Minds over the last few weeks to help raise awareness of rural mental health challenges and provide actionable information and resources for confronting the mental health crisis in rural America.

As a member of the Dean's Advisory Council for Cornell University’s College of Veterinary Medicine, Rural Minds Founder and Chairman Jeff Winton participated in the recent council meeting held on April 21 at his alma mater Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. Jeff also represented Rural Minds at the meeting, talking about the crisis situation facing the veterinary profession due to mental health challenges and suicide. Veterinarians are more than twice as likely to die by suicide compared to medical doctors and four times the rate of the general population.

As part of Rural Minds’ Mental Health Awareness Month activities, Jeff Winton discussed mental health in rural communities in a webinar hosted by New Hampshire Public Health Association on May 9. Continuing education credits were available for public health professionals who attended the webinar.
beneficiary of the KC Summer Kick-Off Charity Horse Show, which was held from June 1 – 3 at the Hale Arena in Kansas City, MO. We are thankful to the event organizers for this great honor that helped spread awareness of our work supporting and advocating for the mental health of rural Americans.

Jeff Winton attended the event, along with Rural Minds Board Member Jim Modica (pictured above) and Vice President of Communications Julie Lux. Special thanks to Jim and Julie for handling the media component of the show. This included four live segments from the show that aired on two local Kansas City stations – CBS affiliate KCTV Channel 5 and FOX affiliate WDAF-TV Channel 4 – to promote the show and Rural Minds as the benefitting charity for 2023.

Help Us Help Others –
Taking Advantage of Employee Match Programs

Employee match programs are a benefit that many companies offer their staff to help encourage charitable giving. While most companies match an employee’s gift to a charity one-to-one, some companies match two-to-one and others three-to-one! Employee match programs are a great way to make your donation to Rural Minds have an even bigger impact on helping to eliminate the silence, suffering and stigma of mental illness for people living in rural America.

If you’re not sure that your company offers an employee match program, you can contact your human resources department to find out. Click here to learn more about employee match programs and other ways you can help Rural Minds help others.

Make A Donation Today!

IN THE NEWS:
Rural Minds and Mental Health in Rural America

The following media coverage of Rural Minds helps to increase awareness about mental health challenges in rural America and the stigma surrounding mental illness:
Farm Progress – “Ending the Silence Around Rural Mental Health”
Jeff Winton discusses how Rural Minds is working to bring mental health resources to underserved rural communities in this article published in Kansas Farmer – a Farm Progress magazine.

Good Day! Magazine – “Partnering for Success”
In this editorial, Dave Roberts – Connecticut State Grange Lecturer/Program Director and Connecticut Lions District “B” Governor – talks about how collaboration among the National Grange, Lions Clubs and Rural Minds is effectively helping to spread mental health information in rural America.

Ag Information Network of the West – “Increasing Mental Health Awareness in Rural America”
This segment with Russell Nemetz ran during May – Mental Health Awareness Month – and included an interview with Jeff Winton from the Cattle Industry Convention in New Orleans. During the interview, Jeff talked about the mental health emergency in rural America and how Rural Minds is working to connect people who live in rural communities with mental health information and resources.

KMAland – “Mental Health Awareness Month: Challenges Facing Rural Caregivers”
This article discusses the webinar presented by Rural Minds and the National Grange – “Rural Mental Health Caregiver Challenges” – and highlights Brittnee Henry’s experience as a communications professional who returned home to her rural community in Iowa to be the caregiver for her father, a lifelong Iowa farmer who lives with dementia.

Ambrook Research – “For Farmers in Crisis, Could Online Therapy Be the Answer?”
Jeff Winton weighs in on the issue of whether online therapy would be an effective treatment option for farmers and producers struggling with a mental health crisis.

Connect with us!