An educational coloring book
Illustrated by West Virginia children & teens...

Out of the Shadows and INTO THE LIGHT

Let’s End Mental Health Stigma For a Brighter West Virginia

Published May 2013 in honor of Mental Health Month & National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week

www.wvsystemofcare.org
Our mental health is just as important as our physical health.

As boys and girls grow from babies to teens and adults, there will be “bumps along the way.”

Artist: Tristen, Age 15
These usually make us stronger, but sometimes people have emotions, feelings, thoughts or actions that they need help with to work through. This would be considered a mental health issue.

Just like you go to a doctor appointment to take care of your body—psychiatrists, counselors and other mental health professionals can help you take good care of your mind.

Almost everyone has mental health needs at one time or another.

**One in four adults** experience a mental health problem in any given year.

1 in 17 American adults live with a serious mental illness, such as depression or post-traumatic stress disorder, which may require life-long help to deal with.

**About one in five children and teens** experience a mental health problem in any given year, and 1 in 10 live with a serious mental or emotional disorder.
Mental illness can happen to anybody.

Mental illnesses are not the result of personal weakness, lack of character or poor upbringing. Mental illnesses can affect persons of any age, sex, race, religion or income.
Mental illnesses are treated with therapies and medications, just like physical illnesses.

People with mental illnesses can and do recover, often by working with mental health professionals, learning “self-help” routines, and sometimes with carefully-prescribed medicines, other community helpers and support programs.

Good professionals don't “fix” us. They help us see our strengths and believe in ourselves. They invite our families to hear the options that can help us make healthy changes, and encourage us to work as a team.

Artist: Skylar Jenkins, Age 11
A mental health diagnosis might be something people HAVE, but it is not who they ARE!

People with mental illnesses are some of the smartest, most creative and talented people in our society. They make our world better.

Abraham Lincoln suffered from severe clinical depression. Demi Lovato has battled with bipolar disorder. Lady Gaga and Paula Abdul have both said they were treated for eating disorders. Howie Mandel talks often about having both attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Artist: Logan Walker, Age 7
Stigma and fear of discrimination keep many people from seeking help.

“Stigma” is a kind of roadblock to asking for help with a mental health problem.

Stigma comes from FALSE BELIEFS or disrespectful “labels” of people with mental illness, and the fear of “what other people will think” if you or a loved one seek help.

The feelings of shame or embarrassment caused by stigma can make a person feel worse than the actual mental health condition itself!

NEVER be ashamed or afraid to ask for help if you think you need it!

"Rabbit" Artist: Angel Crites, Age 17
We Can All Fight Stigma!

You can make a difference in the way people see mental illnesses and mental health.

Your words and actions are more important than you may realize!
Support friends and family members to seek help if they are afraid.

Let them know that you will be there for them.

Artist: Eliza Homel, Age 11
Learn and share the facts about mental health.

Educate others, especially if you hear or read something that isn’t true.

Every person with a mental health diagnosis deserves respect and dignity!

People with mental illnesses should not be discriminated against in housing, jobs, or school.

Children with emotional or behavioral disorders should not be labeled or bullied.

Artists: (Top) Andra Taylor, Age 14; (Bottom) Hannah Secrist, Age 12
Support community resources for West Virginians with mental health needs, and their friends and families.

Money to grow and keep good mental health programs and services often comes from national, state and local governments.

It makes a difference when ordinary people learn about these programs, speak out, write letters to their newspapers and community leaders, and FIGHT STIGMA.
The book you hold in your hands was illustrated by young artists—ages 7 through 17—from all over West Virginia, who entered a statewide art contest in April 2013.

The artists featured in this book created their drawings in school classrooms, after-school programs and community mental health centers, as well as residential treatment programs inside and outside of West Virginia. Through their visual ideas and the important messages inside, the book tells what “bringing mental health out of the shadows and into the light” really means.

It is important that we welcome conversations surrounding mental health in order to eliminate stigma and discrimination towards West Virginians of all ages who live with mental health challenges.

Additional copies of this coloring book have been made available free of charge through the Children’s Services departments at West Virginia’s 13 comprehensive behavioral health centers and family support organizations. You may also download this publication at www.wvsystemofcare.org and make as many copies as you wish.