

# CAI Northern Ohio Chapter

## Quarterly Newsletter

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### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

## Mental Health Challenges in Community Association Living

By M. Katherine Bushey, Esq.

Community association managers and board members are the unsung heroes of our associations as they handle a wide array of responsibilities to ensure the smooth functioning of communities. Some of the job descriptions of a community association manager and board member include maintaining the property's common elements, preserving and protecting property values, providing services for members, and developing a sense of community. Mental health issues affect each one of these responsibilities. Mental health of community residents is impacting community association managers' profession and board members' roles more and more. As we are aware, the pandemic is responsible for a sizable increase in mental illness. U.S. adults reported an estimated three-fold increase in the occurrence of elevated depression symptoms since the start of COVID-19. In an era marked by increased stress, social isolation, and economic uncertainties, individuals within communities are facing greater mental health challenges.

According to CAI, 74.1 million Americans live in community associations. According to recent statistics, 1 in 5 people have a mental health issue of some kind. And, 1 in 25 have a serious mental health issue. In addition, 50% of the population will be diagnosed at some time in their life with a mental health condition. Ohio follows these national statistics, but with a slightly higher depression and suicide rate. Unfortunately, it is also a statistic that 25% of individuals are not seeking the mental health help they need.

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Community association managers and board members have a unique and influential role in shaping the mental health landscape of the communities they serve. By prioritizing positive relationships, open communication, and community well-being, managers and board members can contribute significantly to the mental health of residents. Recognizing and harnessing this potential is not only a compassionate approach but also an essential aspect of effective association management. As champions of mental health, community association managers and board members can help create happier, healthier, and more resilient neighborhoods.

Community associations often create a sense of belonging among residents. Boards may want to organize health and wellness initiatives, such as fitness classes, walking clubs, or gardening projects as physical activity and exposure to green spaces have been shown to have positive effects on mental health, reducing stress and anxiety. In addition, community associations allow residents to work together on common goals, whether it's beautifying the neighborhood, addressing safety concerns, or organizing community events. This collaborative spirit can reduce the stress associated with tackling problems alone. Active participation in community associations can boost residents' self-esteem and sense of purpose. Being involved in decision-making processes and making a positive impact on the neighborhood can enhance one's self-worth and overall mental well-being.

The mental health of residents directly affects the overall well-being of a community. Unaddressed mental health issues can lead to conflicts, decreased neighborhood engagement, and a decline in the quality of community life. Communities that actively address mental health are more resilient. Residents who have the tools and support to manage their mental health are better prepared to handle crises, whether they be personal or community-wide, leading to quicker recovery and reduced long-term impact.

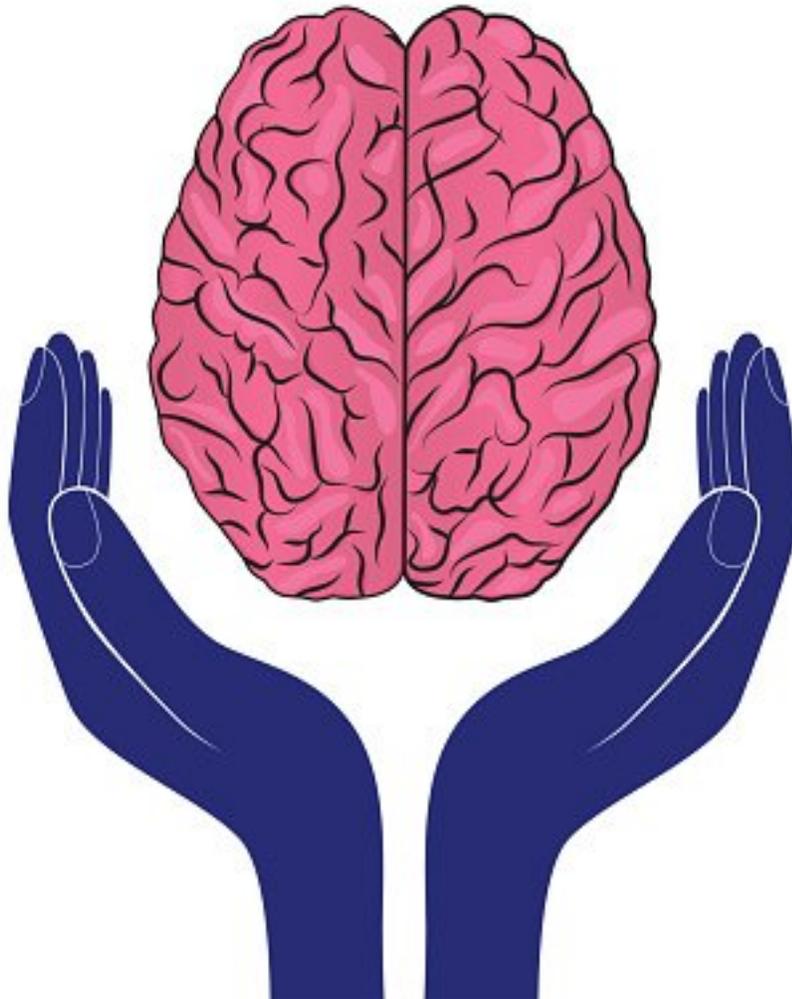
Managers or board members are often the first point of contact for residents with concerns or issues. Addressing these concerns promptly and empathetically can alleviate stress and anxiety, contributing to improved mental health among community members. By fostering positive relationships and open communication, they can create an atmosphere of trust and support, which is essential for residents' mental well-being.

Due to their close interactions with residents, community association managers and board members, may be able to recognize signs of distress or mental health challenges among community members. Early identification can lead to timely support and intervention. Further, conflicts within a community can take a toll on residents' mental health. It is wise for community association managers and board members to be trained in conflict resolution so they can help mediate disputes, reducing tension and stress within the community.

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Addressing mental health within community associations is not just a compassionate choice; it's a strategic imperative. By recognizing the importance of mental health and taking proactive steps to support residents, these associations can become more resilient, cohesive, and attractive places to live. Prioritizing mental health is not only an investment in the well-being of individuals but also in the long-term vitality and strength of the entire community. By recognizing and appreciating the vital role association leaders play in promoting mental health, we can encourage more active participation in these associations and, in turn, contribute to healthier, happier communities.

Please join us on Friday, September 29th for a program entitled Tackling Mental Health Issues in Community Associations presented by Attorney Noelle Hicks. Attorney Hicks will discuss how to handle enforcement of restrictive covenants when dealing with mentally unstable individuals and provide best practices for tackling mental health issues within community associations.



# Conflict Resolution in Everyday Interactions



**Cleveland Mediation Center**

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# Agenda

- **What is conflict?**
- **Conflict and Constructive Conflict Resolution**
- **Active Listening**
- **Empathetic Response**
- **De-escalation Techniques**





**Cleveland Mediation Center**

A Program of FrontLine Service

**Cleveland Mediation Center promotes just and peaceful community in Northeast Ohio by honoring all people, building their capacity to act, and facilitating opportunities for them to engage in conflict constructively.**



# What is Conflict?

- What type of conflict do you experience in your daily life?
- What types of conflict have you experienced at work?



# What is Constructive Conflict Resolution?

Approaches that seek to achieve meaningful, lasting solutions and minimize the harm of **escalating tension**, or **avoidance**.

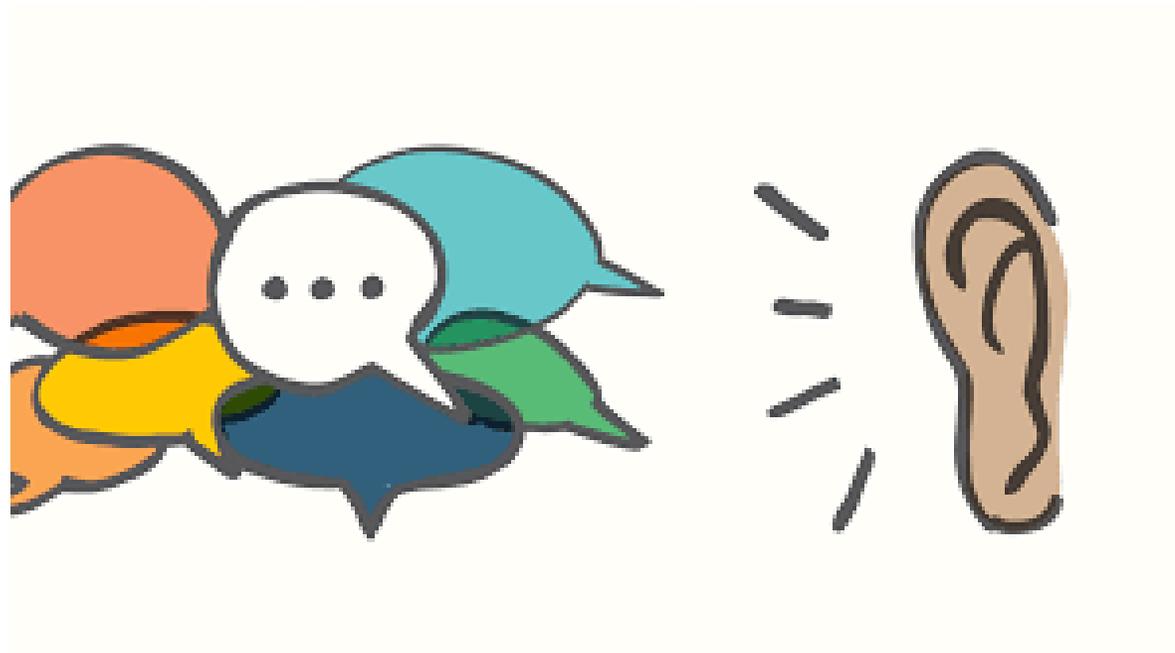
# Experience of Conflict

Think of a work-related dispute, conflict, or unsettling encounter you were involved in.



# Active Listening

- **What is active listening?**
- **What are we trying to accomplish?**



# Active Listening

How do you know  
someone is really  
listening to you?

What is the importance  
of being heard in  
conflict resolution?

# Listening Skill Building

- **Mental/Emotional**
  - **What helps me prepare or get centered?**
- **Physical**
  - R Relaxed**
  - O Open**
  - L Leaning towards the speaker**
  - E Eye Contact**
  - S Squared toward speaker**

# Listening Skill Building

## Verbal

- Reflecting
- Paraphrasing
- Questioning
- Crediting



# Listening Demonstration

- Share an unresolved interpersonal conflict you are experiencing in your personal life or at work
- The purpose is to have someone listen to you, not give you advice, but help you feel clearer or more confident about your situation



**Important! When listening: Do not offer opinions or give advice.**

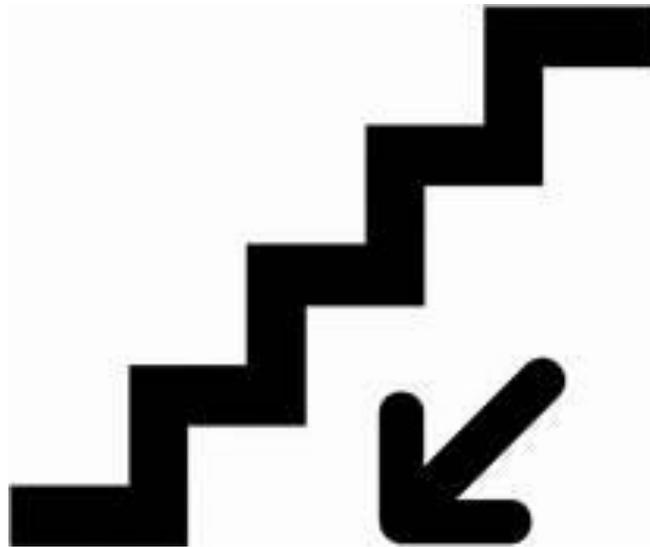
# Empathetic Response

**Empathetic listening is the ability and willingness to listen with empathy that improves mutual understanding and trust. (Beyond Intractability)**



# De-escalation

In conflict resolution, de-escalation can be used *to remove tension between two participants in a conflictual relationship or intervention.*



# Anatomy of Anger



# De-escalation Strategies

- **Remove the crowd**
- **Seek to understand**
- **Listen**
- **Clarify and stay issue focused**
- **Don't assume, be specific, and allow for the power of choice**

# Real life conflict situations at work

- Share examples of conflict situations in your work
- Talk through specific ways to address these
- Discuss as a group



# Questions?



# CMC Contact Information

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