



Mental Health

Karen Bermel, a mental health practitioner from Alegent Creighton Clinic, spoke at the Treynor Optimist Club on July 19. She has a master's in Counseling and works with individuals, couples and adolescents, specializing in treatment of women's issues, depression and anxiety disorders. She works with both Psychologists and Psychiatrists.

Karen said that a community feeling is important for a person's mental health. Not everyone has the resiliency needed to deal with stress of changes. Churches, families, friends, and doctors can help. Not everyone needs medication or therapy.

Alegent provides several levels of mental health care. Inpatient services are short term for the severely depressed. The average stay is 3-5 days. Alegent has nine outpatient clinics. Alegent also has mid-level care, providing a day program, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. This program includes group work, doctor visits, and medication assistance when needed.

Some cultures do not reach out for mental health therapy. However, attitudes are changing.

Therapy is about change. In training counselors learn that you cannot prevent bad outcomes. You often ask yourself "What could I have done differently?" The answer is often "nothing".

If you know someone who is having problems, you could say "It sounds like you are really struggling. Have you talked to anyone about it?" Often the person should start with their family doctor. However, they must be willing to talk to him openly about how they are feeling.

Alegent does not have grant funding, so they cannot provide free mental health services. However, Heartland Family Services does offer free services for those who cannot pay.

For Alegent mental health information and referral services, call 402-717-HOPE.