

What You Need to Know...



Invisible Children's Program

Dedicated to strengthening, empowering and preserving families

What is the Invisible Children's Program?

The Invisible Children's Program (ICP), a project initiated by Mental Health America of Wisconsin (formerly the Mental Health Association of Wisconsin) (MHA), provides support and advocacy services to families where the parent(s) have mental health concerns. The ICP empowers parents to meet their children's needs and improve the overall health of their family, thus preventing child neglect, abuse, infant mortality, childhood injuries, and future mental illness.

What types of services does the ICP provide?

- Intensive case management
- Treatment education
- Mentoring
- Advocacy
- Parent education
- Mental health education
- Support groups
- Youth enrichment activities
- Family Fun events
- Hygiene and personal grooming education
- Prenatal and early identification prevention for pregnant women

Please note: Transportation, childcare, food, refreshments, educational supplies and materials are provided as needed for all ICP events.

Who is eligible for the program?

Parents who:

- 1) are challenged by a mental illness
- 2) are 18 years of age or older
- 2) have children 17 years of age and younger
- 3) want to create a safe home environment for their child(ren)
- 4) are willing to commit to the program
- 5) and are referred by a mental health professional

“Nearly 75% of all parents with acute mental illness will lose custody of their children!”

What types of mental illness do parents in the program have?

Parents in the program suffer from a variety of mental illnesses including post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and major depression.

Why is MHA offering this program?

MHA offers this program because although low-income families have access to many services, there is a noticeable absence of services for families affected by mental illness. Adults who have mental health concerns may be receiving health services, but quite often their children are not. That's why we refer to those children as “invisible.” They are left to cope on their own.

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The parents themselves often lack support as they attempt to meet their children's needs while dealing with a serious mental disorder. Their behavior may be inconsistent, and they often lack the resources for proper medical care. The ICP recognizes that regardless of mental illness, all children deserve a safe and caring home. That's where we can help.

How can you help the ICP?

To continue building on the ICP's success, we need your help! You can help by:

- Volunteering to serve as a family mentor, a therapist, a speaker or a support group facilitator.
- Making a financial donation to help support services for the families.
- Donating items such as car seats, mattresses, children's toys and books, beds, cribs, high chairs, toiletries, event tickets, raffle items, etc.

If you are interested in giving a donation or volunteering your time, please contact Kristina Finnel, supervisor of the Invisible Children's Program, at (414) 276-3122 or kristina@mhawisconsin.org.

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