Kate Mahoney, LCSW

Kate Mahoney is a licensed clinical social worker with more than 30 years experience in behavioral health. Kate earned her Bachelor’s degree in Sociology and Women’s Studies from Northwestern University. She completed her Master’s in Social Work at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in 1983. She has been a full-time practicing social worker for 34 years.

Kate is currently the Executive Director of the Naomi Ruth Cohen Institute for Mental Health Education at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. Kate’s role involves delivering educational and skill-building sessions to youth and adults to promote mental wellness, providing support to individuals and families directly impacted by mental illness, advocating to reduce stigma and discrimination against individuals grappling with mental health challenges and helping to better integrate individuals living with mental illness into our community so they have the opportunity to make meaningful connections, share their strengths and wisdom, and actively participate in our community.

Kate has demonstrated a strong interest in and commitment to the social work profession. She is a talented clinician, a strong advocate and supportive mentor for new professionals entering the field of social work. Kate began serving as a field instructor for MSW students in 1987. She demonstrates a strong interest in helping emerging social workers learn strong clinical and advocacy skills and also to embrace the ethical standards of the social work profession. Throughout her career, she has mentored countless mental health professionals and supported their careers and interest in mental health education, service and advocacy.

Prior to becoming the Executive Director of the Naomi Ruth Cohen Institute for Mental Health Education, Kate served for nearly 30 years as the Executive Director of PEER Services, a small, nonprofit behavioral health organization in our community. There, Kate developed expertise in treating opioid dependence and she also launched the DIMENSIONS dual diagnosis treatment program for individuals struggling with both mental health and substance use disorders. Kate has generously shared her knowledge about the opioid crisis at local workshops for parents and other community members as well as at professional conferences.

In addition to her clinical work, Kate is a strong advocate and participates in many community meetings and organizations. Kate has dedicated much of her career to impacting public policy in order to increase access to care. She represented Illinois on the Board of Directors of the American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence for nine years. She is a past president of both the Illinois Association for Behavioral Health and the Illinois Association for Medication Assisted Addiction Treatment. She was the 2015 keynote speaker for the ACLU Peoria Chapter Annual Dinner in which she spoke about access to behavioral health treatment as a civil liberties issue.

Kate joined the board of Mental Health America of the North Shore in 2012. We are an entirely volunteer run organization; we have no paid staff. Kate agreed to join our board at a critical time of transition for our board. We really needed to grow our board and to get more focused on refining and achieving our mission. Kate helped us to accomplish this as an active participant in our strategic planning process.

As the sole social worker on our board, Kate plays a vital role in helping to build partnerships with other community organizations and linking our organization to essential resources to help the individuals we serve. Kate works hard at raising funds to support our mental health advocacy work. She serves on our program committee and also engages with local, state and federal legislators to advocate for mental health funding and sound public policy.

Kate designed and delivered our professional workshop “Ethical Issues in Clinical Practice: A Case Study Approach.” In 2016, she launched our clinical case study quarterly book club in which participants read an assigned book and use a character or family from the book as a case study. We have received very positive feedback from book club participants who report finding it a very useful method for exploring issues of ethics, counter transference and cultural competence.

We feel fortunate to have Kate as a strong member of the Mental Health America North Shore Board of Directors and a vital participant in the Evanston community. Kate strives to promote mental wellness, advocates for mental health to be seen as essential to each individual’s overall health, and works to ensure that individuals living with mental illness have access to high quality, supportive and effective treatment and are also welcomed as vital members of our community with skills and strengths to contribute.