



For Immediate Release
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**MOUNT LAUREL TOWNSHIP ANNOUNCES MUNICIPALITY A STIGMA FREE
ZONE FOR MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS**

Mount Laurel, NJ --- On Monday April 18, Mount Laurel Township established the Township as a Stigma-Free Zone supporting efforts for Mental Health Awareness.

Approximately 53 million Americans live with a mental illness. Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States, affecting all age groups. The stigma associated with mental health illness is a main contribution of why individuals fail to seek treatment. Individuals that face prejudices affect their ability to access meaningful support and treatment. By creating a community that is stigma-free, individuals feel supported when seeking treatment and the recovery process can begin.

"There is a tragic stigma associated with mental illness and the need for help, which has lingering and often times devastating repercussions," Deputy Mayor Steglik stated. "By breaking down the stigma associated with mental illnesses and seeking mental health medical attention, we are stating confidently to our friends,

loved ones, and community that they are not alone and that we are with them on this journey."

"Raising awareness of mental health illnesses in a stigma free environment encourages hope for those on the path to recovery as they seek support. Without the fear of stigma treatment can begin and tragedies can be avoided."

Councilwoman Cohen said.

The resolution will take effect immediately.

