



December 18, 2014

**For Immediate Release**

**The Behavioral Health Committee of Jewish Family Service Presents  
“Putting the Puzzle Together: Mental Health Policy and Community  
Options”**

A Free Resource Fair and Panel of Professionals in Support of Mental Health Awareness

Contact People: Dennis Ellman – 858-453-9600 ([dme@behmedia.com](mailto:dme@behmedia.com))  
Kelsey Burgess – 858-453-9600 ([kelsey@behmedia.com](mailto:kelsey@behmedia.com))

---

**SAN DIEGO, CA** -- Jewish Family Service will present a Behavioral Health event, “Putting the Puzzle Together: Mental Health Policy and Community Options” on Wednesday, January 21, 2015, at Congregation Beth Israel, located at 9001 Towne Centre Dr., San Diego, CA 92122. The free event begins at 5:30pm with a resource fair and light appetizers and continues with a panel discussion from 6:45pm to 8:30pm.

Parents and families can offer crucial support for loved ones living with mental illness by advocating with doctors, contributing and monitoring a treatment plan, and conveying hope. However, families can also become frustrated when confronted by the obstacles of patient privacy laws and competency standards, especially if a loved one with a serious mental illness is resistant to treatment. The panel is designed as a conversation to explore how the puzzle of mental health policies fits with family and community interest.

Featured panelists include Jim Fix, PsyD, Executive Director of Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT); Michael Krelstein, MD, Clinical Director of San Diego Behavioral Health; and Jeff G. Elias, Esq., Attorney and Consultant in Criminal & Mental Health Law. (Bios Below).

“We are often afraid or ashamed to admit feelings of frustration, despair, or guilt over caring for a child, even an adult child, with mental illness,” said Linda Janon, founder of the Behavioral Health Committee. “But only when we speak out do we find we are not alone. Together we find support and hope.”

The Behavioral Health Committee of Jewish Family Service of San Diego provides resources and services for coping and living with mental illness and seeks to eliminate stigma by increasing community awareness.

Space for this free event is limited. To register online, visit [www.jfssd.org/mentalhealthpolicy](http://www.jfssd.org/mentalhealthpolicy). For more information, call (858) 637-3350.

*Bios of Speakers:*

**Jim Fix, PsyD, Executive Director, Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT)** Dr. Fix is a licensed clinical psychologist and has been the Executive Director of the Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT) in San Diego since 2006. Prior to his current position at PERT, Jim managed the psychiatric intake department of a local Emergency Department and also worked in inpatient psychiatric units, residential crisis facilities, and outpatient and private practice settings. He received his Doctorate of Psychology degree from the California School of Professional Psychology, San Diego. Jim is also a staff member of LEAP (Listen-Empathize-Agree-Partner) Institute in New York. Jim served in the United States Marine Corps Reserve and was honorably discharged in 1988 as a corporal.

**Michael Krelstein, MD, Clinical Director, San Diego Behavioral Health** A practicing clinical and administrative psychiatrist with nearly 20 years of experience, Dr. Krelstein currently serves as Clinical Director for Behavioral Health Services for San Diego County. His broad clinical and managerial background includes urgent/emergent care and hospital-based behavioral health services, along with the integrative care services for diverse clinical populations. Dr. Krelstein is particularly proud of his forensic background and close collaboration with law enforcement, which has earned him several Congressional recognitions. He continues to practice locally, as well as in Las Vegas.

**Jeff G. Elias, Esq., Attorney and Consultant in Criminal and Mental Health Law** Jeff Elias received his Juris Doctor from Loyola University School of Law, Los Angeles. He began practicing law with the Office of the Public Defender in Los Angeles County, where he represented juveniles, the mentally ill, and clients charged with misdemeanor and felony offenses. Following time spent in private practice, Jeff joined the Law Office of the Primary Public Defender, County of San Diego, where he was Supervising Attorney of the Mental Health Division, the exclusive public entity designated to handle all involuntary civil commitments in San Diego County. He helped develop and continued to be a Team member for the San Diego County Behavioral Health Court, functioning as the principal screener and the legal representative for all participants. Jeff retired in 2012 and currently works with agencies, individuals, and organizations as a consultant regarding mental health law, involuntary civil commitments, community reentry programs, behavioral health courts, and a variety of competency issues.

###

**About Jewish Family Service**

Since 1918, Jewish Family Service of San Diego has been a trusted community resource for individuals and families in times of need. Our wide range of integrated services *Empower Individuals & Families To Move Toward Self-Sufficiency, Support Aging With Dignity, and Foster Community Connection & Engagement* throughout San Diego County and the Coachella Valley. Many people turn to Jewish Family Service with a specific need, such as hunger. But that first

contact often leads to a much larger scope of support, including counseling, education, job coaching, transportation, and more. Our message to every person who turns to Jewish Family Service in search of a better life is: WE'RE WITH YOU. To learn how JFS transforms lives in our community, visit [www.jfssd.org](http://www.jfssd.org).

#### **ABOUT THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMITTEE OF JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE**

Founded by Linda Janon, the Behavioral Health Committee (BHC) provides resources and services for coping and living with mental illness and seeks to eliminate the stigma by increasing community awareness. Each spring, the BHC holds an annual Behavioral Health Luncheon in support of mental health awareness. The committee is also responsible for other educational events throughout the year. The BHC's vision ultimately led to the creation of the [Intensive Psychiatric Case Management Program](#) at JFS, which maximizes the ability of chronically mentally ill individuals to live independent lives.