

# Coordinators Workshop Has Diverse Program

Bruce Jenner said "You have to train your mind like you train your body." Dr. Glenn Kessler helps athletes to follow that advice, showing them how they can enter "The Zone," that ideal performance state where nothing can interfere with focus and concentration.



**SPORTS PSYCH**  
- Dr. Glenn Kessler shares performance enhancement techniques.

Dr. Kessler, licensed psychologist and director of Kessler Psychological Associates and Next Level Performance of Northboro, was one of the speakers at the Oct. 24 Wellness Coordinators Workshop held at the MIAA office in Franklin. Other speakers were Stephen Fine of the Melanoma Education Foundation, Claire Bushell of World Challenge Expeditions, Bernard J. Carey, Jr., of the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health, Inc., and Joan Mikula of the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health. Dr. Kessler calls performance enhancement "the science of success." He has worked with athletes, musicians, public speakers, business executives and others, teaching them relaxation techniques and imagery. The goal is for clients to gain control of their thoughts, feelings and behaviors so they will recognize when too much tension is present in certain muscle groups or when thoughts become self-defeating.

He recommends keeping a journal revolving around the skill you want to improve. He said that many people get caught in the trap of irrational thoughts, believing perfection is essential and getting thrown off when one thing goes wrong. They might feel their worth depends on achievement, and blame themselves or others when conditions are not ideal. Dr. Kessler says the keys to controlling irrational thoughts are generating positive self talk and tuning out both internal and external distractions. He says that goals must be S.M.A.R.T. – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. These theories can be applied to an individual or a team.

"If athletes wish to play with more confidence, enjoy the game and improve to their desired level, then a commitment must be made to both the physical and mental skills required in their sport," said Dr. Kessler.

Information on performance enhancement and Dr. Kessler's services can be found at <http://www.next-level-performance.com>.

## Pilot Schools Needed

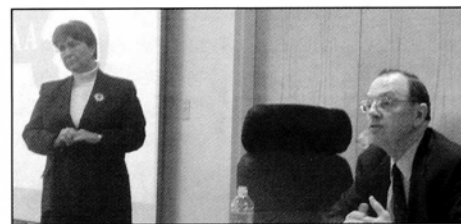
Joan Mikula, Assistant Commissioner for Child and Adolescent Services at the state Department of Mental Health, and Bernard J. Carey, Jr., Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health, Inc., partners in the Elimination of Barriers Initiative, asked Wellness Coordinators for their help in developing a three-hour curriculum to be used by a small number of schools in the Commonwealth in a pilot program aimed at eliminating the stigma associated with mental illness or serious emotional disturbance. Children and adolescents with these disorders are already in the classrooms. It is estimated that about 112,000 children in the Commonwealth have a diagnosable mental illness or serious emotional disturbance, such as depression, bipolar disorder or Attention Deficit Disorder, impairing their ability to function in school, with family or with peers. It is hoped this curriculum would both educate students and staff about mental illness, including available and successful treatments, make it easier to identify students with mental health issues, and make it more acceptable to seek treatment.

Massachusetts was one of eight states chosen to participate in the Elimination of Barriers Initiative, which is supported by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. While some of the states are focusing on employers as the target audience for eliminating stigma, Massachusetts has selected schools as its target audience. The agencies are looking for six schools, a mix of high schools, middle schools and elementary schools. In addition to developing a curriculum, other options include conducting forums, bringing in experts and providing materials to the faculty and administration. Information and feedback from the pilot program would be used to develop a curriculum that would be distributed state-wide. Schools could adapt the curriculum into their existing programs.

Anyone interested in offering input on this initiative, brainstorming curriculum ideas, or in being a pilot school should contact Joan Mikula at [joan.mikula@dmh.state.ma.us](mailto:joan.mikula@dmh.state.ma.us), or Bernard Carey at [berncarey@aol.com](mailto:berncarey@aol.com).

## World Expeditions

Claire Bushell discussed the international company World Challenge Expeditions, which has been a pioneer in adventure edu-



**NO MORE STIGMA** - Joan Mikula and Bernard J. Carey Jr. describe a mental health pilot program.

cation for more than 16 years. World Challenge Expeditions will help schools to establish an extracurricular Team Challenge program run at no cost to the school. It requires one member of the faculty motivated to take part.

Over 16 to 18 months, students will research a country and gather information about the culture, geography, politics and government. The training also includes a hands-on component covering practical skills, safety and fitness. Students will raise money to fund a month-long summer trip in the destination country. Teams choose from 35 destinations, including Bolivia, Tanzania, Costa Rica, Thailand, Kenya, Ecuador and Southern Peru.

An expedition leader and often a faculty member will accompany the group on the trip. Students will take on the decision-making and daily requirements, including where to buy food, what type of transportation to use and how to budget their money. Highlights of the trip will be a physical challenge and community service. Students could help set up an irrigation system in a local community, and then set out climbing a mountain to develop teamwork and organizational skills. Each team carries a satellite Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon. An International Emergency Center is monitored 24-hours per day by staff trained to coordinate any calls needing response.

The company works with 800 schools in the United Kingdom, and has established 26 programs to date in Massachusetts. Those participating in 2002 were Lynn Classical High School and Wellesley High School.

"The goal is to get them off the beaten path and to see things you'd only ordinarily see on the Discovery Channel," said Claire Bushell. "We make them realize that if they set their minds to something, they can do it."

Information is available at <http://www.wcexpeditions.com>. Anyone interested in more information should contact Claire Bushell at [cbushell@wcexpeditions.com](mailto:cbushell@wcexpeditions.com).