

Welcome to the department of Mental Health Services quarterly newsletter. We are so glad you are here!



Mental Health **MATTERS**

Home About Resources Contact Screen Yourself

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

Launched in May 2024 during National Mental Health Awareness Month, Mental Health Matters (M-HM) is a collaborative community initiative focused on boosting mental health awareness and preparing for COVID-19 impacts in East Baton Rouge Parish.

Where To Start

Images and Content NOT FINAL***

WE ARE #MHMEBR

Mental Health Matters (M-HM) was established in collaboration with the BRPSD Department of Mental Health Services, ICARE Prevention, and other key partners. Our mission began with a shared vision to increase awareness and foster an environment where mental health is openly recognized and supported across Baton Rouge.

EBR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES | ICARE | NAMI | EBR

Our Mental Health Matters website goes live October 10th and will focus on prevention (I CARE) and intervention (Mental Health Services).

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Join us for our **Mental Health MATTERS Series**

These presentations help to increase mental health awareness and reduce the associated stigma!

All presentations will be held at the Christa McAuliffe Library from 8am - 9:30am.

- September 12, 2024 "Mandatory Reporting"
- October 8, 2024 "Engaging Families to Help Build a Positive School Climate"
- November 12, 2024 "Understanding the Most Common Mental Health Diagnoses in School Aged Children"
- January 14, 2025 "How to Re-engage Students After a Holiday Break"
- February 11, 2025 "Supporting Students Experiencing Grief and Loss"
- March 11, 2025 "Understanding Test Anxiety in Students"

SCAN TO REGISTER

QUESTIONS? Contact: Ateisha Cage acage2@ebschools.org

We would never tell someone with a broken leg that they should stop wallowing and get it together...We shouldn't treat mental health conditions any differently.

Together for Mental Health: Community Support in a Post-COVID World

Resources for Coping with Life's Challenges

- STUDENTS
- PARENTS
- COMMUNITY

Home About Resources Contact

Join us for our **Mental Health MATTERS Series**. Please use the QR code to register!

September is recognized as

SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH



SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS FOR YOUTH

It's time to take action if you notice these signs in family or friends:

- Talking about or making plans for suicide.
- Expressing hopelessness about the future.
- Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress.
- Showing worrisome changes in behavior, particularly in combination with the warning signs above, including significant:
- Withdrawal from or changing social connections/situations.
- Changes in sleep (increased or decreased).
- Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context.
- Recent increased agitation or irritability.

#SUICIDEPREVENTIONMONTH | #SPM24

SAMHSA

Risk Factors

- Mental Illness
- Substance Misuse
- Trauma
- Painful Losses
- Exposure to Violence
- Social Isolation.

KEY FACTS



- More than 720,000 people die due to suicide every year.
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among 15–29-year-olds.
- Seventy-three per cent of global suicides occur in low and middle-income countries.
- The reasons for suicide are multi-faceted, influenced by social, cultural, biological, psychological, and environmental factors present across the life-course.
- For every suicide there are many more people who attempt suicide. A prior suicide attempt is an important risk factor for suicide in the general population.

Source: World Health Organization
www.who.int

How to help?

Action Steps you can take if you believe someone may be at risk for suicide:

- **Call 911**, if danger for self-harm seems imminent.
- **Call or text 988** to reach the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](https://www.988lifeline.org/) to talk to a caring professional.
- **Ask them** if they are thinking about killing themselves. This will not put the idea into their head or make it more likely that they will attempt suicide.
- **Listen** without judging and show you care.
- **Stay with the person** or make sure the person is in a private, secure place with another caring person until you can get further help.
- **Remove any objects** that could be used in a suicide attempt.



988
SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE



Mental Illness Awareness Week

October 6 - 12, 2024



"Sadly, too often, the stigma around mental health prevents people who need help from seeking it. But that simply doesn't make any sense. Whether an illness affects your heart, your arm or your brain, it's still an illness, and there shouldn't be any distinction...we should make it clear that getting help isn't a sign of weakness — it's a sign of strength — and we should ensure that people can get the treatment they need."

MICHELLE OBAMA

<https://divethru.com/celebrities-and-mental-health/>



"Mental health is a sensitive subject amongst a lot of people, but it doesn't need to be. **We need to talk about it more, get rid of the stigma.**"
-Prince Harry

HELPER POST



"It's something that's extremely common, one in five adults has a mental illness, so basically everyone is essentially connected to this problem and this epidemic."

DEMI LOVATO

<https://divethru.com/celebrities-and-mental-health/>

World Mental Health Day

October 10, 2024 theme:

It is Time to Prioritize Mental Health in the Workplace



Every year, we recognize **World Mental Health Day** on October 10th to raise awareness about mental health around the world, to decrease the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and to mobilize efforts to support those experiencing mental health challenges. The **EBRPSS Mental Health Services Department** recognizes that mental health wellness greatly affects the successes of our students and staff members. Our vision is to assist students and their families in building and maintaining healthy relationships with their schools and communities while recognizing and celebrating individual differences, accomplishments, and choices. Stand with us and show your support by **wearing green on Thursday, October 10, 2024!**



Call To ACTION!

October
10,
2024

World Mental Health Day

Wear **Green** to bring awareness to **Mental Illness** and help **Reduce the Stigma!**



Healthy Habits for the Workplace

Impacts of Occupational Health

Ensure you create a healthy environment for yourself by understanding work-related stress. Here are some effects of work-related stress to look for from the [Cleveland Clinic](#):

Physical Health Effects:

- Fatigue leading to physical exhaustion
- Sleep disturbances
- Weakened immune system making individuals more susceptible to illnesses

Mental Health Effects:

- **Burnout** characterized by feelings of exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy
- **Decreased cognitive performance** which effects decision making, problem solving, and creativity
- **Increased stress levels** potentially leading to anxiety and tension

Emotional Health Effects:

- **Mood swings**, irritability, and a generally negative emotional state
- **Reduced personal time** which can lead to feeling of isolation and loneliness
- **Decreased job satisfaction** and a negative attitude towards work

Decreased Productivity:

- Diminished work quality
- Reduced efficiency and productivity

Winding Down After Work

Creating intentional habits to transition from work to a restful evening is crucial for maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Experiment with different habits to find what works best for you. [Fatherly](#) has some suggestions for all of us!

- Set a clear End-of-Day time
- Spend quality time with loved ones
- Incorporate physical activity in your evening routine
- Practice mindfulness or meditation.
- Establish a wind-down routine
- Disconnect from screens
- Engage in a hobby



What Can **YOU** Do to Achieve Work-Life Balance?

According to the [Harvard Business Review](#), learning to say no is an essential skill that can greatly contribute to maintaining a healthy work-life balance. This skill is about prioritizing your health and well-being to ensure you provide quality work daily.

- **Communicate continuously** with your team about your workload and priorities. Offer to help others when you have the capacity.
- **Communicate priorities**. This transparency can help them understand your workload and help you manage priorities.
- **Self-Assessment**. Understand your capacity and bandwidth realistically.
- **Prioritize tasks** based on urgency and importance. Focus on high-priority items that align with your goals and responsibilities.
- **Set clear goals**. Knowing your priorities helps you decide which tasks align with these goals.
- **Implement effective time management** techniques, such as time blocking or the *Pomodoro Technique*, to maximize productivity without feeling overwhelmed.
- **Provide alternatives** when saying no. This could include recommending a colleague better suited for the task or proposing a different timeline.
- **Be gracious**. Be firm in your decision, but express gratitude for the opportunity. A simple “Thank you for considering me, but I have to decline at this time” can be effective.
- **Set realistic deadlines** based on your current workload.

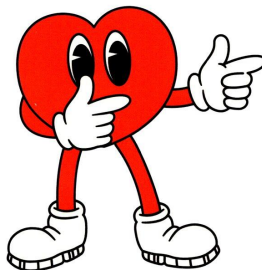
- Unplug from work communication.
- Create a relaxing environment
- Limit caffeine intake

Self-Care Activities

Self-care is the practice of taking care of yourself to promote your health and well-being, and to manage illness when it occurs. It can include habits, lifestyle choices, and practices that you can do on your own or with the help of a health professional.

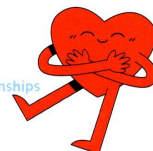
Self-care can help reduce the risk of burnout, depression, anxiety, and other negative consequences. It can also improve your concentration, energy, and happiness.

Self-Care Tips for Positive Mental Health



DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

- Establish a self-care routine
- Talk about your thoughts and feelings
- Find a social group that promote positive self-worth and belonging
- Take a break when you feel tired or overwhelmed
- Do something nice for someone else without expecting anything in return
- Get enough sleep
- Stay physically active and exercise
- Write down your goals and actively work towards them everyday
- Remind yourself that you are not perfect, and no one expects you to be
- Use positive self talk
- Do activities that you love
- Remove yourself from toxic relationships and environments
- Laugh and have fun

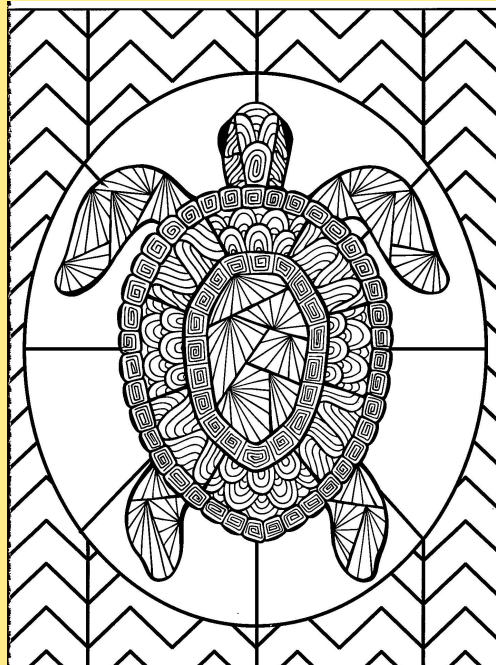


Self-Care Activities

QHOVPUSLESMUEBIZKKEFFTJXFF
 WUQJNVPTPKMHMDBOUCFOTXJCK
 SGJCRXGBPLPRASZZORDRAWUPA
 BDLAHTRIMASXTSXALIBZKTLXCX
 CILZPJIGGUGVGPSTLNYDHEMBDX
 VBAMAAQRGGXPIFAVHOLAZLWO
 CDBCSTRAZHWKHHGPGZGFBBOBJ
 QLPPOBPATAPHOGXLYEJCAJFSZ
 JRAOWRJIVRYUWUFKRBWITBONO
 XNIFKLOTALKTOFRIENDSHNAIY
 UMNNDXUUTTRYNEWTHINGSDKPU
 DSTJYMRDTUMFTTMZXCJTHTFAH
 DWHGYZNERKUFURNSSVCOLORSNS
 NSNOJGAFZHGDZREDXAXXFGFTHE
 EUNJWDLAMUTCLKXXCNAWRTOEA
 VPNPBEHWRGHWIEFCYYEKLFGB
 YDNNGHYROJSDGTRKZMFIJDIGB
 PCVNGONGSOWLTRCKMEDITATEWT
 RIVAEGXEEMLSOOIMLNHGCEQB
 ITKPKXAKOZESZQMSDXVGSPPSPX
 UYSSKKEBEEOOZJEARKWXRHRD
 OFLYUVIDRNWTZZJLIAETKAWSS
 FLMFIIIEFEAAFFIRMATIONSLZV
 GIJXJOVUAIZBIWXWHJEKKNNS
 JLBKAEURDDQGMCDANCEFDRHNS

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------|
| COOK | COLOR | DANCE |
| TALK TO FRIENDS | JOURNAL | MEDITATE |
| AFFIRMATIONS | HUG SOMEONE | LAUGH |
| READ | TAKE A BATH | PAINT |
| YOGA | DRAW | BAKE |
| NAP | MASSAGE | WALK |
| EXERCISE | TRY NEW THINGS | |
| GRATITUDE | SHOWER | |

Downloadable Links



Source: Liquimark.com Color Therapy Adult Coloring Book

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13Q6uwEqCMIFFL2Y2eifepvPB7DwzLoOD/view?usp=sharing>

Source: TPT-The OG Vegan

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dZx5VIBi5H4BTD3GOXtmFlzNcZrKw1vl/view?usp=sharing>

Tips for Managing School and Homework Stress

By: Jesse Tregre

For Students

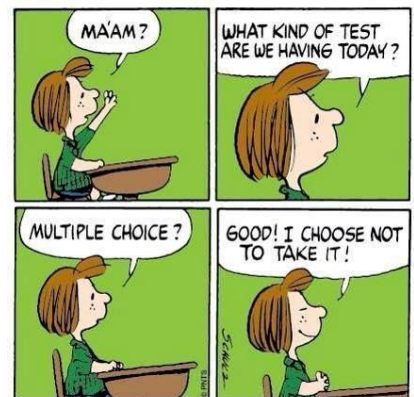
As we progress further into the school year, many of you might be feeling the stress of schoolwork and homework. It's completely normal to feel a bit stressed sometimes, but it's important to find ways to manage it so you can stay happy and healthy. Here are some tips to help you feel a balance between your school and home life:

- 1. Stay Organized:** Use a planner or a calendar to keep track of assignments, tests, and projects. Breaking tasks into smaller, manageable parts can make them feel less overwhelming.
- 2. Set Realistic Goals:** Aim for steady progress rather than perfection. It's okay if you don't finish everything in one day. Set small, achievable goals each day to stay on track.
- 3. Take Breaks:** Give yourself time to relax and recharge. Short breaks between study sessions can help you stay focused and prevent burnout.
- 4. Ask for Help:** Don't be afraid to reach out to teachers, family, or friends if you're struggling with something. Sometimes a little extra support can make a big difference.
- 5. Balance is Key:** Make sure to find time for activities you enjoy, whether it's sports, hobbies, or hanging out with friends. Balancing schoolwork with fun is important for your overall well-being.
- 6. Practice Relaxation:** Simple techniques like deep breathing, stretching, or even a quick walk can help reduce stress and clear your mind.

Tips For Managing School Stress

Stay Organized 	Set Realistic Goals 
Take Breaks 	Ask for Help 
Balance is Key 	Practice Relaxation 

Remember, it's important to listen to your body and mind. If you're feeling overwhelmed, it's okay to take a step back and take care of yourself. Finding a good balance between school work and personal time can help you stay motivated and happy throughout the school year.



Jesse Tregre is a Master of Social Work Student at LSU

Are you a parent experiencing school stress?


From homework to time management to behavior management; here are some tips to assist you with maintaining balance for you and your family.

1 **Remind your child that they're not alone.** It is normal to feel behind in school. Hang in there and just do your best!

2 **Help your child know what to expect.** Find out the school's policies and expectations and review them with your child. Have discussions about what is expected in the classroom, hallways, lunchroom, bus rides, etc.

3 **Praise all your child's efforts!** Life is more than grades. Recognize accomplishments in academics as well as their character.




 **4** **Get enough sleep.** Preschools need 11-12 hours, school-aged kids need 10 hours, teens need 9-10 hours, and adults need 7-9 hours of sleep.

5 **Pay attention to your own anxiety.** Kids can sense anxiety. Talk to other adults to ease worry and get professional help if you need it.



 **6** **Schedule quality time together.** Just 1 hour makes a difference.

7 **Encourage daily movement.** Children need 1 hour of physical activity a day, and so do adults. Riding a bike, a dance party, walking the dog, or whatever gets you moving!

 **8** **Keep a routine.** Waking up and going to bed at the same time everyday improves mental health. (This goes for adults too!)

9 **Identify ways to calm stress.** Taking deep breaths or holding something comforting in you hand (like a smooth rock) quietly relieves stress.



10 **Just ask!** Ask your child if they're worried about anything. Be a good listener and support them.

MANAGING HOLIDAY STRESS

The holiday season is often a time of joy and cherished moments with family and friends. However, it can also bring unwelcome guests like depression, stress, and anxiety. The long to-do lists, time constraints, financial pressures, and high expectations can quickly become overwhelming. Taking a few simple, mindful steps can help reduce or even prevent situational holiday stress and depression.

Here are some strategies to help manage holiday stress and depression:

Acknowledge Your Feelings: The holidays can be tough, especially if you're grieving or missing loved ones. It's natural to feel sadness and grief. Allow yourself to experience these emotions and don't hesitate to cry. Share your feelings with someone you trust—you're likely not alone in this.

Reach Out: Connecting with community, religious, or social events can help you feel less isolated. Many organizations offer online support groups or virtual events. Volunteering or helping others can also be a great way to lift your spirits. Even small gestures, like delivering a meal or holiday treats, can make a difference.

Be Realistic: It's important to recognize that feeling "holiday joy" all the time isn't realistic. As families evolve, it's normal to reminisce about the past. Embrace change by maintaining cherished traditions while being open to new ones. If family members can't visit, consider alternative ways to connect, such as group text exchanges or video calls.

Plan Ahead: Schedule specific days for shopping, baking, and socializing. This can make holiday activities feel more like anticipated events rather than obligations.

Saying "No" is Okay: It's important to set boundaries. If you can't participate in every activity, it's fine to say no without feeling guilty. You don't need to provide explanations—simply say, "Sorry, that doesn't work for me."

Maintain Healthy Habits: Balance holiday indulgence with healthy habits for your body and mind:

- Eat a nutritious snack before celebrations.
- Stick to healthy meals.
- Get sufficient sleep.
- Incorporate regular physical activity.
- Practice deep-breathing exercises, meditation, or yoga.
- Limit alcohol and tobacco use.
- Be mindful of your social media consumption.



Give Yourself a Break: Even if you thrive on holiday activities, taking a break can be refreshing. Spend a few minutes alone, without distractions, to clear your mind and restore calm. Consider:

- Taking a walk
- Getting fresh air
- Viewing holiday light displays
- Listening to your favorite music
- Trying a new podcast

Seek Professional Help if Needed: If you're experiencing persistent sadness or anxiety, consult your doctor or a mental health professional for support.

Mental Health Professionals

In Schools



Team Member Spotlight Jamecia Jackson Tobias, LMSW, C-SSWS



Jamecia Tobias is a school based mental health professional with the East Baton Rouge Parish School System. Although she has lived in many different places, Baton Rouge is home. Mrs. Tobias graduated from Southeastern Louisiana University with a bachelor's degree in social work in 2013. In 2016, she earned a master's degree in social work from Louisiana State University.

Mrs. Tobias is a member of the National Association of Social Workers. She is a Licensed Master Social Worker and is a nationally Certified School Social Work Specialist. Mrs. Tobias works diligently to provide students, families, and school staff with support and strategies on how to address barriers to academic success. She is passionate about dismantling systemic racism in education and fighting for educational equity. Mrs. Tobias has been with the school district for 7 years but has practiced social work for 10 years. She has experience in working with children, adolescents, and adults who struggle with self-esteem issues, anxiety, depression, grief, and trauma. She is a huge advocate for mental health services and works to eradicate the stigma associated with mental illnesses. In her studies, she learned that trauma can significantly impact the brain including how we learn, so she strongly believes in mental health services in the school setting. She is honored to provide students with a safe space to process their emotions and develop healthy coping skills. Her compassion and empathy for others is what drives her in this field.

When she is not working, Mrs. Tobias loves spending time with her family and friends. She also loves any form of body movement, trying new restaurants, going to concerts, and attending football games.

Lastly, Mrs. Tobias believes that just because no one else can heal or do your inner work for you doesn't mean you can, should, or need to do it alone.



EBRPSS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES SUPERVISORS

Highland – Old South Baton Rouge Region – D’Atria London | dlondon@ebschools.org

Broadmoor – Sherwood Region – Ateisha Cage | acage2@ebschools.org

Mid-City Region – Amanda Bitting | abitting1@ebschools.org

North Region – Chalonda Harris | chollins1@ebschools.org

Southeast Region - Alicia Robinson | arobinson@ebschools.org



Meet Our Team!

2024-2025 School Social Workers & Mental Health Professionals



WHO ARE WE?

We are master's level, licensed social workers and mental health professionals who provide tier three therapeutic interventions to students who are referred for mental health support. We also provide professional development and psychoeducation to parents, school groups, and staff as requested.



Past Events

Community Events



Our supervisors, Amanda Bitting and Chalonda Harris attended a community event held at Living Word Church to provide mental health resources to students and parents as they prepared for the new school year.



Our supervisors, Alicia Robinson and Ateisha Cage attended the EBRPSS Job Fair held in July to represent the MHS department by sharing information on our vacancies.



EBRPSS held its annual back to school bash in August. The MHS Department supported by hosting a table with resources for students and parents.



Past Events

Open House

Chloe Rabalais, Social Worker at Woodlawn Middle supported the school's Open House by hosting a mental health resource table for students and parents.



Peyton Eschette, Social Worker at Liberty Magnet High School hosted a mental health resource table for their Open House held last month.



Jasmine Holmes, Social Worker is pictured below with Mrs. Zima, School Counselor at Westminster Elementary School for their Open House held in September.

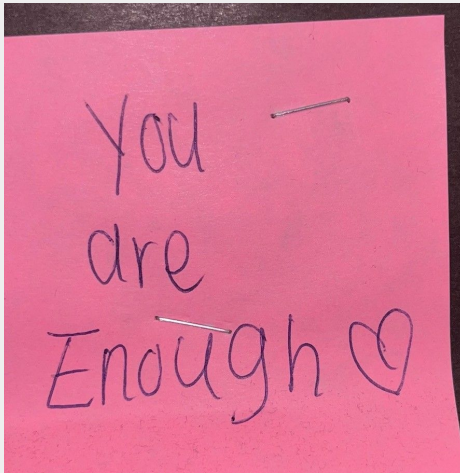


Meka Toliver, Social Worker at Park Forest Middle School supported the school's Open House alongside *I CARE* Specialist, Mamie Hall-Landry.

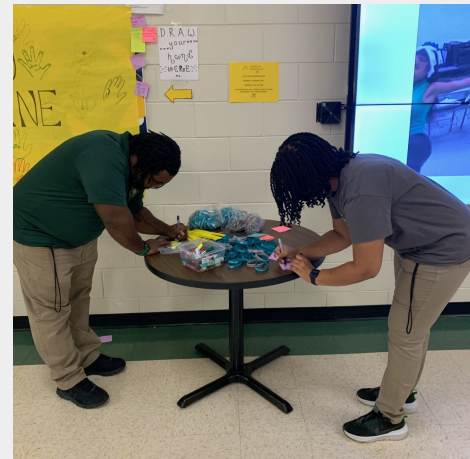
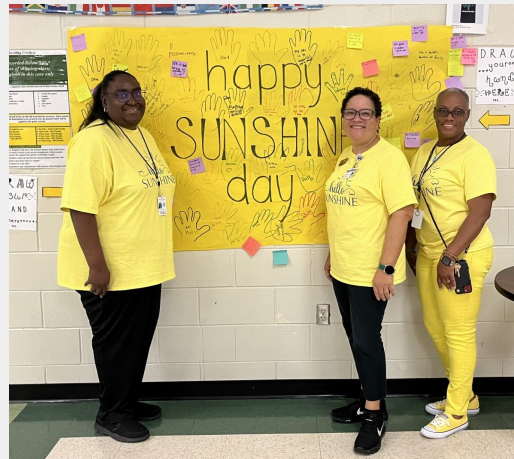
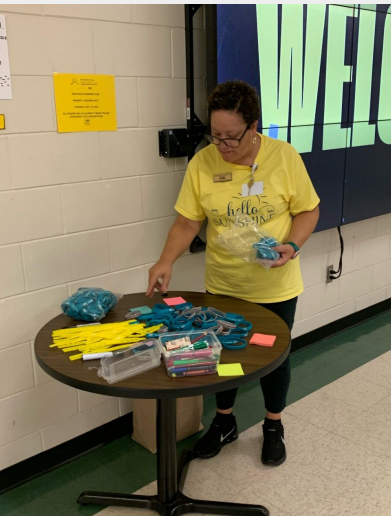
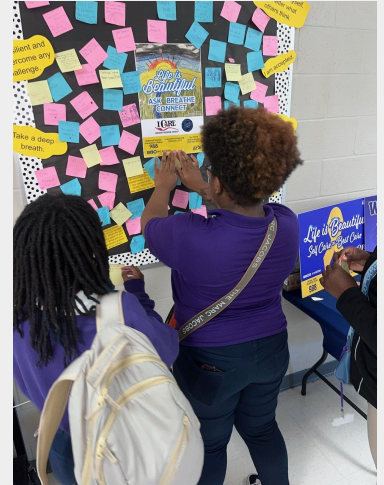
Past Events

September is Suicide Prevention Month!

Dr. Christianne Ricard, Mental Health Professional and **I CARE** Specialist, Mrs. Leslie Manadier, celebrated "Life is Beautiful" Suicide Prevention Campaign on the campus of Woodlawn High School.



School Social Worker, Meka Toliver and **I CARE** Specialist, Mamie Hall-Landry teamed up at Park Forest Middle School to celebrate life with "Sunshine Day".



Upcoming Events

MHS Department Events

- Human Trafficking Training (TBA)
- Trauma Informed Care in Schools – September 24-25, 2024 (Location changed to LSU Vieux Carrè Room)
- *I CARE* Leadership Conference (formerly Teen/Tween Spirit) – September 25-26, 2024 (Broadmoor United Methodist Church - 10230 Mollylea Dr)
- NAMI Walks – September 28, 2024
- World Mental Health Day – October 10, 2024 (Mental Health Matters website goes live)
- District MHS Meeting – October 10th
- District MHS Meeting – November 13th
- District MHS Holiday Celebration - December 18th



Upcoming Events

Awareness Months

October

- Hispanic Heritage Month (Sep. 15-Oct. 15)
- ADHD Awareness Month
- Depression Awareness Month
- Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- Mental Illness Awareness Week (Oct. 6-12)
- National Depression Screening Day (Oct. 7)
- National Day of Prayer for Mental Illness (Oct. 8)
- World Mental Health Day (Oct. 10)
- National Coming Out Day (Oct. 11)
- OCD Awareness Week (Oct. 13-19)



November

- National Family Caregivers Month
- National Diabetes Month
- Native American Heritage Month
- Transgender Awareness Week (Nov. 13-19)
- Transgender Day of Remembrance (Nov. 20)
- International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day (Nov. 23)

December

- International Day of Persons with Disabilities (Dec. 3)