

WELCOME TO THE TALK

Broward County Public Schools' Mental Health Leadership Team welcomes you to our quarterly newsletter. The MHLT is comprised of representatives from the following departments, Coordinated Student Health Services, Employee Assistance Program, Exceptional Student Learning Support, Family Counseling, Psychological Services, Recovery, School Climate and Discipline, School Counseling & Brace, and School Social Work. The TALK will provide information to students, families and employees to assist in building a stronger, "mental health-conscious" district. So....Let's TALK!

DON'T FORGET "JOY" DURING THE HOLIDAY BREAK



When Broward County Public Schools close for the holidays, Nov. 22-26 and Dec. 20-31, staff and students are often encouraged to "enjoy the break;" but how? The stressors of the year may make holidays seem like another challenging time to overcome.

During the holidays, emotional triggers may bring about feelings of grief, isolation and loneliness. A study conducted by the National Alliance on Mental Illness showed that 64 percent of people with mental illness report holidays make their conditions worse. (<https://www.nami.org/Press-Media/Press-Releases/2014/Mental-health-and-the-holiday-blues>)

"It's important to remember the joy in your life, focusing on the traditions and people that you are most grateful to have," said Marie English-Arterberry, LCSW, administrator of BCPS' Employee Assistance Program. "If people are able to find ways to express gratitude, even during stressful times, they can experience proven mental and physical health benefits, including reduction in anxiety and depression."

During the break, when District-based mental health services are unavailable, the Mental Health Leadership Team recommends that students and employees plan ahead to ensure they know what to do, if additional support is needed.

Recognize that the holidays can be a triggering time, filled with memories that can lead to depressing thoughts, so prepare to practice self-care and self-empathy. Be kind to yourself.

Create "new" traditions to remember loved ones or connect with family, if the "old" traditions dredge up intense feelings.

Expand your circle beyond your immediate family, if they do not provide the emotional support you need. Manage expectations of their support, if they are suffering from loss or grief, as well.

Enlist people to talk to or schedule decompressing activities, like walking outdoors or reading inspirational literature to replace holiday activities, if you need a break.

RESOURCES FOR YOU

**211 Broward
Dial 2-1-1**

**Mobile Crisis Response Team Henderson
Behavioral Health
954-463-0911**

**The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
1-800-799-4889 (TTY)**

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

**The Trevor Line
1-866-4-U-TREVOR or 1-866-488 7386
<http://thetrevorproject.org/>**

**Crisis Text Line
Text FL to 741741
<https://www.crisistextline.org/>**

NEW CURRICULUM SAFER, SMARTER SCHOOLS TEACHES ABUSE PREVENTION AMONG YOUNG STUDENTS



BCPS is introducing a new curriculum to students in pre-K through grade 5 to help build their awareness of how to remain safe. The Lauren's Kids Safer, Smarter Schools curriculum is Florida's – and the country's – first-ever comprehensive Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12 school-based prevention and personal safety curriculum. The curriculum contains educationally sound content for parents, teachers and administrators, with professional development courses to help create a culture of safety within schools.

Yva Dieudonné, Supervisor, Child Abuse Prevention Services, is overseeing the curriculum for BCPS and can be reached at yva.dieudonne@browardschools.com or childabuse@browardschools.com.

Safer, Smarter Kids spans Pre-Kindergarten through grade 5, and includes adaptations for the special education population. *Safer, Smarter Teens* provides lessons for middle and high school students. Each *Safer, Smarter Schools* grade level curriculum program consists of five to eight lessons aligned with Florida Standards and Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for easy integration into the classroom through benchmarks in academic areas including social sciences, reading and health. The curriculum enables all children to effectively learn strategies to prevent sexual, physical, and other kinds of abuse, no matter their learning style – while also addressing digital safety, anti-bullying, and both mental health and trafficking prevention in fulfillment of new FLDOE rules.

Learn more at SaferSmarterSchools.org.

EMPLOYEE CORNER

Don't let the holidays become something that you dread or overwhelms you. Learn to recognize your triggers so you can take action towards having a peaceful holiday. Tips to prevent holiday stress:

- Acknowledge your feelings
- Reach out
- Stick to a budget
- Practice acceptance and forgiveness
- Learn to say no
- Take a breather
- Make time for yourself between group activities
- Seek professional help if needed



HELPFUL LINKS:

<https://eastsidemedical.com/blog/entry/minimize-holiday-stress-5-tips-to-unwind>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress/art-20047544>

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/av2118>

For additional information, contact Employee Assistance Program at (754) 322-9900.



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