MAY/JUNE, 2014

Ascension Counseling Center

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# Mental Health Wellness

Did you know that over the course of one year about 1 in 5 American adults will have a mental health condition? Did you know that less than half of them will receive services to address mental health concerns? Around 10 % of adults in America will have a mood disorder such as depression or bipolar disorder while about 18% will have an anxiety disorder. What is mental health? The World Health Organization defines mental health as a "state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community". Simply put, mental health is the ability to cope with daily life and the challenges that come our way. A person's mental health influences how one views themselves, others, and their life. It plays a part in an individual's potential to achieve one's dreams and goals. As a counselor, often times we have to educate others on the counseling process and our role as counselors. Counselors are not here to "fix" other people, tell them what is wrong with them or tell a person what choices to make. As a counselor, the focus is not on fixing but on helping an individual improve personal wellness and quality of life. We all know how important it is to take care of our health. Often the focus is on having a healthy diet, getting enough sleep and exercising but having good health not only focuses on the physical body but also on the mind. We all know how important it is to take care of our health. The National Wellness institute defines Wellness as "a conscious, deliberate process that requires being aware of and making choices for a more satisfying lifestyle". The word Wellness includes a sense of empowerment. Every day we are faced with many different choices and we are personally responsible for making choices that affect both our mind and body. Some choices include choosing to build social support, healthy eating with mental health in mind, recognizing physical and emotional signs of stress, and knowing when to ask others for help.

There are eight dimensions of wellness which are all connected: physical, spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual, occupational, environmental, and financial. All of the dimensions are connected and when one area is affected it affects other areas as well.

For example, when feeling financially stressed we may experience stress emotionally. Emotional stress may lead to physical problems which may decrease a person's effectiveness at work. When someone is no longer working it may have someone searching for meaning and purpose and social interactions may decrease. It is important to balance work, with time for rest and play to improve one's wellness. I encourage you to take time to reflect on all of the eight dimensions of wellness and acknowledge areas that you are actively and successfully working on. Take a moment to recognize one of the dimensions that you have put at the bottom of your priority list or pushed to the side to address other areas of health. Ask yourself what is one choice I can make over the next week to improve my health in this area. Now put it into action and DO IT! Jackson Brown would say "Opportunity dances with those who are already on the dance floor". In June, try out these daily tips to boost mind and body:

# Mental Health Wellness

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
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| 1 Take care of your spirit through meditation, religion, or connecting to what you find meaningful. Spirituality offers improved disposition and decreases anxiety. | 2. Refrain from all or nothing ways of thinking. Making one mistake doesn't mean you are going to repeat it. Maintaining perspective is crucial to positive thinking. | 3 Plan a "Me Day". Take time to put yourself first, address your needs first, and do something for yourself. Do something that you have put off to the side for a while because of juggling lots of responsibilities. It is important to truly take care of yourself if you want to help care for others. | 4 Visualize your dreams and goals becoming a reality. Focusing your mental imagery towards what you want can help improve motivation, boost self-confidence, improve your mood, and foster behaviors that lead to success. | 5 Want to be happy? Just smile. Believe it or not, forcing yourself to smile can actually make you happier. Paul Ekman, PhD, a psychologist found that smiling spontaneously or on purpose produces virtually the same brain activity. | 6 Take 10 minutes out of your day to take a break from what you're doing. Small breaks help clear the mind and improve our ability to handle stress. | 7 Laugh at some of life's challenges and frustrations. Finding amusement in stressful situations can help decrease stress and promote optimism. |
| 8 Remember a time when you achieved something in the past to remind yourself that you have the potential for success. This can help decrease feelings of insecurity and lower stress. | 9 Take 15 minutes to sit outside and enjoy the sunlight. Sunlight synthesizes Vitamin D which may help elevate mood. | 10 Send someone a handwritten Thank You note. Noticing and appreciating the positives can help boost mood.<br><br>Positive Thoughts= Positive Mood. | 11 Sign up or engage in a new hobby or interest you have always wanted to try. Meeting others who have similar interests is a good way to start new friendships. | 12 Remember the saying You are what you eat? Eat a salad for a meal. A diet of fruits vegetables, lean meats, and limited fats can help boost mood and your immune system. | 13 Don't sweat the small stuff. Ask yourself "Is what I am worried about something I can control?" If the answer is NO then why waste energy on something beyond your control. Use that energy to do something for yourself. | 14 Trade out water for sugary drinks. Water helps flush out toxins, reduce bloating, and prevents the highs and lows associated with sugar. |
| 15 FATHER'S DAY Give your father or a father you know a personal thank you for all they do. Taking time to point out and recognize positives can boost one's mood. | 16 Take a few minutes at the end of the day to reflect on 1 thing you are proud of about self or 1 positive thing that happened today. Studies show that optimists have a 50% lower risk of early mortality. | 17 Pat yourself on the back or give yourself a hug. It is important to praise yourself for your accomplishments. We cannot rely on others to let us know when we are doing well and praise us for all of our successes. Be your own cheerleader. | 18 Start your day with a positive affirmation. Write down 1 positive statement about self on a sticky note and place on your bathroom mirror. | 19 Take a picture of an inspirational quote and put it as your phone screensaver. Sometimes we need a reminder to help us stay focused and motivated throughout the day with all of life's distractions. | 20 Do something different. Find a new recipe and cook something you have never tried before. Try out a new group exercise class. Trying out new things can help one to be more open minded about challenging lifestyle changes. | 21 Practice deep breathing exercises. Put one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest. Remember when breathing the air should be going to the stomach and not the chest. Focus on inhaling through the nose and exhaling out the mouth. Deep breathing is one of the best ways to lower stress in the body. When you breathe deeply, it sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax. The brain then sends this message to your body. |
| 22 Set a weekly goal that is challenging but do-able. Follow through and reflect on your feelings about completing your goal. | 23 Begin your day with a 10 minute walk. Exercise can increase blood flow, stimulate "feel good" hormones and reduce stress. Exercise is also a good way to boost energy and improve focus. | 24 Receive compliments and say Thank You. Take the time to acknowledge the positives in your life and focus on your strengths rather than focus on the negative. | 25 Swap out regular coffee with decaf coffee or decaffeinated tea. Reducing caffeine helps to improve sleep. People who get enough rest are more likely to succeed at their daily tasks. | 26 Wake up 15 minutes early today to give yourself time to wake. Beginning your day with a clear mind and not in a rush can help increase productivity and mood. | 27 Laughter is the best medicine. Reminisce about something you have done or seen that gave you the giggles. Laughter helps to boost ones immune system. | 28 We need three positive thoughts to balance the power of one negative thought. Practice replacing negative thoughts with positive thoughts. |
| 29 Call a friend or family member who you would like to reconnect with. Close supportive relationships are an important part in happiness. | 30 Do a Random act of kindness. Research shows that those who consistently help others tend to experience less Depression and better health. | | | | | |

Courtney LeBlanc, LPC NCC

# Training and Outreach

## Play Therapy Workshop

Stephanie Turner and Lisa Weber Curry attended a Play Therapy workshop on May 15, 2014. Play therapy is about learning effective play techniques to use to effectively treat children and adolescents in therapy. The techniques can also be taught to the parents and educators, and clinicians are encouraged to do so to continue the treatment outside of the clinician's office. Play therapy allows the clinician to enter into the child or adolescent story/life on the child's terms using non-directed or directed play to better understand the child/adolescents needs and/or condition.

## Carry the Load

On Memorial Day weekend, therapy dog Java Fun Pup and Counselor Kristie Boggs participated in Carry the Load, Dallas, TX. Carry the Load's vision is to restore the true meaning of Memorial Day by connecting Americans to the sacrifices of our military, law enforcement, firefighters and rescue personnel. Kristie "Carried the Load" for her friend Army Spc. Scott Larson Jr. who was KIA on 4/5/2004.

## Creating Roots for Healing: Discovery Lead to Transformation

Tatiyana Curry and Kristie Boggs attended Creating Roots for Healing: Discovery Lead to Transformation hosted by The New Orleans Institute & The Eating disorders Treatment Center. It was a workshop for Trauma-Based Disorders, Behavioral Addictions & Eating Disorders, focusing on theoretical and clinical advances in psychotherapy within the trauma-based, self-psychology, developmental psychopathology and attachment disorders perspectives. The training was May 28th, 2014.

## Children's Mental Health Awareness Summit

Several staff attended the Children's Behavioral Health Summit sponsored by the Department of Health & Hospitals Office of Behavioral Health & Magellan Health Services on Friday, June 6, 2014. This workshop offered new perspectives on children's behavioral health treatment. The keynote speaker was Dr. J. Stuart Ablon, Director of Think: Kids in the Department of Psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital. He gave a discussion about changing our game with children, youth and families to achieve better outcomes.

## "Ascension Summer Kick Off"

On June 7th, Ascension Counseling Center, participated in the Ascension Summer Kickoff, an event to celebrate the Ascension community as well as the start of summer. Agencies were on hand to give information on resources available to the community as well as family fun. There were games, music, live entertainment, and giveaways. The event was held at G.W. Carver park and the agencies on hand were Spectrum Rehab Services, Nation Child and Family Services, Capital Area Human Services, Magellan Behavioral Health, Ekhaya House, Sorrento Fire Dept. with their smokehouse ,Gonzales Fire Dept., Office of Homeland Security, Household of Faith and many more.

www.AscensionParish.Net/MH


**Ascension Counseling Center**

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**HELPING INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES CHANGE BEHAVIORS, CHANGE LIVES.**

Ascension Counseling Center provides comprehensive therapeutic services to individuals and families in an effort to foster healthy coping skills that will improve their quality of life.

## HOURS

**Gonzales:**

***Business Hours***
Mon - Thur: 8 am - 5:30 pm; Fri: 8 am - noon
***Counseling Hours***
Mon - Thur: 7 am - 8 pm; Fri: 8 am - noon
***Psychiatrist Hours***
Monday and Tuesday: 8 am - 6 pm

**Donaldsonville:**

***Business Hours***
Wednesday: 7:30 am - 5:30 pm
***Counseling Hours***
Wednesday: 7:30 am - 5:30 pm

## MONTHLY EVENTS

**Mondays**:

- ***Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 4 - 6 pm & 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 4 - 6 pm, Gonzales.

**Tuesdays:**

- ***Women's Empowerment Group,*** 10 - 11:30 am, Gonzales.
- ***Nurturing Parenting, adult & children groups***: 5 - 7:30 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Anger Management Class,*** 4 - 5 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Stop Smoking Group***, 4 - 6 pm, Gonzales
- ***Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.

**Wednesdays:**

- ***Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group:*** 1 pm, Donaldsonville.
- ***Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 3 - 4 pm, Donaldsonville.
- ***Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group:*** 4 - 6 pm & 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Living Strong Cancer Survivors group***, 3 - 4 pm, Donaldsonville. 2nd Wed of each month.
- ***Grandparents Raising Grandchildren***, 10:30 am - noon, lunch provided, Donaldsonville, 3rd Wed of each month

**Thursdays:**

- ***Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group:*** 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 4 - 6 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Anxiety Reduction group***: 4 - 5 pm, Gonzales.

At Ascension Counseling Center you are at the center of your own care. We aim to treat you the way you want to be treated, with dignity and respect. If you are not receiving the services you want in the way that you want them, please speak to your counselor or ask to speak with Lisa Weber-Curry, Clinical manger (225-450-1172) or Suzanne Hamilton , Director (225-450-1160).