

Mental Health Matters

Everyone Has A Story

May

is Mental Health
Awareness Month

Summer Bucket List:

- Gaze at the stars
- Barbecue a new recipe
- Have a picnic
- Sleep under the stars
- Play in the rain
- Watch fireworks
- Take a road trip
- Watch an outdoor movie
- Enjoy a campfire
- Hike a new trail
- Visit a National Park
- Read a new book
- Learn a new hobby

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May 2023





- **1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year**
- **1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year**
- **1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year**
- **50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24**

According to the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI), A mental illness is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling or mood. Such conditions may affect someone's ability to relate to others and function each day. Each person will have different experiences, even people with the same diagnosis. Research shows that multiple factors influence the manifestation of mental illnesses, including genetics, trauma, and environment and lifestyle influences.

www.nami.org

Warning signs of mental illness:

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Confused thinking or problems concentrating and learning
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable "highs" or feelings of euphoria
- Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Difficulties understanding or relating to other people
- Changes in sleeping habits or feeling tired and low energy
- Changes in eating habits such as increased hunger or lack of appetite
- Changes in sex drive
- Difficulty perceiving reality (delusions or hallucinations, in which a person experiences and senses things that don't exist in objective reality)
- Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior or personality ("lack of insight" or anosognosia)
- Overuse of substances like alcohol or drugs
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes (such as headaches, stomach aches, vague and ongoing "aches and pains")
- Thinking about suicide
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress
- An intense fear of weight gain or concern with appearance



Mental Health in Children

Warning signs for children experiencing possible mental illness may include:

- Changes in school performance
- Excessive worry or anxiety
- Hyperactive behavior
- Frequent nightmares
- Frequent disobedience or aggression
- Frequent temper tantrums



Prevention & Support Staff Spotlight



Jamel Thomas is the Team Leader for school counselors at Foley High School. She has been in education for 28 years and this is her 6th year at Foley High School. She earned her Bachelor of Science and her masters in school counseling from Florida International University. Mrs. Thomas lives in Foley with her husband and their two dogs. She has three adult children, one granddaughter, and one grandson on the way. In her free time, she enjoys exploring new restaurants, going to the beach, scuba diving, and baking. When asked what she loves most about being a school counselor at Foley High School, she acknowledges the incredible prevention and support staff team at Foley High. Mrs. Thomas states that when she wakes up each morning, she strives to ensure that her students know at least one person loves them and will fight for them.

Foley High School

Foley, Alabama #GoLions

#GoLions

Barbara Wilkerson is a school counselor at Foley High School. She also drives a bus route. She has been with Foley High School for 12 years and has been in education for 29 years. Prior to coming to Foley High School, she taught Science for nine years at Foley Middle School and prior to then, she served the Selma School District. Mrs. Wilkerson earned her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Montevallo and her master's degree in school counseling from the University of West Alabama. She lives in Orange Beach with her husband, their dog, and her mother who is 95 years of age. She has two children and seven grandchildren. When asked what she loves most about being a school counselor at Foley High School, she states that it is the opportunity she gets to have a positive interaction with students and helping her students determine their destiny.

Pictured: (standing) Makayla Ridgway, Barbara Wilkerson, Wendy Johnson O'Toole (seated) Jamel Thomas and Sherry Rainbolt



Prevention & Support Staff Spotlight

Sherry Rainbolt is a school counselor at Foley High School. She also drives a bus route. She is serving her 27th year in education and her 3rd year at Foley High School. Mrs. Rainbolt earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Arkansas State University in Early Elementary Education, and she taught school for seventeen years before earning her master's degree in School Counseling from Arkansas Tech University. She has been a school counselor for 9 years. Mrs. Rainbolt lives in Gulf Shores. She has two adult sons. She loves to travel abroad and she enjoys gardening. When asked what she loves most about being a school counselor at Foley High School, she expresses her passion for students and having the opportunity to have a positive impact on them.



Wendy Johnson O'Toole is a school counselor at Foley High School. She has been in education for 27 years and has served as a Foley School Counselor for the last nine years. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Auburn University and her masters in school counseling from the University of South Alabama. Mrs. O'Toole lives in Silverhill with her husband and their dog. She enjoys spending time with her nieces and nephews. She loves going to the beach, gardening, and watching movies. When asked what she loves most about being a school counselor at Foley High School, she expresses gratitude for the opportunity it gives her to make a difference in the lives of her students.

Makayla Ridgway is the Social Worker for Foley High School. This is her 2nd year with Foley High School. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree from The University of Alabama in Birmingham and her masters in social work from the University of Tennessee. Mrs. Ridgway lives in Fairhope with her husband along with their nine-month-old daughter and two dogs. She enjoys being a new mom, going to the beach, and spending time with her family and friends. When asked what she loves most about being a school social worker at Foley High School, she states that she loves the school community and the opportunity it gives her to help students in multiple aspects.

Morrell Baxter (pictured on the right) is considered a part of the team at Foley High School. She is the College & Career Coach and has served Foley High School since October 2015. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Alabama and her master's degree is in Marketing from The University of Alabama. She lives in Silverhill with her 2-year-old son Aubrey, and her husband of 6 years, Mr. Lance Baxter. In her spare time, Mrs. Morrell is also an artist and fashion blogger and has owned her own businesses, "Morrell Baxter Art", and "Morrell's Armoire", since 2013.





Under His Wings is a Christian residential home for girls under 19. The agency was founded in 2008 by Dr. Lorena Hunt, OB GYN, in Fairhope, AL. The agency opened its doors in 2013. Under His Wings offers counseling for the resident and family, educational support, and the opportunity to feel safe in a loving home-like environment.

Many volunteers coordinate art, music, field trips and volunteer opportunities for the residents. Counseling is led by licensed professional counselors. Equine therapy also plays a major role in the agency's approach to healing. The staff include parents as much as possible in the process – training and equipping families in their roles to better navigate their relationships with their girl. Under His Wings is dedicated to not just creating coping methods but committed reunification of the family. For more information, visit: underhiswingsbaldwin.org

underhiswingsbaldwin.org

There are a number of ways you can help support the mission of Under His Wings. Below is the Wishlist. You can also contact Executive Director, Arcelia Miller, regarding volunteer opportunities and needs at: 251-947-HOPE or director@underhiswingsbaldwin.org

WISH LIST

- Laundry pods
- Twin size sheets and bedding
- Towels
- Feminine hygiene
- Tupperware
- Drinking glasses
- Ziploc bags
- Copy paper
- Printer cartridges
- Canoes
- Life jackets
- Property gate (materials and installation)
- Security cameras
- Funding for education/recreation building and transition housing
- Healthy snacks for school
- Light bulbs

Chloe Thomas

Chloe, a senior at the Baldwin County Virtual School, is a resident at Under His Wings. She was a guest speaker at our Navigating Anxiety Event hosted by BCVS. She courageously shared her remarkable testimony of perseverance and triumph. She has used the abuse and trauma she has suffered to inspire her calling to pursue a career in psychology and to help other kids like herself.

Chloe with BCVS principal, Mrs. Holly Resmondo and Superintendent, Mr. Eddie Tyler



Better Speech & Hearing Month



May is Better Speech and Hearing Month which was founded in 1927 by American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA). It provides an opportunity to raise awareness about communication disorders and the role members of ASHA is providing life altering treatment. The mission of ASHA is “Making effective communication, a human right, accessible and achievable for all.” The 2023 theme is Building a Strong Foundation. For more information, visit www.asha.org.



Many people live with unidentified hearing loss and early detection and intervention is important. According to the World Health Organization’s first World Report on Hearing, noise is being acknowledged as an important public health issue and a top environmental risk faced by the world today. Over 50% of people ages 12-35 listen to music via personal audio devices at volumes that pose a risk to their hearing. The CDC recommends using hearing protection when in environments with loud noise and keep the volume of personal audio devices below 60%.



Asian American & Pacific Islander Month



May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month – a celebration of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States, which was originated with Congress. In 1977 The month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants.



Joan Block is a Korean American and Co-Founder of the Hepatitis B Foundation. The month of May happens to also be Hepatitis Awareness Month. Although Asian Americans only constitute as 4% of the U.S. population, 1 in 12 Asian Americans is chronically infected with Hepatitis B compared to 1 in 1,000 non-Hispanic White Americans. In 1991, Joan Block and her husband, Dr. Timothy Block, along with Paul and Janine Witte started the foundation in Pennsylvania. The Hepatitis B Foundation is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to finding a cure and improving the quality of life for those affected by Hepatitis B worldwide.

