

CENTERED

THE NEWSLETTER OF DAVID LAWRENCE CENTERS

Spring 2022

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MAY is Mental Health Awareness Month!

Celebrate with our **FREE Mind Your Mind Community Day** on May 14.

More info on page 5.

mind
your
mind

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From the CEO | *Scott Burgess*

Let's Keep Minding OUR Minds



You've probably heard the saying that good things come in threes. I happen to have three very good things to share with you today.

1) Our Mind Your Mind campaign is

off to a great start. We began this year-long initiative in January to spark more discussion in our community on the topic of mental health and mental wellness. We focus on a new topic each month — for example, senior mental health in February and workplace wellness in April — to encourage dialogue and healthy practices among us all.

Demand for mental health services has skyrocketed during the pandemic, as more and more people wrestle with depression, anxiety, and more. But the good news is that in my 31 years in this field, I've never heard more conversations about mental health than right now. A topic once discussed only in hushed voices is now being talked about openly, having shed much of the stigma that kept it in the shadows for years.

Our Mind Your Mind initiative is helping with that. More than 3,500 visitors have visited our exclusive landing page — DLCMindYourMind.org — since its launch in January, and over 100 people have signed up for our monthly Mind Your Mind e-newsletter, a number that continues to grow (Visit DLCMindYourMind.org to learn how you can sign up).

2) **We're holding our first-ever Community Mental Health Day.** May is National Mental Health Awareness Month, and we are excited about continuing the discussions about mental health throughout the entire month — particularly at our inaugural Mind Your Mind Community Day on Saturday, May 14, at Cambier Park. I hope you'll join us for this free event, where you'll have an opportunity to chat with members of our team and some of our community partners. We'll have free resources, fun giveaways, and activities for all ages — all part of our pursuit of fostering mental wellbeing for everyone in our community.

3) Our recent Sound Minds Luncheon was a big success.

Our keynote speaker, Emma Benoit, is a remarkable young woman who survived a suicide attempt at 16 that left her paralyzed. Now, at 21, she travels around the country to share her journey of recovery. She's on a mission to share hope for other young people who struggle — that they can find light in the darkness by reaching out for help. Her story is powerful, and she captivated the audience with her message and amazing journey to mental wellbeing. (*Learn more about Emma at myascension.us.*)

Those are the three good things I wanted you to know as you read this edition of your *Centered* newsletter — three things to inspire us all to keep the conversation going, to mind our minds, and to look out for one another in this great community.

Thank you for your support and your kindness.

Scott Burgess
President & CEO

4 Ways to Start a Conversation about Mental Health

By Children's Outreach Specialist
Jessica Liria, M.S.



Jessica Liria, M.S.



1. Take advantage of opportunities around you.

Utilize the present moment to talk about what is happening in front of you. As you and your family are watching TV or listening to the radio, talk about what you are seeing and hearing. How does it make you feel? How is someone with a mental health concern portrayed? What could you do if encountering a similar situation in real life? Being open to these discussions, and encouraging others to do so, helps to reduce stigma and raise awareness.

2. Share what you learn and educate others.

We all know the value in “word of mouth.” Having a desire to educate yourself on important topics will not only strengthen your intellectual wellness, but passing that information along will benefit others as well. We can all play an active role in prioritizing mental health in our community. By sharing a statistic, an available resource, or common concern, you are shining the light on a national challenge.

3. Let others know you care.

We often have no idea what the people around us are going through on a day-to-day basis and simple acts of kindness can make all the difference in their day. Whether it is a loved one, a friend, or a complete stranger, there are things we can do to show they are noticed. Offering a kind smile, holding open a door, or letting someone merge into traffic are small things we can always do. Other days may require us to dig deeper—“How are you feeling today?” “Is there anything I can do help?” “I notice you seem sad. Would you like to talk?”

4. Have the courage to talk about you.

Our society is at a pivotal point, where we can overcome the negativity surrounding mental health just as we did with many physical illnesses. Internalizing emotions can lead us to being guarded and pushing others away. This intensifies those feelings, and we can begin to feel isolated and alone. It can be a challenge to face our emotions, and talking about them can be even more difficult; however, confiding in others and asking for help can bring connection, compassion, and comfort.



The Calm After the Storm

How an angry young boy found peace.



When David was a baby, his mother Nora tried every trick in the book to calm him down, to no avail.

Every request for change, no matter how small, would set him off. *Come to dinner. Get in the car. Feed the dog. Get dressed for school.*

He would end up throwing multiple tantrums every day.

Nora was at the end of her rope.

“It was very upsetting,” says Nora. “I felt like I wasn’t a good mother.”

David was mad at the world. Mad at his mom. Mad at his sister. He would lash out, scream, and hit family members. He would throw things. Break things. Smash things. All trying to provoke a reaction from his mother.

“He did whatever he had to do to get me into the fight,” says Nora.

Nora tried outpatient therapy for David when he was 18 months old, but his behavior continued through his

preschool and kindergarten years. However, David was well-behaved at school, where he was a good student. His teachers never experienced the anger he so often displayed at home toward his family.

“He did whatever he had to do to get me into the fight.” — Nora

When David was in first grade, Nora, desperate for help, brought him to the children’s outpatient program at David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health (DLC). Before long, he was diagnosed with adjustment disorder, typified by an overreaction to change or stress.

David started meeting with a therapist at DLC — alone for most of the session, and then Nora would join them at the end. The therapist quickly learned that David liked to draw, and that it calmed him down, so she encouraged that during their sessions. She taught him additional relaxation techniques that he could take home and practice when with his family.

Nora taped a list of coping skills to the wall in David’s room, and he started using them. The last thing on the list was vital: “Mommy and Daddy will always love you even when you are mad.”





Nora learned coping skills of her own, including ways to practice patience, and methods for de-escalating volatile situations. Things began to improve.

David also expressed an interest in music, so Nora got him a piano. He immediately poured his heart and mind into learning how to play. He would hear a song and teach it to himself. The piano became a soothing activity, a way to bring peace to his inner turmoil.

After one year in the children’s outpatient program at DLC, David is a changed boy.

“He’s a different child,” says Nora. “Now he’s not really mad anymore. He just focuses on another thing to explore to help calm him down.”

“I used to fight with my mom a lot,” says David, now 9. “But not anymore.” He says his therapist “helped me to control my behavior.”

“I used to fight with my mom a lot, but not anymore. My therapist helped me to control my behavior.” — **David**

Nora is overwhelmingly grateful for DLC’s help and the hope and healing she and David have found.

“David Lawrence Centers is a great place to go when you feel that life is not easy and you need help,” she says. “They helped me understand that this was a problem we had to fix as a family. And that with love and patience, we could make it through.”




DLC
mind
your
mind
COMMUNITY DAY

**A FREE
PUBLIC WELLNESS EVENT**

Join David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health at our Inaugural Mind Your Mind Community Day!

SATURDAY, MAY 14
8-11 A.M. IN CAMBIER PARK

To celebrate May as the nationally recognized Mental Health Awareness Month, this free community event is focused on raising awareness and reducing stigma around mental health challenges.

For more information or to get involved as a partner or volunteer, contact donorcare@dlcenters.org or call 239-354-1419



DLC Launches Intervention Program for Early Psychosis

DLC has begun accepting clients and referrals into a new evidence-based, early intervention program for older adolescents and young adults experiencing the first symptoms of a psychotic illness.

The OnTrack program is an innovative treatment program for individuals between the ages of 16 and 30 who have recently begun experiencing unusual thoughts and behaviors, such as hearing or seeing things that others don't, or disorganized, illogical thinking. Eligible participants have experienced at least two weeks of symptoms, with onset within the previous two years.

Warning signs of someone experiencing early psychosis may include: starting to withdraw from family and friends, having thoughts that seem strange to others, bizarre behaviors, and becoming fearful or suspicious of other people.

The goal of OnTrack is to work collaboratively with participants and their families to facilitate independence and achieve life's goals by improving functioning, reducing stress, and minimizing symptoms so they don't become disabling.

"If we intervene early with specialty care, we see a huge return on that investment in terms of quality of life and the trajectory of an individual's life," said Nancy Dauphinais, DLC Chief Operating Officer.

After similarly coordinated specialty care programs for treating psychosis were implemented with great success in other states, the federal government mandated that 10 percent of new mental health block grants throughout each state needed to fund such programs.

"If we intervene early with specialty care, we see a huge return on that investment in terms of quality of life and the trajectory of an individual's life."
— Nancy Dauphinais, DLC COO

DLC was one of two agencies recently selected by Central Florida Behavioral Health Network (CFBHN) – the managing entity that contracts the publicly funded mental health and substance use treatment services in the 14-county SunCoast region – to launch an early psychosis treatment team. The \$750,000 grant was

Thank you to our Community Mental Health Partners

Want to learn more about how you can make a **strategic investment in mental health** and become a **Community Mental Health Partner?**



For more information, please contact:
Emily Budd-Schepperly
Director of Development
emilyb@dlcenters.org

funded by the Florida Department of Children and Families through the federal block grant.

“We are so excited to have been selected to launch this wonderful new service, further advancing our mission.”

— Scott Burgess, DLC President & CEO

Over the last several months, DLC has recruited and built a diverse, highly specialized team of mental health professionals trained in recognizing and responding to the early features of psychotic disorders. The interdisciplinary team consists of a psychiatrist, a nurse, a clinician, a peer specialist and a supported education/employment specialist.

The outpatient community-based program provides evaluation, comprehensive treatment and rehabilitation support services for individuals experiencing early psychosis in a recovery-oriented setting.

Treatment is individualized to meet the unique needs of each participant, and may include psychiatric medications effective in relieving psychotic symptoms. Outpatient therapy helps individuals learn new skills to cope with the symptoms. Peer-to-peer support provides sharing of lived mental health experiences, social tools,

Marilyn Varcoe, PhD, and Chief Jorge Aguilera Join DLC Board of Directors

David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health (DLC) has appointed Marilyn J. Varcoe, PhD, and Chief Jorge Aguilera to the Board of Directors. Each will serve a three-year term.



Dr. Marilyn J. Varcoe, a licensed cognitive behavioral psychologist, life coach, author and international speaker, will bring more than 40 years of behavioral health expertise to her new Board position.

Dr. Varcoe obtained her Ph.D. in Psychology from Pennsylvania State University, her master of science degree from Southern Illinois University, and her bachelor of arts

and resources to better navigate recovery. Education and employment support services help participants navigate and achieve success in work or school settings.

“We are so excited to have been selected to launch this wonderful new service, further advancing our mission,” said DLC President and CEO Scott Burgess. “This innovative, evidence-based practice will greatly improve treatment outcomes for individuals with psychotic illnesses by enhancing early identification and intervention that will maximize opportunities to thrive and achieve their desired goals, whether a job or school, as well as to enhance greater success in their family and community.”



degree from the College of New Jersey. She is the co-author of the self-help book “Toxic Stress: 7 Steps to Recovery” and is also the founder of Golf Smart, Inc.

Dr. Varcoe will serve on the DLC Operations Committee.



Chief Jorge Aguilera, Deputy Chief of North Collier Fire Control and Rescue District, has more than 35 years as a first responder and has experience responding to calls related to mental health, substance use, and trauma. He also serves as Deputy Chief of Emergency Medical Services for North Collier Fire Control and Rescue District, a position he has held for the last 16 years. Prior to that, he served as a Division Chief of Training, Flight Medic and Lieutenant Paramedic for Collier County Emergency Medical Services.

Chief Aguilera will serve on the DLC Operations Committee.

Caregiver Fatigue: Take Steps to Cope with Stress



By DLC's Access and Outreach Clinician **Cindy Gallo**

Taking care of a loved one who has a chronic illness such as dementia, Parkinson's disease, physical disabilities, or any other age-related condition makes significant demands on your time, energy, and emotions. These demands can be very overwhelming. Caregiving can easily tax your patience and foster fatigue, frustration, and guilt, becoming a grueling grind that can pose many health risks. Along with the heavy workload and emotional demands of family caregiving, these issues may contribute to burnout.

Some causes of caregiver burnout as outlined by the Cleveland Clinic and Johns Hopkins Medicine:

- Conflicting demands as you try to balance the needs of your loved one with expectations of other family members, coworkers, employers, and yourself.
- Lack of control over health care costs, resources and a lack of skills needed to effectively manage a loved one's care.
- Lack of privacy. Caregiving may leave you with little time for yourself or to be alone.
- Role confusion: difficulty separating your roles as caregiver, parent, spouse, or sibling of the care recipient.
- Unreasonable demands placed upon a caregiver by other family members, or the person being cared for.
- Unrealistic expectations about the effect caregiving responsibilities will have on loved ones with progressive illnesses such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's.

Compassion fatigue is the physical and emotional stress that a caregiver may feel when caring for someone who has a significant physical or mental condition. Compassion fatigue is more than simply feeling tired after caring for someone who has had the flu for a week.



According to the National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC), 36% of family caregivers characterize their situation as highly stressful and indicate that within the first year of caretaking, their own overall health and wellbeing has dropped from excellent or good to fair. This is often due to an onset of depression, mood swings, or resentment. Sleep deprivation is reported by 30% of caregivers and 43% indicate that caregiving responsibilities have negatively impacted their relationship with a spouse or partner.

It is important to watch for signs of caregiver burnout and take proactive steps to help alleviate its impact before it becomes debilitating.

The Alzheimer's Association cites these 10 indicators that a caregiver may be experiencing an elevated level of stress:

- 1 *Anger or frustration toward the person you are caring for*
- 2 *Anxiety*
- 3 *Denial about your loved one's condition and the fact that it may be worsening*
- 4 *Depression*
- 5 *Exhaustion that makes it difficult to complete daily tasks*
- 6 *Health problems such as increased fatigue or getting sick more often*
- 7 *Inability to concentrate which makes it difficult to perform familiar tasks or causes you to forget appointments*
- 8 *Irritability or moodiness*
- 9 *Sleeplessness*
- 10 *Social withdrawal from friends and activities you used to enjoy*

Tips to reduce caregiver stress:

Give yourself a break. Ask a friend or relative to fill in for you for a few hours occasionally so you can take a walk, watch a movie, enjoy an activity such as playing cards or a sport, exercise, or socialize with friends. These things are especially important to help maintain your health and well-being. If you do not have this sort of informal support available or feel you need more structured respite care, there may be volunteers available through local senior centers, such as the Naples Senior Center, or professional organizations like the Parkinson's Association of SWFL.

Simplify your communication. Keeping extended family and friends up-to-date about your loved one's situation through phone calls or individual emails can be tiring. Identify a spokesperson who can be the communicator for you or utilize websites such as CaringBridge.org that allow you to post updates for everyone with controls for privacy.

Tap into online resources. There are many online resources such as the US government's Eldercare Locator (<https://eldercare.acl.gov/>) that can connect you with your local area agency on aging that can guide you to resources in your community to assist you to deal with the challenges you are facing.

The Alzheimer's Association and AARP provide a joint service called the Community Resource Finder, available at CommunityResourceFinder.org, that can assist you to find a range of programs and services in your area from elder law attorneys to transportation.

Join a support group. If you feel you are alone in your struggle, talking with other family caregivers can lift

your spirits, offer problem-solving, and help you to think through some of your concerns. There is a national network for spousal caregivers called Well Spouse Association. You may be able to find a support group through a local church or hospital.

Other local support groups are offered by the Parkinson's Association of SWFL, the Naples Senior Center, and the Alzheimer's Support Network. The National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) provides an array of support groups in Naples.

Nurture positive relationships. You may feel overwhelmed but take the time to seek out close friends and family members. You need good listeners in your life. Limit your interactions with negative people who will drag down your mood and perspective.

Take care of your own health - mind, body & spirit.

Set a goal to establish a good sleep pattern and to exercise a certain number of hours each week. Be sure to eat healthy foods and to drink plenty of water. Do not miss your own doctor's appointments for routine screenings and recommended immunizations. Tell your physician that you are a caregiver and discuss any concerns you might have. A daily meditation practice utilizing relaxation techniques can also be helpful.

Supporting your mental health is critical for caregivers. There is a high incidence of depression that can come with this role. A consultation with a trained psychiatrist or therapist who can recommend a treatment plan to assist with caregiver stress and burnout is available at David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health (DLC).

T-SHIRT FUNDRAISER

You can show your support for DLC and its Mind Your Mind initiative by purchasing a Mind Your Mind T-Shirt. A portion of the proceeds from your purchase will go toward DLC's mission of providing life-saving and life-changing behavioral health care through education, prevention, intervention, and treatment available to all.



To order a shirt and support the initiative visit:
www.bonfire.com/mind-your-mind-with-dlc/

Moorings Park Foundation Grant Funds Behavioral Health Treatment for Seniors at David Lawrence Centers

DLC recently received a \$20,000 grant from the Moorings Park Foundation to provide mental health and substance use disorder treatment to uninsured or underinsured seniors who are 65 and older.

The Moorings Park Endowment Fund grant is a result of the Moorings Park Social Accountability Program, which supports unmet needs by funding community health initiatives at local nonprofit and public health agencies.

“The funds will eliminate financial burdens for some of our most vulnerable, aging citizens so they can live their life to the fullest.”

— Scott Burgess, DLC President & CEO

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it is estimated that one in four older adults in America has at least one identified mental health concern.

“The number of clients ages 65 plus who are seeking treatment at DLC has increased in recent years, especially as the population of our community ages,” said DLC President and CEO Scott Burgess. “These individuals are typically requiring care for major depression, anxiety, and/or addiction.”

The grant will help seniors access treatment services they might otherwise not seek as a result of their inability to pay. The funds will be utilized for crisis stabilization, adult detoxification, residential substance use treatment and outpatient medical services.

“David Lawrence Centers greatly values our continued partnership with Moorings Park Foundation and appreciates their continued investment in senior health and wellness,” added Burgess. “The funds will eliminate financial burdens for some of our most vulnerable, aging citizens so they can live their life to the fullest.”



MENTAL WELLNESS ACTIVITIES

5 activities to help boost mental wellness

1 Make a gratitude list

Studies found that keeping a gratitude journal can help lower stress and improve interpersonal relationships. Try writing down three things that you are grateful for each day.



3 Take a walk outside

It could be a walk through a park, your neighborhood, or a nearby trail. Research indicates that being outside in nature can increase your energy levels, reduce feelings of depression, and boost your overall well-being.



2 Cook a healthy meal

The foods that we eat affect our mood, feelings, and cognitive functioning. Establishing a diet that consists of lean proteins, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains will not only improve physical health, but mental health as well.



4 Spend some time with your pets

Time with animals can reduce stress, anxiety, feelings of depression, and ease loneliness. If you don't have a pet, hang out with a friend who does or volunteer at a local animal shelter.

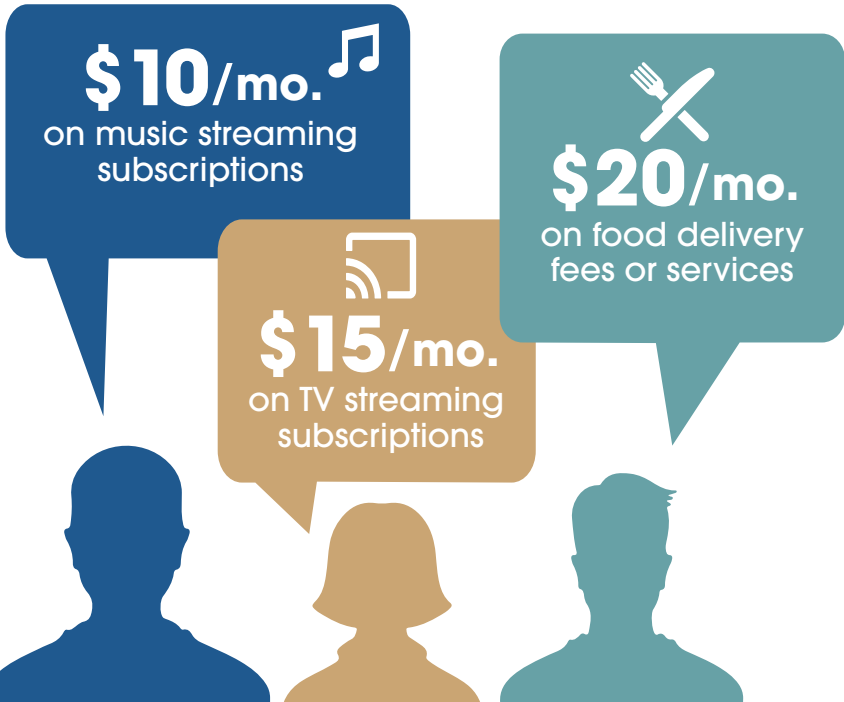


5 Spend time with your family and friends

Watch a movie, plan a road trip, go out for lunch, or take a group yoga class. Whatever the activity may be, studies show that spending time with loved ones can decrease feelings of depression and anxiety. Plus, being physically present with loved ones creates strong emotional support.



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3 EASY WAYS TO START A GIFT TODAY!

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- 2 VISIT** our secure website at www.DLCMindfulGiving.org
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For less than you spend on streaming, you could be **saving lives.**

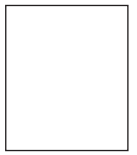


To keep pace with the increased demand for beds, services, and programs for children and adults affected by mental health and substance use issues, we need your help and support.

Think about all of those small, recurring monthly expenses that you barely feel in your wallet. A recurring contribution through our DLC Mindful Giving Program could be the one you feel the least, and that is doing the most good right here in our Naples community.

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Sound Minds 2022 Recap

Thank you to all who supported the mission of David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health (DLC) through the annual Sound Minds Luncheon. **Together we exceeded our fundraising goal and raised \$400,000!**

These funds will help DLC mobilize our mission and **provide life-saving and life-changing** behavioral healthcare to **over 9,000 children and adults in our community.**

