

CENTERED

THE NEWSLETTER OF DAVID LAWRENCE CENTERS

Winter 2022

Inside this Issue:

- 2 LETTER FROM THE CEO
- 3 PRIORITIZING MENTAL WELLNESS
- 4 SUCCESS STORY: LUIS
- 6 VETERANS SERVICES PROGRAM
- 7 NEW ADULT MEDICAL DIRECTOR
- 7 DLC INSTALLS NEW OFFICERS



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From the CEO | Scott Burgess

**What does it mean to
Mind your
Mind?**



The longstanding stigma surrounding mental health may finally be falling away. I see a couple of reasons for this.

First, as we now begin a third year of the pandemic, people seem to have become more comfortable talking about their struggles.

Quarantine and isolation are *hard*. Disruption of school and work are *hard*. Losing a loved one is *hard*. But since we're all experiencing these hard things together, it's a little easier to talk about them.

Second, more and more famous people are opening up about their own mental health issues. Simone Biles at last year's Olympics. Tennis star Naomi Osaka. Actor Chris Evans. Pop singer Ariana Grande. And even royalty is talking about it: Prince Harry has openly discussed his own years-long struggles with grief and anxiety.

Mental health is becoming part of everyday conversations, and that's a good thing!

At David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health (DLC), we want to keep these conversations going — around the world, in the U.S., and particularly here in Collier County. To that end, we just launched an initiative called *Mind Your Mind*, where we're working with community partners to help friends and neighbors prioritize mental health in 2022.

We recognize the psychological toll that COVID has had on us all, and we want to equip people with the knowledge and tools to not only continue the conversation, but, when and where needed, to take action — for themselves, or on behalf of another. That might entail simply

talking about it with a family member, a friend, a colleague, a teacher, or a coach. Or that might mean picking up the phone or going online to reach out for help — whether here at DLC or at another local agency.

Each month in 2022, we will focus on a different theme pertaining to mental health and well-being. One month, we'll focus on seniors, who are struggling in unique ways associated with the pandemic. Another month, we'll zero in on mental health in the workplace.

We've created a website, DLCMindYourMind.org, offering free access to relevant articles, videos, and other resources to enhance and advance community wellbeing. On the site, you can also sign up for a monthly Mind Your Mind e-newsletter.

We want to bring attention to emotional health, encourage earlier intervention, and better ensure our kids and community are healthy, well, and safe. We want to raise awareness, decrease stigma, and encourage openness, acceptance, and action.

We are only as strong as our most vulnerable community member.

So I encourage each of you to mind your own minds in 2022. And if you know of someone struggling with mental health or substance use issues, reach out and help them mind their minds too. Help is just a phone call or online click away here at DLC.

Finally, as always, I am humbled and grateful for your support.

Scott Burgess
President & CEO



5 Reasons Why Prioritizing Mental Wellness is the New Year Resolution of 2022

By David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health (DLC)
Children's Outreach Specialist **Jessica Liria, M.S.**

Ring in the new year is an age-old tradition to celebrate our experiences over the last 12 months, to acknowledge the challenges that we pushed through, and to focus on the hope and opportunities of the year to come. For personal growth and progress, it is important to recognize the events of our past so we can better shape our future.

It is hard to believe 2022 is here and that nearly two years have passed since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.



While we continue to face obstacles, both old and new, there is no better time to come together as a community and set a common goal for the new year. Prioritizing mental wellness in 2022 is a resolution worth committing to, and with support, success is within reach!

5 Reasons to Prioritize Mental Wellness

1. Overall Health:

Each body part is important, but the brain is our control center. Acting like a computer inside our head, the brain is responsible for communicating with and coordinating the rest of the body. When mental health is affected, other aspects of wellness can be affected too—physical, financial, social, spiritual, environmental, intellectual, and occupational. By paying attention to our mental and emotional wellness, our overall health will improve.

2. Reduce Stigma:

Our society has made great strides in overcoming the negativity associated with mental health challenges, but there is still room for improvement. Understanding the concerns your community faces related to mental health and having conversations with others on the topic can help break down the walls of stigma. Feelings of shame, guilt, embarrassment, or disappoint-

ment should not be associated with mental wellness. By placing increased value on brain health, we can foster an environment that makes talking about it more open and accepting.

3. Increased Need, Strained Access:

Florida continues to rank near the bottom of the 50 U.S. states when it comes to public mental health funding. With the influx of people that have moved to the area in recent years, combined with the rising number of challenges being experienced regionally, the mental health field is desperately trying to keep up. Applying preventative techniques, like utilizing healthy ways to manage emotions and conflict, may reduce the need for crisis services.

4. Information Overload:

Along with the benefits of the internet and smartphones, there are also several dangers to be aware of. One major risk to highlight is the prolonged expo-

sure to negativity and information that leaves us feeling anxious, sad, and/or angry. In the age of technology, our brains are constantly processing the information being taken in—including the tragedies and hardships felt worldwide. Without adequate time to work through it all, we subject ourselves to a non-stop rollercoaster of emotions. It is time to give it a rest and dedicate your focus to things that are positive and uplifting.

5. It is OK to not be OK:

Life is unpredictable and things happen that are beyond our control. A sign of true wisdom and strength is knowing when help is needed, and then reaching out to ask for it. Seeking guidance for mental wellness should be met with the same acceptance as a physical health concern. Support and assistance are available—whether it is to overcome a temporary hurdle or to cope with a lifelong challenge.

How do I get started with this New Year's Resolution?

DLC has launched a community-wide campaign called Mind Your Mind in 2022. DLC invites you to participate in a month-by-month approach to mental wellness—encouraging acceptance, awareness, and openness regarding mental health. By signing up for this free initiative, you will receive information and tips associated with each month's theme along with videos, articles, and activities relevant to those focus areas. As a community, we can establish a common goal to prioritize mental wellness—it begins with each of us! When we care about ourselves, we can care for others, too! Visit [DLCMindYourMind.org](https://www.dlcmindyourmind.org) to learn more.

They Gave Me **My Life** Back



How Luis found a brand new start at David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health (DLC)

Luis started experimenting with drugs and alcohol at age 14 and was regularly using by the time he was 16 – which would continue for the next 15 years.

“I have an addictive personality,” says Luis. “If I put any substance into my body, I can’t use it safely. And I have this brain that obsesses over anything.”

Today, at 31, Luis says his struggles really began when his parents split when he was 9 years old.

While divorce is usually hard on children, things got much worse for Luis soon after when his mom began dating someone.

“He wasn’t the best person,” says Luis. “By the time I was 11, I had experienced physical, mental, emotional, verbal, and sexual abuse, both from this man and his brother.”

“I’m very grateful for DLC and all they’ve done for me, how they helped give me my life back.” — Luis

It was too much trauma for a child to deal with, but Luis tried . . . by turning to substances that would help him escape his pain. By the time he was in his early

20s, he was doing whatever he could to support himself financially and continue his regular use of substances.

Over the years, Luis overdosed a number of times, including some instances that were suicide attempts. He had several bouts with homelessness, brushes with the law, and a few jail sentences. But he never seriously considered turning things around.

That is, until he went on a five-day binge of drugs and alcohol, awake the entire time as he consumed about \$800 worth of heroin, methamphetamine, fentanyl, and other pills.

Afterward, he had a sudden realization: “I was lucky to be alive. It was nothing short of a miracle.”

He also realized that he wanted help. He contacted a former high school girlfriend, who had overcome a substance use disorder and wanted to help Luis get well. She recommended DLC, and he went right away, “because I wanted to take advantage of the window of opportunity, before I changed my mind.”



Jumping in with both feet

At DLC, Luis first went through Detox, followed by the Crossroads residential recovery program. “I jumped in with both feet, 110 percent.”

While in Crossroads, Luis says he learned valuable coping skills and mechanisms. He particularly latched onto a technique called “SOBER breathing” that involves these five steps:

S = Stop and do this exercise when in a stressful situation, or even at random times.

O = Observe the thoughts in your mind, and put them into words.

B = Breathe in gently through the nose, hold a few seconds, then gently exhale, 5 to 10 times.

E = Expand your awareness to your body, your environment, the present moment.

R = Respond mindfully, aware of what is truly needed in the moment.

“It’s all about taking refuge in the moment,” he says, “because right here, right now is the only thing that’s real. The past is done, the future hasn’t happened yet. But in the present, I can effect change.”

And it’s working. Luis now lives in a recovery house with other men who are also in recovery. He is working a steady job, and is in the process of pursuing certification to help youth and their families who have mental health and/or substance use challenges.

“I want to help guide them down the right path,” he says. “I can show them where to go for help, because I’ve been there. I want to minimize their suffering.”

He’s also engaged — to the high school girlfriend who pointed him to DLC.

“I’m very grateful for DLC and all they’ve done for me, how they helped give me my life back,” says Luis. “I don’t know how I could ever really repay that. It’s priceless.”

mind your mind
IN 2022 WITH **DLC**

A free monthly resource from the David Lawrence Centers to **PRIORITIZE MENTAL WELLNESS** all year long.

Our Mind Your Mind in 2022 content comes right to your inbox each month with resources, tips, and other useful content to help you focus on your mental wellness and learn how to support others in our community. It’s time to make mental wellness a priority this year.

DLCMindYourMind.org | 239.455.8500

SCAN NOW TO SIGN UP FOR FREE

Help & Hope for Veterans

How DLC is partnering with a local nonprofit to help with invisible wounds.

Jason, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, served on more than 100 combat missions in Iraq. Like many veterans, he came home with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), hypervigilance, and anxiety.

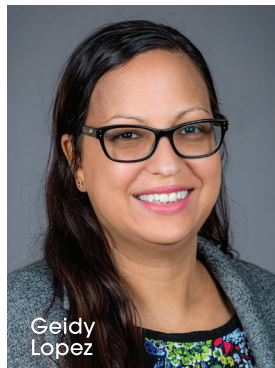


Fortunately, help was available — through a David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health (DLC) partnership with Home Base SWFL, a local nonprofit dedicated to supporting veterans, service members, and military families impacted by invisible wounds.

That partnership is part of a bigger role that DLC plays in helping veterans in our community — through its Veterans Services Program, which launched last year and already has helped 25 clients.

Part of the program includes the partnership with Home Base SWFL, where DLC provides cognitive processing therapy (CPT), a gold standard treatment for PTSD. Jason credits CPT for helping him learn the tools he needed to deal with his struggles.

“It connected a lot of dots for me,” says Jason. “I realized why I interpret things the way I do. I learned how to diminish



my strong emotional responses and use my wise mind, not my emotional mind.”

That’s music to the ears of Geidy Lopez, a Veteran who leads the Veterans Services Program, a free program for veterans diagnosed with mental health and/or substance use issues. The program is designed to build meaningful partnerships with veterans and

their families to help them function better at home, in the community, on the job, in educational settings, and throughout life.

Lopez helps veterans like Jason find just the right services they need — mental health, medical needs, social services, SNAP benefits, Medicaid/Medicare, and more.

“We connect them with what they need,” she says. “We really care. We genuinely see where the clients are, what their real needs are, and we find the resources.”

“Every veteran is unique. Everybody has different challenges that we have to overcome on a case-by-case basis. And we do our very best to help them.”

Lopez adds that the individual must be willing to work with case management. “I love working with those who want to push forward, because they see the need for change, and they press on.”

“Once they connect with services, they feel more heard, and their symptoms begin to subside. I love to see that.”



DLC receives Collier Comes Together Grant from Community Foundation of Collier County

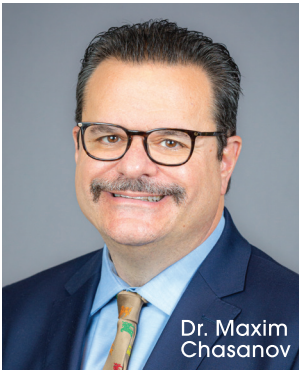
DLC has received a grant from the Community Foundation of Collier County (CFCC) to help address the increasing mental health and addiction crisis plaguing Collier residents – a problem that has been compounded amid the global COVID-19 pandemic, suicide crisis, and opioid epidemic. The \$30,000 education and wellness grant is funding a communications campaign to bring awareness related to the warning signs of common behavioral health challenges and to local services that can help address these challenges.

Funds were provided from the CFCC’s \$15.5 million “Your Passion. Your Collier.” campaign launched last year to address the challenges facing our community including mental health & substance abuse, housing & hunger, education & employment, seniors & veterans, environment & accessibility, as well as crisis & disaster relief.

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DLC Welcomes Maxim Chasanov, MD, as New Adult Medical Director



David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health (DLC) welcomes board-certified adult psychiatrist, **Maxim Chasanov, MD**, as its new Adult Medical Director. In addition to providing supervision and administrative oversight of the medical team, Dr. Chasanov will see patients in inpatient and outpatient treatment.

Dr. Chasanov has nearly 30 years of experience serving as a medical director in the hospital, partial hospital, intensive outpatient, and inpatient crisis stabilization treatment settings. He has also worked as a staff psychiatrist in nursing homes, skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers, adolescent and adult residential programs, and community mental health centers.

Dr. Chasanov graduated with honors with his Bachelor of Arts degree in economics from the University of Chicago and earned his medical degree from the Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine in Illinois. He completed his residency in

psychiatry at the Loyola University Medical Center, where he served as Chief Resident. He is certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

Prior to joining DLC, Dr. Chasanov worked as Medical Director for Alexian Brothers Center for Mental Health for 19 years. During that time, he also served as a staff psychiatrist in the Alexian Brothers Behavioral Health Outpatient Practice.

Dr. Chasanov has received several awards, including NAMI Illinois Psychiatrist of the Year, Alexian Brothers Center for Mental Health Employee of the Year, the Highest Achievement Award from Loyola University Medical Center Psychiatry Residency, among others.

Dr. Chasanov is deemed an expert in the field of psychiatry and has been published and spoken at national and international medical conferences on the efficacy of a variety of psychiatric medications.



DLC Installs New Officers

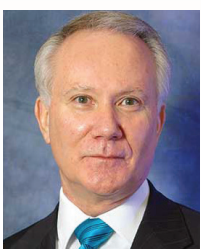


Robert P. Magrann, a retired senior executive with extensive experience in the areas of sales, marketing, and strategic planning, will serve as Chairman. He joined the Board in 2016 and previously served as Vice Chairman, Secretary and as member of the Clinical Operations Committee, Development Committee

and Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee.



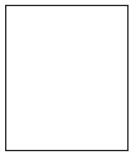
Karen Mosteller, CPA CHBC, is the Strategic Medical Healthcare and Dental Consultant with Markham Norton Mosteller Wright & Company, P.A. She will serve as Treasurer—a position she has held since 2020. She joined the Board in 2019 and Chairs the Finance and Audit Committee.



Edward A. Morton, a former partner at Wasmer Schroeder LLC., will serve as Vice Chairman and Chair the Strategic Planning Committee. He joined the Board in 2020 and brings more than 45 years of leadership, finance, strategic planning, and healthcare experience to his board position.



Edward Boyer, a retired healthcare executive with more than 40 years of experience working in large hospital settings, will serve as Secretary. He joined the Board in 2018 and serves on the Strategic Planning Committee and will Chair the Clinical Operations Committee.



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