

THE OUTLOOK

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

The holiday season for most people is a fun time of the year filled with parties, celebrations, and social gatherings with family and friends. But for many others, it is a time filled with sadness, self-reflection, loneliness, depression and anxiety. Social isolation is one of the main predictors of depression, especially during the holidays.

Some people may have a small social circle or a lack of opportunity for socialization. People who have feelings of disconnectedness often avoid social interactions at holiday time. Unfortunately, withdrawing often makes the feelings of loneliness and symptoms of depression worse. Some people may be keenly aware of the loss of a loved one during the holiday season. Balancing the demands of shopping, parties, family obligations, and house guests may contribute to feelings of being overwhelmed and increased tension.

Here are several ways to stave off the holiday blues:

- Do not become overwhelmed with the details or try to make everything perfect.
- Avoid social media if you feel like you are comparing yourself to others or are “missing out” on something.
- Begin a new tradition. Things do not always have to be planned the same way with the same people.
- Don’t give in to holiday pressures! Feel free to leave an event if you aren’t comfortable. Be willing to tell others, *“I’m not up for this right now.”*
- Volunteer. Helping others can also be very helpful for you, too. For example, you might try:
 - Working for your favorite charity
 - Organizing a gift drive or donate items to those in need
 - Helping your neighbor with a yard or house task
 - Get Back to Nature. Going for a walk in the park or the woods helps many people relax and feel better when they are feeling overwhelmed.

In whatever ways you choose to celebrate the holiday season, I hope that it will be a time of renewal and hope for 2019. As you take ‘me’ time or offer a listening and caring ear to a friend or family member, just know that it is the most valuable gift. Your time and support are worth far more than a purchased present.

Steve Beshear



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Want to be included in the next issue? Send us your stories, achievements, initiatives, events...etc!

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SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

OFFERING OPPORTUNITY FOR EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS FOR THOSE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is a national model of supported employment for people with serious mental illness (e.g., schizophrenia spectrum disorder, bipolar, depression). **ADMH** is proud to offer support to three sites across the state who facilitate this crucial program, so individuals may experience the benefits of employment and sustaining personal success.

IPS is an integral part of the **Workforce Development pillar** found in the ADMH's planning efforts. *"Hosting programs like Individual Placement and Support of Employment is just one way that the Alabama Department of Mental Health is helping to put Alabamians back to work, furthering their mental and emotional recovery and personal success,"* said Commissioner Lynn Beshear.

Nationwide, on average, 70% of clients say they want to work, but only 15% are currently working. IPS offers an opportunity for support to find and maintain employment.

IPS-supported employment helps people living with behavioral health conditions work at regular jobs of their choosing. Although variations of supported employment exist, IPS refers to an evidence-based practice of supported employment. The program increases self-esteem, reduces psychiatric symptoms and substance use, and increases self-confidence, a sense of hope and energy.

"Employment programs allow for us to truly offer meaningful day options for recipients of community mental health services," said Kim Hammack, ADMH Director of Mental Illness Community Programs.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

"When our Employment Specialist was first introduced to the client, "John," he did not make eye contact nor did he speak above a mumble. Since he has been working with IPS, he has obtained a job working 25 hours a week. He has taken initiative to get himself up and ready on time. His personal hygiene and daily living skills have greatly improved."

"He has made friends with co-workers and opened up tremendously. Now when he speaks he has such confidence that the team did not see in him before. He makes eye contact, smiles, shakes hands, and talks to more people now. John's outlook on life and excitement for the future has greatly improved since he went to work. Now he is working on moving out of a group home and into his own apartment to begin living more independently."

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“Time and time again, the success stories for those we serve provide testimony for the transformative power employment has on the lives of people. Work is recovery!” said Jessica Hales, ADMH Coordinator of Adult Mental Illness Services.

The Alabama Department of Mental Health, in collaboration with Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) and Auburn University, pursued grant funding for the purposes of bringing evidence-based supported employment services to Alabama’s public mental health services system. In April of 2014, the Alabama Department of Mental Health was awarded the Transforming Lives through Supported Employment grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

The five-year grant supports a budget of \$800,000 per year. These funds were utilized to establish IPS programs at two initial pilot sites, **AltaPointe Health Services, Inc.**, located in Mobile and **Chilton-Shelby Mental Health Center** located in Chilton and Shelby Counties. By the fourth year, project successes led to expansion of program capacity at pilot sites and the establishment of a new site at the **Montgomery Area Mental Health Authority**. The IPS team configuration is made up of three Employment Specialists, one Benefits Specialist, and one full-time, or two part-time, Peer Specialists. The team provides intensive services to assist individuals with a lived experience of mental illness to obtain competitive employment. From the IPS inception through September 30, 2018, the original two pilot sites have reported 227 job starts for which 173 (76%) were held continuously for at least 30 days.

“Work is as essential to recovery as medication, therapy, and other forms of treatment,” said Mike Autrey, ADMH Director of Peer Programs. The ADMH Office of MI Community Programs fully embraces the philosophy that employment is recovery with a desire to expand IPS-SE statewide throughout the MH services system. Funding for expansion and sustainability is a major barrier, but one for which ADMH is committed to finding a solution.

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A CULTURE OF CONNECTING, COMMUNICATING AND CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

The emergence of school-based mental health services is being seen all over our state due to the increasing number of students who seek out those services. The Shelby County School System has kicked off a new information campaign to offer resources to students and their families on mental health care and support.

Shelby Cares is intended to bring attention to and support for the mental health needs and well-being

of all students and staff. The goal of Shelby Cares is to bring awareness of the importance of positive and proactive mental health care and identify community resources that are available. The campaign offers a website full of information on how to better **connect**, show **care** and **communicate with someone in need**, warning signs, tips for supporting a child or teen in need and more. You can also **contact Shelby County schools staff** directly. The system has three mental health counselors, partnered with Chilton Shelby Mental Health Center, to provide support to students and families. There is also a private practice counselor and counselors through the Supporting Families Initiative and Therapeutic Outreach Program for Students.

Unfortunately, there is still a negative stigma associated with mental illness. It is our hope that this effort will help fight the stigma, provide support, educate our stakeholders, and advocate for equal care. One of the ways to end the stigma surrounding mental health and wellness is to start a conversation about it.

Early detection of mental health disorders is the best way to ensure that a student will be able to reach their full potential, which means school staff must be informed and equipped to handle these students who may show early warning signs. Remember, everyone has mental health and everyone’s wellness is different.

Local and National Emergency Hotlines and Numbers

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

“Our Employment Specialist first met client “Mary” in February of 2016. Her primary diagnoses are bipolar and substance abuse disorder. She had worked with the IPS Program in 2016 and got a job at Dunkin Donuts while taking a break from attending college at Jefferson State Community College. Mary was successful with IPS in 2017, but since then she quit her job and began taking classes again at Jefferson State and again needed a part-time job that would sustain her financially through college.

Mary reentered the IPS Program and began working with an Employment Specialist again, which helped her obtain a job at a Shell Gas Station near her home, while our Employment Specialist and client continued to search for a job that met her needs and desires.

When a job became available as a Peer Support Specialist at Chilton Shelby MHC, the Employment Specialist knew it was a perfect fit for Mary. Upon meeting with her and explaining the function of a peer support position, she was very excited to apply. She knew that her life experiences and insight to mental illness and substance abuse could help people.

Mary is currently attending the University of Montevallo and working as a Peer Support Specialist at Chilton Shelby MHC. She loves her job. The team can really see a change in her demeanor and overall outlook on the future. While her diagnosis has not changed, the view of herself has. She now uses her past experiences to assist others going through similar issues that she has faced in the past and gaining hands on experience in her chosen profession.

PREVIEW:

ALABAMA CENSUS 2020

United States
Census
2020

A full and accurate count is critical for Alabama’s communities because many of the federal programs distribute money to the state based on statistics. An under count or drop in census numbers for Alabama will mean less funding allocated to the state and - as an extension – to your community.

As mandated by the Constitution, the U.S. Census Bureau conducts a count of the United States population every 10 years. **Starting April 1, 2020, each Alabama household should receive a postcard from the Census Bureau encouraging them to complete their census form online or by phone or to call a number to request a paper form.**

This is just an early reminder of the opportunity to participate and ensure Alabama is counted!

COMMUNITY PARTNER SHOWCASE: WINGS ACROSS ALABAMA

BY THOMSON MCCORKLE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Wings Across Alabama is a peer-run non-profit for mental health consumers in the state of Alabama. Wings' mission is to advance mental health policies and services to promote and support recovery. Currently, Wings has 4 components we believe lead to a successful mental health recovery. First, is the Art Program. Wings believes visual art, creative writing, and poetry, among other art forms, promote wellness and recovery.

Second, is education. The Certified Peer Specialist / Wellness Recovery Action Plan (CPS/WRAP) program allows mental health consumers to learn to identify mental illness triggers in order to prevent relapse and/or repetition of prior self-defeating behaviors.

Third, is the Warm Line. The Warm Line is a place for a person with a mental health challenge to speak with a Certified Peer Specialist. They can share good or bad news, daily events, or challenges day to day. The Warm Line is in operation 12pm-8pm Wednesday – Sunday. The Warm Line number is 1-844-999-4647 (1-844-99WINGS).

Finally, Wings conducts Certified Peer Specialist support groups across the state. Currently in four locations, these groups are designed to support CPS and promote wellness in our community. It is tough being a CPS. CPS often hear challenging or upsetting stories, but have no one to turn-to to process this. In this program that began in early 2018, CPS fosters a community of respect and wellness for one another twice a month. Groups are held in the Huntsville area, the Birmingham area, the Mobile area, and the Fairhope area. We will be expanding to several more sites in early 2019.

Wings is excited for 2019! Wings has the most robust staff it has had in the past two years, and looks forward to serving the Mental Health Community across the state.



Current Wings Staff:

Thomson McCorkle, Executive Director

Christi Collins, Program Director

Audrey Trippe, CPS/WRAP Program & Art Program

Ann Conner, Warm Line Team Leader

Mary Murphy, Warm Line

Donna Soloway, Warm Line



1-844-999-4647

A Warm Line for people
with mental health issues

Wed - Sun 12PM-8PM

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LinkedIn



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Twitter



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on **Flickr**



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on **YouTube**



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Wikipedia

ADMH AWARDED STATE OPIOID RESPONSE GRANT

CONTINUING OUR WORK TO OFFER IMPORTANT RESOURCES TO THOSE IN NEED

The Alabama Department of Mental Health has been recently awarded a State Opioid Response Grant to help combat the opioid crisis. Grants awarded and utilized in the past two years have allowed for more prevention information to be shared and for more treatment options to become available in the state.

The 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), found that the number of Americans initiating heroin use dropped by around half from 2016 to 2017. The number of Americans misusing opioids also dropped for the second year in a row, and the number receiving specialty treatment for heroin use increased.

The focus of the State Opioid Response Grant (SOR) funding is:

- For the expansion of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), particularly in populations and areas where disparities in access exist or where OUD is most prevalent.
- For outreach to providers to participate in MAT.
- Continuation of prevention efforts in the STR strategic plan.
- An introduction of publicly funded evidence-based recovery housing; and an improvement in the state's coordination efforts and data analytics to better plan and implement its strategic response to the crisis.

Work begins immediately to implement the objectives of the SOR grant and to increase access to medication-assisted treatment using the three Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved medications for the treatment of opioid use disorder, reducing unmet treatment need, and reducing opioid overdose related deaths through the provision of prevention, treatment and recovery activities for opioid use disorder.

HHS 5-POINT STRATEGY TO COMBAT THE OPIOIDS CRISIS



Better addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery services



Better data



Better pain management



Better targeting of overdose reversing drugs



Better research



Project | SEARCH

DID YOU KNOW?

The Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) helps to facilitate Project SEARCH, an employment program with 11 sites throughout the state. The program's primary objective is to secure competitive employment for students with disabilities transitioning from high school. Project SEARCH is a research environment that was developed at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center to foster visionary thinking and innovation. Project SEARCH has grown from a single program site at Cincinnati Children's to a large and continuously expanding international network of sites.

Project SEARCH began in the state in 2012, beginning with two sites in Montgomery and Shelby County schools. There are now 11 sites, partnered with school systems in the State: two in Mobile County, and one in each area of: Baldwin County, Tuscaloosa County, Huntsville City, Birmingham City, Marshall County, Etowah County and Calhoun County.

"Project SEARCH has been a huge success in Alabama and has really strengthened partnerships at both the state and local levels. Vocational Rehabilitation, the Developmental Disability agency, the Alabama DD Council and the State Department of Education have all contributed expertise, funding and other support to ensure Alabama's Project SEARCH is one of the best in the Country. One measurement of success is the number of students that obtain employment by the end of the school year. In 2018, approximately 80% of the interns exited with a job. This success rate has been consistent since we brought the Project SEARCH to Alabama," said Byron White, Alabama Project SEARCH Coordinator.

Of the 80% that obtained employment in 2018, the average



work week was 25 hours with an average pay grade of \$8.84 per hour. Last year's graduates obtained employment in a variety of businesses, including:

- Food Service:
- Hotel
- Manufacturing
- Government/City/County
- Hospital/Medical
- Retail
- Other

Project SEARCH is a partnership between ADMH, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Alabama State Department of Education, The Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities, local school systems (LEA), local provider agencies and local businesses.

**I'M NOT
TAKING IT**

**WITHOUT MY
NAME HERE.**

Visit the [My Smart Dose website](#) to learn the five signs of prescription drug abuse, take a self-assessment, call the 24/7 Hotline at 1-844-307-1760 for support and resources, or search substance abuse provider listings by your location.

DATES TO REMEMBER

MENTAL HEALTH RELATED EVENTS OF INTEREST

- 11/14** **The Southern Conference on Homelessness and Housing**
Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach
- 11/16** **QPR Suicide Prevention Training**
Wellstone, Huntsville
- 11/19** **Lunch and Learn: Nutrition and Cognitive Learning**
Gulf Coast Mental Health Coalition, Mobile
- 11/30** **2018 Annual Pediatric Mental Health Conference**
Troy University, Dothan
- 12/03** **Lunch and Learn: Creating a Trauma-Informed Community Network**
Gulf Coast Mental Health Coalition, Mobile
- 12/07** **ASL Coffee Night**
Starbucks, Montgomery
- 12/07** **QPR Suicide Prevention Training**
Southwest Alabama Mental Health Center, Monroeville
- 12/10** **Lunch and Learn: ADHD Alternatives for Kids**
Gulf Coast Mental Health Coalition, Foley
- 12/14** **QPR Suicide Prevention Training**
Mountain Lakes Behavioral Healthcare, Guntersville

ON HIATUS

OUTLOOK WILL RETURN IN MARCH

Due to several impending births this winter (an actual child, our new website...etc.), our Public Information Office will put the Outlook newsletter on hold for an issue.

Please check back in March 2019!



Serve • Empower • Support