

MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

Monthly Newsletter

NEWS FROM PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Winter Break Wellness: Supporting Kids During the Holidays

The winter holiday season can be an exciting but stressful time for children and families. For some, the pressure and expectations of the holidays gives way to “the holiday blues.” Here are some key considerations that can be shared with families to support children’s mental health and adjustment during the winter break:

Maintain Schedules and Routines: Keep consistent sleep schedules, mealtimes, and other daily routines as much as possible. Predictable routines offer comfort for children and make it easier to return to school after break.

Provide Outlets for Energy: With less structured time, children may have more pent-up energy. Be mindful of increased screen time and look for ways to keep kids actively engaged. Physical activity, crafts, and hands-on projects are recommended to help children get their energy out in healthy ways. Ward off boredom by creating a “menu” of activities for children to choose from.

Manage Expectations: Traveling, being in new places, attending holiday gatherings, and unrealistic expectations for gifts can create anxiety and stress in children. Prepare them for events by providing details and setting expectations ahead of time. Explain how long the event will take and who they are likely to see. If children become overwhelmed, try talking with them privately, allowing them to take a break in a safe place, or leaving the event altogether.

Monitor Mental Health: The disruption to normal routines, family stress, reminders of lost loved ones, and other holiday factors can take a toll on anyone’s emotional wellbeing. Make sure to take time for self-care and relaxation. Watch for signs of anxiety, depression, or other mental health concerns, and don't hesitate to reach out for professional support if needed.

*Follow Psychological Services
on Social Media!*



Resources:

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)

The NAMI NC Helpline is a compassionate “warmline” dedicated to providing a single source for mental health information, support, and helpful referrals to local resources.

Available M-F; 8:30 am – 5 pm EST
Call 800-451-9682 or Text 919-999-6572

<https://naminc.org/crisis-info/>

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Available 24/7

Call/Text: 988

988lifeline.org

Therapeutic Alternatives, Inc. Mobile Crisis Services

Available 24/7

Call: 1-877-626-1772

www.mytahome.com

Additional Resources:

- [Beat Back the Holiday Blues](#)
- [Kids get the holiday blues, too](#)
- [How to Support Your Child Through the Holiday Blues](#)



Signs of the **Holiday Blues** in Children



Headaches



Nausea



Irritability



Anxiety



Nightmares



Mood Swings



Withdrawal



Outbursts



Regression

PRISM PROJECT GRANT UPDATES

The PRISM Project recently hired three additional Mental Health Clinicians to provide direct counseling services to students. Further, three contracted Mental Health Clinicians with the Stepping Stones Group have joined our team. We would like to extend a very *warm* welcome to our new hires and contracted providers:



<i>Holly Gammon</i>	<i>Pam Hill</i>
<i>Nicole Watlington</i>	<i>Danaja Hogan</i>
<i>John "Brent" Idol</i>	<i>Briana Steele</i>

Referral Update:

This school year (as of 10/31) across the district, our Mental Health Clinicians have served 340 unique students and provided 1,251 sessions!

For information on the school-based mental health referral process, see our Mental and Behavioral Health Services One-Note Notebook.

SAMHSA TISS GRANT UPDATES

The SAMHSA Trauma-Informed Support Services (TISS) project is in full swing, providing mental health supports through our partners at Kellin Foundation and North Carolina for Communities and Justice (NCCJ).

During the months of October and November, the SAMHSA TISS grant has:

- provided mental health treatment services and other support services to 15 students
- provided staff development in trauma-informed practices to 387 GCS staff members at the six SAMHSA pilot schools
- provided a family engagement learning session at Falkener Elementary, with sessions scheduled at the remaining pilot schools in the coming months
- provided Student WELLness (SWELL) cohort sessions at 4 of the 6 SAMHSA pilot schools, with additional sessions scheduled in December and January

Schools should follow the normal process for referring students for mental health supports, and submit the referral to the GCS Mental Health Lead for their zone. The Mental Health Lead will review the case and make a decision regarding referrals to Kellin, GCS Clinicians, Daybreak or other outside agencies.

We are excited to see this important work continue in the months ahead!

Mental and Behavioral Health Services

Asynchronous Canvas Courses



The Mental and Behavioral Health Services Department has developed four asynchronous courses that provide school personnel with actionable content and resources for building a behavior, social emotional, and mental health continuum of support for students. The following courses are available through canvas:

Establishing a Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support System

This is a self-paced course that is designed for school-based personnel who support the development and/or implementation of a school-wide positive behavior/social emotional support system. During this course, participants will be guided through the steps involved in developing a positive behavior support system, including establishing school-wide expectations, developing teaching matrices, creating lesson plans for teaching expectations to students, developing a formal acknowledgement system, and establishing a continuum of strategies to effectively respond to student behavior.

<https://gcs.instructure.com/enroll/P4DTBM>

Implementing Effective Core Behavior Practices

This is a self-paced course that is designed to support school-based personnel with developing, implementing, and monitoring core behavior practices, particularly classwide. This course consists of five modules covering evidence-based core behavior practices, including 1) strategies to maximize structure through designing environments that facilitate appropriate behavior and minimize distractions, 2) establishing, teaching, prompting, and monitoring expectations in the classroom, 3) supporting active student engagement, 4) acknowledging appropriate behavior, and 5) responding to inappropriate behavior.

<https://gcs.instructure.com/enroll/GWAFKM>

Developing, Implementing, and Managing a Check In Check Out (CICO) System

This is a self-paced course that is designed for school-based personnel who support the development and implementation of supplemental/intensive intervention systems within a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). During this course, participants will receive step-by-step guidance for developing, implementing, and managing the Check In Check Out (CICO) intervention. CICO is a school-based intervention included within the GCS Behavior/Social Emotional Standard Treatment Protocol (STP) that is intended to provide daily support and monitoring to students who are at-risk behaviorally and/or socially emotionally.

<https://gcs.instructure.com/enroll/DR3XBH>

Developing, Implementing, and Managing Check In Check Out (CICO) Breaks Are Better (BrB)

This is a self-paced course that is designed for school-based personnel who support the development and implementation of supplemental/intensive intervention systems within a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). During this course, participants will receive step-by-step guidance for developing, implementing, and managing the Check In Check Out (CICO) Breaks Are Better (BrB) intervention. CICO BrB is a school-based intervention included within the GCS Behavior/Social Emotional Standard Treatment Protocol (STP) that is intended to provide daily support and monitoring to students who demonstrate at-risk behaviors related to academic engagement.

<https://gcs.instructure.com/enroll/MG9XG4>

~General Announcements~

The SEL/Behavior Standard Treatment Protocol has been updated with links to additional curriculum materials for grades K-12. The Be Good People curriculum is now a supplemental and intensive intervention option for students receiving direct social skills instruction individually or in a small group.



Each month a mental health condition that may impact students in our schools will be highlighted. Click the link to see this month's edition focused on Depression.

~External Professional Learning Opportunities~

SEL4NC Gather & Grow:

Join SEL4NC for a series of virtual sessions showcasing successful SEL implementation across NC.

Save the Dates ~ 9-10am EST

- December 5, 2024: Supportive Classroom and School Environments
- February 27, 2025: Explicit SEL Instruction
- June 12, 2025: Integrating SEL into Academics

Register at: <https://bit.ly/GatherandGrowSEL4NC24-25>

Mindspring Mental Health Alliance:

Click the below link for a list of free webinars on a variety of mental health topics.

<https://www.mindspringhealth.org/get-involved/webinars-and-events#page=1>