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PIKE NEWS

TOGETHER WE HEAL

STUDENTS JOIN FORCES WITH THE INDIANAPOLIS COLTS TO BRING AWARENESS TO MENTALHEALTH



(LEFT) Seniors Alayna Neal and Kailey Jackson discuss the importance of mental health awareness and explore how they can contribute to the club Bring Change to Mind during a special presentation Oct. 15. (RIGHT) Colts players and cheerleaders spent time interacting with the students who attended the special in-school fieldtrip. KYNADI CHANDLER/photo



Kicking the Stigma, a foundation led by the Indianapolis Colts, is devoted to raising awareness about mental health and breaking the stigma surrounding it. By hosting events and encouraging athletes to share their personal challenges, the initiative helps individuals recognize that it's okay to struggle and seek help. Partnering with Bring Change 2 Mind (BC2M), Kicking the Stigma collaborated with Pike High School's BC2M chapter to host an empowering event on Tuesday Oct. 15, which was also mental health awareness day.

The Colts host events and allow athletes to speak about the challenges they face so people can recognize it's okay to struggle and to get help.

Students selected for their leadership and strength were excused from their classes where they listened to

speeches and participated in interactive activities.

One of the activities involved participants writing inspirational quotes on a poster.

"It was nice to write motivational and inspirational quotes because I have been through mental struggles, junior Zoey Constable said. "I just want people to know it does get better."

Lexi, a cheerleader from the team, spoke about her experience with an eating disorder and body image. Afterwards, students participated in stations set up with activities like making a shaker for anxiety and playing Jenga. The students also answered questions and learned about each other.

"Having the ability to take a day away from the stress of school was refreshing, especially with the seemingly

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Kailey Jackson

back-to-back tests and assignments we are often given," one student said.

Lexi provided important data from research in the field. She talked about how many students don't get the ability to take mental health days, which leads to failing grades, self-harming habits and in worst-case scenarios, suicide.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death for people between the ages of 14-18. Suicide alone accounted for approximately 18.6 percent of deaths in this age group. This increases for youth in the LGBTQIA+ community, who are more than four times as

likely to attempt suicide than their peers. This research is validated by the National Institute of Mental Health and the American Pediatrician Society.

"This is what Bring Change 2 Mind is about. We bring awareness to mental health and try to break down the stigma around it being bad. Mental health isn't always bad; it's about taking care of yourself and bringing a positive mindset to things," Kailey Jackson, vice president of Pike's chapter for BC2M, said.

Events like these not only provide students with much-needed resources but also remind them that they are not alone in their struggles



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