



# Wellness Connect

*Connecting the Steps to Mental Health*



**Mission:** To promote mental health awareness and provide access to resources through prevention and intervention, fostering wellness for all students and families. This is achieved through a variety of department programs and initiatives designed to connect the steps to mental health.

**Vision:** To increase the success & wellness of all students and families by promoting mental health awareness, fostering resilience, and building positive community connections.

## Director's Message

MRS. VERNICCA WYNTER



I hope you had a rejuvenating, refreshing Spring Break! It was a pleasure connecting as a family just before leading into some well-deserved relaxation time.

Now, let us focus on the critical work that lies ahead in Quarter 4! This is a crucial time for us to finish the school year strong, and I am confident that we can scale up our excellence together.

Let us bring the same energy and enthusiasm we had in August and channel it into reflecting on how we can minimize our 'should've, could've,' and 'would've' this year. We still have time to try new ideas and improve what's currently in place. I'm here to support you, and I'm available for any questions or concerns you may have. Your dedication and hard work are truly appreciated, and I believe we can make this final stretch a successful and memorable one!

### MHAART



This quarter, MHAART has focused on community outreach and presentations. Several student support groups have also been established at various schools to promote students' mental health and sense of connectedness.



LaNette Burgess April 02  
 Christopher Gentles April 07  
 Shanekia Calbert April 11  
 Gabriela Quintero-Rodriguez April 14  
 Selena Voncile April 16  
 Chelsea Heard April 17  
 Magarith Lubin April 19  
 Sharona C Baker April 21  
 Kereen Miles April 22  
 Felicia Lynch April 24  
 Sharon Forde-Marshall April 25  
 Maria Alexandra Munera April 27



## YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Our team is doing a happy dance over here! March has been a whirlwind of YMHFA learning, and we're thrilled to announce that over 600 staff have jumped on board and enrolled to take the YMHFA training! That's right, SIX HUNDRED!!! Talk about a BIG push! With this incredible surge of participants, we're zooming closer to our 95% goal like a rocket! Every enrollment brings us one step closer to creating a stronger, more supportive community. Thank you all for your dedication to supporting youth mental health.



## FAMILY COUNSELING PROGRAM

The Family Counseling Program continues to make a meaningful impact, providing vital support and guidance to students and families in our community. We proudly announce the successful completion of our latest training sessions, Brief Strategic Family Therapy and Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, which have equipped our team with enhanced skills to better serve those in need.



## MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE ALLOCATION

Our busy season picks up each Spring for the Mental Health Assistance Allocation Team. Our team is currently working on tutorial PowerPoints for Charter Schools to assist them in preparing the MHAA documents for the next school year. We are also in the budget planning stages for the 25/26 school year.



## SUICIDE PREVENTION

Suicide Prevention continues to work closely with schools to provide SRA support. We have three Data Management Team Members who continue to work diligently to ensure compliance and support. Our Teachers on Special Assignment continue to highlight awareness and connectedness for students through the uniqueness of the curriculum delivery. Two new Teachers on Special Assignment are currently in the onboarding process. The next Suicide Assessment Training for new users will take place on April 8th. Registration is available via LAB.

I CHOOSE YOU

Trusted Adult

YOU'RE MY TRUSTED ADULT, AND I KNOW YOU CARE WHEN I NEED HELP. YOU'RE ALWAYS THERE. YOU'RE MY SUPPORTIVE GUIDE, SO KIND AND TRUE, HELPING ME FIND THE RIGHT PATH THROUGH. THANK YOU FOR ALWAYS BEING SO NEAR. I'M GRATEFUL TO HAVE YOU HERE!

## STUDENT SUPPORT INSTRUCTIONAL SPECIALISTS (SSIS)

Our SSIS team is excited to lead Trusted Adult Week! During this week, students will identify trusted adults on campus who offer guidance and support. Each student will complete a card for their chosen adult, and these cards will be delivered to those adults as a special reminder of their positive impact.



# ♥ M.H.A.C. CORNER ♥ MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS COMMITTEE

The Mental Health Awareness Committee, a voluntary organization within BCPS, was started back in 2014, by Marisa Sotelo during her tenure as a School Social Worker. The mission involves raising mental health awareness within the district throughout the year, culminating in May during Mental Health Awareness Month. Each year, the committee and initiative have grown, not only in numbers but across programs and departments. MHAC continues to serve BCPS students, their families, schools, and staff by emphasizing the importance of strong mental health and the ways it can be achieved. The committee supports wellness and resource events, hosts student engagement opportunities that encourage the acknowledgement of taking care of your mental health and provides staff with tools to promote the initiative. MHAC is dedicated to its evolution by improving the reach of this essential message through outreach, support, education, and advocacy. For more information, please reach out to the Mental Health Services Department and visit our social media platforms.



## WE'VE BEEN BUSY...

- ♥ Health and Wellness Resource Events at Lake Forest Elementary, McNab Elementary, Westpine Middle School, Pioneer Middle School, Boyd Anderson High School, Western High School, McArthur High School and Hallandale High School (to name a few 😊)
- ♥ Title I Parent Seminar
- ♥ Above the Influence Rally at Dillard High School
- ♥ BABSE SLICE Conference at Blanche Ely High School

## TIPS OF THE TRADE


Working with students who engage in non-suicidal self-injurious (NSSI) behaviors presents unique challenges and opportunities for mental health clinicians. These behaviors—often misunderstood and stigmatized—can be alarming to school staff and caregivers, yet they can be a coping mechanism rather than a suicide attempt. As clinicians, it's essential to approach NSSI with a trauma-informed, compassionate lens, equipped with evidence-based strategies to support both the student and the school community. The following tips aim to enhance the care you provide to students.


Try suggesting some of the following replacement behaviors to curb the dangers of NSSI...


- ♥ Hold ice in your hands, against your arm, or in your mouth
- ♥ Snap a rubber band or hairband against your wrist
- ♥ Bite into a hot pepper or chew a piece of ginger root
- ♥ Massage where you want to hurt yourself
- ♥ Clap your hands until it stings
- ♥ Put tiger balm\* on the places (you) want to cut. Tiger balm is a muscle relaxant cream that induces a tingly sensation. You can find it in most health food stores and vitamin stores.

### Follow Mental Health Services On:

X: @bcpsmentalhelp  
Instagram: @bcpsmentalhealth

 Broward County Schools Mental Health Awareness Committee

 @bcpsmentalhealthawareness

 [linkedin.com/in/Broward-schools-mental-health-awareness-committee](https://www.linkedin.com/in/Broward-schools-mental-health-awareness-committee)

## WHAT'S COMING UP NEXT??

- ♥ HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCE EVENTS AT:
  - MONARCH HIGH SCHOOL – 4/3/25
  - BLANCHE ELY HIGH SCHOOL – 4/25/25
  - BOYD ANDERSON HIGH SCHOOL - MAY(TBA)
- ♥ WALK IN MY SHOES AT QUIET WATERS PARK, DEERFIELD BEACH ON 5/17/25
- ♥ MHAC END OF YEAR EVENT ON 5/27/25

