ANNOUNCEMENTS

NAMI Meeting on Brain Disorders/Treatment and Recovery: 2nd floor auditorium of the Juliette Hampton Morgan Memorial Library in Montgomery at 245 High Street on May 13th from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
Contact: Mary Jo Logan at (334) 271-2286

Liberal Arts Graduation Ceremony: Auburn Arena on May 10th at 5:00 p.m.
Contact: graduation@auburn.edu

NASW Virtual Career Fair: Online on May 19th from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. EST
Link: https://app.brazenconnect.com/events/virtual-career-fair#eventLanding;eventCode=nasw-career-fair
Contact: Yvette Mulkey at ymulkey@naswldc.org

NASW Alabama | American Red Cross: Disaster Mental Health Volunteer Training: American Red Cross Building on May 16th from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Contact: Alabama@naswldc.net

Students in Need of Counseling

Incoming college freshman are experiencing the highest levels of anxiety in history – Student Counseling Services need to prepare accordingly for the largest incoming freshman class in Auburn history.

By: Belle Brooks

Recently, one of my close friends began to deal with depressive thoughts. She cried in the car, in restaurants, in her room, the shower - essentially everywhere, and it lasted for almost an entire week.

She had a strong support system of friends and it was suggested that she reach out to Student Counseling Services (SCS), a division of student affairs. She was responsive to this idea and made an appointment.

During her first visit she was not offered much advice. She completed an intake session where she described her current issues and how she was handling them so they could assign her a counselor. However, the problem was they had no open counselors until the end of the semester – three months later. She was given local resources that could be paid for, however she did not have the funds to attend private counseling.

Students who are at risk of immediate harm are given priority, as they should be, but this can often result in others being pushed to the side. This could result in a cycle of individuals dealing with mental health issues who are overlooked and a heightened risk of self-harm or the harm of others.

This is an issue for college students because if an individual has the courage to seek support, they deserve access to sustainable resources. I believe that SCS should reevaluate the counseling they so adamantly advertise, but do not necessarily provide. This is not to say that students should not reach out to SCS at all, but they should be prepared to find other resources if the options they need are not readily available.

Nana’s Corner

In some of my classes, I have talked about the “Healthy Mind Platter,” a concept developed by David Rock and Daniel Siegel. They characterize it as a “recommended daily diet” for a healthy mind, and identify seven daily essential mental activities necessary for optimum mental health. Most ideas about self-care talk about the importance of balancing competing needs/wants and each of us may differ in the areas most important to us, and the balance we seek among them. The seven areas they highlight are the following: sleep, physical (moving our bodies), play time (being spontaneous/creative), connecting time (relationships), time in (quiet reflection), and down time (relaxing).

At this busy time of year, I want to highlight something that can often be overlooked—sleep. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have gone so far as to state that insufficient sleep is a public health epidemic (2014). Rock and Siegel state that “when we give the brain the rest it needs, we consolidate learning and recover from the experiences of the day.” How much sleep do we need? There are individual differences in this, and it is important to know your own needs for sleep, as well as what is getting in the way of getting the sleep you need. The cognitive stimulation from being “plugged in” with technology close to bedtime can have negative effects on sleep and I encourage you to consider your own “sleep hygiene” habits, as getting adequate rest is a foundation for optimal functioning in physical and mental health.
Finding My BraveHeart

Volunteers find bravery and love through art, music, and dance therapy for teens living with physical and mental disabilities.

By: Ashley Moore

If you attend a session at Expressions of a BraveHeart and do not learn something, you’re obviously not paying attention.

The meaning of true friendship is found in the community room before classes begin, when our participants arrive and excitedly hug their coaches. They’re ready for another incredible night. You can feel warmth and peace while solving puzzles or reading books. The participants show their true personalities and love for adventure through their art, music and dance. Compassion and community can be seen in the way that our participants play ball together after class. The love and positivity that has been cultivated throughout the past four years at BraveHearts are ever present.

It’s as simple as solving a puzzle or reading a book. It’s as effortless as letting go of your inhibitions in dance class. Every session is a time of growth and acceptance, and every night is full of opportunities. It’s a time to meet someone new or learn more about their story. By simply holding a hand or looking at someone’s artwork, the compassion and importance of human relationships that we as social workers value so much become ingrained in everyday actions.

And this is how it happens. This is how you find your BraveHeart.

Students are all smiles as they pose for a picture with their partner for the semester.

If you or someone you know would like to participate in Expressions of a Braveheart, please contact Angie Burque at burquad@auburn.edu or Danilea Werner at dwwo004@auburn.edu

5 Misconceptions About Mental Illness

May is Mental Illness Awareness Month: here are some myth busting facts about individuals living with mental illness.

By: Rachel Morrell

1 Myth: People with mental health problems are violent and unpredictable.

Reality: The vast majority of people with mental health problems are no more likely to be violent than anyone else. Most people with mental illness are not violent and only 3%-5% of violent acts can be attributed to individuals living with a serious mental illness. In fact, people with severe mental illnesses are over 10 times more likely to be victims of violent crime than the general population.

2 Myth: Personality weakness or character flaws cause mental health problems.

Reality: Many factors contribute to mental health problems, including: biological factors, life experiences, and family history of mental health problems.

3 Myth: Therapy and self-help are a waste of time.

Reality: Treatment for mental health problems varies depending on the individual and could include medication, therapy, or both.

4 Myth: I can’t do anything for a person with a mental health problem.

Reality: Friends and loved ones can make a big difference. You can reach out and let them know you are available to help; help them access mental health services; learn and share facts about mental health, especially if you hear something that isn’t true; treat them with respect, just as you would anyone else; and refuse to define them by their diagnosis or using labels such as “crazy”

5 Myth: Prevention doesn’t work. It is impossible to prevent mental illnesses.

Reality: Prevention of mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders focuses on addressing known risk factors such as exposure to trauma that can affect the chances that children, youth, and young adults will develop mental health problems.

Facts found at:
http://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/myths-facts/

Intern Spotlight: Ashley Edwards

I am finishing up my internship at the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama. The Equal Justice Initiative is a non-profit law firm that provides legal services to indigent defendants and people in prison. The majority of my work is devoted to providing social support to clients who have been incarcerated since their childhood. In addition, I have the privilege of working with clients who have been released from prison and are working to successfully re-enter society.

One of the most common sayings in the office is that “We are more than the worst thing we’ve ever done,” and the work at EJI resoundingly supports that view. If I could give any advice to upcoming social work students, it would be to treat all of your clients—no matter who they are, where they come from, or what they’ve done—with the dignity and respect that they deserve.

About Ashley: I am a lemonade connoisseur. I love to read poetry, and sometimes I write my own when I’m feeling particularly bold. My self-care method of choice is crocheting. (Want a scarf?)

Update: After graduation, Ashley will be joining the Equal Justice Initiative Staff as a full-time Justice Fellow.

Inquiring Minds Want To Know...

What’s the best advice you have for college students?

In college, as in life, perfection is not mandatory, nor is it possible. Doing the very best you can with everything you do—that is possible. THAT is required.
- Delaine Gibson

Meet as many different people from yourself as you can, and take advantage of every opportunity you receive.
- Emily Myers

You will ultimately learn more from your failures than your successes. When you fail, turn your feelings of disappointment into motivation to do better the next time. Failure does not define you—it makes you stronger!
- Dr. Hilary Joyce

Learn time management and stress management. Get to know your professors, take advantage of every opportunity, and enjoy the ride!
- Dr. Danilea Werner

The Auburn University Social Work Program mission is to make a positive impact on the social problems within the State of Alabama by training generalist social work personnel who are capable of addressing the problems unique to Alabama’s poor, advocating on behalf of the disenfranchised, including children and families at risk, and dealing with diverse populations, by establishing and maintaining community partnerships, and by developing and implementing research techniques and evaluative strategies designed to address these problems in a collaborative manner.

If you would like to contribute to Strengths, please contact Rachel Morrell at ramos006@auburn.edu or Hallie Feldman at hef0006@auburn.edu

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform students of the happenings around campus and provide articles detailing events the social work department hosts each month. This newsletter is written and edited by current social work students.

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