The Mind Over Matters Campaign is an ongoing movement to raise awareness about mental health and promote wellness for students and staff in Baltimore County Public Schools. The activities listed below are created to coincide with the various themes broken down by months/quarters. There are a host of options for the school community, including those that can be offered virtually. While the themes are broken down by month/theme, feel free to use the activities when appropriate for your students/staff.

We encourage staff and students to post pictures of themselves engaging in the activities using #BCPSCares on social media. Please visit the Mind Over Matters Webpage for updates.

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September – November “Kindness Matters”

Goal: To engage students and staff by exploring the importance of being kind to themselves and others.

Welcome Video
Support staff create a video introducing themselves that can be played during homeroom or morning announcements.

Classroom Visits
Support staff could create a schedule and visit classrooms to introduce themselves and explain how students can reach out to them as needed.

A Collection of Icebreaker and Connection Activities
Includes guidelines and considerations for facilitating connection activities. Additionally, activities are broken down into low-risk (students just meeting), moderate-risk (for students who have developed a rapport with one another), and high-risk (for groups that function well together) based on the needs of your students. This resource also highlights the importance of processing/debriefing after the activity and states that “the process is much more important than the product.”

Resilience & Self-Confidence
Students and staff can write on post-it notes or use some other medium to share things about which they are proud. They can list their best accomplishment, their heritage, what they are grateful for, and anything of the sort.

All About Me:
This can be used by staff and students. – These PowerPoint slides are a great way to introduce yourself to others and share some things about yourself. An example is provided.

The Identity Iceberg
This activity involves exploring self-awareness, and like icebergs, most of the qualities and aspects of ourselves and others are unseen. This can allow for students the opportunity to learn more about themselves as well as their classmates. It fosters the development of empathy. This discussion could also lead to exploring race and culture. The Maryland State Department of Education provides resources for talking and teaching about race, and BCPS provides readings and resources about race for students, staff, and families.

Creating Space Resource:
This document was co-constructed by the Department of Equity and Cultural Proficiency, the Department of Professional Learning, and the Department of Academics with support from the Division of School Support and Achievement. BCPS defines Social Emotional Learning (SEL) as the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. SEL skills are foundational as we navigate courageous conversations around topics related to social inequality. The resources included in this document can be used to design spaces that allow students to talk openly about difficult topics. You can also use the strategies in this resource to prepare to facilitate difficult conversations in the classroom and school community.

Having Courageous Conversations in the Classroom:
In order to have courageous conversations in the classroom, relationships and trust are key. When students feel connected to each other and their teacher, they will likely be more willing to engage in
meaningful and courageous conversations. Some schools use circles (a restorative practice) to build and foster relationships and community in the classroom. Many schools have equity teams that support staff in engaging in courageous conversations with their students. Please contact the BCPS Department of Equity and Cultural Proficiency if you have additional questions.

Resources:
- Courageous Conversations in the Classroom Part I: A Partnering Tool to Achieve Equity in Schools.
- Conversations should be courageous: why the compass
- Tough Conversations: A Tool for Parents, Part I
- Cedarmere Elementary’s Equity Team developed compasses for elementary students and intermediate students to use when having courageous conversations:

September 10, 2021 – World Suicide Prevention Day
Goal: For students to meet the mental health professionals assigned to their school and for students to learn how to access those individuals. School counselors, school social workers, psychologists, and nurses are all support staff available to assist students as needed.

Hayden Hurst’s Second Change in Life – Breaking the Stigma Around Mental Health –
“Falcons tight end Hayden Hurst always had dreamed of playing in the MLB or the NFL. After some time in the minor leagues his passion for baseball had diminished, which threw his life in flux. He wanted everything to be over. But he was given a second chance in life, culminating in his NFL dream being accomplished. Listen to Hayden’s powerful story of resilience, and together let’s break the stigma on mental health.”

Possible Discussion Questions:
- What signs did his family notice that he may be having some mental health concerns?
- Who did Hayden finally open up to when he was struggling?
- Why did Hayden turn to alcohol and drugs?
• What helped Hayden?
• What is the purpose of Hayden’s foundation?
• What were some of the messages from Hayden and his family members to others who may be struggling with anxiety and depression?

October 30, 2021 Out of the Darkness Walk
*Activity specific to Suicide Prevention but occurs in October.*
The Out of the Darkness Walk is held all over the country and is the largest fundraiser for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). They produce millions for suicide prevention programs, unite those who have been affected by suicide, and create communities that are smart about mental health. At this time, the walk is scheduled to be held in person, in Baltimore at the Inner Harbor. However, participants can participate virtually if they prefer. Join Team BCPS by visiting the Out of the Darkness webpage.

October – Bullying Prevention Month
Goal: To engage students, staff, and other stakeholders in setting and maintaining a positive tone in BCPS schools and offices throughout the year.

Bullying versus Meaness-
Have students examine the difference between what bullying is versus when someone is mean. Review definitions (This could vary based on the developmental/cognitive abilities of students). Review definitions. Consider role-playing and having students demonstrate the differences. Rude vs. Mean vs. Bullying: Defining The Differences

Bullying Prevention Materials
October is National Bullying Prevention Month.
“Every October, schools and organizations across the country join STOMP Out Bullying™ in observing National Bullying Prevention Month. The goal: encourage schools, communities and organizations to work together to stop bullying and cyberbullying and put an end to hatred and racism by increasing awareness of the prevalence and impact of all forms of bullying on all children of all ages.” For more information and ideas for how schools can participate in weekly events, visit the Stomp Out Bullying webpage.

The following links are resources for bullying prevention and intervention with students, staff, and parents:
• Stop Bullying
• Stomp Out Bullying: Online Participation Toolkit
• Bullying 101 - Elementary Schools
• Bullying 101 - Middle and High Schools
• #SeeMe2 Campaign - Join the #SeeMe Campaign and help change the culture.
  • Change the way our culture... thinks
  • Change the way our culture.... acts
  • Let’s Change the culture for all of us!

#BCPSCares
At one point or another each of us has felt insecure, or stressed out, or alone. It is important to remind our friends and classmates that we are all in it together and we are there to listen and support each other. Use the hashtag #BCPSCares on social media to let your classmates know that they have your support and a person to reach out to if they ever need to talk.
Understanding Bullying
(Secondary students) Using Policy and Rule 5580, Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation, make sure that students have a clear understanding of the definition of bullying and the difference between bullying and conflict.

Wear a Color for Character – Week of October 18th-Oct 22nd 2021
A color for students and staff to wear each day of the week has been suggested to represent character traits that all people should demonstrate. Share photos on social media using #BCPSCares.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
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<td>Civility</td>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>Unity</td>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Positivity</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Random Acts of Kindness
Several virtual activities at this site to demonstrate kindness for children and adults including the ‘Do good from home challenge’, peaceful pen pals, device free dinners, write thank you letters, and gratitude meditations.

Cyberbullying Prevention
Post to Twitter positive words, statements, and pictures of their support for their school and others. Be sure to tag your school. They should then tag five people from their school and challenge them to do the same.

Cyberbullying awareness resources:
- National Bullying Prevention Center
- Stomp Out Bullying

Stand Up for Others/Upstander
Talk about what an upstander versus a bystander looks like. Have students act out scenarios demonstrating upstander practices. An “upstander” is someone who recognizes when something is wrong and acts to make it right. When an upstander sees or hears about someone being bullied, they speak up.

What Youth Can Do to Help Peers Who Are Experiencing Bullying
You're an Upstander - Middle Schools

Family Materials about Bullying
Resources for families about how students can be responsible and kind online.

I Can Help Calendar
This calendar has daily suggestions that adults and students can do independently or with a peer to spread kindness every day. Examples: Send a teacher a thank you email, start a compliment thread, create a positive only group chat, etc.

Channel Kindness
“Channel Kindness” is a digital platform created by Lady Gaga’s, Born This Way Foundation. It is a safe space for young people to tell their stories of kindness, resilience, and community. By highlighting the people and organizations that are doing good in their communities, Channel Kindness’ audience is inspired to create a kinder and braver world, one story at a time.” Learn how you can tell your story by visiting the Channel Kindness: Share Your Story webpage.
December – February “You Matter”
Goal: Coping skills, healthy lifestyle, and engaging in healthy relationships play a vital role to overall wellness. Students and staff will enhance their abilities to cope by identifying their coping skills, exploring their healthy habits, and examining the quality of their relationships.

Coping Skills Toolkit
A collection of worksheets, resources, and tools for all ages.

My Coping Skills Worksheet
(Middle and High Schools; and Staff) Worksheet that you can personalize by identifying triggers, coping skills, people to talk to, etc.

Take a Break – Activity
You will need dice or a dice app for your phone –
Roll the dice as each number you could roll has a corresponding physical activity.

Healthy Habits Bingo
Includes an elementary and secondary option for bingo cards. You can have students use the cards to identify a healthy habit or habits they want to commit to and track. Additional healthy habits bingo cards are available online.

ChooseMyPlate
Practice healthy eating habits using this app and website.

Motivation
Share health facts, motivating quotes, challenge updates, and/or calendar reminders during the school-wide or classroom daily announcements. Have staff check-in with one another and their students’ goal progress. Use a bulletin board to display and update any school challenges related to the healthy behavior.

Connection Rituals and Activities
(Elementary) Initially designed to include rituals involving eye contact, appropriate physical touch, & presence, in a playful situation. Due to the potential for continued remote learning, consider using one of the 4 CDs provided with Conscious Discipline curriculum (It Starts in the Heart, Brain Boogie Boosters, Kindness Counts, Get Funky!), or other connecting songs, students (and adults) work in partners to follow the routines and virtually connect.

Relationships through Reading
(Elementary) Teachers are encouraged to re-read any of the Shubert books they have in their classrooms. Teachers in grades 4 & 5 as well as special area teachers can borrow books from PreK-3rd grade classrooms. Each book has ideas on the last page to continue discussions about anything discussed in the story. Shubert Sees the Best is a great text to focus on positive intent and relationships. Revisit the lessons provided during the first 3 weeks of school in the Conscious Discipline folder of Schoology for PreK-3rd grade. 4th and 5th grade can borrow a book from another classroom, read through, and facilitate discussions on how they can see the best in others. Visit the Conscious Discipline website for a template and idea related to the story.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Information and Activities:
Information about various social emotional learning resources including restorative practices, Conscious Discipline, mindfulness, and more. The monthly SEL calendars also provide examples of SEL and mindfulness activities that students and staff participate in.
Couplets – One Love Foundation
(Secondary) There are always signs in an unhealthy relationship. While everyone has behaviors we can work on, we also shouldn’t brush aside bad behavior as “cute” or “trivial.” The Couplets features a series of videos that highlight unhealthy relationships. Process with students. Visit the One Love Foundation’s website for more information on healthy relationships and more thought provoking free videos to engage students.

(Staff) The One Love Foundation’s website and the information are also applicable to adults/staff about healthy relationships as well as intimate partner violence. As mentioned in one of the videos titled, The Most Important Gift Of All “we’re not taught how to love.”
March – May “Mental Health Matters”

Goal: Mental health impacts how we think, feel, and act. It also impacts the decisions we make, how we relate to others, and how we handle stress. In these activities we will enhance our tools for social, emotional learning, grief, promote mental wellness, and healthy ways to cope with uncomfortable and unsettling feelings or events.

Self-Care Activities

Promote habits and routines that engage and encourage students, staff, and all members of our school communities to take care of their physical and emotional health throughout their lifetime. The Self Care Plan ideas range from five minutes to one-hour self-care activities that can be practiced at school and at home.

The resource, Self-Care for Teachers Calendar April 2021, provides administrators suggested strategies to help with teacher an adult self-care as well as ideas to keep school staff connected. Additional resources for school staff include Elementary and Secondary SEL calendars for April 2021, to foster staff and student connections towards engagement. SEL calendars are updated monthly. Visit the SEL Resources webpage for the current calendars.

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA)

Youth Mental Health First Aid is a training available to BCPS staff, parents, and community members. This training is primarily designed for adults who regularly interact with young people. Participants will learn about mental health challenges for youth, review typical versus atypical adolescent development, and learn and practice a 5-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations. Topics covered include anxiety, depression, substance use, disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including ADHD), and eating disorders.

This course includes 2 hours of pre-session self-paced work and 4.5 hours of virtual face-to-face instruction. The course is free to attend, and eligible staff will receive a $125 stipend for completion of the entire training. Trainings will be offered throughout the year. Please check the BCPS News Hub and the BCPS Mental Health Services Webpage for more information.

Free Printable Grief Worksheets

(Elementary and Secondary) Grief worksheets are helpful resources for children dealing with loss. Adults are better equipped to seek out help and support. But children have less life experience and emotional maturity to work through the incredible mix of emotions that arise when they lose a loved one. Grief worksheets can be used as tools to help kids gently work through the emotional turmoil they experience while grieving.
May 1st-7th 2022: Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week:
(All) The Children’s Mental Health Matters! Campaign brings together non-profits, schools, and other agencies with the following goals: raising public awareness of the importance of children’s mental health and substance use, helping reduce the stigma of mental health, and connecting families, educators and providers throughout Maryland with resources to help children.

3rd Annual Virtual Mental Health Mile (May 28-May 30, 2022)
The Virtual Mental Health Mile event is scheduled for Memorial Day Weekend from May 28th through May 31st. Employees, students, family members, and community members can walk, run, bike, or use any other outdoor physical activity to cover at least 1 mile at any time that weekend. This mile can be completed by yourself, with people you live with, with colleagues/friends, whatever works best for you. Please share your pictures of your virtual mental health mile experience on social media using #BCPSCares. Please check the BCPS News Hub and the BCPS Mental Health Services Webpage for more information in March 2022.
June “Pride Matters”
Goal: For students and staff to recognize the importance of having pride in who they are, appreciating their strengths, and the strengths in others.

Activities for Students and Staff

Pride Matters Choice Board – Includes a variety of activities for students, families, and staff to participate in.

Juneteenth
Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. From its Galveston, Texas origin in 1865, the observance of June 19th as the African American Emancipation Day has spread across the United States and beyond.

• 17 Ways to Celebrate Juneteenth with Kids
Mind Over Matters 2021-2022 Campaign

Mind Over Matters Resources (All Year Activities)

**BCPS Virtual Calming Room:**
The Virtual Calming Room is a space for students, families, and staff to find tools and strategies for managing emotions and feelings. Fun games, videos, activities, resources/supports and more are provided.

**Multicultural & Diversity Calendar**
“Throughout the year there are special days, weeks, and months that focus on celebrating diversity and the contributions of various groups to the fabric of the United States.” Students can learn about different groups via research or learning from their peers. Other options would be via classroom activities, discussions, writing assignments, etc.

**Form a MOM Club**
Staff can create a Mind Over Matters (MOM) Club that is student lead. Student leaders of the group can facilitate discussions or activities that align with the MOM theme of that month. Complete this form to nominate someone.

**SEL Champion (Monthly)**
Staff/students can be nominated will be highlighted (on social media, and/or BCPS website) each month who are supporting social emotional learning that aligns with the MOM campaign.

**SEL Resources**
Includes several social emotional learning resources including SEL Calendars, information on Conscious Discipline, Restorative Practices, Mindfulness, the 3 signature practices, and more.

**Start a School Instagram Account**
Some schools have started various social media accounts (specifically Instagram) to communicate with students about upcoming events and important information. This can be another way to promote various school-wide and county-wide initiatives, including Mind Over Matters. Staff ‘takeover days’ are days when staff post pictures to that particular account showing their day-to-day activities. It is a fun way to connect with students and show some of the personal side to educators and staff in the school.

**Mental Wellness Wednesdays**
County-wide monthly virtual event via Google Meet lead by BCPS Student Leaders and focusing on mental wellness in connection with the MOM theme. This will include a 20-minute guest speaker to discuss a component of mental wellness followed by a 20-minute student lead conversation.

Schools could develop a similar model and host these events as often as they want. If the school has a MOM club, they could plan and facilitate the event(s).

**Mental Health Days**
One or two days a quarter, provide students the opportunity to take some time to discuss mental health wellness in class and/or advisory periods. Infusing Paws (Pause days) for academic reflection and mental wellness.
Trainings

Trainings for staff members and parents are offered throughout the school year. The below trainings are available. Please access the [BCPS website](#) for more information.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Trainings</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
<th>Target Audience</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Mental Health First Aid</td>
<td>Courtney Brown</td>
<td>Staff/Teachers, Parents, Students (must be 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:cbrown39@bcps.org">cbrown39@bcps.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trauma Informed Practices</td>
<td>Courtney Brown</td>
<td>Staff/Teachers</td>
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<td>Restorative Practices</td>
<td>Lisa Selby</td>
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<td>Email: <a href="mailto:lselby@bcps.org">lselby@bcps.org</a></td>
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<td>Conscious Discipline</td>
<td>Elizabeth Askine</td>
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<td>Email: <a href="mailto:easkine@bcps.org">easkine@bcps.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mindfulness/Culture of Care</td>
<td>Caryn Mouring or Dina Vendelis</td>
<td>Staff/Teachers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:cmouring@bcps.org">cmouring@bcps.org</a> or <a href="mailto:dvendelis@bcps.org">dvendelis@bcps.org</a></td>
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<td>Equity – Best Practices</td>
<td>Office of Equity and Cultural Proficiency</td>
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<td>Positive Productive Class Meetings</td>
<td>Katherine McLean</td>
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<td>Suicide Prevention (through Cigna, not the required annual training)</td>
<td>Janice Zimmerman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Various trainings for parents/caregivers</td>
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