

Note From the CEO



Happy Holiday Season!

This is the most wonderful time of the year, for some. For others, this is a very difficult season. Loneliness, grief, mental illness, family dysfunction, and stress can all become a big highlight during this season. This is why both self-care and checking in with loved ones is especially important during the holidays.

Did you know that acts of kindness and generosity actually improve your mental well-being and can be a part of your self-care plan? I love this opportunity as an act of self-care because it has two fold purpose - it helps you AND someone else. So now is a great time to check in with family members who live alone, kids who struggle with anxiety and depression, or to practice some stress reduction that will benefit you and your family.

Also, winter is a time when we tend to stay inside more, but nature has some of the best benefits to our self-care, so bundle up and don't be scared of the cold, take the dog out, play with the kids or just take a walk. Your mental health is so important, and we don't have to break our self-care routines based on inconvenience, we have to find ways to keep it up.

I encourage you to browse this newsletter and find other ways you can help yourself or a loved one who needs support! We here at TN Voices are always here to help, just pick up the phone or log on to www.tnvoices.org!

Sincerely,
Rikki Harris, CEO

Join Our Team



**Have you thought of a career in Mental Health?
Check out our open positions at [TN Voices](#).**

7 Tips for Managing Your Mental Health During the Holidays By: Brianna Grant, LCSW, RPT-S, Clinical Director, TN Voices

The holidays can be a joyful season of gift-giving, socializing and traveling. The holidays can also be an overwhelming time of stress and anxiety. You're not alone if you find yourself feeling down during this season. Many people express feeling high levels of anxiety, stress or sadness surrounding the holidays. It is important to prioritize your mental health during this time.

Overcoming holiday stress and finding effective methods for managing our mental health are essential. Easing our stress and looking at the holiday season with a new perspective can help us find joy in the season. Here are some tips for managing mental health during the holidays.

1. Manage holiday expectations

We can often create an expectation for what the holiday is going to be like, who we will spend time with, what meal we will eat, and on and on. When we think an experience "should" be a certain way, it can lead to disappointment and frustration. If we grew up in a big family, we might feel a sense of disappointment with a small gathering. If we have lost a loved one, we can feel a sense of loss without them this year. Being aware of our expectations for the holiday season can assist with managing negative emotions or disappointment. Another tip is to notice when we are feeling this way and list out what we are grateful for in the present moment.

2. Check in with yourself

One way that we can manage our stress is to check in with ourselves regularly. Monitor your emotional state. Feeling anxious? Take a step back and do some deep breathing. Feeling sad? Allow yourself to feel sad and then identify one thing you are grateful for. Feeling stressed? Take a breath and think of what the season means to you. Is what you are stressing about as important as you think?

Is it an expectation that can be managed and adjusted? The goal is to develop self-awareness, practice skills and engage in self-care before being overwhelmed with emotions.

3. Have a plan

In addition to regular self-monitoring, have a plan in place for what to do if you begin to feel stressed or anxious. This could be calling a friend, taking a walk, reading a book or listening to music.

4. Keep a routine

Consistency is key to predictability and predictability allows for decreased anxiety. This is true for adults and children. Try to keep sleep and eating schedules close to the schedules you and/or your children keep during the non-holiday months. There are always exceptions to the rules, such as New Year's Eve! However, maintaining a routine schedule, getting rest, eating healthy meals and remaining active will assist with managing stress and anxiety.

5. Connect with community

Loneliness in general, and during the holidays, can have negative mental and physical effects. The holidays can often amplify feelings of loneliness, especially if we are not able to see loved ones or friends due to distance, travel restrictions, deployments, illness or the loss of a loved one. If we do not have a network of friends or are unable to see loved ones this holiday, we can seek those supports in our community. We can volunteer during the holidays to give back and connect with others by joining a church, club or community center to begin to build those relationships. It can be intimidating or scary to join a new group or sign up for a volunteer event, but getting out there, talking and interacting with others is important and when we connect to others, we feel better.

6. Have fun and relax

Many of us will have time off of work and the kids time off from school. Take advantage of this time to relax, play with the kids, go on a nature walk, paint, play board games, make hot chocolate and read books. Relax and have fun... make some memories!

7. Seek support

The holidays are as good a time as any to seek mental health services and support. There are support groups (in-person and online) and counseling services available throughout Tennessee. TN Voices provides an array of support services, statewide, that include therapy/counseling, parenting support, family support specialists, advocacy and more.

See a list below for community support and resources:

- TN Voices - <https://tnvoices.org/>
- United Way: Volunteer Guide for the holiday season - <https://uwgk.org/vol/>
- Alive Hospice: Grief Support during the holidays - <https://www.alivehospice.org/news-events/special-holiday-grief-support-offerings/>
- Tennessee Department of Mental Health resource website: <https://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/mental-health-services.html>
- Nashville: Holiday Activities Guide (free) - <https://nashvillefunforfamilies.com/free-holiday-fun/>

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, help can be reached 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by texting 988 from a smartphone, calling mobile crisis at 1-855-274-7471 or going to your nearest emergency room.



Walk With Us!

The out of the Darkness Walk in Centennial Park Nashville was held last month in Nashville. Dr. David Thomas, Megan Easterling, and Dontaine Oglesby attended to represent TNV.



This event was a journey of remembrance, hope, and support. It united communities and provides an opportunity to acknowledge the ways in which suicide and mental health conditions have affected our lives and the lives of those we love and care about.

Program Spotlight: TMI (TN Move Initiative)

During this holiday season, we want to highlight a TN Voices program that many people do not know about - **TMI (TN Move Initiative)**. TMI's primary purpose is to **transition individuals from the state owned regional mental health institutes to community based housing** by providing short-term intensive support services, coordinating with natural and formal supports within the individual's home community.

We currently have **30 individuals that are on our active caseload**. Those 30 live in various placements throughout Nashville; some are in our supportive housing homes, some are with family, and some are living independently. The TMI team is **made up of care coordinators and**

Certified Peer Recovery Specialists. The impact can best be shared by someone completing the program. These words were shared in a letter to the TMI staff: “You all took me in when I had absolutely no one, no chance, and taught me love and what support and family was. I want you to know you gave me purpose in my life that I never thought I had or would ever see. I will hold my head high, always remembering that I have been taught by the best of people who loved me.” Great job Lacy, Eddie, Steven, and Natalie!

[Learn More](#)

Roaring 20's Charity Casino Night







[View more pictures here!](#)

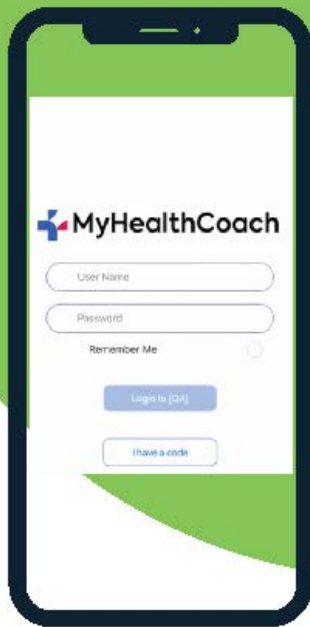


State Budget Hearing

Our CEO, Rikki Harris, attended the state budget hearing proposed by The Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. We are so grateful for Governor Bill Lee and being a part of a state that continues to invest in mental healthcare!

Rikki is the chair of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services' Planning and Policy Council alongside Paul Fuchcar, CEO of the Council for Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services.

My Health Coach App



FREE MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS APP

TN Screen is a partnership between TN Voices and My Health Coach App.

To begin click "I have a code" button. Enter code:

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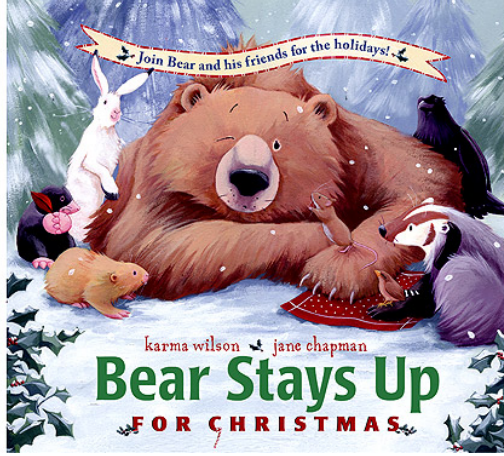
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Online Library Resources

Bear Stays up for Christmas By Miss Jill

Christmas is coming! The whole forest is buzzing with excitement. Everybody, that is, except bear. Because bears hibernate during the winter, Bear always misses out on the festivities. But this year, his friends are going to be sure that bear stays awake. If he can do it, Bear is certain to have the time of his life and may even get a special Christmas eve visit from you know who! Join the party by watching this dramatic read of Bear Stays Up for Christmas by Karma Wilson.



[Listen and Read Along Here!](#)

[View more resources in our online library here!](#)

Upcoming Trainings

Free Classes and Trainings

TN Voices offers numerous classes and trainings each month through Eventbrite.

Each training is designed uniquely to be an informative and innovative class for parents and caregivers to be enriched in a safe and positive environment.

Common Sense Parenting

6 week virtual class

Thursdays, starting December 14

10 am - 12 pm CT

Location: Virtual

For more information, contact Sharon.Purnell@tnvoices.org

Nurturing Parenting Classes

Tuesdays and Thursdays, December 14^h - January 4

5 pm - 7:30 pm CT

Location: Virtual

For more information, contact Randall.Sidwell@tnvoices.org

Parent 2 Parent

January 8-9

8 am - 3:30 pm CT

Location: Virtual

Register [here](#)

Youth Mental Health First Aid Training

January 24

8:30 am - 4 pm CT

Location: Goodlettsville, TN

For more information and to register click [here](#)

Counseling Services

TN Voices offers Counseling services for kids, teens/young adults, adults, and families. Counseling can be extremely helpful for anyone struggling with emotional difficulties, mental health concerns, academic challenges for students, or even just life challenges.



[Make a referral here!](#)



TN Voices | 800-670-9882 | tvc@tnvoices.org | www.tnvoices.org

Tennessee Voices for Children | 500 Professional Park Drive, Goodlettsville, TN 37072

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