

# Op-Ed: What can we do better to make sure all Tennesseans get the help they need?

By Commissioner Marie Williams



One in five Tennessee adults experiences a mental illness in a given year. The impact of these mental, behavioral, or emotional disorders can range from no impairment to severe impairment. The prevalence is higher among adults age 18 to 49 and among women, but women are far more likely to receive treatment than men.

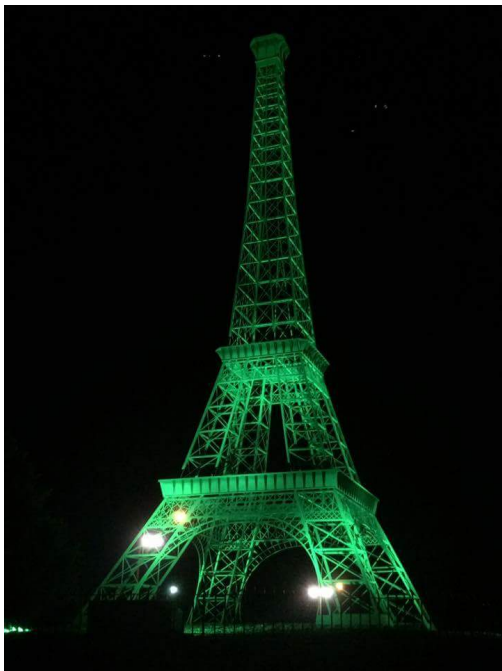
Half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14, and 75 percent surface by age 24. Here's the critical thing about our youth: national averages indicate that it takes eight to ten years from the onset of symptoms until intervention. That can lead to problems at home, problems at school, interaction with the juvenile justice system, and even thoughts of suicide. More than 90 percent of children who die by suicide have a mental health condition.

As a community, what can we do better to make sure all Tennesseans get the help they need? The [National Council for Behavioral Health](#) has a great resource entitled "[7 Super Skills to Help a Friend in Need.](#)" They list calmness, honesty, a non-judgmental attitude, empathy, resourcefulness, reassurance, and encouragement as the seven tools needed for helping someone experiencing difficulty. In addition, if you or someone you love is struggling, I encourage you to visit our website ([tn.gov/behavioral-health](http://tn.gov/behavioral-health)) and learn more about the resources that are available.

[Read the full press release](#)



## Turning TN Green for Mental Health Month in May, providers focus on Children's Mental Health Awareness



The week of May 7-11 was National Children's Mental Health Awareness Week. The hope is that throughout the year, and especially in May, we work together statewide to raise awareness and erase the stigma associated with mental health so more individuals can gain the treatment they need to move into recovery. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) joined the rest of the country in recognizing May 10, 2018, specifically, as Children's Mental Health Awareness Day.

This year's national theme was "Partnering for Health and Hope Following Trauma." [This video features some of the great people in our state](#)

[working toward this goal!](#) Tennessee communities supported this theme through the #MakeTNGreen campaign, celebrating with events and trainings, mayoral proclamations from more than 30 county and city governments, and by lighting state landmarks green to signify mental health awareness. Pictured, left: The Eiffel Tower in Paris, Tennessee!

In addition to the awareness celebrations statewide, one of our System of Care alumni, Dr. Altha Stewart, President of the American Psychiatric Association, was invited to participate in the [national children's mental health awareness event](#) hosted

in Washington, D.C.

Enjoy these highlights from Mental Health Month 2018, and we hope you'll plan to join us in next year's campaign!

## Johnson City



Children's Mental Health Awareness was announced as part of Johnson City's Commission meeting. Pictured, left to right: are Carl Counts, Frontier Health; Jill Stott, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth; Tim Perry, Frontier Health; Johnson City Mayor David Tomita; and Taylor Rumsey-Phipps, System of Care Across Tennessee (Tennessee Voices for Children).

## Kid Power 2018!

Kid Power: Empowering Kids for Success was held May 19 at Crossroads Christian Church in Gray. Attendees enjoyed a day of family-friendly entertainment and education about mental health including how to find and connect with resources in the community. More than 20 exhibitors participated. Enjoy these highlights from the Kid Power photo booth!

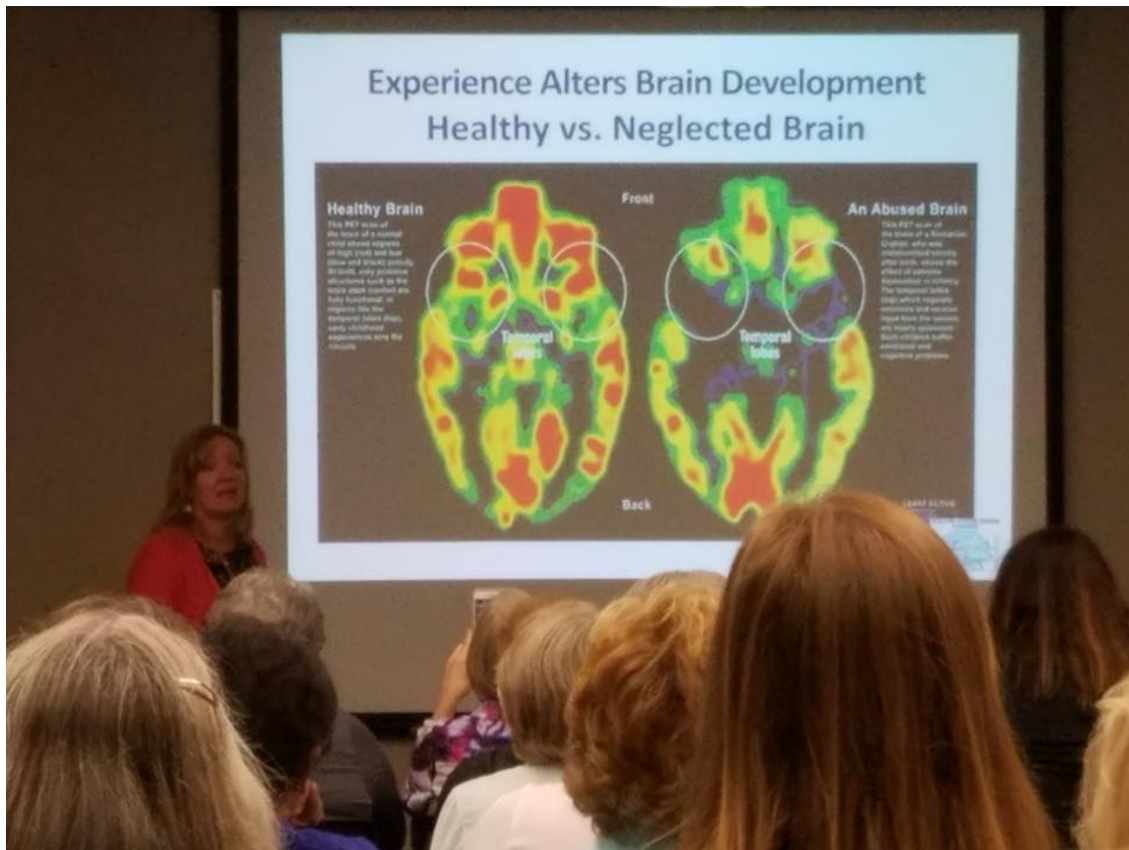








# Maryville



SOCAT Youth Divisional Coordinator Jill Murphy (Tennessee Commission on Children & Youth) presented "Childhood Trauma and the Developing Brain" at Blount

Memorial Hospital Auditorium.

# Nashville



The 2nd annual Resource Carnival for mental health awareness was held May 19 at Hadley Park Community Center. Event goers enjoyed giveaways, door prizes, games, art activities, wellness education, and had an opportunity to participate in the interactive photography project "Humans in Real Life." This project offers youth and young adults a public forum for sharing personal stories of living with a mental illness, substance abuse issue, and/or co-occurring disorder. Family members and loved ones can also share their experiences of caring for someone affected by these conditions. The portraits and stories will be published.

Pictured above: Jessica Mullins and her daughter encourage everyone to be a voice for mental health awareness! Jessica is with our Office of Children, Young Adults, and Families and serves as project director of the System of Care of Tennessee Training and Technical Assistance Center. #BeAVoice







Thanks to all the providers who participated!



Once again this year, members of the TDMHSAS Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council helped to plan and facilitate the event. We appreciate your leadership, dedication, and advocacy for the children, youth, and young adults of Tennessee!

Pictured: left to right: Will Voss, Amy Campbell, Jon Clark, Kisha Ledlow, Josh Pilarski, Jules Wilson, and Joseph Valinor.

# Jackson



Left: Proclamation signing with Vice Mayor Ernest Brooks, II  
Right: System of Care Across Tennessee staff with Mandy Hrach from WBBJ-7.



Jackson City Council Member Johnny Lee Dodd with Pathways Behavioral Health Services staff.

## Coffee County





SOCAT team at Mental Health Cooperative preparing for National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day.

# The Behavioral Health Awareness Coalition of East TN

The Behavioral Health Awareness Coalition of East TN decked out in green! \*Mental Health Awareness ribbons can be worn any day of the year as a conversation starter!





# Suicide prevention, awareness is focus for Mental Health Month at State office building



On May 22, members of the "Be the One" Suicide Prevention Workgroup hosted an information table on the first floor of the Andrew Jackson Building in Nashville. Passersby picked up materials on a variety of topics and were encouraged to identify their feelings at the Mood Board provided by Insight Counseling Centers. Pictured, **left to right**, are workgroup members: Gwen Hamer, Debbie Wynn, Kendra Wagener, and Lygia Williams.

# Mini Suicide Conference held at Manchester Church; explores ACES



To respond to several suicides that have occurred in the area within the last year, a Mini Suicide Prevention Conference was held in Manchester on April 28 at Stephens Chapel United Methodist Church. Reverend James Butler served as facilitator. Sponsored by the Rutherford County Suicide Prevention Coalition, the goals of the conference was to educate faith leaders and the general public about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in relation to suicide prevention awareness. The conference provided participants with tools to assist their parishioners and others in the community. The speakers included local mental health and parenting experts.





**Left:** Reverend James Butler, Stephens Chapel United Methodist Church

**Right:** Speaker Kim Rush



**Left:** Gwen Hamer, TDMHSAS Director of Education and Development, helped organize the event. **Right:** Thanks to Maya Allen who volunteered her time and talent.

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## Brentwood High School Wins Tennessee Together Teen PSA Competition

[Watch the winning video!](#)





NASHVILLE—The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services is proud to announce that the team from Brentwood High School won the viewer-voted Tennessee Together Teen public service announcement competition.

The video produced by Garrett Linney, Matthew King, Nicholas Walter, Ramesh Adabala, Taggart Nadasdi, Barrett Hall, Jacob Trauscht, and Bethany Foust features a striking presentation of the Pledge of Allegiance framed in the context of the opioid crisis.

“We knew we would get a lot of great submissions, but this one really blew us away, and it’s clear that the Brentwood High School entry connected with voters as well,” said TDMHSAS Commissioner Marie Williams. “We asked teens to learn more about the opioid crisis, talk about the issue with their friends, and create short videos. All seven finalists and everyone who submitted videos should be proud of their work.”

Finalist school districts included:

- Williamson County Schools
- Rutherford County Schools
- Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools
- Roane County Schools
- Knox County Schools
- Hamilton County Schools
- Kingsport City Schools

“When we were creating this campaign, we quickly identified messaging for youth and young adults as an essential but complex component,” said Matthew Parriott,

TDMHSAS Communications Director. “Not only are teens today connected in more ways than ever, they’re also savvier when it comes to messaging and marketing. That’s why the peer approach was so attractive, and we hope it will be effective in our campaign.”

The teen PSA competition is part of a year-long media awareness campaign surrounding the opioid crisis. Selected finalists from the PSA competition will be used in targeted ads on social media to speak directly to teenagers about substance misuse.

[Learn more about Tennessee Together at this link.](#)

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## Please help us welcome the Tennessee Recovery Navigators



We are excited to share about a new program and introduce you to the TN Recovery Navigators. Their mission is to help people who have experienced an overdose, assisting them as they navigate their own recovery journeys. The TN Recovery Navigators are Certified Peer Recovery Specialists (CPRS) who are in long-term recovery, have lived experience of addiction, and can help meet people where they are in their recovery. The Navigators are part of Gov. Haslam’s TN Together plan to address the opioid crisis; they will be working in targeted emergency departments across the state.

The department is very grateful to the governor and the General Assembly for prioritizing the funding for these positions so we can reach people soon after an overdose. We're excited to add them to the team and grateful for the help of our community providers who are working on this project: Buffalo Valley, Inc, CAAP, Inc, CADAS, Cherokee Health Systems, and Frontier Health.

The TN Recovery Navigators visited TDMHSAS Central Office in May for orientation. Pictured **(left to right)** are: Polly Jessen, Patrick Starnes, Ken Allison, Tracy McClain, Will Taylor, Arsanía Holmes, Sayle Hudson, Hope Johnson, Monica Tucker, and Sherman Mason.

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## Tennessee Hosts International IPS Employment Conference

Tennessee had the honor and pleasure of co-hosting the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the International IPS Learning Community on May 22-23, 2018 in Franklin Tennessee with the IPS Learning Center. The meeting brought together teams from across the country and world to provide education, networking, and discussion groups to help communities advance their IPS efforts. Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is a model of supported employment for people with serious mental illness. In Tennessee, TDMHSAS works with Department of Human Services – Vocational Rehabilitation, community behavioral health agencies, NAMI, TMHCA, TennCare and employers across the state to help Tennesseans living with mental illness gain competitive employment of their choosing.

Tennessee's IPS journey was featured in a presentation to the full conference. You can view that presentation (and an award presentation to an employer champion) at [this link](#).

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Click to view Tennessee's presentation at the International IPS Learning Community annual meeting.

## Faith and Recovery Forum

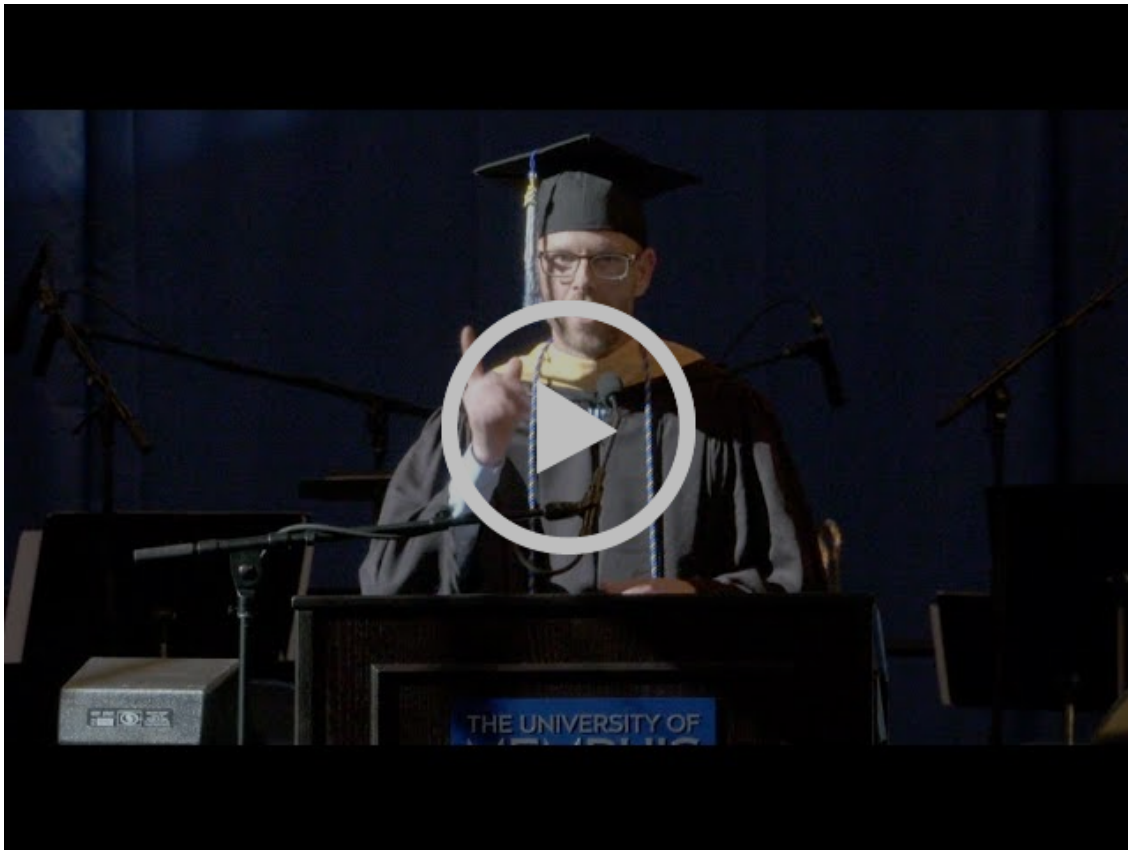


Commissioner Williams had a great time speaking with folks at the Faith and Recovery Forum at Alamo First Christian Church on May 31. Pictured are (Left to right): Brannon Powell – Project Lifeline Region 6N, Franz Nolen – Ripley Fire Dept. Chaplain, State Rep.

Craig Fitzhugh, Emily Oswald – Crockett County Health Department, Christy Bane – Prevention Alliance of Dyersburg & Dyer County, Melesa Lassiter – Regional Overdose Prevention Specialist Region 6N, Xavier Andrews – Prevention Alliance of Lauderdale, Commissioner Marie Williams, Mary Duncan – Milan Prevention Coalition, Monty Burks – TDMHSAS Director of Faith Based Initiatives, Suzanne Harper – Weakley County Prevention Coalition

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## Congratulations to Jack Wyatt!



*Jack Wyatt, former coordinator with TN's Lifeline Project, is now the Executive Director of the Memphis Area Prevention Coalition. He graduated with his Masters of Social Work at the University of Memphis and was asked to deliver the commencement speech. View his inspiring speech in the link above.*

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## **TDMHSAS welcomes Technical Assistance Coordinator**





Welcome Lindsay Sinicki, our new Technical Assistance Coordinator within the Office of Children, Young Adults, & Families. Lindsay has five years of experience within the mental health field and comes to us from Mental Health America of Middle Tennessee where she was the Program Manager for the Erase the Stigma program. She holds a Master of Science in Social Work from the University of Tennessee and a Bachelor of Science in Family and Child Sciences from Florida State University. In addition to program management, Lindsay has experience providing administrative support, quality assurance, planning and implementing trainings, grant writing, research, and event planning. She is an avid volunteer and has helped to organize several large community fundraising events, such as Relay For Life.

In her role at TDMHSAS, Lindsay will be working alongside Project Director Jessica Mullins, assisting in the development of our System of Care Training & Technical Assistance Center (TTA). She will provide logistical support for the TTA Center, including: handling requests for training and technical assistance; planning, scheduling, and implementing trainings; reviewing System of Care website resources; and providing administrative assistance.

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## Celebrating, thanking staff at statewide Employee Appreciation events

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**Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute:** Security staff members Ted Cleghorn and Janet Williams; Hospital Administrator Charles Dickens; Executive Housekeeper Jimmy West; and John Crawley, Director of Human Resources, enjoy "Popcorn Extravaganza" in the lobby.



**Western Mental Health Institute:** Administrator Mike Murley presents housekeeping staff member Louise Lockett with a 32" TV purchased by Executive



Staff for Employee Appreciation Day. In addition to the Grand Prize drawing, WMHI employees enjoyed a treat of hot dogs and chips.



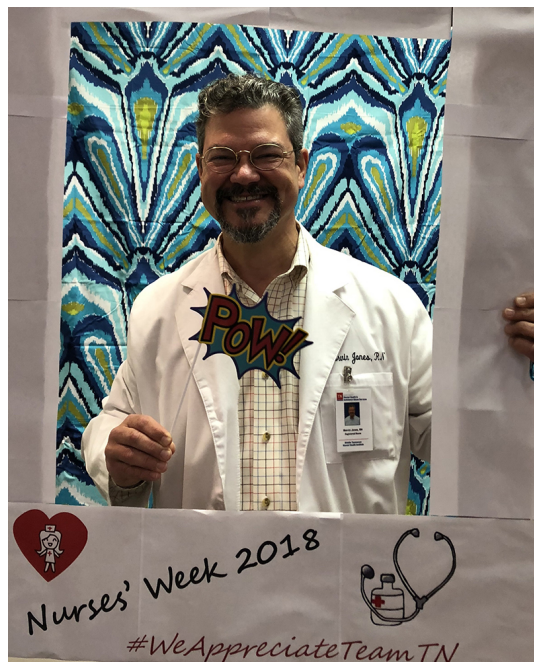
**Central Office:** Executive Staff started their day by delivering donuts, coffee, and fruit to employees.

## We ❤️ our nurses!

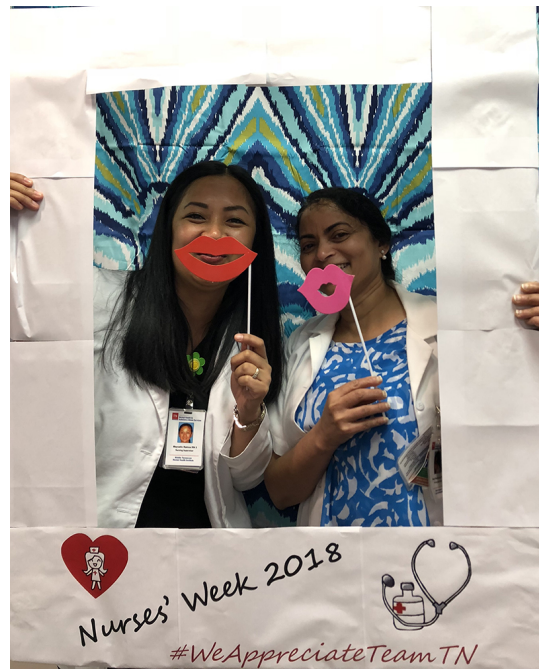
We appreciate our nurses every day of the year. Here are a few highlights from **Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute** as they celebrated Nurses Week 2018!



Katherine and Catherine







Left: Marvin  
Right: Mayce and Vincy



Left: Belisza and Gary  
Right: Kathy and Nancy



# Save-the-Date!

## Upcoming Planning & Policy Council Meetings

The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Planning and Policy Council is made up of mental health and substance abuse service providers, consumers, family members, advocates and other stakeholders. Its mission is to advise the department about the service system, policy development,

legislation, budget requests, system evaluation, and monitoring. The next meeting of the Statewide Planning & Planning Council is scheduled for:

**Tuesday, June 12**

**10 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

**Tennessee School for the Blind | Professional Development Room | Nashville**

Upcoming Regional Planning & Planning Council meetings:

**Region I**

**Tuesday, August 7 | 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. EDT | Frontier Health Corporate Offices (Gray)**

**Region II**

**Wednesday, August 8 | 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. EDT | Helen Ross McNabb Center (Knoxville)**

**Region III**

**Thursday, July 19 | 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. EDT | AIM Center (Chattanooga)**

**Region IV**

**Wednesday, August 1 | 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. CDT | TAADAS (Nashville)**

**Region V**

**Thursday, August 2 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. CDT | TAADAS (Nashville)**

**Region VI**

**Tuesday, July 10 | 1:30 p.m. - 3 p.m. CDT | Pathways (Jackson)**

**Region VII**

**Tuesday, July 24 | 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. CDT | Lowenstein House East (Memphis)**

For more information on the TDMHSAS Planning & Policy Council and for a complete list of scheduled meetings, please visit our website: <https://bit.ly/2LLrUNq>





For questions about substance abuse treatment,  
**Call the Tennessee REDLINE**  
**800-889-9789**



**In the event of a  
MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY:**

**Call 855-CRISIS-1**  
**\*855-274-7471**

For confidential help  
from a caring crisis professional  
in your area, available  
**24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

This is a free call.

To learn more about Crisis Services in the  
State of Tennessee, [visit our website](#).

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