

Managing mental health is an ongoing journey

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and so it is a good time for me to encourage you to prioritize your own mental health every day. As human service professionals, we play a vital role in supporting the well-being of our clients, but we must also take care of ourselves. If we don't, we will burn out quickly. It's not something I want for any of you. In fact, I want you all to be mentally healthy. It's what makes you

From the Acting Commissioner

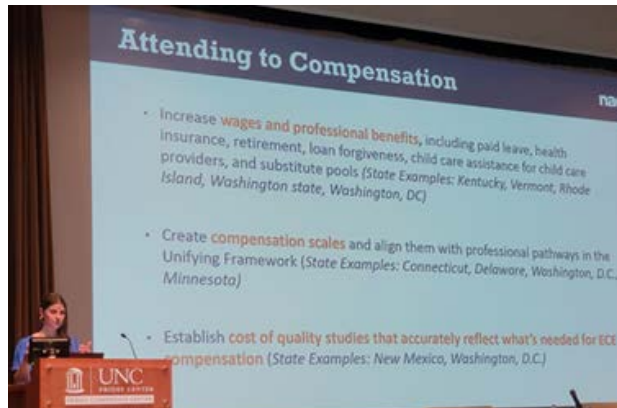


great role models for clients and what makes you amazing caring professionals. But mostly it makes you the best versions of yourself. With that in mind, here are some tips to achieve good mental health



Prioritize self-care: Make time for activities that bring you joy and relaxation, such as exercise, reading, or spending time with loved ones.

[Read more here](#)



A big DCBS Shout Out goes to our **Division of Child Care** and their partners. Last month our DCC Director Andrea Day, attended the national T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood National Center's Early Childhood Education Workforce Convening in Chapel Hill, N.C. The second day's plenary session was given by Lauren Hogan, Managing Director of Policy and Professional Advancement at the National Association for the Education of Young Children and Katie Hamm, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, Office of Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Lauren Hogan mentioned Kentucky as having key initiatives to increase wages and benefits as an example of working to improve provider compensation. Good work, DCC and partners for getting a shout out on a national platform! Child care is essential.

Shout Out to several staff who were recognized through the feedback from our recent Division of Service Regions Youth Experience Survey. **Chase Burkett**, Salt River Trail Service Region; **Kelly Kitchens**, Two Rivers Service Region; and **Nisa Lacey**, Cumberland Service Region were all given high praise.

[Read more here](#)

Nominations Open for Staff Awards

Acting Commissioner Lesa Dennis has issued the Call for Nominations for the 2023 DCBS Employee Recognition Awards.

There are several award categories.

The Commissioner's Awards honor staff from each of the department's nine regions and from each of these department divisions:

- Division of Protection and Permanency
- Division of Family Support
- Division of Child Care
- Division of Prevention and Community Well-Being
- Division of Administration and Financial Management
- Division of Service Regions

Four special awards honor exemplary leadership.

[Read more here](#)

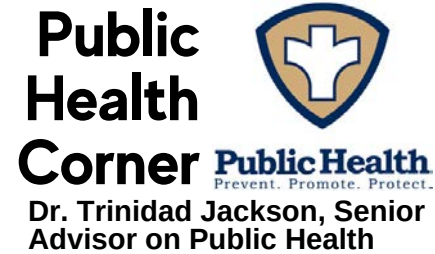
Unity helps achieve public health goals

Hello DCBS!

In last month's newsletter, I mentioned that we are ALL key actors in the public health system.

As social service workers, we ALL influence access to the human rights that some of our most beloved, yet targeted and structurally oppressed community members deserve.

Important actions that must be systematically executed in order to complement public health justice include capturing data that illustrate conditions and patterns; using data to educate and inform decision making; communicating population-level needs in culturally responsive ways; and organizing and mobilizing people to action in ways that paralyze oppression and catalyze liberation.



Check out [this video](#) to explore ways that key actors work together to achieve public health goals.

DSR Update: On-call support plan & MEP

On April 1st, 2023, Central Intake implemented an On Call Support Protocol to support regional staff while on call. The purpose of this support plan allows for the regional level leadership on-call to consult with Central Intake when further consults are needed regarding difficult situations for screening.

Central Intake has created an on-call schedule, rotating Supervisors and Chief's from the Central Intake Branch, who will be on call and available to consult when needed with the regions. Calendars, the On-Call Support Protocol, along with the most up to date Central Intake Staff directory have been shared with all service regions and accessible on the On-Call SharePoint site. When faced with challenging screening decisions while assessing referrals received on-call, regional staff will follow current regional processes, and if further consultation is needed, will loop for support from Central Intake.

The Division of Service Regions is hopeful that by providing this extra layer of support to our local staff, screening capacity will be enhanced amongst the service regions, training trends can be tracked and implemented, and structured decision making can be further supported afterhours for the children and adults that DCBS serves.

CAC/MEP

Central Intake in the Division of Service Regions has been working jointly with TWIST and our external CAC (Child Advocacy Center) partners to create an interface between TWIST and CAC's database, to automatically share reports of child abuse and neglect (115's) to our CAC partners to support Multidisciplinary Enhancement Program (MEP) expansion statewide. In short this means our highly valued, long-term CAC community partners are able to also engage in working with families at a community level, even if not referred directly by the DCBS Agency via a screened in report that is assigned for investigation.

It is a focused effort geared at furthering prevention, community response, and resource linkage connections for families and children. In late April 2023, system updates rolled out, which included intakes automatically being sent to the Child Advocacy Center's. Currently Central Intake has been piloting the MEP project, and manually sending to 3 designated counties in the Commonwealth (Boyd, Boone, and Graves), however, with the updates in the TWIST System, the CAC's statewide will be able to automatically receive 115's, to their local counties which will in turn allow for more families across the state to be reached and served through MEP.

One aspect of MEP involves enhancing communication systems amongst team members for the purpose of improving the team's response to each report of child abuse.

Data from the pilot project, which launched in 2019, shows that when CACs receive intake reports - enabling them to coordinate the joint investigation, the MDT response, and CAC services earlier in the investigation - more children and families receive the coordinated response and services required by law in Kentucky and agreed upon by the MDT.

Kentucky's General Assembly reviewed the success of the MEP in the pilot locations and decided to invest \$5.5 million of the state's budget to expand these collaborative efforts statewide, including the information-sharing component. This is a wonderful response to the collaborative efforts of the local CACs and DCBS!

Please be on the lookout for further updates from our CAC partners to come with more specifics on the roll-out plan, as with the current technology now in place, the CACs are working internally with goals to fully implement in all Kentucky counties by July 2024.

CQI survey open to stakeholders

DCBS stakeholders are invited to complete the Division of Service Region's Community Partner Survey. This survey is unique in that it seeks to both collect input and engage our collaborative Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) efforts together. It is an intentional focus to increase and improve stakeholder engagement. This survey will be utilized across a broad scope of CQI endeavors and convenings. Additionally, results will be shared back with stakeholders so that DCBS, as well as the partners receive the results to utilize within their respective roles and shared endeavors. It is mutually beneficial. Stakeholders may access the survey at <https://tinyurl.com/DCBSCommunityPartnerSurvey> or scan the code at left. DSR appreciates partners' time and effort as survey participants!



Dog Bite Prevention Tips

Every year, we have several of our staff who are attacked and bitten by dogs. These incidents often require emergency medical services.

Our Division of Service Region leadership asks staff to take a few minutes to please review the dog bite prevention tips [here](#).

And, please print and share this [dog bite prevention handout](#) with your teams. Stay safe!

Kentucky Community Partner Survey

We want to hear

Caregivers
DCBS Staff
Parents
Community Partners & Providers
Program Assistance Participants
Foster Parents
Child & Adult Welfare System Collaborators

FROM YOU

Kentucky
CQI
Assessment
Implementation
Evaluation
Continuous Quality Improvement

TEAM KENTUCKY
CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

6 percent salary increase in effect July 1

Reminder: The 6 percent salary increase for eligible state employees announced by Gov. Andy Beshear in March will be effective July 1, 2023.

Interim employees are not eligible. All eligible employees will receive a 6% salary increase, based on current monthly salary or hourly rate - not to be confused with an annual increment.

Visitation rooms add inclusion-focused books



Above left: In Harrison County, pictured are Kellie Rose SSCL II and Aaliyah Nzola SSWII.

Above right: In Nicholas County, pictured are Phyllis Albright, Nicholas County Library and Angel Templin, Nicholas County SSWI.

Keeping a focus on racial equity and inclusion, The Division of Service Region Racial Equity and Inclusion Core team collaborated with public libraries all across the Commonwealth. So far four counties, including Nicholas, Clinton and Harrison, have added children's books focused on equity and inclusion to visitation rooms for families and children with a total of 39 books donated so far!

Thank you to our Library Community Partners!



Clinton County: Rushteen Hughes, Clinton County Library, Chelsea Shoopman Riley, SSWI, Courtney Guthrie DCBS Practicum student, Margaret England, Clinton Co. Library, Kalyn Strunk, FSOS

South Central Neighborhood Place reopens in Jefferson

DCBS Jefferson Service Region Administrator Amanda Gehring joined Jefferson staff and other Louisville leaders last month for the reopening of the South Central Neighborhood Place. Louisville's network of Neighborhood Places provide vital community services, including those from DCBS. Congratulations South Central on opening to the public once again!



Boyd, Jefferson and Kenton START teams honored with national certification

The START - Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams - programs in Boyd, Jefferson and Kenton counties were named certified local START affiliates by the National Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams Training and Technical Assistance Program at Children and Family Futures. Framed certificates were presented to each team earlier this month. At each presentation, START Director John Lewis and Assistant Director Kathy Kleier-Coates were joined by department and regional leadership as well as partner providers and staff from Children and Family Futures. This new designation is a three-year certification for programs that focus on collaborative, early intervention in families who are at higher risk of child abuse and neglect due to a parent's substance misuse. The three Kentucky counties are among the first five counties nationally to achieve this status. Congratulations START on this amazing accomplishment and all it means for your service to families and children!



Top: Boyd County
Middle: Kenton County
Bottom: Jefferson County





Northern Bluegrass, Salt River Trail join for leadership retreat

Last month, leadership from our Northern Bluegrass and Salt River Trail service regions gathered for a staff retreat to talk about regional issues and challenges and commit to department strategic plan priorities. It was a good meeting to exchange ideas and solutions for these staff representing 29 counties. Thank you Northern Blue and Salt River Trail for prioritizing children, adults and families of your communities!



Northeastern leadership meets

Meeting this month was our Northeastern Service Region leadership team, including supervisors from the Division of Family Support and the Division of Protection and Permanency and other regional management. Each Service Region Administrator Associate's team chose a theme to dress as for the meeting, and Acting Commissioner Lesa Dennis and Chief of Staff Shannon Hall presented the best costume award. The winners: Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs! Other themes included camouflage, the Incredibles and rockin' concerts. Thank you for sharing and giving us smiles, Northeastern!



Acting Commissioner Lesa Dennis, Social Service Clinician II Fonda Walker and Service Region Clinical Associate Angela Lane.

Walker wins WKU Child Welfare leadership award

Congratulations to Two Rivers Service Region Social Service Clinician II Fonda Walker, winner of the LifeSkills Center for Child Welfare Education and Research Angela Lane Community Award for Outstanding Leadership in Child Welfare.



NECCO Chief Strategy Officer Pam Priddy, Acting Commissioner Lesa Dennis, Children's Alliance President Michelle Sanborn and Maryhurst President and CEO Paula Garner.

Gov. Beshear announces \$41.5 million for foster care

Earlier this month, Gov. Andy Beshear announced \$41.5 million to support foster children and those who provide them care. He presented a ceremonial check for \$21.5 million to three leaders representing the state's 45 providers and their 120-plus foster care agencies. The funding is from two sources: A one-time allocation of \$21.5 million, which is available due to cost savings secured by the administration, and \$20 million provided by an emergency regulation from the state budget to fund a higher monthly reimbursement rate.

Foster Friendly app launches statewide



This Foster Care Month we celebrate the statewide launch of the new Foster Friendly app, which connects foster and kinship families with businesses and faith-based groups that want to support them with discounts and programming. Our staff joined our terrific partners Kentucky Kids Belong at Foster Friendly Day in Louisville earlier this month. It's a great resource for foster parents to find discounts on goods and services and helpful support.



Branch Manager Veronica Jordan-Sears, Assistant Director Kelli Root, Kentucky Kids Belong's Valerie Buccola and Dayna Gleason, Social Service Specialist Tim Hodge at Foster Friendly Day in Louisville this May.

Download the Foster Friendly app from the Apple App Store or Google Play. Thank you foster parents and thank you Kentucky Kids Belong! Learn more about Kentucky Kids Belong at <https://americaskidsbelong.org/states/KY/>.

Trusted Advisors meet

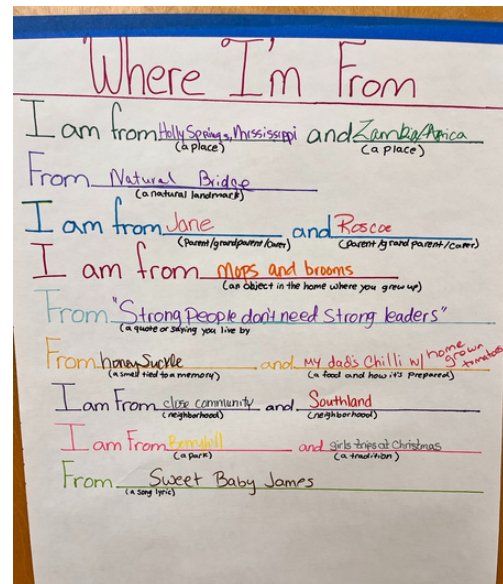
Last month, our DCBS Trusted Advisors Council, a team formalized last year and made up of many of our stakeholders, including advocates, partners and existing or former clients, met to discuss department policy and goals.

This group with lived experience helps our leadership team by guiding policy and strategic planning. Thank you, Trusted Advisors!



New Division of Prevention and Community Well-Being meets to discuss vision, goals

The new Division of Prevention and Community Well-Being had a two-day retreat this month to get to know each other and discuss division and department goals, values and vision. Yolanda Green-Rogers of Chapin Hall also joined the team.



Child Abuse Prevention Month events educate communities

Our teams across the state coordinated so many educational and engaging family events for Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. Here are some great images of our Clark County DCBS team all in blue at the Clark County Community Child Abuse Prevention event, and of our Division of Prevention and Community Well-Being staff at the Child Abuse Prevention Month Wrap-Up Event from Seven Counties Services and the Community Collaboration for Children.



Castlight app puts insurance info at your fingertips

Castlight brings your insurance benefits, providers and healthcare spending together. When you download Castlight, you can:

- Connect with a Care Guide
- Find in-network high-quality providers
- Review your medical claims

Download the Castlight app to register or visit mycastlight.com/mybenefits. Registration takes less than a minute!

Register for Castlight by May 31 and you will be entered to win a \$25 VISA gift card.

DCBS staff to be featured in upcoming Healing through Writing webinar

DCBS employees are invited to attend the one-hour virtual discussion, Healing Through Writing, featuring DCBS staff Jessica Bowman, Melinda Vise, Mary Kay Williams-Duff and Angela D. Green. It's at 2 p.m. EDT on Thursday, May 25. Learn how Healing Through Writing was created, hear some of the entries, and engage in conversation about how writing can support well-being and resilience.

With supervisor's pre-approval, employees may attend this program on work time (Coded 1REG). Supervisors are strongly encouraged to allow employees to attend.

Register at <https://bit.ly/41CtMOi>.



HEALING THROUGH WRITING


SAVE THE DATE

A CONVERSATION WITH JESSICA BOWMAN, MELINDA VISE, MARY KAY WILLIAMS-DUFF & ANGELA D. GREEN

THURSDAY MAY 25, 2:00 P.M. (EASTERN TIME)

Learn how DCBS supported Healing through Writing, a resilience-building project open to all staff, and hear some of the powerful work created.

This is Us Showing Our Support To End Elder Abuse In Kentucky



**Join us at the Capitol Rotunda
On June 15th, 2023
From 10:00—11:30am
In honor of World
Elder Abuse
Awareness Day**

How to SIT LESS & MOVE MORE

FIVE TIPS FOR INCORPORATING MOVEMENT INTO YOUR DAY!

1

Take more walks. Try to schedule at least one each day, and encourage your coworkers or family members to join you. Walking partners are a great way to stay accountable and have fun! Walking not your thing? Go for a bike ride for a low-impact alternative!

2

Throughout your day, set alarms on your phone. When it goes off, take time to stretch, walk to the faucet or water fountain to refill your water, go get the mail, or just move to the other side of your house or office. This can provide a boost of energy.

3

Turn inactive situations into fun opportunities for movement. Stand or pace while you are on the phone. Try doing a few squats or stretches while brushing your teeth or waiting for your food to reheat in the microwave. Enjoy music? Then feel the groove and move your body while listening to some tunes.

4

Work on improving your home. While this may not always sound fun, cleaning or yard work will get you active and moving around. Try vacuuming after dinner or dusting before settling down to watch TV. Raking leaves, scrubbing an outdoor staircase, or pruning some plants are great ways to get active minutes.

5

Intentionally stand more. Create a makeshift standing desk, stand while you fold laundry, or make a dinner that takes a little extra prep time. If you have limited mobility, you can still participate in and benefit from incorporating movements. Some movement is better than none at all.



AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION. "RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN ADULTS AND KIDS." [HTTPS://WWW.HEART.ORG/EN/HEALTHY-LIVING/FITNESS/FITNESS-BASICS/AHA-RECS-FOR-PHYSICAL-ACTIVITY-IN-ADULTS](https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/fitness-basics/aha-recs-for-physical-activity-in-adults). ACCESSED 04/27/2022.

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