



**Summer 2018  
was a time  
of growth!**

One of the highlights of summer is tending to the garden. Staff and patients at Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute did that in their own community garden. Back for a second year, the garden welcomed the addition of several elevated and accessible raised beds. Recreational Therapists **Kaleigh Perlotto** and **Tiffany L. Jones (pictured)** were instrumental in the design of the garden. They also worked with patients to plant and care for a variety of vegetables, fruits, and flowers. Many of the plants were originally donated by friends, family, and organizations including the Lookout Mountain Beautiful Garden Club. **Ryan Beckett**, Director of Adjunctive Therapy, is also pictured along with the miniature watermelons MBMHI harvested this year.

*Submitted by Susan Feltman.*

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**September is Recovery Month, but let's celebrate**

# hope, healing, and new beginnings year-round!

By Commissioner Marie Williams



What does recovery mean to you? Does it mean sore muscles after an intense workout? Does it mean a moment's peace after you put the kids to bed? Does it mean finding something of value that you lost long ago? For Tennesseans living with mental health and substance abuse issues, recovery means that and so much more: it is the process through which people are able to live, learn, work, and fully participate in their communities.

As we near the end of Recovery Month in Tennessee and across the country, it's a special time to celebrate the achievements of people who are in recovery living with mental illness and addiction, to encourage those in treatment that there is hope, and to remove the stigma for those living with untreated issues and encourage them to reach out for the help that they need.

No matter a how person connects to treatment resources through the community of behavioral health providers, whether it's through private insurance, TennCare, veterans' benefits, services funded by the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, or another method, one thing is certain: there is hope for a life of recovery. The examples are all around us. People at work, in school, in the line at the grocery store, in the pew next to you at church, they're all living lives of recovery every day. It's no different from someone with diabetes managing their insulin levels. Behavioral health conditions are often chronic, but with proper assessment, intervention, medication, wraparound services, and recovery supports, these conditions can be overcome for we all know that recovery is real.

In a time when addiction and mental illness are touching more and more families, we join together with our neighbors to celebrate recovery and advocate for increased access to recovery pathways. One such attempt is through our Tennessee Together campaign. Led by Governor Haslam and supported by the Tennessee General Assembly, TN Together is focusing on stories of recovery this month by featuring the stories of three families touched by opioid addiction. One is a young woman and her mother living with a multi-generational cycle of addiction. Another is a young man and his parents who are simply thankful for each new day. The third is a mother who overdosed and nearly died from the addiction she developed after taking prescription medication she received after her last pregnancy. They all have several things in common: good families, good homes, a lot of hard work, and immense gratitude for their new life in recovery. [You can view the videos at this link.](#)

If you want to take the first step to a life of recovery from addiction issues, call the Tennessee REDLINE at 1-800-889-9789. If you're experiencing a mental health crisis and need help, please call our statewide crisis line at 1-855-CRISIS-1. It is through the partnership of our faith-based organizations, community behavioral health partners, peers with lived experience in recovery, and family members that we will continue to make Tennessee a recovery-friendly state.

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TAADAS honors Commissioner Marie Williams,

# Director Monty Burks at annual awards banquet



The Tennessee Association of Alcohol, Drug, and other Addiction Services and its members celebrated another successful year of helping Tennesseans find a new life in recovery at its annual Recovery Month Banquet and Awards. **Commissioner Marie Williams** and **Monty Burks** were honored for their leadership. (Left) TAADAS recognized Commissioner Williams with the Voice of Recovery Award. They acknowledged the enthusiasm and joy that she brings to her job. More from the awards program:

*Commissioner Williams builds relationships that make things possible, both within and outside her department. Her commitment to this field brought new treatment resources, and grants while bringing awareness to the need for recovery services within the Governor's office and cabinet as well as every community she visited. Commissioner Williams initiated public-private partnerships that will enhance service delivery while implementing new Federal Opioid treatment response grants and treatment navigator services in our state.*

(Below) TDMHSAS Director of Faith-Based Initiatives Monty Burks, PhD. was honored as the TAADAS Volunteer of the Year. He stands with Commissioner Williams and several of Tennessee's Lifeline coordinators. Dr. Burks was instrumental in implementing the Lifeline Project soon after coming to work with the State of Tennessee. Additional awards were given to Trina Frierson with Mending Hearts Inc. who was named CEO of the Year and to Judge Seth Norman who received the Lifetime Achievement Award.



## Another Successful ECR Launch!

*MBMHI is the third of four Regional Mental Health Institutes to launch Electronic Clinical Records*



*All hands on deck! Electronic Clinical Records would not be possible without our IT staff and technical experts!*



*Preparation begins months in advance of launch. This group of MBMHI staff successfully completed Train-the-Trainer classes in July.*



*On launch day, MBMHI "Super Users" were ready to make the leap to ECR! They are all smiles with **CEO Mary Young** (far right). Way to go, Moccasin Bend!*

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**#BeThe1 to Speak up to Save Lives During Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and beyond**





Suicide is 100% preventable! Staff from Central Office wore purple, teal, and gray on Friday, Sept. 28 for suicide prevention awareness. Thanks to everyone working to prevent suicide in Tennessee every day of the year.

## Suicide Prevention in the Workplace

*Submitted by Kendra L. Wagener, Forensic Specialist*

We spend a good portion of our day at work, and we get to know our coworkers fairly well during that time. This puts us in a good position to notice any changes in behavior that might indicate someone is at risk for suicide or other mental health problems.

Suicide impacts everyone, and is no respecter of age — but the majority of suicide deaths in the United States are working-age adults, ages 24-64, especially men. Some problems place people at a greater risk for suicide such as having a prior attempt, a mood or anxiety disorder, a substance use disorder, or a triggering traumatic event. While coworkers may not be privy to risk factors, there are warning signs which can indicate greater risk.

Some warning signs for suicide include: Is your coworker talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live? Have they had a recent, painful loss or change in their life? Are they increasing their use of alcohol or drugs? Are they acting anxious or agitated or behaving recklessly, withdrawing or isolating from coworkers, friends or family? Are they neglecting their appearance or hygiene? Are they giving away personal items or making final arrangements? Are they displaying extreme mood swings?

When we notice these things, we may feel awkward or not know when or how to ask anything other than “How are you doing?” Yet you may be the one in the unique position to reach out when no one else can. If you are unsure how to respond, stay with the person and let them know you will connect them with a resource that will help. To begin to intervene, engage them in conversation by developing trust with a statement such as “I can hear the pain in your voice, please tell me what is going on?” Then, listen attentively.

Listen without judging, express empathy, remain calm and accepting by letting them know they did the right thing by sharing their feelings. It is okay to ask if they are having suicidal thoughts in a manner such as "Sometimes when people feel as you do, they think about suicide. Are you thinking about suicide?" Please be careful not to shut down the conversation in the following manner, "You're not thinking of suicide, are you?" This sends a message that you are scared or not ready to talk about suicide, and that it is not safe to talk about. If you don't feel ready to discuss suicide, simply stay with the person and let them know you will connect them with a resource that will help.

If suicide is an immediate concern, do not leave this person alone, keep them talking by asking open ended questions and listening attentively. If unable to connect them with a professional, contact a supervisor. If lethal means are present, signal a coworker to call 911. If suicide is not in the near future, let them know you care, provide them resources and follow up with them and check in with them to see how they are doing. Be mindful of differences in cultural background and how people's attitudes towards death, suicide, mental health, and help-seeking may be very different from your own, and respond accordingly. Some may not be willing to see a therapist, but would be willing to talk with a faith leader.

If you are feeling suicidal, please talk to somebody. State employees can reach the State Employment Assistance Program at [www.Here4TN.com](http://www.Here4TN.com) or 855-437-3486, and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255. For more immediate assistance contact the statewide crisis phone line at 855-CRISIS-1 (855-274-7471). If you prefer, check out Lifeline Crisis Chat or Crisis Text Line by texting 'Go' to 741741.

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## Recovery Month wraps with notable Nashville events

The last week of September was a fantastic time for learning and inspiration surrounding substance abuse issues in our state as two large gatherings were held on back to back days.

The Medication Assisted Treatment Training Institute (pictured above) was held Monday, Sept. 24. Attendees packed a ballroom at the Nashville Airport Marriott to hear from leaders with TDMHSAS and TennCare, professionals and thought leaders in Tennessee's treatment continuum, and people with lived experience of addiction. The training institute featured several combined sessions and a pair of parallel breakout tracks for those interested in administrative or clinical perspectives.

On Tuesday, Sept. 25, the Metro Public Health Department held the Nashville Summit on Addiction. Keynote speaker Patrick Kennedy energized the crowd to fight for parity in behavioral health coverage and inspired people with his personal story of overcoming addiction. Other highlights included a welcome from Nashville Mayor David Briley, an update on efforts at the state level from Commissioner Marie Williams, a powerful panel discussion featuring voices of long-term recovery led by Monty Burks, and the uplifting presence of emcee Trina Frierson.



*Speakers for the Nashville Summit on Addiction included: Commissioner Marie Williams, advocate and former Congressman Patrick Kennedy, Nashville Mayor David Briley, and Mending Hearts CEO Trina Frierson.*

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## System of Care Across Tennessee conference:



# Connected 4 Children, Young Adults, Families



*Submitted by Lindsay Sinicki, SOCAT Technical Assistance Coordinator*

The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, in partnership with the Tennessee Commission on Children & Youth and the Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations, hosted the sixth annual System of Care Across Tennessee Conference Sept. 21-22. The theme of the conference was: Connecting 4 Children, Young Adults, & Families.

*(Pictured: Keri Virgo, SOCAT Director)*

Because Tennessee has been building systems of care that foster hope and resiliency for our youngest citizens to our young adults and their families for nearly two decades, this year's conference offered four unique tracks: Infant and Early Childhood; Engaging Youth and Young Adults; All About Families; and Evidence-Based & Evidence-Informed Practices.

To enhance the continued learning and networking opportunities, conference attendees had the opportunity to participate in multiple tracks, attend two keynote addresses by Dr. Marva Lewis and Sam Davidson, listen to poems from young adults via Southern Word, and participate and have their voices represented in an interactive board by The Sketch Effect. The conference target audience included youth, young adults, families, community partners, state agencies, and individuals who have an interest in behavioral health in Tennessee and it was a great success! Thanks to all who participated!



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## TN Faces of the Opioid Crisis: Submit your story

The Tennessee Department of Health is launching a new public education campaign on addiction, and they

want your help. One component of the campaign, “TN Faces of the Opioid Crisis,” will tell personal stories of people from all 95 Tennessee counties who have been impacted by the epidemic. Their photos and stories will be posted online at [www.TNTogether.org](http://www.TNTogether.org) as an interactive map with links to opioid abuse prevention resources within each county and activities designed for individuals or groups to implement in their own communities. Some stories will also be featured in media advertisements.

TDH is seeking individuals who would be willing to serve as an ambassador for the “TN Faces of the Opioid Crisis” campaign. They're looking for people who demonstrate the broad impact of this crisis: candidates may be someone in recovery; someone with a family member or friend impacted by opioid abuse; a health care professional; a law enforcement officer or other first responder; an educator or caregiver; a business owner; a faith leader, etc.

Participants will be photographed and asked to share their stories of how they have been personally impacted by the opioid crisis.

***If you are interested or know an individual who would be willing to represent his/her county in this campaign, email [TNFaces.Health@tn.gov](mailto:TNFaces.Health@tn.gov) with your contact information, county of residence, story and photo.***

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## Our newest Crisis Services Outstanding Employee is Volunteer Behavioral Health's Angela Duncan



*Submitted by Nancy Carroll, Volunteer Behavioral Health*

Angela Duncan has worked for Johnson Mental Health Center, a division of Volunteer Behavioral Health, since April 1, 1993. She served as a case manager and began working part-time in the Crisis Services department answering the phone. On July 1, 2004 she became Coordinator for the Volunteer Behavioral Health Crisis Call Center.

Angela and her team dispatch five mobile crisis teams, direct individuals to the two Crisis Walk-in Centers, and respond to crisis calls. She has taken calls that require sound clinical judgment, quick thinking, concentration, and patience to assist callers in all kinds of situations. Angela has trained many staff. She has come in as needed to work shifts to make sure her staff had holidays, vacation, and time off to take care of themselves and their families.

Angela is small in stature but powerful when it comes to supporting her staff and making sure our callers get the assistance they need. She keeps a smile on her face and a positive attitude. She has used her wisdom and patience to make sure she and staff are responding quickly for face-to-face assessments and providing the proper documentation. She has coordinated calls for 30 counties in Tennessee and 10 counties in Georgia when we were contracted to assist with the Georgia crisis calls. She has processed calls

from all across the United States through her work with the nationwide Lifeline and attended training in New York and Baltimore to gain more knowledge and skills. She is active in Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network meetings and conferences.

Angela has survived at least three major changes in computer systems. She has worked in the dark when the power was off, in the heat, and in the cold. She has traveled to work in thunderstorms and when her own home was affected by tornadoes and she had to walk over trees in the road to get to work. She has driven on icy and snowy roads. She recently coordinated a move to a new location for the Crisis Call Center and a new phone system.

Angela's husband and family can attest to her dedication to her family as well as to her career. We are so proud to have an Outstanding Employee like Angela working in our Crisis Services Department.

To nominate a TN Crisis Services worker for this honor, [visit our website](#).

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## Peer Leadership Academy empowers young adults, TN Family Support Specialists

*Submitted by Jules Wilson, TDMHSAS Youth & Young Adult Coordinator*

It is hard to believe that it has been a month since System of Care Across Tennessee partnered with Tennessee Voices for Children to host the Peer Leadership Academy at the beautiful Westin Hotel in downtown Nashville. This was our second year of having a group of young adults come together to learn about leadership skills, but our first year of collaborating with TN Family Support Specialists to create two days of combined education and fun. As Heather Taylor-Griffith, Director of the Office of Children, Young Adults, and Families, put it in her welcoming letter: "We are confronting a time of many changes surrounding the services rendered by Peer Support Leaders across the nation, and we are gearing up to meet fully equipped."



The Peer Leadership Academy offered two tracks – one for the Young Adults and one for the Family. The tracks came together to share meals and the keynote sessions then split up for afternoon sessions catered to the specific interests of each group. Dr. Dan LaBreton, a lecturer at Vanderbilt University, spoke on Saturday about the steps to successfully engaging in Prosocial Leadership, and Melissa Gordon, the program creator and director for Teen Intern and Mentor Experience (T.I.M.E.), delivered a thought-provoking presentation about Implicit Bias on Sunday. Melissa McGee, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, kicked off the weekend for the Family Support Specialists. Then, Wendy Sullivan and Michelle Webster educated the group about Ethics for Parent Peer Supports and Kassie Williams facilitated a training on Special Education Rules and Requirements in Tennessee.

The Young Adult Track hosted several guests as well. Brian Grant from NAMI Davidson, who shared his



story as a part of the *In Our Own Voice* program, and Madeline Zielinski from YouthMOVE National taught the group about how to build their capacity as leaders and self-care. Rashad from Southern Word closed the Academy with a powerful spoken word activity that many young adults expressed was their favorite part of the weekend.

While several joked that the theme of the weekend was great food and company, it was very apparent that the warmth everyone felt also came from the newfound empowerment the Academy had given them. We hope that the youth, young adults, and families who attended feel that are ready to take the next steps in their leadership and advocacy journeys. Thank you to everyone who came out and we can't wait for next year!



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## Moccasin Bend RMHI has surprise delivery





Unit 3 staff at Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute came together in a big way to welcome a baby into the world when the nursing staff successfully delivered a breach baby. For their superb work under pressure, MBMHI recognized the nurses, including Monica Allen, John Matheny, Melissa Ward and Rachel Tolliver. Way to go, MBMHI!

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## Welcome Bev Fulkerson, our new Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Substance Abuse Services

Please help us welcome **Bev Fulkerson** who has been named Deputy Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Substance Abuse Services.

Bev comes to us from Bradford Health Services where she served as an Administrator and Clinical Director of Adolescent Services. She previously held positions as Dean of Students at Currey Ingram Academy, Program Coordinator at STARS, and Statewide Suicide Prevention & Education Coordinator at the Crisis Intervention Center.

Bev has a Master of Art in Counseling and Bachelor of Science degree in Behavioral Science and Communication.



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## Welcome Attorney Kezia Mills to MTMHI



Attorney **Kezia Mills** has joined our Department as the new Assistant General Counsel for Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute.

Kezia previously served as a Lead Litigation Attorney for the Division of TennCare and as a law clerk in a Memphis firm. She holds a bachelor and a master's degree in Business Administration and received a Doctor of Jurisprudence from the University of Memphis. During her studies, Kezia acquired diverse and relevant work experience from the Shelby County Public Defender's Office, Memphis Area Legal Services, and the Child and Family Litigation Clinic. Welcome, Kezia!

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## Welcome Mark Liverman, TDMHSAS Director of Employment & Wellness

**Mark Liverman** has joined the Division of Mental Health Service as our new Director of Wellness & Employment. His professional career began as a team leader in the United States Army. After serving ten



years in the military, he worked for the State of Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole as a parole hearings officer and parole officer, supporting people with their reintegration into civilian life, some of which had both physical disabilities and/or mental health diagnoses.

He has earned a B.S. degree in Sociology, an M.S. degree in Human Development and Leadership, and a post master's degree in Education Leadership. Mark later began teaching criminal justice and general education classes at the college level and worked in that field as a campus director for several years before accepting a position with Park Center as an IPS trainer. His most recent position at Park Center was as director of supported employment where he worked closely with TDMHSAS, Vocational Rehabilitation and various agencies and employers in the Davidson and Rutherford Co. areas. While at Park Center, Mark earned both the CIPS (Certified Individual Placement and Support) and CPRP (Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner) credentials. Welcome, Mark!

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## Tony Jackson promoted to Director of Prevention & Early Intervention Services



**Anthony "Tony" Jackson** has been appointed to serve as the Director of Prevention and Early Intervention Services for the Division of Substance Abuse Services.

Tony started his career with TDMHSAS as a Prevention Fellow in 2010. He previously held the positions of Evaluation Director in the Office of Research and Assistant Director for the Office of Prevention and Early Intervention Services. He most recently served as the Data Director.

Tony is known for his strong analytical skills, especially the work he has done on the "Prescription for Success: Statewide Strategies to Prevent and Treat Prescription Drug Abuse Epidemic" and the Governor's Public Safety Subcabinet. Tony has a Bachelor of Science from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and completed course work for a Master in Public Health and Master in Accountancy.

He is currently participating in the 2018 Commissioner's Leadership Academy.

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# Jessica Mullins promoted to lead Y/YA Initiatives



**Jessica Mullins**, LMSW, was recently chosen to oversee TDMHSAS Youth and Young Adult (Y/YA) initiatives within the Office of Children, Young Adults, and Families. In this role, she provides oversight for various programs and initiatives that enhance services and supports for youth and young adults across Tennessee including Healthy Transitions, First Episode Psychosis, and the upcoming Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialist program.

Jessica has more than ten years of experience working within non-profits and government agencies, with five years of experience providing direct service to children, youth, young adults, and families in community-based mental health and substance abuse provider agencies. She is a trainer in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) through Building Strong Brains Tennessee and serves on several committees working to improve awareness of ACEs and implementation of trauma-informed practices across the state.

Most recently, Jessica served as the Project Director for the System of Care Across TN Training & Technical Assistance Center. Jessica is a Licensed Master Social Worker who received a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish from East Tennessee State University, as well as a Master of Social Work from the University of Tennessee. Jessica's passion and commitment to children, youth, young adults, and families is evident in her experience and demonstrated leadership. Please help us welcome Jessica to her new role!

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## Mark your calendars: Planning & Policy Council

### Upcoming Regional Planning & Policy Council Meetings

Region VI	Tuesday, Oct. 9, 2018	1:30 p.m. - 3 p.m. CST	Pathways 238 Summar Dr. Jackson, TN 38301
Region III	Thursday, Oct. 18, 2018	10 a.m. - 12 p.m. EST	AIM Center 472 W. MLK Blvd. Chattanooga, TN 37402
Region VII	Tuesday, Oct. 23, 2018	11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. CST	Lowenstein House East 6590 Kirby Center Cove,



Suite 103  
Memphis, TN 38115

Region V	Thursday, Nov. 1, 2018	9:30 a.m. - 11:30 p.m. CST	TAADAS 1321 Murfreesboro Pike Suite 130 Nashville, TN 37217
Region IV	Wednesday, Nov. 7, 2018	11 a.m. - 1 p.m. CST	TAADAS 1321 Murfreesboro Pike Suite 130 Nashville, TN 37217
Region I	Tuesday, Nov. 13, 2018	10 a.m. - 12 p.m. EST	Frontier Health 1167 Spratlin Park Dr. Gray, TN 37615
Region II	Wednesday, Nov.14, 2018	11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. EST	Helen Ross McNabb Center, Training Room 201 West Springdale Ave. Knoxville, TN 37917

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

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## Help up spread the message: National Depression Screening Day is Thursday, October 11

*Submitted by the Office of Consumer Affairs & Peer Recovery Services*

Did you know that depression is the leading cause of disability in the United States that affects 9.9 million American adults each year? That's five percent of the adult population. Did you know that nearly twice as many women as men are diagnosed with depression each year? And that all ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups can find themselves facing depression?

The good news is that although depression can be a devastating illness, it is highly treatable! Between 80 and 90 percent of people with depression can be effectively treated and can return to their typical daily activities with emotional stability.

This year, National Depression Screening Day is Thursday, October 11. National Depression Screening Day is held each year during Mental Illness Awareness Week and is designed to call attention to depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. National Depression Screening Day helps educate all Americans about the symptoms of these disorders and effective treatments, offers individuals the opportunity to be screened for the disorders, and connects those in need of treatment to the mental health care system.

If you or someone you know is struggling with symptoms of depression, you can complete an anonymous online screening [on our website](#). [Find a full list of online screenings.](#)

If you would like information on where to go for mental health resources in your area, please contact the Helpline at the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services at (800) 560-5767 or go online to [www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/](http://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/)

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## What's one great way to reduce stress? Laugh!

Lygia Williams has worked in suicide prevention for many years. This work -- and behavioral health work in general -- can be stressful and weigh heavily. It's easy to take work home (figuratively and literally).

In a training last month, Lygia reminded Central Office staff of the importance of taking care of ourselves and our own mental health as we work to help others. Combatting stress is a must. One surefire way to feel better is to take a few minutes to laugh! Even better, share some chuckles with your colleagues, family, and friends. Look up some new jokes, watch a favorite comedy, or search the internet for laughing baby videos. Lygia says: "It's impossible not to smile when you see a laughing baby." We agree, Lygia.



Thanks for the great training and important reminder.

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**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.](#)*



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

*We hope you've enjoyed this issue of the Update!  
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etc.) or if you'd like to be added to the  
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