

Healthy Lifestyles

June 25, 2025

Wellness from head to toe: The Brain and Body Coalition's mission to heal and uplift

By Heather Ann Pitcher

In a world where mental health conversations are often left behind closed doors, The Brain and Body Coalition (BBC) is creating bold, inclusive spaces where healing begins at the intersection of education, advocacy, and culture. Founded in December 2022, The BBC was born from a simple but profound idea: our wellness must be understood holistically—from head to toe.

Too often, our society separates physical and mental health. We instinctively care for a twisted ankle or a diagnosis like cancer with urgency and compassion. But when a loved one experiences schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, confusion, stigma, or silence can take hold. The Brain and Body Coalition challenges this narrative by reminding us: illness is illness—and people are people.

July marks Bebe Moore Campbell BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month, a national observance honoring the late advocate, author, and trailblazer who championed mental health equity in communities of color. For The BBC, this month—and the one leading into it—is more than symbolic. It is a call to action.

Reeling Hope, Building Resilience

On June 22 of both 2024 and 2025, The Brain and Body Coalition hosted REEL Hope for Men's Mental Health, a community-centered fishing derby in Ulster County. These free events were more than a day by the water—they were part of a deeper effort to destigmatize men's mental health and reconnect individuals with the natural world.

Research continues to show that spending time outdoors supports mental health, reduces stress, and boosts overall well-being. For many men expressing emotional vulnerability is often discouraged. These events offered a quiet, judgment-free space to simply show up, engage, and begin healing in community.

Culture and Mental Health: An Interwoven Tapestry

For many BIPOC communities, the challenges surrounding

mental health are layered: cultural expectations, historical trauma, systemic inequities, and generational silence. The BBC understands that mental health is deeply shaped by culture, and so its outreach and education reflect that. From workshops to speaking engagements, The BBC creates spaces that are culturally responsive, inclusive, and compassionate. Whether engaging youth, training educators, or supporting families, they remind us: we must see the person, not just the condition.

Their signature workshop, "It Is What It Is: Breaking the Barriers of Stigma," is a nationally recognized professional development training that helps individuals understand how stigma operates, how cultural narratives influence help-seeking behaviors, and how to respond with humility, empathy, action, and listening—the HEAL framework.

Proactive, Not Reactive

The Brain and Body Coalition's mission is not just about responding to crises. It's about preventing them. Their programs focus on proactive mental wellness, offering tools for mindfulness, self-care, resilience building, and family support. Whether hosting school field trips, supporting veterans, or partnering with local organizations, The BBC weaves wellness into every level of community life.

"We don't wait for people to be in crisis," says Founder Heather Ann Pitcher. "We educate and equip so they know how to support themselves and others before it ever reaches that point."

Everyday Wellness, for Everyone

Mental wellness isn't just for Mental Health Awareness Month. It's a daily practice, and The Brain and Body Coalition helps make it accessible for all. If you're looking to start or strengthen your wellness journey, here are a few simple but powerful practices they recommend:

- Stay hydrated – Your body and brain need it.
- Spend time outdoors – Nature



Youth Ambassador Anesse Elting is pictured distributing coping skill tool kits with the assistance of her Mother. Courtesy photo

is healing.

- Create a sleep routine – Rest fuels resilience.
- Journal your thoughts – Writing builds awareness.
- Learn positive coping skills – And understand the difference from negative ones.
- Connect with someone – A friend, family member, or support group.

Wellness isn't about perfection—it's about connection. It's about recognizing when something feels off and having the support, knowledge, and courage to care for yourself and others.

This July—and every month—The Brain and Body Coalition invites you to commit to your wellness, from head to toe.

Heather Ann Pitcher is the Founder of The Brain and Body Coalition, a keynote speaker, mental health educator, and award-winning advocate. She is the author of *Pen Your Journey: A Guide to Build Resilience*, a reflective workbook designed to

support individuals in building strength through self-awareness and storytelling.

Heather Ann Pitcher has been nationally recognized with multiple honors, including the Dedicated Disruptor Award and inclusion in *Who's Who in America* for her bold leadership in interrupting stigma and reshaping mental health conversations—particularly in BIPOC communities. Her work bridges wellness, culture, and education through evidence-based training, outreach, and professional development.

An avid fisher and lover of creation, Heather Ann's favorite initiatives through The Brain and Body Coalition are REEL Hope for Men's Mental Health and Kids Coping and Casting, both of which combine nature and community healing to promote mental well-being.

Please see more
Information on page 6

Summer time is ‘moving time’ – exercise counts!

By Christian Campilii PT, DPT



Christian Campilii

Most Americans don’t move enough despite proven benefits, such as reduced risk of cancer and chronic diseases, and improved bone health, cognitive function, weight control and overall quality of life.

The second edition of the “Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans,” reports that approximately 80 percent of U.S. adults and adolescents are insufficiently active. As a result, many Americans currently have or are likely to experience chronic diseases, including heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and depression.

The good news is that regular physical activity can prevent and improve many chronic conditions.

BODY KNOWLEDGE

America, it’s time to get moving!

According to the guidelines, the following is recommended:

- **Preschool-aged children** (ages 3 through 5 years) should be physically active at least for three hours, if not more. Adult caregivers should encourage active play that includes a variety of activity types and limits sitting-around time, such as screen time.
- **Children and adolescents** (ages 6 through 17 years) need at least 60 minutes or more of activity a day. This includes activities to strengthen bones, build muscles, and get the heart beating faster.
- **Adults** should do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week, and at least

two days for muscle-strengthening activities. Adding more time provides further benefits.

- **Older adults (ages 65 and older)** should do at least 150 minutes of aerobic activity a week and include muscle-strengthening activities 2 days a week. You should also add components, such as balance training as well. If you have limitations due to preexisting conditions, consult with a health care provider and be as physically active as your abilities allow.
- **Pregnant and postpartum women** who were physically active before pregnancy can continue these activities during pregnancy and in the postpartum period, but they should consult their health care provider about any necessary

adjustments.

• **Adults with chronic health conditions and disabilities**, who are able, should do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a week. You should consult with a healthcare provider about the types and amounts that are appropriate for you.

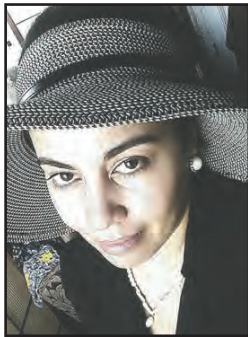
Physical therapists are movement experts who improve quality of life through prescribed exercise, hands-on care, and patient education.

You can contact a physical therapist directly for an evaluation. You do not need a physician referral.

*Adapted from APTA and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

For more information, visit centerforphysicaltherapy.com or call 845-297-4789.

Tips on selecting the ‘right’ candle style



It’s difficult to believe that candles were once a source of light after dark before electricity. Today, candles provide comfort in times of

LIFE IS BETTER WITH CANDLES

With Sonya, the Candle Lady

sadness; are the perfect complement in celebrations; scent our space and enable us to relax.

When selecting a candle, consider

the purpose of the candle, size desired, scent preference if any, and safety considerations.

Types of Candles

- **Scented Paraffin Candles** come in floral and fruity to woody and spicy. There is a scent to suit every preference and mood, making them perfect for relaxation.
- **Soy Candles** are made from soybean wax, a renewable resource that burns cleaner and longer than traditional paraffin wax. They come in a variety of colors and scents, making them a popular choice.
- **Beeswax Candles** are made of natural beeswax, and have a honey-like aroma which is known for its clean-burning properties.
- **Floating Candles** are made to float on water, and are used in centerpieces for weddings and special events, adding a touch of romance.
- **Jar Candles** are poured into glass containers, and come in a variety of scents and sizes, making them popular choices for the home.
- **Pillar Candles** are a great choice because of their simple shape and self-supporting nature. They come in a wide selection of colors and sizes and are perfect for home décor.
- **Taper Candles** are traditionally used for formal occasions such as dinners and weddings but they come in a range of colors and lengths, allowing for creative arrangements and displays.
- **Tea Light Candles** are one of my favorites! They are small and come in metal or plastic containers. Their size makes them ideal for use in any decorative holder or lantern.
- **Votive Candles** are small and often encased in containers, making them easy to handle and safe to burn. They are popular for religious and spiritual ceremonies, as well as for creating cozy atmospheres in the home.

Candle Care & Safety

Scented candles are safe if they are made with high-quality, non-toxic ingredients and are used according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Always trim the wick and never leave a burning candle unattended.

Always practice safety when burning candles. Never leave unattended and keep away from children and pets. Never burn a candle for more than 4 hours and trim the wick to ¼ inch before lighting to promote proper flame height. Additionally, keep candles away from drafty areas to avoid flame flickering; pool debris and black marks from forming on sides of the candle holder.

About - Sonya, the Candle Lady established herself as a trusted source for soy and beeswax candles when she opened Ye Olde Candle & Gift Shoppe in 2015 at Pleasant Valley with late husband, Dominick and relocated to Eastdale Village in 2020.

Ye Olde Candle & Gift Shoppe transitioned in May of 2024 from storefront to focus on candle-making workshops; art galleries, local libraries, restaurants and schools. However, you can now visit her new showroom suite; order on her online store and place orders through Door Dash.

The Carriage House at 42 Catharine Street, Suite C108 in Poughkeepsie.

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday: 2:30PM to 6:30PM

Saturday: By Appointment ONLY
Sunday & Monday: Closed

It is best to call in advance just in case there has been a change in my hours

To set up appointments to visit or to inquire about candle-making workshops, call (845) 818-6280

I can be of assistance to you with planning your wedding with ceremony and reception candles and with wedding invitations. You may view and order wedding invitations at:

candlehousegiftshoppe.carlsoncraft.com

Email Address:
candlehousegiftshoppe@gmail.com

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Who are the Vital Women of Washington Heights?

Special event planned for July 19 & 20

Meet Iris and Ivette, two extraordinary women dedicated to personal growth, mental well-being, and wellness, particularly for those navigating menopause. Their approach is unique, drawing strength from their lineage and the stories of their maternal ancestors. They blend these insights with their own life journeys and professional knowledge to connect with their audience, fostering healing within the community of women. They offer unwavering support, serving as a comforting presence and compassionate listeners, guiding others through the transformative phases of their physical and mental well-being. Check out their podcast on Spotify.

They hold a strong belief in the transformative power of redemption, grace, mercy, and restoration, having personally experienced an abundance of

grace. This profound encounter with the creator inspires them to share their insights and support other women as they journey through perimenopause, menopause, and post-menopause. Although it is a natural biological process, the experiences can vary significantly from person to person, with symptoms ranging from mild to severe.

This is the reason they decided to introduce “The Path of the Goddess” women’s training, a thorough program aimed at empowering women and enabling them to embark on a journey of relaxation while refreshing their minds. Treat yourself to the gift of empowerment as you engage in thought-provoking discussions. Participate in vibrant Afro-Caribbean movements and discover how to sway to the rhythm of Belly Dance to ignite

your creative energy. Experience transformative Reiki and sound healing sessions to rejuvenate your spirit and connect with like-minded women. Discover your inner strength through your menopause transformation.

As women, it’s vital to take charge of menopause. We should no longer hide or feel ashamed. This is not the menopause of our mothers’ generation. When you join ‘The Path of the Goddess’, you will learn how to handle symptoms and acquire practical strategies to flourish.

Mark your calendar: July 19 & 20 from 9 AM to 5 PM.

Stay tuned for the location reveal!

“Investing in your personal development is the best decision you can make for your success! This event is a unique opportunity

for you to grow and succeed.”

“Lunch is provided for both days.”

REGISTER TODAY!

SPOTS ARE LIMITED.

ASK FOR OUR PAYMENT OPTIONS.

Don’t let this unique and fantastic opportunity pass you by! This is a chance to take control of your menopause and embark on a journey of empowerment and wellness. Register now to secure your spot.

For more information, please reach out to Iris Doulgas, who will be happy to assist you with further details at (917) 502-3989

Iris Douglas is the proprietor of Hudson Valley Holistic Healing Center, and Ivette O’Sullivan is a social worker and certified menopause coaching specialist.

Summer educational activities to encourage learning

Our long-awaited summer is here, 10 weeks of relaxation, fun, and enjoying all the summer has to offer. But during this wonderful vacation, there are some activities that children can be involved in to make sure that their brains are stimulated and they are learning in a way that can be fun.

This is particularly important for children who have learning issues. These ten weeks can mean a significant loss of skills and information if we are not careful. So what can we do to help them retain these skills and prepare for their return to school in September? They can enjoy the lazy days of summer with their family and friends, and still brush up on their skills and keep their minds active.

Many parents may be looking for educational programs or private tutors. Once again I advise you, before selecting a program or tutor, be sure to ask questions regarding their services. Are they familiar with your child’s needs? What strategies will they use to help your child overcome deficits? Are they patient? How do they encourage a reluctant child? How do they help build self esteem in children who have difficulty learning? Listen to their responses then make a careful decision.

Plan ahead to keep minds

MAKING EDUCATION WORK with Diane Fulves

active. Gather some materials that you have at home, flash cards, phonics, reading and math workbooks, pencils, pens, paper, and crayons and you will have them available when you need them. Your child’s teacher may have some additional worksheets and workbooks, so don’t be afraid to ask for them. Schedule a little time during the week to play school. This doesn’t have to be each day but this reinforcement will make a big difference when children return to school in September. Add some rewards to offer some incentives. Everyone likes a reward!

Remember to use your public library. During the summer months, many libraries offer special programs for children and they are free of charge. Enjoy them together. When children spend time with other children listening to stories that are read by a professional, they hear the music of the words and the drama of the adventure. They also participate in the group activities that follow the reading.. They hear questions other children ask which

may encourage them to ask their own questions. Now they are working together in a group, thinking, questioning, responding, and learning.

Be sure to gather some books for summer reading. Librarians can help you select books that are appropriate and interesting. Set aside some time to read each day and if you can, read with your children. This builds a special bond with them. They love to hear your voice as you bring them into the lives of the characters, their emotions and adventures. This is one way we can encourage them to read and

develop a love of reading... Everyone leads busy lives, but taking 15-20 minutes to read together lets children know that you believe that reading is valuable. When children can read, they have power. So cuddle up with your books and read.

Summer days can be quite busy and they pass too quickly. Make the most of this time to have fun, but don’t forget. September is just around the corner!

Diane Fulves is an educator and advocate for children and parents. She is director of Empowering Our Parents, which offers information and support to parents. She is the director of Nurture the Spirit and Shakespeare Odyssey, programs that enrich children with the magic of the arts. For more information, please contact her at dee076@verizon.net



Introducing:
Vital Women of Washington Heights, two women dedicated to personal development, mental health, and wellness, particularly those experiencing menopause.

Mark your calendar: July 19 & 20 from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
Stay tuned for the location reveal!

"Investing in your personal development is the best decision you can make for your success!"
This event is a unique opportunity for you to grow and succeed."
“Lunch is provided for both days.”
REGISTER TODAY! SPOTS ARE LIMITED. ASK FOR OUR PAYMENT OPTIONS.
DON’T LET THIS UNIQUE AND AMAZING OPPORTUNITY PASS YOU BY!

For more information, please reach out to Iris Doulgas, who will be happy to assist you with further details at (917) – 502 - 3989

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Changing the conversation: Prioritizing Men’s Health in the Golden Years

By **Brian Zeidan, Administrator Meadows at Brookmeade**



Brian Zeidan

For many men, taking care of their health hasn’t always been a top priority. Generations were raised to “tough it out,” to downplay symptoms, or to put their own well-being last. But as we age, these habits can lead to missed warning signs and preventable conditions.

At Brookmeade Community, we’re committed to changing that narrative—by encouraging open dialogue, regular screenings, and compassionate support that helps men age with strength, dignity, and purpose.

Understanding the Health Risks for Older Men - Older men face unique health challenges, including higher risks of heart disease, prostate cancer, diabetes, and cognitive decline. These conditions often go undetected or untreated when routine care is avoided. Fortunately, many of these issues can be better managed—or even prevented—through early detection and consistent care.

Common Barriers to Care - Despite these risks, men are often less likely to seek medical attention or talk about mental health concerns. Long-standing social norms and personal discomfort can discourage men

BROOKMEADE SENIOR CONCEPTS



Karen Stritt, CEO & President at the Brookmeade Community, is pictured at a social gathering at the Community. Courtesy photo

from reaching out, even when something doesn’t feel right. This reluctance can lead to delayed diagnoses and missed opportunities for intervention.

Proactive Steps We Encourage -

At Brookmeade, we promote routine health screenings such as blood pressure checks, prostate exams, and diabetes monitoring. Just as important is addressing emotional wellness. Men may be

less inclined to open up about anxiety, depression, or grief, but creating space for honest conversation can make a real difference. Our team works to normalize these discussions and connect residents with support services when needed.

Creating Meaningful Connections - We’ve found that meaningful social engagement plays a major role in promoting overall well-being. When men participate in group programs,

outdoor activities, or purposeful routines, it often leads to improved mood, motivation, and connection. These experiences not only benefit physical health but also support emotional and cognitive resilience.

Family Can Make the Difference - Families are often key to initiating change. Encouragement from adult children, spouses, or close friends can be the nudge someone needs to take their health more seriously. Whether it’s offering to attend an appointment together, organizing a walk, or simply starting the conversation, loved ones can have a lasting impact.

Let’s Keep the Conversation Going - Men’s Health Month is more than a calendar event—it’s a reminder that every man deserves the chance to age well and be heard. At Brookmeade, we’re proud to support that journey by creating a culture where men feel safe to talk about their health, take action, and live with purpose.

Brian Zeidan, LNHA, SPHR is the Administrator of Meadows at Brookmeade. He holds a bachelor’s degree from Harvard University and a master’s degree in Human Resource Management at NYU. With a strong foundation in leadership and a passion for resident-centered care, Brian is dedicated to supporting families, staff, and residents through every step of the aging journey.

Protect your skin: What you need to know for UV Safety Month

By Premier Medical Group
July is UV Safety Month, a national observance dedicated to raising awareness about the dangers of ultraviolet (UV) radiation and how you can protect yourself from skin damage, premature aging, and skin cancer. Whether you’re soaking up the sun at the beach or simply walking to your car, UV rays are present — and precautions matter year-round.

By learning the risks associated with too much sun exposure and taking the right precautions to protect you and your family from UV rays, everyone can enjoy the sun and outdoors safely.

Here are the harmful things unprotected sun exposure can do:

- Cause vision problems and damage to your eyes
- Suppression of the immune system
- Premature aging of the skin
- Skin cancer



Fortunately, there are things you can do to minimize the risk that comes with sun exposure.

1. Cover Up: Wearing a Hat (preferably wide brimmed) or other shade-protective clothing can partly shield your skin from the harmful effects of UV ray exposure. Proper clothing may include long-sleeved shirts, pants, hats, and Sunglasses – for eye protection.

2. Stay in the Shade: The sun’s glare is most intense at midday. Staying in the shade between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. will further protect your

skin. The sun can still damage your skin on cloudy days or in the winter. For this reason, it is important to stay protected throughout the year.

3. Choose the Right Sunscreen: This is extremely important. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) new regulations for sunscreen labeling recommend that your sunscreen have a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 and should protect against both Ultraviolet A (UV-A) and Ultraviolet B (UV-B) rays.

4. Use the Right Amount of Sunscreen: According to the

National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention, most people apply only 25-50 percent of the recommended amount of sunscreen. When out in the sun, it’s important that you apply at least one ounce (a palmful) of sunscreen every two hours. You should apply it more often if you are sweating or swimming, even if the sunscreen is waterproof.

UV Safety Month is the perfect reminder to make sun protection a daily habit—not just in the summer. Small changes, like applying sunscreen each morning or choosing a shady spot during lunch breaks, can go a long way in keeping your skin healthy.

At Premier Medical Group, our dermatology team is here to support your skin health year-round. If you have concerns about sun exposure, moles, or need a skin screening, don’t hesitate to reach out and schedule an appointment # (845) 451-7272.

How to talk to your loved ones about their health: Tips for Adult Children

By **Brian Zeidan, Administrator Meadows at Brookmeade**



Brian Zeidan

Talking to a parent or older loved one about their health is never easy. Whether you're concerned about memory changes, mobility issues, or a shift in independence, these conversations can feel overwhelming—for both sides. As adult children, we often want to help while still honoring our parents' dignity and autonomy. At Brookmeade Community, we regularly work with families navigating these emotionally charged conversations. While no two families are the same, here are some compassionate, practical tips to help guide the dialogue.

Start with Empathy, Not Assumptions - Before diving into advice or observations, listen first. Try to understand your loved one's perspective, fears, and hopes. Use open-ended questions like, "How have you been feeling lately?" or "Is anything about your daily routine becoming more difficult?" This sets a tone of partnership rather than pressure.

Choose the Right Moment - Timing matters. Pick a calm, quiet time to talk—ideally when no one is feeling rushed or overwhelmed. Avoid starting the conversation during a moment of crisis or frustration.

Be Honest, but Gentle - If you've noticed memory changes, weight loss, mood shifts, or increasing forgetfulness, it's okay to bring them up—but do so with kindness. Try phrases like:

- "I've noticed a few things lately that concern me, and I wanted to talk to you about them because I care."
- "Would you be open to seeing a doctor together, just to rule some things out?"

Focus on Goals, Not Just Problems - Instead of dwelling on limitations, frame the conversation around quality of life. Ask, "What would make you feel most supported right now?" or "What are your goals for the next few years, and how can I help you get there safely?"

Prepare for Mixed Emotions - Health-related conversations can stir up fear, resistance, denial—or even anger. That's okay. Try not to take it personally. Give your loved one space and time to process. Sometimes, planting the seed is more important than getting immediate agreement.

Involve the Best People - If your loved one has a strong relationship with a physician, faith leader, or another family member, consider inviting them into the conversation (with your loved

one's permission). Hearing guidance from a trusted source can help validate concerns in a less threatening way.

Offer Choices, Not Ultimatums - When it comes to next steps—whether it's scheduling a check-up, exploring in-home help, or touring a care facility—present options. This empowers your loved one to be part of the solution rather than feeling like decisions are being made for them.

Don't Forget About Yourself - If you're taking on more caregiving responsibility, acknowledge the impact it may have on your time, energy, and emotions. It's okay to set boundaries and ask for support. You can't pour from an empty cup.

Keep the Dialogue Going - Health needs—and perspectives—evolve over time. What your loved

one resists today might feel acceptable in a few months. Stay engaged, be patient, and revisit the conversation with compassion.

Consider Adult Day Healthcare as a Bridge and Support - For families not yet ready for long-term care—or simply in need of daytime support—Meadows' Adult Day Healthcare Program offers a safe, engaging environment for seniors during the day while allowing them to return home each evening. It provides peace of mind for caregivers and meaningful social, therapeutic, and clinical support for participants.

Whether you need respite while working, running errands, or simply recharging, adult day care can be a vital resource that balances independence with structured care. For more information email

info@brookmeadecommunity.org

At Brookmeade, we believe that aging with dignity starts with honest, respectful conversations. If you're unsure how to begin—or where to turn—we're here to help, with resources, programs, and guidance rooted in compassion.

Brian Zeidan, LNHA, SPHR is the Administrator of Meadows at Brookmeade. He holds a bachelor's degree from Harvard University and a master's degree in Human Resource Management at NYU. With a strong foundation in leadership and a passion for resident-centered care, Brian is dedicated to supporting families, staff, and residents through every step of the aging journey.





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Join Us and Make a Difference!

July is National Bebe Moore Campbell BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month

This year, The Brain and Body Coalition is calling on YOU to be a change-maker in conversations about mental health conditions. Every organization and community member has the power to create change and safe spaces for compassion and healing.

Join our kick-off event with The Commission on Human Rights on July 1. Throughout July, we encourage our community partners to promote a culture of wellness.

Resources and Support:
Toolkit available with sample

infographics for social media and other shareable resources. Visit the BIPOC tab on www.brainandbodycoalition.org for support resources. Follow @thebrainandbodycoalition on Instagram for Mindful Mondays tips. Attend and promote existing events during Awareness Month. Request staff training and specific resources.

This comprehensive toolkit was created to deepen cultural competency, foster cultural humility, and offer actionable steps for building inclusive, supportive



From left are, Heather Ann Pitcher of The Brain and Body Coalition, Jean-Marie Niehbur, Commissioner and Director of Community Services of the Dutchess County Department of Mental Health and Katie Castell, Director at Astor Services - Enhanced Coordinator of Care. *Courtesy photo*



The Dutchess County Health RV participates in Bebe Moore Campbell BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month. Debbie Francisco from the Dutchess County Empowerment Center speaks with Media Assistant Taison Jemison of The Brain and Body Coalition. *Courtesy photo*

environments. Inside, you'll find 20 culturally relevant, shareable resources, tips for community engagement, and highlights of local events taking place throughout July. Organizations can also request customizable infographics, sample captions, and additional tools to amplify awareness efforts. Together, we can create spaces for healing, break down the walls of stigma and prioritize mental wellness in every space.

Tag BBC and Use Campaign Hashtags to help spread the word. Help us amplify the message by tagging The Brain and Body Coalition and using our campaign hashtags. Your voice can reach far and wide, promoting mental health awareness in BIPOC communities.

Suggested Hashtags:
#BIPOCMentalHealth
#BrainAndBodyCoalition
#HealingTogether
#Mentalhealthawareness Take Part in #MindfulMonday Check-Ins Start Your Week Mindfully! Join our #MindfulMonday check-ins to cultivate mindfulness and self-care.

These weekly prompts are designed to encourage reflection and promote mental wellness.

How to Participate: Follow our social media for weekly prompts. IG@thebrainandbodycoalition. Reflect on the questions and share your thoughts. Engage with others and build a supportive network. Together, we can achieve incredible growth and healing. Let's celebrate the progress we've made as a community and continue to support each other on this journey.

Ways to Celebrate: Share stories of community achievements. Host or attend events that promote healing. Recognize and celebrate individual and collective growth

How to Share: Write a post or record a video Focus on your healing journey and insights Encourage others to share their stories too.

Join us in making a lasting impact on BIPOC mental health! Your involvement is crucial to fostering a supportive and thriving community.



Part of "The Wider View Series"

BEBE MOORE CAMPBELL BIPOC MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

COMMUNITY KICK-OFF JULY 1ST 5PM-8PM Come Create & Celebrate!

Join us in the 230 N. Road Parking Lot

For more information or to be a creative partner text
845-293-2929
or email reply@brainandbodycoalition.org



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DUTCHESS
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RIGHTS AND THE BRAIN AND BODY
COALITION

Life after cancer: Top questions survivors ask

By Kathleen N. Mueller, MD, FAAFP



Kathleen N. Mueller, MD

When cancer treatment ends, many people expect to feel nothing but relief. But for many survivors, the end of treatment brings a wave of new

emotions and questions. If you've had thoughts like "I thought I'd feel better by now" or "I didn't expect this part to be so hard," you're not alone.

Here are answers to some of the top questions cancer survivors ask.

Why don't I feel like myself after cancer? - Even after active treatment ends, your body and brain are still healing. You may feel fatigue, brain fog, or emotional ups and downs. These symptoms can linger. To support your recovery:

- Prioritize rest and pace yourself throughout the day.
- Try gentle physical activity, like walking or stretching.
- Stay connected with others to avoid feeling isolated.

Will I ever stop worrying about cancer coming back? - Fear of recurrence is normal, especially around scans or new symptoms. These strategies can help:

- Acknowledge your fears—don't push them away.
- Practice mindfulness or breathing exercises.
- Focus on healthy habits and keeping your appointments.

Who manages my care now? - After treatment, your care is usually shared between your oncology team and your primary

PATIENT FIRST

care provider. To stay organized:

- Keep a digital or printed survivorship care plan.
- Schedule regular checkups with both care teams.
- Update all providers about any changes in your health.

Why am I still so tired? - Cancer-related fatigue is common and different from regular tiredness. To manage it:

- Track your energy levels with a fatigue journal.
- Break up tasks and take breaks often.
- Move your body regularly—yoga or tai chi can help.
- Eat well and stay hydrated.

What should I eat? - Nutrition plays a key role in recovery. Aim to:

- Eat plant-based foods like fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains.
- Limit processed foods, red meats, and added sugars.
- Prepare meals ahead of time to make healthy eating easier.

Can I exercise safely? - Yes—movement can help you regain strength and reduce fatigue. Start with:

- 10- to 20-minute walks and build up gradually.
- Low-impact activities like swimming or biking.
- Stretching and balance exercises to avoid falls.

How do I manage lingering side effects? - You may experience nerve pain, hot flashes, digestive issues, or memory problems. Consider:

- Using a pill organizer or

setting phone alerts for memory.

- Wearing comfortable shoes if you have neuropathy.
- Dressing in layers and staying cool for hot flashes.
- Asking your doctor about integrative therapies like acupuncture or hypnotherapy.

What about my mental health? Emotional healing is just as important as physical recovery. If you're struggling:

- Talk with a therapist or licensed counselor.
- Join a cancer survivor support group.
- Try creative outlets or keep a gratitude journal.
- Do more of what brings you peace and joy.

How do I return to work? - Transitioning back to work can feel overwhelming. To make it easier:

- Discuss accommodations with your employer.
- Ease back with a reduced schedule, if possible.
- Be kind to yourself—it's okay not to be at 100% right away.

What if I need financial help? - Cancer-related financial stress is common. You can:

- Contact your insurance provider about financial navigators.
- Explore local and national grants for survivors.
- Visit organizations like the American Cancer Society for resources.
- Look into SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance) if needed.

- Talk to a hospital social worker for personalized guidance.

What medical records should I keep? - Most health systems offer patient portals for electronic records. Key documents to save include:

- Your diagnosis summary and treatment history
- Pathology and lab reports
- Imaging results
- Medication lists
- Your survivorship care plan

How do I connect with others who understand? - Talking to people who've also survived cancer can help you feel seen and supported. Try:

- Joining survivor support groups or peer mentoring programs
- Attending survivorship events or workshops
- Volunteering or connecting online, such as through the American Cancer Society's Cancer Survivors Network: csn.cancer.org

Surviving cancer is more than just living—it's about living well. As you move forward, you may need different tools for different times—like support groups, a new movement routine, or guidance on managing side effects. Build a toolbox that works for you. With the right resources, you can take control of your health and thrive.

For more cancer care content from Nuvance Health, visit nuvancehealth.org/health-tips-and-news.

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