

Dear Esther September 2021

Dear Esther

Hello readers! It's Toni Jacobsen, Clinical Director of Jewish Family Service. Esther is on vacation and getting ready for the holidays with her family, so she asked me to fill in for her this month.

Since I don't have a question from a reader, I thought I would make you aware of a series of programming JFS is planning for you.

Due to the increase in anxiety and depression brought on by the pandemic, we thought it was timely and important to put together a program focused on mental health with the goals of education, increasing awareness and reducing the stigma. As we reflected on the events of the past year and looked at the needs, it was clear to us this topic is beyond a one-time program. So, we decided to put together a year's worth of programming for all ages focused on aspects of mental health. The name of this series is called Mental Health Matters.

I am so excited about all the events we have planned for you. While there is not enough room in this column to cover all the programs, I would like to highlight a few of my favorites. First, there will be an interactive art display at the GJCC where participants can freely share their experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Next, JFS is partnering with Blue Dove to bring a community wide program on mental health to change the culture of silence and stigma around mental health. We will also be offering a free book to parents with anxious children to assist in teaching their child healthy coping skills. And last but not least, a client of the agency and published author, will speak about his newly released book that outlines his first 40 years of life's challenges and his mental health journey. It is a rare occasion when a client comes forward to share their story so I am hoping that everyone will support him by coming out to hear about his life's journey so far. There is so much more in store for all of you so keep your eye out for more details.

I also want to recognize that there are members of our community who do not have family to gather with for the holidays or who are estranged. I know you are out there and might be feeling lonely and depressed at this time of year. I would encourage you to reach out to your Rabbi, community member or other Jewish agency (including JFS) and let them know how you are feeling. The Nashville Jewish community is one of the most loving and caring communities of which I have been a part. The community is here to support you, but you have to let us know.

I hope everyone has a sweet new year and that we will be together again soon.

Aug 31, 2021

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