



## STAND UP AND BE PROUD

### A Message from Our Founder: Celebrating Pride Month and Juneteenth



As we step into June, I want to take a moment to acknowledge two incredibly significant observances: Pride Month and Juneteenth. Both represent vital chapters in our collective journey toward justice, equality, and liberation, and they deeply resonate with the core values we uphold here at New Beginnings Counseling Center, LLC.

Pride Month, celebrated throughout June, honors the LGBTQIA+ community and commemorates the Stonewall Uprising. It's a time to recognize the struggles, celebrate the triumphs, and advocate for the continued fight for LGBTQIA+ rights. For us, Pride is a powerful reminder of the importance of authenticity – encouraging every individual to embrace who they are without fear or judgment. Our commitment to providing a safe, affirming, and understanding space for all sexual orientations and gender identities is unwavering.

On June 19th, we observe Juneteenth, marking the day in 1865 when enslaved African Americans in Texas finally received news of their freedom, more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation. Juneteenth is a profound celebration of freedom, resilience, and the ongoing pursuit of racial justice. It underscores our dedication to compassion and understanding the diverse experiences that shape each person's mental health journey. We are committed to fostering an inclusive environment where every voice is heard, respected, and valued, and where the historical and ongoing impacts of systemic injustice are acknowledged and addressed.

At New Beginnings Counseling Center, LLC, our mission is to provide a space where everyone feels seen, understood, and supported. The spirit of Pride Month and Juneteenth – authenticity, compassion, freedom, and the unwavering pursuit of equality – is woven into the very fabric of our practice. We believe that true healing and growth can only occur when individuals feel safe to be their authentic selves and when their unique experiences are met with genuine understanding and empathy.

Let's use this month to reflect, learn, and continue to build a community that champions the dignity and well-being of all.

Sincerely,  
Frederick Harris  
Founder, New Beginnings Counseling Center, LLC



# New Beginnings Counseling Center, LLC

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## New Group at NBCC

As of June 5<sup>th</sup>, NBCC is now hosting a biweekly, in-person community support group for LGBTQIA+ individuals (18+) on Thursdays from 2:00PM-3:30PM. This group provides a welcoming and affirming environment to explore identity, mental health, relationships, and lifestyle transitions while fostering authentic connection.

Whether you're looking for a place to share and listen or simply be among others who understand, we invite you to be part of our growing community. To inquire further information about joining, reach out to your individual therapist! Come as you are, you are welcome here.

Our next gathering will be on June 26<sup>th</sup> as we continue to build a community rooted in equity and belonging.



## Colon Cancer Awareness

Updated studies from the National Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society, have noticed an uptick in cancer rates among young adults are on the rise. Those born in the 1980s and 1990s are increasingly likely to develop cancer in their 30s and 40s, in contrast to earlier generations. Historically, cancer has been more common in older adults, the shift towards younger individuals indicates an urgent need for research to understand the underlying causes and to adapt cancer prevention and treatment strategies accordingly.

1. Obesity and sedentary lifestyles are known risk factors that could play a role, especially as obesity rates have risen sharply in recent decades. However, these factors do not fully explain the trend.
2. Researchers are exploring a broader range of influences, including early-life exposures—factors that individuals are exposed to during fetal development and early childhood—which may predispose them to cancer later in life.
3. Environmental factors, such as exposure to pollutants and chemicals, and changes in the gut microbiome—an essential component of the body's immune system—are also being investigated.

These combined factors, along with unexplained factors, suggest that a complex interplay of lifestyle, environmental, and biological influences may be contributing to the rise in cancer among younger adults.

Additionally, the gut-microbiome is one area to highlight concerning prevention. The gut microbiome—the vast community of bacteria, viruses, and fungi that live in our intestines—has a significant impact on overall health, including the risk of developing colorectal cancer. The balance of these microorganisms can be influenced by diet, antibiotics, and other environmental factors. When the gut microbiome is disrupted, it can lead to inflammation and other conditions that promote cancer development.

Paying attention to factors that we can control, specifically increased fiber can positively feed the gut bacteria, is one way to decrease inflammation in the body and to help decrease our overall risk in developing colon cancer.

It is recommended that a high fiber diet (25-50 grams) daily can help to properly feed the microbiome. Daily consumption of fiber closer to 50 grams per day is acceptable in other countries. Below is a list of high fiber foods one can add to their diet. It is also important to add fiber slowly to avoid bloating and gas.

- |                   |               |                   |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| ·Lentils          | ·Raspberries  | ·Quinoa           |
| ·Split peas       | ·Blackberries | ·Haas avocados    |
| ·Black beans      | ·Barley       | ·Apples           |
| ·Artichoke hearts | ·Pears        | ·Green peas       |
| ·Kidney beans     | ·Almonds      | ·Edamame          |
| ·Chickpeas        | ·Oats         | ·Brussels sprouts |
| ·Chia seeds       | ·Broccoli     | ·Ground flaxseed  |

Sources:

- <https://www.mskcc.org/podcasts/cancer-straight-talk/whats-causing-cancer-rates-to-rise-in-gen-x-and-millennials>
- <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/high-fiber-foods>

--- Amanda F.



## Mindful Minute

### Body Scan Meditation Script

#### Introduction:

Welcome to this body scan meditation. This practice is designed to help you become more aware of your body and release any tension you may be holding. You can do this meditation lying down or sitting comfortably in a chair. Ensure that you're in a quiet space where you won't be disturbed. Before we begin, take a deep breath in... and out. Let's do that once more: a deep breath in... and out. Allow your body to settle into its natural rhythm of breathing.

#### Beginning the Scan:

Now, gently close your eyes if you haven't already. Bring your attention to the sensations of your body. Notice how your body feels against the surface you're on, whether it's the floor, a bed, or a chair.

#### Start at the Feet:

Begin by bringing your awareness to your feet. Notice any sensations there—perhaps warmth, coolness, or pressure. Are there any areas of tightness or discomfort? Simply notice whatever you feel, without judgment.

As you inhale, imagine you are breathing into your feet. And as you exhale, imagine any tension or discomfort melting away, softening with your breath. Slowly move your attention up to your ankles. Notice how they feel, any sensations or lack of sensations. Take a deep breath in... and as you breathe out, release any tension.

#### Move Up the Legs:

Now bring your focus to your calves. Are they tight? Relax them with each exhale. Move your awareness to your knees. Are they tense or comfortable? Take a breath in and, with the exhale, relax them.

Slowly continue scanning up your legs. Pay attention to your thighs, your hips, and your pelvic area. Notice how each area feels. Any sensations of warmth, tightness, or relaxation? Allow each area to soften with your breath.

#### Scan the Abdomen and Chest:

Bring your attention to your abdomen now. Feel it rise and fall with each breath. Is there any tension here? If you notice any, breathe into it and let it go with your exhale. With each breath, allow your abdomen to become softer, more relaxed.

Now move your awareness to your chest. Notice the rise and fall of your chest as you breathe. How does it feel? Are there any areas of tightness or restriction? Allow them to relax as you exhale, softening your chest.

#### Scan the Shoulders and Arms:

Now, bring your attention to your shoulders. Notice if they are holding any tension. Are they lifted or relaxed? With each exhale, release any tightness or discomfort in your shoulders.

Move down your arms, scanning through your upper arms, elbows, forearms, wrists, and hands. Notice any areas of tension or comfort. Allow each part of your arms to soften and relax as you continue to breathe deeply.

#### Scan the Neck and Head:

Now, bring your focus to your neck. Is there any tightness here? Gently soften your neck with each breath, releasing any tension.

Finally, bring your awareness to your face. Notice your jaw—are you clenching it? Release any tension in your jaw. Let your tongue relax inside your mouth, and soften your eyes, your forehead, and the space between your eyebrows. Allow your whole face to become soft and relaxed.

#### Finishing the Scan:

Now that you've scanned your whole body, take a moment to check in. How does your body feel now compared to when you began? Is there a sense of lightness or calm? Simply observe without judgment.

Take a few more deep breaths in and out. With each breath, feel the calm and relaxation settle deeper into your body.

#### Closing:

When you're ready, gently bring your awareness back to the space around you. You can open your eyes if they were closed, and when you're ready, gently move your fingers and toes to reawaken your body.

Take a moment to thank yourself for taking this time for your own well-being. You can carry this sense of relaxation and mindfulness with you throughout the rest of your day.

#### Sources:

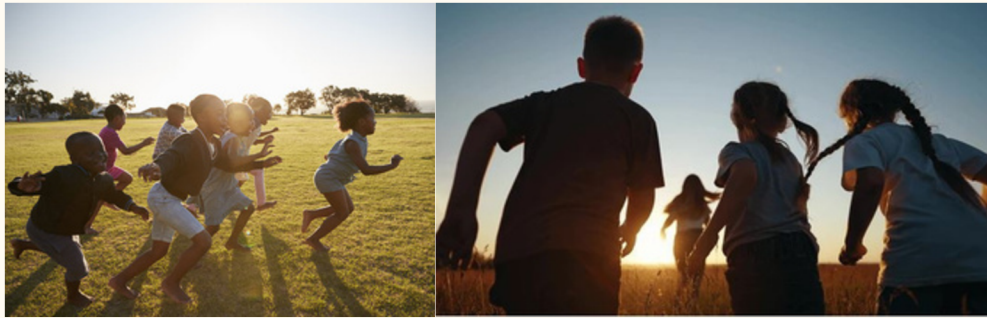
- *Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)* – Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn, the founder of MBSR, has done extensive work on mindfulness meditation and the body scan technique. His book *Full Catastrophe Living* is a great resource for learning more about body scan meditations.
- *The Power of Now* by Eckhart Tolle – Though not exclusively about body scans, Tolle's work focuses on being present with the body, and many of his teachings align with practices used in body scans.
- *The Body Keeps the Score* by Bessel van der Kolk – This book explores how trauma is stored in the body and how practices like body scan meditation can be used for healing.
- *Mindful Awareness Research Center* – The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) has a free library of guided meditations, including body scan sessions, available on their website.

*These sources provide additional context and insights into body awareness and mindfulness practices.*

— Katie R.



## The Summer Dilemma: Supporting Youth During the Break from School



Summer break is often celebrated as a time for kids and teens to unwind, enjoy outdoor activities, and take a break from their academic responsibilities. However, for many young people, the summer months can bring about feelings of loneliness, a lack of direction, and even an increase in mischief. With school out of session, youth lose the structure and routine they rely on during the academic year, leading to a period of emotional and social uncertainty. For some, this can result in a rise in risky behaviors or a sense of aimlessness without the usual framework of daily activities and peer interactions.

### **The Struggles of an Unstructured Summer**

For numerous young people, the summer months can feel unstructured and isolating. Without the regular schedule that school provides, youth may struggle to find purpose or maintain a sense of motivation. According to the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST), when kids have too much unstructured time, it can sometimes lead to an increase in risky behaviors, such as experimenting with substances or engaging in delinquent activities due to boredom (NIOST, 2016). The lack of school, extracurricular activities, and social connections can create a feeling of emptiness, especially for adolescents who face social pressures or lack support networks.

While summer break can offer freedom, for some teens, it only heightens the feeling of being disconnected. Research from the Search Institute (2017) highlights that youth who are unable to participate in organized summer programs may find it difficult to maintain social relationships or engage in productive activities. This lack of engagement can foster emotional distress, leading to an increase in mischief or other negative behaviors.

### **The Role of Parents, Caregivers, and Communities**

One of the most effective ways to help youth during the summer is through engagement and support. Encouraging participation in summer camps, sports teams, or volunteer programs can help provide structure and prevent the void that often accompanies the break from school. The Search Institute (2017) emphasizes that structured activities, particularly those involving social interaction and skill development, reduce the likelihood of risky behavior and increase the chances of youth developing a strong sense of community and purpose.

In addition to organized programs, keeping youth connected with their peers is essential. Community centers, libraries, and local youth clubs can serve as safe spaces for interaction and personal growth. These venues often offer a variety of activities, from creative arts workshops to sports leagues or coding clubs, helping teens build skills while fostering a sense of belonging. A report by the Afterschool Alliance (2014) suggests that participation in such programs not only keeps youth engaged but also boosts their self-esteem and academic success.

### **A Positive Perspective: Cultivating Growth and Exploration**

Although unstructured summers present challenges, they also offer opportunities for personal growth and exploration. Adolescents can use the summer break to explore new hobbies, develop skills, or take on responsibilities. Encouraging teens to pursue activities that interest them, set personal goals, or try something new can provide a sense of direction and purpose.

In addition, internships, part-time jobs, or mentorship programs provide valuable learning experiences, allowing youth to gain independence, develop a strong work ethic, and practice critical thinking. These activities not only help pass the time but also build confidence and responsibility. For some teens, entrepreneurial ventures, such as freelancing or starting a small business, can offer both a sense of achievement and a productive way to spend their time.

### **Conclusion: Addressing the Needs of Youth During Summer Break**

It is crucial for families, communities, and schools to recognize that while summer break is a time for relaxation, it can also be a vulnerable period for many young people. By providing accessible resources, promoting participation in structured activities, and ensuring ongoing social connections, we can help minimize the risks that summer may pose. With the right support, summer can transform from a time of loneliness and mischief into a period of growth, connection, and positive exploration.

— Kelsey V

#### **Sources:**

- Afterschool Alliance. (2014). *America after 3PM: The most recent nationwide survey of afterschool program participation*. Afterschool Alliance. <https://afterschoolalliance.org>
- National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST). (2016). *The role of afterschool programs in youth development: A review of the literature*. Wellesley Centers for Women. <https://www.niost.org>
- Search Institute. (2017). *Developmental assets: A framework for positive youth development*. <https://www.search-institute.org>

