



MYSTIC VALLEY
Public Health Coalition

May 2024 Newsletter

The Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition works to build the collective responsibility of creating and sustaining environments where communities can thrive in supportive and healthy spaces.

MVPHC Youth Leadership Group

Each month, a member of the Public Health Youth Leadership Group creates a written piece on a specific topic.

Read below for Diamond's piece on National Stuttering Awareness Week and Jaya's piece on Mental Health and College Applications.

National Stuttering Awareness Week

Written by Diamond

May 12th - May 18th, 2024

“Stuttering is OK! Because what I say is worth repeating.”



What is Stuttering?

According to the [National Stuttering Association](#), stuttering, or stammering, is a speech condition that causes frequent and significant problems with normal fluency and flow of speech. Stuttering affects 5–10% of any age, mostly 2–6-year-olds. Stuttering affects 5–10% of any age, mostly 2–6-year-olds. It results in an uneven speech rate, interrupted speech production, and difficulty in expressing words, syllables, and sounds. Most children do not carry a stutter into adulthood, but 25% of those who do may it. Early intervention can help stop stammering and reduce the chances of it continuing into adulthood.

What Causes Stuttering?

Both children and adults can have a stutter, which can sometimes make it difficult to express what they want to say. Family dynamics and history, neurophysiology, and childhood development issues can all contribute to stuttering. Injuries and traumas can also contribute to a person's stuttering. Half of the brain's progress in speech and language may be abnormally developed. Additionally, those with stuttering parents may have a tendency to stutter as they grow up. Stuttering in general doesn't require treatment, however speech therapy can help with intonation and reduce interruptions, while electronic devices like voice recorders and hearing aids can also help. While hearing aids reduce background noise and increase focus, these devices aid in repeating spoken words and pinpointing mistakes. However, no specific medication is known to help with stuttering beyond speech therapy and self-essential speech improvement.

Breaking the Stigma of Stuttering

Stuttering has been seen as a "flaw." However, viewing stuttering as a "flaw" increases stigma and criticism. It can cause embarrassment and low self-esteem, affecting personal and professional progress. Accepting stuttering as a normal speech variant builds inclusion and successful methods of interaction. It's true that people with fluency problems tend to practice more until they think their speech starts sounding perfect, but those individuals should already feel good about themselves because people who stutter are intelligent. Stuttering isn't something to be afraid of, and if we get past that stigma, more positivity and less judgment will be shown on this subject. Prominent figures, such as President Joe Biden, Marilyn Monroe, and Bo Jackson, have all shown that great success is possible for individuals who stutter. Many celebrities with stutters help use their platform to raise awareness for stuttering.

Stuttering Support

With proper support, individuals can learn to communicate effectively and gradually reduce their symptoms. Stuttering can impact daily life, but symptoms can be managed. Usually, with symptoms, it's best to have a SLP (speech-language pathologist), which is beneficial in school, work, and social settings, by speaking freely and impressing others. In some cases, having a SLP can help individuals feel more confident and comfortable in various situations. Ultimately, being proactive in managing stuttering symptoms and seeking help can help individuals lead a more successful life.

Maintaining Mental Health during College Applications

Written by Jaya

The month of May has long been regarded as Mental Health Awareness Month - but it seems almost coincidental that May is the time most high school seniors are committing to colleges and most high school juniors are beginning the application process. As a Melrose High School senior set to graduate at the end of the month, I can say on behalf of myself and my classmates that college applications are one of the most stress-inducing processes I have ever gone through. Students are asked to look deep inside themselves; to figure out who they are and who they want to be, and to show that in a 650-word essay. Sometimes the students are loved. Much of

the time, they are not. [A 2014 study by the University of California, Los Angeles' Higher Education Research Institute](#) found that less than 57% of high school seniors would be attending their first-choice schools, and that number has decreased exponentially as applications rise and thus, acceptance rates fall. And no matter how aware students are of a three-percent acceptance rate, there's no way around it - rejections hurt.

As high school seniors choose the college they will attend for the next four years and high school juniors begin filling out the Common Application and writing essays, I wanted to share my own advice for how to maintain mental health during the college application process.

1. Remember that you can only control what you can control.

You could write the most beautiful essay; you could be the president of every extracurricular you are a part of; you could score perfectly on every standardized test you took - but at the end of the day, the college application process is not in your hands. It is in the hands of the dozens of admissions officers reading your application and deciding whether it will land in the accept, reject, or waitlist stack. I have always been the kind of person who likes to set goals for myself, and many of these goals surrounded getting into specific colleges. Looking back, I wish they hadn't. Specific colleges can be motivation, something to think about when studying for your next exam or your first SAT, but at the end of the day, you are not defined by your decisions from those schools, because they are out of your control. The student, the leader, and the person you are - those are within your control, and those are what define who you are.

2. Remember that not everything will be perfect, especially not the first time that you write it.

My classmates and I spent tens of hours writing and editing our Common App essays, waiting until we felt they were perfect to copy and paste them into the "Personal Essay" section of the website. Of course, you should love the essays you write for your college applications - they, out of every part of your application, are what represents you the most. But there is so much pressure for these essays to be "perfect" that it can never truly feel like they are perfect. If you love your essays and feel that they represent your authentic self, they are perfect.

3. Remember how many people are behind you.

Yes, the people reading your applications are unknown to you, but the people who do know you - your family, friends, teachers, and counselors - are the ones who get you through this process. Listen to their advice, and use them as a shoulder to lean on when you need someone to vent about a decision with or just someone to talk to. The relationships you build with others are more meaningful than any decision you get.

There is no way around saying that college applications are stressful, and can be deleterious to your mental health. Take the time to be kind to yourself - to me, that means going out for runs, spending quality time with my friends and family, and separating work time from personal time. Try to remember who you are, and how much you've worked to get to where you are today, and the people you've been able to meet along the way. That - not any application you submit or decision you get back - is what defines you.

Melrose Events

Mental Health 101

May is Mental Health Month!
Learn more about signs and symptoms, stigma, self-care, and how to help a loved one or friend.
Free and open to all.

Session Details:

Thu, May 23
6pm-8pm
Milano Center

Register at:
www.cityofmelrose.org/recreation



TuftsMedicine
MelroseWakefield Hospital

Medford Events

BLACK HEALTH SERIES

EVENT 4: ASTHMA AMONG BLACK CHILDREN & CLIMATE JUSTICE

May 29, 2024
6pm-8pm

In-person: West Medford Community Center
111 Arlington St, Medford, MA

Virtual: Zoom Registration:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/91581234567>



The Black Health series looks at how health disparities have harmed Black Americans. The series will explore health issues affecting the Black community.

In partnership with healthcare professionals, community leaders, and subject matter experts.

Featuring guest speaker Dr. Brita Lundberg, Physicians for Social Responsibility; CEO and founder, Health Equity Institute.



Contact Sophie Antoine with questions
at santoine@medford-ma.gov



Stoneham Events

Join us for a 2024 PRIDE Celebration!
Saturday, June 1st, 2024 (12pm-2pm)
Stoneham Town Common



Stoneham
PRIDE

**WHEN THE COMMUNITY STANDS
TOGETHER, WE ARE BETTER.**

*Join us for a family friendly Pride Day Celebration & stand in solidarity
with our LGBTQ+ community! Music, Raffles, Kids Crafts & Activities,
Guest Speakers. SHS & CMS GSA Groups, and community tables!
(Rain or Shine! In case of inclement weather, event will be moved into Town Hall).*

 **Eastern Bank**
JOIN US FOR GOOD

STONEHAM
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF STONEHAM & WAKEFIELD

 **Stoneham
Human
Rights
Commission**

Regional Events

Your local NAMI offers free support programs and an empathetic community to people living with mental health conditions and their families.



Pick your favorite option to support NAMI Walks

1) Walk with Us 2) Raise Funds 3) Donate

Learn more: namicentramiddlesex.org/nami-walks

Local Events

Are you hosting an event that serves our students or families? Could folks benefit from the work that you're doing? Would you like to get the word out to collaborators in the region?

Submit your upcoming events here and we will feature them in the future editions of our newsletter. Use the button directly below.

[Submit Events for a Future Feature Here!](#)

Mystic Valley Public Health Coalition

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