



# CHBS Canopy

## Inclusive Excellence

Volume 2 | Issue 11 – February 26, 2024

What's in this Issue?

CHBS Highlight – Pathway Program p.1

Gender Affirming Care – p. 2

Dysregulation - p.2-3

ADA Interactive Maps Link – p.3

Time for Peace? – p. 4

Opportunities & Events – pp.5-7

**A note on this issue:** Beyond our CHBS Highlights, this issue addresses difficult topics that, when we are exposed to them, may leave us silent and inactive due to our discomfort. Often, this is because we do not know what is appropriate to say or how to respond to a particular situation. Topics such as the harm of war or ethnic differences, race and anti-oppression, and the importance of gender-affirming care can make us unsure in our words, anxious about offending, or feel a need to defend our positions. None of these topics are easily engaged, especially in mixed groups. In this issue, we acknowledge our collective discomfort and encourage us all to continue to learn independently and in dialog with other trusted persons. We also address what we can do when we feel that discomfort. Let's take conversations to the next level by acknowledging discomfort and imperfection in word choice. Be courteous and courageous. Let's also offer grace.

### CHBS Highlight

#### CHBS Middle School Pathway Program

On Friday, February 23, CHBS hosted 134 students from five area middle schools. The purpose of the program is to introduce students to health-related professions. Most middle school students would not know about occupational therapy, speech pathology or audiology, exercise science, or being a physician assistant unless they needed these services in their lives. We provide clarity or direction on professions like social work, psychology, or nursing, where there may be familiarity. This is different from the Fall program for high schoolers who are making decisions about their next steps.

CHBS students, faculty, and administrators played vital roles in the day's opportunities by being guides, introducing their majors, sharing their professional goals on the student panel, and helping with sessions in their majors. Some students represented CHBS Student Ambassadors, CHBS Inclusive Excellence Student Council, and unit majors. Most units planned age-appropriate engagement experiences as the middle school students were exposed to a variety of activities. The planning committee included Lincoln Gray (CSD), Johnny Ginnity (HP), Reem Mohammed (IIHHS), Brenda Bechler (IIHHS), Kirk Armstrong (HP), and CHBS Associate Deans Linda Plitt Donaldson, BJ Bryson, and Doug Hochstetler. The Dean's office [Abby Dean, Loran Bowes, Julie Love, and Tammy Crawford] worked behind the scenes to make the event run smoothly, from identifying spaces, stuffing student bags, and ensuring there was enough pizza and supplies to helping to facilitate the fine details of this event. The bottom line is that this event could not have happened without the dedication of units and the many volunteers. Thank you for supporting this event.



## The Importance of Gender Affirming Care

[The recent story](#) of Nex Benedict, a 16-year-old Oklahoma Owasso High School sophomore who died, provides another example of the importance of gender-affirming care and efforts to make learning spaces more inclusive and welcoming for students who identify across the LGBTQPIDA+ spectrum. While this death is still under investigation, it is known that bullying in school due to identity is part of the story. The bullying escalated to a bathroom fight. The following morning, Nex was dead. [Reports](#) indicate increased bullying is an effect of recent Oklahoma laws: “the state implemented a new law that bars transgender students from using the school bathrooms that align with their gender identities.”



The [Human Rights Campaign](#) (HRC) offers insight into this story with information on law changes, challenges, and effects on youth and their families. HRC is a leading organization “focused on mobilizing those who envision a world strengthened by diversity, where our laws and society treat all people equally, including LGBTQ+ people and those who are multiply marginalized.”



Join [CHBS Viewpoints on Health](#) speaker Dallas Ducar, CEO of Transhealth, on Thursday, February 29, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m., at Wilson Auditorium to learn more about “**Gender-Affirming Healthcare as a Model of Person-Centered, Value-based Care**”.

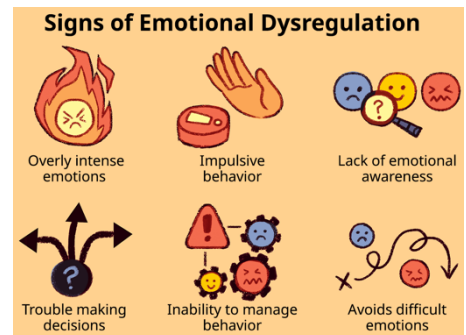
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## Dysregulation and Inclusive Excellence: What to do When our Learning has Stalled

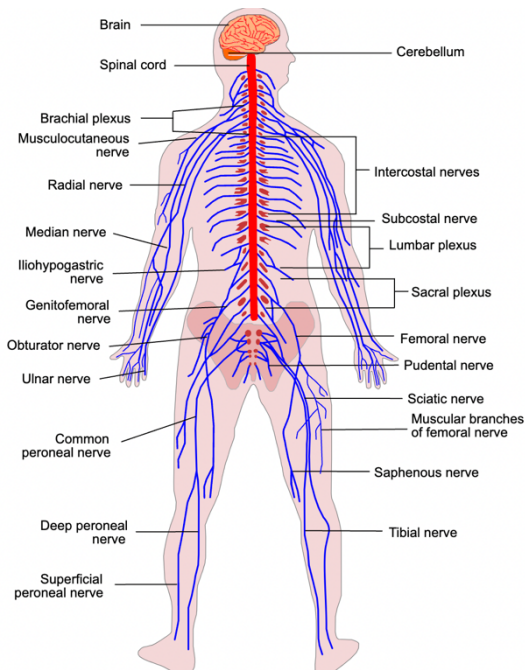
Amanda Evans, Graduate Psychology

Have you ever participated in an inclusive excellence training and/or workshop and noticed feelings of defensiveness and/or resistance? Or maybe you haven't directly experienced this, but you've noticed these types of reactions when engaging with students on important topics. Researchers suggest that exploring topics like discrimination and privilege in professional work environments can lead some participants to explore their worldviews and value systems simultaneously ([Frierson et al. 2023](#)).

When new information challenges our previously held beliefs about the world, we may begin to experience feelings of discomfort ([Brackett, 2019](#)) that can activate our fight, flight, and/or freeze response. Some researchers argue that we may also respond by fawning, et cetera, but for the purposes of this demonstration, we will stick with the original three. Once our fight, flight, or freeze becomes activated, it can be difficult to remain attentive as we are biologically hard-wired to react and may become [dysregulated](#), an inability to control or regulate one's emotional responses. Learning stops when dysregulation starts.



**Deeper Explanation.** Biologically, dysregulation signals that our senses are overstimulated, and we become preoccupied with reestablishing an equilibrium at the expense of learning new information ([Hannaford, 2005](#)). In a very oversimplified explanation, our complex central nervous system is comprised of nerve tissues that control the body. Messages received by the nerves from the senses continue through the brain to the central nervous system, and our bodies respond. Within the autonomic nervous system, there are the parasympathetic (rest and digest) and sympathetic (fight, flight, or freeze) nerves. When all the systems are regulated, we have optimal learning as we can



receive, process, and react to information appropriately ([Greutman & Kostelyk, 2018](#)). When our systems aren't working together, we may experience the very resistance and defensiveness described above. Some researchers suggest that when our sympathetic system is activated and we are in a fight, flight, or freeze response, focusing on the parasympathetic can be a useful intervention. Parasympathetic restores our physiological responses to a threat and calms our body down.

Learning can be transformative. The more experiences we have, the more pathways our brains create. There are instances that can disrupt our learning. The [Central Nervous System Pyramid of Learning](#) can be a great resource in instances when dysregulation in learning occurs. Some examples of how we can focus on the

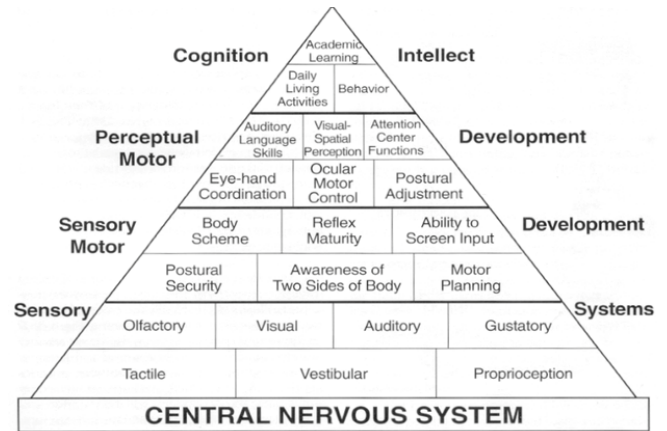


Figure 1-3. Printed with permission.

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parasympathetic system in inclusive excellence training and classroom discussion can be through some of the following suggestions.

- Humor
- Rhythm and/or Movement
- Play
- Whole Body Activities
- Mindfulness
- Breathwork

The College of Health and Behavioral Studies (CHBS) trains students to offer holistic and integrative approaches to health and behavioral healthcare, and this aligns with national priorities to reduce health disparities and improve quality of care. Often referred to as behavioral health integration (BHI), it is imperative that faculty, staff, and students are empowered to serve a diverse range of students, patients, and communities. To be able to offer these services means that many of us are stretched as we learn how to address health disparities and better serve under-resourced communities. Please join me in considering the ways in which we can use our body's reactions to enhance learning for our students and ourselves in effective ways to grow both personally and professionally.

Another Reference: van Der Kolk B. A. (2014). [The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma.](#)

**[JMU Improved ADA Inclusive Maps!](#)** Check out the updated JMU interactive map that has ADA Accessibility embedded, providing identifications for ramps, electronic doorways, and universal bathrooms. The HBS building also indicates the Lactation Space.

- The JMU Accessible Parking map is [here](#).
- You may report Accessibility Barriers [here](#).

## Is it time to talk about peace?

Martin Luther King Jr, Mahatma Gandhi, Elie Wiesel, and Nelson Mandela are some of the leaders who focused on bringing peace to the world. The NAACP [[National Association for the Advancement of Colored People](#)] in 2007 put forth national resolutions for the development of a National Department for Peace and Non-Violence. The United Nations writes, “The most effective way to diminish human suffering and the massive economic costs of conflicts and their aftermath is to prevent conflicts in the first place” through [Preventive Diplomacy and Mediation](#). Yet, our legislative efforts seem to move away from creating processes of peace development. No doubt, peace is not our national default setting. It is difficult for most people to talk about peace or the circumstances associated with a lack of peace. From an ethnic identity perspective, an individual’s internal peace can be associated with issues of world peace when ties external to the USA exist.

Inclusive excellence (IE) as a concept is in keeping with promoting peace. The five dimensions of IE are intrapersonal awareness, interpersonal awareness, curriculum transformation, inclusive pedagogy, and inclusive learning environments. We seek to build a sense of belonging for all students within our college community because belonging is associated with higher academic performance and mental health well-being. It is difficult to focus on academics when worrying about cultural community members in distant places. This is true for faculty and staff members who may be connected to places of war or community instability.

Recognize that members of our college community may be silently hurting due to wars, changes in national or local priorities, and the deafening silence of pain unspoken. While some have turned off their news and media, others listen intently with concerns of harm to their loved ones or distant cultural communities. In [How to Survive the Loss of a Love](#) by Colgrove and Bloomfield, a chapter is devoted to a stage of limbo in its many forms. Limbo is a period of awaiting a resolution or decision, a state of neglect or oblivion. Many may feel a state of limbo because the management of outcomes is not in the hands of everyday people. For some, limbo can be associated with uncertainty, times when knowledge is limited, and a lack of progress or improvement.

Internal or emotional peace is feeling calm, moving from worry, anxiety, or stress, even in the face of difficult or challenging situations. Achieving such a state requires many skills, actions, and intentions. [Some suggestions](#) are:

- Notice and name what you feel
- Tune into physical representations of your emotional life
- Engage in physical activity – UREC, local gym, walking campus
- Engage in positive self-talk and recognize positive emotions
- Practice mindfulness
- Identify and seek to reduce emotional triggers
- Remove yourself from negative experiences (turn off media) or people
- Talk to trusted friends or family; develop a support group
- Take positive actions – write a legislator, seek out and volunteer with an advocacy group



Image: College of Arts & Science  
George Washington University

Share these suggestions with students or peers who may benefit from learning more about and engaging in methods of self-care, as these are actions and behaviors available without cost and within our control.

When these types of methods are not effective, seeking professional help is a positive action.

- Students may find assistance through the [JMU Counseling Center](#), [TimelyCare](#), [JMU Health Promotion](#), or [Madison Cares](#).
- For faculty or staff, JMU offers [Balanced Dukes](#) and the [Employee Assistance Program](#).

## OPPORTUNITIES

### **Mary Baldwin University FAFSA Nights**

February 26 – 29, 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
Mary Baldwin Administrative Building

The federal government tried to simplify the FAFSA application process for graduating high school students. There have been barriers for many diverse and first-generation students applying to college. The barriers to completing the simplified version will slow awards for financial aid. MBU is offering assistance to any student applying to any college or university. [Campus map](#).

### **The Journey: Black History Month** (Highlights from the local area)

WHSV, Channel 3 ([online](#))

- A series of short news stories about regional Black History.

### **This Is Home Exhibit**

[Shenandoah Valley Art Center](#) (currently)

A photo exhibit by photographer Kate Simon, in partnership with the Community Foundation of Central Blue Ridge, explores local housing insecurities.

## EVENTS

### **The History of Black Minds of All Kinds**

Monday, February 26, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Student Success Center Indoor Information Table  
Sponsored by ODS

- ODS invites you to learn about Black individuals with disabilities who have made an impact in the past and present

### **Black Card Revoked**

Monday, February 26, 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.  
The Union, Taylor 306

- In honor of black history month we are playing a card game where it is like Jeopardy but about black history month facts

### ***girls + eggs***

Duke Hall, Gallery of Fine Arts  
Open until March 8, 2024

Bring together artist from Krakow Poland, NY, & VA

- [girls + eggs](#) is a group exhibition of drawings, paintings, photographs, and objects by artists working in solidarity and fury in response to attacks on reproductive justice and sexual citizenship. The exhibition presents a world of individuals, characters, thoughts, and fragments from those repressed by and resisting the return to patriarchal norms – women, men, transgender, non-binary, queer, lesbian, cis-gender, mothers, fathers, child-free, dog lovers, and feminists.

**Gender-Affirming Healthcare as a Model of Person-Centered, Value-Based Care**

Guest Speaker: **Dallas Ducar**, Chief Executive Officer, Transhealth

Thursday, February 29, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Wilson Hall Auditorium

- This presentation focuses on core principles of gender-affirming care as a model in healthcare. It discusses how this approach not only supports transgender and gender-diverse individuals but also serves as a blueprint for compassionate, personalized healthcare.

**Commemorate Black History in our community: Dr. Steve Reich (JMU History)**

February 29, 6:00 p.m., [Lucy F. Simms Continuing Education Center](#)

- Dr. Reich will present his research that studies African American history, violence, and memory.

**Shades of Strength: Black Women's Resistance**

Friday, March 1, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Cardinal House

Sponsored by: Furious Flower Poetry Center

- A First Friday reception featuring our sixth exhibit, *Shades of Strength: Black Women's Resistance*, curated by Furious Flower Carmen R. Gillespie Fellows India Williams and Taylor Naufflett. Black identity and womanhood intersect, prompting a compelling question: What is the essence of being both Black and a woman?

**30+30 Tour - Advertising Funds to Enhance Diverse Applicant Pool**

Tuesday, March 5, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. (Virtual Event)

Contact Lisa Hess for link ([hesslb@jmu.edu](mailto:hesslb@jmu.edu))

- This is a TFRE Recommendation. We will discuss funding allocated to cover advertising costs that cannot be borne solely by hiring departments. The numbers vary but HR typically spends between \$3,000 and \$4,000 per year on advertising specifically purchased for departments who are unable to afford the cost. The request process for departments will be included in the discussion. We hope to obtain opinions from key stakeholders to ensure that procedures and parameters are seen as fair and beneficial to those who might require funding. In addition, methods used to communicate this information will be discussed. [Check out other 30+30 Tour events.](#)

**Author Talk: Making Universities “Good Neighbors” in Communities**

Tuesday, March 5, 5:00 - 6:30 p.m.

Massanutten Regional Library, 174 S. Main Street, Harrisonburg, VA 22801

- All are invited to hear urbanist, historian, and cultural critic [Dr. Davarian Baldwin](#) speak about his research and his book, *In the Shadow of the Ivory Tower: How Universities are Plundering Our Cities*. His work examines ways institutions of higher education across the country exacerbate economic and social problems in our communities. Dr. Baldwin proposes a vision for more equitable relationships between our cities and our universities.

### **Talk: *Freedom of Thought and the Courage to Lead***

March 7, 2:30-3:30 p.m., [Hall of Presidents](#)

Speaker Marjorie Hass, President, Council of Independent Colleges

- [Marjorie Hass](#), is considered an expert in higher education leadership

### **Global Humanitarian Week: Legacies of War**

Tuesday, March 19, 5:00 – 6:00 p.m., Miller Hall 1101

Sponsored by: Center for International Stabilization & Recovery

- CISR is honored to host Legacies of War for this year's Global Humanitarian Week (<https://www.legaciesofwar.org/>). Legacies of War is the only international U.S.-based advocacy and educational organization working to address the impacts of war in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Our guest speakers will be Sera Koulabdara, CEO of Legacies of War, and Siliphone Phommachanthone, Senior Executive Intern at Legacies of War.

### **[JMU 2024 Diversity Conference](#)**

#### ***The Time is NOW: Boldly Demonstrating Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Belonging***

Wednesday, March 20, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Registration is [here](#).

Keynote Speaker: **Rick Mitchell, Commissioner for the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired**

- Dr. Richard Mitchell, (Rick) is presently the Commissioner of the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired. He was appointed to this role by Governor Glenn Youngkin in May 2022. Before his appointment as Commissioner, he served as the Deputy Commissioner for Services with DBVI for a total of nine years.

### **Faculty's Role in Employment Justice for Students with Dr. Temple Grandin**

Thursday, March 28, 12:30 PM - 2:30 PM

Student Success Center 1075

Sponsored as part of ODS Disability Awareness Week & [Center for Faculty Innovation](#)

- [Dr. Temple Grandin](#) is a professor, prominent author, and speaker on autism. Possible topics include finding career opportunities, industry partners, and disability employment justice.