

Happy New Year!



... "bite size" news from your HSB Regional Behavior Specialists

# OH, Behave!

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## New Year, New YOU!



### Tip of the Month:

If feelings of guilt begin to creep in as you begin to prioritize your own mental health and well-being, remember you can't pour from an empty bucket. In other words, you have to take care of yourself if you want to take care of others!



### Connect with us!

Check out [Tucker's NC Nest](#) on Pinterest!

Follow OhBehaveTips on [X \(formerly, Twitter!\)](#)

Join our new online community by clicking [here](#)! By joining Social - Emotional Connections, you will have the opportunity to network, post questions, and share resources with other early childhood professionals in NC!

Open our latest public resource, a growing library shelf of virtual binders that include archived issues of the HSB newsletter, *OH, Behave!*, a collection of Disaster Response Resources, and a binder of scripted stories for classroom use! Click [here](#).

When you hear the words "mental health", what immediately comes to mind? Mental health affects how we feel, act, and think. If your mental health is suffering, your ability to handle stress is compromised. Mental health impacts our emotional and social well-being. As behavior specialists, we talk about the importance of social and emotional skills in everything we do. Social and emotional skills are the building blocks of life, just as mental health is important at every stage of life. We started talking about mental health and supporting the well-being of the teachers we work with even more once COVID made its way into the world as we know it. Doesn't it just make sense that mental health goes hand in hand with behavior and social and emotional skill building?

We would like to dedicate this first issue of the new year to mental health. Most of our readers are teachers who are twice as likely to experience burnout and stress. If long term burnout and stress are not mitigated adequately, it can become toxic and affect your mental health. Therefore, it is critical to take care of yourself and create good, healthy habits that become part of your every day life. Be pro-

active about setting yourself up for success. It is essential to plan ahead for stressful times in life by practicing mindfulness and actively searching for enjoyment. Here are some ways you can work on becoming more mentally fit:

- At the end of each day, think about three things that went well. (This activity helps retrain your brain from focusing on the negative).
- Smile. Especially if you don't feel like it. Smiling makes you present yourself in a more positive way, thus making you feel better.
- Get more sleep. Even a half an hour more will make a positive difference.
- Do something nice for someone else. Hold the door open for the next person or give someone a compliment. This simple act of kindness is a sure way of lifting your own spirit.
- Send a text message to a friend to let them know you are thinking of them.
- Challenge yourself not to complain about anything for a whole day.
- Sing! It doesn't matter if you are American Idol or The Voice worthy. You can always sing in your car or in the shower. Take it a step further and make a playlist

of your favorite songs that never fail to make you grin!

- Take time to share something you are excited about or looking forward to doing with your family, friends, or a colleague.
- Be mindful of not watching too much news or media. Stay in the know enough to be aware of what is going on in your community and the world; but, don't saturate yourself in it.
- Drink water the way you most enjoy it. If you prefer ice cold water, fill up your favorite tumbler with it! If you prefer room temperature water, drink it that way. If water is not your thing, try it in a fancy glass or add a lemon wedge to it. Think of it as doing something good for your body and mind!
- If you have a task you are not looking forward to, do it first thing in the morning. Get it over with so it doesn't negatively impact your mood and ruin your entire day.
- Make a list of all the things that bring you joy. This list will be unique to you and can contain anything that makes you smile. Once the list is created, select one thing from it each week and do it!



In each issue you will find a new card to help you build your very own "Calming Choices" Card Set for your classroom.



**Question:** I recently accepted a teaching position at a school whose population primarily consists of children from homeless families in our community. My classroom is a combination of three and four year olds. I want to support these young learners in every aspect, but I am new to the signs of trauma. I want to be able to address their social and emotional needs and behavior as well as begin to help them become more resilient and heal. What are some symptoms I should look for? These children deserve the best and I want to give that to them!

**Answer:** We are happy to answer this question for you. Thank you for wanting to give the children in your care your very best! Some of the signs and symptoms of trauma in young children are sadness, being overly clingy, restlessness, aggression, developmental regression, fearfulness, irritability, social avoidance, and overall problematic behavior issues that tend to arise out of the blue. Of course, this will look different from child to child.

According to the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI), being prepared to support these children and their families is key. Working to help families get in touch with supportive systems that can ensure their basic needs are being met is essential. As a teacher and influential caring adult in the lives of children, you can help strengthen the responsive relationship between the parent(s) and child. The relationship you have with the child and the family will be a protective factor in their lives. Teaching children social and emotional skills will help them be ready for school accomplishments and life success. Providing predictability throughout the school day and establishing routines will help children feel a sense of safety and security. Furthermore, NCPMI and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network suggest to "respond to challenging behavior by seeking to understand the behavior and use prevention and instructional strategies to address behavior; and, eliminate the use of exclusionary or punishment responses". These practices align with the Pyramid Model for early childhood programs.

To find materials and learn procedures you can use directly in your classroom such as breathing strategies, feeling faces, emotional regulation tools (i.e., Tucker Turtle), social stories, and problem solving techniques, check out [challengingbehavior.org](http://challengingbehavior.org)

Be sure to promote parents' self-care, and be certain to do the same for yourself!

When I am upset, I can...

## READ WITH A FLASHLIGHT



For durability and repetitive use, print on cardstock paper and laminate.

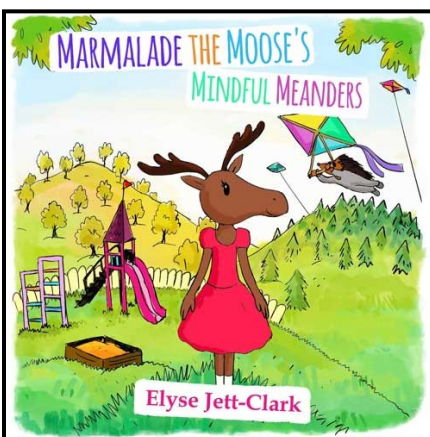
Children don't say, "I had a hard day. Can we talk?" They say, "Will you play with me?"  
-Lawrence Cohen

PRESCHOOL  
Inspirations

Do you have a question you would like to see answered in our column? Feel free to email it to [AskTheBehaviorSpecialist@gmail.com](mailto:AskTheBehaviorSpecialist@gmail.com). We will keep your identity private. Your question is probably one someone else needs answering, so ask away! Your time is appreciated!



## Social/Emotional Book Nook



If you want to explore more about mindfulness, happiness, and gratitude with the children in your life, consider adding this book to your classroom reading corner! Suitable and adaptable for all ages (0-10 years), Marmalade the Moose loves to live in the moment and look for all the wonderful things happening all around her. Whether it is a farm, hiking with friends, or visiting a beach, Marmalade makes every adventure fun, exciting, and a learning experience! Join her through the vibrant pages of this book!

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