

Baldwin community encourages mental wellness

By Brianna Heard on Monday, March 16, 2026



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The winter months have brought colder and shorter days to Baldwin County, which has taken a toll on mental health for some residents and students. As the community transitions into spring, local resources and organizations are offering opportunities to strengthen mental health.

On March 3, Georgia College & State University celebrated Wellness Day and redirected classes so students could enjoy mental wellness activities such as goat yoga, hydro-massages and painting.

"Sometimes we do not have good days and are dealing with really hard stuff, so no matter where students are on that spectrum, we want them to find a moment for themselves," said Emily Jarvis, GCSU vice president for student health and wellbeing.

Ran by Gregory and Toyia Barnes, the ArtHealthy Festival is another free event for anyone to attend which will be held in Milledgeville on April 11. This festival focuses on overall wellness so the community can celebrate health and fitness.

"We're going to be doing different classes from safety to technology. We're also going to introduce AI workshops and things of that nature," said Gregory Barnes. "We want to give people opportunities in physical, emotional and financial health, as well as artistic creativity. I believe that's our way forward."

Beyond events, residents can also take advantage of local mental health businesses.

Oconee Center in Milledgeville offers services and treatments for those struggling with mental health or substance abuse. Their mission is to provide high quality and cost-effective behavioral health to their customers. For more information, visit oconeecenter.org.

Milledgeville Counseling Center offers therapy options for couples, families, grief, spiritual awareness and more. Sessions range from \$75 to \$150 based on individual needs. For more information, visit milledgevillecounseling.org.

River Edge Behavioral Health in Milledgeville offers many services for mental health, addiction recovery, developmental disabilities and even offers supportive housing to assist those in recovery. For more information, visit river-edge.org.

For immediate support, residents can call the Milledgeville Crisis hotline at 478-457-5311 or the Georgia crisis line at 800-715-4225. They can also use the national 988 crisis and suicide hotline which is available 24/7 by texting or calling the number 988.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIH), it is important to follow self-care to support your recovery or treatment for mental illness.

NIH recommends getting regular exercise, eating healthy, making sleep a priority, trying relaxing activities, setting goals, practicing gratitude, focusing on positivity and staying connected to friends or family.

If you have trouble sleeping, changes in appetite or unplanned weight change, difficulty leaving bed due to mood, difficulty concentrating, loss of interest in things you enjoy or feelings of irritability or restlessness, NIH recommends seeking professional help.

Recognizing these signs and seeking support early can make a difference. Mental health officials encourage residents to take advantage of these resources and remember that support is always available.