



DEKALB MISDEMEANOR MENTAL HEALTH COURT

www.dekalbcountymagistratecourt.com

April 2025
Volume XVIII
Issue 01

MINDFULNESS Edition - Part I

Mindfulness is a state of active, open attention to the present. This state is described as observing one's thoughts and feelings without judging them as good or bad. To live mindfully is to live in the moment and reawaken oneself to the present, rather than dwelling on the past or anticipating the future. To be mindful is to observe and label thoughts, feelings, sensations in the body in an objective manner. Mindfulness can therefore be a tool to avoid self-criticism and judgment while identifying and managing difficult emotions.



What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness encompasses two key ingredients: awareness and acceptance. Awareness is the knowledge and ability to focus attention on one's inner processes and experiences, such as the experience of the present moment. Acceptance is the ability to observe and accept—rather than judge or avoid—those streams of thought.

What is the purpose of mindfulness?

The goal of mindfulness is to cultivate perspective on one's consciousness and identity that can bring greater peace mentally and relationally. Mindfulness may also

be used in mindfulness-based therapies, to address stress, anxiety, or pain, and simply to become more relaxed.

What is the history of mindfulness?

Mindfulness has its origins in Buddhist and Hindu teachings, from which the concept “sati” was roughly translated to “mindfulness.” The practice was popularized in the West through the work of Jon-Kabat Zinn. Zinn created Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction to treat pain, anxiety, and stress, and he ultimately brought mindfulness into mainstream clinical practice.

What's the difference between mindfulness and flow?

Flow is a state in which one is completely absorbed in an activity and loses self-awareness. Flow and mindfulness both involve deep concentration—but only flow involves goal-directed behavior. While *mindfulness channels* concentration entirely toward the present moment, flow channels concentration toward skills and goal achievement, which might include thoughts of the past and future and judgment of those thoughts.

What's the difference between mindfulness and meditation?

Mindfulness is one form of meditation. Meditation utilizes various practices to quiet the mind or achieve a higher level of consciousness, one of which is mindfulness. Mindfulness can be cultivated within or outside of formal meditation and woven into any activity, such as taking a walk or being engaged in conversation.

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988 has been designated as the new three-digit dialing code that will route callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. While some areas may be currently able to connect to the Lifeline by dialing 988, this dialing code will be available to everyone across the United States starting on July 16, 2022.



Georgia Crisis and Access Line (GCAL)
1-800-715-4225



Consider these options when you or someone you care about is experiencing a mental health crisis:

- Call 911 if the situation is a life-threatening emergency.
- Call the Claratel DeKalb Regional Crisis Center at 404.294.0499, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Visit the Claratel DeKalb Regional Crisis Center (DRCC) located at 450 Winn Way, Decatur, Georgia 30030.

For non-crisis situations, Central Access serves as the central point of contact for Claratel Behavioral Health. Call 404.892.4646 for information about services.



Graduate Gab

Mr. R.

Mr. R. recently graduated from MMHC after making a life-changing decision to own his recovery. Prior to entering, he began his recovery journey and continued it throughout his time in MMHC. He was a model participant who worked hard and owned his mistakes. He held himself accountable for every decision he made—good and not so good. He utilized the cognitive-behavioral skills thought in MMHC to manage life's stressors and situations.

Today, Mr. R. is doing well and recently reported that "life is good". Congratulations, Mr. R., on successfully completing MMHC and continuing to show yourself and others what wellness and recovery looks like!

Ms. S.

Ms. S. also is a recent MMHC graduate. Upon entering, she stated that completing MMHC was something that she really wanted to do and was willing to do whatever needed in order to accomplish that goal. And she did, despite some challenges along the way. She was able to dig deep, remember her reason for being here and kept pushing. She was open to change and willing to do something different so that she could have something different. We expect nothing but the best from and for her!

Ms. B.

PERSEVERANCE— that is the word most would use to describe Ms. B., another recent MMHC graduate. She doesn't know failure because she picks herself up and tries again and again until she masters it. She sees every issue, obstacle, and problem simply as a challenge to be met and overcome. She has never given up and never will.

In a post-graduation conversation with MMHC staff, she plans to complete her GED tests and to apply for college in preparation for entering this upcoming Fall semester. Ms. B. continues to inspire her former peers and the MMHC team members. If you are ever lucky to cross paths with her, you too will be inspired!

Resource Information

Hotlines & Helplines

SAMHSA's National Helpline

1-800- 662-HELP (4357) or
1-800-487-4889 (TDD)

(<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>): Provides 24-hour, free, and confidential information and treatment referral for mental and substance use disorders in English and Spanish.

Crisis Text Line

TEXT HOME to 741741

(<https://www.crisistextline.org/>):

Provides 24/7 support for individuals experiencing a crisis via text message.

Other help lines: Veteran's, SAMHSA, Teen Suicide, Violence:

Veteran's Crisis Line:

1-800-273-8255 (press 1) text: 8382355

www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/hotline

Help for veterans and their families.

"Names are always safeguarded or redacted in order to protect the identity of the Participants"

DeKalb Misdemeanor Mental Health Court (MMHC) is state certified accountability court. Certification is achieved through adherence and compliance with state and national standards as set forth by the Council of Accountability Court Judges (CACJ) and AllRise. One very important standard addresses the need for a multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary team, which is a dedicated team of professionals that brings together the expertise, resources, and legal authority required to improve outcomes for treatment court participants. Team members coordinate their roles and responsibilities to achieve mutually agreed upon goals, practice within the bounds of their expertise and ethical obligations, share pertinent and appropriate information, and avoid crossing boundaries and interfering with the work of other professionals. MMHC's Multidisciplinary/Interdisciplinary team is comprised of criminal justice and mental health professionals who are dedicated and work collaboratively to help participants living with mental health illness achieve treatment and criminal justice goals by regularly reviewing and revising the court process. The Multidisciplinary/Interdisciplinary team participates in weekly staffing and public court hearings of MMHC participants. We are spotlighting below a few new team members!

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Kysha McDermott, MMHC Case Manager

Kysha McDermott joined MMHC in 2024 as the case manager. She is very grateful to join this amazing team and serve her community in this capacity. Kysha has spent many years serving various populations as a case manager in the community. Kysha sees how important the role of an advocate is and is honored to walk side by side with the participants of MMHC providing support, encouragement, and community resources. When not serving as a case manager Kysha enjoys going to the gym, spending time with her husband of 22 years and is blessed to be a mom of two, along with having four fur babies, 2 cats and 2 dogs. Kysha looks forward to continuing to grow and learn from the MMHC team!



Dwight Jackson, DeKalb County Assistant Solicitor-General



Dwight Jackson was raised in Buffalo, New York. In 2017, he graduated **summa cum laude** from Buffalo State College with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a minor in Legal Studies. During his time at Buffalo State, he also studied abroad in Beijing, China.

In 2020, Dwight earned a dual JD/MBA degree from the University at Buffalo Law School. After graduation, he relocated to Atlanta to begin his legal career. In 2022, he joined the DeKalb County Solicitor-General's Office, where he now works in the Diversion Unit.

Outside of work, Dwight enjoys roller skating, watching movies, and spending quality time with his family. One of his favorite quotes is: **"Blessed are they who maintain justice, who constantly do what is right."** — Psalm 106:3

Mental Matters

If you were born with
the weakness to fall
you were born with
the strength to rise.

Rupi Kaur, Milk and Honey

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Kira Bradley, MMHC Clinical Evaluator



Kira Bradley has been with MMHC for 2 years now as the Clinical Evaluator. Kira spent 10 years working with DeKalb County's Accountability Courts, in various positions. Having the experience working as the Family Services Coordinator, allotted her the ability to reconnect families and connect participants to services within the community. Families learned about addiction and mental health and how to embrace participants. Having attended trainings at both the national and local levels, Kira recognizes the importance of normalizing and talking about the stigmas around mental health. Kira has been a Certified Addiction Counselor for 20 years, a Licensed Associate Professional Counselor, a Coordinator in a substance abuse nonprofit organization, and a Department of Family and Children's Services, Protective Services Worker and Supervisor. Kira is excited about sharing information on how to engage and embrace who you are and how the light within is perfect for that person, just as they are.

Rose Priddy, DeKalb County Assistant Public Defender

Rose Priddy recently joined MMHC as the representative from the DeKalb County Public Defender Office. She is thrilled to be joining such a collaborative team whose goals include lifting up some of the most vulnerable members of society entangled in the criminal justice system. Rose graduated as a Double Dawg from the University of Georgia School of Law in 2013, after earning her bachelor's degrees in Political Science and Sociology there in 2010. She worked as an assistant public defender in the Northeastern Judicial Circuit, supporting the Felony Mental Health Court, Felony Drug Court, and Competency Docket, until 2016 when she joined the DeKalb County Public Defender Office, where she has represented hundreds of clients in traffic court, state court, and superior court. During her decade working in the public interest, she has tried to heed the inspirational words of Martin Luther King, Jr.: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." When she's not working, Rose enjoys gathering for meals with friends, long walks in her neighborhood with her husband, and hanging out with her three cats at home.



JOIN US FOR AN OBSERVATION OF A MISDEMEANOR MENTAL HEALTH COURT SESSION

You are welcome to observe a
MMHC court session. MMHC
convenes the 1st, 2nd, and 4th
Thursday at 10:30 am and the
3rd Thursday at 9:00 am.

Please contact the court's coordinator below for more information.

DeKalb County Courthouse,
Magistrate Court of
DeKalb County
First floor, Courtroom 1200-D

For further information, or if
you would like to receive the
MMHC newsletter or submit an
article for consideration,
contact:

Connie Morris, Coordinator
cmorris@dekalbcountyga.gov
phone 404-371-3254
fax 404-371-3206

Brandon Pillar, DeKalb County State Probation Officer



Officer Brandon Pillar is one of the newest members of the MMHC team. He graduated from Georgia Southwestern State University in December 2024 with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration. Officer Pillar's greatest achievement was being the founder and President of the Black Student Union on campus. Officer Pillar has always strived to be a leader and to find ways to best help the community.

He enjoys spending time with friends and family outside of work, as well as traveling to explore the world. He will continue to strive to honor what is right while serving the community.

His favorite poem is "Invictus" by William Ernest Henley. It is a powerful poem about not being shaken or discouraged when faced with fear. It was a gift from his brothers to encourage him during college.