

MARCH 2026

# The SMART Center

THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS NEWSLETTER



## THE SMART CENTER

BY Madison Presley

The University of Memphis School of Social Work SMART Center Research, Training, and Treatment Center aims to provide evidence-based interventions for school-based behavioral health programming in underserved areas, provide training on best practice in tele-behavioral health, develop opportunities to research the use of technology in practice direct services to the states most vulnerable populations.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

We are a 100% tele-behavioral health clinic. We provide remote services to children, youth, and their families/caregivers, as well as adults in the Mid-South area and across Tennessee. Our current operation hours are Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:00pm.



## MEDIA FOR THE SMARTCENTER

Website:

<https://www.memphis.edu/smartcenter>

**CONTACT:**

901-678-1636

[smartcenter@memphis.edu](mailto:smartcenter@memphis.edu)

Instagram:

[@uofm\\_smartcenter](https://www.instagram.com/uofm_smartcenter)



## THE WARM LINE

CONTACT: 901-678-1636

The SMART Center continues to host a “warm line” for the community that provides support, psychoeducation, and linkage to community services FREE of charge. The “warm line” is not intended for crisis support, but to assist families with identifying resources in the community. The “warm line” is in service Monday-Friday from 9:00am-4:00pm CST.



## PODCAST AND MEDIA

### SMART CONNECTIONS

The SMART Connections podcast has many helpful podcast episodes to listen to for a wide range of topics. If you are struggling with parenting tips, anxiety, depression, or just want some resources for different aspects of your life, then we have an episode for you. The SMART Connections podcast is run by the University of Memphis SMART Center warm line and MSW staff. Listen to our podcasts on our website and receive more information at <https://www.memphis.edu/smartcenter/> and <https://anchor.fm/susan-elswick>



## Mental Health Fact

### Journaling

Journaling is like giving your mind a safe space to speak out loud on paper. By writing down your thoughts, feelings, or even small daily moments, you can start to notice patterns in your emotions and reactions. This simple practice helps release stress, clarify what’s important, and even spark new ideas or solutions you might not have seen before. You don’t need perfect grammar or long entries, just honesty and consistency. Over time, your journal can become a mirror, showing how far you’ve come, helping you process difficult emotions, and giving you a private place to reflect on life’s ups and downs. Pairing journaling with other mindfulness techniques, like deep breathing or meditation, can make its benefits even stronger. It’s a small daily habit that can grow into a powerful tool for mental well-being.

# IMPORTANT MENTAL HEALTH DATES FOR MARCH

March 1: Self-Injury Awareness Day

March 8: International Women's Day

March 16-20: LGBTQ Health Awareness Week

March 30: World Bipolar Day

March 31: International Transgender Day of Visibility

Self-Harm Awareness Month



**UPCOMING MARCH MENTAL HEALTH  
EVENTS IN MEMPHIS**

**Diabetes Prevention Program Info Session-Take**

**Control of Your Health:**

Monday, March 2nd

6pm-7pm

3025 Kate Bond Rd

Free event

**Changing the Game leadership Conference:**

Saturday, March 7th

10am - 2pm at Vollintine Baptist Church

4181 New Allen Rd

Free event, Lunch Provided

**From Within - Reflection and Mindfulness**

**Workshop:**

Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup>

10:30am – 1:30pm at Hickory Ridge Mall

6075 Winchester Rd, Suite 525

\$28.52 per ticket

**Memphis Caregiver “Moment for You” Recharge**

**Series:**

Tuesday, March 17th

9am

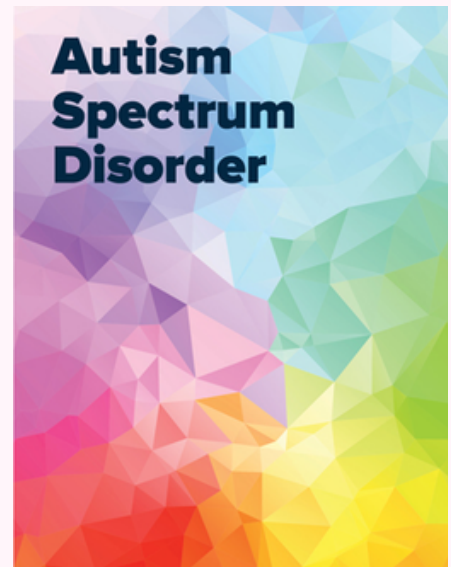
4488 Poplar Ave

Free event

# MARCH MENTAL HEALTH FOCUS: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

## Understanding Autism Through a Mental Health Lens

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects how individuals communicate, interact socially, process sensory information, and experience the world around them. From a mental health perspective, it's important to recognize that autism itself is not a mental illness, but individuals with ASD may experience mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression, emotional regulation difficulties, or stress related to navigating environments not designed for their needs.



## Common Mental Health Considerations

Individuals with ASD may experience:

- Anxiety, especially related to changes in routine or sensory overload
- Difficulty identifying or expressing emotions
- Increased stress in social situations
- Co-occurring conditions such as ADHD, anxiety disorders, or depression

Early support, understanding, and inclusive environments can greatly reduce these stressors.

## How Can We Support Mental Well-Being

- Predictability & Routine: Clear schedules and expectations help reduce anxiety.
- Sensory Awareness: Be mindful of noise, lighting, and transitions.
- Emotional Support: Teach and model coping strategies and emotional vocabulary.
- Strength-Based Approach: Focus on what the individual can do and enjoys.
- Collaboration: Families, educators, and support staff working together make a big difference.

## Promoting Acceptance and Inclusion

Mental health support for individuals with ASD is strongest in environments rooted in acceptance rather than compliance. Celebrating neurodiversity helps children and adults feel safe, valued, and understood

***Together, we can create spaces that support mental health, inclusion, and growth for individuals of all abilities.***