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Next Steps in Hope and Healing in Parkland and Broward County

On June 10, Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) in collaboration with the Center for Mind-Body Medicine (CMBM) and the Children's Services Council, will begin the next 15-month phase of a Comprehensive Wellness Program, which is already providing stress relief and trauma recovery to BCPS students, parents, teachers and school staff. The June 10 – 13 training for 170 educators, clinicians, and student peer counselors, will take place at The Bonaventure Resort and Spa in Weston, Florida.

Following the February 14, 2018, tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, which took the innocent lives of 17 students and school staff, BCPS Superintendent Robert W. Runcie and his leadership team reached out to community partners to create an effective, sustainable Districtwide response to the psychological distress that was devastating Broward's students and their families, and staff.

Superintendent Runcie and his team read about CMBM's groundbreaking use of self-care and group support during and after wars in the Balkans and Middle East. They experienced CMBM's practical tools for rebalancing trauma-disrupted biological, psychological, and social functioning, and reviewed the papers published in peer-reviewed journals that demonstrated that the model decreases post-traumatic stress disorder by 80% in war-traumatized children and adults.

A grant from The Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative underwrote a year-long program for CMBM to provide BCPS with intensive wellness training for 180 clinicians, educators, parents and dedicated community members from Broward County and 130 peer-counselors at MSD. These trainings brought CMBM's signature small groups, workshops and classroom experiences to 75% of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High students and to several thousand students, family members and teachers throughout the county.

One of the trainees who has led CMBM self-care groups, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High parent and mental health counselor Ellen Fox-Snider, praised the power of this process "to transform" – teachers and parents, as well as students. Research on the program confirmed their experience. Those who participated in the trainings showed statistically significant improvements in all measures, including depression, fear, hostility, guilt, sadness, fatigue and hope.

In early spring 2019, the Children's Services Council, which closely tracked CMBM's program, committed to extending its reach in Broward County. On May 21, the Broward County School Board unanimously voted to fully fund the program.

The June 10-13 training will be led by psychiatrist James S. Gordon, M.D., CMBM's founder and executive director. For Dr. Gordon, who is also a clinical professor at Georgetown Medical School, the work in Parkland and Broward is "a beacon of hope and a tribute to Robert Runcie's vision of social-emotional learning as well as trauma recovery. This is foundational education," Dr. Gordon stressed, "it should be an integral part of the school experience of every student everywhere."

"There is," he observed, "a sign in a courtyard at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High, a Nelson Mandela quote urging students to 'Be the change you wish to see in the world.' That is the hope of the people in Broward County," Dr. Gordon concluded, "what we're working to help them make a reality."

For additional information or inquiries, contact CMBM Program Manager, Hannah Quinn at hquinn@cmbm.org; 802-233-0833. **Media are invited to attend portions of the June 10 – 13 training and to interview Dr. Gordon.**

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ABOUT BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"Committed to educating all students to reach their highest potential."

Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) is the sixth-largest school district in the nation and the second-largest in the state of Florida. BCPS is Florida's first fully accredited school system since 1962. BCPS has more than 271,500 students and approximately 175,000 adult students in 234 schools, centers and technical colleges, and 88 charter schools. BCPS serves a diverse student population, with students representing 204 different countries and 191 different languages. Connect with BCPS: visit the website at browardschools.com, follow BCPS on Twitter @browardschools and Facebook at [facebook.com/browardschools](https://www.facebook.com/browardschools), and download the free BCPS mobile app.