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Scientists to Explore Suicidal Behavior for Brain Awareness Week

March 23 discussion on Zoom looks at efforts to understand and treat behaviors

MARCH 20, 2022 BY EDWIN B. SMITH



OXFORD, Miss. – Two neuroscientists and an educator will conduct a virtual discussion on suicidal behavior March 23, as part of Brain Awareness Week at the **University of Mississippi**.

The goal of the Brain Awareness Week is to make brain research and its impact in the society accessible to the general public. Aliona Tsypes, Kristin Austin and Juawice McCormick will address the topic “Suicidal Behavior and the Brain” beginning at 3 p.m. on Zoom. The link for the session is [here](#).

“After the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of people that commit suicide is increasing in our society,” said Alberto Del Arco, an associate professor and behavioral neuroscientist in the UM **School of Applied Sciences** and coordinator of the activity.

“Brain sciences are working to understand the neurobiological bases of suicidal behavior. In this roundtable, we will learn how a distortion in brain function may contribute to suicidal behaviors as well as new strategies to treat suicidal behavior and risk in our community.”



Aliona Tsypes

Tsypes is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Pittsburgh. Austin is a clinical assistant professor in UM **Department of Psychology**. McCormick is interim director of the UM **Counseling Center**. Each speaker’s presentation will focus on a different aspect of suicidal behavior.



Kristin Austin

“My presentation will focus on how the ways in which individuals respond to, learn from and value reward-related information in their environments may contribute to suicidal behavior,” Tsypes said. “Implications of this line of work for the understanding of suicidal crisis will also be discussed.”

Austin’s presentation will cover the identification of suicidal risk in children, adolescents and adults.

“Additionally, I will briefly discuss components of treatment of suicidal behaviors as well as how to respond to suicidal risk in these developmental periods,” she said.

McCormick’s presentation will discuss suicidal behavior from the perspective of brain counseling.

Brain Awareness Week ends Thursday (March 24) with a display of research posters made by Ole Miss students minoring in neuroscience from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Bryant Hall gallery. This research showcase is organized by Lainy Day, UM associate professor of biology.

A closing seminar begins at 4 p.m. in Bryant Hall, Room 111. Steven Phelps, professor of integrative biology, director of the Center for Brain, Behavior and Evolution at the University of Texas and a Harvard Radcliffe fellow, will address “The Bonding Brain: Molecules, Circuits and Evolution.”

The annual program is sponsored by the School of Applied Sciences, Graduate School, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and College of Liberal Arts.

Brain Awareness Week is a global campaign to increase public awareness of the progress and benefits of brain research. For more information about the observance, contact Del Arco at adelarco@olemiss.edu.



Juawice McCormick

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OXFORD, Miss. – The University of Mississippi is asking the community to help spread a little joy this holiday season by donating to the 25th annual Books and Bears program. Donations such as toys, books, dolls, bicycles and other children’s play items are being accepted through Dec. 14. All donations will be collected and sorted

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OXFORD, Miss. – Twenty-five inaugural recipients of the Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship – a program hosted by the University of Mississippi School of Education in partnership with the Mississippi Association of Coaches and the Mississippi High School Activities Association – are expected to increase their impact on student-athletes and their communities. The coaching fellowship

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