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Bullock Museum spotlights mental health with new exhibition

The exhibition *Mental Health: Mind Matters* opens to the public on Saturday, May 7

MAY 3, 2022 (AUSTIN, TX) — *Mental Health: Mind Matters*, a traveling exhibition produced by the Science Museum of Minnesota in collaboration with Heureka: The Finnish Science Centre, will open Saturday, May 7 at the Bullock Texas State History Museum. The exhibition uses immersive experiences and multimedia activities to raise awareness and provide a safe space for conversations about mental health.

Mental illness touches all of our lives in some way. In 2020, one in five adult Texans experienced a mental health concern. One in four children will experience a mental illness during their childhood. Although mental illness is common, misunderstanding often leads to lack of treatment and needless suffering. *Mental Health: Mind Matters*, opening at the Bullock Museum during Mental Health Awareness Month, provides a better understanding of some of the most common mental illnesses and encourages empathy for the experiences of people living with them.

"The decision to host this poignant exhibition was made prior to the pandemic, and at the time we could not have anticipated the timeliness of its message in the aftermath of that crisis," said Bullock Museum Director Margaret Koch. "We hope visitors use this opportunity for themselves, colleagues, and family members who may be struggling with their mental wellbeing, and work toward creating a more supportive environment for all."

The exhibition begins with an overview of mental illnesses, common misperceptions, and the ways treatments and attitudes have changed over time. Visitors will see how noted experts in the past treated depression and schizophrenia and can test their knowledge of mental health and mental illness with a screen-based, multiplayer quiz.

Empathy-building experiences throughout the exhibition demonstrate what some people who live with mental illnesses may experience. Visitors will hear from people in their own words about how mental illness affects their lives, and a safe audio simulation allows visitors to experience what it is like for someone living with psychosis.

Unique interactives in the exhibition explore the healthy expression of emotions, including the ways in which creative activities like painting, dancing, and writing can help with identifying and expressing emotions and strengthen mental health. Visitors can act out an emotion using facial expressions and challenge their companions to correctly recognize their expressed emotion. Additionally, a motion-based,



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multiplayer game immerses visitors in a dark forest, demonstrating that the skill of facing fears can be practiced and honed. Visitors can also write down worries, problems or anxieties and shred them in the exhibition's Worry Shredder.

The exhibition also features two resource areas. A resource center for younger visitors provides activities and games that focus on identifying emotions and encourage children to think about common joys and concerns, the importance of friendships, and handling commonly experienced situations. A family guide will also be available on the Bullock Museum website to aid families in exploring the exhibition with their children.

A resource center for adult visitors provides handouts covering a variety of mental health topics, information about local and national resources offering education and advocacy, and ways to find immediate help for themselves and others.

Upcoming Bullock Museum programs offer opportunities for further engagement with the exhibition's content. Tickets are on sale now for *Speak Up!* on Thursday, May 19 at 6 pm. *Speak Up!*, presented in partnership with NAMI Central Texas (National Alliance on Mental Illness), will explore the history of mental health care in Texas, its evolution, and its future through a conversation with Dr. King Davis, lead on the Austin State Hospital Archives Project and former director at the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health. H-E-B Free First Sunday on June 5 will highlight mental health with an opportunity for visitors to explore *Mental Health: Mind Matters* and the Museum's three floors of Texas History Galleries for free from 10 am to 5 pm. Free activities will take place until 2 pm, including a mental health toolkit activity in the gallery with volunteers from NAMI Central Texas.

"The past two years have shown us that health can shape history," said Bullock Museum Deputy Director of Interpretation Josefa González Mariscal. "As we strive to rebuild our social fabric, the Bullock Museum is doing its part by facilitating learning opportunities so that we can become more resilient through a better understanding of mental health."

Mental Health: Mind Matters is presented in English, Spanish and French. The exhibition is on view May 7 through July 31, 2022. For more information and to view the full calendar of upcoming programs, visit TheStoryofTexas.com.

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Mental Health: Mind Matters was produced for North America by the Science Museum of Minnesota in collaboration with Heureka: The Finnish Science Centre.

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H-E-B Free First Sunday presented by H-E-B.

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ABOUT THE BULLOCK MUSEUM

The Bullock Texas State History Museum, a division of the State Preservation Board and an accredited institution of the American Alliance of Museums, illuminates and celebrates Texas history, people, and culture. With dynamic, award-winning exhibitions, educational programming for all ages, and an IMAX® theater with the largest screen in Texas, the Museum collaborates with more than 700 museums, libraries, archives and individuals across the world to bring the Story of Texas to life.