

Free ‘The Belonging Need’ Training Series And Symposium With Former Cincinnati Bengals Player Gaelin Elmore

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ALTON - Centerstone, a national leader in behavioral health care, will co-host, along with Illinois First Judicial Circuit, Heritage Behavioral Health and Kane County System of Care, the no-cost “The Belonging Need” training series in early 2024 featuring advocate, speaker and former NFL player Gaelin Elmore. CEUs will be available.

“The Belonging Need” series stresses that belonging is a vital component of human flourishing. However, those who have experienced traumatic and adverse situations often lack a sense of belonging, which can hinder their relationships, development, and their future. The series includes:

- “The Belonging Need: Part 1” – January 24 from 9-11 a.m. CT via Zoom
- “The Belonging Need: Part 2” – February 21 from 9-11 a.m. CT via Zoom
- In-person “A Trauma-Informed Courts and Community Symposium: Creating a Culture of Belonging” – March 21 from 8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at the Marion Cultural and Civic Center featuring Gaelin Elmore as the keynote speaker presented by Illinois First Judicial Circuit Chief Judge William J. Thurston, Access to Justice Improvement Grant, Williamson County Presiding Judge Stephen R. Green, and Centerstone
- “The Belonging Need and Deficit for Youth Navigating Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)” – March 26 from 5:30-7 p.m. CT via Zoom

Elmore believes that the only thing that was more powerful and long lasting than the trauma that he experienced was the belonging that he encountered. After a childhood filled with trauma, abuse, neglect, and homelessness, Gaelin believed that his issues would be solved if he became successful. From college football to signing an NFL contract, Gaelin was driven, even comforted, by this assumption.

It wasn't until Gaelin achieved what he thought was "success" (making it to the NFL), that he finally realized he had been wrong all along. And so, Gaelin retired as a rookie to begin his journey of self-love, self-discovery, and belonging.

That journey has led Gaelin here today, and to stages all across the country, aiming to inspire, encourage, and equip others, to erase the belonging gap plaguing youth with adverse childhood experiences. Gaelin lives in Eden Prairie, MN, where he gets to experience the purest form of belonging, as a husband to his wife, Micaela, and a Dad to their two daughters, Laniah and Tatum.

“The Belonging Need” webinars Parts 1 and 2 are geared toward youth-serving professionals, while “The Belonging Need and Deficit for Youth Navigating Trauma and ACEs” is aimed at professional and personal caregivers of youth. “Creating a Culture of Belonging” symposium is designed for court personnel and other professional communities. However, everyone is welcome to attend all “Belonging” events.

For the webinar series, CEUs are being applied for through the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR – counseling / social work) and the Illinois Certification Board. The symposium plans to offer various types of continuing education credits.

For more information or to register for “The Belonging Need” events, visit Centerstone.org/events.

“Centerstone’s Building Compassionate Communities (BCC) program is thrilled to partner with the Illinois First Judicial Circuit, Heritage Behavioral Health and Kane County System of Care to bring in Gaelin to work his time, talent and treasure with our region to tell his inspiring story,” said Dr. David Mills, Centerstone BCC grant coordinator.

About Centerstone

Centerstone is a nonprofit health system specializing in mental health and substance use disorder treatments for people of all ages. Services are available in Florida, Illinois, Indiana, North Carolina, and Tennessee through the operation of outpatient clinics, residential programs, school-based services, telehealth, and an inpatient hospital. Centerstone also offers specialized programs available nationwide for the military community, as well as services for children, including therapeutic foster care. Centerstone’s Institute provides guidance through research and technology, leveraging the best evidence-based practices for use across our communities. Centerstone’s Foundation secures philanthropic resources to support the work and mission of delivering care that changes people’s lives. Learn more by visiting Centerstone.org.