

# The Equalizer

Marriage & Family Therapy Solutions, LLC Newsletter



## STRATEGIES FOR EQUITY AT INTERCEPT 0: INCREASING MENTAL HEALTH ASSESS FOR BIPOC YOUTH

Welcome to the Summer (July/August) 2023 issue of the Marriage and Family Therapy Solutions, the “Equalizer “ Newsletter. In this issue we highlight, BIPOC Mental Health Month, Voice & Allies Assembly with Governor Youngkin, Disparities in mental health access amongst BIPOC Youth and Advocacy for the Mental Health of BIPOC Youth.

## JULY IS BEBE MOORE CAMPBELL NATIONAL MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

**ALSO KNOWN AS BIPOC MENTAL HEALTH MONTH**

Mental Health America’s BIPOC Mental Health 2023 Theme:  
**Culture, Community, & Connection**

“Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) populations are faced with disproportionate amounts of historical trauma and

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[BIPOC Mental Health Month](#)

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[Disparities in Mental Health Access amongst BIPOC Youth](#)

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displacement that can challenge their ability to thrive in their environments. However, culture, community, and connection are pillars that support and uplift BIPOC individuals in the face of oppression and systemic racism. Learn more in these resources about how BIPOC communities have thrived.”

- Mental Health America

## VOICE & ALLIES ASSEMBLY WITH GOVERNOR YOUNGKIN

Representatives from Marriage and Family Therapy Solutions, LLC Clinical Supervisors and Residents attended the VOICE & Allies Assembly with Governor Youngkin on July 9, 2023 at Mount Zion Baptist Church in Triangle, Virginia. More than 800 community leaders and allies assembled to raise awareness of the youth mental health crisis in Virginia. Black and Latino youth are at the highest risk!



## Youth Suicide Attempts Rising

As children prepare to go back to school, it is important that parents and educators pay attention to changes in their mental health. Youth who experience depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder may also experience suicidal thoughts. Additionally, BIPOC youth who experience racial trauma may experience increased mental health symptoms. Research has shown that people who experience various forms of racism including discrimination and microaggressions are more likely to experience considerable psychological distress.

A 2019 report released by, the Centers for Disease Control Prevention, tracked suicide trends over a ten-year period and found that 8.9% of suicide attempts were made by youth between the ages of **14-18 years old**. Comparatively, Black youth had the highest rates of attempted suicide at 11.8%, Hispanic youth accounted for 8.9% and White youth accounted for 7.9% of all those reporting attempted suicide during this period. The American Academy of Pediatrics tracked suicide trends from 1991-2017 and found that **Black children ages 5-12 years old had suicide rates that were at twice the rate** of white children in the same age group. (Livingston, 2022)

## Mental Health Disparities amongst BIPOC Youth

There are several underlying causes of mental health disparity amongst BIPOC children and youth:

- » Lack of access to mental health care
- » Lack of awareness of symptoms of mental illness
- » Social stigma of being labelled as someone with depression or anxiety
- » Medical racism, clinician bias and racism resulting in misdiagnosis
- » Structural and systemic racism in the form of economic inequality and lack of resources

## ADVOCACY FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF BIPOC YOUTH

There are certain proven advocacy efforts that promote better mental health outcomes for BIPOC communities. These include advocating for:

- ✓ Increased access to basic resources such as healthy food, housing, healthcare programs, efficient and accessible community infrastructure and Wi-Fi
- ✓ Culturally responsive social services
- ✓ Culturally responsive providers
- ✓ Sufficient educational opportunities at all levels
- ✓ Decreased community policing and government surveillance, which can lead to less police violence, stronger feelings of

safety, and rebuilding of trust amongst community members

## A Call to Action: Implement these Five Steps

- 1 Promote Protective Factors amongst BIPOC Youth by creating opportunities for:
  - ⊙ Positive ethnic identity
  - ⊙ Family and community support
  - ⊙ Positive school connection and focus on academic achievement
  - ⊙ Community engagement (i.e. engagement in church and civic activities)
- 2 Seek more training in the effective assessment and diagnosis of BIPOC children
- 3 Reduce the stigma around mental health within communities
- 4 Increase access to mental health care
- 5 Engage with BIPOC communities and learn about how these communities have utilized culturally responsive spaces that allow individuals:
  - ⊙ The opportunity to connect with their communities and their culture
  - ⊙ To be seen as leaders within their communities, and
  - ⊙ To promote protective factors that lead to maintaining physical and psychological safety

Culturally respectful spaces include, but are not limited to:

- » Churches
- » Greek organization (the Divine 9)
- » Social Clubs
- » Civic Organization (LINKS, Jack and Jill, Top Ladies of Distinction, National Coalition of 100 Black Men and Women)
- » Sports teams

BIPOC communities are connected by their prideful cultures. Each culture complimenting each other and recognizing the importance of individual and community health and wellness. Culturally respectful spaces are important to BIPOC community resilience and should be leveraged in order to have an impact on the wellness of the community at large.

## LEARN MORE

Abrams, Z. (2020). Sounding the alarm on black youth suicide: Psychologists are mobilizing to address a growing crisis. American Psychological Association.

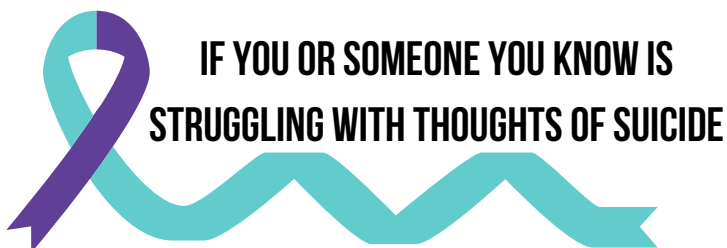
Improving Mental Health of BIPOC Communities Through Community Advocacy. Mental Health America. <https://mhanational.org>.

2023 Culture, Community and Connection: BIPOC Mental Health Outreach Toolkit. Mental Health America. <https://mhanational.org>.

Gordon, J. (2020, September 22). Addressing the Crisis of Black Youth Suicide. National Institute of Mental Health.

Lepres, D. (2023, July 31). Training Today's Youth to Become Tomorrow's Mental Health Care Providers: A new career preparation program inspires diverse students to "create healing spaces." Edsurge.

Livingston, K. (2022, July 6). Many Black children are dying by suicide doctors say: Understanding the why—and how to help.



**CONTACT THE NATIONAL SUICIDE  
PREVENTION HOTLINE**

Text **HOME** to  
**741741**  
or call



**9-8-8**





## BE A PART OF MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES BETTER

**Equity at Intercept Zero** aims to make sure that community services are available to meet the needs of Virginians of color and other minority groups by providing training opportunities, increasing participation of providers of color in crisis services, increasing the number of students of color seeking jobs in crisis services, and viewing all crisis programming through a Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) lens.

## MARCUS ALERT/NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGIONAL PROJECTS OFFICE REGION 2 NEWS AND UPDATES

Click to access the [Northern Virginia Public-Sector Crisis Brochure for community members and Stakeholders](#). Please feel free to share this with others as warranted.

**Please distribute this brochure to your contact list, encourage others to visit the Marriage and Family Therapy Solutions website, and like us on social media.**

**NOVA Regional Crisis Call Center:** ☎ (703) 527-4077 or Text 8551

The NOVA Regional Crisis Call Center provides immediate help to callers by connecting them to behavioral health and other community services.

### Mobile Crisis Response

**CR2 Mobile Response:** ☎ (844) 627-4747 (24/7) or 571-364-7390

CR2 provides 24-hour rapid response to children, youth, and adults facing a mental health and/or substance use crisis who may be at risk for hospitalization.

[CR2 Public Flyer 5-2022](#)

[CR2 Client Flyer 5-2022](#)

**REACH Mobile Response:** ☎ (703) 531-2150 TTY 711 (24/7)

The REACH program is designed to meet the crisis support needs of individuals who have a developmental disability and are experiencing crisis events that put them at risk for homelessness, incarceration, hospitalization, and/or danger to themselves or others. REACH programs offer an additional layer of support to emergency services, the state hospital system, and caregivers who work most closely with individuals with developmental disabilities (DD).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### PURPLE REIGN GALA 2023

A celebration of community champions who are making significant impact to tackle domestic and intimate partner abuse #PurpleHopeCampaign  
 October 7, 2023 5-10pm  
 The Clubs at Quantico Marine Corps Base Quantico

[Click Here for additional information](#)



## PAST EVENTS

### AFRICAN AMERICAN FESTIVAL

Marriage and Family Therapy Solutions participated in the 30th annual African American Heritage Festival on August 5, 2023. More than one hundred vendors participated in the event which [celebrated the diversity of African American culture](#).



Marriage and Family Therapy Solutions (MFTS) shared information about how to access crisis mental health care and information was share about mental health career pathways. Pictured above are PWC Board of County Supervisor Andera Bailey and MFTS staff.

## RESOURCES

### 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

The SAMHSA [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) provides information about 988, and understanding the background, history, funding opportunities, and implementation resources for strengthening suicide prevention and mental health crisis services

The [Native Americans and Alaska Natives](#) section of the [988 Lifeline](#) website provides Native American specific information and resources for AI/AN communities

### Other Suicide Prevention Organizations

#### [Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#)

Helps with the development of suicide prevention programs, interventions, and policies, and advances the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention

#### [Suicide Prevention Fact Sheets](#)

##### [Suicide among Racial/Ethnic Populations in the U.S.: American Indians and Alaska Natives](#)

Provides information on suicide and risk and protective factors among American Indians and Alaska Natives

##### [Suicide Facts at a Glance](#)

A fact sheet from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[HTTPS://STORE.SAMHSA.GOV/PRODUCT/ADVANCING-BEST-PRACTICES-BEHAVIORAL-HEALTH-ASIAN-AMERICAN-NATIVE-HAWAIIAN-PACIFIC-ISLANDER/SMA17-5032](https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Advancing-Best-Practices-Behavioral-Health-Asian-American-Native-Hawaiian-Pacific-Islander/SMA17-5032)