

The Equalizer

Marriage & Family Therapy Solutions, LLC Newsletter



STRATEGIES FOR EQUITY AT INTERCEPT 0: INCREASING MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS THROUGH THE ARTS

Welcome to the February 2024 issue of the Marriage and Family Therapy Solutions the “Equalizer” Newsletter. In this issue, we highlight Black History Month and Arts-Based Strategies for improving mental health.

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The 2024 National Black History Month theme:

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE ARTS

Black history month is observed in February each year. Throughout the month of February, the accomplishments of African Americans is celebrated by taking time to recognize the various ways that “Black history, culture, leadership and innovation have influenced all facets of life in the United States.” The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Office of Minority Health (OMH) celebrates Black History Month this year by acknowledging the historic role African Americans have played in improving the health and well-being of all Americans and

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- Mental Health Awareness Day

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emphasizing the need for health equity promoting policies, programs, and practices focused on addressing the health disparities that affect BIPOC populations.

IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH: UNDERSTANDING AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE

Mental health outcomes can be positively impacted through the use of arts. These outcomes impact both individuals and communities. People around the world reported using artistic activities as coping mechanisms during the COVID 19 pandemic to support their mental health and manage anxiety.

Mental health outcomes are improved when mental health services, information and resources are culturally connected in BIPOC communities.

“WHEN PATIENTS ARE PROVIDED WITH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE INFORMATION, THEY ARE BETTER ABLE TO CREATE HEALTHIER OUTCOMES FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.”

- Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of Minority Health

Participating in artistic activities such as playing an instrument, listening to music, dancing, drawing, coloring, painting, or writing can elevate your mood. Jill Sonke, Research Director of the University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine found evidence that suggests that “creating art, as well as activities like attending a concert or visiting a museum, can benefit mental health”. And Dr. James S. Gordon, psychiatrist and founder of The Center for Mind-Body Medicine, introduced the “three drawing technique” which is featured in the book “Your Brain on Art: How the Arts Transform Us.”

Arts-Based Strategies

Arts-Based Strategies can enhance cultural connection, health equity and community well-being. Try strategies like:

- **Coloring books** – research shows that coloring within the lines lowers anxiety. Coloring allows time to focus on the paper, choose colors and tune out everyday distractions.
- **Music** – research shows that listening to music, playing an instrument or singing were identified as activities that helped people feel better. Young adults ages 18-24 identified musical activities as most effective and across all age groups, singing was ranked as effective in managing stress and anxiety during the COVID 19 pandemic.
- **Writing** – research shows that writing down thoughts and feelings lowers anxiety. Journaling feelings and writing poetry are effective ways of expressing one’s feelings.



To Learn more about Black History Month and the Arts

- Visit [OMH's Black/African American Population Profile](#) to learn about the unique health concerns disproportionately impacting Black and African Americans.
- Read HHS's [Equity Action Plan Summary - PDF](#) to learn what HHS is doing to advance health equity for Black and African Americans.
- Explore Think Cultural Health's [free e-learning programs](#) designed to help healthcare professionals provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services.
- Visit the U.S. [Census Bureau's Black History Month website](#) to access population statistics.
- Read [President Joseph R. Biden's remarks on National Black History Month 2024](#)

BLACK HISTORY ARTISTS FACTS



Alvin Ailey Jr.

American dancer, director, choreographer and activist. He founded the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (AAADT) and the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center (later Ailey School) as sanctuaries for nurturing Black artists and expressing the pervasiveness of the African-American experience through dance. Alvin Ailey's work brought together theater, modern dance, ballet, and jazz with Black vernacular.



Deborah (Debbie) Allen

American actress, dancer, choreographer, singer, director, producer, and a former member of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. She has been nominated 20 times for an Emmy Award and the recipient of five Emmy Awards, two Tony Awards, a Golden Globe Award and received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1991.



Chuck Berry

Born "Charles Edward Anderson Berry" and known as the "Father of Rock. Chuck was an American singer, guitarist and songwriter who pioneered rock and roll. Signature songs: "Maybellene", "Roll Over Beethoven", and "Johnny B. Goode".



Jean Michel Basquiat

One of the most iconic African American artists in history. Basquiat used social commentary in his works that highlighted contrasting themes such as wealth and poverty and the implications that integration had over the course of history across the United States.



Kehinde Wiley

Commissioned by First Lady Michelle Obama in 2017 to paint a portrait of President Barack Obama for the National Portrait Gallery, which features a portrait of each of the 46 presidents of the United States



James Brown

Known as the “God Father of Soul”, “the Hardest-Working Man in Show Business”, “Mr. Dynamite, and “Soul Brother No. 1”. James Brown influenced several genres of music. Signature songs “Please, Please, Please”, “Try Me”, and “Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag.”



Aretha Franklin

Known as the “Queen of Soul” for her powerful voice and emotional delivery. She was a singer, songwriter and pianist who was twice named the greatest singer of all time by Rolling Stone. Signature songs “Respect” and “Natural Woman”.



Michael Jackson

Known as the “King of Pop”. He was a singer, songwriter, dancer, and philanthropist. Michael Jackson influenced artists across many music genres. He popularized street dance moves like the moonwalk and the robot. Signature songs: “Beat It”, “Billie Jean”, and “Thriller”.



Little Richard

Born Richard Wayne Penniman and known as the Architect of Rock and Roll. He was a dynamic and charismatic singer, pianist, and songwriter. Signature songs “Tutti Frutti” and “Long Tall Sally.”



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.

Click to access more information about [MARCUS ALERT Prince William County](#).

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).

FEBRUARY 2024

UPCOMING EVENTS

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS DAY

Join Omicron Chi Omega for this free event open to the public. The guest speaker will be speaking about mental health. Prince William County organizations involved in mental health will also be in attendance to speak and share information with teens and families attending this event.

May 18, 2024 10am-12pm

Freedom High School Woodbridge, VA



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)