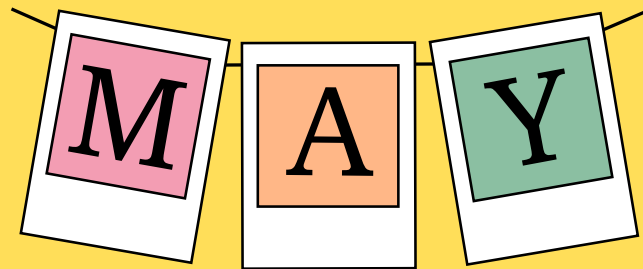




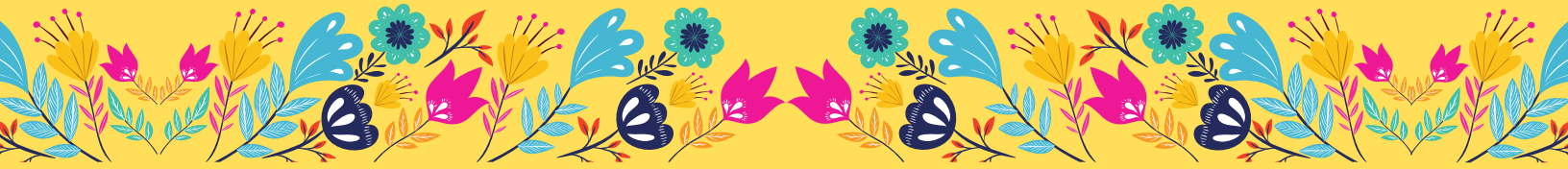
HEY, HOW ARE YOU?

EMBRACING
TRANQUILITY EDITION:



Let's welcome May, a month of blooming possibility, deeper awareness, and collective care. As spring reaches its full stride, we're reminded of the importance of nurturing both ourselves and those around us. This month, we shine a light on vital causes that touch lives across every age and stage, from maternal mental health and teen self-esteem to chronic fatigue, childhood depression, and honoring our mental health providers. May invites us to reflect, support, and take action for a healthier, more compassionate future.





Yoga Classes:

Stay on the look out for yoga dates!



inhale
exhale

Breathwork and Stress Reduction Techniques:

Your breath is your anchor. We explored the transformative power of breathwork and stress reduction techniques. Participants learned how to harness the breath to calm the nervous system, reduce anxiety, and cultivate inner peace.

INSTANT DOWNLOAD

YOUR GUIDELINE FOR BREATHWORK HERE





Nurturing Young Minds: How We Can Support Children with Depression

Childhood Depression Awareness Day is observed annually on May 6, serving as a vital reminder that children, too, can experience depression—a condition often misunderstood or overlooked in young individuals. This day emphasizes the importance of recognizing, understanding, and supporting children facing mental health challenges.

Understanding Childhood Depression

Childhood depression is more than just occasional sadness or moodiness; it's a serious mental health condition that can affect a child's thoughts, feelings, behavior, and overall development. Symptoms may include persistent sadness, irritability, loss of interest in activities, changes in appetite or sleep patterns, and difficulty concentrating. Early identification and intervention are crucial to help children navigate these challenges and lead healthy lives.

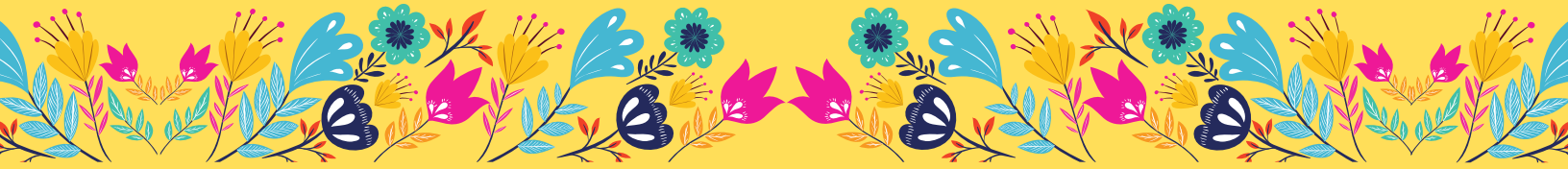
Key Statistics

- **Prevalence:** Approximately 4% of children aged 3–17 in the U.S. have been diagnosed with depression.
- **Age and Gender Disparities:**
 - Depression rates increase with age, affecting 8.6% of adolescents aged 12–17.
 - Girls are more likely to experience depression than boys.
- **Co-occurring Conditions:** Over 1 in 3 children with a mental health condition have two or more disorders, such as anxiety or behavior problems.
- **Suicide Risk:** Among high school students in 2019, 36.7% reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, and 18.8% had seriously considered attempting suicide.

Causes and Risk Factors

Childhood depression can result from a combination of genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors, including:

- **Family History:** Children with a family history of depression are at higher risk.
- **Trauma and Stress:** Experiencing abuse, neglect, or significant life changes can contribute to depression.
- **Chronic Illness:** Living with long-term medical conditions can increase vulnerability.
- **Social Factors:** Bullying, social isolation, and academic pressures are significant contributors.



Continued...

Supporting Children with Depression:

Parents & Caregivers

- Foster open, judgment-free conversations
- Seek professional mental health support when needed
- Create stability through routines

Educators

- Engage in training to identify warning signs
- Build inclusive, emotionally safe classrooms
- Collaborate with families and professionals

Communities

- Raise awareness to reduce stigma
- Improve access to mental health resources
- Advocate for policies supporting youth mental health

Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Provides data and resources on children's mental health. [CDCCDC](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/mental/index.html)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): Offers information on children's mental health awareness initiatives. [SAMHSA](https://www.samhsa.gov/children)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): Provides support and education for families dealing with mental health conditions.



Understanding ME/CFS: A Comprehensive Overview



Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) is a serious, long-term illness that affects multiple body systems. Individuals with ME/CFS experience profound fatigue that doesn't improve with rest, along with a range of other symptoms that can severely impact daily life.

Core Symptoms:

- **Persistent Fatigue:** A significant reduction in the ability to engage in pre-illness activities, lasting more than six months, not alleviated by rest.
- **Post-Exertional Malaise (PEM):** Worsening of symptoms following physical or mental activity, often described as a "crash."
- **Unrefreshing Sleep:** Sleep that doesn't restore energy or alleviate fatigue.
- **Cognitive Impairments:** Difficulty with thinking, memory, and concentration, commonly referred to as "brain fog."
- **Orthostatic Intolerance:** Symptoms like dizziness or lightheadedness upon standing or sitting upright.

These symptoms can fluctuate in severity and may be exacerbated by physical or mental exertion.

Prevalence and Statistics:

- **Prevalence:** Approximately 3.3 million U.S. adults live with ME/CFS, according to the CDC.
- **Demographics:** ME/CFS is more prevalent among women and most common in individuals aged 40–60.
- **Severity:** About 25% of those affected are bedbound or homebound, indicating the severe impact on daily functioning.
- **Diagnosis Challenges:** ME/CFS is often underdiagnosed due to lack of awareness and understanding among healthcare providers.

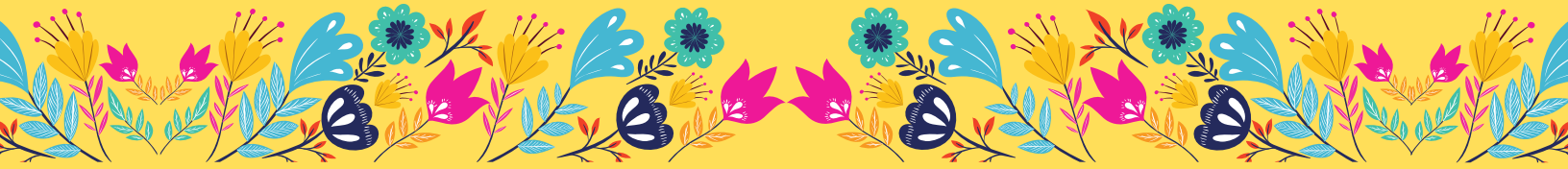
Causes and Triggers:

The exact cause of ME/CFS remains unknown, but several factors are believed to contribute:

- **Infections:** Many cases begin after a viral or bacterial infection, such as Epstein-Barr virus or COVID-19.
- **Immune System Issues:** Abnormal immune responses may play a role.
- **Hormonal Imbalances:** Hormonal dysregulation has been observed in some patients.
- **Genetic Factors:** A genetic predisposition may increase susceptibility.

Local Resources:

- **Pathfinders for Autism:** A Maryland-based organization offering resources, workshops, and support for individuals with autism and their families.



Continued...

Diagnosis Challenges

Diagnosing ME/CFS is complex due to the absence of specific tests. Healthcare providers rely on patient history, symptom patterns, and exclusion of other conditions. The Institute of Medicine's 2015 criteria emphasize the presence of core symptoms like PEM, unrefreshing sleep, and cognitive impairments.

Management and Support Strategies

Diagnosis and Management

Diagnosis:

There is no specific test for ME/CFS. Diagnosis is based on:

- Persistent fatigue lasting at least six months
- Presence of other symptoms like PEM, unrefreshing sleep, and cognitive impairments.
- Exclusion of other medical conditions

Management:

Currently, there's no cure for ME/CFS, but symptom management strategies include:

- **Pacing:** Balancing activity and rest to avoid PEM.
- **Medications:** Addressing specific symptoms like pain or sleep disturbances.
- **Supportive Care:** Nutritional support, counseling, and physical therapy.
- **Therapies:** Cognitive-behavioral therapy and graded exercise therapy have been used, though their efficacy is debated.



How to Support Those with ME/CFS

- **Listen and Believe:** Validate their experiences without judgment.
- **Educate Yourself:** Learn about ME/CFS to understand the challenges faced.
- **Advocate:** Support increased research funding and awareness campaigns.
- **Accommodate:** Offer flexible arrangements in work or social settings.
- **Stay Connected:** Regular check-ins can alleviate feelings of isolation.

Resources

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):** Provides comprehensive information on ME/CFS.
- **Solve ME/CFS Initiative:** Focuses on research, advocacy, and patient support.
- **ME Association:** Offers resources and support for those affected.



Managing and Reducing Stress During Maternal Mental Health Month



Maternal mental health encompasses a range of emotional and psychological well-being aspects during pregnancy and up to a year after childbirth. Conditions under this umbrella include:

- **Postpartum Depression (PPD):** Affects approximately 1 in 7 women in the U.S., leading to feelings of extreme sadness, anxiety, and exhaustion that can interfere with daily care activities.
- **Perinatal Anxiety Disorders:** Include generalized anxiety, panic attacks, and obsessive-compulsive behaviors occurring during or after pregnancy.
- **Postpartum Psychosis:** A rare but severe condition involving hallucinations, delusions, and mood swings, requiring immediate medical attention.
- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** Can result from traumatic childbirth experiences.

These conditions are not just "baby blues" but serious health issues that can impact the mother's ability to function and bond with her baby.

Key Statistics:

- **Prevalence:** Approximately 1 in 7 women experience postpartum depression in the year following childbirth.
- **Undiagnosed Cases:** Nearly 50% of mothers with postpartum depression are not diagnosed by a health professional.
- **Impact on Fathers:** Around 10% of new fathers experience symptoms of depression during the postpartum period.
- **Recovery:** With appropriate treatment, 80% of women with postpartum depression achieve a full recovery

Understanding the Causes:

- **Maternal mental health conditions** can result from a combination of factors:
- **Hormonal Changes:** Fluctuations in estrogen and progesterone levels after childbirth can affect mood.
- **Sleep Deprivation:** Caring for a newborn often leads to disrupted sleep patterns, contributing to fatigue and mood disturbances.
- **Psychosocial Stressors:** Lack of support, financial strain, and relationship challenges can increase risk.
- **History of Mental Health Issues:** Individuals with a personal or family history of depression or anxiety are at higher risk.

How to Support Maternal Mental Health

For Individuals:

- **Seek Help Early:** If you're experiencing symptoms, consult a healthcare provider promptly.
- **Build a Support Network:** Connect with family, friends, or support groups to share experiences and feelings.
- **Practice Self-Care:** Engage in activities that promote relaxation and well-being, such as exercise, meditation, or hobbies.

For Partners and Families:

- **Offer Practical Support:** Assist with household tasks and baby care to alleviate the mother's workload.
- **Be Patient and Understanding:** Listen without judgment and encourage open communication.
- **Educate Yourself:** Learn about maternal mental health to better understand and support your loved one.

For Communities and Employers:

- **Promote Awareness:** Organize workshops and disseminate information about maternal mental health.
- **Provide Resources:** Ensure access to mental health services and support groups.
- **Implement Supportive Policies:** Offer flexible work arrangements and parental leave to support new parents.

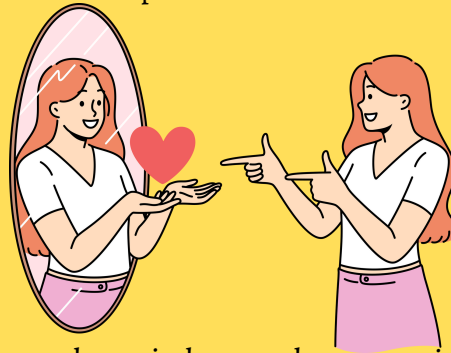
Building Brave Hearts: Supporting Teen Self-Esteem

Adolescence is a critical period for developing self-identity and confidence. Healthy self-esteem contributes to better mental health, academic achievement, and social relationships. Conversely, low self-esteem can lead to issues such as depression, anxiety, and risky behaviors.

Key Statistics

- **Prevalence of Low Self-Esteem:** Research indicates that certain groups are more susceptible to low self-esteem. For instance, obese teens have particularly high rates of low self-esteem (30%).
- **Gender Disparities:** Females are more likely to experience low self-esteem compared to males.

Impact of Social Media: Excessive screen time and exposure to unrealistic beauty standards can negatively affect teens' self-image and self-esteem.



How to Support Teen Self-Esteem

For Parents and Guardians:

- **Open Communication:** Encourage honest and non-judgmental conversations about feelings and experiences.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** Acknowledge and praise efforts and achievements, fostering a sense of competence and value.
- **Model Healthy Behavior:** Demonstrate self-acceptance and positive coping strategies in your own life.

For Educators and Mentors:

- **Inclusive Environment:** Create a classroom culture that celebrates diversity and encourages mutual respect.
- **Empowerment Opportunities:** Provide leadership roles and decision-making opportunities to build confidence.
- **Address Bullying:** Implement anti-bullying programs and promptly address any incidents to ensure a safe space for all students.

For Peers:

- **Supportive Friendships:** Be a source of encouragement and understanding for friends facing self-esteem challenges.
- **Positive Social Media Use:** Share uplifting content and avoid participating in negative online behaviors.
- **Peer Mentoring:** Engage in programs that allow older students to mentor younger ones, promoting mutual growth and confidence.

Resources

- **I Am Worth More:** An organization dedicated to empowering teens through self-esteem building initiatives. iamworthmore.org
- **Mental Health America:** Offers resources on building self-esteem and coping with social pressures.
- **National Teen Self-Esteem Month Activities:** Ideas for events and activities to promote teen self-esteem.

By coming together as a community—parents, educators, peers, and organizations—we can create an environment that nurtures the self-esteem of our teens, helping them to grow into confident and resilient adults.



Honoring the Healers: National Mental Health Provider Appreciation Day



National Mental Health Provider Appreciation Day is observed annually on May 12, honoring the dedication and compassion of professionals who support mental well-being. This day recognizes the vital role of therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, and social workers in fostering mental health across communities.

The Importance of Mental Health Providers

Mental health providers are essential in addressing emotional, psychological, and behavioral challenges. Their work not only aids individuals in managing mental health conditions but also contributes to the overall health of society.

Current Challenges in Mental Health Care

- **Provider Shortage:** Over 160 million Americans reside in areas with insufficient mental health professionals. [Axios](#)
- **Workforce Deficit:** The psychiatric workforce faces an anticipated shortage of up to 31,000 professionals by 2024, with only marginal improvements expected thereafter.
- **Insurance Barriers:** Nearly 50% of mental health providers do not accept insurance, limiting access for many individuals seeking care.

How to Show Appreciation

For Individuals:

- **Express Gratitude:** Send a thank-you note or message to a mental health professional who has made a difference in your life.
- **Share Stories:** Publicly acknowledge the impact of mental health providers by sharing personal experiences on social media or community forums.

For Organizations:

- **Host Appreciation Events:** Organize events or ceremonies recognizing the contributions of mental health staff.
- **Provide Support:** Offer resources and programs that support the well-being of mental health professionals within your organization.

For Policymakers:

- **Advocate for Funding:** Support legislation that increases funding for mental health services and workforce development.
- **Address Insurance Gaps:** Implement policies that encourage insurance acceptance among providers to improve access to care.

Resources

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):** Provides support and advocacy for mental health professionals and those they serve.
- **American Psychological Association (APA):** Offers resources and continuing education for mental health practitioners.
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA):** Supports mental health providers through grants and training programs.

May Community Events: Celebrate, Explore, Connect

1. Silver Spring Mother's Day Arts & Crafts Spring Fair

- Dates: Sunday, May 4, 2025
- Times: 1:00 PM – 6:00 PM
- Location: 1 Veterans Plaza Silver Spring, MD 20910

Celebrate Mother's Day with a delightful afternoon at the Silver Spring Mother's Day Arts & Crafts Spring Fair!

2. 2025 Around the World Embassy Tour

- Dates: Saturday, May 10, 2025
- Times: 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Location: Around the World Embassy Tour Washington, DC 20036

During Around the World Embassy Tour, embassies from multiple non-European Union (EU) countries, will host open houses on May 3, 2025 to visitors and residents to enjoy a one-of-a-kind experience.

3. 2025 Downtown Silver Spring Chalk Fest

- Date: Saturday, May 10, 2025
- Time: 10am - 4pm
- Location: Ellsworth Drive Silver Spring, MD

The Downtown Silver Spring Chalk Fest is returning to Ellsworth Drive! Enjoy strolling, scooting or wheeling down Ellsworth Dr. as it's transformed into an immersive chalk art gallery for the community to enjoy!

4. Eisenhower Under the Stars: Free Stargazing Event

- Date: Friday, May 16, 2025
- Time: 8:00 PM – 10:00 PM
- Location: 540 Independence Avenue Southwest Washington, DC 20024

Enjoy a free evening of stargazing through telescopes and fun activities for all ages.

5. 10th Annual M-NCPPC Tots to Teens Expo

- Date: Saturday, May 17, 2025
- Time: 10:00 PM - 4:00 PM
- Location: 8001 Sheriff Road Summerfield, MD 20785

Join the excitement at the Prince George's Sports & Learning Complex for a fun-filled day catered to connect children and adults to educational and health related resources.





Free Resources:

NAMI Maryland (National Alliance on Mental Illness) (410-884-8691):

- NAMI Maryland provides free mental health education, support groups, advocacy, and resources for individuals and families affected by mental illness. They offer programs such as NAMI Family Support Groups and NAMI Peer-to-Peer classes.

Mental Health Association of Maryland (443-901-1550):

- The Mental Health Association of Maryland offers free mental health resources, advocacy, and support services to promote mental wellness and recovery. They provide information on mental health topics, support groups, and educational programs.

Mosaic Community Services (410-453-9553):

- Mosaic Community Services is a nonprofit organization that offers free and low-cost mental health and substance use disorder services in Maryland. They provide counseling, therapy, case management, and other support services for individuals of all ages.

Maryland Coalition of Families (410-730-8267):

- The Maryland Coalition of Families is a nonprofit organization that provides free support, education, and advocacy for families of children and youth with mental health, substance use, and other behavioral health challenges. They offer support groups, workshops, and resources for families navigating the mental health system.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255):

- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a national network of crisis centers that provide free and confidential support to individuals in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Trained crisis counselors are available 24/7 to offer support, intervention, and resources to those in need.

Crisis Response Team (301-429-2185):

- This team likely consists of mental health professionals who are dispatched to respond to crisis situations, such as mental health emergencies or suicidal threats, in the community. They provide on-the-ground support and intervention to individuals in crisis.

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) (410-402-8300):

- The DHMH Behavioral Health Administration oversees mental health and substance abuse services and programs at the state level in Maryland. They may provide funding, coordination, and oversight for various mental health initiatives and organizations.
- School Max has changed over to Synergy please register

Maryland Programs Addressing Hunger and Homelessness



Maryland Food Bank

The Maryland Food Bank is a statewide nonprofit that provides millions of pounds of food to residents in need every year. It works with more than 1,200 community organizations, including food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters. Programs include:

- **Mobile Pantries:** Delivering food directly to underserved areas across the state.
- **School Pantry Program:** Offering nutritious food to children and families at over 40 schools in Maryland.
- **SNAP Outreach:** Assisting residents in applying for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to access nutritious food.

2. Moveable Feast

Moveable Feast provides nutritious meals and grocery items to individuals facing serious health challenges, such as HIV/AIDS, cancer, and diabetes, in Maryland. This program not only helps reduce food insecurity but also addresses the specific dietary needs of individuals with chronic illnesses. Volunteers are central to Moveable Feast's operations, helping prepare, package, and deliver meals throughout the state.

3. Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

The Maryland DHCD provides several programs aimed at preventing homelessness and supporting affordable housing initiatives. Key programs include:

- **Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG):** Funding for emergency shelters, rapid rehousing, and homelessness prevention.
- **Rental Assistance Programs:** Offering financial support to low-income residents, including the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program.
- **Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA):** Providing housing support to individuals with HIV/AIDS.

4. Homeless Persons Representation Project (HPRP)

The Homeless Persons Representation Project offers free legal services to people experiencing homelessness or those at risk of homelessness in Maryland. HPRP assists with issues like eviction prevention, public benefits access, and veteran's benefits. Their work is essential for protecting the legal rights of homeless individuals and families.

5. Health Care for the Homeless (HCH)

Health Care for the Homeless in Baltimore provides medical, mental health, and substance abuse services to homeless individuals. HCH's approach emphasizes integrated care, addressing both physical and mental health needs alongside housing services. They also provide case management to help individuals find stable housing and other community support.

6. Project PLASE (People Lacking Ample Shelter and Employment)

Based in Baltimore, Project PLASE provides transitional and permanent housing to homeless individuals, especially those with complex medical or behavioral health needs. They also offer support services, including job training, mental health counseling, and case management, to help residents gain stability and self-sufficiency.

7. Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless (MCCH)

The Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless works to reduce homelessness in Montgomery County by providing housing, advocacy, and supportive services. MCCH's programs include:

- **Safe Havens and Permanent Housing Programs:** For individuals with chronic homelessness or severe mental health needs.
- **Housing Stabilization Services:** To prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless.
- **Veteran Housing:** MCCH provides resources specifically tailored to veterans experiencing homelessness.

8. Baltimore City's Mayor's Office of Homeless Services (MOHS)

- The Mayor's Office of Homeless Services in Baltimore City is responsible for coordinating homeless outreach, housing programs, and resource distribution. MOHS works closely with local shelters, nonprofits, and community programs to deliver essential services such as:
- **Street Outreach:** Connecting people with shelters, healthcare, and support.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing Programs:** Offering stable housing and case management services to chronically homeless individuals.
- **Family Stability Programs:** Providing support for families facing homelessness or housing instability.

Maryland Domestic Violence Resources:

Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV)

- Phone: 1-800-634-3570
- Website: mnadv.org
- Provides information, support, and a directory of local service providers for victims of domestic violence.

Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA)

- Phone: 1-877-988-7800
- Website: mcasa.org
- Offers support and resources for sexual assault survivors, including those experiencing domestic violence.

Crisis Intervention Services

- Phone: 1-800-322-4043 (available 24/7)
- Provides immediate support and crisis intervention.

Local Shelters and Services:

- Montgomery County:
 - Phone: 240-777-4195
 - Website: montgomerycountymd.gov
- Prince George's County:
 - Phone: 301-883-7870
 - Website: pgcmls.info
- Baltimore City:
 - House of Ruth Maryland
 - Phone: 410-828-6390
 - Website: houseofruth.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline

- Phone: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
- Website: thehotline.org
- Connects Maryland residents to local services.

Legal Aid Bureau

- Phone: 1-877-261-8807
- Website: mdlab.org
- Provides free legal assistance for protective orders and other legal matters related to domestic violence.



Director's Corner...



Erica Coleman CPRP Founder/ Director

Your presence is a gift.

April is not only a time for blooming flowers and warmer days but also a moment to celebrate two vital aspects of our well-being: mental health and poetry. National Poetry Month provides a perfect opportunity to reflect, express, and heal through words while also emphasizing the importance of self-care.

The Power of Poetry in Mental Health

Poetry has long been a source of comfort, expression, and healing. It allows us to navigate our emotions, articulate complex feelings, and find solace in the shared human experience. Whether reading a heartfelt sonnet, composing free verse, or simply enjoying spoken word performances, poetry offers a way to connect with ourselves and others on a deeper level.

Writing or reading poetry can serve as a form of therapy, helping to reduce stress, process emotions, and even combat symptoms of anxiety and depression. When words feel insufficient, poetry can fill the gaps, allowing emotions to flow freely and encouraging a sense of release.

"Be patient with yourself. Self-growth is tender; it's holy ground. There's no greater investment." –Stephen Covey