April is Counseling Awareness Month

*Counseling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals*.

Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC) are highly-skilled professionals who have earned a master's degree in counseling; they have completed a 3000 hour post-masters clinical internship under the supervision of a licensed mental health professional who has undergone specific training to operate as a supervisor; and they have also passed a state or national licensure or certification examination. Licensed Professional Counselors are also required to complete 24 hours of continuing education every two years in order to stay abreast of the latest counseling techniques in the field.

Licensed Professional Counselors provide flexible people-oriented therapy. By combining traditional psychotherapy with practical skills training, problem-solving and education, counselors can assist clients in bringing about the change that they want to see in their lives.

While many believe that counseling is not necessary until someone reaches a personal rock bottom, there are many predictable situations that almost everyone will encounter throughout the stages of life. Such as the death of a loved one, the break-up of a relationship or marriage, illness, knowing or being someone who struggles with addiction, communication problems at home or at work. The above listed situations, and many more, have all been proven to respond well to counseling as long as the client is willing to try something new and be educated on the subject.

Choosing to see a counselor does not mean that you are "crazy". Counseling sessions can serve as a place to talk out what is on your heart and mind with an objective third party, weigh the consequences of multiple options, or explore family of origin issues that continue to affect your life in a negative manner. Counseling can also provide a means of exploring the pros and cons of a future event by providing premarital counseling or sessions with families preparing for a 2nd or 3rd marriage.

As a Licensed Professional Counselor and a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor, I have had the honor of walking alongside of people as they make healthy adjustments in their lives and go on to be productive, forward moving people with good boundaries. I believe that everyone is capable of change and I prefer to believe the best in people rather than the worst.

My prayer for you is to have comfort on difficult days, faith so that you can believe, hugs when spirits sag, bravery to accept the truth and confidence for when you doubt.