



Lifeline Tabernacle Community Church

Rev. Gloria D. Anderson, PsyD

May 2022

Comfort, Comfort My People, says the Lord...Isaiah 40:1

Mental Health Awareness Month

This month, May 2022, is Mental Health Awareness Month. It has been celebrated in May by the Mental Health America (MHA) organization since 1949 with the purpose of breaking the stigma associated with mental health illnesses. Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, relate to others, act, and make decisions. Mental health is essential to our overall health and quality of life and not just the absence of a mental illness.

Many people who suffer from mental illnesses find it difficult to ask for help or are unable to talk about their illness with family or friends because they fear being treated differently or being judged. By encouraging conversations and empowering those who struggle with mental health, awareness helps to bring attention to the millions of people who are impacted by mental health issues throughout the United States. According to MHA (2022) nearly 50 million (19.86%) of Americans experienced a mental illness in 2019.

Clifford W. Beers founded the organization now known as Mental Health America in 1909 (Parry, M. (2010). Beers and his four (4) siblings suffered from mental health illnesses and were admitted to numerous mental institutions during their lifetime. Out of his own mental institutional experiences, in 1908, Beers wrote an autobiography entitled, "A Mind that Found Itself." It chronicled his personal, brutal, and punitive treatment while institutionalized and how he was able to recover from his mental illness. With support from medical professionals and his colleagues, Beers helped revolutionized the care and the treatment of the mentally ill.

According to the Mayo Clinic (2022), the COVID-19 pandemic helped to expose mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, fear, sadness, depression, insomnia, and loneliness that many people experienced due to the lockdown. For those already diagnosed with a mental disorder, many may have had worsening symptoms as they attempted to find ways to cope as a result of the pandemic. Today, as we still grapple with the pandemic, in one way or the other, people maybe still struggling to establish healthy routines and to find new ways to cope day by day.

This year, the theme for the Mental Health Month Toolkit, set by MHA (2022) is "Back to Basics." It was chosen to "provide basic knowledge about mental health and its conditions and to provide information to people if mental health is a concern for them." MHA (2022) also noted ways to observe Mental Health Awareness Month:

1. Take care of yourself mentally by seeking mental health treatment from a mental health specialist or from a pastoral counselor in your faith community.
2. Take care of your loved ones by keeping in touch, supporting, and encouraging them.
3. Talk about mental health with your peers which helps to normalize Mental Health Awareness Month.



Lifeline Tabernacle Community Church

Rev. Gloria D. Anderson, PsyD

May 2022

Comfort, Comfort My People, says the Lord...Isaiah 40:1

Self-care can also play an important role in maintaining your mental health, by helping to support treatment and recovery if you have a mental illness, by helping you to manage stress, by lowering your risk of illness, and by increasing your energy. Self-care means taking the time to do things that help you live well and improve your physical, mental, psychological, and spiritual health. The following list include some but not all of the things you can do to help you get started with self-care (National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), 2021):

1. Exercise regularly to help boost your mood and improve your health.
2. Eat a healthy diet and stay hydrated to keep you focused and to boost your energy.
3. Get enough sleep by sticking to a schedule.
4. Stay connected to family and friends who can provide emotional support and help.
5. Acquire an attitude of gratitude by daily writing down things that you are thankful for.
6. Make time to do things that help you to destress and relax.
7. Be kind to yourself by replacing your negative thoughts with positive thoughts.

The NIMH (2021) advises you to seek professional help or talk about your concerns with your primary care provider who can refer you to a mental health specialist if you are experiencing severe or distressing symptoms that have lasted two weeks such as:

- Difficulty sleeping
- Changes in your appetite that resulted in unwanted weight lost
- Struggling to get out of bed in the morning because of your mood
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest in things you usually found enjoyable
- Inability to perform your daily activities

If you are thinking about harming yourself or attempting suicide:

- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Hotline) at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Text HOME to 741741 to reach a volunteer Crisis Counselor
- Ask for Help from Someone You Trust
- Dial 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Room

Bibliography/Resources

- Mayo Clinic (2022) COVID-19 and your mental health. Mayoclinic.org
- Mental Health America (2022). Back to Basics. <https://ww.mhanational.org/mental-health-month>
- Mental Health America-MHA Screening. <https://mhascreening.org>
- Mental Health Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or Text 'MHA' to 74174
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, 2020). Caring for your Mental Health. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov>



Lifeline Tabernacle Community Church
Rev. Gloria D. Anderson, PsyD
May 2022

Comfort, Comfort My People, says the Lord...Isaiah 40:1

- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Tips for Talking with Your Health Care Provider fact sheet
- Parry M. (2010). From a patient's perspective: Clifford Whittingham Beers' work to reform mental health services. *American journal of public health, 100*(12), 2356–2357. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2010.191411>
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
1-800-789-2647

And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.” – [Deuteronomy 31:8](#)

Important Note:

For those of you who are within the Household of Faith, if you have a family member or friend who has a mental illness, by all means, pray for them and with them. Believers can also have mental health problems, as well. Be compassionate, loving, and offer your support and prayers. Your support and encouragement are much needed to help those with mental health issues to seek professional help from a mental health specialist. Just as the body needs a trained medical provider when it is sick; the mind needs a trained mental health professional when psychological issues arise. Prayer and God’s Word with help from mental health professionals provides an avenue for healing for those suffering from mental health issues.