

July 27, 2021



The Mental Health Association in New Jersey (MHANJ) joins Mental Health America and others across the U.S. in recognizing July as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) Mental Health Month. In this issue of *Bell* we will share information, events and highlights, many of which focus on the importance of mental health for members of BIPOC communities.

## Mental Health Strategies in BIPOC Communities

In last month's *Bell* we focused on **Community Care** as one of three important elements in delivering strong mental health services to diverse communities. Two other vital elements of this approach that many consider essential to supporting mental health and resilience in BIPOC and other communities are: **Self-Directed Care** and **Culturally-based practices**.

**Self-directed care (SDC)** refers to an innovative practice emphasizing that people with mental health and substance use conditions, or their representatives if applicable, have decision-making authority over services they receive. While many SDC programs are based on providing individuals with funding to manage as they see fit, the general philosophy of SDC is something that anyone can integrate into their wellness plan, including:

- **Know what will -- and will not -- work for you**
- **Focus on shared decision-making with a loved one, and respect the individual's final decision**
- **Be ready to advocate for yourself**

**Culturally-based practices** refer to practices that are embedded in cultures and are passed down through generations. They naturally provide resiliency and healing. Some examples are:

- **Holding healing or prayer circles**
- **Following traditional healers/practitioners shamans, medicine men/women, diviners**
- **Living in multi-generational households**
- **Practicing energy healing/cleansing rituals, such as reiki, sweat lodge, and feng shui**

For generations, many culturally based practices have been erased, set aside, hidden away, or utilized in secret diminishing, the history, value, and pride in BIPOC communities. It is necessary to provide legitimate, culturally relevant alternatives to the medical model to improve the existing mainstream systems and to provide sufficient care to all people -- not just those who benefit from the systems that are already in place.

Sources: Mental Health America Footnote: 11 Ozbay, F., Johnson, D. C., Dimoulas, E., Morgan III, C. A., Charney, D., & Southwick, S. (2007). Social support and resilience to stress: from neurobiology to clinical practice. *Psychiatry (Edgmont)*. 4(5):35

## Emotional Support for Families of Color in NJ

According to Laverne S. Williams, CSW, Director of the MHANJ's Promoting Emotional Wellness and Spirituality program, "The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted the emotional health of families across our state, but most significantly families of color. Families have faced enormous upheaval as people deal with chronic physical health issues and the emotional and financial challenges brought on by the pandemic."

The MHANJ's COVID-19 Pandemic Emotional Support for Families of Color program helps address inequities regarding behavioral healthcare access and outcomes in the state's communities most negatively impacted by COVID-19. The video below features KiMani Divine, RScP, Family Support Specialist for this program. This program is made possible through support from the New Jersey Pandemic Relief Fund. [Click here to learn more and scroll for their calendar of free, virtual emotional support groups.](#)



## Join us for Events and Groups

### **BIPOC Mental Health Month Celebration**

The MHANJ, Pleasant Valley Productions, The Oskar Schindler Performing Arts Center, Lynette Entertainment LLC, and The New Jersey Creative Arts Collaborative (NJCAC), are producing a special event for BIPOC Mental Health Month. Please see the details on the left. This event is designed to be a creative expression of celebration, vibrancy, courage, hope, and resilience through the unique lens of people of color. The impressive line-up of diverse entertainers includes: Jeffrey Foote, Sierra James, Sandra

# **BIPOC**

(Black Indigenous People of Color)

## **MESSAGES OF HOPE AND CELEBRATION**

**Outdoor, family-friendly, live music, poetry, dance, art, and education**

**7/29 | 7:30-9:00 PM**

**OSPAC | 4 Boland Drive, West Orange, NJ**

Sponsored by:



**This is a free family-friendly event, with free parking in an adjacent lot and indoor restroom facilities. Donations are welcome.**

Ward, RO-STAFSA, Tracey- Lynn- Haskell, Carl Brister, and the Zawadi African Dancer and Drummers. Your host will be Lynette Sheard, Director, and Community Education Coordinator at the MHANJ. There will be artistic vendors, tables with community resources and information, as well information on mental health services.

**You are invited to wear something that represents your cultural origin.**



**PEWS**  
Promoting Emotional Wellness  
and Spirituality Programs



## AUGUST 2021 PROGRAMS

SERVING FAMILIES OF COLOR IMPACTED BY COVID-19

### MON-THU

Weekdays M-Th @ 12-12:10 pm - "Press Pause" Self-Care & Wellness Techniques in 10 Minutes

Zoom Meeting ID: 982 3576 0128

Passcode: 524704

<https://zoom.us/j/98235760128?pwd=M25ueTdBZVA3RkFYbFJobldKRzZKdz09>

### TUESDAYS

Weekly @ 2:00pm - Thankful Tuesdays with Deacon Laverne S. Williams

Zoom Meeting ID: 424 719 863

Passcode: 469922

<https://zoom.us/j/424719863?pwd=SjRXUXRYZiZnZHVc3ZhbHlM1oxQT09>

### WEDNESDAYS

Weekly @ 6:00pm - Haitian Community Group

Zoom Meeting ID: 827 5268 7877

Passcode: 038824

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82752687877?pwd=SXlyVzk3eHJYNzJSSnpZL1FPeGR2dz09>

### THURSDAYS

Weekly @ 5:00pm - Women of Color Support Group

Zoom Meeting ID: 910 7097 3497

Passcode: 673094

<https://zoom.us/j/91070973497?pwd=dXl1cE11STVqeUNWVeh0MjZud3Qwdz09>

8/19 @ 5:30pm - "Healing in Conversations"

Zoom Meeting ID: 873 1891 8246

Passcode: 643211

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87318918246?pwd=RnRFYm1aQzk5ajVlaGZUHI2UnpGQT09>

### FRIDAYS

Weekly @ 11:00am - Spanish-Speaking Support Group

Zoom Meeting ID: 985 2934 2867

Passcode: 299051

<https://zoom.us/j/98529342867?pwd=QXdsZHBZZURhQ3NlS0kzTHJPWFllUT09>

### SUNDAYS

Weekly @ 7:00pm - Muslim Mental Health Support & Discussion

Zoom Meeting ID: 842 3899 4439

Passcode: 879442

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84238994439?pwd=Y0hMeXlnY1JpV0ZiN0FIVEFRROjJ2QT09>

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE PROGRAMS, PLEASE CONTACT [FAMILIESOFCOLOR@MHANJ.ORG](mailto:FAMILIESOFCOLOR@MHANJ.ORG)

[Click here for more information about COVID-19 Pandemic:  
Emotional Support for Families of Color.](#)



VIRTUAL WELLNESS CENTER -- ZOOM IN OR CALL

FREE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, EDUCATION & ADVOCACY

NON-JUDGEMENTAL, SAFE, DIVERSE COMMUNITY

MULTIPLE GROUPS - 7 DAYS A WEEK. SUCH AS:  
MENTAL WELLNESS, COPING SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT  
WELLNESS, SUPPORT GROUPS, RELAXATION  
TOOLS, PEER CAREER INFO, AND MANY OTHERS

PURSUE YOUR INTERESTS, JOIN OTHERS

For Info: <http://www.mhaac.info/ubw>.  
To join: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8VXP2K8>.  
Questions: [UNITEDBYWELLNESS@MHANJ.org](mailto:UNITEDBYWELLNESS@MHANJ.org)  
or 609-652-3800.

A 3 Month Pilot Program from Mental Health Association in New Jersey

[Click here for more info about United by Wellness.](#)

[Click here to join United by Wellness](#) or call 609-652-3800.

**Save the Date!**



Mental Health  
Association  
in New Jersey, Inc.



**Saturday, October 2, 2021  
MHANJ's Walk for Wellness!**

**NEW PARTNER:  
Tri-State K-9 Response Team**

**TWO LOCATIONS:  
Nomahegan Park, Cranford, NJ  
AND  
Mill Creek Park, Mill Creek Road, Manahawkin, NJ  
(Stafford Township)**

**MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON!**

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**Follow MHANJ's Social Media for Updates and Inspiration**



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**Suggestions?**

If you have any suggestions on how the MHANJ can serve the community,  
or comments on our services please send them to [info@mhaj.org](mailto:info@mhaj.org).

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Click here to donate.

Mental Health Association in New Jersey | 800-367-8850 | [info@mhanj.org](mailto:info@mhanj.org)