



Suffering in Silence

A Discussion about Mental Wellness in the Black Community

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In 2002, she received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. In 2005, she received her Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy with a concentration in Sex Therapy from Richmond Graduate University.

She has spent many years walking alongside individuals as they trudged through the muck and mire of life's hardships. She has experience working in youth ministry, community outreach, and a pregnancy care center. She has been blessed with supportive, trustworthy people in her life who have seen her through many trials. Their example has taught her the ministry of "getting in the trenches" with people.

Mrs. Richardson-Pinkerton resides in Chattanooga, TN with her husband, Pierre, and their two precious boys.



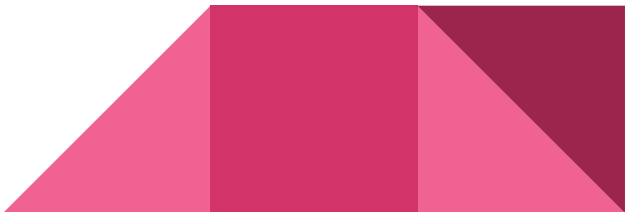
Definition of Mental Health

Our psychological well-being as well as satisfactory adjustment to society and to the ordinary demands of life.

It determines how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices

Mental Illness/Mental Health Disorders

Mental health disorders, also known as mental illness, are serious disorders which can affect your thinking, mood and behavior. They can affect your ability to relate to others and function each day. They may be occasional or long-lasting.



Obstacles to Seeking Treatment

- **Misunderstanding about mental health**
 - ◆ Lack of accurate information about mental health disorders
 - ◆ Difficulty recognizing the signs/symptoms of mental health disorders
 - ◆ Fear of being labeled “crazy”
 - ◆ Disregarding the importance of self care
- **Inability to access quality mental health services**
 - ◆ Lack of health insurance
 - ◆ Limited access to effective mental health providers
 - ◆ Time, money and transportation
- **Mistrust of medical professionals**
 - ◆ Misdiagnosis
 - ◆ Inability to find a racially sensitive therapist




Common Mental Health Disorders

Depressive Disorders

Disorders where the common feature is the presence of sad, empty or irritable mood, accompanied by somatic and cognitive changes that significantly affect one's capacity to function

Anxiety Disorders

Disorders that share features of excessive fear (the emotional response to real or perceived imminent threat) and anxiety (anticipation of future threat) and related behavioral disturbances



Common Mental Health Disorders

Panic Attack

A sudden episode of intense fear that triggers severe physical reactions when there is no real danger or apparent cause.

Panic Disorder

Recurrent, unexpected panic attacks followed by constant fear of another attack for a long period of time



Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

- Development of symptoms following exposure to one or more traumatic events. The following elements must be present:
 - ◆ Re-experiencing of the traumatic event
 - ◆ Persistent avoidance of stimuli (triggers) associated with the traumatic event
 - ◆ Negative changes in cognitions and mood associated with the traumatic event
 - ◆ Changes in arousal and reactivity associated with the traumatic event
- Exposure includes directly experiencing the event, witnessing an event that occurs to others, learning a traumatic event occurred to close family member or close friend, experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of a traumatic event



Abuse

Abuse treats someone as if he/she were an object to control and use rather than a person to love and value. The abuser wants control over the mind, feelings and will of another person.

- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Spiritual
- Emotional



Reactive Abuse


Reactive abuse occurs when the victim reacts to the abuse he/she is experiencing. The reaction could be screaming, lashing out physically, or using sarcastic remarks/insults. The abuser responds to the reaction by accusing the victim of being the abuser. The abuser will use the reaction as “proof” that the victim is unstable or mentally ill.

Abusers use reactive abuse as a tool of manipulation. They also use it as a means of shifting the blame - drawing attention to what the victim has done as opposed to their actions that precipitated the reaction.



The Church's Call to Genuine Love

Romans 12:9-21

- Abhor what is evil
 - Love with brotherly affection
 - Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer
 - Contribute to the needs of the saints
 - Seek to show hospitality
 - Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep
 - Live in harmony with one another
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The Church's Call to Genuine Love

- The church should educate and equip its members to be wise stewards of their mental health
 - ◆ Psychoeducational seminars
 - ◆ Retreats
 - ◆ Conferences (marriage, parenting, sexuality, etc)
- Access to resources
 - ◆ Subsidize payment for mental health services
 - ◆ Provide transportation to appointments and/or child care if needed
 - ◆ Provide respite for caregivers
 - ◆ Help create and put into action a safety plan for those in abusive situations



The Church's Call to Genuine Love

- Create a pastoral care committee focused on mental health issues
 - ◆ First line of defense when a specific need has been identified
 - ◆ Charged with creating and enforcing policy

