



MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Updates and information from the Atlantic County Office

July Is Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

Also known as BIPOC Mental Health Month

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Spotlight: BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month

Formally recognized in June 2008 (and currently designated as), Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month was created to bring awareness to the unique struggles that underrepresented groups face in regard to mental illness in the US. Bebe Moore Campbell was an American author, journalist, teacher, and mental health advocate who worked tirelessly to shed light on the mental health needs of the Black community and other underrepresented communities.

To continue the visionary work of Bebe Moore Campbell, each year Mental Health America (MHA) develops a public education campaign dedicated to addressing the mental health needs of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).

2022 Theme:

Beyond the Numbers

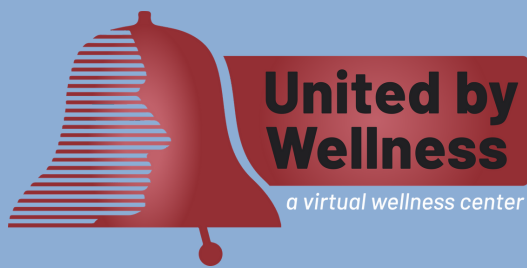
Mental Health America recognizes that Black, Indigenous, and people of color have rich histories that go #BeyondTheNumbers. While there are stories of resilience born out of oppression, persecution, and abuse, there is immeasurable strength in each



Bebe Moore Campbell

of these cultures. In an increasingly diversified America, we acknowledge the specificity of individual and group experiences and how it relates to their beliefs and well-being. BIPOC communities are significantly more likely to develop mental health conditions, and one of the major barriers to mental health treatment is access and the need for understanding mental health support. #BeyondTheNumbers explores the nuances and uniqueness in BIPOC communities.

This year's theme for BIPOC Mental Health Month is #BeyondTheNumbers. Join us and together, we will gain knowledge on historical context, systems of support, and actionable ways to move forward toward a mentally healthy future. For more info: mhanational.org/BIPOC-mental-health-month



United by Wellness Celebrates a Milestone

July 7th marked the one-year birth date and launch of United by Wellness (UBW). UBW is MHANJ's virtual Wellness Center where peers offer skills and tools for recovery to people living with mental health and/or substance use disorders.

The staff at the center provide no-cost support, education, and advocacy in a safe and diverse community. Together, they embrace the uniqueness of their members and offer hope for their chosen path toward recovery.

UBW members have access to 80 groups per week, offered daily, including weekends, via zoom video and telephone. During UBW's first year, 1300 individuals signed up to become members (attendance records show they participated at a rate of 22,258 times).

UBW Peer Leadership looks forward to continuing to expand the center's impact by increasing the wellness center's visibility, streamlining the registration process, rolling out a virtual training for the 65 UBW facilitators, and adding specialized communities within the center's membership.

In recent months, UBW has partnered with the Atlantic Center for Independent Living to create a specialized Independent Living Community (ILC) that provides groups for individuals across the disability spectrum.

To celebrate this first year, UBW leadership planned a 3-hour online birthday party that featured "Wellness Jeopardy" and a virtual scavenger hunt. In addition UBW members gave awards to facilitators, and facilitators presented members with awards. Attendees were given the opportunity to reflect on what the UBW community means to them and set a wellness goal.

The birthday party ended with everyone in attendance singing Happy Birthday and blowing out a virtual candle.



To become a member of UBW, or to learn more about ILC go to www.mhaac.info/ubw, call 609-652-3800 ext. 302, or email unitedbywellness@mhanj.org

Peers The evolution of this important role

In behavioral health, a peer is usually used to refer to someone who shares the experience of living with a psychiatric disorder and/or addiction. In that narrow context two people living with those conditions are peers, but in reality, most people are far more specific about whom they would rely on for peer support. Trust and compatibility are extremely important factors.

Peer support is the "process of giving and receiving encouragement and assistance to achieve long-term recovery." Peer supporters "offer emotional support, share knowledge, teach



skills, provide practical assistance, and connect people with resources, opportunities, communities of support, and other people" (Mead, 2003; Solomon, 2004). In behavioral health, peers offer their unique lived experience with mental health conditions to provide support focused on advocacy, education, mentoring, and motivation.

Peers go by many names and can work in many different settings. Many peers have *continued on p. 3*

(continued from Peers)

training and certification that demonstrates their skills and knowledge. Combined with their lived experience and ability to engage and connect with consumers, peer supporters are a dynamic and growing group that continue to transform lives and systems.

History

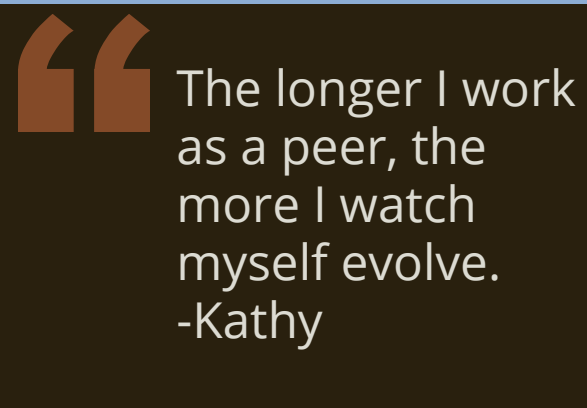
The concept of “peer support” in mental health has its roots in the self-help movement that began in the 1970s. During a time of intense focus on civil rights and social change, people who had survived the abuses of psychiatric hospitals came together to support each other and work towards healing.

They understood there was more to recovery than “symptom management” and that individuals who had been hospitalized could support one another and live productive and fulfilled lives in the community.

Present

Thanks to the leadership of peers and the growing evidence around the practice over the past decades, the peer workforce has grown to over 24,000 supporters working in all 50 states and U.S. territories. Considered an evidence-based practice by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), peer support is Medicaid reimbursable in over 41 states.

From the criminal justice system to housing services to hotlines, peers work to model recovery and contribute to the lives of others.



How to Become A Peer Support Specialist

Working in peer support is an especially rewarding experience. Peers get to share the tools, skills, and information they have learned to transform their own life with individuals going through similar struggles. It's reciprocal -- peers contribute to the lives of others and enhance their own recovery and well-being in the process.

As others become aware of the impact of peer support, opportunities and career paths for peer specialists grow and expand. The growth of peer support has the potential to radically transform the ways we support people in the behavioral health system.

Training:

If you are interested in working as a peer support specialist, you will likely have to participate in some sort of training. Requirements vary across the states so you must determine what is required in your state or county. Doors to Wellbeing has a comprehensive list of training and certification requirements and appropriate contact information in each state.

MHA's Consumer Connections recruits, trains, and supports consumers to become providers of mental health services. The program works with mental health providers in New Jersey to expand employment opportunities for consumer providers. Consumer Connections offers courses which meet the educational requirements and lead to Certification as a Recovery Support Practitioner (CRSP).

For more information, contact:
consumerconnections@mhanj.org or call Chrissy Schayer, Director (732) 451-4457 Ext. 950.



A STATEWIDE VIRTUAL WELLNESS CENTER



**United by
Wellness**

a virtual wellness center

CREATED BY: MHANJ'S
INDIVIDUALS CONCERTED IN
EFFORT (ICE), JOURNEY TO
WELLNESS (JTW) & ESPERANZA
WELLNESS CENTERS

UNITED BY WELLNESS (UBW) OFFERS PEER-LED
SUPPORT GROUPS FOR ANYONE & EVERYONE!

UBW CREATES A SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN A VIRTUAL
ATMOSPHERE AS WELL AS CREATES A UNIQUE WAY TO
FIND SUPPORT.

**80+ FREE Peer-led Support Groups
7 days a week**

**Group topics covering all dimensions
of wellness & recovery principles**

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO REGISTER PLEASE CONTACT UBW:



WWW.MHAAC.INFO/UBW



UNITEDBYWELLNESS@MHANJ.ORG



609-652-3800

OR COMPLETE THE MEMBERSHIP FORM:

[HTTPS://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/8YX2K8](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8YX2K8)

INDIVIDUALS CONCERTED IN EFFORT

MHANJ- Atlantic County
4 East Jimmie Leeds Rd Ste8
Galloway NJ 08205
Phone: 609-652-3800
Fax: 609-652-3801

JOURNEY TO WELLNESS

MHANJ- Ocean County
25 South Shore Drive
Toms River, NJ 08753
Phone: 732-244-0940
Fax: 732-244-0948

ESPERANZA

MHANJ- Union County
673 Morris Ave. Ste. 100
Springfield, NJ 07081
Phone: 908-810-1001
Fax: 973-218-0636

BIPOC MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

(Black, indiginous, People of Color)

BIPOC Mental Health Awareness (originally Minority Mental Health Awareness) was created to put a spotlight on the struggles that underrepresented groups face in regard to mental health. Members of these communities are more likely to develop mental health conditions due to experiencing the trauma associated with systemic oppression, high levels of prejudice, discrimination, and microaggressions which cause mental, emotional and physiological stress responses. Though they are at higher risk, their access to services continues to be a barrier in many areas. In addition, implicit and explicit provider bias, lack of provider cultural humility, cultural responsiveness, and cultural competence compromises the system of care.

MHANJ provides many online groups to engage these communities. We are highlighting one of them in this issue. Thank you to Kim Reynolds and La Verne Saunders for co-facilitating A Gathering for Womyn of Color, which is provided for LGBTQ womyn of color.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

A Gathering of Womyn of Color



Kim Reynolds and La Verne Saunders, co-facilitators of A Gathering of Womyn of Color.

BY BETH WADE
Public Relations Specialist

With grace, gratitude, and eloquence for which they are known, La Verne and Kim speak about a group that is especially endeared to each of them. Together, they are providing a safe space for a community, which Kim describes as underserved, undervalued, overlooked, and marginalized.

Simply put, being at the cross-section living with the intersecting identities of gay, Black, and female places people who fall into these categories among the most in need of understanding and a sense of belonging. To that end, Kim and La Verne are succeeding as Womyn Gathering draws members worldwide.

The leaders anticipated a good response, but their reach is far greater than expected. Since they launched their group 8 months ago, the meeting has attracted people globally, with interest outside this state, across the country, as well as the Caribbean and UK.

That affirms – and sadly punctuates -- the great need.

The group's members return at a 90 percent rate, according to Kim, which is another testament to the success of A Gathering for Womyn of Color. Though the camaraderie may be difficult measure, the facilitators shared a number of heartwarming stories that help to calculate the group's impact. Among the moments that standout is this one described by La Verne.

“A woman in her 60s, a black woman in recovery,” La Verne says recalling her. “She was using 12-step and church and decided to use self-help and church to come out. Being a part of her journey resonated with so many of us and seamlessly prompted group sharing about coming out, religious experiences, recovery, and more.”

Group participants range in age from 20s through their 70s. For La Verne, that span is especially gratifying. She says she didn't have this sort of outlet growing up. Technology is permitting opportunities for women who lack access in other states, including Florida, California, Boston, and New York.

“This completely amazes me,” she said. “I'm giving younger people an opportunity that was denied to me. It's so healing for me. I didn't have safe, segregated spaces.”

In this particular meeting, the facilitators open with meaningful music, sound or lyrics, then The Four Agreements of Courageous Conversations, and a grounding activity designed to encourage being mindful and present. That is followed by the introduction of a topic/poem/quote and open floor discussion.

From the first meeting, the willingness and eagerness to share was clear and present, said La Verne. The people shared “beyond the superficial with courageous honesty.” Through that process, she said, she, too, was prompted to share on a deeper level than she had reached up to that point in her own journey.

La Verne also explained the importance of the sense of belonging that comes from attending the group.

“A lot of people who are BIPOC do not experience a sense of belonging in other LGBTQ groups that are primarily White spaces. This space gives others that sense of belonging. Belonging is a basic human need. For me it's a broader, deeper belonging,” she said.

For example, during Pride Month events she's attended, she said BIPOC music and speakers are not equally represented, if at all. Planners and organizers are typically not from the BIPOC community, which she says lends itself to the lack of balance in these events.

The idea for Womyn Gathering was Kim's original inspiration. She said being gay in America has its challenges; being a female (regardless of sexual orientation) has its challenges; and being female and gay makes her part of two marginalized groups. The experience of the women in the group is vastly different *in* the world and *of* the world.

“I feel a great sense of honor and responsibility to hold a space where women of all identifications can come and be themselves, move, and speak from the heart. Just be and have a conversation, say what you have to say,” she reflected. “That's a level of freedom.”

A Gathering for Womyn of Color meets on the first Thursday of each month at 6 pm. The group is provided through MHANJ and PEWS and the Emotional Support for Families of Color Initiative. To receive a link for this or other groups, email familiesofcolor@mhanj.org. ●

Does someone in your family live with a mental health disorder?

Support and assistance are available for families with a loved one in crisis and in need of linkage to treatment and other services.

Acute Care Family Program
7 days per week
Available 8 am to 8 pm
609 517-8614

Our team engages families who are often navigating the mental health system for the first time.

Staff educate families about mental illness and offer resources and referrals that can help their loved one

Help is a phone call away



NATIONAL EXPOSURE



Pictured: Michelle Price, Carolyn Quinn, and Bob Kley who presented about the MHANJ statewide virtual wellness center in Washington, DC.

Our very own, Carolyn Quinn, Director of Community Engagement & Wellness Programs, presented on Wednesday, June 8 at Mental Health America's Annual Conference held in Washington, DC. Carolyn was joined by Michelle Price, Director of Ocean County, and Bob Kley, Vice President & COO of MHANJ.

Carolyn and Michelle highlighted the United by Wellness (UBW) Center. Both in-person and virtual attendees heard about the successful model we use. Their engaging presentation showed how a virtual wellness center serves and positively impacts persons in recovery. They did a wonderful job of blending their passion for recovery communities with explaining the center's structure and sharing the data collected about this exciting, successful project.



**ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE
WHEN YOU HAVE THE RIGHT PEOPLE
TO SUPPORT YOU**



Find out how we can help

The POST Program provides one-on-one support to those living with a mental health condition

Call Britt at 609 652-3800 ext. 308



HISTORY OF NATIONAL BLUEBERRY MONTH

Blueberries have been consumed for a very long time — more than 13,000 years, according to some research. The first people to recognize the versatility of this friend were the Native Americans. They used blueberries for medicinal purposes and as a natural flavoring agent.

Native Americans were using wild ones, which are different than the variety we eat today. The blueberries found in the supermarket are the result of one person's long commitment to cultivating blueberries. Elizabeth White, the daughter of cranberry farmers in New Jersey, wanted to expand her family's business with other crops, particularly blueberries. While studying at Drexel University in Philadelphia, her main interest centered around figuring out how to grow the best blueberries. She eventually partnered with botanist Frederick Coville to cultivate blueberries at her farm.

Today, blueberries are available in 35 states and some other regions around the world. British Columbia is the largest blueberry growing region in the world, with Canada coming in third behind the United States and Chile. Hammonton, NJ is the self-proclaimed blueberry capital of the world with 56 blueberry farms located there!

Excerpt from nationaltoday.com

Health Benefits of Blueberries

Blueberries can be eaten freshly picked or incorporated into a variety of recipes. They can also be purchased frozen. They have been shown to protect against heart disease and cancer, and can also help maintain bone strength, mental health, and healthful blood pressure.

Fast facts on blueberries

- Blueberries contain a plant compound called anthocyanin. This gives blueberries both their blue color and many of their health benefits.
- Blueberries can help heart health, bone strength, skin health, blood pressure, diabetes management, cancer prevention, and mental health.
- One cup of blueberries provides 24 percent of a person's recommended daily allowance of vitamin C.
- Use blueberries to top waffles, pancakes, yogurt, oatmeal, or cereal, blend them in a smoothie or syrup, or fold them into muffins and sweet breads.
- People who use blood-thinners, such as warfarin, should speak to their doctor before increasing their intake of blueberries, as the high vitamin K content can affect blood clotting.

Source: EatingWell.com

Atlantic County Farmers Markets



Wednesdays - Ocean City

A well-established market, the OC Farmers Market, brings out both the vendors and the shoppers. Despite the good turnout, there shouldn't be any trouble finding a place to park.

When – Wednesdays until September 14th from 8am-1pm

Where – Grounds of the Tabernacle at 6th and Asbury Aves., Ocean City

Thursdays - Margate Community Farmers Market

While not huge, this market has a nice collection of vendors including organic Jersey Fresh produce, food trucks, the best damn coffee around, fair trade items, non-profit organizations and more.

When – Thursdays until September 1st. 8:30 am to 11:30am through September 1st

Where – Parking lot behind Steve and Cookies, Monroe and Amherst Aves., Margate

Thursdays - Smithville/Galloway – Galloway Green Market

A small market that offers a nice selection. In addition, to local produce, you can find baked goods, crafters and more. The produce market is held in the Historic Village of Smithville which is an attraction itself.

Come for the market but stay to explore the shops of the quaint village.

When – Thursdays 4:00 pm – 7 pm, June 25 to September 3rd

Where – Historic Smithville Village Greene, 615 E. Moss Mill Road, Smithville

Fridays - Ventnor City Community Farmers Market

This is true community market. Families ride their bikes, and you can find them hanging on the lawn together while live music fills the ocean air. You will find neighbors and friends catching up with one another.

When – Fridays 8:30 a.m. to noon through Labor Day

Where – Holy Trinity Parish lot, Atlantic and Newport Aves., Ventnor



Saturdays -Atlantic City

The C.R.O.P.S. Market @ Chelsea is set to be up and running August 20- Oct 29th

When – Saturdays 1 pm to 4 pm

Where – Chelsea Market at O'Donnell Park, 3501 Atlantic Ave., www.cropsnj.org

Saturdays - Brigantine

This is another great family-friendly market. In addition to all your typical market finds the organizers have activities for the kids, live entertainment, and even cooking demonstrations. Brigantine Farmers Market is one of the largest markets held in these Jersey Shore towns and a nice way to spend a Saturday morning. While there is no designated parking lot, there is plenty of free on-street parking.

When – Saturdays 8 am to 12 pm through Labor Day

Where – North School parking lot on Sheridan near Roosevelt

Wellness Bulletin Board



Free Summer Concerts



Several communities host free concerts including:

Somers Point (Friday nights 7-9 pm
at William Morrow Beach)

Ventnor (Saturdays at 6 pm Newport Beach &
Wednesday nights 6 pm at Ski Beach)

Absecon (Sundays at 7 pm Heritage Park)

Atlantic City (Mondays 8 pm at Kennedy Plaza)



Sunflower Festival
Sahl's Farm
420 W. Pestalozzi Ave., EHC
Starts July 29



FREE MOVIES AT MARGATE BEACH

July 7th Happy Feet Two
July 14th Encanto
July 21st Sing 2
July 28th Star Wars: Rise of Skywalker
August 4th Space Jam
August 11th Secret Life of Pets 2
August 18th The Meg
August 25th Clifford The Big Red Dog
Behind Martin Bloom Pavilion between Huntington Ave
& Granville Ave. on the beach



Mindfulness for Balance and Peace
Tuesdays 12 pm

Wisdom Circle
Explore mindfulness practices and
meditations
Wednesdays 4:30 pm

Both offered by Linda Schwartz at
Med A Quest 6814 Tilton Road,
Suite K, EHT

Find a u-pick blueberry farm

Here are a few: Walking Bird Farm, EHC
and Lindsay's in Hammonton.
(MANY others in Hammonton)
Call for details



Local Libraries

July 11-16

Summer blowout book sale!

Fill a bag with materials for \$5

Located in front of the library - Absecon

All proceeds benefit the Atlantic County

Library Foundation's support of

programming in your library branch

(www.aclf.us)

