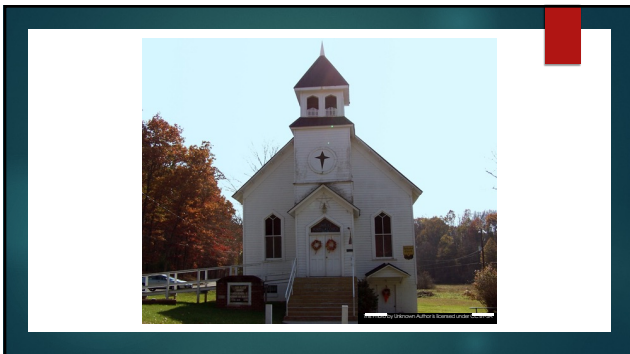


Partnering With Faith-Based Organizations In Addressing Suicide and Mental Health Issues

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WHY INCLUDE FAITH COMMUNITIES IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE?

- *Mental health issues affect people across faith traditions.
- *Faith leaders and faith communities are often "first responders", on the front-line
- *Faith communities care for whole person and families.
- *Faith communities interact with people in diverse settings.
- *Congregations include people from diverse workplaces, including mental health professionals.
- *Mental health crises are also crises of faith.

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Suicide Prevention Efforts Have Taught Us:

- Having open, supportive dialog that builds trusted relationships, finds trusted messengers, and yields a trusted message can lead to potentially lifesaving action and interventions.
- Having a robust crisis response system that is not punitive or stigmatizing, that is informed by individuals with lived experience, and is accessible to historically marginalized communities, is protective against suicide risk for the entire population.
- Screening for suicide risk and providing evidence-informed, culturally sensitive, risk reducing clinical care, including education and support for patients and families where they live, work, play, and pray, saves lives.

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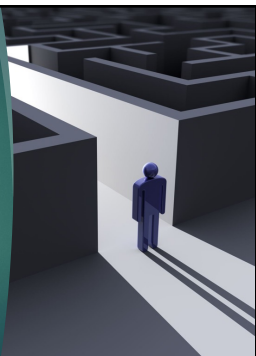
The Black Church as a Partner in Improving Access to Care

ACCORDING TO THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER, 91% OF BLACK AMERICANS SAY RELIGION IS SOMEWHAT OR VERY IMPORTANT IN THEIR LIVES, AND 79% IDENTIFY AS CHRISTIAN.

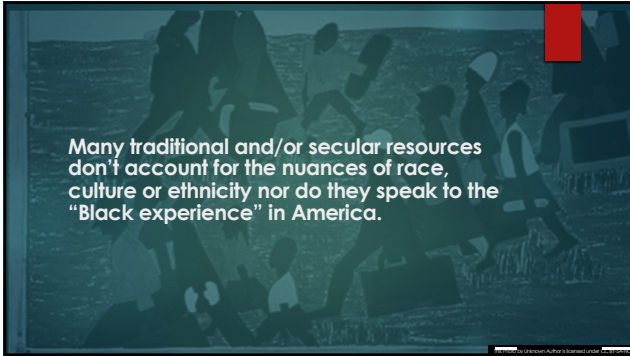
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Also.....

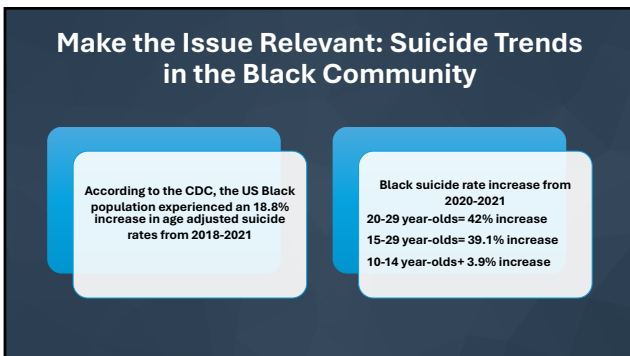
Literature suggests that African Americans are much more likely to rely on their faith as a coping mechanism for dealing with depression and anxiety than they are to utilize a mental health professional



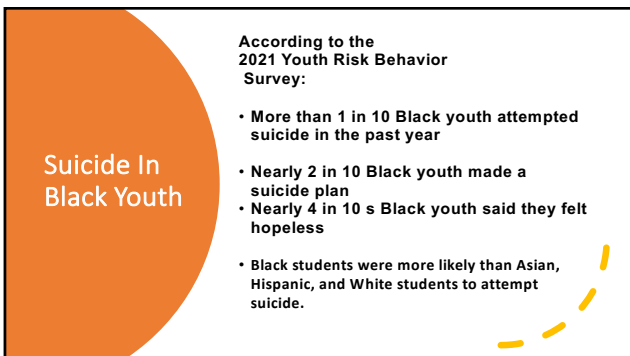
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Soul Shop for Black Churches

"Access is not only about having physical proximity to traditional resources; it is about having resources available to me that are culturally relevant, relatable to my lived experience and that I am willing to utilize."


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What is Soul Shop For Black Churches?

- One-day workshop designed for clergy, staff, lay pastors, and faith-based clinicians in the Black Church.
- Equips leaders who are on the front lines of the mental health crisis to minister to those impacted by all the faces of trauma and struggle regarding suicide, including:
 - Those who are considering suicide,
 - Those who are concerned for family, friends, or associates who may be considering suicide,
 - Suicide loss survivors, and
 - Suicide attempt/ideation survivors.



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The Black Church as a Change Agent

- Gateway to reach and mobilize the Black community
- Shapes religious and cultural norms as well as help seeking behavior
- Place of refuge and healing
- Place of strong social connectedness and kinship
- First place of social services, political activity, and social activism in the Black community
- Long history of being used as a community partner for community health interventions (primary care, community mental health, health promotion, disease prevention)

The Black Church is well positioned to be a source of hope and healing for those impacted by suicide

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How does Soul Shop promote suicide prevention in the Black community? Why is this community-based approach important?

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What Are the Characteristics of a Community?


- Shared sense of consciousness- What happens to you impacts me.**
- Emotional identification- A feeling of belonging together.**
- Common ends- Respect for language, culture, customs, and traditions.**
- Distinguishing factors- Possessing distinguishable characteristics which distinguish it from others.**

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Managing the Paradigm Shift

Changing the narrative and demonstrating that individuals within the church do struggle with depression, anxiety, and suicidality, and that they can have faith, seek therapy, and even take medications simultaneously, de-stigmatizes the conversation.

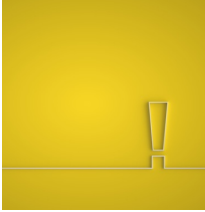
By reframing how the church and church leaders view and address mental health and suicide, and by equipping them to minister to those impacted by suicide, we are creating access.



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At a Soul Shop workshop, Faith Leaders learn:

- How to prevent suicide in your community
- The signs of suicide risk and warning signs
- How to ask a person at risk if they might be thinking about suicide
- How to be a companion to those experiencing suicide loss
- About local and national resources available for suicide prevention
- How to integrate suicide prevention into the life and ministry of the church



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DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS



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Before Trying to Develop Cultural Competence, Develop Contextual Competence

- Learn as much as you can about the culture
 - Spend time in the community
 - Ask questions
 - Rely heavily on key informants (colleagues, friends, neighbors)
- Have a contact in the community who can “introduce” you to key stakeholders
 - Most members of the community VALUE RELATIONSHIP
- Understand “etiquette” for that community
 - How do you address leaders/elders? Dress code?

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BE AWARE OF CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Be honest about own views and possible biases

Value other cultural perspectives

- Scientists and healthcare practitioners often value objectivity, precision of measurement, control over "white noise",
- Community members may value experience over measurement; strengths over weaknesses
- Providers are trained "pathology detectives"

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DEVELOPING CULTURAL COMPETENCE ISN'T ONLY ABOUT WHAT YOU KNOW. IT IS ABOUT WHAT YOU UNDERSTAND.

How do people in a community typically engage in help-seeking behaviors when someone has mental health problems

- What language is used to describe the problem?
 - "Nervous breakdown", "crazy", "mental illness", "spastic", "behavioral health"

How does culture shape who is a legitimate helper?

- PCP, mental health provider, counselor, clergy, family members, traditional healer,

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What are factors that affect mental health in Black communities?

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Know Your Audience

What has been the position of the faith-based community on mental health and suicide? How has the church's view impacted the way communities deal with issues regarding mental health?

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Mental Health Stigma and the Faith-Based Community

- Mental health conditions and suicide have been largely viewed as moral failure or lack of faith
- Silence regarding mental health and suicide can cause harm
- Perpetuate misinformation and stigma regarding mental health and suicide
- Favoring and trusting prayer over mental health support (or as the only resource) to help those struggling with mental health issues

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GETTING BUY-IN

- Engage Faith Leaders
- Understand the hierarchy
- Understand the roll of trauma
- Don't Challenge Theology

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Faith Leaders Are Key

According to LifeWay Christian Resources, more than half of pastors have counseled people who were later diagnosed with a mental illness (59%). About a quarter of pastors (23%) say they've experienced some type of mental illness themselves. 12% have been diagnosed with a mental health condition.



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Faith Leaders

- According to the Schaeffer Institute:
- 70% of pastors constantly fight depression
- 71% are burned out
- 80% believe pastoral ministry has negatively affected their families; and
- 70% say they don't have a close friend.

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Objectives

- Engaging the faith-based community and faith leaders in suicide prevention by reframing how they view and address mental health: Individuals can have faith, seek therapy, and even take medications simultaneously. Changing the narrative behind mental illness within the church de-stigmatizes the conversation.
- Effectively training church leaders and staff to recognize mental health issues. Train spiritual counselors and advisers to recognize the signs of anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges.
- Form mental health partners: with the community.
- Creating a cultural climate that focuses on the restoration of religion and mental health can offer health, hope, and healing within communities by creating *access to care*.

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Keep It Simple

Turn-key Host Resources

- Budget Calculator
- Registration available through Eventbrite
- Day of Checklist
- Promotional materials including logo, video, press release, and modifiable flyers
- Soul Shop Planning Toolkit

www.southshopmovement.org

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Questions/Conversation

THANK YOU

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