



## *Unique Partnership Brings Needed Mental Health Services to Vulnerable Populations*

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### Points of Interest:

- Learn how faith-based organizations can partner with government agencies to improve mental health
- Learn about ways to help military congregants
- Learn how faith-based groups are working to prevent drug use

In the not too distant past, there was a stigma associated with the need for mental health care, with individuals and families hesitant to discuss their personal issues and challenges. As awareness increased and shame decreased, many were still not receiving the professional help they needed. Often their paths to improved mental health were blocked by fear or accessibility to treatment options. Sadly, many needs continued to be ignored or unmet.

That started to change significantly in 2006 when the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) began exploring ways to get more individuals into care, addressing the three primary challenges of fear, stigma and accessibility. Research and community outreach in west Tennessee, particularly in some communities, revealed the need for a trusted organization to be an advocate for mental health services. Subsequently, a partnership was

born between TDMHSAS and The Healing Word Counseling Center in Memphis, directed by Dr. William M. Young and Pastor Dianne P. Young.

The collaboration began with a new name, Emotional Fitness Centers of Tennessee, drawing off the positive energy of fitness as a desirable condition. Repackaging services as “emotional fitness screenings” helped to remove stigmas and calm fears associated with the need for mental

## Unique Partnership, Cont.

health counseling and care. The strategy allowed those needing help to see screenings as check-ups to ensure a more healthy life.

The concept, now identified as a proven best practice, utilizes local churches as easily accessible hubs to help many obtain mental health services. The church environment is seen as a safe place and, in many cases, those needing services see a church's involvement in their care as a stamp of approval. This effort is an effective countermeasure to some who still believe seeking professional medical help of any kind is being weak in faith. Utilizing a church facility as an entry point for needed emotional distress services also:

- Gives a non-traditional, culturally competent method of getting needed services.
- Provides a creative way to gain access to Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.
- Removes the fear and stigma attached to needing Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

The Emotional Fitness Centers of Tennessee began with twelve local churches and currently seven are in operation. Each church has from one to four Peer Advocate Liaisons (PALs) at each site.

Oversight of the project and supervision is provided by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

Clients are connected with one of the program navigators and, based on their ZIP Code, are triaged to the site closest to them. Each client is contacted with 24 hours to schedule a screening. After the screening has been completed, the tool is reviewed by the program's Licensed Professional Counselor, who makes a determination of the next level of care. The client may be referred to a support group, a drug/alcohol treatment center, a mental health center or hospital. These are all monitored by a PAL to ensure appropriate care.

Since January, 2008, the program has screened 3,886 people; 2,317 have followed through in getting the needed care. It should be noted that though one-third of those seeking care do not attend church, they see the church as a safe place. Emotional Fitness Centers of Tennessee has over 25 partners, including mental health centers, drug and alcohol treatment centers, hospitals and other local and state agencies.

**"The dream is to see emotional fitness screenings become a part of our annual check-up and this best practice move across the state."**

**-Pastor Dianne Young**

The common goal for those involved is to see emotional fitness

screenings become a part of our annual check-up and this best practice to become a model for the nation. Many faith leaders from varying denominations are recognizing the need for the program and are making more referrals of congregants to the centers.

Annually, the Emotional Fitness Centers of Tennessee hosts a grief and remembrance service for families that have experienced losses, conducts Emotional Fitness Fairs and bi-annually co-hosts the National Suicide and Black Church Conference. To connect with the EFCTN, call the administrative office at (901) 370-HOPE (4673).

## Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Military Congregants

While 2013 was coming to a close, the Knoxville Regional Veteran’s Mental Health Council voted to start a new initiative for faith communities to understand the unique needs of veterans and current service members. The new faith-based community committee is chaired by Freddie Owens, a Vietnam veteran who has worked with his congregation to meet needs of veterans for the past ten years.

The initiative seeks to help faith communities become “Veteran Friendly Congregations.” This concept comes from an organization, Care for the Troops, whose motto is, “to care for those who have borne the battle, and their spouses, children and families.”

Studies show many veterans returning from deployment suffer from issues ranging from difficulty reintegrating into the community and

problems with family and relationships to Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and traumatic brain injury. Studies also show veterans are five times more likely to seek help from their clergy than a mental health service provider.

The Veteran Friendly Congregation Program works to help faith leaders and their congregations understand the unique needs of veterans as well as provide support to them and their families.

The Knoxville Regional Veterans Mental Health Council will be hosting its first forum, “When War Comes Home,” Thursday May 1, 2014, at the Knox County Community Action Committee Center.

For more information on how to become a Veteran Friendly Congregation, contact Owens at:

[fowens@tnvhc.org](mailto:fowens@tnvhc.org)

## Working Toward a Drug-Free Tennessee



Many people often cite their faith as a motivating factor for wanting to make the world a better place and to help the people in their community. The Foundation for a Drug-Free South works to educate and empower children and adults through

presentations at schools and by working with community organizations such as local police and other community groups to distribute information regarding facts about drugs.

Presentations and materials are free of charge to interested groups.

The Foundation for a Drug-Free South is the Nashville-based chapter of The Foundation for a Drug-Free World. The latter is an international non-profit corporation that empowers youth and adults with factual information about drugs so they can make informed decisions about a drug-free life. It was started by members of the Church of Scientology and others who wanted to provide accurate information about drugs.

## Working Toward a Drug-Free TN, Cont.

Foundation members use booklets, videos and other curriculum materials in their presentations and have thus far visited 31 counties in Tennessee. The programs focus on preparing students to make informed decisions about drugs and to be aware of the long-term effects of drug misuse.”

For more information, visit:

[www.drugfreesouth.org](http://www.drugfreesouth.org)



## Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Faith-Based Initiatives

The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services partners with numerous faith-based communities to provide prevention, treatment and recovery services across Tennessee.

It is extremely important to have a community of recovery for those with substance use/abuse issues, and the faith-based partners are a big component of this.

There have been a number of studies that indicate the use of religion and

spirituality can be key in preventing and treating substance use/abuse issues. This is because of the way in which religion and spirituality can help establish moral order, provide opportunities to acquire learned competencies, and provide social and organization ties. There is also research that suggests that more Americans who have serious personal problems seek help from members of the clergy than from psychiatrists, psychologists, doctors, marriage counselors, or social workers.

One of the largest areas of partnership in Tennessee is for recovery support services for people who need help to sustain and maintain their recovery from substance use/abuse. The TDMHSAS Division of Substance Abuse Services currently funds 41 providers across the state that have identified as faith-based.

Some of the services these agencies provide are spiritual/pastoral support individually or in a group setting, case management, transportation, transitional housing, recovery support, and relapse prevention.

If you have any questions about the faith-based work being done by the TDMHSAS Division of Substance Abuse Services, please contact Linda McCorkle, Director of Treatment Services, at :

(615) 532-7803 or

[Linda.McCorkle@tn.gov](mailto:Linda.McCorkle@tn.gov).

[http://tn.gov/mental/A&D/A\\_D\\_preventionServ.shtml](http://tn.gov/mental/A&D/A_D_preventionServ.shtml)

**“It is extremely important to have a community of recovery for those with substance use or abuse issues.”**

**-TDMHSAS**

## ***PMS: Not Just that Crazy Time of Month***

**Submitted: Eydie Cloyd, JD, MSN, PMHNP-BC. Vanderbilt Center for Integrative Health**

There are many myths and mysteries surrounding a woman's menstrual cycle, especially during the luteal phase of their cycle. The luteal phase is the 14-day period leading up to menses or bleeding. It is estimated that up to 80% of all women experience some form of mood or physical symptom during this 14-day period. When a woman experiences both mood and physical symptoms during the second half of each cycle and these symptoms become severe enough to interfere with activities of daily living they are given the diagnosis of PMS. If PMS symptoms are severe enough and negatively impacts activities of daily living, work life, and relationships, this is classified as PMDD (Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder). In women with PMDD anger, irritability and internal tension are the prominent, debilitating symptoms.

The most common symptoms associated with PMS are a sense of bloating, lack of energy, increased irritability and increased worry. Other reported symptoms can include feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and frequent tearfulness; increased emotional sensitivity; frequent mood changes; difficulty concentrating; appetite changes which can include cravings for certain foods and weight gain; sleep disturbance; breast tenderness; headaches; joint and/or muscle pain.

What causes PMS and PMDD? We aren't sure exactly what causes some

women to experience PMS and PMDD and others to not experience it -- but it's not "all in your head". Research suggests some women are much more sensitive to the hormonal changes experienced during the menstrual cycle than others. Hormone levels ebb and flow throughout a woman's menstrual cycle. Changes in estrogen and progesterone levels may influence changes in brain chemistry, including changes in the neurotransmitter serotonin which affects mood.

The good news for women is that there are quite a few treatment options available through both traditional medicine and complementary/alternative medicine (CAM).

Medical evidence supports the use of medications called Select Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs). An adequate trial of SSRI therapy for PMS/PMDD symptoms includes trying at least two different SSRI's during at least three menstrual cycles. Additionally, starting a woman on birth control medication and the use of anti-inflammatories like ibuprofen can also be effective in alleviating PMS/PMDD symptoms. There are side effects with all medications so be sure that you ask your doctor, nurse practitioner or pharmacist before you take them.

Complementary and alternative treatments for PMS and PMDD which have scientific evidence include: the herbal supplement Vitex (Chaste berry), Calcium Citrate, Magnesium,



Vitamin E, and Vitamin B6. Some women report that they find PMS/PMDD symptom relief using; Black Cohosh, Dandelion, Dong Quai, Evening Primrose Oil, Saffron, St. John's Wort, and Raspberry Leaf. Additionally, some women find symptom relief through Acupuncture.

Regular daily exercise and practicing relaxation therapy or relaxation techniques can also be helpful for symptom relief in some women. Cutting back on sugar, alcohol, and caffeine intake can also be helpful in decreasing symptoms. As with any medication, supplement, or therapy it is important to speak with your primary care provider before initiating any of these treatments.

## Tennessee Department of Health Office of Minority Health and Disparities Elimination Faith-Based Initiative

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We're on the web!

<http://health.state.us/dmhde/faith.shtml>

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**"Protect, promote and improve the health  
and prosperity of Tennesseans."**



In our journey to better health, we often think about the destination, avoiding detours and possible dead-ends like death and disease, how many pounds we'd like to lose and how many years we'd like to live.

However, by thinking in these terms, we often forget about the many steps along the way that lead us to our detours, dead ends and destination. This newsletter is an effort to highlight those small steps that will help us along our journey, as well as share success stories of communities of faith across Tennessee who are already focusing on those steps.

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### Faith-Based Participants in Tennessee Addictions Recovery Program, TNDMHSAS

Amazing Grace Recovery Program, Old Hickory	Hope Center Ministries, Waverly	Teen Challenge of Memphis Inc., Memphis
Aphesis House Inc., Nashville	H.U.G.G.S. Inspirational, Nashville	Tennessee Valley Teen Challenge, Savannah
Best Friend Rescue House, Gallatin	Journey with Jesus Transitions, Dyersburg	Trevecca Community Church, Nashville
Care and Be Blessed Inc., Millington	Lighthouse Mission Ministries Inc., Memphis	Urban Family Ministries CDC Inc., Memphis
Chosen Vessel Ministries, Cordova	Love Temple Community Outreach, Memphis	Vision Behavioral Health Management/Monumental Redevelopment Corp., Memphis
CrossBRIDGE Inc., Nashville	Mending Hearts Inc., Nashville	Wade Harvest Ministries, Alamo
Families Free, Johnson City	Mount Hopewell Community Development Corporation, Nashville	Warrior Ministries Center, Memphis
The Father's House, Memphis	Nehemiah Recovery Center, Columbia	Watson Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Nashville
First United Pentecostal Church, Cookeville	The Next Door Inc., Nashville	Welcome Home Ministries, Nashville
Focus Group Ministries, Inc., Knoxville	The Next Step Home Inc., Shelbyville	Women Ablaze Ministries Church Inc., Cordova
Fresh Start Center, Shelbyville	Phases Inc., Nashville	WOW Transition House Inc., Nashville
Greater Faith Community Action Corporation, Springfield	Philadelphians Prison Ministries, Knoxville	
Greater Faith Missionary Baptist Church; Greater Faith @ Work Ministries, Nashville	Place of Hope, Columbia	
Greater Revelations, Nashville	Room In The INN, Nashville	
Healing Hearts Foundation, Memphis	Spring 2 Life Addiction Recovery, Murfreesboro	