

## A Mental Health Moment with Dr. Mekeshia

Luke 5:31a Jesus answered, "It is not the healthy that need a doctor but the sick"

**Mental health** is defined as the condition of being sound mentally and emotionally which is characterized by the absence of mental illness and reflected in feeling comfortable about oneself, positive feelings about others, and the ability to meet the demands of daily life.

On the other hand, **mental illness** is considered to be a wide range of mental health conditions and disorders that affect your mood, thinking, behavior, and relationships with others. For some, in life when there is not a spiritual, physical, and emotional balance in the body or dis-ease then there is a risk of developing a mental illness. Additionally, factors such as genetics, biochemistry, environment, and psychology can all potentially cause mental illness. There can also be a combination of factors leading to mental illness.

Statistically, mental health occurs in 5 out of 5 people – meaning everyone has mental health; however, mental illness is found in one out of five people. When many people think of mental illness they think of someone with a severe mental illness or "crazy"; however, like physical illnesses that occur across a continuum with everything from a cold to possibly a more debilitating disorder such as cancer, it is important that mental illness is also thought to occur as various points along a continuum.

It is also critical to understand that mental health and physical health are intertwined. When a person feels depressed, they may not recognize that they have a mental health issue or mental illness. What they may realize is that they are not sleeping, not eating, or having physical ailments such as headaches, backaches, or just feeling tired.

Therefore, it is important to realize that we must take care of ourselves. **Self-care** looks like:

- Eating healthy – fruits, vegetables, and plenty of water
- Getting rest and sleep
- Exercising
- Praying and developing a spiritual connection with God
- Finding hobbies that bring personal gratification
- Decreasing your stress level
- Scheduling and keeping annual physical appointments
- Seeking a mental health professional as needed
- Whatever you need to do for yourself to remain healthy

**ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT SELF-CARE IS NOT SELFISH!**

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Mekeshia Bates at 301-814-8463 or by email at [drbates@giftofdreams.org](mailto:drbates@giftofdreams.org).