PATHWAYS
to Promise
Connecting Communities of Care

SPOTLIGHT

June 2026

NEW Monthly Spotlight!

Spotlight will now be delivered to your inbox on a monthly basis rather than quarterly. While each issue will continue to feature the same valuable resources, it will now be tailored to highlight content relevant to the current month.

Pathways to Promise & Mental Health Ministries

Mental Health Ministries, a program of Pathways to Promise, provides resources to erase the stigma of mental illness in our faith communities and create caring congregations for persons living with mental health challenges and their families.

Mental Health Multifaith Resource Center (MHMRC)

Our Mental Health Multifaith Resource Library is your comprehensive destination for mental health and wellness information. We have meticulously curated this resource center to ensure ease of use and to provide you with the most relevant materials. This library builds upon the outstanding work initiated by Rev. Susan Gregg-Schroeder, who founded Mental Health Ministries in 2001.

Visit the MHMRC

THE
SILENT
WEIGHT:
Mental Health,
Racial Trauma, and
Healing in the
AFRICAN AMERICAN
COMMUNITY

"The Silent Weight: Mental Health, Racial Trauma, and Healing in the African American Community"

By Dr. Edward T. Carroll

Chairman of the Board and CEO

ETC Healthcare Solutions, Inc.

Board Member, Pathways to Promise

Mental health remains one of the most critical yet underserved areas of healthcare within the African American community. While awareness surrounding emotional wellness has grown significantly in recent years, many African Americans continue to experience barriers to adequate mental health care. These barriers are often rooted in historical oppression, racial discrimination, cultural expectations, and a longstanding distrust of healthcare systems. Understanding the connection between racial trauma, chronic stress, cultural identity, and access to culturally competent care is essential in improving mental health outcomes for African Americans.

One of the most significant findings in mental health research is that African Americans often experience improved therapeutic outcomes when they receive care from African American mental health providers. Shared cultural understanding can create a deeper sense of trust, safety, and openness within the therapeutic relationship. Many African American clients report feeling more comfortable discussing experiences related to racism, discrimination, family dynamics, spirituality, and social pressures with providers who can personally or culturally relate to those experiences. This cultural alignment can reduce feelings of judgment or misunderstanding and improve treatment adherence, communication, and emotional vulnerability.

The importance of culturally competent care becomes even more apparent when examining the chronic heightened stress responses experienced by many African Americans as a result of intergenerational racist trauma. For centuries, African Americans have endured systemic racism, segregation, violence, economic inequality, and social injustice. The psychological effects of these experiences did not disappear with previous generations. Instead, trauma has often been transmitted across generations through family experiences, survival behaviors, fear, and persistent exposure to racial inequities.

Intergenerational racist trauma can contribute to chronic stress responses that impact both mental and physical health. Many African Americans live in a heightened state of vigilance due to repeated exposure to discrimination, racial profiling, workplace inequities, and social marginalization. Over time, this constant activation of the body's stress response system can lead to anxiety, depression, hypertension, sleep disorders, and other stress-related illnesses. The body and mind may remain in a continual state of alertness, even when immediate threats are absent, because racial trauma is not simply a historical event—it remains an ongoing lived experience for many individuals today.

Racial trauma must therefore be understood as an ongoing traumatic stressor rather than a singular incident. Unlike isolated traumatic events that eventually end, racial trauma can occur repeatedly throughout an individual's lifetime. Experiences such as microaggressions, inequitable treatment, exposure to racial violence in media, and systemic barriers in education, employment, housing, and healthcare reinforce emotional wounds continuously. These cumulative experiences can leave individuals feeling exhausted, unsafe, hyperaware, and emotionally overwhelmed. Because these stressors are ongoing, healing often requires more than traditional coping mechanisms; it requires supportive environments, culturally informed therapy, community support, and systemic change.

Another significant factor influencing mental health in the African American community is the "Strong Black Woman" stereotype. This cultural expectation often portrays Black women as emotionally resilient, self-sacrificing, nurturing, and capable of enduring hardship without complaint. While strength and perseverance are admirable qualities, this stereotype can become emotionally harmful when it discourages vulnerability and help-seeking behaviors.

Many African American women feel pressure to appear strong at all times, even when experiencing emotional pain, anxiety, depression, or trauma. As a result, they may suppress their emotions, avoid discussing mental health concerns, or delay seeking professional support. Some women fear being perceived as weak, incapable, or burdensome if they express emotional struggles. Over time, carrying unaddressed emotional burdens can contribute to burnout, chronic stress, emotional isolation, and declining mental health.

The expectation of constant strength can also create internal conflict. Black women are often expected to care for families, support communities, maintain professional responsibilities, and navigate societal inequities simultaneously. When combined with racial and gender-based discrimination, these pressures can become overwhelming. Encouraging vulnerability, emotional honesty, and mental wellness within the African American community is, therefore, essential in dismantling harmful stereotypes and promoting healthier coping strategies.

Addressing mental health disparities among African Americans requires a multifaceted approach. Increasing the number of African American mental health professionals, improving access to culturally competent care, reducing stigma surrounding therapy, and openly discussing racial trauma are all important steps toward healing. Faith communities, educational institutions, healthcare systems, and community organizations can also play significant roles in promoting mental health awareness and support.

Ultimately, healing within the African American community involves recognizing that mental health struggles are not signs of weakness but valid responses to complex personal and collective experiences. By creating safe spaces for vulnerability, understanding the impact of racial trauma, and supporting culturally responsive care, society can help African Americans move toward emotional wellness, resilience, and lasting healing.

Explore Upcoming Training Events

JOIN US!
Become a Companion
Build meaningful connections and provide spiritual support through Companionship Training
3 HOUR VIRTUAL WORKSHOP
SIGN UP ONLINE:
PATHWAYS2PROMISE.ORG
PATHWAYS to Promise

***Become a Companion* Workshop**

Thursday, July 16, 2026, 5-8:30 pm CT
Register for Become a Companion Here

ATTEND
Community Trainer Training
Make a difference by becoming a Companionship Workshop Trainer!
2 DAY VIRTUAL COURSE
APPLICATION REQUIRED
PATHWAYS to Promise

Community Trainer Training

Thursday, July 16, 2026, 5-8:30 pm CT
PLUS Saturday, July 18, 2025,
9am-5pm CT
For more information and to register/apply, click here

Learn More About Training Opportunities Here

ATTEND
Taste of Companionship
Come to this 30-minute Zoom session for a presentation about Pathways and our Companionship program with time for questions.
PATHWAYS to Promise

Attend *Taste of Companionship*

Taste of Companionship introduces Companionship and provides time for questions and answers, all in about half an hour.

- **Wednesday, June 3, 12 PM CT**

(Contact admin@pathways2promise.org for Zoom support.)

Register Here on the Pathways to Promise Homepage

The following articles from websites other than pathways2promise.org are intended as a library of resources only. Pathways to Promise receives no financial benefit from these organizations.

June

These resources are helpful for any time, although intended to highlight themes from the Mental Health calendar for June.

National PTSD Awareness Month

PTSD
AWARENESS
MONTH

"June is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Awareness Month. This often misunderstood disorder affects about 9 million people in the US, and occurs more often in women than men. Historically PTSD has been understood as a result of military service and combat, but it can occur after any traumatic event, such as a car accident, natural disaster, assault, or prolonged abuse."

Read More Here

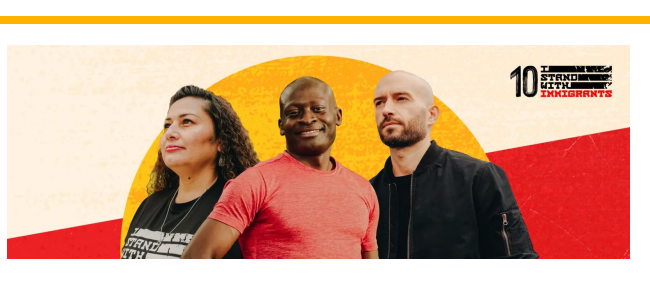
Trauma and PTSD:
Dispelling Myths, Inspiring Hope

Trauma and PTSD: Dispelling Myths, Inspiring Hope

"Traumatic events — such as a motor vehicle crash, assault, military combat or natural disasters — can have lasting effects on a person's mental health. While many people will have short term responses to life-threatening events, some will develop longer term symptoms that can lead to a diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD symptoms often co-exist with other conditions such as substance use disorders, depression and anxiety. A comprehensive health evaluation which can result in an individualized treatment plan is optimal."

Click here to learn more

National Immigrant Heritage Month



Moving the Culture, Shaping Our Future

"Over the past decade, pro-immigrant sentiment has increased from 43% of Americans to 67%, representing a strong majority of people who agree that immigrants strengthen the country.

The following report looks at the impact of cultural strategy within the immigrant rights space, particularly how it helped shift public sentiment toward immigrants and sustain immigrant protections, even amidst political turmoil."

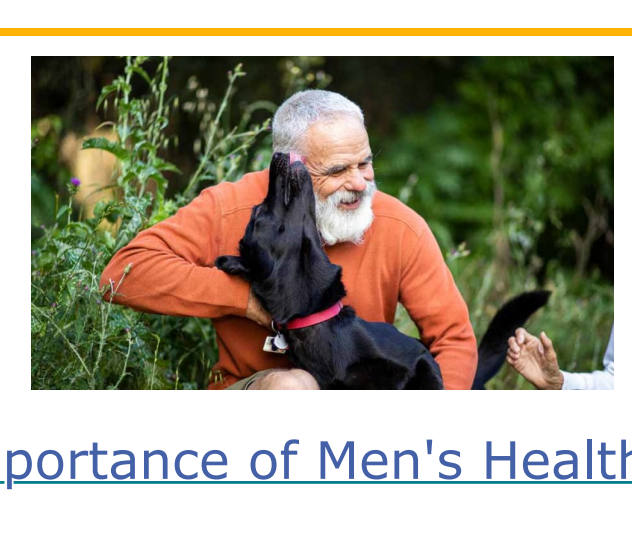
Read More Here

Men's Health Month

IT'S NOT
WEAK TO
SPEAK

"There is often a strong focus on men's physical health — fitness, annual checkups, and heart health — but mental well-being is equally as important because mental health is health!"

Read More Here



The Importance of Men's Health Month

"National Men's Health Week was established in 1994 as a special campaign to help educate men, boys and their families about the importance of positive health attitudes and preventive health practices. Today, the week is observed around the world as International Men's Health Week and begins on the Monday before Father's Day in June and ends on Father's Day itself.

The aims of the week are to heighten awareness of preventable health problems for males of all ages, to support men and boys to engage in healthier lifestyle choices and to encourage the early detection and treatment of diseases like cancer, heart disease and depression."

Read More Here

National Men's Health Week - June 15-21

2026 INTERNATIONAL
MEN'S HEALTH WEEK
#menshealthweek

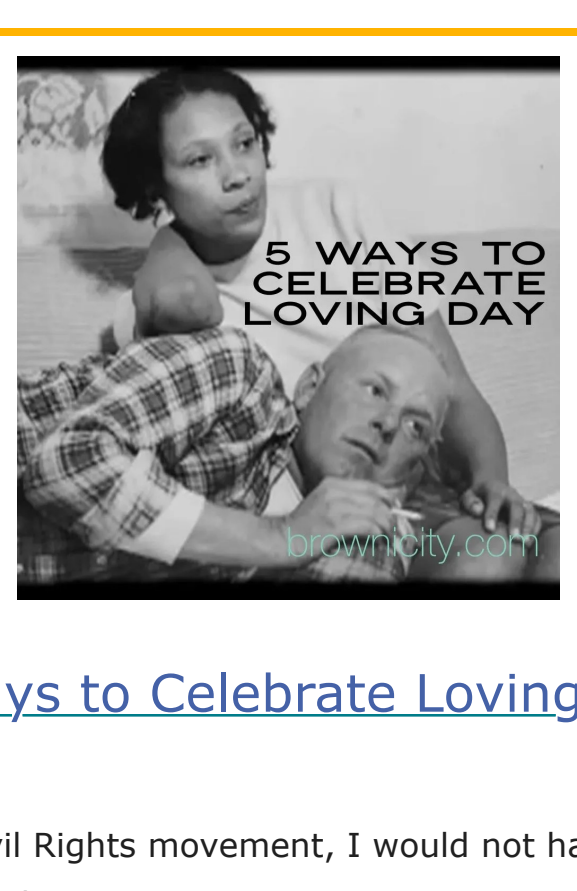
"Men's Health Week began in the USA in 1994 following a Senate Joint Resolution. The Week was linked to Father's Day in the USA and so always ends on that Day, the third Sunday in June). It became an international event in 2002 when it was first marked in the UK.

It has since been adopted in Australia, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, New Zealand and beyond. The Week provides an opportunity for a wide range of organizations and individuals to draw attention to the poor state of men's health, organize activities that engage men, and advocate changes to health policy and practice. In short, it puts men's health on the map both nationally and globally.

#menshealthweek"

Read More Here

Loving Day - June 12



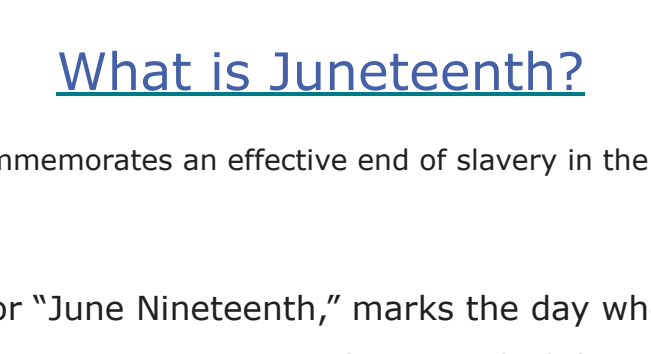
5 Ways to Celebrate Loving Day

"If it wasn't for the Civil Rights movement, I would not have been able to be born," our daughter said at age seven.

She understood enough about our nation's history of race-based laws, policies, and social practices to come to this realization on her own. She stomped around the living room furiously objecting. I smiled, relieved that this connected to her, and mattered to her. While psychologists have found that kids develop a sense of fairness by ages three or four, there is a growing body of research indicating that their sense of fairness may be innate. Either way, my daughter understood how racism dictates not only the quality of life, but life PERIOD. She proclaimed, 'That's not fair!'"

Read More Here

Juneteenth - June 19



What is Juneteenth?

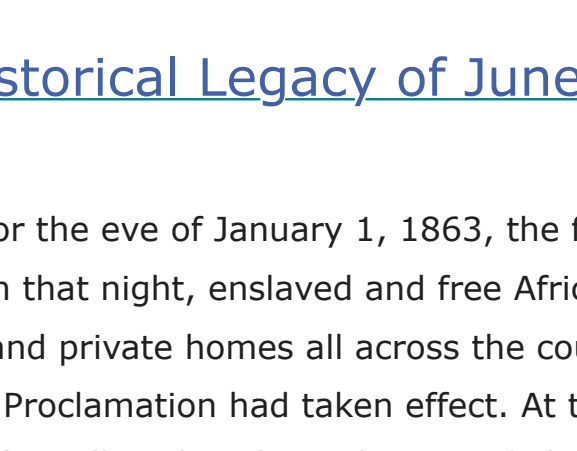
The holiday commemorates an effective end of slavery in the United States.

"Juneteenth, short for "June Nineteenth," marks the day when federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, in 1865 to take control of the state and ensure that all enslaved people be freed. The troops' arrival came a full two and a half years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Juneteenth honors the end to slavery in the United States and is considered the longest-running African American holiday. A federal holiday since 2021, Juneteenth occurs on Friday, June 19, in 2026.

Although Confederate General Robert E. Lee had surrendered at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, in April 1865, slavery had remained relatively intact in Texas. That is until U.S. General Gordon Granger stood on Texas soil and read General Orders No. 3: "The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free."

Read More Here



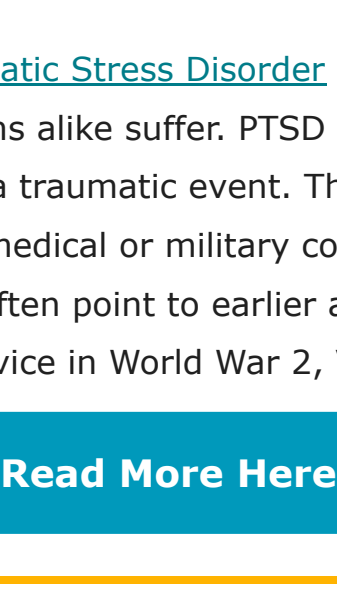
The Historical Legacy of Juneteenth

"On "Freedom's Eve," or the eve of January 1, 1863, the first Watch Night services took place. On that night, enslaved and free African Americans gathered in churches and private homes all across the country, awaiting news that the Emancipation Proclamation had taken effect. At the stroke of midnight, prayers were answered as all enslaved people in Confederate States were declared legally free.

Union soldiers, many of whom were black, marched onto plantations and across cities in the south reading small copies of the Emancipation Proclamation spreading the news of freedom in Confederate States. Only through the Thirteenth Amendment did emancipation end slavery throughout the United States."

Read More Here

National PTSD Awareness Day - June 27



"PTSD stands for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and is a condition that many veterans and non-veterans alike suffer. PTSD can occur when someone experiences or witnesses a traumatic event. This condition wasn't always understood properly by the medical or military community, and Department of Defense press releases often point to earlier attempts to identify PTSD symptoms in the wake of service in World War 2, Vietnam, and other conflicts."

Read More Here

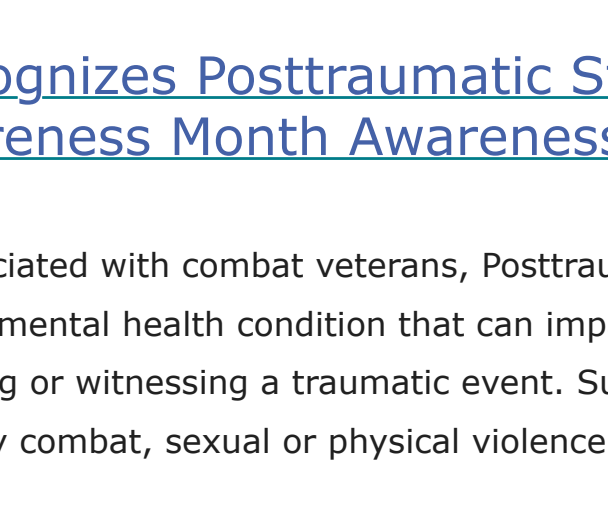


Photo by Pierre Bamin on Unsplash

SAMHSA Recognizes Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Month Awareness Day

"Although often associated with combat veterans, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that can impact any person of any age after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event. Such traumatic events might include military combat, sexual or physical violence, natural disasters, or severe accidents.

The term "PTSD" first appeared in 1980 in the third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. However, earlier medical publications referred to conditions described as "soldier's heart," "shell shock," and "war neurosis." With the prevalence of PTSD in the military community, it is not surprising that the effort to create awareness was launched as a tribute to a service member. On June 27, 2010, PTSD Awareness Day was established in recognition of Staff Sergeant, Joe Biel, a National Guard service member who experienced PTSD after two tours in Iraq and died by suicide in 2007. In 2014, the federal government designated the entire month of June as PTSD Awareness Month"

Read More Here

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

June

Month long themes

National PTSD Awareness Month
Men's Health Month
Pride Month
National Immigrant Heritage Month

Week long themes

7-14 Multiracial Heritage Week
15-21 National Men's Health Week

4 - Feast of Corpus Christi - Roman Catholic
9 - St. Columba of Iona - Celtic Christian
12 - Loving Day
16 - Guru Arjan martyrdom - Sikh
17 - Islamic New Year
19 - Juneteenth
21 - Litha - Wicca/Neo Pagan
21 - Summer Solstice
21 - International Day of Yoga
21 - First Nations Day - Canadian Native People
24 - Saint John the Baptist - Christian
27 - National PTSD Awareness Day
28 - Stonewall Rebellion
29 - Feast Day of Saints Peter and Paul - Christian

Reminder: All holidays marked with * begin the prior evening.

Also consider the following calendars for other important dates:

2026 Interfaith Calendar
2026 Diversity Calendar

Mental Health Ministries, a program of Pathways to Promise, creates and promotes resources to help erase the stigma of mental health challenges in our faith communities. Join us in making a difference for those with mental health challenges and those who love and support them.

Click the button below to give a monthly gift of $30 (just $1 a day) or a one-time amount of $120 (which equals just $10 a month) or any amount you choose. You may also send a check to Pathways to Promise at the address below.

Thank you for joining us in supporting mental health needs!

Click here to give now

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www.pathways2promise.org

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