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# SPOTLIGHT

Fall 2025

## 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.

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## Website Resources

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](#)

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Photo by [Thomas Kinto](#) on [Unsplash](#)

*When Rev. Susan Gregg-Schroeder led Mental Health Ministries, she included a brief meditation in each issue of the Spotlight, which she called "Snippets from Susan." With her permission, we will include these occasionally in the Spotlight. Here's the one she wrote for the December 2008 issue:*

## **The Holiday Season: Finding Light in the Darkness**

By Susan Gregg-Schroeder

We are entering into a festive season. The winter holidays are meant to be times of joy, parties and gatherings with friends and families. But for many people this is a lonely stretch of the year marked by hard memories and unrealized dreams.

The commercialization of the holiday season bombards us with unrealistic expectations, especially in these difficult economic times. It is not unusual for people to experience a decrease in energy and motivation. But some people experience an exaggerated form of these symptoms. Their

depression and lack of energy became debilitating. This condition, known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) may affect over 10 million Americans. The milder, "Winter Blues" affects an even larger number of individuals.

But for those of us who live with serious mental illness all year long, the holidays can make us feel even more alone, isolated and disconnected from friends, family and from our God. [Psalm 88](#) reflects that feeling from an emotional spiritual perspective. "You have put me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep." "Lord, why do you cast me off? Why do you hide your faith from me?"

The cold landscape and trees empty of their leaves reflects our inner winter. Having been in this place, I now understand that God is working in our silent darkness. As with nature, we can trust that new tender shoots will emerge from the dark, silent soil to bring unlimited possibilities of new life.

It is for this reason that I wrote a brochure, Mental Illness: Coping with the Holidays. This brochure provides tips for persons living with a mental illness, tips for family and friends and tips for faith communities wanting to be supportive. Family, friends and caring faith communities can remind us that we are loved and accepted by God even when we feel unworthy and alone.

Many churches realize the importance of acknowledging the grief, loneliness and depression associated with the holiday season by holding special services like "Blue Christmas." Rituals often focus on light breaking through the darkness. Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ who will become the "light of the world." The eight day Jewish celebration of Hanukkah is known as the Festival of Lights serves to remind their people of the miracle which re-kindled the Temple menorah light at a time of darkness and despair.

I now know that no matter what the circumstances, we are not alone in the darkness. God is working in our lives even when we are not aware of it to bring about healing and hope. This holiday season, may we be open to those moments of grace when flickers of light break in to penetrate our darkness.

*Break into my confusion, Lord.*

*Help me to know who I am*

*and what I am meant to be.*

*Guide, uphold and strengthen me*

*as I leave behind the world  
of limits and labels.*

*Guide, uphold and strengthen me*

*as together we create a world  
of infinite possibility.*

*Have blessed holiday season.*

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## Explore Upcoming Training Events to Become a Companion or Community Trainer



**JOIN US!**  
**Become a Companion**

Build meaningful connections and provide spiritual support through Companionship Training

**3 HOUR VIRTUAL WORKSHOP**

**SIGN UP ONLINE:  
PATHWAYS2PROMISE.ORG**



**ATTEND**  
**Community Trainer Training**

Make a difference by becoming a Companionship Workshop Trainer!

**2 DAY VIRTUAL COURSE**  
**APPLICATION REQUIRED**



## ***Become a Companion Workshop***

Wednesday, November 12th 5-8:30 pm CT

[Register for Become a Companion Here](#)

## **Community Trainer Training**

Wednesday, November 12th 5-8:30 pm CT

PLUS Saturday, November 15th 9 am-5 pm 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.**

## ***Attend Taste of Companionship***

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

- **Thursday, November 13, 10 AM CT with Mark Stephenson**
- **Thursday, December 4, 7 PM CT with Rita Rippentrop**

(Contact [admin@pathways2promise.org](mailto:admin@pathways2promise.org) for Zoom support.)

**Register Here on the Pathways to Promise Homepage**

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All of 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.

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# **OCTOBER**

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

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[October is Global Diversity Awareness Month](#)

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“In a world where the tapestry of human experience is rich and varied, understanding and embracing diversity and inclusion is not just a societal imperative but a crucial element in fostering mental health and wellbeing. Mental health, an integral part of our overall well-being, is profoundly affected by how we perceive and interact with the world and its myriad cultures, identities, and experiences. This blog delves into the vital relationship between diversity, inclusion, and mental health, unraveling how inclusivity is not just a moral or ethical choice, but a foundational component of psychological wellness.”

[Click here to read more](#)

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[October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#)

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“Are you ready for National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)? Held every October, NDEAM is a fitting time to educate about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America’s workers with disabilities. The 2025 NDEAM theme will be “Celebrating Value and Talent,” and as part of the lead up to America’s 250th anniversary in 2026, this year’s observance will highlight the achievements of Americans with disabilities both past and present.”

[Click here to learn more](#)

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## October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

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“October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a time to create awareness, honour the millions of lives affected by breast cancer and reaffirm our global commitment to equitable access to care and improved survival for

all. This year, we highlight the theme: Every Story is Unique, Every Journey Matters.”

[Click here to learn more](#)

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## [October is Down Syndrome Awareness Month](#)

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“[Down syndrome](#) is one of the most common types of [intellectual disabilities](#). So it’s no surprise that each year in October we recognize National Down Syndrome Awareness Month to raise public awareness about the condition, and advocate for acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome.

People with Down syndrome still face stereotypes and myths, but they’ve shown time and again that the condition is just one part of who they are and doesn’t define them or limit their abilities. That’s why it’s so important that during National Down Syndrome Awareness Month and all year long, we help spread the message of love, acceptance, inclusion, and respect.

Down syndrome is a condition in which a person is born with an extra chromosome, the packets of genes that determine how our bodies form and function. A baby is typically born with 46 chromosomes, but a baby with Down syndrome has an extra copy or part of a copy of one of those

chromosomes, chromosome 21.”

[Click here to learn more](#)

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## Mental Illness Awareness Week - October 5-11

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## Mental Illness Awareness Week and World Mental Health Day

“Mental health affects everyone. While one in five U.S. adults experiences a mental health condition annually, the impact extends to the friends, family, coworkers, and others who support them. Mental health is something we all experience, manage, and need support with. No one should have to face these challenges alone.”

[Click here to read more](#)

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## OCD Awareness Week - October 12-18

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Photo by [Annie Spratt](#) on [Unsplash](#)

## [Walk Around the World for OCD Awareness](#)

“On October 18, 2025, join the OCD Walk Around the World—a global day of action for all OCD Community Walk participants. Wherever you are, take a walk in your neighborhood, park, or even at home to raise awareness for OCD and related disorders. Together, we can break stigma, build understanding, and show support worldwide.”

[Click here to read more](#)

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## [National Health Education Week - October 20-24](#)

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Photo by [Annie Spratt](#) on [Unsplash](#)

## History of National Health Education Week

“Created in 1995, National Health Education Week has worked to raise awareness of the importance of health education specialists and their contribution to consumer wellness as well as educate the next generation of students. People in this profession provide knowledge, skills, and training to complement health providers, policy makers, human resource personnel, educators, and other professionals that impact human wellness.

The purpose of health education is to improve the health status of people, communities, and the nation. Educators work to strengthen the quality of life for all individuals and reduce premature deaths and disabilities. When health education specifically focuses on prevention, it helps lower the financial burden spent on medical treatment. Chronic conditions, like diabetes, Crohn’s disease, and cancer make up more than 75% of all money spent on health care in the United States alone each year. Educating the masses in health literacy is a large component of health status within the country. Without this subject being taught by education specialists, members of omitted communities can be negatively affected.”

[Click here to read more](#)

# Anniversary of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act - October 3



Photo by [Dylan Gillis](#) on [Unsplash](#)

## Reflections on the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act After 10 Years

"It took more than 45 years to accomplish fairness in insurance coverage for the treatment of mental illnesses and substance use disorders (SUDs) since President Kennedy took the first step in that direction with a directive to the Civil Service Commission that resulted in parity coverage for the years 1967 to 1975. Consumer groups, providers, and some segments of the health insurance industry worked long and hard to enact legislation that promised coverage on par with other medical care. The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA), enacted on

October 3, 2008, began to take shape in Senators Pete Domenici (R-NM) and John Danforth's (R-MO) "parity" bill in 1992. Today there is much to celebrate. Coverage has improved for more than 170 million people; access to and use of treatment have expanded; and sicker patients are better protected against the financial consequences of treatment"

[Click here to read more](#)

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## National Bullying Prevention Awareness Day - October 6

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## Help Turn America Blue for the Safety of our Children

"An epidemic is an increase, often sudden, in the number of cases of a disease above what is normally expected in that population in that area. Bullying, in all its forms, is on the rise and has become a silent epidemic in the United States.

Some may mistakenly view bullying as playground harassment - “teasing in the schoolyard” story. However, it is so much more than that.

Many unfortunate consequences occur for bullied individuals that bullies don’t think about when they're in the act.”

[Click here to read more](#)

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## [National Depression Screening Day - October 9](#)

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“Depression is one of the most common mental health concerns, affecting up to 17% of U.S. adults each year. For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), the rate is even higher—some estimates suggest as many as 39%.

Depression can be caused by many factors, including genetics, health conditions, stress, major life changes, inactivity, and social isolation. For people with IDD, additional risk factors often increase vulnerability, with some symptoms commonly in those without IDD, and other symptoms presenting differently.”

[Click here to read more](#)

# SCREENING DAY

“National Depression Screening Day is observed annually in October. In 2025, it is observed on October 9.

Like any other health screening --- such as those for cancer and diabetes -- depression screening should be a routine part of healthcare.

Clinical depression is a serious medical illness that affects millions of Americans each year. It can occur alongside other medical conditions, often complicating them further. Many people dismiss the symptoms of depression as a "normal" part of their life, and only about a third of those who suffer from it seek professional help.”

[Click here to read more](#)

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## World Mental Health Day - October 10

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“World Mental Health Day takes place every year on 10 October. It’s a

reminder of the importance of good mental health and the need to prioritise and invest in good mental health.

This year's theme is 'access to services - mental health in catastrophes and emergencies'. The theme highlights the importance of people being able to protect their mental health in times of global instability."

[Click here to read more](#)

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## Indigenous Peoples' Day - October 13

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## Mental Health Ofrenda: Indigenous Peoples' Day

"Mis queridos familiares y amistades,

¿Cómo están? How are your heart and spirit doing? As we near Indigenous Peoples' Day and Día de los Muertos con mucha anticipación, mi corazón piensa en nuestrxs ancestrxs Indígenas. My heart and spirit are thinking about the upcoming celebrations of our fierce, powerful and beautiful ancestors. In Spanish, I say



“nuestrxs ancestrxs” to honor our beautiful queer, nonbinary, and transgender ancestors. My soul reaches out to connect with them and to feel the generations of courage, strength, beauty, and wisdom that I inherited in my own brown and queer being today. I am honored to reflect and share their gifts.”

[Click here to read more](#)

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# NOVEMBER

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

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## November is National Veterans and Military Families Month

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Photo by [Bermix Studio](#) on [Unsplash](#)

“Veterans & Military Families Month was established in 1996 by the Armed Services YMCA, with the U.S. Government recognizing the occasion every year since. Each November, the President signs a proclamation declaring



November National Veterans & Military Families Month, and with hundreds of thousands of service members deployed overseas, recognizing the daily sacrifices made by active duty, Guard, and Reserve military families has never been more important."

[Click here to learn more](#)

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## November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month

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## Go Teal for Alzheimer's Awareness Month

"November is Alzheimer's Awareness Month, a time to heighten awareness about Alzheimer's disease and show support for the more than 6.2 million Americans living with it. There are a number of quick and easy ways you can help raise awareness, show support, and fight Alzheimer's disease!

**Why Teal?**

Teal is the Alzheimer's Awareness color of the Alzheimer's Foundation of America (AFA). AFA uses teal because it has been shown in color psychology studies to be a calming color. This is helpful when designing and decorating spaces and events to be welcoming and comforting to those living with Alzheimer's. So, next time you see someone dressed in teal, remember the more than 6 million people living with Alzheimer's and the help they need."

[Click here to learn more](#)

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## November is National Family Caregivers Month

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"November is a time to show support and to honor our nation's vital caregivers during National Family Caregivers Month. Join us in acknowledging and honoring families who are often caregiving "around the clock". That means around-the-clock dedication, organization, responsibility, scheduling, and hands-on care."

[Click here to learn more](#)

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## November is Movember

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"Mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer and testicular cancer – we're taking them all on.

Since 2003, Movember has funded more than 1,250 men's health projects around the world, challenging the status quo, shaking up men's health research and transforming the way health services reach and support men."

[Click here to read more](#)

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## International Stress Awareness Week - November 3-7

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# 2025 Theme: Optimizing Employee Wellbeing through Strategic Stress Management

“International Stress Awareness Week will exemplify our 2025 theme: a workplace culture that prioritises growth, support, recognition, and psychological safety is not just advantageous—it’s essential. By actively fostering and sustaining such a culture, organisations empower individuals to succeed while reaping the benefits of a healthier, more productive workforce, creating a win-win for employees and the organisation alike.”

[Click here to learn more](#)

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## National Stress Awareness Day - November 5

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“National Stress Awareness Day 2025 is a day dedicated to raising awareness about the impact of stress on individuals’ physical and mental well-being. This observance encourages people to recognize and manage stress in healthy ways, emphasizing the importance of self-care and stress reduction techniques. National Stress Awareness Day serves as a reminder to prioritize mental health, reduce stressors, and seek support when

needed.”

[Click here to learn more](#)

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## International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day - November 22

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“International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day is an event in which survivors of suicide loss come together to find connection, understanding, and hope through their shared experience. This year, International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day is Saturday, November 22, 2025.”

[Click here to learn more](#)

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# DECEMBER

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

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# Giving Tuesday

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Join us in delivering resources to ease the mental health crisis!

This Giving Tuesday a monthly gift of \$30 (just \$1 a day!) or a one-time gift of any amount you feel you can give would help establish a stigma-free safety net bringing multi-faith mental health support and a continuum of resources across the country and especially to marginalized neighborhoods.

No need to wait until Giving Tuesday!

Click the button below to give anytime or, if you prefer, send a check to  
Pathways to Promise

5850 Macklind Ave

Unit #377

St Louis, MO 63109

[Give Here](#)

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# International Day of Persons with Disabilities - December 3

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“International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) is a globally recognized observance dedicated to promoting the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities. This day highlights the importance of inclusivity, accessibility, and equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities, while also celebrating their achievements and contributions to society.

## **What is International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2025?**

International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) is an annual event established by the United Nations to raise awareness about the challenges faced by persons with disabilities and to promote their full and equal participation in all aspects of society. It serves as a platform to advocate for the rights and dignity of individuals with disabilities.”

[Click here to learn more](#)

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# International Human Rights Day - December 10

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“[Human Rights Day](#) is observed annually around the world on 10 December. It commemorates the anniversary of one of the world's most groundbreaking global pledges: the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (UDHR). This landmark document enshrines the inalienable rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being - regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

The Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 and sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected.

As a “common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations”, the UDHR is a global blueprint for international, national, and local laws and policies and a bedrock of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

It is available in 577 languages, from Abkhaz to Zulu, making the UDHR the [most translated document](#) in the world.”

[Click here to learn more](#)

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## The Holidays and Mental Health

December 15-22 - Hanukkah

December 25 - Christmas

## Hanukkah - December 15-22

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### The Mental Health Hanukkah Journal

"The Talmud discusses the obligation of *pirsumei nisah*, literally, publicizing the miracle, on Hanukkah. This is in reference to our task of publicizing the miracle of Hanukkah by lighting our menorahs by windows or our front doors. In doing so, we remind the world there is a God who performs miracles. The need to publicize the miracle of Hanukkah is an example of Judaism's desire to shed light on powerful ideas and truths our tradition holds dear and share them with the world."

[Click here to learn more](#)

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### Mental Health Menorah

"Build your own mental health menorah, and channel the resilience of the Maccabees into your Hanukkah experience, and spend each day thinking about a different way you can build strength and resilience in your own

life. There are many ways to build resilience, and we listed 8 steps you can take to do so. One for every day of Hanukkah! Just fill in your mental health menorah and plan for what you would like to focus on each day.”

[Click here to learn more](#)

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## Christmas - December 25

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## Blue Holiday Service Resource

A sample bulletin for a Blue Holiday Service from One Mind Mental Illness Ministry

For additional resources for Blue Christmas Services, visit our Mental Health Multifaith Resource Center. To view all Blue Christmas Service Resources, [click here](#), and select “Blue Christmas Worship.”

[Click here to learn more](#)

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## Blue Christmas Service Sample

A sample bulletin for a Blue Christmas Service from One Mind Mental Illness Ministry

For additional resources for Blue Christmas Services, visit our Mental Health Multifaith Resource Center. To view all Blue Christmas Service Resources, [click here](#), select “Blue Christmas Worship.”

[Click here to learn more](#)

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## [Kwanzaa - December 26 - January 1](#)

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### [How the Seven Principles of Kwanzaa can be Self-care Methods](#)

“The seven-day celebration of Black culture [also promotes seven specific principles](#): Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity), and Imani (faith).

While these seven principles are meant to inspire ways to uplift the Black community as a whole, they could also be decent ways to practice self-care. Sharon Lewis, a professor of clinical neurology at the University of Pennsylvania, led a talk on how to incorporate the principles into a self-

care practice.”

[Click here to learn more](#)

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# MARK YOUR CALENDARS

## October

### Month Long Themes

Global Diversity Awareness Month

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

National Polish American Heritage Month

Down Syndrome Awareness Month

Italian American Heritage Month

Filipino American History Month

ADHD Awareness Month

### Week long themes

5-11 - Mental Illness Awareness Week

12-18 - OCD Awareness Week

20-24 - National Health Education Week

1 – Defender of Ukraine Day

2\* - Jewish - Yom Kippur

3 - Anniversary of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act

6 - National Bullying Prevention Awareness Day

7\*-13 - Sukkot

8 - World Dyslexia Day

10 – World Mental Health Day/National Depression Screening Day

10 – World Inclusion Day

13 - Indigenous Peoples' Day

16 – Spirit Day

20 - Hindu: Diwali

21 - Sikh: Bandi Chhor Divas

22\* – Baha'i: Birthday of the Bab

31\* - Pagan and Wiccan: Samhain

31 - International Overdose Awareness Day

# November

# All Month Long Themes -

Native American Heritage Month

National Veterans and Military Families Month

National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month

National Family Caregivers Month

3-7 International Stress Awareness Week

Movember

1 - Christian: All Saints' Day

2 - Christian: All Souls' Day

3 – Birth of Baha'u'llah

5 - National Stress Awareness Day

6 - Jain: Gyan Panchami

11 – US: Veterans Day

16 – International Day for Tolerance

16 – Dutch American Heritage Day

20 – Transgender Day of Remembrance

21 - Native Women's Equal Pay Day



21 – Eastern Orthodox Christian: The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

23 - International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

25 – UN: International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

27 – US: Thanksgiving Day

30 – St. Andrew's Feast Day

30 - Christian - Advent

# December

1 - World AIDS Day

2 - International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

2 - Giving Tuesday

3 - International Day of Persons with Disabilities

6 - Christian: Saint Nicholas Day

8 - Buddhist: Bodhi Day

8 – Feast of the Immaculate Conception

10 – International Human Rights Day

15-22 Hanukkah

16-24 Roman Catholic: Las Posadas

21\* – Pagan and Wiccan: Yule

25 - Christian - Christmas

26 - January 1 - Kwanzaa

26 – St. Stephen's Feast Day

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

Also consider the following calendars for other important dates:

[2025 Interfaith Calendar](#)

[2025 Diversity Calendar](#)

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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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