



MENTAL HEALTH IN THE CARIBBEAN AND THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

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THE
CARIBBEAN
IS HAVING
A SERIOUS
MENTAL
HEALTH
PROBLEM!



*All are affected
Children, Adolescents, Elderly,
Families, etc.*



*Youth violence
Self-injury (cutting)
Suicidal Ideation
Abandonment
Insecurity*

**Governments
are beginning
to ask the church
to partner with them
“to provide
robust intervention
that supports
mental health
in the population”.**

(Prime minister of Jamaica, 2023).



As a Church, let us seize this opportunity to:

- educate our congregations
- clarify our role
- unite and partner with each other and others
- explore how we can work to strengthen the mental health of our nations





Mental Health Concepts

- Good mental health is “not merely the absence of illness or disease”.
- It **focuses on wellness** of the mind.
- This wellness **affords good functioning**

What is good Mental Health?

Mental health is defined as “ a

- **state of well-being** that allows people to
- **cope with the stresses of life,**
- **realise their abilities,**
- **learn well** and
- **work well** and
- **contribute to the community”.**

(WHO)



What is Mental Illness?

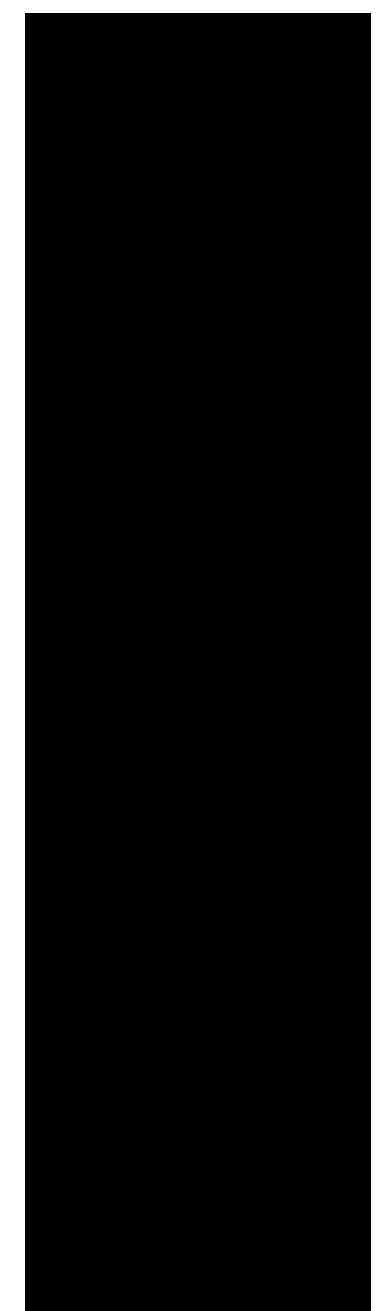
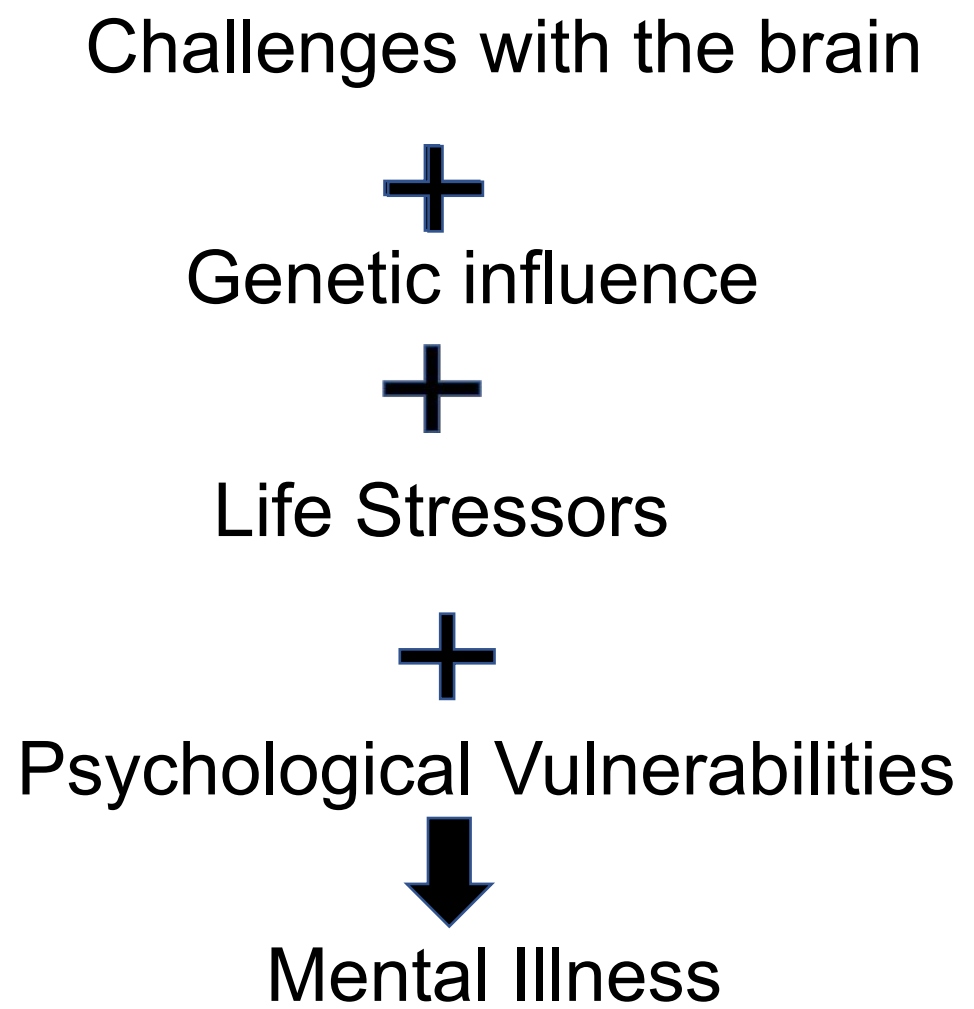
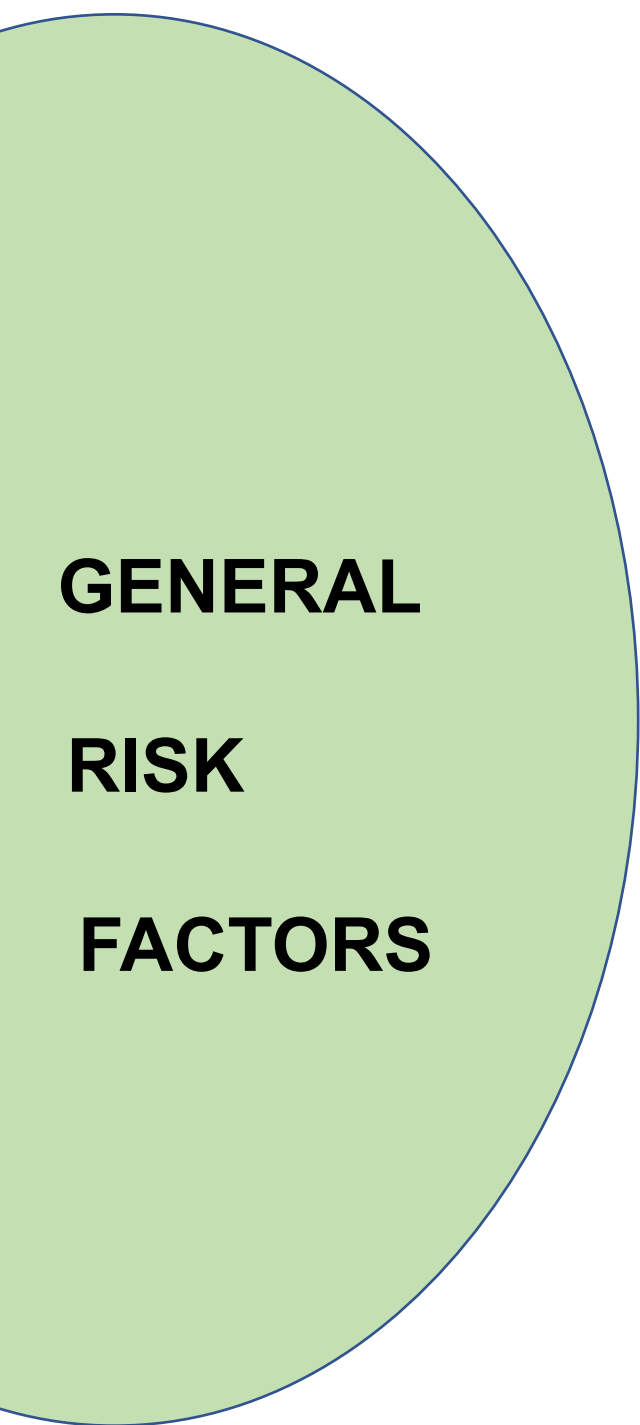
“Significant disruption in mental health
that affects one’s level of functioning”

...

(WHO)

“...by impairing

- an individual’s cognition,
- emotional regulation ... and
- behaviour”.



BE OPTIMISTIC

Scientific Knowledge



Best Practices



Recovery or
Effective Rehabilitation

Early treatment brings best results.

Common Mental Disorders

Globally, mental disorders

- affect one in eight persons, and is
- one of the leading causes of ill-health and disability. (WHO)

MORE FREQUENT DISORDERS IN THE CARIBBEAN

DEPRESSION

PSYCHOTIC
DISORDERS

ANXIETY

PERSONALITY
DISORDER



DEMENTIA

BIPOLAR
DISORDERS



SUICIDE

COVID-19

More depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress among adolescents and young people, ages 13-29 in Latin America and the Caribbean

Some children in Jamaica not coping with online learning and separation from peers. Have dropped out of the school system and vulnerable to behaviour disorders and gang recruitment

The Caribbean

A map of the Caribbean region, showing the Caribbean Sea and surrounding landmasses. The map is titled "The Caribbean" in the top right corner. It includes labels for various islands and countries, such as Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands (US), Anguilla, Barbados, Grenada, and Trinidad & Tobago. The map also shows the Gulf of Mexico to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. A compass rose is located in the bottom left corner.

Who are we?

- Over 30 countries making contact with the Caribbean Sea
- 44.1 million people with only 9.9% of the population living in 21 Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
- Multiethnic – with a variety of languages, cultures and traditions

Dark historical legacy of slavery and colonialism

- * Mass relocation by force
- * Oppressed
- * Hostile environment

* “Monstrous distortion of human society”
Prof. Orlando Patterson





A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.

Marcus Garvey

MENTAL HEALTH RISKS IN THE CARIBBEAN

- *Persistent Poverty**
- *Chronic Underdevelopment**
- *Disrupted Family Systems**
- *Colour-Class Stratification**
- *Social disintegration**
- *Cultural undermining**
- *Geography – vulnerable to natural disasters**



Mental Illness can be treated

Variety of standard treatments

- Psychotherapy
- Medication
- Psycho-Education
- Suicide Risk Management
- Etc.

*Need family and
community-based support*

**Consequences
of Inaction!!!**

Social and Economic Costs for the Individual and Society

For example:

- Low productivity
- Poverty
- Homelessness
- Vulnerability to abuse
- Etc.

Prof. Roger Gibson, UWI

The state of mental health services in the Caribbean

Analysis: 6 SIDs

- Social Inequalities
- Limited implementation of mental health policies/plans
- Lack of resources
- Uncoordinated/sporadic health promotion
- Low levels of mental health literacy
- Low awareness of mental health services
- Stigma towards people with mental illness

All Caribbean Countries similar challenges in addition to:

- Being under-funded
- Poor integration into primary care clinics
- Scant cross-sector collaboration
- Over-emphasis on mental hospitals vs community mental health care
- Mental illness often attributed to supernatural forces

Gibson

HOW SHOULD THE CHURCH RESPOND?



□ Recognize that a mental health ministry needs to be a part of a wider ministry of healing with the Church as a healing congregation

□ Have a theology of Health and Healing along with a relevant ecclesiology

OUR **“PARADIGM”** OR **VIEW**
ABOUT THE WORLD AND LIFE

- affects our



THEOLOGICAL
UNDERSTANDING

- This affects our



VISION and MODELS of action

IN OUR CHURCH MINISTRY

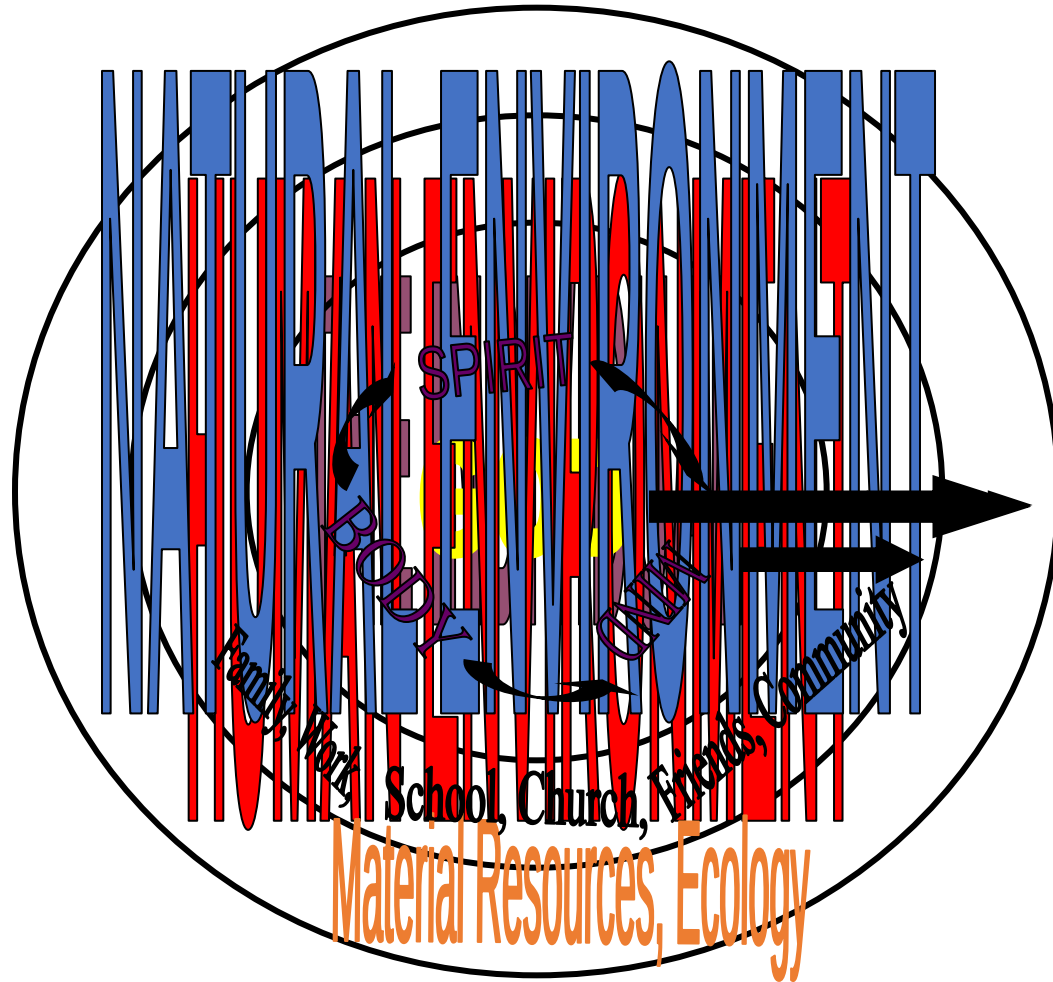
OUR BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

St. Luke 9:1-6

“When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority

- to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out
- to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.
- Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town
- So they set out ... proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere.”

THE BIBLICAL PARADIGM: HEALERS OF THE WHOLE PERSON



Health is *wholeness* or harmony between:

- aspects of the self (mind, body and spirit)
- self and others
- self and the natural environment
- self and God (as our centre)

**Mutual interaction
between all dimensions**

Our Motto Should Be:

“There can be
no mental health without physical health
and
There can be
no good physical health without mental health”

THE BIBLICAL PARADIGM: HEALERS WHO PROCLAIM AN INTEGRATED GOSPEL OF SALVATION AND HEALING

WHAT IS SALVATION?

FORENSIC VIEW

Sin = Amorality

Salvation

=

Moral
Transformation
Only

INTEGRATED VIEW

Sin = Rebellion



Alienation



Amorality + Disintegration
(Disease)



INTEGRATED VIEW

Salvation

=

Forgiveness



Reconciliation



Moral Transformation



Re-integration (Healing)
between

- Persons and God
- Persons and each other

THE BIBLICAL PARADIGM:
HEALERS WHO PROCLAIM AN INTEGRATED GOSPEL OF
SALVATION AND HEALING

WHAT IS SALVATION?

“A TOTAL VISION”

SALVATION = HEALING
in Christ Jesus

FOR WHOLENESS

Thus, healing is inseparable from salvation or salvation is healing
and they are one and the same.

THE BIBLICAL PARADIGM: HEALERS IN A HEALING COMMUNITY

- Build **organic communities** where each person is as important as the other and each has a helping friend.

LOVE

- **LOVE** is the greatest commandment as it motivates concern for others and will enable us to care for others.

(Matthew 22:36-40)



Practical Possibilities

**A model for best
practices
in being the
Church as a
Healing Community**



A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL FOR BEING THE CHURCH AS A HEALING COMMUNITY

1. **SPONSORSHIP:** Congregation-Sponsored

2. **APPROACH:** Whole Person Oriented

- Medical
- Counselling
- Social and Economic Development
- Prayer and Spiritual Direction

3. **SCOPE:** Comprehensive Service

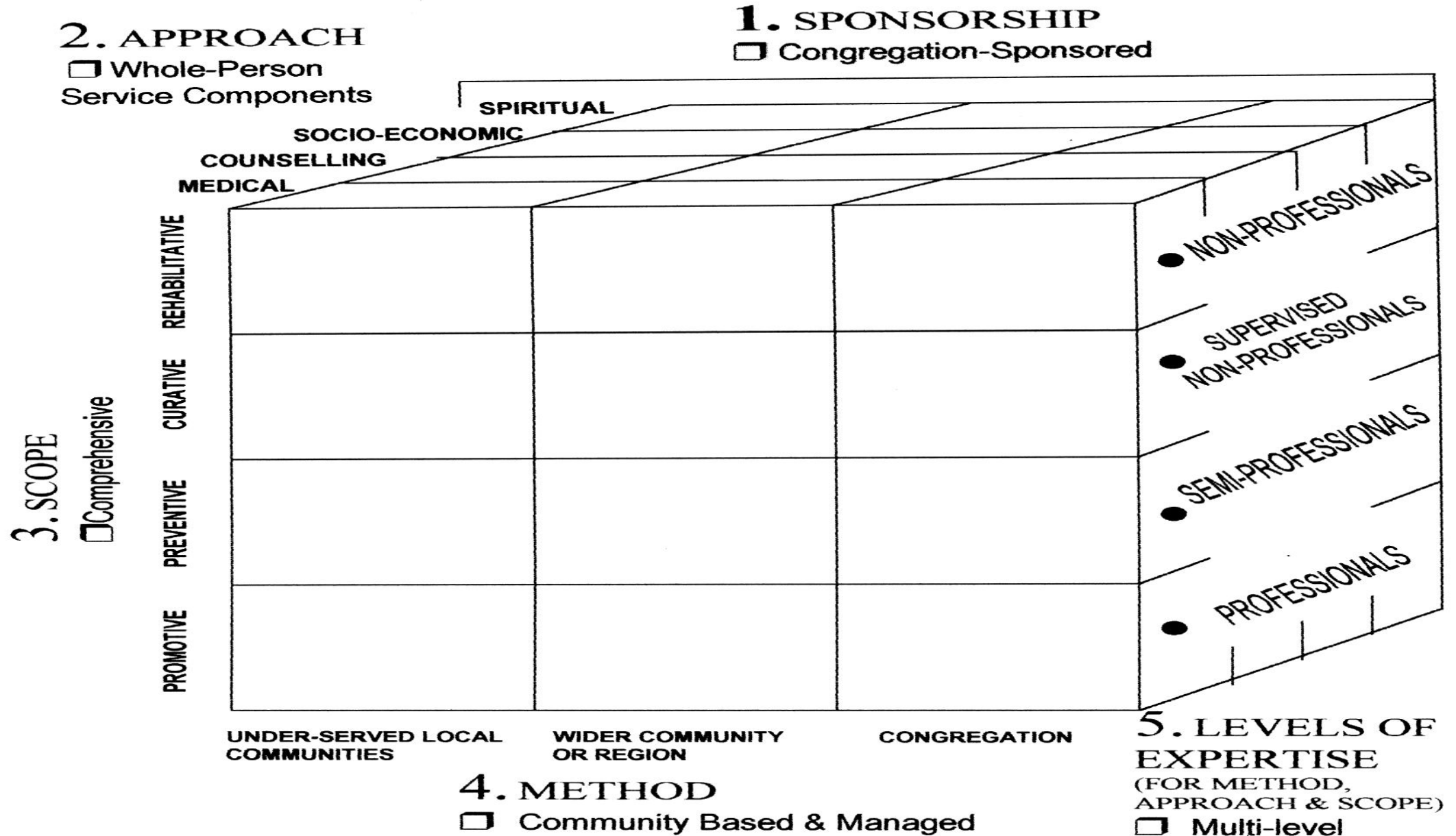
- Promotive
- Preventive
- Curative
- Rehabilitative

4. **METHOD:** Community-based and Managed

- Congregation
- Underserved Local Communities
- Wider Community

5. **EXPERTISE:** Multi-Level Human Resource Utilization

- Non-Professionals
- Supervised Non-Professionals
- Semi-Professionals
- Professionals



The Model of a “Whole-Person Healing ministry” : Putting it together

**BETHEL BAPTIST
CHURCH**

**BETHEL BAPTIST
CHURCH**

The Bethel Baptist Church Healing Ministry

- Under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Burchell Taylor
- Started in 1975
- Provided an integrated set of services
 - medical services,
 - pastoral care,
 - counselling
 - prayer
- Model of an wholistic ministry

The original vision for the Healing Ministry of the Church



← PHARMACY & CLINIC →

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Over the years

... the original “healing ministry” providing Primary Health Care (PHC) evolved into a broader understanding based on the model just described.

- We adopted a ***needs-based approach to ministry***, while our current Pastor, Rev. Dr. Glenroy Lalor facilitates a strong ***non-clergy-centered lay involvement***.
- We promoted ***self-help activities*** for self-care and ***healthy lifestyles***.
- Our ministries are ***comprehensive in scope***.

Our various ministries include the following:

WELLNESS PROMOTION

Wellness Promotion via a Wholistic Health Promotion Committee

- Educational talks
- Family month activities
- Marriage enrichment sessions
- Health Fairs with preventive screening
- Special Healing Sunday →
- Female wellness group



WELLNESS PROMOTION

Support Groups

- Bereavement Support group
- Rays of Sunshine – education and support for various life challenges

March Birth Month Social



Practical Help

- Legal Aid Clinic
- Cyber Centre
- Thrift Cooperative Society
- Homework Centre
- Adult Learning Centre
- Life Coach
- Whole church organized into “Birth Month” Groups
- Regional prayer and outreach groups

PREVENTION

Carried out over the life cycle:

- Pre-marital counselling
- Maternity monitoring
- Immunization for children
- Counselling and parenting education for parents of children to be blessed
- “Seniors in Action” group
- Screening for brain health and for non-communicable diseases
- COVID vaccination via partnership with government and USAID

CURATIVE SERVICES

Our primary care clinic provides our main curative services:

- Medical doctors
- Counselling
- Social casework
- Deacons and members provide monthly homebound communion service along with a whole person needs evaluation

VISIT OUR HEALING CENTRE



Physician



Wholistic Interview



Group Prayer



Our Nurse



Prayer Partner

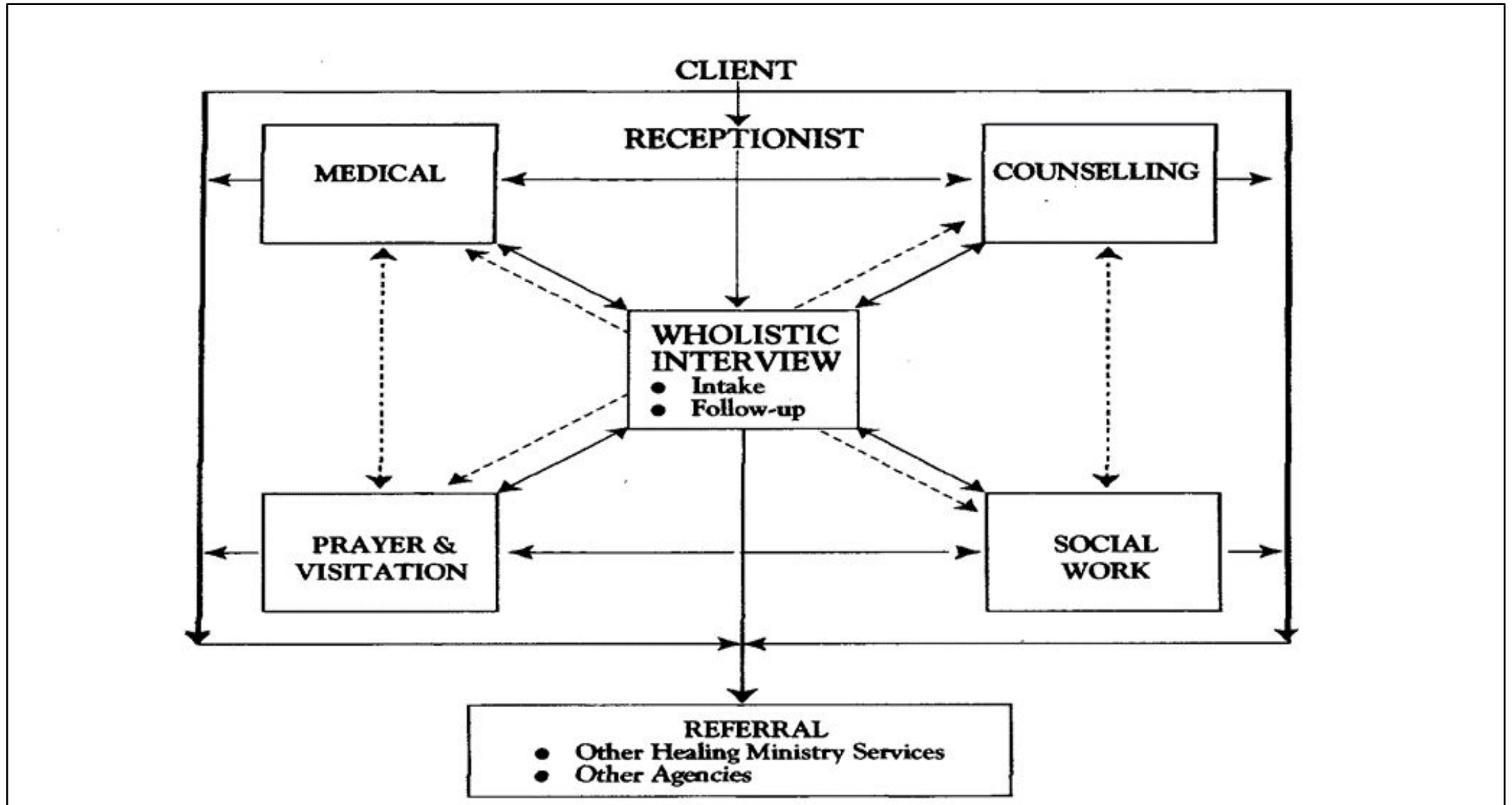


Counselling



Social Worker

The Bethel Wholistic Clinic- A Flowchart of Curative Services



REHABILITATION

Confidential access for support and intervention for persons with:

- Mental health conditions
- HIV/AIDS

There are also a:

- Special Care Ministry
- Homeless Ministry
- Community Outreach Ministry where we established basic schools in inner-city communities

Over the decades, churches in most denominations have adopted some of the activities provided at Bethel.

Other Key Points to Note

- Ministries are carried out by **multidisciplinary teams** where members **pray** and strengthen each other
- The Jamaica Baptist Union **trained** lay counsellors and health workers
- For several years, **capacity building** for churches' healing ministries were carried out by a group called Whole Person Resource Centre.

Other Key Points to Note

- We **network** with government and private sector agencies.

For example, recently the Jamaican governments included churches in the training of persons for lay counselling and psychosocial intervention.

- **Sustainability enabled** via
 - Strong administration,
 - Voluntarism,
 - Church ownership,
 - Cost recovery from clients, where possible,
 - Fundraising
 - Foundation for community outreach.

How can your Church get started in a **Mental Health Ministry?**

- Train every member to become an emotional wellness supporter
- Establish a Mental Health Committee with a volunteer Coordinator of Mental Health Ministries
- Develop training and education to enable mental health literacy
- Combat stigma
- Seek advocacy for access to adequate services

Every member can become an Emotional Wellness Supporter

1. Manage your own self-care through healthy life style practices
2. Become aware of individuals around you
3. Reach out and make yourself available and accessible
4. Spend time to listen, empathise while being respectful and confidential
5. Refer for professional help as necessary. Go with them if needed
6. Provide or recruit practical assistance
7. Help to keep the person integrated in social and spiritual relationships
8. Pray always for God's healing

Mental Health is not a lost cause!

We are resilient
as a people

We can “think
big and start
small”

We can overcome the
barriers to Caribbean
Church collaboration

With God, we have “power and authority”.

FOR BLACK GIRLS
Self Care
HAPPY HEALTHY WHOLE

Other Care

*With this God of
Power
All Things are
Possible!*

*Thank You for
Listening*