The Silent Struggle: The Black Church’s Role in Faith, Mental Health Literacy, and Social Transformation

Research for 21st Century Scholarship

Janie Dowdy-Dandridge

Omega Graduate School

Date February 17, 2025

Professor

Caroline Geer, Ph.D., M.A., M.L.I.S., Librarian

Essay Draft

Assignment #3 – Essay Draft

Begin work on Assignment #4 Research for 21st Century Paper (see below):

1. In preparation for Assignment #4, choose a scholarly topic of interest. Type the topic on

the title line on the cover page and the first page of the paper. Explain your reasoning for

choosing the topic in the introduction section (after the title and before the first Level 1

heading) of the paper. Use your best academic voice, correct sentence structure, tense,

and punctuation. In the rest of the introductory paragraph, preview three points you

would address in an essay about your topic with ideas that came from your sources.

2. Develop a list of search terms and phrases that pertain to the subject chosen and

include these immediately following the first Level 1 heading. Give the list a name and

use the name as the Level 1 heading (use the heading styles in the template and the

APA 7 Manual or Guide provided in the hyperlinks in this syllabus). Present the list in a

complete sentence or a bulleted list with an opener (e.g., Search terms related to the

topic of this paper are as follows:). Use correct punctuation.

3. Continue building the Works Cited list you began in Assignment #2. Locate a minimum

of two books (minimum of one published in the last five years) relevant to your chosen

topic and develop an APA reference for each book. Insert the properly formatted

references in the Works Cited section of the paper.

4. Locate four primary research journal articles relevant to your chosen topic; three articles

must be less than five years old. Develop a reference for each journal article and insert

the references into the Works Cited section. Put your 10 references in alphabetical

order.

**The Silent Struggle: The Intersection of Faith, Mental Health Literacy, and Social Transformation in the Black**

**Introduction**

Depression along with grief and trauma emerged repeatedly throughout my life. The loss of my son and grandson together with a teenager’s murder at my church led me to uncover the silent pain that exist about mental health literacy that occurs within the African American Church and community. The personal grief experienced from these losses highlights an urgent need in Black communities where unresolved mourning and continuous trauma from violence remain persistent challenges. Faith leaders’ efforts to address mental health often remain hidden due to societal stigma and feelings of shame. Many of my clergy colleagues maintain that prayer should remain the only approach to address mental health issues. Therefore, our sacred spaces continue to suffer destruction because untreated trauma persists alongside the rejection of mental health awareness, despite faith serving as a crucial healing element.

**Why I Chose This Topic**

The topic I chose stems from my conviction that the Black Church needs to transform mental health dialogue and support systems. The Black Church needs to take a crucial position in transforming our approach to mental health conversation and care provision according to my belief. Therefore, it is essential to study the integration of faith and mental health literacy within the Black Church to destroy stigma while increasing awareness and motivating people to access both spiritual and professional help. Overall, my research will investigate approaches for the Black Church to stop ignoring mental health issues and educate congregations and communities of faith to lead mental health advocacy and social transformation. have observed faith leaders’ approach to mental health has been suppressed or seldom talked about because of the stigma and shame while many still believe prayer should serve as the sole solution for social transformation in the Black Church and African American Communities.

My examination of Black Church practices that merging faith and mental health education is essential to reduce the stigma and enhance awareness while motivating the Black Church to pursue both spiritual and professional mental health services. My research will explore methods for the Black Church to break its silence and develop congregational education programs to promote mental health advocacy and social transformation. According to (Campbell, 2021; Clement et al., 2015; Fitzgerald & Vaidyanathan, 2023; Muvuka et al., 2020; Pederson, 2023), my research will address three critical areas:

* Reducing the stigma of depression and shame associated with cultural and historical factors that create mental health stigma in Black religious communities.
* Enhancing mental health literacy related to depression in Black communities can improve health beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, and outcomes.
* Improving mental health literacy and referral practices and the importance of mental health professionals increasing their spiritual competence. within the Black Church

**A List of Related Search Terms and Phrases are as follows:**

* Black Church and Mental Health Stigma
* Faith-based mental health interventions
* Mental health literacy in African American communities
* Depression in Black faith communities
* Role of pastors in mental health advocacy
* Trauma and grief in Black congregations
* Cultural barriers to mental health treatment
* Integration of faith and psychological well-being
* Spiritual competence in mental health practice
* Social transformation through faith-based mental health programs
* Mental Health Professionals
* Faith Leaders

**Works Cited**

Campbell, A. D. (2021). Clergy perceptions of mental illness and confronting stigma in congregations. Religions, 12(12), 1110. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12121110>

Davenport, A. D., & McClintock, H. F. (2021). Religiosity and Attitudes Toward Treatment for

Mental Health in the Black Church. Race and Social Problems, 13(3), 226-233.

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Clement, S., Schauman, O., Graham, T., Maggioni, F., Evans-Lacko, S., Bezborodovs, N., Morgan, C., Rüsch, N., Brown, J. S. L., & Thornicroft, G. (2015). What is the impact of mental health-related stigma on help-seeking? A systematic review of quantitative and qualitative studies. *Psychological Medicine*, *45*(1), 11–27. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291714000129>

Fitzgerald, C. A., & Vaidyanathan, B. (2023). Faith Leaders’ Views on Collaboration with Mental Health Professionals. *Community Mental Health Journal*, *59*(3), 477–485. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10597-022-01031-8>

Muvuka, B., Combs, R. M., Ali, N. M., Scott, H., & Williams, M. T. (2020). Depression Is Real: Developing a Health Communication Campaign in an Urban African American Community. *Progress in Community Health Partnerships*, *14*(2), 161–172. <https://doi.org/10.1353/cpr.2020.0029>

**Books**

Grcevich, S. (2018). M*ental health and the church: A ministry handbook for including children*

*and adults with ADHD, anxiety, mood disorders, and other common mental health*

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Walker, R. (2020). *The unapologetic guide to Black mental health: Navigate an unequal system,*

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Black Youths’ Mental Health and Access to Care in Canada: C & A. *Child & Adolescent*

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