



# Maryland Counseling Association

A BRANCH OF ACA

## COMPASS POINTS

ISSUE 13 | VOLUME 1 | SUMMER 2020

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### Mission

“SERVING THE COUNSELING,  
GUIDANCE, AND HUMAN  
DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONS”

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## Letter from the President

Happy Summer, MCA Members and Community!

As 2020-2021 MCA President, I am excited to serve our organization and the larger community in this great time of need. As our nation and world continue to struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic, Black Lives Matter protests and changes, and a general feeling of uncertainty, it is my humble opinion that counselors are needed more now than ever before.

People in our communities are seeking change and transformation that is tangible and hope can be a powerful force in this time of transition. As counselors, we have the awareness, knowledge, and skills that are necessary for healing and promote movement toward our better selves, a better community, and a better world.

This is my formal invitation to you to use your voice and passion to further justice in our world, and to work with other, like-minded counseling professionals to help to educate and build a new, healthy community.

MCA can provide a helpful platform for change and we need you as a participant. If you are an interested citizen, a clinical practitioner, a counseling student, a licensed mental health provider, or counselor educator, your skills and expertise are needed more than ever!

Here are some tangible ways that you can help:

1. Update your MCA membership and invite others to join.

2. Consider your talents and share them as a workshop or webinar by emailing our Registrar, Cathy Eaton, at [events@mdcounseling.org](mailto:events@mdcounseling.org)
3. Register for [MCA events](#). Our annual “[Cultivating Growth](#)” conference will be a great way to obtain 30 CE’s in October this year!
4. Consider writing an article to submit to the MCA [Compass Points newsletter](#).
5. Join or promote the [Emerging Leader Program](#) by nominating or mentoring.
6. Join an [MCA Division](#); we still have leadership positions open and could use your help.
7. Nominate yourself or someone else for an award (nominations will be solicited in August!).
8. Run for a Division or MCA leadership position. We need you!
9. Offer your ideas to leadership when you have them. No idea is too small.

On that last point, please note that my door is open and I am always interested in hearing what may be on your mind and how MCA may be of help. We have an important path before us as we navigate the many unknowns that our world will be experiencing and it is my hope that you will join me in promoting optimal mental health and wellness in the months to come.

Be well,

Carol ZA McGinnis PhD,  
BC-TMH, LCPC, NCC  
[President, Maryland  
Counseling Association](#)



## Letter from the Chair

As many of you are aware, July was BIPOC Mental Health Month. From [Mental Health America](#):

“Formally recognized in June 2008, Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month has been observed each July and was created to bring awareness to the unique struggles that underrepresented groups face regarding mental illness in the United States.

[Bebe Moore Campbell](#) was an American author, journalist, teacher, and [mental health advocate](#) who worked tirelessly to shed light on the mental health needs of the Black community and other underrepresented communities.

People and language evolve, and Mental Health America (MHA) has chosen to remove the word ‘minority’ from our toolkit and will be phasing it out on our materials. Instead, we are using a different designation – BIPOC – that we believe more fairly honors and distinguishes the experiences of Black, Indigenous People, and People of Color.

In an effort to continue the visionary work of Bebe Moore Campbell, each year MHA develops a public education campaign dedicated to addressing the needs of BIPOC.... We hope that you will join us as [we] take a critical lens at the mental health space and how trauma has impacted the lives and wellbeing of BIPOC, while celebrating resiliency in the face of adversity.”

As Dr. McGinnis shared in her President’s Letter, “counselors are needed more now than ever before.” I had recently been reflecting on this statement as I considered my professional practice, my advocacy efforts, my role within MCA and my personal bubble. I intended to share some of these thoughts as a lead in for the articles in this edition. However, my proverbial train was derailed.

Earlier in the summer, our church elders had agreed to expand our public anti-racism display in support of the BIPOC community to proclaim “Black Lives Matter”. This was too contentious a decision merely three years ago when elders had agreed only to the less fraught “Dismantle Racism”. I received an email from our mission team elder just as I began drafting my editor’s note. The banners were vandalized in the middle of a hot afternoon. Someone driving past screamed profanities at our pastors when they assessed the damage. It was also shared that a display at another local church had been vandalized and a display at a pastor’s home had been stolen within the same 24 hours.

This collection of events touched a nerve that triggers deep pain and deep anger within me. Racism isn’t hiding anymore, and it’s not afraid to scream at you in broad daylight. However, I was buoyed by the responses from those on our mission team, our elders and our pastors. The damage was quickly repaired and a demonstration was organized. I breathed in a sense of safety from that little community because of these actions.

As some of you may have been reminded on social media platforms, the work continues on even if your feed has settled back into its normal rhythm. This incident highlighted for me, even though I did not need the reminder, that the work must continue. Friends, it is hard to stay hopeful, focused and engaged when there seems to be so much to do. Sometimes it may be hard to remember we are worthy of love and care when there’s yet another person screaming the N-word as they speed by you in your neighborhood. Sometimes it may be hard to show up for our clients, especially when they recount similar traumatic experiences. Sometimes it may be hard to guide our counselors in training when we’re crossing unfamiliar cultural landscapes. Yet, we keep trying and pushing to shift the world in our own big and small ways. MHA talked about “celebrating resiliency”; counselors and counselor educators are working to uncover and nurture that resiliency in themselves and in those they support.

I have reshared the recent organization statements, which are located on the following pages. Please take some time to remind yourself, if you need to, of the stances taken. As those working in mental health, we are warned of burnout at various points in our development. Please remember that burnout can happen in any aspect of our lives, not just professionally. We must be taking care of ourselves as we try to care for others. We must recharge when we’re doing the heavy lifting and reaffirm for ourselves why we started. Whatever way(s) you have chosen to show up for BIPOC and non-Black POC still require us to have the internal and external resources to follow through and keep up the energy. **Allyship is an action.** If you are still contemplating ways you can show up and do the work, please also check the resources included after the organization statements. Every one of us is needed however and whenever we are able to show up. This heavy work is not yet done so, friends, take a deep breath and bend at the knees.

Michelle Schoonmaker, LCPC  
[Chair, MCA Newsletter Committee](#)

## 6/3/20 MALGBTIC Statement:

Happy Pride,

As you may be aware, our national organization has had a long history of addressing the evolving language of the communities we serve by changing its name. In response to the changing climate and work over the last two years, and after ACA approval in April 2020, ALGBTIC is very excited to announce their official name change:

Society for Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities (SAIGE).

SAIGE will be reaching out to branches soon to help support them with the process of changing the subdivision's name, i.e., MALGBTIC. Essentially, it will be a 2-year process, and they will offer support to branches and also offer a new logo based on the national division logo with our specific branch's name. They will also be providing support surrounding bylaw revision as well.

On a separate note, personally in terms of my energy right now, I'm just exhausted.

One intrinsic fact that surges the ethos of our work is that no person is expendable, and no portion of our community does not belong to us. When assessing the health, safety, and prosperity of our collective demands, acknowledge the pain, fear, and disillusionment that exist for our families, friends, colleagues, and the communities we serve. One thing is for sure; we should not be the same after the events of recent months. The coronavirus pandemic has introduced a global health crisis, unlike any other in the past hundred years. That, coupled with the escalated fight for racial and social equity, manifest what many have felt for some time: our systems are marred, our nation is imperiled, and our community is vulnerable.

We watched and listened to the unforgettable pleas of George Floyd as he appealed for the most fundamentally essential element of human needs — breath — as a Minneapolis police officer with indifferent cruelty kneeled on his neck. We witnessed the shooting death of Ahmaud Arbery by white butchers in Brunswick, GA, whom appreciatively evaded the consequence of their actions until the video surfaced and sparked national outrage. We grappled the agony of Breonna Taylor's boyfriend as he painstakingly called 9-1-1 after ununiformed Louisville police kicked down the door of their home and shot her eight times as she slept in her bed. We again observed the weaponizing of race by a white woman who pantomimed fear in calling the police on Christian Cooper, a Black gay man bird-watching in Central Park. Lest we forget Tony McDade, a trans man, shot and killed by police last week in Tallahassee, Florida where police approached him as a suspect in a stabbing that had taken place earlier in the day, and the police chief reported that "the suspect was in possession of a handgun, and a bloody knife was found at the scene", yet Facebook videos taken by witnesses disprove this. We looked on as a Black college basketball player was detained by police in Ohio on Friday during a peaceful protest. The world watched on Friday as CNN's Omar Jimenez was arrested for following the rule and doing his job. We gawked as the police in Atlanta, Georgia, on Saturday, smashed the car windows and slashed the tires of two students as they were dragged out of their car, cuffed and arrested after being brutally tased trying to leave a protest site, causing one of the victims to have epileptic seizures on live television.

All of these incidents are stark reminders of why we must speak out when hate, violence, and systemic racism claim — too often with impunity — Black Lives.

The death of George Floyd may be culminating event to have led to worldwide protest, but it does not and must not separate nor overshadow from deep undulations that have always been just beneath the surface: economic and social inequality, inconsistent accountability in law enforcement, a glaring absence of a moral compass in the White House, an exaggerated use of military force in domestic situations, and rhetoric that recalls violence against people of color in this country. It is a palimpsest of racism in this country.

### **BLACK LIVES MATTER!!!**

MALGBTIC, as an organization, has declared and embraced our mutuality with immigrants and undocumented among other communities, and we recognize how racism and xenophobia continue to endanger too many. We strongly denounce racism, bullying, and hate in all its forms towards our family and friends in the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. We unapologetically denounce the senseless and barbaric killings and abuses of power and person towards Black and Brown people living in an overabundance of systemic inequities. [continued...]

Will the progeny of systematic and generational hate and violence be our birthright as a nation? Are we satisfied with that outcome? We must reconcile who we claim to be with who we really are and hope to become.

Black lives matter—especially in this moment.

For our allies and accomplices, I would like to provide you with some resources if you'd like to get educated on this.

I strongly recommend that you read the book by Angie Thomas and then watch the movie called *The Hate You Give*.

Other books that I recommend you add to your plethora of knowledge include: [*Chair note: Texts are included with [resource list](#).*]

And for those who question how the Black Lives Matter movement relates to the LGBTQ+ movement, let me direct you to CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR: A Rainbow in Black: The Gay Politics of the Black Panther Party, which highlights how the Black Panther Party co-founder Huey Newton called for full participation of the gay liberation movement and the women's liberation movement

I am thankful for real allies, who understand that this is not the time to center their own experiences. If you have a friend of color, hop on zoom and provide space for them to talk to you about what they're going through, and ask for their recommendations and actually listen. Listen to understand, not to respond.

We need an omnipresent notion of radical inclusion: a deep-seated and profound recognition that inclusion and equity cannot exist in the absence of justice, empathy, compassion, and truth.

During this time and at all times, we all must understand that all lives don't matter until Black Lives Matter.

Exhaustively, Proudly, and Unapologetically Black,

Sergio, Washington, MS  
MALGBTIC President

### **MCA President Statement - June 3, 2020**

The Maryland Counseling Association mourns the murders of George Floyd, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, David McAtee and the countless others who have died due to state sanctioned violence. The pain, grief and trauma is cumulative, indescribable and unrelenting. This is a call-in to every member of our community.

It is important that we grieve the loss of life and center our Black community members' needs, experiences and voices and engage in anti-racism work. We must challenge white supremacy and the systemic racism and oppressive systems that perpetuate injustice. Maryland Counseling Association stands in solidarity with the #BlackLivesMatter movement.

When I was elected as the President of the Maryland Counseling Association, I signed up to represent all counselors in the state and to advocate for effective, accessible, and culturally competent care for all clients and communities we serve. Today, we are addressing the egregious acts of violence against our Black community members.

As Counselors we have a responsibility to serve as advocates and allies, not in name but in action. We must proactively work to address our implicit bias and privilege. We must also use our voice to disrupt the narratives that contribute to discrimination, dehumanization of Black people in media and the decolonization of therapy. Race-base trauma and cumulative loss (of safety, of life, of justice) is wreaking havoc on the mental and physical wellness of members of our Black and BIPOC communities.

#### **Call-to-Action:**

**We call on elected officials in the State of Maryland** to denounce the killing of Black people by the police and pledge to partner with Black leaders in our community and local government to dismantle and eradicate anti-Black systems, policies and policing. Additionally, a commitment from state and local governments to invest in systems that expand mental health services, mental health parity, addiction treatment, education, housing and assisting with rebuilding and strengthening minority owned businesses.

**We call on the American Counseling Association** to identify and partner with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) counseling students, faculty, practitioners, and staff to intentionally create a strategy to incorporate multicultural and social justice counseling in teaching, supervision and across professional leadership trainings.

**We call on non-BIPOC counselors, students, faculty, staff and community members** to listen, educate yourself and actively engage in anti-racism work. Donate your time and money to support causes that repair, restore and enhance the lives of BIPOC communities. Engage in the uncomfortable but necessary dialogue about race and privilege with your friends, and family. Advocate for reform in policies that uphold institutional and structural racism and oppression. Stand in the gap. Do not act BIPOC folk to expend emotional labor on educating you about your privilege. If BIPOC folk decide to partner with you in doing this work, compensate them well.

The mission of the Maryland Counseling Association is to promote public confidence, and trust in the counseling profession and to influence policies that affect professional counselors and the welfare of the diverse clients they serve. MCA supports professional counselors and counselors-in-training through a variety of professional development opportunities and support services.

Dr. Ajita M. Robinson  
President, Maryland Counseling Association (2019-2020)

[*Chair note: Recommendations are included with [resource list](#).*]



## 6/19/20 SAIGE Position Statement: Police Brutality & Systemic Racism

The Society for Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities (SAIGE) first and foremost acknowledges the lives lost to police brutality. We lift up the families, friends, and communities grappling with these losses in honor and solidarity.

The recent murder of George Floyd highlights what has for too long been a reality in our country: a culture of white supremacy.

George Floyd's murder was not the result of one bad officer; it was the predictable outcome of a racist and prejudiced system that was built to be and remains oppressive. George Floyd's murder is just one of the incalculable acts of murder, marginalization, and repression experienced by our black and brown siblings since the first enslaved persons arrived on this continent. George Floyd is one of the names we know, one of the atrocities we saw or heard about. We have also seen or heard about the losses of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Oscar Grant, Muhlaysia Booker, Eric Garner, Tanisha Anderson, Trayvon Martin, Malissa Williams, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, Emmett Till, Martin Luther King, Jr., and yet there are far more we do not know.

For too long, systems of oppression and marginalization have been in place. George Floyd's murder has brought forward a collective voice, communities feeling sorrow and outrage, and we are standing on the precipice of change. As we march, stand, chant, donate, write, and teach in protest, we are faced with brutality in the streets, online, and in discourse. The violent response to protestors highlights the desperate need for change. We are here, this is the time to call for systemic changes. We need federal, state, and local reforms which impose strict police accountability, limit the use of force, eliminate racial profiling, de-militarize law enforcement, and ensure proper screening, education, and training of all officers.

And we each have a role in this. To be silent is to be complicit. We are committed to raising our voices, donating our time, decolonizing our counseling and teaching spaces. We are committed to doing the work of racial healing, of broaching the conversation, holding space, receiving feedback, and learning from it. We are committed to carrying on this conversation as long as it takes to bring about substantive change.

### **Black Lives Matter.**

Here are the actions that SAIGE is taking in this effort.

1. We have joined with CSJ to provide an inclusive space of mourning called I Need a Minute offered on 6/8/20.
2. We are joining with CSJ to offer a town hall.
3. We offered a space for Queer and Trans People of Color to come together for solace and healing.
4. Finally, we ask that all of our members join us in doing the work – personally and collectively of racial healing. Read, watch, and listen to see how these value messages about others have been ingrained into our psyche – actively work to dismantle these biases. Donate to Black and Brown causes and contact your elected representatives to use your voice to condemn racism in our police, judicial, and political systems and ask for reform. Tell them you support HR 40 – Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act.

Misty M. Ginicola, Ph.D., LPC, CYA-RYT-200  
President, [SAIGE](#) | [American Counseling Association](#)

*[Chair note: Event details removed as events occurred in June 2020. Recommendations are included with resource list.]*

## Maryland Counseling Association July 16, 2020 President Letter

### *Maryland Stands with International Students*

On July 10, 2020 the American Counseling Association and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision published a joint statement in opposition to new regulations issued by the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). These regulations will withdraw visas from foreign students whose courses move fully online which will threaten the health and welfare of these individuals and impact our community negatively beyond measure.

The Maryland Counseling Association (MCA) are in alignment with this position and support these students. In Maryland and the surrounding area, our institutions of higher education house some of the foremost educational programs in our country and this ICE position not only threatens the lifeblood of these international students but also the professions that they represent as a whole.

It is unconscionable to have to choose between your life and your education. MCA wants all international students potentially impacted by this to know that we support you in your efforts to peaceably resist this ICE policy and empathize with your situation. As professional mental health practitioners and advocates, we hope for a better world through the services that we provide at every level of human development.

For counselors and students who are training to become counselors, client caseloads are increasing due to undue pandemic stresses of unreasonable workload expectations, unemployment, isolation, and aspects of safe social distancing. These clients often rely on field experience and internship students to receive care and this forced face-to-face educational policy threatens to interrupt these services.

As professionals who are often tasked with speaking out for those who do not have a voice through advocacy and aspirational care. MCA stands with everyone in our community who will be negatively impacted by this ICE policy change.

[Please find the ACA and ACES joint statement here.](#)

Stay safe and be well,

Carol ZA McGinnis PhD, BC-TMH, LCPC, NCC  
President, Maryland Counseling Association (2020-2021)

**SPEAK UP CALL IN**

**ALL BLACK AND BROWN LIVES MATTER**

## Resource List

*This is a combined and condensed list of ways to contribute and support BIPOC communities. Please note that this list is not exhaustive. Check your local community for other events and organizations. Check with your library and peer networks for additional educational tools for yourself and others.*

### To Read:

*So You Want to Talk about Race* by Ijeoma Oluo  
*The History of White People* by Nell Irvin Painter  
*Race Matters* by Cornel West  
*White Fragility* by Robin Diangelo  
*White Rage* by Carol Anderson  
*Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad  
*How to Be an Antiracist* and *Antiracist Baby* by Ibram X Kendi  
*The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander  
*The Central Park Five: The Untold Story Behind One of New York City's Most Infamous Crimes* by Sarah Burns  
*White Tears, Brown Scars* by Ruby Hamad  
*Deadly Injustice: Trayvon Martin, Race, and the Criminal Justice System (New Perspectives in Crime, Deviance, and Law)* by Devon Johnson  
*Rest in Power: The Enduring Life of Trayvon Martin* by Sybrina Fulton and Tracy Martin  
*Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome* by Joy DeGruy  
*Amazons, Abolitionists, and Activists: A Graphic History of Women's Fight for Their Rights* by Mikki Kendall and A. D'Amico  
*Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women that a Movement Forgot* by Mikki Kendall  
*From Sundown to Sunup: The Making of the Black Community* by George Rawick  
*Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates  
*Soul Food: The Surprising Story of an American Cuisine One Plate at a Time* by Adrian Miller  
*The Hate You Give* by Angie Thomas

### To Listen:

NPR Code Switch  
The Diversity Gap  
1619  
Intersectionality Matters  
About Race  
No Country For Young Women  
Say Your Mind  
Slay In Your Lane  
Witness Black History

### To Watch:

13th  
When They See Us  
Just Mercy  
Strong Island  
Teach Us All  
Dear White People  
The Hate You Give

### To Learn

[Being Uncomfortable](#)  
[Healing from Internalized Whiteness](#)  
[Decolonizing Your Therapy](#)  
[Tending to Racial Trauma during Crisis](#)

### To Visit

[National Museum of African American History and Culture](#)  
[Antiracism resources for white people](#)

### To Donate:

[Black Lives Matter DMV](#) (local DMV)  
[Reclaim the Block](#) (local Minneapolis)  
[The Minnesota Freedom Fund](#) (local Minneapolis)  
[BEAM](#)  
[Color of Change](#)  
[The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund](#)  
[The National Association of Black Journalists](#)

### To Contact

Contact your [federal](#) and [local](#) elected officials to share your concerns about social justice matters.

### To Protest

Check your local community for upcoming events. Protests have included marches, car caravans, creating memorials and stationary demonstrations. If so inclined, [organize an event](#) in your local community.



## Join in the "What is Counseling?" Initiative!

Counselors and Counselors-in-training are invited to lend your voices on the topic of "What is Counseling?". Please take a moment to post a few words, a metaphor, or ideas that may help to convey an answer to this general question. Intriguing metaphors and descriptions are likely to result in your voice being in the spotlight in future newsletter issues! Please submit your ideas in the discussion forum on the [MCA website](#).

## Emerging Leaders Program

The MCA Emerging Leaders Program was designed to provide graduate counseling students, new professionals, and experienced professionals with experiences that cultivate leadership skills and competency development, as well as, provide diverse opportunities to actively participate in MCA. Opportunities include serving on a committee or task force, engaging in projects of interest, building professional networks, and gaining exposure to the responsibilities associated with fulfilling elected leadership positions.

This year, up to 12 individuals will be selected from the following applicant categories to participate in this program:

- graduate counseling students (master's or doctoral),
- new professionals (within one-year post graduation), and
- experienced professionals (graduated before 2019).

MCA Emerging Leaders will provide a minimum of 30 hours of service to MCA during the 2020-2021 fiscal year (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021). They receive free registration to the 2020 MCA Annual Conference (\$250 value!), receive mentorship from a MCA leader, network with other Emerging Leaders, and are recognized at the conference as an Emerging Leader. The program grows each fiscal year; check out our past [Emerging Leaders](#). Those selected this year will be featured on the MCA site and in the Fall Edition newsletter.

Keep an eye out for the call for applications to become an Emerging Leader in 2021-2022!

## Articles

### **Counselor Advocacy for Gender Diverse Clients** *Written by Liz Nadeau, J.D., M.S. in Counseling (candidate, 2021), MALGBTIC Student Representative*

The Maryland Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling (MALGBTIC) has identified equitable access to competent counseling for gender diverse clients, including transgender and non-binary (TNB) individuals, as a priority and ethical imperative. In furtherance of this goal, at the June 18, 2020 meeting of the Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists, Liz Nadeau, attorney and student representative on MALGBTIC, presented a proposed policy statement and advocacy brief. Ms. Nadeau urged the Board to exercise its authority under Maryland Code of Health Occupations 17-205(4) to “establish continuing education requirements for counselors or therapists currently certified by the Board” that is specifically tailored to counseling TNB persons from an intersectional perspective. MALGBTIC also advocated for a requirement that applicants for initial licensure complete such education. [\[link to Position Statement and Advocacy Brief\]](#)

The position statement calls for five concrete steps that counselors, counselor educators, counselors-in-training, accreditation bodies, and licensing boards are ethically obligated to undertake. More far-reaching obligations are imposed upon those who hold positions of authority that enable them to effect institutional and regulatory changes. Two of the five steps rely on good faith, voluntary efforts of counselors and counselor educators to seek and provide requisite education on gender diversity until it is mandated by accreditation boards and licensing boards. Three steps involve actions by accreditation boards and licensing boards. MALGBTIC will facilitate voluntary efforts to gain competency by offering free education at its annual symposium on November 14, 2020 on the fundamentals of working with gender diverse clients, their families, and all of the systems they encounter.

Fulfillment of nondiscrimination and affirmative duties to gender diverse persons under the ACA Code of Ethics requires taking concrete steps to end inequitable access to competent counseling. The mental health profession’s obligations to the gender diverse community are especially profound since it has played a fundamental role in pathologizing gender diversity. Without concrete action, the mental health community will continue to be complicit in perpetuating past injustices and abuses against a population that suffers from disproportionately high suicide rates (Dickey & Budge, 2020) and other societally-induced symptoms. All therapists should understand the great benefits of social transitions in reducing depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior (Russell et al., 2018), particularly when working with the families of youth who wish to dress, style their hair, or use pronouns or a chosen name (different from birth name) that are consistent with their gender identity. With family support, attempted suicide and suicide rates plummet from greater than 40% to about 4% (Klein & Golub, 2016); 57% of youth who lack family support attempt suicide (Travers et al., 2012).

It has been more than a decade since the ACA adopted the ALGBTIC *Competencies for Counseling Transgender Clients*, authored by the Transgender Committee of the Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling (ALGBTIC). [\[link to ALGBTIC Competencies for Counseling Transgender Clients\]](#) These *Competencies* are geared toward counselors who work with transgender individuals, families, groups, or communities. They recognize that counseling and other helping professions have historically “compounded the discrimination of transgender individuals by being insensitive, inattentive, uninformed, and inadequately trained and supervised to provide culturally proficient services to transgender individuals and their loved ones.” Adoption of these *Competencies* was a necessary step to improving the quality of services available for gender diverse persons, but adoption has proved to be insufficient on its own. Research conducted throughout the decade following adoption of the *Competencies* demonstrates that gender diverse people continue to lack access to safe and affirming counseling and that they are dissatisfied with services provided by counselors who are often insensitive, inattentive, uninformed, and inadequately trained to

*continued...*

provide culturally proficient services. The same problems identified by the authors of the *Competencies* continue to exist. Research demonstrates that, without adequate education, counselors are more likely to misunderstand gender diverse client goals and needs, stereotype them (Bettergarcia & Israel, 2018), invalidate their experiences (McCullough et al., 2017), and engage in other intentional or inadvertent microaggressions, such as use of incorrect pronouns, display of discomfort through body language and facial expressions (McCullough et al., 2017), conflation of gender identity with sexual orientation, gender "inflation" (improper attribution of presenting problems to gender identity), putting the client in the role of the therapist's educator (Benson, 2013; Mizock & Lundquist, 2016), deadnaming (calling the client by their birthname), erasure of nonbinary identities (Knutson et al., 2019), and other inappropriate conduct that detracts from the therapeutic process and may deter a client from seeking counseling in the future.

MALGBTIC is reaching out to educational institutions that sponsor counseling programs and alumni of those programs, professional associations, individual counselors and other mental health professionals, and private and government agencies that provide therapy to educate them on the critical need for the development of competence in counseling with gender diverse clients, including TNB clients. Outreach involves use of social media and direct contacts. Our website includes educational materials that may be used as training tools by educators and individuals who wish to pursue self-study. [[link to MALGBTIC website](#)]

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# Considerations for Providing Telehealth Services from Home *Written by Carmen Spears M.S., LCPC*

As we have been amid the coronavirus pandemic, telehealth has become extremely popular. It has allowed for mental health providers such as psychiatrists and therapists to be able to continue providing services to their clients. This option allows everyone to practice safety with social distancing and prevents services from being interrupted. Some providers may have already been utilizing telehealth services while other providers had to quickly make the adjustment.

## What is Telehealth?

Telehealth goes by many names such as teletherapy, online counseling, online therapy, eCounseling, etherapy, distance counseling, distance therapy and others; however, they're all referring to the same thing. So, what exactly is teletherapy? Teletherapy is the delivery of mental health services or behavioral health services to a patient at an offsite location by a distance provider through the use of technology assisted communication. The distance site refers to the physical location of the provider and the originating site refers to the physical location of the client.

## Technical Requirements

Before beginning telehealth services there are some technical requirements that you do need. You will need internet access, a video camera, audio and a device such as a laptop or computer to be utilized for sessions. Ideally, the display monitor should be sufficient to support or assess diagnostic needs. Make sure that you assess your internet service and ensure that it is secure. Having high-speed internet will not guarantee that you'll always have the best connection. There are many factors that play into this, such as does your location support this speed of internet, how many other people are on the same network, how many devices are using the internet at the same time and will there be interruptions to your internet service.

## Things to Test Out Ahead of Time

Some other things to consider are camera quality, sound, lighting, and privacy. You should check your camera quality to make sure that it is clear. If you are not satisfied with it, then consider purchasing a webcam to connect to your laptop or computer. Observe how much of your body the camera shows of your client and of yourself. Make sure it is evenly leveled and adjust the angle to show the best view of you. Check the audio and test different volumes. Make sure that the audio works with whatever platform or electronic health system that you're using. There's nothing worse than logging on and then not being able to hear your client. Sometimes you will have to try different browsers and adjust the security settings on your laptop or computer so that they may access your video and audio. Headphones can also be beneficial if there's external or outside noise that you cannot control. Another option is a sound machine to help drown out any other noise.

## Lighting and Background

Don't forget to test out lighting. It's usually best if the light is in front of you if that is an option. Daytime lighting is always complimentary, but what happens as the sun starts going down? You should make sure that you have additional light sources when that happens if it will effect the lighting. You should also locate a private location to use while providing services. If you can go into a room with a closed door, that would be the best option if you're at home. Depending on the layout of your environment, that may not be feasible. Since you're providing services from home, make sure you know what will be viewed in the background. If there's something you'd rather not have in view, remember to move it, choose a different location or adjust your camera angle. Perhaps you should consider investing in a divider to use for sessions or you may decide to use a virtual background. There's nothing wrong with using that option. Maybe you'd like a soothing water background, or a relaxing nature background or even a professional office background. These options may be available for you to use depending on what platform you choose to use while providing services.

## Session Time

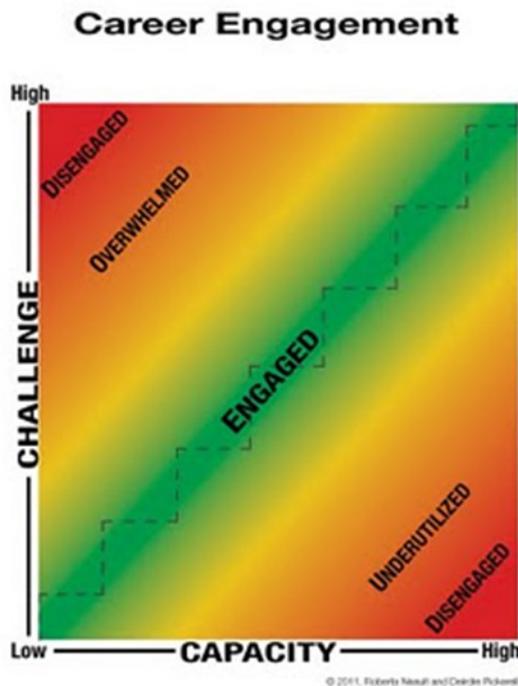
So now you've tested your video and audio, have the perfect location and are ready for your therapy session. If this is the first telehealth session for your client, make sure to verify their identity, such as by having them hold up their photo ID to the camera. If they are extremely close to the camera, see if they can step back so you can view more of their body. Afterwards, you can decide what distance from the camera works best for you both. You should also verify their location. This can be done by asking them, having them type it or having them pan the room they're in with their camera. It's not a bad idea for you both to do this to verify that there's no one in the room with your client or yourself. Another option would be for the client and yourself to come up with a code word to use if another person walks into the room. This is a great idea because it will discreetly let you know if they are no longer alone so that the conversation can be adjusted as needed. Since this is a telehealth session, it's important to have an emergency plan. This should be discussed during your first session. In addition, consider identifying a "patient support person". This is an individual located in the same setting as your client that can be called upon in case of an emergency or to assist in the evaluation of an emergency. Additionally, you'll want to have a plan in case there are interruptions to the internet services. This should specifically state whether to log back onto the same platform, switch to another platform, call the therapist or wait to receive a call from the therapist.

## Other Considerations for Working from Home

While providing services from home, remember to be as professional as possible and ensure the same standards as if you were in an office. Both your client and you should show up on time for the scheduled session. Make sure you are dressed appropriately. We understand that you're at home, but if you're dressed from the waist up, it's probably best for you to stay seated during the session. If you live with family or others, let them know that you're in a session and not to be interrupted. This includes kids. You may need to lock the door and put a sign on it if it's possible. If you own pets, consider if they will be a distraction and explore your options, such as putting them outside or in another room. In addition, you may need to review some rules for therapy with your client.

As you can see, providing telehealth services from home is possible. While there are many things that you may have to consider, you also have many different options that you can explore. Each person's situation will be different. It's important that you find what works best for you while providing telehealth services from home.

## Staying Engaged in Your Career during COVID-19 Written by Karol Taylor, GCDFI, CSP, CCMC, JCTC, CCC, CBBSC, Prior President of MCA, Board Member of MCDA



I like to share this picture with SEC employees who feel somewhat lost in our current COVID-19 circumstances. The picture was developed by career expert Dr. Roberta Neault and her colleague, Dierdra Pickerell. It shares about career engagement and helps folks to identify where they fit in this continuum.

A quick word about career engagement. Most people stay deeply engaged in their careers. However, each of us can “fall off the career engagement track” on occasion for one reason or another. Engaged employees have good and bad days, as indicated by the up and down dotted line, but ultimately they stay engaged. The concern takes place when individuals feel overwhelmed or underutilized which can quickly lead to disengagement, AKA burnout.

As you can see by the low and high axis, problems arise when we have high capacity and low challenge (underutilized) or when we have low capacity and high challenge (overwhelmed). It helps to pay attention to this as we work to stay engaged.

Right now we are in a situation that no one quite understands, and we are trying to make the best of it. We were once confident in our capacity to do our work, but today’s challenges are far reaching and different from anything previously experienced. We accept the challenge of making our way through this confusing time, but sometimes we wonder if we still have the capacity to address our work, home, and new existence properly. Forgiveness and patience are important during this uneasy time, especially toward yourself.

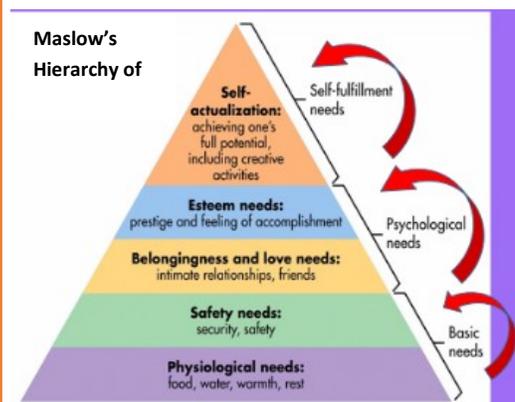
So here we are, chugging along, doing the best we can. A word of encouragement: that’s all we can do – the best we can. Most of us are working from home, some are homeschooling (in a way), and all are “holding down the fort.” We’ve taken on tasks we never thought we would be called upon to do. We see the same people over and over in a confined space. That can get frustrating. When we interact on the outside, we wear a mask. One person joked, “If I went to the grocery store with a mask on before COVID-19, they would have thought I was there to rob them.”

Mistakes are bound to happen; learning new ways of doing things involves the risk of not knowing. William Bridges, author of *Transitions: Making Sense of Life’s Changes*, says we are in the neutral zone. It’s not the way it was, it is not the way it’s going to be. This is the most frightening time and yet the most creative (<https://www.trg-inc.com/resources/transitions-the-personal-side-of-change>). We are creating this new way of being and, from my perspective, doing a fairly good job of it.

Please take a moment to realize how amazingly well you’ve adjusted to your new circumstance. Pause and savor your success. You are practicing new ways of accomplishing the same work; you adapted quickly and efficiently, and you became highly flexible at learning and adapting to new situations and ideas.

Your career is still on track and you remain engaged. Congratulations.

# Staying Motivated and Engaged While Sheltering-in-Place *Written by Karol Taylor, GCDFI, CSP, CCMC, JCTC, CCC, CBBSC, Prior President of MCA, Board Member of MCDA*



Time management gurus offer advice on how to stay motivated during a pandemic, as if they have experience dealing with one: get up at the same time each day, get dressed and ready as if you are reporting to the office, have a separate office from the rest of the house, etc. While some of their ideas may work, others may not. Teleworking during a pandemic is new to all of us, and none of us quite knows what we are doing. The key to staying motivated is to do your best without adding unnecessary, unrealistic pressure.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow talked about motivation in his Hierarchy of Needs Theory. Maslow said basic needs must be met for individuals to move to the next level (see graphics). At the basic level of survival (physiological) and safety needs, employees feel disengaged at work and their primary motivation is to survive. When basic needs are met, employees are able to reengage and focus. According to Maslow, engagement increases as employees move up the levels of the hierarchy from feelings of belonging and accomplishment, to becoming fully engaged and meeting their full potential.

Right now most of us have been given telework privileges, so sheltering in place meets our basic needs. Our sense of belonging and accomplishments is safeguarded – as long as we stay home. When we venture out, we move back down the Hierarchy to the basic needs level of survival and safety. It takes a moment to get back on track when we return home. With these variances in engagement vs non-engagement, it is not as easy to stay focused. Now IS NOT the time to write that book we all have inside us. Now IS NOT the time to make big decisions or big changes. Now IS the time to practice excellent self-care. Make self-care your biggest priority, then allow your positive energy to enhance your sense of engagement.

Here are some self-care ideas: set aside 15-20 minutes each day and honor this commitment. Walk around the house or around the block to get some natural Vitamin D. We need exercise, but we also need time to relax. Practice breath-focused meditation, guided meditation, and/or use music for relaxation. Some people meditate by coloring or drawing to music. Some apps offer free short meditations. YouTube has free guided meditation videos by a number of well-known authorities.



Another meditative approach is journaling, which helps to identify thoughts you might not know you are having. Journaling doesn't need to be perfect or in well-developed sentences; just write. It only takes an inexpensive notebook and a favorite pen, and voila you have a journal. Setting aside time each day will provide much needed insight and energy for facing the current ups and downs inherent in life during a pandemic. Whatever style of self-reflection you choose, make sure it is the one that works best for you.

As always, I suggest setting aside 10-15 minutes for your own career planning. Keeping track of your accomplishments is a great idea for writing your performance narrative at the end of the year. Be sure to have an IDP in place. Research courses, books, online learning, and other developmental opportunities to include in it. A well-developed IDP helps keep your career on track.

Right now we continue to face the unknown, so we might as well do it with style, verve, and pizzazz. Be kind and gentle with yourself. Make sure that no matter which method you use to keep yourself motivated and engaged, it's the right one for you.

## How to Become a Human Rights Activist *Written by Felicia Pressley, Ph.D., Human Rights Committee Chair*

So, you want to be a human rights activist. What does that term even mean? It can mean a lot of things, including working full-time at an organization or dedicating a large chunk of your free time to a cause. Anyone can be an activist. Here are ten tips:

**#1: Commit to small actions** — The easiest things you can do on your journey to becoming a human rights activist are very small. Donate money to causes you care about, write letters, and sign petitions. These may seem insignificant, but they're a great starting point and can make a difference for the people affected.

**#2: Get educated on issues** — You won't know what's going on in the world of human rights unless you do some research. Knowledge is power, and you'll find what really sparks your passion when you start seeing injustices. Digging deeper will also show you what other activists are doing to solve problems and how your skills could be relevant.

**#3: Join a local group** — Big organizations like Amnesty International usually have local chapters all over the place that you can join as a volunteer, if not as an employee. Pretty much all career activists will volunteer before they are paid; it proves you're really in it for the cause and are willing to sacrifice your free time.

**#4: Get involved in the political process** — The state of human rights is largely determined by who is in power. If you are a citizen of a country that votes for its government, you need to vote. That's the least you could do. Activists will most likely not be satisfied with just heading to the polls, so get involved in other ways, for example by volunteering for candidates you're passionate about.

**#5: Students, look for classes and degrees in relevant fields** — If you're in school and interested in pursuing some kind of career in human rights, search out classes that will build up your knowledge. Schools will also have degrees with human rights specializations that you can study for. Lots of jobs in the human rights field will require these types of degrees, so if you're serious about a possible career, see what your school has to offer.

**#6: Get experience** — Besides a relevant degree, experience is also crucial for budding human rights activists. You can get in the field through volunteering and internships; they're just as important as taking the right classes or reading the right books in terms of fully understanding an issue. These experiences will also connect you to organizations and people that can lead you to a permanent career.

**#7: Be flexible and willing to go where you're needed** — A human rights activist goes where the issues are. This might mean you take some trips to places you never thought you'd see and possibly stay there for a while. When you're thinking about your future plans, acknowledge that you'll need to be flexible about where you look for jobs, volunteer opportunities, and schooling.

**#8: Come up with a personal mission statement** — What's a "personal mission statement?" This is a statement that encompasses your goals, purpose, and the value you bring to the human rights arena. It's the kind of thing that would go on top of a resume, so the human rights organizations you want to work for get a clear idea of who you are as a person and what you'll add to a team. Writing this statement (which can be up to three sentences) is an extremely valuable exercise in self-reflection and forces you to dig really deeply into why you have a passion for human rights.

**#9: Stand up to oppression and discrimination when you see it** — This will most likely come naturally to the type of person who wants to be a human rights activist. When they see injustices in real time, in their own life, they stand up. However, it can sometimes be scary and speaking up might cost you relationships with friends and family. Think about how you stand up based on the situation and what your end goal is – is it to change minds? Or is to show victims of oppression that they aren't alone?

**#10: Maintain a support network** — Every activist needs a support network because standing up for human rights can be physically and emotionally exhausting. Burnout is very common. Know your limitations and surround yourself with people who can help you work through hard feelings. You should also memorize phone numbers in case you are ever arrested at an event or lose your phone. If you believe you're going into a potentially-dangerous situation, try not to go alone. Fighting for human rights can feel daunting, so prepare for opposition, stay organized, and stay sharp.

Source: <https://www.humanrightscareers.com/magazine/how-to-become-a-human-rights-activist>

If you feel you would like to submit to this work and be a part of the newly re-formed Human Rights Committee, please contact the Chair, Felicia Pressley, Ph.D. at [fpressley@yahoo.com](mailto:fpressley@yahoo.com)



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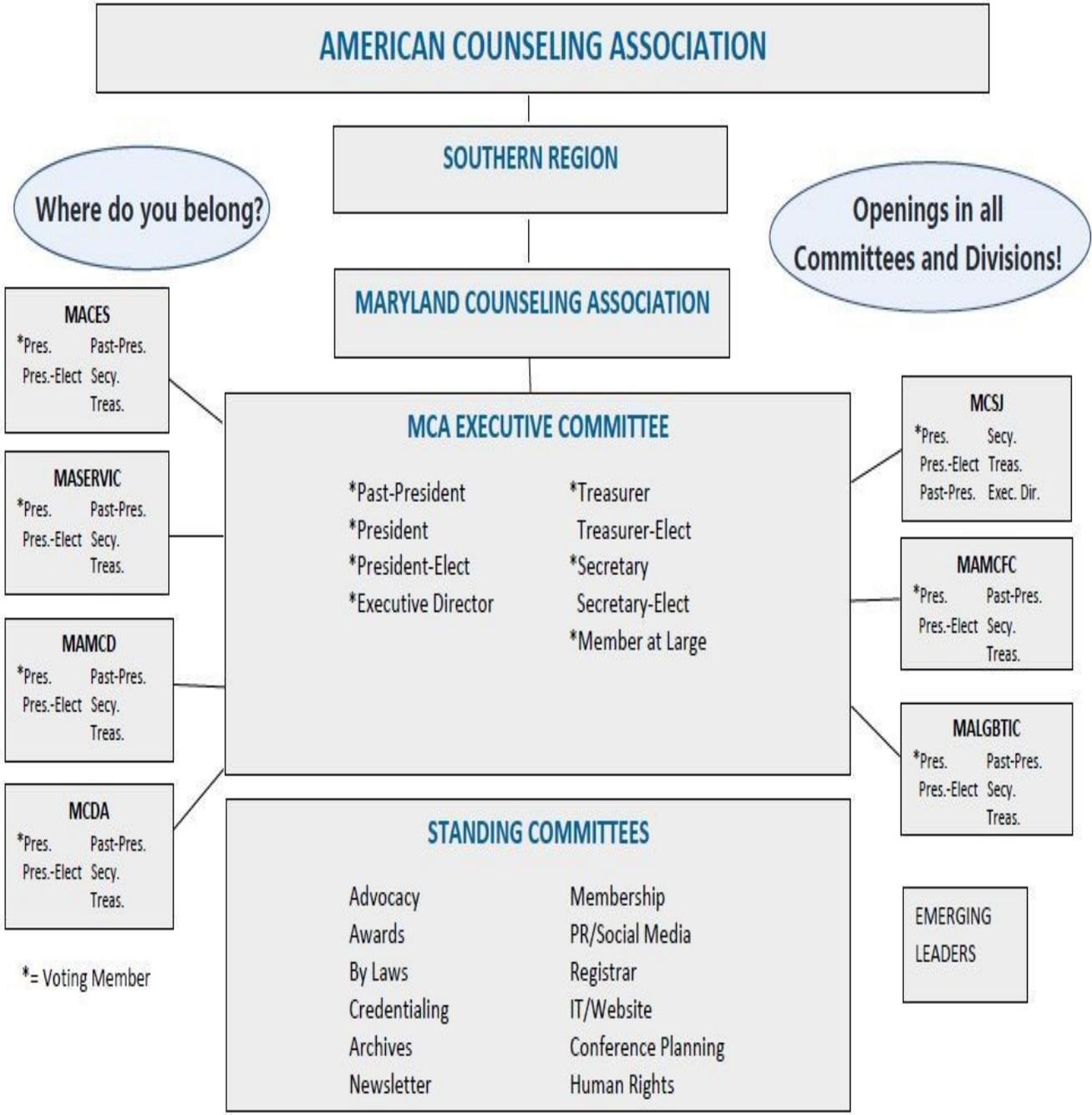
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**Announcements** may be submitted for inclusion by MCA committees, divisions and affiliates. This can include upcoming events, important news, etc.

### **How much do ads cost?**

Pricing is based on size of the ad per page. A quarter page is \$25, a half page is \$50 and a full page is \$75. For example, if your ad is 2 full pages, your total will be \$150.

### **What forms of payment do you accept?**

We accept payments via check and credit card. Checks must be mailed to PO Box 1971 Clinton MD 20735 % MCA Treasurer. Please note "Newsletter Ad" in the memo.

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For paying by credit card, you must be [registered](#) as a member or [subscribed](#) nonmember on the MCA site. An invoice will be generated to the email address on record; payment must be completed within 5 business days of receiving invoice. Advertising will be returned if payment is not received within the allotted time.

### **How often is there a newsletter release?**

Newsletters are released quarterly. When released, it is emailed to subscribers and posted to MCA's website at: <http://www.md counseling.org/page-1596008>.

### **When is the next newsletter deadline?**

| <i>Edition</i> | <i>Submission Deadline</i> | <i>Publication Month</i> |
|----------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Summer         | July 15 <sup>th</sup>      | August                   |
| Fall           | October 15 <sup>th</sup>   | November                 |
| Winter         | January 15 <sup>th</sup>   | February                 |
| Spring         | April 15 <sup>th</sup>     | May                      |

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### **Can I submit events to the weekly digest?**

Yes, contact the Public Relations Committee at [Public.Relations@MDCounseling.org](mailto:Public.Relations@MDCounseling.org).