



MICOMeds

Mental Empowerment and Developmental Support



"Yuh Mussi Mad!!"

Does Mental Health Matter?

Dr. Ruthlyn McLarty
Guidance Counsellor

"Yuh mussi mad" is one of many common Jamaican colloquial expressions which is used lightheartedly and without prejudice or consideration of a person's mental state. While such terminologies within a cultural context create a great avenue for conversation, they can also affect one's awareness, sensitivity and vigilance in recognizing and attending to mental health challenges, thus generating a barrier to treatment and recovery.

Essentially, young adulthood is a time of growth, learning and exploration. Likewise, university life is usually one of excitement and fun, though for a number of reasons, it can also be a period of major transitional challenges. These may be due to significant changes which can negatively impact the socio-emotional and mental health and well-being of students.

The fact is, there is a strong inter-relationship between good mental health and other areas of an individual's life. Even at this very critical academic and occupational juncture, university students can be equipped to successfully balance and manage all aspects of their lives without crumbling under pressure.

However, the reality is that many students at the tertiary level are finding it difficult to manage, especially with the added complexities of coping through a pandemic. Additionally, studies have shown that while students are struggling with mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression and substance abuse, only as small as 10-15 percent on average seek the services of their university counselling centers. At times this can have substantial negative impact on students' academic performance and subsequently, their ability to satisfactorily complete their programmes as well as continue on a lucrative career path (Nance, 2018).

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Introducing the Counsellor

Dr. Ruthlyn McLarty

“Allow your passion to become your purpose and it will one day become your profession.” This saying aptly describes the life and career path of the Guidance Counsellor, Dr. Ruthlyn McLarty. She has been an Educator for the past 29 years and a Counselling Psychologist for the past 16 years. Her passion for both professions is rooted in her Christian beliefs and values and grounded in her love for people.

Dr. McLarty has a Bachelor's Degree in Education, a Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology and a Doctoral Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. She is licensed with the Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine and a member of the Jamaica Psychological Association. In her capacity as Guidance Counsellor, she endeavours to help in fostering the holistic development of The Mico University College community.

Balancing Life: Staying the Course

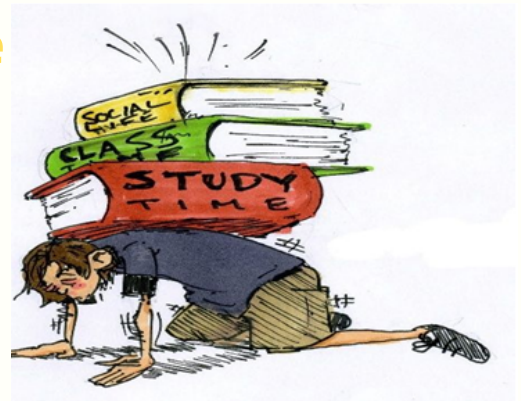
Mr. Kirk James

MSc. Counselling and Social Work

How fulfilling would life be with success and progress in only one area of our life? It would never work to our benefit. The fact is, there is an enormous interplay between balancing our lifestyle and longevity of life. According to Gestalt therapy, individuals are involved in the constant construction of organizing and reorganizing their experience, searching for patterns and a feeling of wholeness. It subscribes to the view that human beings cannot be understood by generalizing one part of the self, but must be considered the total of all they are (Joshua, 2020).

Subsequently, the significance of wholeness and balance in our life cannot be overstated. A balanced lifestyle is the way in which we live and reflect the different elements of our life in the right proportion. It involves us taking into consideration all elements of our wellbeing necessary to foster positive growth and development.

Adopting a balanced lifestyle is of utmost importance because it can have immediate and long-term effects on our health. It will improve our immune system while lowering the risk of the development of chronic diseases. It will also reduce stress, develop



our state of mind and improve our general well-being (Basics of Healthy Living, nd).

Additionally, life will be much more fulfilling if we maintain a balance between work, social life, family life, studies, and hobbies. Prioritizing is a critical component to a balanced lifestyle, which will require individuals to examine their values and decide what is most important. Attending to each area of life by setting goals, being organized and taking time out to enjoy activities is key and will go a far way in not just helping us to live a balanced life, but to also stay the course of life in fine style.

*"The one who falls and gets up is so much stronger than the one who never fell.
Think progress and not perfection."*

Message from the President

Dr. Asburn Pinnock

Dear Mico Family

It is with pride that I welcome the inaugural issue of MICOMeds an initiative of the Office of the Guidance Counsellor. This is timely now that we are celebrating and focusing attention on International Mental Health Week (October 10-16, 2021)

We recognize the importance of positive mental health to all aspects of our being. It speaks to the “ability to learn, to feel, express and manage a range of positive and negative emotions as well as the ability to form and maintain good relationships with others”.

As a family, we must support each other and this pandemic has made it critical that we check on each other, listen well and reaffirm our faith in God. This newsletter will share tips on how to identify signs of mental fatigue, how to keep physical and positive mental health. I am also confident that the Guidance Counsellor will be open to other issues that our community might identify as important.

I encourage you to read this newsletter, visit the Guidance Counsellor, relax and engage in activities that will make you happy and satisfied. We know that challenges will arise but our capacity to deal with them will be enhanced by our support and good mental health. Be safe and God bless you all.



Message from the Vice President of Administration

Mr. Rudolph A. Sewell

The core business of The Mico University College is the preparation of teachers for Jamaica and the world at large. For a teacher to be effective he/she must have the capacity to develop authentic relationships with school administrators, colleagues, students, parents/guardians and the wider community.

In facilitating the development of this competency, the appropriate psychosocial environment has to be created during the pre-service stage of learning to teach. Teacher Education Institutions routinely implement interventions for students struggling with their understanding of subject and pedagogical knowledge as well as the planning and execution of lessons. Similarly, interventions must also be implemented to address social, emotional and mental health issues being experienced by student-teachers.

I welcome and applaud the efforts of our new University College Counsellor in this regard. The theme for Mental Health Week 2021, “Self Preservation for Better Acceleration”, aptly captures the psychosocial imperative for our students at this time. I also endorse the launch of the MICOMeds Newsletter, and wish for the entire community a productive and fulfilling academic year.



Mission Statement

The Mico University Guidance and Counselling Unit serves to enhance the holistic wellbeing of its constituents. This is done by offering a wide range of services that include individual and group counselling, consultation, psychoeducation, personal, professional, preventative and interventive support.

Vision Statement

The Mico University Guidance and Counselling Unit strives to create and maintain an environment that is warm, engaging and dynamic in its approaches to provide treatment and care of mental health issues and in supporting the psychosocial growth and development of its community.

"Yuh Mussi Mad"

Does Mental Health Matter?

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Consequently, early professional intervention that will provide the necessary actions of counselling, teaching life skills and supporting the holistic well-being of students is vital; yet, not without the students' understanding of the critical role they play in:

- Accepting that mental illness is real.
- Negating the personal and cultural stigma associated with mental illness and counselling.
- Recognizing the critical role individuals play in securing his or her own mental health.
- Understanding that delay in seeking the necessary assistance can lead to drastic life-threatening consequences.
- Appreciating the valuable support and resources available within and outside of The Mico community.
- Acting quickly and responsibly in seeking guidance and counselling.

References

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Self-Care 101

Your Daily Dose

Dr. Ruthlyn McLarty

The importance of good self-care must be underscored. While living through a pandemic is proving to be quite stressful, one sure way to cope is by engaging in good self-care. A holistic approach to self-care is vital to carrying out one's daily routine effectively.

Subsequently, taking some 'me-time' is not being selfish or an indulgence; it's a necessity. We can use the recipe below as a guide to our daily dose of self-care.

- 8 hours of sleep; your mood and immune system depend on it.
- 1 hour of devotion, meditation and prayer to help maintain spiritual growth, build mental resilience and manage anxiety.
- 1 hour of leisure reading
- 3-5 hours of study time
- 1 hour of exercise
- 3-5 hours of social media break
- 1-3 hours of family time
- 1 hour of friendship time
- At least 2-3 hours of 'me-time' indulging in an activity that you absolutely love.
- At least 1 serving of fruits
- 2 servings of vegetables
- 8 cups of water
- Vitamin and mineral supplements on doctor's advice
- Ton loads of laughter with a dash of selfie
- Drops of forgiveness and a whole heap of optimism.
- Sprinkle with lots of love and thankfulness

Serving is just enough for you whether on a steaming hot or an icy cold day. Enjoy!

About The Mico Guidance Counselling Services

The Mico Counselling Services provide its constituents with a safe, non-judgmental and supportive place to share and navigate change that will lead to a more fulfilling life. Its services include individual and group counselling as well as training programmes. The Chaplain of the University also provides a cadre of services including grief and bereavement counselling.

For Appointments send an email to the Administrative Assistant
 Email: peta-gay.douse@themico.edu.jm
 Tel: 876-564-8915

Upcoming Events: Semester 1- Sept-Dec, 2021

- Mental Health Week - October 10-16, 2021
- NewsLetter & Website Launch - October 12, 2021
- Wired to Win Workshop (Students) - October 14, 2021
- Self-Care 101 Workshop (Staff) - October 15, 2021
- Study Skills Workshop (Students) November 11, 2021