



**We are
Called**

TO HEAL. TO UNITE. TO JUSTICE.

A REFLECTION

National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month (July)

Minority mental health champion Bebe Moore Campbell tells a story of watching a loved one exhibit increasingly erratic and unsafe behavior. Fear of stigma kept him from seeking much-needed help. Campbell explains,

"Stigma is one of the main reasons why people with mental health problems don't seek treatment or take their medication. People of color, particularly African-Americans, feel the stigma more keenly. In a race-conscious society, some don't want to be perceived as having yet another deficit. Others find it hard to trust medical personnel who don't seem to understand their culture. ... The word 'crazy' relegates people to a world of semi-human. My relative didn't want to live there. No one does."

Eventually, her family member got treatment, accepted a diagnosis and the whole family could heal. In Catholic health care, we must do our part to end the stigma and end the mental health disparity experienced by minority communities.

Let us pray for all who suffer from mental illness, especially those who endure double discrimination because of their skin color.

God of Love and Tenderness,

Look with kindness on your children who have a mental illness, especially those from minority communities who experience both fewer resources and greater stigma. Draw near to them with comfort and peace.

May we welcome them in Your name and affirm their inherent dignity, which is your gift. Lift the burden of stigma from the hearts of those who suffer and the hearts of those who serve.

Amen.

Excerpted from Bebe Moore Campbell, "[Stigma Can Prevent Much-Needed Mental Health](#)"