

our

May + June 2015

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HEALTH

IN TOUCH
WITH YOUR
HEALTH

matters™

After “I Do”

How Can Couples Strengthen Their Relationship?

How to Keep Your Marriage Alive

10 THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU GET MARRIED

Great marriages are built on more than a strong attraction, or affection for one another.

CAN INTERFAITH MARRIAGES WORK?

Couples find ways to co-exist with their different religious beliefs.

MARRIAGE MATTERS, AND NOT JUST TO YOU

How do others view your marriage?

Ten Things to Consider Before You Get Married



LOVE CHANGES EVERYTHING...

You spend a lot of time planning for that special day — your wedding day. But do you spend time planning for the actual marriage, which is meant to last a lifetime? Marriage is a long-term commitment that requires careful planning. Before you take the plunge, consider these 10 things that could impact your happiness.

1. ARE YOU READY? During their teens and 20s, people change considerably. Until a person has matured as an individual, it is difficult to know if a relationship that worked for them in their younger years will still work for them years later.

2. FINANCES. Discussing money issues ahead of time, (spending habits and where you each feel your money should go), can prevent disagreements later. Discuss how you and your partner feel about buying, saving and sharing bank accounts. How will the bills be split up? Will a prenuptial agreement be necessary?

3. PERSONAL NEEDS AND BELIEFS. What do you need to make your relationship work? What are your views on issues such as loyalty, honesty, and dealing with anger? What behaviors are considered *off-limits*?

4. COMMUNICATION SKILLS. How do you communicate with your partner? Set ground rules for communication, making sure to discuss specific issues such as arguing, yelling, and name-calling. Are you able to resolve issues to reach a compromise?

5. LIFE OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE. Having a life outside of your partner is vital, and it is important to maintain your identity, rather than to lose yourself in your mate. Are there certain activities that will stop or change once you get married?

6. DO YOU WANT CHILDREN? If so, how many? How do you plan to discipline them, raise them, and care for them? How would you handle issues such as infertility and adoption should they

come up? Having children brings changes into your relationship and you will have less time to focus on the two of you.

7. EMPLOYMENT. What kind of effect will your job and long-term career plans have on your family life? If you have children, will one of you quit your job to take care of them?

8. SEX. Being unsatisfied with your sex life can cause problems in your relationship. Discuss your expectations with your partner, and find out what he/she expects from you in return.

9. DAILY LIFE, FAMILY/FRIENDS. Who will be responsible for daily activities such as household chores? Do you get along with the people who are important in your partner's life? If not, will it cause problems in your relationship?

10. HOW COMMITTED ARE YOU TO THE RELATIONSHIP? When your relationship goes through changes (which it will), are you willing to take the necessary steps to deal with the changes? Are you open to counseling if your relationship is in trouble, or are you more likely to give up?

Marriage is not a fairy tale. There is no magic formula for making a marriage work. However, only you can be held responsible for your own happiness. Take time to think about your future and share your thoughts with your partner. You have already taken the first step in making sure your relationship can stand the test of time. •

SOURCE: Cigna Behavioral Health

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Kansas City, Missouri Health Department

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Bluford Healthcare Leadership Institute

The BHLI welcomes its third class of scholars exposing them to executive leadership opportunities.

Pathways to a Better Life

Each edition I look forward to connecting with you in this very space. I think about what might be helpful to your life, searching for the right words. Then it dawned on me that your dreams are a pathway to a better life.

You've got big dreams for your family, your career and your life. And while the road to achieving them isn't always smooth, chasing your dreams with the ones you love makes the journey more meaningful.

Whether you've discovered your calling or you are still searching to find your way, this issue is filled with advice, encouragement and support for you. A healthy marriage is the dream of many and *Our Health Matters* takes a look at marriage from pre-nuptials to marriage, to money, to interfaith unions—offering “food for thought” from multiple angles.

Follow us as we share information on how to improve your health and well-being in observance of National Mental Health and National Asthma Month. Look for important answers and data on each of these health observances. Lastly, realizing that many of our dreams are made possible through the sacrifice of others, we take a moment to celebrate the Military. A chat with the communications officer at the VFW National Headquarters, located right here in our home town shares the policies, programs and services available to America's veterans.

... Til Death Do Us Part



All throughout this edition we have focused on the joys of marriage and a shared life. When you have built a life with someone, losing that person feels like everything you have accomplished and hoped for is gone. On April 30, 2015, I experienced such a loss. My husband of 22 years, Floyd Wiggins passed away. The sadness is overwhelming and yet I will continue our dream of this magazine. Floyd would want me to continue this journey to bring you closer to a healthy life. Thanks to everyone who has offered prayers, good wishes and reflections on Floyd's life.

One thing is clear, everyone needs a cheerleader in life. Consider the team at *OHM* as your personal pep squad, as you journey toward a better life.

Be well. LIVE, LAUGH AND LOVE!

Ruth Ramsey, Publisher and CEO



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1734 E. 63rd Street
Suite 509
Kansas City, MO 64110
816.361.6400
kcourhealthmatters.com

PUBLISHER
Ruth Ramsey
ruthramsey@kcourhealthmatters.com

EDITORIAL & STRATEGIC PLANNING
Donna Wood
dwood@kcourhealthmatters.com

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Jeanene Dunn

EVENT COORDINATOR
Barbara Bartholomew
bebe@kcourhealthmatters.com

**HAVING AN EVENT?
GOT QUESTIONS?**
info@kcourhealthmatters.com

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CONTRIBUTORS
Theresa Hubbard, LMFT (MO),
LCMFT (KS), ACCH
David Brown
Steve Katz
Randi Law
Gayle Hill
Nina Johnson
Tru-Kechia Smith
Rev. Algernon Baker, Sr.
Stacy Davis, MA
Samantha Hughes, MPA
Danielle Malan, COTA,
NASM-CPT
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
National Alliance
on Mental Health

Jason

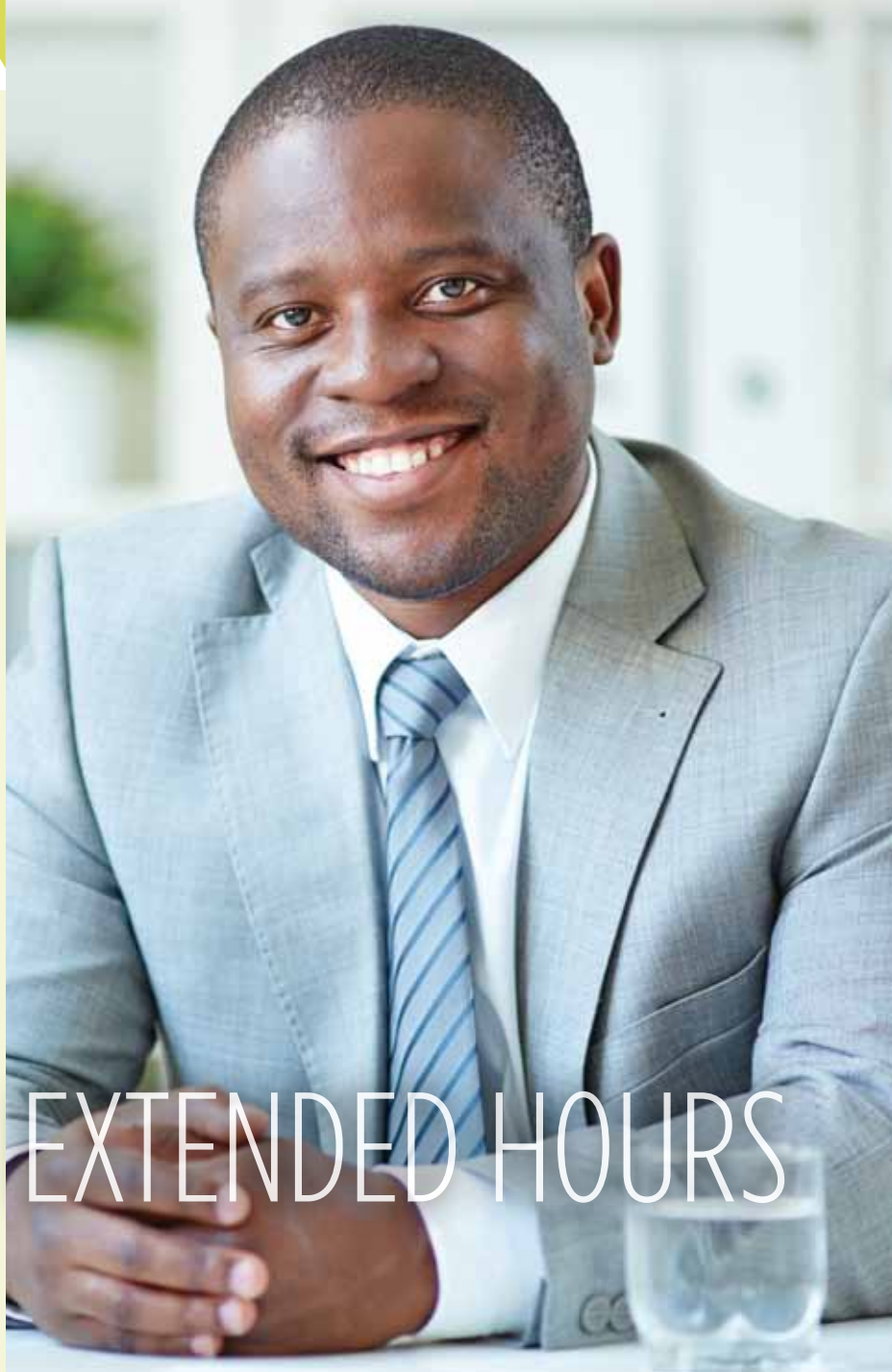
Has his eyes set squarely
on a corner office.

Travels between
KC and NYC weekly.

Escapes to the ski slopes
every chance he gets.

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get in his way, so
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Getting to Normal After a Stroke

On the road to healing and recovery.

By Jeanene Dunn, OHM Staff

Loud laughter and multiple interruptions fill the room. Danielle “Dani” Malan is trying to get through morning announcements at a recent American Stroke Foundation (ASF) Next Step stroke survivors meeting. Malan keeps things moving along though, because she knows the next activity is exercise.

Malan, a program assistant for the ASF Cleaver YMCA location, is a certified occupational therapy assistant (COTA), and certified personal trainer (NASM-CPT). “My certifications are a compliment to the group’s goals for improvements in functional activities,” says Malan. “This is how I am able to meet them where they are in the recovery process.”

Movement is critical to help stroke survivors recover some of what has been lost -- and help prevent another stroke. “Physical and mental exercises help stroke survivors strengthen their minds and bodies,” explains Malan.

Her positive energy is infectious. Eventually, even the most reluctant participate. Malan keeps the group motivated and provides a gentle nudge when necessary. “Every person has been affected

differently by their stroke,” says Malan. “And each person’s recovery process is different, too.”

Could you be at risk?

The risk factors that may lead to stroke, include:

- > High blood pressure
- > Heart disease
- > Diabetes
- > Smoking
- > Family history
- > Race (African-Americans and Hispanics are at higher risk)
- > Age

A stroke can occur at any age. Bob, Rosita and Troy suffered strokes before age 50. “I never thought I would have a stroke,” Rosita says. “Even though my family history put me at higher risk.” Bob had been discharged from the hospital following treatment for heart disease. “I was readmitted a few days later suffering from a stroke,” he says. Troy says stress and high blood pressure contrib-



uted to his stroke. “I was leading a very busy lifestyle and it wasn’t good for my health,” he says.

How can I reduce my risk?

- > Take high blood pressure medicine as prescribed
- > Stop smoking
- > Get moving
- > Eat healthy

Healthy eating helps to reduce the risk of having a stroke. It’s important to read food labels and ingredients. “Be aware of the sodium content in foods,” counsels Malan. She encourages the group to eat fresh or frozen vegetables — and drink more water. “Drinking water helps the body better process foods and medications.” These discussions help Next Step members evaluate their food choices. Carrie is completely changing the way she eats. “I want to eliminate meat completely from my diet,” she says. Rosita loves bacon and cola-flavored soda. “I don’t buy these items anymore,” she says.

“Physical and mental exercises help stroke survivors strengthen their minds and bodies.”

– Danielle Malan, program assistant,
American Stroke Foundation

The road back

Recovering from a stroke takes time and work. Roosevelt, of Big Spring, Texas, knows this well. He suffered a stroke three years ago. “Now, I take my medications and exercise regularly,” Roosevelt says. “I also eat healthier.”

Setting and maintaining goals are part of recovery. The Next Step group commits to (and documents) healthy goals like daily exercise. “I want them to be accountable for their own health, and goals help them stay on track.” says Malan.

To learn more about American Stroke Foundation Next Step program locations, visit www.americanstroke.org.

SOURCES: Danielle Malan, COTA, NASM-CPT,
Program Assistant, Next Step Cleaver YMCA location
American Stroke Foundation



My Healthy Lifestyle Journey

A story of sheer will, commitment and determination.

By Gayle Hill, Winner Red Dress Lifestyle Challenge

WITHOUT A DOUBT, LOSING WEIGHT WAS WHAT I NEEDED TO DO FOR MY HEALTH. My body complained in various ways and I'm glad it did.

For Lent, I gave up cookies and laziness, promising to add consistent exercise. However, I was not consistent with my exercise. I saw an ad while reading *Our Health Matters* about the Red Dress Healthy Lifestyle Challenge. "Great," I said to myself. "This is just what I need to help me." As soon as I got home I registered for the challenge.

We gathered at Fit for the Journey Fitness Center for the kickoff. I was determined and ready to get in shape. With the expert guidance from Nina Johnson and her staff, encouragement from Ruth Ramsey and the ladies at the fitness center, my journey began.

Twice a week, I participated in an hour of rigorous exercise. Monday night was boot camp. Wednesday night was TNT (Tighten & Tone). Whew! After the hour session I could tell I had a good workout. My energy level began to increase. The journey was feeling good. I ate right and began to shed some pounds.

My determination, healthy eating habits, consistent exercise guided by professionals, along with support and encouragement helped me to win the challenge.

Reaching this one goal has motivated me to set another goal, because my journey is not over. I continue to exercise at Fit for the Journey Fitness Center to lose a few more pounds and to keep them off. At home, I exercise often and continue to eat right. My goal is to maintain a healthy lifestyle and stay 'fit for my journey.'

Thanks American Heart Association, *Our Health Matters* and Fit for the Journey. I love my new 'red dress!'



Gayle Hill, winner of the Red Dress Challenge by achieving the highest percentage of weight loss.

Gayle is a retired school teacher after 30 years with the Kansas City, MO School District. She taught special needs students from grades Kindergarten to 9th grade. She is an active volunteer in her church and board member of the Friends of Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center & Museum and the Spirit of Freedom Foundation.

My advice to anyone wanting to make a healthy lifestyle change...

First set a goal and make up your mind that you will do what it takes to reach your goal.

Then eat healthier and get consistent exercise.

For ladies I recommend Fit for the Journey Fitness Studio.

Empowered By the Red Dress Challenge

Committing to a healthy lifestyle change has its benefits.

By Nina Johnson, Certified Personal Trainer

Fit for the Journey Fitness Studio

ON FEBRUARY 6TH A COLD, WINTER EVENING AT FIT FOR THE JOURNEY FITNESS STUDIO, 30 women signed up to

start on the path to good health and fitness. Each was committing to the American Heart Association's six-week Red Dress and Lifestyle Challenge. Their motivation went far beyond the promise of winning a stylish "red dress" for their accomplishments. Getting and maintaining a healthier weight and lifestyle was the bigger priority.

At the beginning of the challenge, each received a food plan, personal training session and fitness classes. They tracked their weekly weight loss and keep a food journal. They also participated in Fit For The Journey's regular group fitness classes twice a week which included:

- > Zumba®
- > Boot camp workouts
- > Tighten 'n Tone strength training workout
- > Sweat and Sculpt

The woman with the highest percentage of body weight loss was declared the winner. On March 28, Gayle Hill was announced as the winner. She is an extraordinary participant who entered the challenge with commitment and dedication. Gayle exercised consistently, kept her food journal and made progress every week. She was an inspiration.

Hill received a beautiful red dress and was presented at the American Heart Association's stroke education awareness event Most Powerful Voices Concert, in Kansas City, MO on May 2. Read more about Gayle Hill's fitness journey in her own words on the opposite page. •

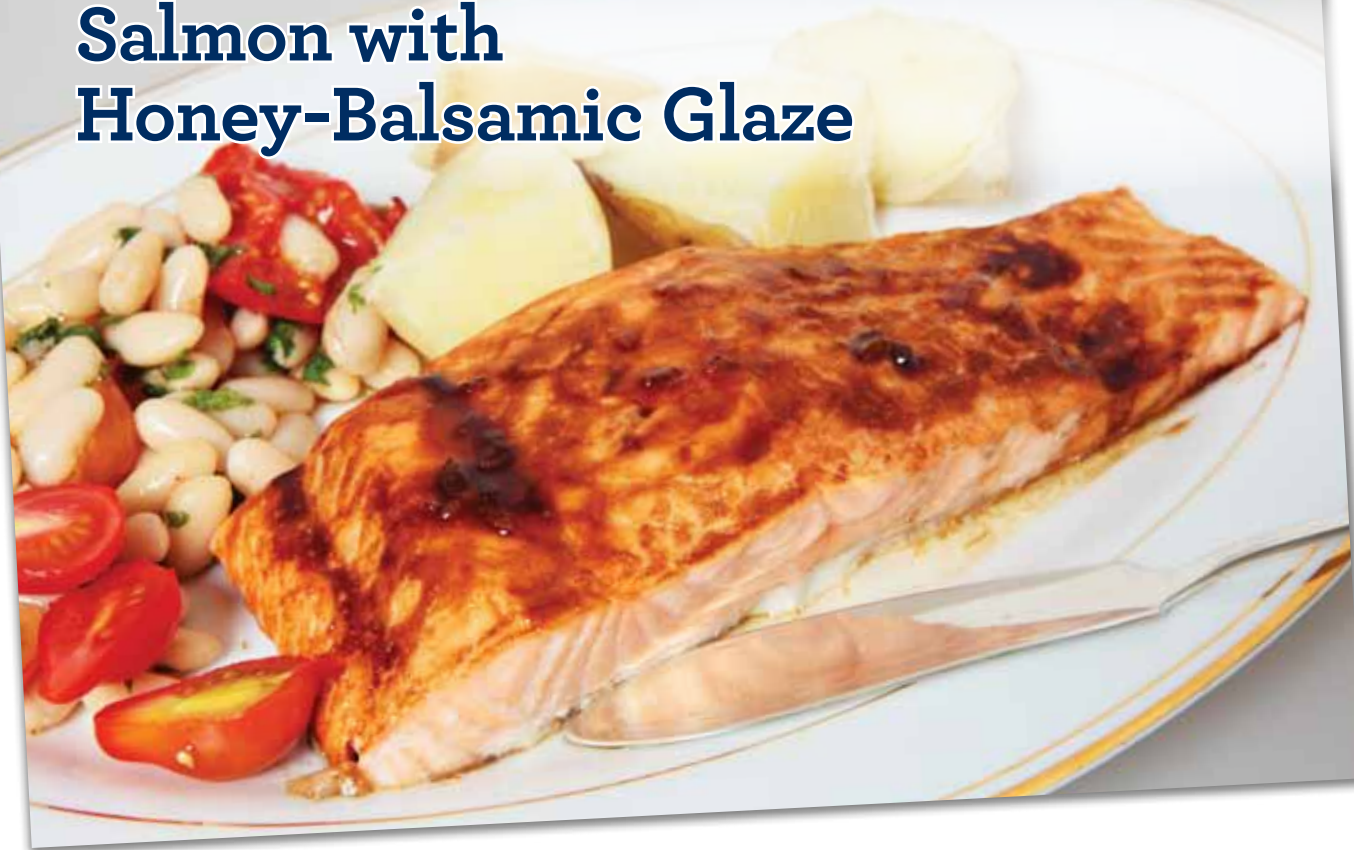
Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women in the U.S., taking the life of one in three women – almost one woman every minute. Research shows that most cardiac events can be prevented if women make small, yet life-saving choices for their heart. The American Heart Association's Red Dress Healthy Lifestyle Challenge helped women transform their overall health through small, simple choices. It gave them an opportunity to achieve a noticeably better state of well-being and heart health in just 6 weeks.



Left: Tru-Kechia Smith
Regional Multi-Cultural Initiatives Director
American Heart Association – Overland Park

Right: Nina Johnson, Certified Personal Trainer, Fit for the Journey
Fitness Studio

Salmon with Honey-Balsamic Glaze



Serves: 4

Use simple ingredients likely to be found in your kitchen to create a far-from-ordinary glaze for this easy entrée.

Ingredients

- > Cooking spray
- > 1 1/2 tablespoons light mayonnaise 1 1/2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar 1 tablespoon honey
- > 1 1/2 teaspoons sesame seeds
- > 3/4 teaspoon dried oregano, crumbled 3/4 teaspoon olive oil
- > 1 medium garlic clove, minced
- > 4 skinless salmon fillets (about 4 ounces each), rinsed and patted dry

Cooking Instructions

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Lightly spray a shallow baking pan with cooking spray.

Spoon the mayonnaise into a small bowl. Gradually whisk in the vinegar until smooth. Whisk in the remaining ingredients except the fish.

Put the fish in the baking pan. Lightly spread the mayonnaise mixture over the top and sides of each fillet. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the fish flakes easily when tested with a fork.

Nutritional Analysis Per serving

Calories Per Serving	200
Total Fat	7.5g
Saturated Fat	1.0g
Trans Fat	0g
Polyunsaturated Fat.....	3.0g
Monounsaturated Fat.....	3.0g
Cholesterol	67mg
Sodium	130mg
Carbohydrates.....	7g
Fiber	0g
Sugar	6g
Protein.....	25g

This recipe is brought to you by the American Heart Association's Patient Education program. Recipe copyright © 2010 by the American Heart Association. Look for other delicious recipes in American Heart Association cookbooks, available from booksellers everywhere, and at heart.org/recipes.

10 tips

Nutrition
Education Series

salt and sodium

10 tips to help you cut back



It's clear that Americans have a taste for salt, but salt plays a role in high blood pressure. Everyone, including kids, should reduce their sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium a day (about 1 teaspoon of salt). Adults age 51 and older, African Americans of any age, and individuals with high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease should further reduce their sodium intake to 1,500 mg a day.

1 think fresh

Most of the sodium Americans eat is found in processed foods. Eat highly processed foods less often and in smaller portions—especially cheesy foods, such as pizza; cured meats, such as bacon, sausage, hot dogs, and deli/luncheon meats; and ready-to-eat foods, like canned chili, ravioli, and soups. Fresh foods are generally lower in sodium.

2 enjoy home-prepared foods

Cook more often at home—where you are in control of what's in your food. Preparing your own foods allows you to limit the amount of salt in them.

3 fill up on veggies and fruits—they are naturally low in sodium

Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits—fresh or frozen. Eat a vegetable or fruit at every meal.

4 choose dairy and protein foods that are lower in sodium

Choose more fat-free or low-fat milk and yogurt in place of cheese, which is higher in sodium. Choose fresh beef, pork, poultry, and seafood, rather than those with salt added. Deli or luncheon meats, sausages, and canned products like corned beef are higher in sodium. Choose unsalted nuts and seeds.

5 adjust your taste buds

Cut back on salt little by little—and pay attention to the natural tastes of various foods. Your taste for salt will lessen over time.



6 skip the salt

Skip adding salt when cooking. Keep salt off the kitchen counter *and* the dinner table. Use spices, herbs, garlic, vinegar, or lemon juice to season foods or use no-salt seasoning mixes. Try black or red pepper, basil, curry, ginger, or rosemary.

7 read the label

Read the Nutrition Facts label and the ingredients statement to find packaged and canned foods lower in sodium. Look for foods labeled “low sodium,” “reduced sodium,” or “no salt added.”

8 ask for low-sodium foods when you eat out

Restaurants may prepare lower sodium foods at your request and will serve sauces and salad dressings on the side so you can use less.

9 pay attention to condiments

Foods like soy sauce, ketchup, pickles, olives, salad dressings, and seasoning packets are high in sodium. Choose low-sodium soy sauce and ketchup. Have a carrot or celery stick instead of olives or pickles. Use only a sprinkling of flavoring packets instead of the entire packet.

10 boost your potassium intake

Choose foods with potassium, which may help to lower your blood pressure. Potassium is found in vegetables and fruits, such as potatoes, beet greens, tomato juice and sauce, sweet potatoes, beans (white, lima, kidney), and bananas. Other sources of potassium include yogurt, clams, halibut, orange juice, and milk.

AKA and NAMI Partner for Mental Health Awareness



Programs planned in communities around the country.

By Rhonda Harris,

2nd Vice Program Chairman, AKA, Xi Tau Omega Chapter

THIS YEAR, the International Organization of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated (AKA) and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), launched a four-year partnership to expand community outreach and increase mental health awareness in the African-American community.

AKA has always been at the forefront when it comes to bringing awareness to health-related matters in the community, especially the African-American community. It has been well documented that mental health problems and illness are real and disabling conditions that one in four Americans experience. Left untreated, mental illness can result in disability and despair for families, schools, communities and the workplace.

According to the Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, African-Americans are 20% more likely to experience mental health problems than the general population.

Common mental health disorders among African-Americans include:

- Depression
- Suicide
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Risk factors like homelessness and greater exposure to violence increases the risk of developing a mental health condition like PTSD.

The goal of the partnership is to raise awareness of health-related activities to improve the quality of life for African-Americans individuals and families impacted by these mental health conditions.

Advocacy at the local level

The Xi Tau Omega chapter of AKA is excited about the partnership





Pictured from left: Xi Tau Omega Health Promotion Committee Chairman, Dr. Wynter Rice, President, Jamie Braden, *Our Health Matters* Publisher, Ruth Ramsey, Xi Tau Omega 2nd Vice President, Rhonda Harris, and Health Promotion Committee Co-Chairman, Penny Rice.



between the two organizations. “This is a chance to make a difference by coupling our sorority’s Health Promotion Target and NAMI’s dedication to building lives for millions of Americans affected by mental illness,” says Dr. Wynter Rice, AKA Health Promotion Committee Chair and Mrs. Penny Rice is co-chair, mother and daughter team serving Alpha Kappa Alpha.

Xi Tau Omega, and the other Kansas City area AKA chapters, Beta Omega, Mu Omega and Upsilon Rho Omega, will work with the local NAMI organizations to raise awareness of mental health risk factors. Their work will include: identifying warning signs and increasing awareness of support services, treatment and recovery for individuals and families affected by mental illness.

AKA/NAMI awareness events will include community impact days, ceremonial walks, presentations, gatherings, sports activities, picnics, parades and more.

For more information about the AKA/NAMI partnership, visit www.nami.org/aka. For more information about the services provided by NAMI and to reach your local NAMI organization, visit www.nami.org.

Members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., Xi Tau Omega Chapter are excited to join in partnership with the National Alliance of Mental Illness(NAMI) along with AKA chapters across the globe, to bring a message of awareness and hope through their Target II Health Initiatives.

LIVING WITH BIPOLAR DISORDER NOT CURABLE, BUT MANAGEABLE

STEVE, AN OHM READER, has lived with bipolar disorder for many years. This is his story in his own words.

I am 80-years-old. I was first diagnosed with bipolar disorder about 40 years ago. At that time, it was called manic-depression and carried much the same stigma that it does today. Bipolar disorder is not curable, but is manageable.

While there are varying degrees of bipolar disorder, each has depression and manic cycles. Some of these cycles are short in length, while others last longer. Each has its own set of symptoms.

The first step in managing one's disorder is to recognize the onset of symptoms. I advocate establishing a buddy system; employing a spouse, partner, or close friend to help recognize the onset of particular symptoms.

The second step is to employ the necessary medications to alleviate or modify the full effect of the symptoms. Use a med-check psychiatrist to help with your particular needs. I will not mention

any particular medications in this article, because each person responds differently. A word of warning is to phase in and out of a medication; never stop 'cold turkey'.

A third step that's often overlooked is the use of a Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) light. I have used on for years to read the morning's newspaper. It's especially effective during the winter when the days are shorter.

We tend to focus on the depression cycle and do not fully understand the gravity of full-blown mania. Correctly managing the mania cycle is the most important point to be made here. It can be a wonderfully productive time if managed correctly. If allowed to run rampant, the cycle will be harmful to others and will result in 'falling off the cliff'. In other words, deep depression will follow an unbridled mania episode.

It takes time and patience to fully manage bipolar disorder. If a method doesn't work at first, try and try again. A friend offered these encouraging words: "This too shall pass."



> Support groups: There are local bipolar support groups. To find a Peer-to-Peer Group near you, contact the local NAMI (National Alliance of Mental Illness) at 816-931-0030 www.nami.org

Give Yourself the Gift of a Healthier Life

Five tests every woman needs.

As women, it's easy to lose ourselves by focusing on those around us—tending to spouses, children and aging parents. Most days we race against the clock and our to-do list—maintaining a rapid pace of running errands, transporting kids from school to activities, meeting deadlines at the office, keeping a household on schedule.

The screening tests you need depend on your age, family history, personal health history, and other risk factors. Most deadly diseases can be prevented—take action now to care for you. A one-hour visit to your health-care provider annually and six easy, simple, and painless tests can lead to a lifetime of good health and happiness.

This Mother's Day, give yourself the priceless gift of health and pledge to schedule these tests.

Breast Cancer

Remember: The earlier breast cancer is detected, the better your chance of a cure.

If you're in your 20s or 30s, your health-care provider will perform a breast exam as part of your regular check-up every one to three years—and teach you how to perform self-exams.

Once you hit age 40, have an annual mammogram—a low-dose X-ray that will find a lump before you can feel it.

Cervical Cancer

Remember: With regular Pap smears, cervical cancer is easy to prevent.

Pap smears find abnormal cells on the cervix, which can be removed before they ever turn into cancer.

Blood Pressure

Remember: High blood pressure can cause life-threatening heart attack or stroke and as a woman ages—and especially if she is overweight—her risk of high blood pressure increases.

Blood pressure readings include two numbers. The first (systolic) is the pressure of your blood when your heart beats. The

second (diastolic) is the pressure between beats.

Normal adult blood pressure is below 120/80. High blood pressure, also called hypertension, is 140/90 or above.

Cholesterol

Remember: Heart attack is the number one killer of women, so early screening of cholesterol and blood pressure is critical.

High cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, and smoking can cause plaque to clog your arteries.

Plaque can build up, silently, for many years without symptoms, eventually causing a heart attack or stroke.

Prior to a cholesterol test, fast for 12 hours. Then you'll take a blood test that

measures total cholesterol, LDL “bad” cholesterol, HDL “good” cholesterol, and triglycerides (blood fat).

Diabetes

Remember: One-third of Americans with diabetes don't know they have the disease that can cause heart or kidney disease and stroke.

Diabetes is tested by a simple blood test, and fasting for eight hours is required. A blood sugar level of 100-125 may show pre-diabetes; 126 or higher may mean diabetes.

Diabetes—especially when found early—can be controlled with diet, exercise, weight loss, and medication. •

SOURCE: HCA Health Midwest, www.hcamidwest.com/womens



By Sheila R. Roth,
CNM (Certified Nurse Midwife)
Research Medical Center-HCA Midwest Health

Community Tree Gardens for the Hungry

Food Insecurity: It touches over 250,000 people in our metro area, and one in five children under the age of 5 live in a food insecure household. The Giving Grove is empowering neighborhoods to create their own food oasis – micro-orchards filled with fruits, berries and nuts. In just two years, we have helped over 50 communities establish their own edible tree garden.

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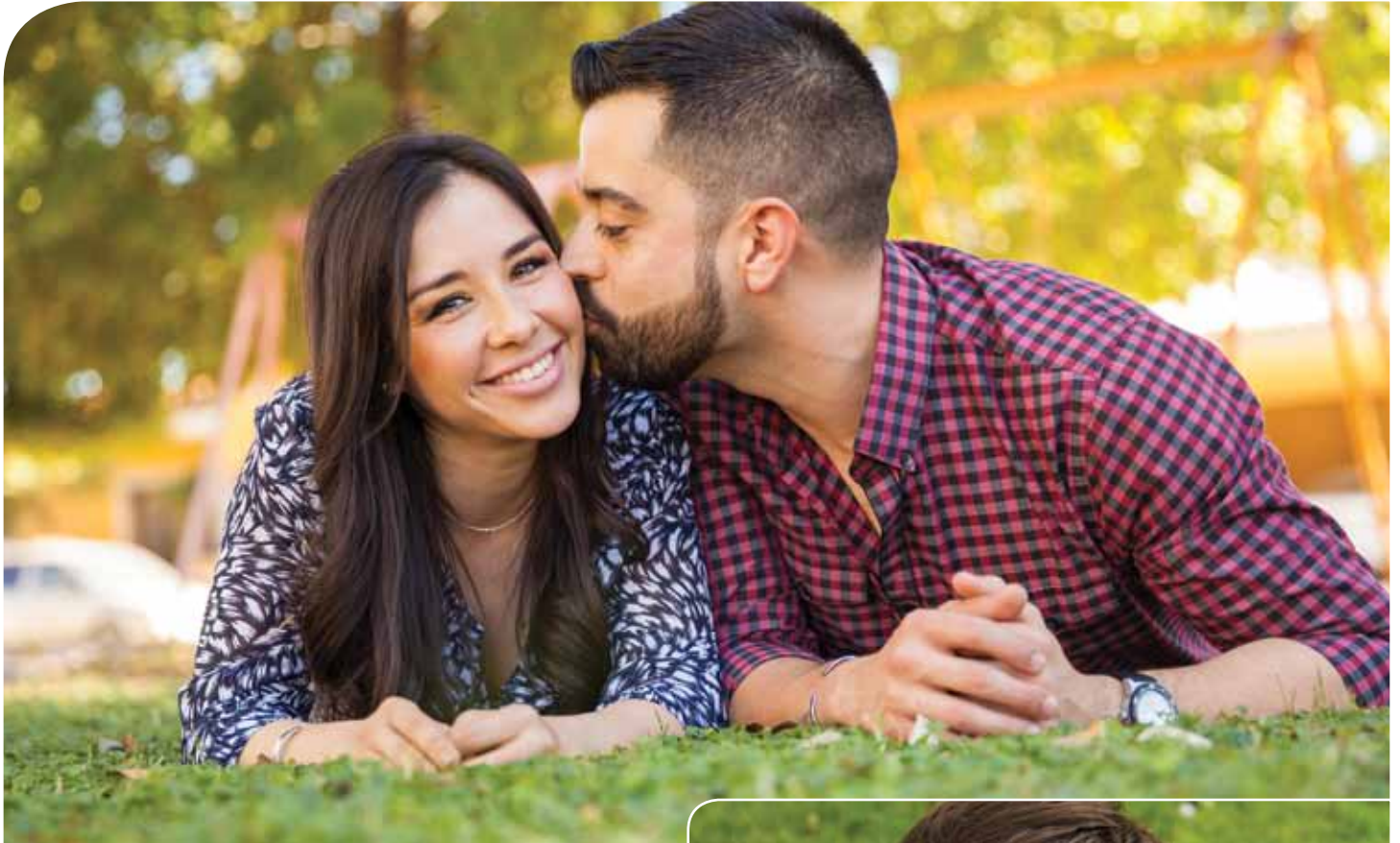
Grow and **Maintain**

a Healthy Relationship

Great marriages are built on more than a strong attraction, or affection for one another.

There is a need inside each of us to be chosen that often makes life and relationships seem overwhelming. Even as infants we look for someone to respond to us. Watch the “Still Face Experiment” video on YouTube to understand what this looks like.

Problems in our relationships can result from not understanding how we attach to our partners. If we understand what we need from our partner in terms of safety and security, we are more likely to be successful in getting those needs met.



As young children, we begin to develop these attachment styles as a result of our relationships with our families. Each encounter we have strengthens our belief that people we are close to are safe, or not. Unfortunately, for more than half of us, once the newness of a relationship becomes more routine and hormones stabilize, we often begin to wonder whether the person we care so deeply about, really cares about us. We often begin testing them with questions designed to look for one particular response. If we do not get that response, we feel rejected. It is important to understand how our brain, body and emotions are interwoven in each experience we have — and how, despite our best efforts, we cannot separate them. There are several things we can do to grow and maintain a healthy relationship.

1. RECOGNIZE THAT WE COME INTO RELATIONSHIPS WITH A PICTURE IN OUR HEAD OF WHAT THE RELATIONSHIP WILL LOOK LIKE, AND THAT OUR PARTNER'S PICTURE WILL LOOK DIFFERENT. Even if we think that we have shared tons of information with each other, we truly never “know” each other. We are amateurs at best in seeing the world through someone else’s eyes. If you are able to accept this, you will be less anxious when you don’t see it from their perspective.

2. BE CURIOUS ABOUT UNDERSTANDING YOUR PARTNER'S VIEW OF THE WORLD. You will be more successful if you let your partner teach you about them, instead of assuming that you



know them. It is okay if you like different things. Your partner does not need to share your taste in food, music, or books in order for them to love you.

3. KNOW THAT THIS JOURNEY LASTS A LIFETIME. Keep in mind, there will always be opportunities to learn more about yourself and your partner. Learning new things about your partner can be exciting.

4. WORK ON FIGURING OUT WHAT YOUR NEEDS ARE AND HOW THEY ARE SEPARATE FROM YOUR WANTS. It can be surprising to us that we often are not clear on what we need to feel safe and loved. Get counseling, if needed.

5. REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE NOT IN COMPETITION WITH EACH OTHER. We are often trying to prove to our partner in unhealthy and unhelpful ways that convey, “You deserve me, and I am good enough for you.”

There are several things we can do to grow and maintain a healthy relationship.

6. INSPIRE AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER. The reality of what a healthy relationship can be is better than what you have imagined.

The things we can do to grow and maintain a healthy relationship are extensive. Each couple needs to work to find what works for them. A couple I know comments, “Things aren’t always easy. In trying moments, when one of us felt like giving up, the other remained fierce in the promise of our vows.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: KEEP YOUR MARRIAGE ALIVE AND ON THE RIGHT TRACK BY LEARNING AND SHARING THINGS YOU BOTH HAVE IN COMMON. SEEK OUT AND READ ABOUT WAYS TO MAINTAIN A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP.

Marriage Matters, and Not Just To You

How do others view your marriage?

By **David Brown**

Certified Marriage Coach
American Association of Christian Counselors
Founder, Marriage Rocks LLC

From now and hence forth, it’s just you and I. Nothing else matters. We all feel that way after we get married. Everyone and everything becomes a distant second. We revel in the love and friendship we share. Then, time marches on. Yes, we still love our spouse, but life happens and we discover marriage is no

Merric and Trese Robinson on their wedding day, January 16, 2015.



crystal stair. It’s full of ups and downs, and the downs can be some real whoppers. However, because our marriage matters to us, we buckle down and do whatever it takes to make sure the “ups” far outweigh the “downs.”

In doing so, we often fail to understand or appreciate that our marriage matters to others, too; including skeptics. In fact, the way we honor, respect and show commitment to our marriage actually influences the way others view marriage in general, and their own marriage, specifically. Food for thought, right?

I was struck with this reality recently. I was attending a conference and sat next to a young woman who was seemingly only days away from having a baby. After we chatted a bit, she asked me if my husband attended church with me. I responded that he does when he’s not working. She went to say that I was lucky, because her husband NEVER attends church with her. She said she felt duped because they used to attend church together before they got married. She went on to say that because she’s so sick of him not accompanying her, she asked him for a divorce.

“Whoa,” I thought. That was a mouthful. After a brief pause, I responded.

We have expectations of our spouse. When they don’t live up to them, especially in areas that are important to most to us, we

feel bamboozled. Be the best partner you can be to your spouse – and be patient. Trust and believe that change can happen and eventually, it will.

Sometimes, another married person can offer a different perspective. Sometimes, we need to see, hear or bear witness

to another marriage that made it through a “big something.” It teaches us that our marriage can make it through a “big something,” too. Consider the following when you interact with other married couples:

1. DON'T SPEAK NEGATIVELY ABOUT YOUR MARRIAGE.

What you say and sometimes don't say can affect how another couple views their marriage. Even if you share that you're going through a rough patch, there's a way to convey that you and your spouse are committed to resolving the issue and moving forward together.

We are amateurs at best in seeing the world through someone else's eyes.

2. SHOW OTHERS WHAT A THRIVING MARRIAGE LOOKS LIKE. You'd be surprised how many couples, and even singles, are paying attention to your marriage. The way you interact with your spouse speaks volumes about your marriage.

3. INTERACT WITH YOUR SPOUSE AT SOCIAL GATHERINGS.

Even the amount of time you spend with your spouse at social gatherings can matter. Wives tend to flock to each other and husbands tend to do the same. Make the effort to connect

with your spouse periodically. Married couples want to see other married couples who enjoy spending time together.

4. BLESS OTHER MARRIAGES. When a married person speaks negatively about marriage or a situation, educate, support and encourage. If you're married, you have valuable insight to offer. Share resources you've utilized to get through a rough patch. You may be the key to help move their marriage forward.

While the focus of your marriage is the two of you, make no mistake, your marriage matters more than just to you. A window into your marriage, particularly your triumphs and mistakes, may be just what another couple needs to get, or stay, on track to have a successful marriage.

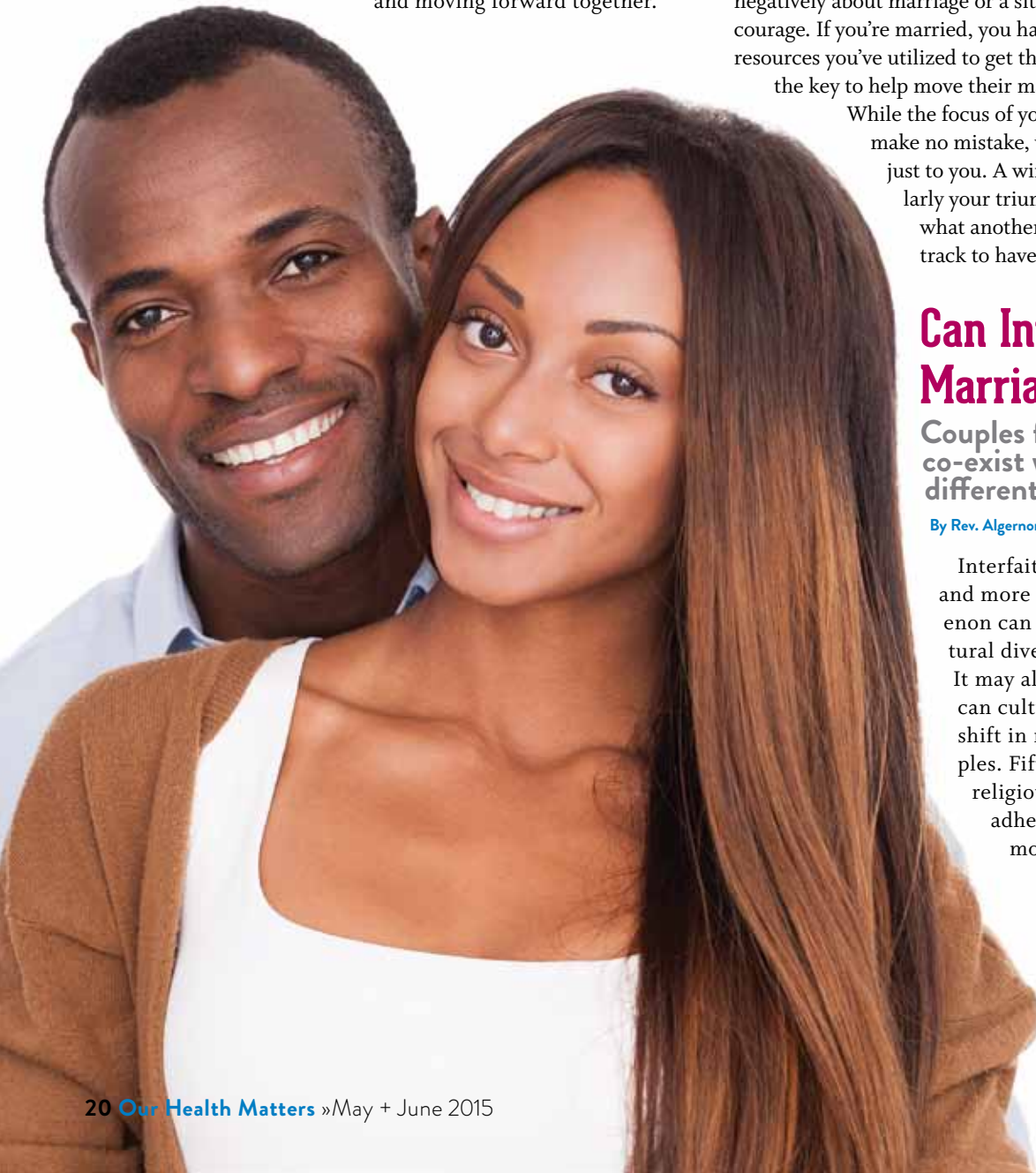
Can Interfaith Marriages Work?

Couples find ways to co-exist with their different religious beliefs.

By Rev. Algernon Baker, BA

Interfaith marriages are becoming more and more common. Perhaps this phenomenon can be attributed to increased cultural diversity and tolerance in America. It may also be due to the shift in American culture. This is due primarily to a shift in non-religious values or principles. Fifty years ago, America was more religious and many families tended to adhere to their faith practices with more regularity.

However, in the last several decades, there has been a noticeable shift in the religiosity of American culture and individual American families. The prohibition of parents and the possible rejection of the faith



“In our vows to one another that promise assures us that for every winter, there is a spring.
A new life in each other.” – Chris and Tara.

community no longer hold the threat they once did. This is especially true in light how social media has transformed the idea and the experience of community.

Still, the lingering importance of religion can be noted on most dating sites which offer the option of religious identity as part of the user’s profile. Some sites exist specifically for individuals looking for others who share their religious perspective. Additionally, when religious differences exist in a couple, often, the more religious partner may persuade the less religious partner to convert. Arguably, for most people, religion is not at the center of their worldview. Individuals of different faiths may no longer perceive religion

Be the best partner you can be to your spouse – and be patient.

as a barrier to falling in love, marrying or raising children.

For couples who are minimally religious, their differences may not surface until moments of religious or traditional significance arise (i.e., circumcision, baptism, bar/bat mitzvahs, Ramadan or choosing religious education). Religious holidays (holy days) can cause awkwardness with relatives. For couples who choose to partner across religious lines, this decision requires:

- > Mutual respect
- > Planning
- > Ongoing communication

Though complicated, practicing these few things can lead to marital harmony.

Rev. Algernon Corico Baker, Sr., is senior pastor at Bethel Family Worship Center in Kansas City, MO. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from Eastern University and Master of Theological Studies from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and is a PhD candidate for Marriage and Family Therapy. •



2.1 Million Americans Get Married Every Year

Here are the “TOP 10 Wedding Destinations”

- Central Park - New York, NY
- Chapel of Love - Bloomington, MN
- Columbia Gorge Hotel - Hood River OR
- Disneyland - Anaheim, CA
- Empire State Building - New York, NY
- Graceland Wedding Chapel - Las Vegas, NV
- Little Church of the West
- Wedding Chapel - Las Vegas, NV
- Palace of Fine Arts - San Francisco, CA
- Philadelphia Zoo - Philadelphia, PA
- Westin Beach Resort - Key Largo, FL

SOURCE: MSN



VFW Serves Veterans and Their Families

Advocating for quality health care is one of the VFW's highest priorities

The Senate first passed a resolution in 1999 designating National Military Appreciation Month, encouraging U.S. citizens every May to observe the month in a symbol of unity, and honor the current and former members of the armed forces, including those who have died in the pursuit of freedom and peace. Our Health Matters chose to recognize the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) for their local influence and record of serving veterans and their families.

3 Ways to Support Our Military and Veterans

- Display the American Flag
- Send a care package to a Soldier through USCares.org
- Hire a Veteran

Founded in 1914, the VFW is a nonprofit veterans service organization composed of eligible veterans and military services members from the active, Guard and Reserve forces. With national headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri, the VFW and its Auxiliaries dedicate their efforts to veterans service, legislative advocacy and military and community service programs.

The VFW has eight priority issues with the VA. However, according to Randi Law, Communications Director at the VFW National Headquarters in Kansas City, "There is no greater initiative than ensuring those who fought to secure our freedom receive the health care they've earned, and certainly deserve. Accordingly, part of this quest involves educating our service members and veterans on what health care programs and services they are entitled to. There are so

many veterans who simply don't know what is available. We strive to provide this information and even help service members and veterans file claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs to secure their benefits and compensation. Our services are offered free of charge. It's just another way we work for veterans."

As the nation's oldest veteran's organization, the VFW has an unparalleled record of advocating for policies that effect millions of veterans and their families. As a result, nearly \$7 Billion has been recovered in benefits and compensation. For more information on the VFW National Veterans Services (NVS) Program go to: www.vfw.org/NVS. Separating and retiring service members may find a VFW representative on their military base: <http://www.vfw.org/BDD>.

To veterans in the greater Kansas City Area and veterans everywhere, "Thank You for your Service and Sacrifice." •

SOURCES: VFW National Headquarters,
Randi Law, Communications Director, Kansas City MO



In 2014 VFW volunteers spent more than 700,000 hours assisting veterans file their VA claims, free of charge.

A DONATION OF

\$20

ENSURES THE VFW CAN

- ★ Educate **30** separating service members on how to receive their well-earned VA benefits
- ★ Provide **500** minutes of phone time to homesick American troops stationed in the Middle East
- ★ Serve **5** morale-boosting "welcome home" meals for service members recently back from combat
- ★ Help cover rent, utilities or groceries for a military family struggling with the hardships of war



"Don't go through it alone. A VFW Service Officer can help. They know who to call ... who to

write ... who to appeal to. Seek help and you shall find it."

Vietnam veteran Michael Prata on receiving word that he was deemed 100% service disabled and awarded full benefits. Prata suffered from prostate cancer connected to herbicide exposure in Vietnam. Lost military records once sealed his fate, but the VFW stepped in and found the proof he needed.

As the nation's oldest major veterans' organization,

The VFW has an impeccable and longstanding record of service and stewardship. More than 4 million patriotic Americans, both members and non-members, entrust the VFW with financial contributions and dedicate millions of volunteer hours.

80%

Over the last decade, **approximately 80% of support received from VFW members and patriotic Americans** was applied directly to veterans service, community service, legislative advocacy and military service programs worldwide.

1,549

Number of VFW-accredited representatives across the country helping veterans fight for the VA benefits they have earned.

\$6.9 billion

The amount in VA benefits the VFW network helped more than 284,000 veterans recover in the last three years.

28

Number of times the VFW has testified before Congress in the last 12 months alone. The VFW has been instrumental in virtually every major legislative victory for veterans in the 20th and 21st centuries.

\$5.1 million

Value of financial assistance awarded to military families since 2004 to help cover basic needs in times of crisis. Nearly **half** of the funds covered basic housing needs.

7.5+ million

Number of connections between deployed service members and loved ones made possible by the VFW's "Free Call Days."

1,891,885

Number of service members and their family members hosted at VFW Military Assistance Program (MAP) events since 2005.

\$3.3 million

Amount of scholarships, monetary awards and other incentives the VFW distributes annually to middle and high school students through two major patriotic essay competitions.

\$800,000+

Amount of scholarships awarded to more than 200 veterans and service members through the VFW "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" since January 2014.



"Having one less worry has allowed me to focus on my

husband—making sure he gets the care and support he needs."

Military spouse Michele Hyde, whose husband Jason struggles with PTSD. The Hydys received financial assistance from the VFW to help cover past-due bills.

Learn more about the VFW's programs and services at www.vfw.org.

Strengthening Families Focus of Marriage and Family Therapists

The field of professional counseling is rewarding in many ways.

By Jeanene Dunn, OHM Staff

Today's varied and complex family dynamics may lead individuals, couples or families to the office of a marriage and family therapist. Some issues that may lead families to seek professional help include:

- > Childhood and adolescent behavioral challenges
- > Substance abuse
- > Blended families
- > Co-parenting
- > Issues between siblings
- > Loss of a loved one

Theresa Hubbard, a licensed marriage and family therapist based in the Kansas City area, was drawn to the profession out of a desire to help people. She describes her approach to treatment: "I want everyone

invested in the therapy process," explains Hubbard. "I help my patients set goals that help them clearly understand and improve their relationships."

It may sound simple, but it isn't. Marriage and family therapy is more than just talk therapy. These professionals are also trained to diagnose and treat psychological issues as part of therapy. Their job is to get at the root of issues that may be harming the family. The main goal is to help the family become a more cohesive unit and move forward.

Education

Marriage and family therapists are required by law to be licensed to practice. Licensure requires a master's degree in

the field of family therapy. Undergraduate degrees include work in psychology, psychiatry, nursing, social work, pastoral counseling and education. Family therapy coursework includes 48-60 semester hours over two years, along with a clinical internship to gain practical experience in the field. Students take psychotherapy and family systems coursework, and are trained to diagnose and treat mental and emotional disorders within the context of the family.

Once supervised clinical work is completed, students may apply to take state licensing exams. According to the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, the average level of professional experience is 13 years.

Working conditions

Family therapists work in an office setting in private practice, hospitals, government agencies, treatment programs, and in the nonprofit sector. Hubbard has worked in the field for 10 years. "Before I went into private practice, I worked as a clinician at the Child Abuse Prevention Association, in Independence, MO," says Hubbard. "At that time, I saw clients in the office or in their homes. I still do some in-home therapy."

Growth and pay

Between 2012 and 2022, the profession is expected to grow 31%, higher than the national average. Seventy-five percent of family therapists make an average annual salary of \$62,750, while the higher end of the salary averages \$78,920. States with the highest level of employment in the field include California, New Jersey, Florida, Maryland and Virginia. •

SOURCES:

Theresa Hubbard, LMFT (MO), LCMFT (KS), ACCH
 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
 The American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists

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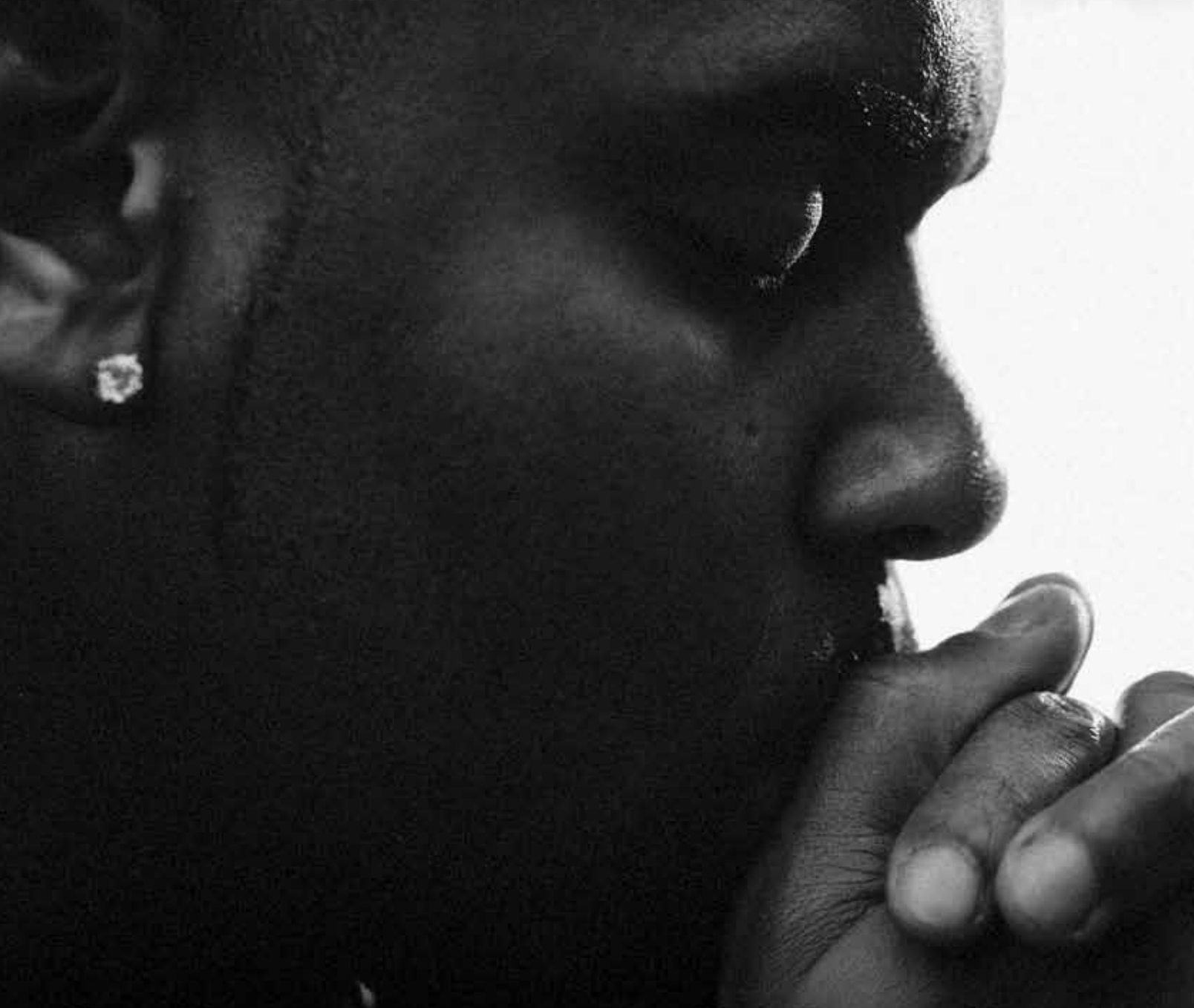
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"This material was made possible by federal grant #CFDA 93.940-3303 through the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services and the Kansas City, Missouri Health Department."



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Read...

to your child every day ... this helps your child enjoy learning.



Play...

with your child every day ... this helps your child get along with others.

Infants

Beginning to learn words

Talk Every Day

- Say your baby's name often.
- Take turns making the same sounds as your baby. Babies learn that people react when they make sounds.
- Talk to your baby during bath time, play time, diaper changing, and feeding time. This is how your baby will learn the daily routine.
- Talking to your baby will help your baby learn to talk.

Read Every Day

- Look at books together. This gives you a chance to hold and cuddle your baby.
- Point to pictures in books and talk about what you see. This gives your baby a chance to hear new words and learn to enjoy books.
- Read before nap time and bedtime. This routine can calm your baby.

Play Every Day

- Give your baby time to move and play with you.
- Look and smile at your baby. Let your baby watch your face and follow your movements.
- Play with your baby using rattles, toys, and games like peek-a-boo.
- Talk to your baby during these activities.

Toddlers

Starting to use words

Talk Every Day

- Help your child learn to talk by adding words. If your child says, "Milk," you say, "Do you want some milk?"
- Help your child learn new words by explaining what is happening during the day. "You are using your spoon to eat your peas."
- Name your toddler's feelings, such as happy, sad, mad and scared.
- Sing simple songs. Use lots of rhyming words. Play children's music at home or in the car.

Read Every Day

- Sit close to or hold your toddler when looking at books together.
- Let your toddler choose a book, turn the pages and point to pictures and words.
- Read your child's favorite books over and over again. Children learn words when they hear them often.
- Visit the library to find new books. Keep books, newspapers, and magazines in your home.

Play Every Day

- Children learn when they play.
- Give your child time to explore new objects, places and people. Play outside often.
- Play make-believe with your child. Use dress-up clothes, puppets, boxes, pots and pans.

Preschoolers

Putting more words together

Talk Every Day

- Talk to your child about his or her day. Ask questions that begin with who, what and why.
- Talk about what happens during the day.
- Use complete sentences to describe what is happening around you and your child.
- Ask children "what if" or "I wonder" questions. "I wonder what will happen if we leave the ice cube on the kitchen counter."

Read Every Day

- Have fun while you are reading books and looking at pictures with your child. Use silly voices. Point out words and pictures on the page and ask questions.
- Retell stories in your own words. Listen to your child retell stories.
- Point out words inside and outside of your home. Point out written words on doors, traffic signs, billboards, boxes, cans and buses.

Play Every Day

- Play with toys and create things using blocks, crayons, play dough, sandboxes and playgrounds.
- Follow what your child is interested in when playing together.
- Describe what your child is doing.
- Pretend to cook, clean, care for babies, dress up and go to work.



To find out more, visit www.talkreadplaykc.org or call TFC: 913.342.4144

ADHD → A's and B's

Although Ty has struggled with ADHD, the award-winning Summer Treatment Program at Children's Mercy has helped him improve functioning where it matters—with his family, friends and teachers. This intensive eight-week program goes beyond medication to help behavioral, emotional, academic and social functioning. See how we're transforming lives every day at [childrensmercy.org/stories](https://www.childrensmercy.org/stories).

Ty | Age 7 | Mission, KS | ADHD Program



KC Health Department Hosts HIV/STD Testing Events

How and where you can get tested.

Ryan Benjamin, BS, Public Health Specialist
Kansas City, Missouri Health Department

HIV screening is part of many public health strategies to reduce the rate of sexually transmitted diseases, and refer affected individuals to the appropriate health care resources. Every year, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention promotes HIV awareness through the observance of National HIV Testing Day (NHTD).

The Kansas City, Missouri Health Department epidemiology staff and the HIV Prevention team will provide testing services at two events.

On Saturday June 27, 2015, in observance of NHTD, The Kansas City Health Department's HIV Prevention program will offer free HIV/STD testing at the 2015 Kansas City Greek Picnic in the Swope Park Bandstand, from noon to 6 p.m. More than 1,500 people are expected to attend the Kansas City Greek Picnic. Those who are tested will receive a custom t-shirt, sunglasses, or other gift.

The National Week of Prayer community outreach along with Calvary Baptist Temple Church will offer testing, from

10 am to 2 p.m., at Renaissance United Methodist Church, 7205 Longview Road, in Kansas City, MO The National Week of Prayer community outreach provides resource connections, in addition to STD/HIV testing. "It is our hope that working with the faith-based community will end the stigma one PEW at a time," says Samantha Hughes, HIV Prevention and Planning Council Support Manager, Kansas City, Missouri Health Department.



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“Knowing your status is the key to controlling of HIV and not letting HIV control you.”

— Samantha Hughes, Kansas City, Missouri Health Department

The Social Network Strategy

The KCHD team is tackling efforts to combat STD/HIV through the Social Network Strategy (SNS). SNS is a program that provides counseling, testing and referrals for individuals who are: unaware of their HIV status or aware, but not seeing a primary care physician. Through its incentive-based structure, SNS motivates people who are at high risk of contracting HIV/STDs to encourage their peers, who may be at risk, to get tested. With everyone on board to fulfill the the mission of The National AIDS Strategy, let the countdown to National HIV Testing Day begin.

“Knowing your status is the key to controlling of HIV and not letting HIV control you,” says Hughes. •

John W. Bluford (center) welcomed UMKC and Kauffman Scholars DeNesha Johnson (left) and Jasmin Guzman (right) to the 2014 Bluford Healthcare Leadership Institute (BHLI).



IF YOU CAN SEE IT, YOU CAN BE IT.

By John W. Bluford, Founder
Bluford Healthcare Leadership Institute

AS HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY SERVE AN INCREASING NUMBER OF MINORITY POPULATIONS, a well-documented gap exists between the diversity of those organizations' executive leadership teams and the populations they serve. A 2013 benchmark report from the Institute for Diversity in Health Management indicated that, "Although minorities represent a reported 31% of patients nationally, they comprise only 14% of executive leadership positions, 14% of hospital board members, and 17% of first-and mid-level management positions." In the Kansas City metropolitan area, the position of President/CEO among 20 hospitals and medical centers is held by a single minority, translating to 5%.

The Bluford Healthcare Leadership Institute (BHLI), a professional development program founded by former Truman Medical Centers (TMC) president, John W. Bluford, seeks to address that gap by developing minority college sophomores for future healthcare leadership roles. The institute, modeled after Bluford's previous experience at a Harvard University executive management program and combined with his experience of more than forty years in healthcare, recruits scholars with leadership potential from historically black colleges and universities and the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) to participate in the two-phased program. The institute provides the scholars mentoring opportunities, aligning with Bluford's premise, "If you can see it, you can be it."

The BHLI welcomes its third class of scholars to Kansas City in June for two weeks of a comprehensive view of today's healthcare landscape, exposing the scholars to leadership opportunities both within and without standard clinical areas. Presenters for the 2015 BHLI at venues including the Kauffman Conference Center and the UMKC Bloch School of Management are Dr. Bruce Siegel, President/CEO of America's Essential Hospitals; Eugene Woods, President/CEO of CHRISTUS Health; and Esther George, President and Chief Executive of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. The scholars will visit Stowers Institute for Medical Research, Cerner Corporation, TMC Behavioral Health, and Operation Breakthrough.

The incoming BHLI scholars will intern during Summer 2016 at healthcare organizations both locally and nationally. Pictured are 2014 BHLI Scholars DeNesha Johnson and Jasmin Guzman, both UMKC students and Kauffman Scholars, who will intern this summer at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas City and Children's Mercy Hospital. Two of their Kansas City peers will also intern at America's Essential Hospitals in Washington, D.C. and Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis.

Though the innovative work of the BHLI, a pipeline of talent is being developed to decrease the gap between the diversity of healthcare organizations' executive leadership teams and the minority populations they serve.

CELEBRATE YOUR HEALTH ALL YEAR LONG

Our Health Matters is committed to helping you meet the future with greater knowledge and opportunity to improve your health status and quality of life. There are numerous health observances of which to take notice. For more on these health observances, visit the website of the specific health organization.

MAY + JUNE HEALTH OBSERVANCES

MAY

Arthritis Awareness Month

www.arthritis.org

Better Hearing and Speech Month

www.asha.org

Food Allergy Action Month

www.foodallergy.org

Global Employee Health and Fitness Month

www.healthandfitnessmonth.com

Healthy Vision Month

www.nei.nih.gov/hvm/

Hepatitis Awareness Month

www.cdc.gov/hepatitis

Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month®

www.spotskincancer.org

Mental Health Month

www.mentalhealthamerica.net

National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month

www.aafa.org

National Celiac Disease Awareness Month

www.americanceliac.org

National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month

www.nof.org

National Physical Fitness and Sports Month

www.fitness.gov

National Stroke Awareness Month

www.cdc.gov

National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month

www.advocatesforyouth.org

June

Fireworks Safety Month

www.preventblindness.org

Cataract Awareness Month

www.preventblindness.org

Men's Health Month

www.menshealthmonth.org

National Aphasia Awareness Month

www.aphasia.org

National Safety Month

www.nsc.org/nsm





COMING IN THE JULY + AUGUST 2015 EDITION

Pregnant Moms Connect

We explore the latest innovations to help expectant moms have a healthy pregnancy, and give their babies a healthy start. Technology plays a huge role. Learn how apps and online resources are assisting women and their doctors.

Childhood Vaccinations Matter

The recent measles outbreak reignited the debate about immunizations. Many communities are now requiring that all children get vaccinated, without exception. Find out what diseases immunizations protect.

Hearing Test for Babies on the List

Among the tests a newborn baby receives, did you know that a hearing test is one?

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