

FALL 2020 EDITION



WELLSPRING

M A G A Z I N E

CITLALI'S JOURNEY:

From Trauma
to Triumph





is proud to support Wellspring Counseling
as they Shatter the Stigmas of Mental Health!



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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



It's been a hard year, and the stressors have taken a large toll on the nation's mental health. In a study conducted in June by the CDC, 11% of respondents reported having seriously considered suicide in the 30 days before completing the survey! This is a shocking statistic. The study also revealed that more than 26 percent reported symptoms of trauma and stressor-related disorders because of the pandemic. (CDC, 2020)

At Wellspring, a 27% increase in services from the summer of 2019 to the summer of 2020 was also evidence of this growing mental health pandemic. God has been faithful to help us adjust and respond to all who have come to us for support. Last year, we invested \$70,000 in a new Electronic Medical Record System, which was perfectly suited to transition all of our services to Telehealth in March. This year, the PPP loan carried us through this major transition.

We look forward to seeing our clients in person again, but Telehealth has helped us to be more accessible, to expand our services statewide and to introduce online support groups, overcoming the usual traffic obstacles in Miami. It even allowed us to re-hire former therapists who had moved to other states to help us keep up with our client load.

We hope that you too have been able to see how God has been faithful to you through this difficult season. We also hope that the stories included in this magazine will inspire you further to trust God through your hard times. These testimonies represent the many people who don't just have hard years, they have hard childhoods. They are stories of those who survived childhood trauma and through the hard work of therapy not only overcame their negative life events, but built on them to fulfill God's calling for their lives.

We at Wellspring are grateful to God for sustaining our capacity to restore hearts and minds this year. We are also grateful for the privilege of joining people on their journeys to overcome difficulties as well as to enjoy blessings.

Sincerely,

Tova J. Kreps



Tova Kreps, LCSW
President & Co-founder
Wellspring Counseling



CITLALI'S JOURNEY

Beginnings

Citlali was born in the Homestead area of Miami and raised by her mother. While her biological father was never in her life, when she was two years old, her stepfather joined the family. She looked up to him as a father. However, he never became the father figure that she wanted him to be. Citlali's stepfather drank a lot and became abusive toward Citlali, her three younger siblings, and her mother. "I was too scared to say anything. And I didn't want to say anything either," Citlali says about speaking out about the abuse at the time. Many people perceived them to be a picture-perfect family, and she was hesitant to break the positive image people had of her family.

The last day he was with them, he was drunk. He pulled a knife on Citlali, but she found herself too afraid to call 911. Citlali doesn't remember exactly how it happened, but she says it was God who allowed her finally to find her voice. She ran out of her house and yelled for help, finding courage within herself that she didn't even realize she had. Someone heard Citlali's cries and called the police to her home. The police removed her stepfather from her home. She said she felt very relieved at the time, but also like she had betrayed her family. Citlali was 15 when she was finally set free from her stepfather and allowed to look toward the future.

However, a few months after receiving a new start, Citlali's mother was in a car accident that left her suffering in a hospital for over a month. During the period that her mother was in the hospital, Citlali and her siblings were staying in different homes temporarily. It was a difficult time for Citlali. She missed her mother's hugs and kisses, and questions about her day. Despite missing her mother terribly, she felt she had to be strong for her siblings during this time. She was also angry at God for continuing to throw challenges at her and her family. She questioned why after so many years of dealing with her stepfather's abuse, God continued to allow such difficult situations to occur in her life. Once her mother finally came home from the hospital, Citlali and her siblings continued their struggles as they helped their mother regain her ability to walk properly.

Wellspring and Other Support

After Citlali's stepfather was taken away and during the difficult period where Citlali's mom was recovering from the accident, she and her siblings were receiving therapy through Wellspring. Citlali's family was also receiving help through KIX, a youth-for-Christ afterschool program, and Branches, her church home. KIX and Branches provided meals for Citlali and her family every

day during her mother's recovery and provided help in various other ways. Eventually, Citlali and her younger sister also attended BOUNCE!, a Wellspring program for kids who have been through traumatic experiences.

Going into BOUNCE!, Citlali didn't plan on sharing her story. However, after hearing the story of another girl in her small group, Citlali felt relieved. "BOUNCE! made me realize that I was not alone in this. And I think for a very long time it felt like I was." Citlali's Wellspring therapist also provided Citlali with a safe place to talk through her feelings without fear of being judged or feeling ashamed. When Citlali's family faced financial troubles, Wellspring was able to provide funding for Citlali's family so that her therapist could continue to support her.



“ BOUNCE! made me realize that I was not alone in this. And I think for a very long time it felt like I was. ”



Where She is Now

Citlali is now in her junior year at the University of Central Florida, her dream school since she was in 8th grade, pursuing a degree in hospitality. Though she still feels unsure about what she plans on doing in the future, she likes hospitality and would like to travel. Her siblings are also doing well, and since going through therapy have been better able to work through some aggression they had. Her mother has recovered a lot since the accident and also gave her life to Christ in the aftermath. Citlali is no longer angry at God. Over time she began to recognize the moments that God was there for her, especially through BOUNCE! and KIX and Branches. At a camp in her senior year of high school Citlali also accepted Jesus Christ into her life.

Citlali wanted to share her story because she understands just how difficult her situation was for her to overcome, even with all the support that she received. She recognizes how difficult it must be for people without that support and wants to be an encouragement to those who think that there is nowhere to turn, or that they can never overcome their circumstances. She hopes that her story, filled with support and love from so many people, can help change the world for the better.



Restore E-Retreat

FEB. 4-7. 2021

We are taking our Restore Retreat online!

If you are an adult who has experienced a major negative life event that continues to affect you today, our Restore E-Retreat is designed for you. Learn to recover from old childhood wounds, or recent losses or tragedies through our teachings, small groups, experiential therapies and individual sessions during our 4-day retreat.

**For more information,
visit <https://www.wellspringmiami.org/restore-retreat>**

Restore Testimonies:

"The Restore Retreat was a life-changing experience for me. After many years of struggling with trauma, anxiety and PTSD, I never imagined true healing was attainable. The therapies used within the program are specifically designed to speed up the process of healing. The experienced therapists, the spiritual insight, and the art components of the retreat make it a very unique and intensive treatment, compared to other therapies I have done in the past. I would highly recommend Restore to anyone struggling to overcome past painful events, and even current ongoing stressful circumstances. I have been given tools that will continue to support my mental health and emotional wellbeing, now and in the future. I am so thankful to Wellspring for providing such a priceless gift: Hope after trauma."

"For years I have attended workshops and retreats for spiritual and emotional growth. I can truly say that Restore exceeded my expectations... It is very difficult to express the value in words. I will be encouraging everyone I know to allow Restore to minister to them of God and His healing work done through these powerful teachings and experiences presented by the Wellspring team of skilled therapists and teachers."



God Wins

At 37 years old, Godwin Altidor's life tells a story of God's faithfulness to His children, and the tools He uses to complete the work He starts in us (Philippians 1:6).

God's Calling

As Godwin tells his story, his parents immigrated from Haiti before he was born in Homestead. "My parents taught me a lot about working hard; they loved me; and they did what they could to raise me." But they had to work hard to get by, and there was conflict and trauma. "We had to fend for ourselves a lot, and so I got into trouble at a very young age," says Godwin. At 8 years old, he began attending a youth club called KIX, started by a missionary, Stacy Morales. He accepted Jesus as his savior at a camp in response to a message, and he was fed a solid Bible foundation through regular church and youth programs until he was about 13 years old.

The Prodigal Years

In 8th grade, Godwin got involved with kids who were getting in trouble and walked away from what he knew about God "just to go experience the world... But, it was not what I expected. It was pain, heartache, misery, being betrayed by people, and not achieving goals. I went down a road that was not the best option for me."

He ended up in Orlando for college, but was not ready for it. Using up his mother's support, he

began to party heavily, and then got into theft. "I spiraled out of control. When they put an eviction letter on my door, I had to get money or get out... I couldn't call my mom, so I came up with a plan that I thought was full-proof: to rob a gas station." He was caught, and although this was his first time in actual trouble with the law, he served 14 months in prison. "It was 14 months of hell.... I will never go back there." He ran to God and was involved with church while he was in prison. He knew God protected him; he knew God's promises; and he knew that he was God's child.

But when he got out, he went right back to his old friends. "I didn't want any authority telling me what to do." So, he moved to Bradenton with his Orlando friends and progressed from using weed and petty theft to using and trafficking cocaine. When police started to move closer to his activities, he knew that he either needed to go back home or he would end up in prison again. He went home!

But home was still hard. He got a job, but continued for months, cycling between his cocaine addiction and crying out to God. "I had no control over myself. I looked like a different person." He asked his mother what was wrong one day at a family gathering, when she looked at him and began to cry. She told him that she was going to lose her son.

*(Continues on page 15)*₇

KATHY PAPPAS

BEAUTIFUL INSIDE & OUT

Kathy Pappas is a woman to be admired in many ways. She has spent over 40 years actively involved in community service in Miami, such as the Lowe Art Museum and Westminster Christian School. Her husband of 40 years, Mike Pappas, is the CEO of The Keyes Company, a major real estate firm in Florida. Together with Mike, Kathy has hosted Bible studies for years at their home and led mission trips. They have also been involved with the Young President's Organization for over 30 years, through which Kathy has been a speaker and the organizer of major events and fundraisers. She is the mother of 5 successful children, and the beloved grandmother of 6, soon to be 7.

Kathy's happiness and success were not always evident to herself. Kathy was raised in Miami in an average family, and was the second born of 4 siblings. Her parents were divorced when she was 5 years old.

When she was 10 years old, the family moved in together with her mother's soon-to-be third husband and his 4 children. The now 8 children were not well-monitored, and were often left to fend for themselves. Kathy recalls trying to speak through the laundry shoot to get her mother's attention because her mother's door was frequently locked and the children were not permitted to disturb her, "unless you're bleeding".

While still only 10, one of her older stepbrothers began to sexually abuse Kathy. She never felt safe in her home, and felt alone, especially in her own bed at night. Despite locks that she attempted to place on her doors, he found ways to enter. He also drilled peep holes into the bathroom door



and tried any way he could to let her know he was always watching. He threatened to abuse others in the family as well, if she were to tell anyone. Years later, Kathy grew stronger, and was able to stand up to him.

Kathy moved on with her life and the memories were buried. She met her husband Mike in high school and at 22 years old they married. When Kathy was 25 and pregnant with their first child, the memories flooded back as she now thought of protecting her own child. Although the abuse had stopped, the effects on Kathy were profound, pervasive and dramatic. On the outside, she maintained a picture-perfect life to observers, but on the inside, she was afraid and ashamed. "I thought that if anyone knew, I would be unlovable. The secrecy of it all ate away at my soul and turned into depression." As a young mother of five small children, her internal sadness and *depression grew and her marriage became rocky. "I kept trying different things to make the pain go away. It was harder to keep it all together."*

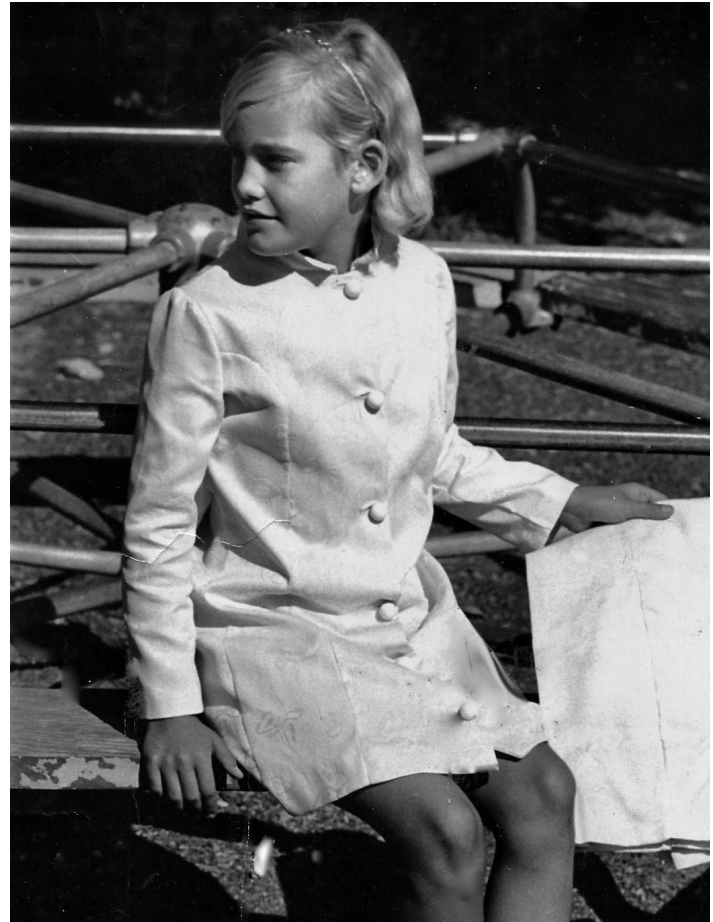
“I am a whole new person, not the damaged person that I thought I was.”

depression grew and her marriage became rocky. “I kept trying different things to make the pain go away. It was harder to keep it all together.”

In a time of crisis, she called out to her pastor for help. Without having told him of her childhood abuse, he repeatedly looked at her and asked, “So who abused you?” She tried to avoid the question as she felt it had no relevance to the issues at hand. She was shocked that he “knew”, and finally confessed the truth. He then referred her to Wellspring for counseling.

“Without help, I would not have pulled out of it,” says Kathy. At Wellspring, she joined a support group for women who had all been sexually abused. The group lasted for years. Through that group, she discovered that she wasn’t alone in her abuse. She learned that even though she didn’t stop the abuse sooner, it wasn’t her fault that it happened. Through EMDR (a specialized trauma therapy used at Wellspring) “my hatred for my abuser softened into pity,” says Kathy. Through years of individual and group therapy, she was strengthened and able to confront her step brother and directly address the abuse. Her marriage healed and so did she. “The bad habits and patterns I had formed to manage my pain all began to diminish.”

Until this article, Kathy has never gone public with her story of childhood abuse. But, she leaves the book, *The Wounded Heart* (a book for victims of sexual abuse) visible in her home. This opens the door for conversations with fellow-sufferers, who she gently encourages with hope for change and refers for counseling. Like her former pastor, Kathy now has a sixth-sense to recognize others who struggle with past abuse. When given the opportunity, she asks the question herself: “Who abused you?”



Kathy at 10 years old

“Without help, I would not have pulled out of it”

No longer needing to pretend or cover secrets, Kathy is free to be authentic to herself and the world around her. “I can go into every room of my soul,” says Kathy. “I am a whole new person, not the damaged person that I thought I was. I now believe that this all happened for a reason. I think it was so that I would know that God loves me, so I could live a life that is honoring to God, and so I am able to help others.”

WAIT ON THE LORD

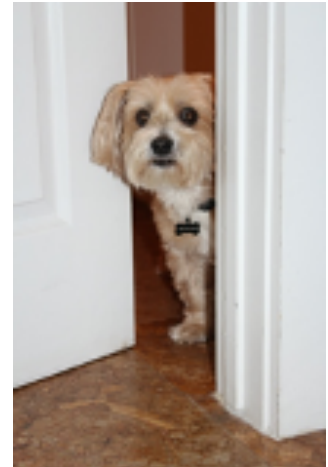
A Devotional by Tova Kreps, Wellspring President

From his perch by my side or at my feet, my dog Peanut watches my every move. If I put my tennis shoes on, he prances around his leash, hoping to go for a walk. If I pull out a suitcase, he becomes anxious and pushes through the door when I leave, so he won't be left behind. Now that I work from home, I find myself apologizing to Peanut for disturbing his comfort when he follows me to retrieve a pen or some water, only to return.

Scripture tells us to look to God in heaven, watching His hands the way a servant watches the hands of a master (Psalm 123:1-2).

As I meditate on these verses, I ask myself if I look to the Lord the way Peanut looks to me. Do I watch His hands with anticipation? Am I living with God so closely, abiding with Him, that I notice what He is doing around me, anxious to join Him for a journey? Do I patiently wait before I move in any direction until I see which way God is going?

My father told me that one of his philosophies for choosing which ministries to support, was to look to see where God was already working and then to join that cause. My husband and I have applied my father's philosophy and have found ourselves supporting missionaries like Stacy Morales from KIX, our church, and Wellspring. What do you see God's hands doing that you could jump up to join?



Peanut

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE AFFECTED BY CHILDHOOD TRAUMA?

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1.800.799.SAFE (7233)

National Sexual Assault Hotline

1.800.656.HOPE (4673)

Florida Department of Children & Families Abuse Hotline

1.800.962.2873

SEXUAL ABUSE RESOURCES FOR HEALING

theallendercenter.org



**On Life FM, and
Online Podcast.
More info at**




WellspringMiami.org/ontheair

FIND FREE

- BIBLICAL
- PRACTICAL
- SCIENTIFIC

RESOURCES AT
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EVERYONE DESERVES SUPPORT

At Keyes, we're about more than just real estate; we're about taking care of people. That's why we are proud to stand with Wellspring Counseling in their mission to **shatter the stigmas of mental health.**

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God Wins

(Continued)

The Return

In January of 2012, the great earthquake hit Haiti, and for some reason, Godwin felt compelled to go help. Friends and co-workers helped him go on a relief trip to Haiti. After he arrived, his life changed. He planned to be there for only one week, but on the first day, he began to minister to a group of 12 street boys. Soon, he led them in a daily Bible Study, recalling his early childhood training. At the end of the week, he was persuaded to stay to minister to these youth. He stayed there for a year and a half. "That's where God transformed my heart, turned me into a missionary, and took me away from all of the noise and distractions of the world. He helped me learn to be sacrificial and to focus on others." Godwin has never touched cocaine again after that trip.

When he returned to Homestead, he began working at the same KIX ministry where he had been taught about God as a youth. He moved into leadership and worked there for several years.

Eventually, he returned to Haiti on another small mission trip. He had begun to think about starting some farming pursuits in Haiti, "but God always has His way." Instead, he started a new Youth for Christ Ministry for youth in Haiti. While on that trip, something else significant happened. He met a 5-year old homeless orphan named Ricardo, who grabbed his heart. Since then, Godwin has cared for Ricardo and is in the process of adopting him.

Counseling

Godwin came for counseling at Wellspring at two points in his life journey. First, he came when he returned home but was still struggling with addiction. "What counseling did for me was to help me realize that I couldn't just ignore my past. I had to deal with it. I began to unlock some of the root issues, which helped me to understand why I was going through the things I was going through. But I wasn't ready to touch all of those root issues yet, which is why they continued to cause me trouble."



Later, while working at KIX, he did further counseling work on his past and on relationship issues. "I know counseling helps. In the Black community, counseling is frowned upon. In the Haitian community it is non-existent. Issues are brushed under the table... Counseling helped me realize that even though we are Haitians, we need to deal with issues. And if we don't, it will affect us for years."

"What counseling helped me do was unlock something in me that I didn't know. An emptiness. I knew it was there, but I kept running from it." He recalls one day, when he was asked to speak about forgiveness to some KIX youth, "I couldn't give the talk because I knew that I hadn't forgiven my father yet. So, I told the truth during the talk." One teenage boy heard him speak and also struggled with forgiveness. He had been sexually abused. The youth challenged Godwin for both of them to forgive together. After tears and prayer together, "we both let it go. After that, I was able to have a better relationship with my Dad."

Now

"I enjoy my ministry and I love working with the kids here in Haiti. There is less distraction and rat-race... I have time to study the Bible. God is incorporated into all parts of my life." Eventually, Godwin says that he may get married and may come back to the US for Ricardo's sake. Ricardo is now 8 and Godwin says, "I am blessed. My life is good."

ABOUT OUR PARTNERSHIPS



Wellspring has nonprofit community partners throughout Miami. These community partnerships are leveraged to expand our services especially to youth in underprivileged communities. Wellspring therapist Yasamin Shamloo, LMHC, explains, "As the Assessments Coordinator for the Bounce! Trauma Resolution program and also as a therapist who has counseled youth in **Touching Miami with Love**, **KIX**, and **Urban Promise** Miami, I have witnessed the true healing that comes from partnership."

Alicia Foss, Registered Mental Health Counseling Intern at KIX runs skill-based and therapeutic groups to middle school students, "Our groups allow students to build strong bonds with one another, and they feel comfortable doing so in this safe space."

At Urban Promise, a team of Wellspring's licensed clinicians and interns have the opportunity to be on site with the teens twice a week for after school and summer programming. Wellspring therapist Lindsey Steffen, LMHC leads this effort, "I love our partnership with Urban Promise, because we have the privilege to provide therapeutic services to kids and teens with trauma histories, some who would otherwise not have access to mental health resources. I believe we are giving them the chance to choose the direction of their lives rather than trauma dictating their story."

Community partnerships are a sign of an effective nonprofit (Exponential Philanthropy, 2014). Wellspring's mission involves being connected to our community to provide counseling and education. According to the publication NonProfit Pro, nonprofits are always challenged with scarcity of resources to meet their mission and are often stretched to capacity (Haddad, 2016). According to Executive Director, Dr. Leigh Byers, "Without donor support, including organizations like the Ocean Reef Community Foundation, these collaborations would be difficult to sustain and **partnering with other nonprofits stretches those dollars to reach more people that need mental health services.**"





2021 GOALS FOR FUNDRAISING

Accessible Services

- Financial Aid for those who are under-resourced
- Affordable services for middle-income families through donor dollars which allow for Wellspring to receive lower payouts from in-network insurance

Accelerated Healing

- Programs to help people recover from trauma more quickly through intensive counseling and retreats

Alternative Avenues

- Mental health webinars and courses that free people to "do their own work", pursuing mental health on their own timetable

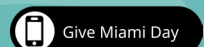
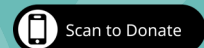
These efforts can only happen through donations.

Results of a 2020 Wellspring Health Insurance Survey showed that 43% of clients selected a faith-based world view as the main criteria for selecting a mental-health provider, and 40% selected in-network insurance as a primary criterion.

The Cycles of Giving: Generous giving made Citlali and Godwin's success stories possible. Generous giving was inspired for Kathy and her family through her success story.

WAYS TO GIVE

1. Become a one-time or monthly giver through our **online giving portal**.
2. Choose Wellspring for your **Give Miami Day** charity. Remember, \$25/\$50/\$100 gifts may receive matching funds.
3. Designate Wellspring as your **preferred charity through your company**, such as United Way, Benevity, and more.
4. Make Wellspring your charity of choice on **AmazonSmile**.
5. **Mail a check to:** 11401 Old Cutler Rd., Palmetto Bay, FL 33158



WELLSPRING DOES MORE THAN INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING

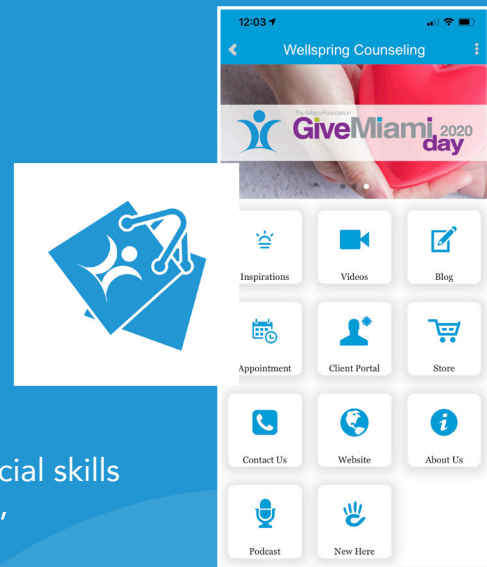
NEW

THE WELLSPRING COUNSELING APP

- This new App brings Wellspring education material and client resources within easy reach. Search Apple Play or Google Play for Wellspring Counseling

THE WELLSPRING STORE

- For free or for fee - Shop for education packages, books, resources and encouraging items.



ONGOING

ON-SITE AFTER-SCHOOL THERAPY PROGRAMS

- Wellspring provides individual and group counseling and social skills training at KIX and Touching Miami with Love in Homestead, Urban Promise in Little Havana.

SPECIALIZED TRAUMA RESOLUTION

- Bounce! – A unique, experiential therapy program for traumatized teens. This program which includes teaching, groups, art, experiential therapies, equine therapy and more is county funded, evidence-based, and profoundly effective.
- Restore Retreat – a 4-day intensive group therapy experience for adults seeking to overcome major life losses or traumatic events.
- Individual Counseling Intensives – Designed to resolve major issues more quickly, this 2-5 day, one-on-one intensive therapy, includes homework assignments, experiential therapies and EMDR.

MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION

- Weekly shows of Wellspring on the Air on LifeFM radio, address mental health issues with scientific and Biblical foundations and practical applications.
- Podcasts, blogs, digital newsletters, social media and this magazine deliver Christian mental health education.

FUNDRAISING FOR FINANCIAL AID AND EDUCATION OUTREACH

- Wellspring works to find grants and donors to provide discounted services and new education and programs.

COUNSELOR TRAINING

- Wellspring is a teaching center with counseling student interns and ongoing best-practice education and consultation for therapists.

MINISTRY 2 MINISTERS

- Wellspring seeks to sustain and equip pastors, ministry leaders, and missionaries through specialized programs just for them.

