

NEWSLETTER

WELCOME TO THE

The Guidance of Hope Corner

On Purpose, Not in Silence

◆ As **May is Mental Health Month**, I find myself reflecting on the current mental health state of our country, particularly within the BIPOC community. In recent months, outside of ongoing conflicts, people are losing their jobs to bots and AI. Women are facing violence at the hands of their partners. Domestic violence has always been prevalent, yet it often remains unspoken in our community.

Systemic racism plays a significant role in our ability to improve our quality of life. Many of us do not pay close attention to how our traumatic history causes us to repeat patterns of generational trauma, which can manifest in harmful ways against one another and the very lives that give us birth. **Men often carry open wounds from maternal pain or paternal abandonment. Black men are raised in a system that pressures them to conform to traditional notions of masculinity while simultaneously limiting their access to resources that would allow them to embrace their full humanity.**

Black women are excelling in education and the workforce, often overfunctioning in both career and parenting, which can lead to a disconnection from their bodies and personal values. So, what can we do as a community?



Her Health . Her Power . Her Story

We can give ourselves permission to seek access to the support we need. This might mean **discussing real issues with friends instead of remaining on the surface, reaching out to someone who is struggling, or connecting with your spirituality, whatever that means for you, because your soul is seeking it.**

Most importantly, let's **stop suffering in silence and start seeking the professional help we need to address and heal our internal wounds.** I hope the resources in this newsletter are helpful to you. Have a great month on purpose, because you can!

Love you, fam!
Judeline



To All My Zoes!

L'union Fait La Force (In unity theirs strength)

Being Haitian To Me

Being Haitian signifies strength, freedom, and love to me. I was raised to always remember and take pride in my culture, and my parents made it clear to us when we migrated to the States. I didn't fully understand the sacrifices my country made for African slaves to seek their freedom until I got older and truly recognized how my country is still paying the price for a freedom that was owed to us, not one that we should have had to fight for. Colonization tried to take our land, but they could never take our spirit. I pray for and encourage all my Zoes and Zoe lovers to keep fighting for our rights and freedom. 🇪🇺

OUR HISTORY

- ◆ Haiti, a country populated majorly by African descendants, gained its independence from French colonizers in 1804.
- ◆ Haiti was the first Black republic in the world to free itself from colonial rule.
- ◆ Dancing is a way of life for this community and you can see this on any public occasion, be it a wedding or a church function.
- ◆ Carnivals are a much-loved affair for Haitians.

HAITIAN LITERATURE

- Haiti, a slave revolution: 200 years after 1804. Chin, Pat.; Dunkel, Greg.; Ives, Kim.; Flounders, Sara. 2004.
- Songs in the shade of the flamboyant tree: French Creole lullabies and nursery rhymes. Grosliéziat, Chantal.; Mindy, Paul.
- Poetry of Haitian Independence. Kadish, Doris Y.





Flag Day 🇧🇩

May 18

Haitian Flag Day is a national holiday celebrated annually on May 18th to commemorate the creation of the Haitian flag in 1803, symbolizing independence, unity, and resistance against colonial rule.

It honors the adoption of the blue and red flag, designed by Jean-Jacques Dessalines and sewn by Catherine Flon to represent the union of black and mixed-race people, making it a proud celebration of Haitian history, culture, and heritage globally.

Events & Traditions: Celebrations include parades, flag-raising ceremonies, concerts, festivals, and festivals featuring Haitian food, dance, and music in Haiti and cities with large diasporas, such as Boston, Miami, and New York.



Food

Bold, spicy cuisine, featuring staples like Griot (fried pork), Diri Djon Djon (black mushroom rice), and Soup Joumou. Influenced by African, French, and Caribbean traditions, Haitian food is deeply aromatic, frequently using epis (herb marinade), plantains, and pikliz (spicy slaw).



Music

Kompa/Compas: The main pain killer, characterized by slow-tempo, danceable.

Rara: Festival music played on bamboo trumpets (vaksen) is often associated with Carnival and Carnival season.

Twoubadou/Troubadour: Guitar-based, acoustic ballad music influenced by Cuban son.

Mizik Rasin (Roots Music): A genre mixing traditional Vodou drumming with rock and pop



The Reality of Motherhood

Motherhood is often described as beautiful, and it is.

AND it is also:

- exhausting
- identity-shifting
- emotionally demanding
- deeply invisible at times

Many mothers are carrying:

- the emotional needs of their children
- the responsibilities of partnership or single parenting
- work expectations
- family obligations
- and their own unprocessed pain

All while still being expected to “hold it together.”

Motherhood can bring joy and grief at the same time. **You can love your children deeply and still miss parts of yourself. Both can be true.**

THINGS MOTHERS CAN DO THIS MONTH

Take 10 minutes daily without caring for someone else

Ask for help without overexplaining

Schedule something that nourishes you, not just your family

Spend time with women who pour into you

Reflection Questions for Mothers

Reflection for Mothers

Who am I outside of what I do for others?

What do I need more support with right now?

Where have I been overgiving at the expense of myself?

What would rest look like if I stopped feeling guilty for it?

Mental Health & Motherhood

Many mothers struggle silently with:

- burnout
- anxiety
- overstimulation
- resentment
- guilt for needing rest
- feeling emotionally touched out

And in many BIPOC communities, mothers are often expected to endure quietly rather than ask for support.

But support is not weakness. It is necessary.

For Those With Complicated Mother's Days

Mother's Day can also bring up:

- grief
- infertility
- estrangement
- loss of a mother
- difficult maternal relationships
- longing for the mothering you never received

If this day feels heavy for you, you are not alone. You are allowed to honor your emotions honestly.

May Themes: Surviving, Healing & Reclaiming Ourselves.

Burnout & High-Functioning Depression

Why They Can Look Similar — But Aren't the Same

Both high-functioning depression and burnout can leave someone feeling exhausted, disconnected, and emotionally drained.

The difference is often found in:

- ☛ the source
- ☛ the duration
- ☛ and what happens when rest is introduced.

High-Functioning Depression

"I'm doing everything... but I don't feel okay."

High-functioning depression often goes unnoticed because the person is still "showing up."

- They go to work.
- Respond to texts.
- Take care of their children.
- Meet deadlines.
- Smile in public.

But internally, they may feel:

- emotionally exhausted
- disconnected from themselves
- numb
- overwhelmed
- hopeless in quiet ways

Because they are still functioning, people often miss the signs, sometimes even the person experiencing it.

BURNOUT

"I HAVE TOO MUCH ON ME."

Burnout is often connected to **chronic stress and overwhelm.**

It usually develops after prolonged:

- work stress
- caregiving responsibilities
- emotional labor
- overfunctioning
- lack of boundaries

Burnout Often Looks Like:

- irritability
- emotional exhaustion
- cynicism or detachment
- difficulty concentrating
- feeling overwhelmed by responsibilities
- loss of motivation specifically tied to work or caregiving

Common Thoughts:

"I need a break."

"I'm mentally exhausted."

"I can't keep doing this much."

Important: With proper rest, support, boundaries, and reduced stress, burnout symptoms often improve.

Why It's Common in BIPOC Communities


Many BIPOC individuals were taught:

SURVIVAL BEFORE EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

PRODUCTIVITY BEFORE REST


overfunctioning


Perfectionism


Caregiving


Emotional shutdown



STRENGTH BEFORE VULNERABILITY

Reflection Questions

Ask yourself:

- When I rest, do I actually feel restored?
- Am I exhausted from overdoing or emotionally struggling underneath it all?
- Have I been surviving for so long that I no longer recognize what balance feels like?

Gentle Reminder

- Just because you're functioning doesn't mean you're okay.
- And you do not have to wait until you completely fall apart to deserve support.
- Support is not only for a crisis. It's also for prevention, clarity, and healing.

Graduation Season & Identity Transitions 🎓

“Now What?”

Graduation is often celebrated as an ending and a beginning.

The pictures are posted.
The accomplishments are acknowledged.
The family is proud.

But underneath the celebration, **many people are quietly asking themselves: “Now what?”**

Because transitions, even positive ones, can create anxiety, grief, uncertainty, and identity confusion. And for many graduates, especially first-generation students, BIPOC students, or individuals carrying family expectations, graduation can feel less like relief and more like pressure.



THE PRESSURE TO “FIGURE IT OUT”

Social media has intensified comparison during graduation season.

People are constantly exposed to:

- Job announcements
- Acceptance letters
- Engagements
- Relocations
- Successful Milestones



This can create the illusion that everyone else has clarity.

BUT MANY PEOPLE ARE:

SCARED
UNCERTAIN
FINANCIALLY STRESSED
EMOTIONALLY OVERWHELMED
EVEN IF THEY DON'T SHOW IT
PUBLICLY.

The Grief No One Talks About

Graduation can also bring grief

Not because someone is ungrateful—but because life is changing.

People may grieve:

- friendships shifting
- loss of structure and routine
- moving away from home
- the ending of a familiar identity
- the version of themselves tied to school or achievement

SOMETIMES THE QUESTION ISN'T:

“WHAT DO I WANT TO DO?”

IT'S:

“WHO AM I NOW?”



Therapist Insight

Success and self-worth are not the same thing.

You are more than:

Your degree
Your title
Your productivity
Your accomplishments

Achievement can open doors. But it cannot replace identity, healing, or self-connection.

Real success may look like:

Emotional peace
Healthy boundaries
Alignment with your values
Sustainable living
Meaningful relationships
Rest without guilt

Not just survival or performance.



Relationship Grief During Seasonal Transitions

“The Relationship Didn’t End Overnight”



As the seasons change, relationships often shift too.

May and the beginning of summer have a way of bringing emotional truth to the surface, highlighting disconnection, unmet needs, loneliness, and relationships that no longer feel aligned. **Many relationships do not end suddenly. They end slowly.**

Through conversations that stop happening, affection that fades, unresolved resentment, emotional distance, and the quiet ache of feeling unseen for too long. And often, **people begin grieving the relationship long before the breakup ever happens.**

For Singles: Protecting Your Peace While Staying Open to Love

For many singles, summer can intensify feelings around relationships and loneliness. Social media begins pushing the idea that everyone is outside, partnered, dating, or “living their best life,” which can quietly create pressure to connect even when something doesn’t fully feel right.

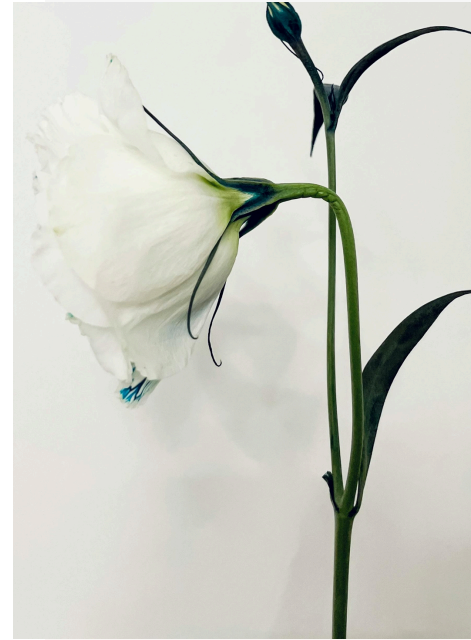
But being single is not a problem to solve. And healing does not mean abandoning your standards, values, or emotional safety just to avoid being alone.

Sometimes the relationship ended months ago...but emotionally, the grief is still active.

And in that vulnerable space, people can become more susceptible to emotional coercion, staying in situations that compromise their values because they fear loneliness, rejection, or “starting over.”

Clinical Insight:

Coercion does not always look aggressive. Sometimes it looks like: being pressured to move faster than you’re comfortable with, abandoning boundaries to keep someone interested, feeling guilty for saying no, and confusing emotional inconsistency with chemistry, silencing your intuition because you don’t want to lose the connection. Healing requires learning to trust yourself again.



Therapist Insight:

A relationship cannot feel emotionally safe when partners are fighting to win instead of fighting to understand. Many couples don’t stop loving each other first. They stop feeling emotionally protected by each other.

When Conflict Becomes About Winning

One of the most painful experiences in a relationship is realizing that somewhere along the way, the partnership stopped feeling like a partnership.

From the outside, everything may appear “fine.” But internally, couples may be struggling with emotional disconnection, unresolved hurt, lack of intimacy, and the quiet loneliness that comes from no longer feeling emotionally safe with one another.

Over time, conflict can stop being about understanding and start becoming about winning.

- **Who’s right.**
- **Who’s more hurt.**
- **Who sacrificed more.**
- **Who gets the final word.**

And in those moments, many couples begin reaching for emotional weapons they’ve been storing quietly beneath the surface.

- **Old mistakes.**
- **Past betrayals.**
- **Insecurities.**
- **Failures.**
- **Family wounds.**

Things once shared in vulnerability are now used during conflict to stab, shame, or gain power.



UPCOMING WORKSHOP & NEW SERVICE



New at Guidance of Hope **GOH Triage Sessions**

Need support now but not ready for weekly therapy?

GOH Triage Sessions are short-term, high-focus sessions designed to help you:

- Stabilize in moments of overwhelm
- Gain clarity on what's happening
- Leave with a practical plan

We focus on:

- What you're experiencing
- What you need most right now
- Your next best steps

Using evidence-based tools (DBT, ACT, mindfulness), these sessions are designed to help you feel grounded, supported, and back in control.

 **Limited spots available.**

Why Wasn't I Enough? (6 Weeks) **Healing from the Loss of Love**

Starting May 16, 2026

A supportive workshop for individuals grieving:

- Breakups or divorce
- Unanswered questions after loss
- Identity shifts after relationship endings

This space centers meaning-making, self-compassion, and reclaiming your narrative.



WHY WASN'T I ENOUGH?

A POWERFUL HEALING WORKSHOP DESIGNED TO HELP PARTICIPANTS PROCESS HEARTBREAK, REJECTION, AND SELF-WORTH

 **Saturdays**
 **May 16 - June 20**
 **10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**
 **In-Person (Preferred)**
 **Virtual Option Available**

\$75 per session
Insurance accepted

Guidance of Hope Resource Corner

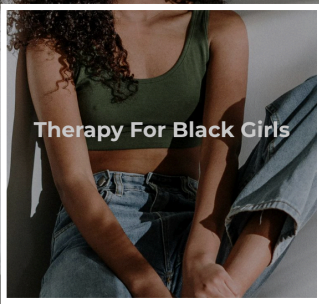
TRAUMA & COPING

- 01 **Grounding exercises (5-4-3-2-1)**
- 02 **Insight Timer (app): guided anxiety & trauma practices**
- 03 **Read: The Body Keeps The Score by Bessel Van Der Kolk**
The Pain We Carry: Healing from Complex PTSD for People of Color by Natali Gutierrez
- 04 **Body-based regulation (stretching, walking, breathwork)**




BIPOC-Centered Mental Health Resources

Inclusive Therapy directories



Therapy For Black Girls

A photograph of a woman with curly hair, wearing a green tank top and denim jeans, sitting on a chair. The image is framed with a white border.

Therapy for Lanin X

A photograph of a man and a woman sitting on a couch, talking. The man is wearing a denim jacket and a white t-shirt. The image is framed with a white border.

Melanin & Mental Health

A photograph of a man in a blue sweater holding a green book and gesturing with his hand. The image is framed with a white border.

National Queer and Trans
Therapist of color

A close-up photograph of a person's face, focusing on their eyes and nose. The image is framed with a white border.

Sol Counseling &
Consulting

A photograph of two people in military uniforms sitting on chairs and talking. The image is framed with a white border.



Community-based healing spaces

BEAM

Supports the mental health and well-being of marginalized communities through training, funding, and healing-centered resources for therapists and wellness practitioners.

LOVELAND FOUNDATION

Supports Black women's mental health by funding therapy, providing resources, and investing in BIPOC therapists

THE NAP MINISTRY

Was founded in 2016 by Tricia Hersey and is an organization that examines the liberating power of naps.



Culturally responsive podcasts and readings

Couch Chronicles
Therapist After Dark
(My podcast)

Therapy For
Black Girls

Just Lyfin Podcast

Rest of Us Podcast

All Relations Podcast



So this month, I invite you to reflect:

As Mental Health Awareness Month comes to a close, my hope is that we move beyond simply talking about mental health and begin intentionally caring for it. So many people are carrying invisible weight, grief, burnout, loneliness, uncertainty, and emotional pain while still trying to function every day. Healing does not always look dramatic; sometimes it looks like asking for help, setting boundaries, resting without guilt, or choosing to no longer struggle in silence. As a community, we deserve more than survival mode. We deserve access, support, and healing that reaches the root. **This month, I invite you to ask yourself: What would it look like to care for myself with the same urgency I use to care for everyone else?**

WITH CARE,

**JUDELINE ALTEMA-COMMEY, LCPC
FOUNDER, GUIDANCE OF HOPE, LLC**

Interested in therapy, workshops, or future newsletters? Visit the Guidance of Hope website or follow us on social media for updates.