



# UCJCI UPDATE

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THE UNITED CHURCH IN  
JAMAICA AND THE  
CAYMAN ISLANDS

*Congregational,  
Disciples of Christ and  
Presbyterian.*

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**OUR VISION:** "Touching  
lives, Nurturing Disciples,  
Seeking Transformation  
through Christ."



Ridgemount United. One of the  
selected Counseling Centers.

## PRAY FOR:



**Rev. Dr. Adlyn White**, who  
is recuperating from  
surgery.

**Jiréné Bain**, daughter of  
Joan Page-Bain who is ill.

**Mr. Krishna Beach**, of  
Boulevard United who is  
recuperating after being  
shot.

**Our world** (racial, politi-  
cal & ideological crises)  
especially France, USA  
and Turkey

## UCJCI IMPROVES RESPONSE TO MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

**T**he major mission  
priority of the  
Church is to re-  
spond to the hurt and  
hopes of people in the  
community where the  
church is located.

To demonstrate that this  
is not an insular agenda,  
the Church needs to  
articulate an intentional  
strategy to reach out to  
the communities in  
response to social and  
economic needs as well  
as a range of justice  
- related issues.

### THE OUTREACH AGENDA

For years, social work as-  
sistance and support to  
the disenfranchised have  
been part of the  
**Church's outreach pro-  
grammes.** These pro-  
grammes have been well  
utilised and at times are  
inadequate due to the  
overwhelming response  
by the public, as the  
church is still the first con-  
tact for help by those in  
need. Many of our  
schools were built based  
on resource mobilisation

by Church leaders both  
locally and overseas,  
comprising multi- denomi-  
nations. In a similar man-  
ner the Church can take  
an active role in creating  
opportunities for **mental  
health counselling.**

**Counselling** has always  
been a part of the  
Church's outreach  
through **pastoral counsel-  
ling and lay leaders  
offering advice and  
guidance,** and this has  
been accessed not only  
by its members but the  
wider community.

**The need to expand  
counselling services to  
include professional  
mental health counselling  
is becoming increasingly**  
evident however with the  
steady breakdown of  
values, attitudes and  
morals coupled with  
financial difficulties that  
restrict access to good  
quality professional  
counselling for many.  
Statistics and news reports  
indicate increasing levels  
of violence, against others  
and self, arising out of situ-

ations in which it appears  
persons are unable to  
cope with the challenges  
of life. **The government,  
church, private sector,  
professional bodies are  
united at this time in  
calling for counselling  
services to be made more  
available for the people  
of Jamaica.**

With Churches being  
viewed as a **neutral safe  
haven** not associated with  
mental health stigma, the  
Church recognises it can  
play a practical role in  
responding to the mental  
health needs of a society.

Churches in Jamaica are  
strategically placed to be  
used as an alternate  
public site for sourcing  
professional counselling.

**Church sites therefore can  
supplement the overbur-  
dened public spaces**  
currently available for  
clinical counselling  
offering much-needed  
partnership in improving  
the quality of life of  
individuals and families.  
**(See over).**

## ‘COUNSELING’

The United Church initiated an ecumenical conversation towards using existing Counselling Centres to respond to the established mental health needs. Arising out of this conversation, ecumenical partners from the **Baptist, Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches** established a working group towards using existing facilities to provide the requisite counselling. **A steering committee was established and this project is an outcome of its work.**

### Target Beneficiaries:

The target population for provision of services will be children, youths and adults in the communities who are critical to the healthy functioning of the family. **These include but are not limited to the following:**

- **Couples** identified through the police force with a history of gender violence
- **School-age children** engaging in self-destructive and/or delinquent behaviours who along with their guardians recognise the need for help.
- **Employees** referred through employee-assistance programmes
- **Persons with poorly managed chronic health and life style conditions or mood disorders** including risk for depression who have been discharged from hospital or are being managed in outpatient care facilities
- **Parents who are inexperienced or ineffective** in their parenting practices

- **Individual children, youth and adults who are affected by loss, grief and /or trauma.**



### Project Objectives and Aims:

**T**he goal of the project is to strengthen the capacity of individuals to improve their life skills and quality of life and to contribute more meaningfully to the society.

**To establish professional counselling services** (individual, couple, family, group) using five (5) multid denominational church sites across Jamaica.

**To expand tertiary level training in mental health counselling** through the use of identified church site counselling services as practicum sites and Counsellors as supervisors

**To utilise the skills of professional counsellors to conduct health promotional and educational workshops** and seminars to enhance all aspects of family life in the identified communities

**To monitor and evaluate the implementation and progress** of counselling service throughout the targeted communities

**To design qualitative study to establish baseline data and determine pre & post-evaluation data on current social attitudes and behaviour and use of counselling service within each church community .**

### Implementation and Activities:

The UCJCI will be responsible for providing oversight to the project under the leadership of **Dr. Audrey Pottinger, Consultant Clinical Psychologist** along with an ecumenical board of stakeholders from various church denominations including **Baptist, Anglican, Roman Catholic and United Church** that make up the Steering Committee.

The delivery and implementation of the counselling service and public education workshops will be managed by the **Programme Coordinator, a Clinical Psychologist and Chair of the Steering Committee;** all volunteers.

The five individual church sites, **Ridgemount United, Webster Memorial, Mona Baptist, Burchell Baptist (Montego Bay), Church of the Reconciliation, Portmore (Roman Catholic and Anglican)** will be supervised by the Minister of the church, Counsellor and church office administrator and they will report directly to the Project Coordinator through quarterly reports prepared by the Counsellor.

The project has received funding support for three years through an ecumenical grant received from the **Council for World Mission (CWM)**. Counsellors are currently being recruited for four of the five sites.

