

Podcast Summary

Health & Wellness in Focus Program & Podcast Topic: *Encouraging a Lifestyle of Good Mental Health*

Host: Bryan Hudson, DMin

Guest: Bryson Davis, President of Onward & Upward Counseling

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In this episode of *Health & Wellness in Focus*, Dr. Bryan Hudson welcomes **Bryson Davis**, a seasoned mental-health professional with 24 years of experience serving youth, adults, families, and communities. Produced by Vision Communications and presented by New Covenant Church, the program aims to inform and empower congregations and the broader community on issues essential to emotional, relational, and spiritual well-being.

Bryson Davis: Background and Expertise

Mr. Davis leads **Onward & Upward Counseling** in Brownsburg, Indiana. His broad expertise includes:

- One-on-one and group counseling
- Substance use counseling
- Gun-violence reduction
- Reentry support
- Life coaching
- Anger management and grief counseling
- Cognitive behavior therapy
- Violence intervention
- Work with youth displaying maladaptive or harmful sexual behaviors

He holds certifications in:

- **EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing)**
- **CSAYC (Credentialed Sexual Abuse Youth Clinician)**
- **TF-CBT (Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy)**

Davis emphasizes that **cognitive health**—how we think, interpret, and respond—is foundational to meaningful change and sustained long-term emotional wellness.

Mentoring, Life Coaching, and Mental Health

The conversation begins with an important question: *Is there a connection between mentoring, life coaching, and mental health?*

Davis affirms that both forms of support focus on **understanding individuals, teaching them skills, and helping them advance in life.**

- **Mentoring** uses lived experience to inspire and guide.
- **Life coaching** provides structured tools, knowledge, and practical strategies to help individuals make better decisions and lead productive, healthy lives.

Both are essential—especially in communities where cycles of stress, trauma, and violence require intentional guidance and support.

Practical Mental Health Skills Everyone Can Use

Davis highlights several “*practices*” anyone can begin immediately:

1. **Accept what you cannot control**
2. **Slow down** instead of living at an unsustainable pace
3. **Be mindful of your triggers**

He explains the *four stages of emotional triggering*:

- **Trigger → Rise → Peak → Fall**

People often react during the rise or peak without understanding what caused the reaction. Davis emphasizes that **people do not make us angry—people trigger us**. Learning to identify and interrupt triggers is crucial for healthy decision-making.

Knowing When to Seek Help

A key marker that someone needs additional support is when they begin experiencing **repeated negative outcomes from the same decisions**.

Davis encourages viewers to recognize that:

- Emotional struggles rarely resolve by themselves
- Guidance from trained professionals can prevent long-term harm
- Seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness

He stresses that understanding the **root causes** of harmful behaviors—not just the behaviors themselves—is essential. Many clients struggling with anger, substance use, or unhealthy reactions are actually responding to **trauma, grief, abandonment, or shame**.

Breaking Stigma and Generational Habits

Addressing the reluctance in the Black community—especially among men—to seek help, Davis challenges the commonly used phrase “generational curses.”

He calls them **generational habits**, patterns of coping and survival learned and passed down. Many individuals have been taught to:

- Push through pain
- Avoid vulnerability
- Hide emotions
- Mask brokenness with strength

Both Dr. Hudson and Davis emphasize that healing begins when individuals challenge old habits, seek support, and address underlying wounds.

Prevention Over Intervention

A powerful theme of the episode is the shift from **intervention** to **prevention**:

- Intervention helps people in crisis
- Prevention helps people *avoid* crisis

Davis advocates reaching individuals during “pre-crisis” moments—before patterns escalate. This approach reduces harm, increases resilience, and builds healthier communities.

Understanding EMDR, CSAYC & TF-CBT

Davis explains his clinical certifications:

CSAYC

Work with youth displaying harmful sexual behaviors, as well as victims processing trauma, loss of innocence, and grief.

EMDR

An evidence-based trauma therapy that helps individuals process distressing memories through **bilateral stimulation** (eye movements, tapping). Effective for PTSD, severe anxiety, and deep emotional pain.

TF-CBT

A structured approach that addresses trauma through understanding how thoughts influence emotions and behaviors.

This therapy does **not** require people to “get over” trauma; rather, it teaches them to **manage trauma in healthy ways**.

Davis shares that after losing his sister to cancer, he learned he would never “get over” her death—but he could learn to manage grief with strength and clarity.

Human Need, Divine Grace, and Professional Support

Dr. Hudson reminds viewers that **God sends help through trained professionals**.

Struggling alone is not God’s plan, especially when:

- Trauma repeats

- Emotional pain deepens
- Decisions become harmful
- Habits become unhealthy

Partnership with trained counselors is part of God's provision for healing.

Why Bryson Davis Entered the Mental Health Field

Davis concludes by sharing the heart behind his calling:

Growing up in church, he and his brother were surrounded by young men who mentored them, invested in them, and provided positive examples of leadership and compassion. Their influence inspired him to devote his life to helping children, families, and communities heal.