



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

May 12, 2026

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JULIET KUEHNLE

"Name It To Tame It."

by **Marilynn Bowler**

Tackling the topic of mental health during a twenty-five-minute speech can be best described as "complicated," and yet Juliet Kuehnle ~ National Board Certified and Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor, author, keynote speaker, business owner, and podcast host ~ took it on her shoulders ... and what she told us at our Charlotte Rotary meeting made all 100+ of us sit up and listen.

Introduced by **Dr. Elizabeth Teagarden**, we learned that Juliet is a premier mental health professional who - on the side - dyes her hair blue during her beloved Duke University's basketball season; has recently competed on our local Dancing With The Stars fundraiser; and grew up in Pinehurst which, in Elizabeth's words, "is why Juliet is precise, has great follow-through, and is unbothered by difficult terrain." She's a Wake Forest grad and earned her master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from UNC-Greensboro.

Juliet began her remarks with the startling statement that 1 in 4 adults experience mental health issues, a topic which makes most people uneasy about discussing mental health ~ their own, their family members', and their friends'. And yet, mental health is closely connected to physical and spiritual health which she describes as the "ultimate trifecta of well -being."

She then shared that "approximately 50% of adults will experience a diagnosable mental health condition at some point in their lives." In fact, she told us that 1 in 5 adults - and 1 in 6 youths (ages 6-17) - will experience mental health issues each year. (Wow!) We, in the audience, found ourselves digging into our inner selves, and we could easily relate to a time when life became almost too challenging. And we tend to cover it up as if it were an embarrassment ... something to hide rather than something to address and conquer. Her term, "high functioning distress," is relatable and could apply to all

of us.

The World Health Organization uses a call to action: MENTAL HEALTH IS HEALTH" because "there is no health without mental health."

The six components of mental health, which Juliet outlined on the video screens, include emotional, psychological, and social well-being, along with resilience, self-worth, and wellness & balance. She then carefully distinguished each component with the cautionary advice to slow down, stay present, allow emotions to move through us, and build self-trust. Like a tree blowing in the wind, she said, we have to bend and sway when times get rough. Her mandate: Remind yourself that "I matter. I deserve better."

Juliet then spoke of the stigma related to mental health ~ self-stigma, social stigma and structural stigma ~ (inclusive of the use of the terms "bipolar" and "narcissistic") and she encourages people in distress to treat themselves with compassion as one would treat a good friend (be gentle and nurturing), set boundaries for what is acceptable behavior, and practice self-worth each and every day. Don't be self-critical or judgmental. Prioritize your own physical, mental, and emotional self-care.

In today's modern, somewhat frantic digital system takeovers, we all receive unwelcome emails and notifications (including SCAMS) that threaten to overload our nervous systems, so coping skills are much needed. Juliet advised practical skills such as deep breathing, intentional rest ~ even cold water or ice for nervous system regulations since ice cubes signal the body to calm down ~ among a longer list. and then led us through three breathing techniques to activate the body's calming response.

She closed her remarks with the reminder that "You are a human **BE**ing, not a human **DO**ing."

The Q&A minutes included questions from audience members:

Susie Masotti asked about the surge in the availability of online therapy. Juliet responded that it is the "new normal" and each person has to do what is best for him/her. The most important part of therapy is a good connection between patient and therapist. If this is in place, then location doesn't matter. Juliet mentioned that she, herself, spends time with her therapist both online and in person. Happily, our world is now open to therapy for people who may not have had that option in the past.

John Cantrell asked about the difference in mental health issues now versus 30-40 years ago. Juliet said that today's technology is causing additional mental health concerns, which causes the nervous system to become over-activated.

Edwin Peacock asked what habits can be nourished to keep mental health issues at bay. Juliet said that anxiety is an issue; joy is a counter-balance. We should focus on things for which we feel grateful.

All-in-all, a thought-provoking and very important topic which surely fostered discussion post-meeting and demands further exploration.

A recording of the meeting can be found here:

Without Slides: <https://vimeo.com/1192009839?fl=pl&fe=sh>

With Slides: <https://vimeo.com/1192038895?fl=pl&fe=sh>

The program introduction begins at approximately 26 minutes and 30 seconds.