Workshop 4E
Preaching to the Choir: Keeping Your Home Fires Burning While Helping Others

Moderator/Panelists:  M. Valerie Mills, PhD, MSW, Senior Health Policy Advisor, SAMHSA, Washington, DC

Presenters:  Rev. Jeffrey Thomas, Metropolitan AME Church, Fort Meade, MD  
Darcel Dillard-Suite, President and CEO, Full Circle Health, Bronx, NY  
Derek H. Suite, MD, MS, founder, Full Circle Health, Bronx, NY

Rev. Jeffrey Thomas used several kitchen metaphors to make his points. When you cook, you have to combine ingredients. This is also what you want to do to make a good relationship. It takes time to prepare a meal and it takes time to build a relationship. Let things simmer a while. Then appreciate the good you have made together.

Darcel Dillard-Suite and Dr. Derek Suite started Full Circle Health together for an initial group of 30 clients. She left the news business and he left his medical practice because both of them love care givers and helping others. To recruit more clients, they went to courts, churches and the community.

Some of the benefits of their work with care givers are fulfillment, empowerment, meaning, joy, transcendence, health, a sense of purpose, and a positive sense of self. Many of the problems associated with care giving are the things care givers do not get enough of: Regular medical check ups, prescriptions, exams, sleep, healthy eating, vitamins, physical activity, hobbies, and help.

The husband and wife team has learned to articulate their limits and needs. They work out mutually agreed roles, develop relationship rituals, explore and maintain shared beliefs, maintain a network of friends, monitor each other’s health, participate in prayer circles and healing circles, and find solutions – not faults. They live, love, listen, laugh and let go. Their website is at [ www.fullcirclehealth.org ].