

## Press Release

For Immediate Release  
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### **#EpilepsyEquity: The Impact of Epilepsy on Mental Health**

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**INDIANAPOLIS** (May 24, 2019) –D.U.O. EmpowerMENT Services (D.U.O.) recognizes the need for equitable services and support for community members and has made an effort to provide a channel of opening for community members. Through a mini grant awarded by the Epilepsy Foundation and CDC, D.U.O., along with several community organization’s support, began its work in January 2019 to bring about awareness of epilepsy and the impact on mental health in minority communities.

On Saturday, May 18, 2019, D.U.O. in partnership with the Epilepsy Foundation Indiana hosted the #EpilepsyEquity & Seizure Disorder Wellness Retreat. As May is Mental Health Month, the event focused on being mentally healthy, receiving support and services for those living with or caring for loved ones with Epilepsy. “We became prisoners to our own home,” said Ms. Hadley one of the retreat speakers. She shared the mental battle experienced in caring for their son with epilepsy and managing his healthcare. “This is the first time ever that we speak of this in public. Sharing on this platform today has been so freeing for us,” said Mr. Dominguez. He and his wife shared their journey in caring for a loved one with epilepsy.

A discussion held during the wellness retreat highlighted the struggle, at times, to remain mentally healthy as the stress of so many factors consumed those caring for their loved ones with epilepsy. Not only can sadness and depression set in for caregivers, it can also impact the lives of those living with epilepsy. Epilepsy is the fourth most common neurological disease and affects people of all ages. The Epilepsy Foundation Indiana reports that 69,500 Hoosiers have epilepsy. In 2017, an estimated 17.3 million adults in the U.S. had at least one major depressive episode (National Institute on Mental Health).

There continues to be stigma attached to epilepsy and mental illness especially within minority communities. It is a mission of both the Epilepsy Foundation Indiana and D.U.O. EmpowerMENT Services to continue efforts to decrease the stigma by educating the community on both epilepsy and mental health.

For more information, please contact NaKaisha Tolbert-Banks, CEO of D.U.O. EmpowerMENT Services at info.duoservices@gmail.com. For information about epilepsy, specific to Indiana, visit the Epilepsy Foundation Indiana at <https://www.epilepsy.com/local/indiana-province-state>. The following helplines can provide additional information and resources. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255. 24/7 Epilepsy & Seizures Helpline: 1-800-332-1000. Spanish Speakers Only: 1-866-748-8008.

D.U.O. EmpowerMENT Services is a mental health counseling and life coaching private practice. D.U.O. EmpowerMENT Services is dedicated to serving communities and supporting individuals to be mentally healthy. The Mission of D.U.O. EmpowerMENT Services is to empower individuals, families, and groups to develop, strengthen, and enhance positive relationships with self and others through the understanding and use of laughter.

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