

SUNDAY MORNING HEALTH CORNER

Faith, Spirituality, and Mental Health Care in the African American Community

The **African American community has the highest rate of church attendance** among all racial or ethnic groups in the United States.¹ **While faith and a faith-based community often play a meaningful role** in a treatment journey, it is also **important to speak to a healthcare professional (HCP)** if you or a loved one lives with a mental health condition. **Our mental health is just as important as our physical health.**



Who can I talk to about my mental health concerns?



HCPs play a vital role in helping adults manage a mental health condition. A primary care doctor can connect you or a loved one with HCPs specializing in mental health treatment, which can include counseling, group therapy, or medication. You can always ask for a referral from your primary care doctor.



As you work toward your health and wellness goals, finding an HCP who understands your values is key.

Start a conversation about your personal beliefs and values by asking questions² like:



How do you see my cultural background influencing our communication and my treatment?



How do you plan to integrate my beliefs and practices in my treatment?



Know that mental health conditions are medical conditions that can be treated. Talk to a trusted HCP to find a treatment plan that works for you, such as medication and supportive therapies.

If you or a loved one is in crisis, call 911 as soon as possible. If you or a loved one needs someone to talk to, there is confidential support available 24/7 for everyone in the United States by calling **1-800-273-8255** for the National Suicide Prevention Hotline.

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1. Lukachko A, Myer I, Hankerson S. Religiosity and mental health service utilization among African-Americans. *J Nerv Ment Dis.* 2015;203(12):979.
2. National Alliance on Mental Illness. African American Mental Health. <https://www.nami.org/Support-Education/Diverse-Communities/African-American-Mental-Health>. Accessed April 14, 2020.

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