

SUNDAY MORNING Health Corner

Common Barriers to Mental Health Care

Often communities of color are met with a myriad of disparities that prevent or make difficult access to mental health services. Lack of relevant and culturally responsive mental health care also increases the number of psychological difficulties in the Black community. Additional factors, like racism and discrimination within health care systems, further contribute to access to proper mental healthcare within African American communities.

Common Barriers African Americans Face

Nearly 12 percent of Black Americans are without health insurance, which limits or prevents their access to therapy and other mental health care. Even with access to needed health care resources, cultural mistrust of mental health professionals is a common attitude within the African American communities. This mistrust causes many to forgo treatment.

Less than 2 percent of American Psychological Association (APA) members are Black or African American. So, many people searching for care may worry that mental health care practitioners are not skilled to treat their needs while remaining culturally sensitive.

How to Overcome Common Barriers

- Conduct stigma awareness training in faith institutions, community organizations, and primary care facilities.
- Support academic-community partnerships that focus on culturally competent academic health training and the provision of health services.
- Increase awareness about the connection between chronic diseases and mental health.



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