

Valuing Individuals as More Than Their Mental Health Diagnosis

Community Inclusion Awareness

An inclusive community is a community that is welcoming and accepting, where all members feel supported and safe regardless of background and ability.

Community inclusion requires that all individuals have an equal opportunity to fully participate in the community. Inclusive communities actively seek out and welcome the participation of everyone. Everyone's uniqueness and potential contribution is valued.

1 in 5

adults in the US is living with a mental illness—
it's more common than you might think.¹

For adults living with mental health conditions, this can mean feeling recognized and valued by their community.² For communities who face different types of discrimination, including communities of color, the LGBTQIA community, religious communities, people with certain health conditions, and people of various abilities, community inclusion recognizes that differences between people create strong and healthier communities.²

For instance, in an inclusive community, Black adults living with mental illness are viewed by their hopes, dreams, desires, and capabilities, not just their mental health condition.²

Accepting people for who they are, instead of focusing on differences, may help Black adults living with mental health conditions live better and healthier lives.² Participating in local activities or with local groups through employment, religion, physical activity, and social relationships can help create more safe spaces.²



Community Health Equity Alliance

Community Inclusion Strategies

There are ways to create an inclusive community for Black adults living with mental illness.

Community members can help to reduce stigma among adults with mental health conditions by providing safe spaces to address their feeling of being viewed negatively, which can reduce interest in or efforts at community inclusion.² Talking or learning about mental illness, finding things in common with other community members, and accepting what makes each community member unique can help reduce stigma and create more-welcoming communities.

Community members can encourage peer-to-peer support. Whether it be a similar experience with a mental illness, or shared goals, culture, dreams, or interests, finding things they have in common with community members may help adults with a mental health condition take part in their communities.

Adults living with mental illness have said it's important to them to have access to the following:

Housing



Employment



Use of Public Transportation

Education



Attending a Place of Worship



Promoting Inclusion in Your Community

Find organizations and initiatives in your area that are promoting community inclusion and celebrating diversity. Some resources to help get you started include:

- [Peer Voice NC](#)
- [Faith and Community Resources](#)
- [North Carolina Mental Health Services](#)
 - » Community Support Teams
 - » Individual Placement and Supports/Supported Employment
 - » Transition Management Services

1. National Institute of Mental Health. Mental illness. January 2022. Accessed February 2022. https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness#part_2540

2. Salzer, MS, Baron, RC. Well Together – A blueprint for community inclusion: fundamental concepts, theoretical frameworks and evidence. Wellways Australia Limited. 2016.