

# SUNDAY MORNING Health Corner

## Taking a Supportive Approach to Serious Mental Health Conditions

Nearly **1 in 25 adults in America** live with a **serious mental illness (SMI)** [1]. SMI includes major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, post traumatic stress (PTSD) and borderline personality disorder (VA). With only an estimated **30% of African American adults living with a mental health condition are receiving treatment** [2], it's essential for Black people to speak up, speak out, and communicate with healthcare professionals to get proper mental health care.

### How can I support if I believe that I or my loved one has a serious mental health condition?

- Educate yourself about the illness.
- Seek out resources.
- Have realistic expectations. Your expectations can have an effect on the healing process of someone you care about.
- Reach out for support.
- Respect them regardless of symptoms.
- Realize that feelings of shame and guilt are normal.
- Encourage them to talk to their mental health professional.

If you or a loved one is in crisis, call 911 for emergencies. The National Suicide Prevention Hotline is available 24/7 for US residents at 1-800-273-8255.



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1.National Alliance on Mental Illness. African American Mental Health. <https://www.nami.org/nami/media/nami-media/infographics/generalmhfacts.pdf>African-American-Mental-Health. Accessed November 23, 2021.

2.National Alliance on Mental Illness. African American Mental Health. <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Identity-and-Cultural-Dimensions/Black-African-American>. Accessed November 23, 2021.