

How Mental Health Issues Impact People of Color



How has race impacted your mental health?

“Being biracial, obviously. But the black community is not good at acknowledging mental health issues and fixing them. I think the stigmas around it in black communities are toxic to mental health and toxic to masculinity in general.”

Male, age 19

How has race affected your mental health?

Personally my sexual orientation was what really played a role in my mental health. Especially because I feel so connected to my race and I know how the African-American community has viewed and continues to view members of the LGBTQ community.

Did any of that lead to depression/ anxiety?

I would say it led to both. I was always worried what people would think about me and how they would treat me.

People meaning black and white people?

Yeah, but mainly those who were close to me which were mainly black people.

Female, age 19

How do you think race has affected your mental health?

Let me put it this way: for me specifically, a lot of Korean Americans tend to stick around other Korean Americans. But I didn't because I didn't live in that neighborhood. My parents also just didn't really associate with them much. So I was around a lot of people of other races, and in many circumstances they were like "Oh, you're the Asian kid." Eventually I broke through, but for a while I would be defined by my race. But then when I interacted with other Korean Americans I didn't really feel like I was close to them, namely at middle school or at church. Koreans would all stick together and go to each other's houses and stuff, and I didn't. So I found myself intentionally going out of my way to redefine myself. Not as another Korean American, not as the Asian kid, but as a very distinct (insert name). Like a very distinct and different personality. In other words, I very often felt lonely. My family wasn't close with the Korean American community as many others were. And at the same time my family didn't have many other multicultural friends either. So growing up I felt very out of place.

Male, age 19

Barriers (summary)



- **Self-sufficiency:** People of color may be more likely to suppress their emotions, as emotional dependence is seen as lazy and selfish in certain ethnic and cultural groups
- **Spiritual beliefs:** (for example, Filipinos are a very Catholic community), those with mental health issues are directed towards prayer, and suicide is seen as sinful
- **Lack of resource accessibility:** Certain therapists don't understand culture or ethnic background. Moreover, a general physician might be biased to diagnosing certain disorders because their implicit biases may transcend the required cultural competency courses
- **Success Complex:** Model minority myth (pressure for Asian Americans to be perfect)
- **Imposter Complex:** collections of feelings of inadequacy that persist despite success



Further Summary of Disparities and Barriers

“Ethnic/racial minority children are underserved relative to their non-Latinx white counterparts in the areas of prevention, access, quality treatments, and outcomes of care”

- Community trauma and poverty that disproportionately affect certain racial and ethnic groups lead to PTSD, depression, and anxiety
- Different question phrasing may lead to different responses when screening minority youth (excessively asking: “are you sure?”)
- Surveys found that African American and Latinx individuals have lower rates of mental health service youth compared to non white counterparts (national study) and lower usage of psychiatric pharmacotherapy



Statistics to note

- "Based on the 2017 Youth Risk Behaviors Survey, 7.4 percent of youth in grades 9-12 reported that they had made at least one suicide attempt in the past 12 months. Female students attempted almost twice as often as male students (9.3% vs. 5.1%). Black students reported the highest rate of attempt (9.8%) with white students at 6.1 percent. Approximately 2.4 percent of all students reported making a suicide attempt that required treatment by a doctor or nurse. For those requiring treatment, rates were highest for Black students (3.4%)".



- Asian Americans are the least out of every racial/ethnic group to receive mental health services (specifically three times less likely to seek mental health services than whites).
- People who identify as being two or more races (24.9%) are most likely to report any mental illnesses than any other race/ethnic group, followed by American Indian/Alaska Natives (22.7%), white (19%), and blacks (16.8%)



More stats

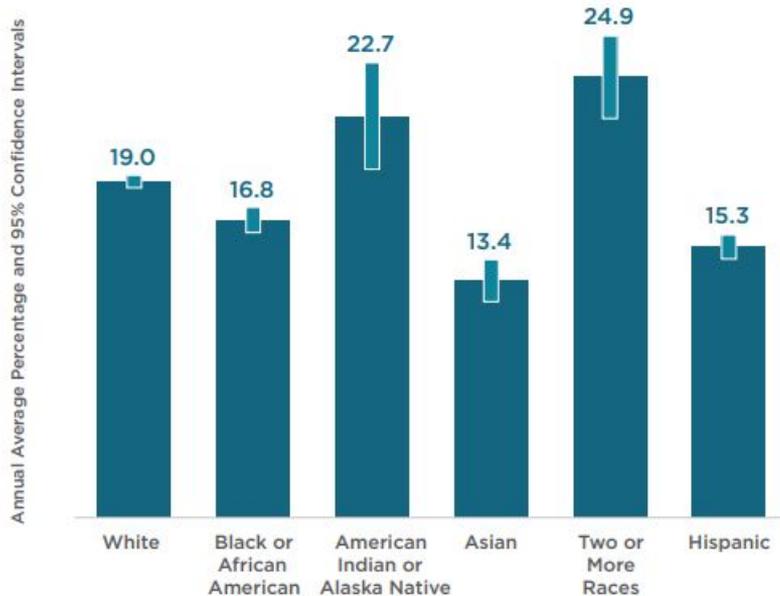
- Black teenagers are 50% more likely than white teenagers to exhibit bulimic behaviors, and Hispanic females are more likely to experience bulimia nervosa than their peers.
- Suicide was the leading cause of death for Asian Americans, ages 15 to 24, in 2017.



Therapy

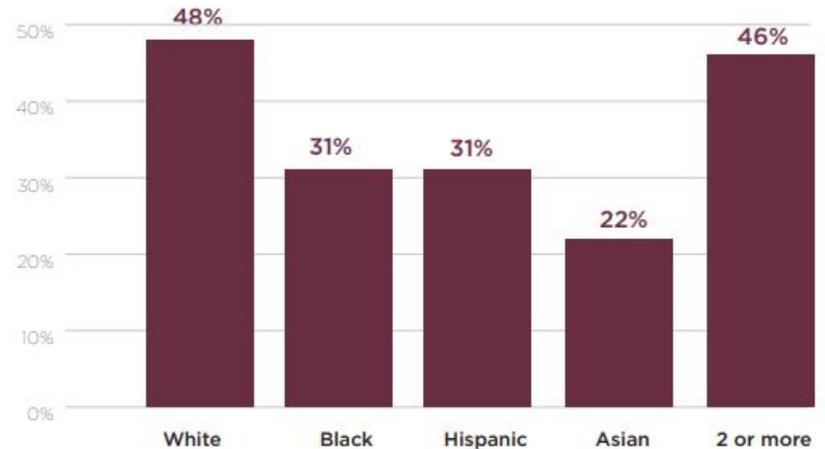
- Many people of color prefer a non-white therapist, as they view particular issues as race- or ethnicity- specific
- In 2015, 86 percent of psychologists in the U.S. workforce were white, 5 percent were Asian, 5 percent were Hispanic, 4 percent were black/African-American and 1 percent were multiracial or from other racial/ethnic groups. This is less diverse than the U.S. population as a whole, which is 62 percent white and 38 percent racial/ethnic minority.

Any Mental Illness in the Past Year among Adults, by Race/Ethnicity, 2008-2012



Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration, *Racial/Ethnic Differences in Mental Health Service Use among Adults, 2015*

Among People with Any Mental Illness, Percent Receiving Services, 2015



Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2008-2015*



Stand up if you know somebody
who feels that mental health issues
represent laziness and weakness.



Stand up if you know someone who has struggled getting mental health services because of familial pushback.



Stand up if you feel that you or someone you know were misunderstood by a professional because of your race, culture, ethnicity or sexuality.