It’s time family. We are breaking the silence around mental health in the Black/African American community. I don’t have to tell you that being Black in America is strenuous. Our community is resilient and thriving, but that does not mean that the obstacles we encounter have no effect on us. So, this month, we’re going to take some time to debunk the myths. Knowledge is power. Let’s get to it.

A Recap of Colorado Springs Screening

June 2nd, the CBHC was invited to screen for blood pressure and glucose levels at Colorado Cares NDI Walk, an event hosted by the owner of the 226 Salon. We are sharing the stories of one of the volunteers who participated with us.

How You Can Volunteer With Us

See last page for more information.
4 COMMON MYTHS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH
AS TOLD BY FACEBOOK FRIENDS

• THE MYTH: "Seeking help in the Black community is seen as both shameful and weak." "We keep our business to ourselves"
• THE FACTS: Yes. Stigma exists in our community, but it also exists in all communities. There are two main reasons Black people seek help less: 1) Distrust and Misdiagnosis 2) Socio-economic factors (Black folks are less likely to have access to health care)

1

• THE MYTH: “Mental health issues are caused by some type of substance/drug abuse”
• THE FACTS: Mental health issues can arise for a number of reasons. African Americans are more likely to experience some factors more than any other population. These are: Incarceration, homelessness, having low-income, victimization of violent crimes, and the psychological stress of racism, stereotypes, and rejection.

2

• THE MYTH: “You’re just high strung. That’s why you’re successful. Don’t be like white people on all them drugs.” (Mental Illness is a white thing)
• THE FACTS: Mental health affects everyone. It has no claim on any certain culture, race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.
• Adult Black/African Americans are 20 % more likely to report serious psychological distress than adult whites.
• Adult Black/African Americans are more likely to have feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and worthlessness than adult whites. Though Black/African Americans are less likely than white people to die from suicide as teenagers, Black/African Americans teenagers are more likely to attempt suicide than are white teenagers.

3

• THE MYTH: “My depression is just a “state of mind” and if I work hard enough I can overcome it…”
• THE FACTS: Depression is more than just feeling sad or going through a rough patch. It’s a serious condition and requires understanding and medical care. For more information visit: www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/

4

SUPPORT & RESOURCES

Now that we’ve busted some of the myths surrounding our community, let’s talk about being prepared and having resources.

10 Common Warning Signs of Mental Illness (NAMI.org)
1. Feeling sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks.
2. Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
3. Intense worries or fears that interfere with daily activities
4. Sudden overwhelming fear
5. Seriously planning or attempting to self-harm
6. Not eating, throwing up, or using laxatives to lose weight
7. Significant weight loss or gain
8. Severe risk-taking behavior
9. Repeated use of drugs or alcohol
10. Drastic changes in behavior, personality, or sleeping habits

Check out our sources for more information:
www.nami.org
(National Alliance on Mental Illness)
www.abpsi.org
(The Association of Black Psychologists)
www.mentalhealthamerica.net/african-american-mental-health
Wanting to get to the root of the silence around mental health in our community, we took to Facebook. Mariea Singleton wrote “Seeking help in the black community is seen as both shameful and weak. The “pray on it”, “get over it”, “it can’t be that bad” platitudes can often make it worse. When real issues aren’t seen as real or valid, hopelessness ensues and the vicious cycle spirals downward. The flip side is that we don’t have enough people who look like us sitting in the other chair providing help. It’s a challenge finding someone to trust, whether it be a professional or a confidante.”

We understand how difficult it can be to find professionals in the medical industry that look like us. That’s why we have our resource directory which can be found on our website. You will find mental health providers on page 81-82 of the 2013 Resource Directory.

Although we try and provide you with all you need, it may not always be possible to find a medical or mental health specialist who is Black/African American. If this is the case here are some questions you can ask your provider to prevent cases of cultural insensitivity and misdiagnosis. – nami.org

• Have you received training in cultural competence or multicultural mental health?
• How do you see our cultural backgrounds influencing our relationship and my treatment?
• How do you plan to integrate my beliefs and practices in my treatment?
• Have you ever treated African Americans with my diagnosis?

Your health includes your mental health. You know yourself and your friends/family. If anything, out of the normal is occurring it’s better to be safe and talk to a doctor. As Dr. Richardson says, you only have one life. Live it happy, live it healthy!
CBHC BARBERSHOP/SALON PROGRAM

CBHC WELCOMES VOLUNTEERS - HAPPY TO TRAIN YOU!

- ARE YOU ABLE TO GIVE ONE SATURDAY EVERY 2-3 MONTHS?
- WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE YOUR TALENT?
- DO YOU LIKE TO SEE OTHERS LIVE A HEALTHY LIFE?

PLEASE CONTACT US: INFO@COLORADOBLACKHEALTH.ORG

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We will be the Healthiest Black folks in the Nation...

Are you with us?

Just for the HEALTH of it!