AUGUST 2023 NEWSLETTER

BIPOC Community Face Unique Mental Health Struggles

America as a whole is suffering a mental health crisis: nearly 53 million people are estimated to have experienced mental illness in 2020. But statistics show that mental health problems hit BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) the hardest.
Members of the BIPOC community often suffer from poor mental health outcomes due to factors such as lack of access to quality mental health care services, cultural stigma surrounding mental illness, discrimination, and overall lack of awareness about mental health.

In 2021, it was estimated that only 39% of Black or African American adults, 25% of Asian adults, and 36% of Hispanic/Latino adults with any mental illness were treated, compared to 52% of non-Hispanic white adults.

According to the Veterans Health Administration Department of Veterans Affairs, American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans report experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at double the rate of non-Hispanic white Veterans—20.5 percent compared to 11.6 percent.

Click here to learn about culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health care services, information, and resources offered by the HHS Office of Minority Health (OMH).

Information courtesy of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

We recently spoke to LuAnne Brown, President and CEO of Buffalo Prenatal Perinatal Network, about stigma and mental health.

Buffalo Prenatal Perinatal Network empowers women, fathers, and families to take charge of bettering their family health and well-being by providing education, support, advocacy, and connection to resources and services in WNY. The work of Buffalo Prenatal Perinatal Network is dedicated to honoring the dignity and capacity of individuals and communities and in promoting health equity.

Why did your organization become a member of The Anti-Stigma Coalition?
We see mental health issues with our clients and staff every day and are aware it is a growing issue. It can have impact not only on the clients but their children as well. Staff also need assistance and mental health issues can impact their work performance and family life.

How are your clients impacted by stigma?
They are reluctant to go to formal counselors due to their cultural backgrounds, but also, they fear someone taking their children away from them.

What is your organization doing to address stigma and enhance mental wellness in the community?
All our clients are screened at different intervals and appropriate referrals are made. We also offer an Empowerment group monthly in our Community Health Worker Program for our moms experiencing PMD, which is facilitated by a mental health counselor. We are starting another one for our Healthy Families program in September. We have a strong EAP program for our staff through Child and Family Services which staff can access for counseling, etc. We also mandate staff to attend EAP if we feel they are in real need. We will be starting a new pilot “Thinking Healthy Plus” with Syracuse University in August which will train eight of our staff members to deliver a modified cognitive behavioral therapy during home visits.

LuAnne Brown
PRESIDENT AND CEO
BUFFALO PRENATAL PERINATAL NETWORK
How to Prepare for Mental Health Counseling

The mission of the Erie County Anti-Stigma Coalition is to eliminate the stigma of mental illness. Once you have taken the steps to seek professional therapy, what can you expect? Here are some helpful tips from Bridget McNally, case worker at Mental Health Advocates of WNY.

IT CAN BE AWKWARD.
Anxiety disorders affect 18% of the US population every year, so it’s natural to dread talking about your intimate problems with someone new. Therapists are aware of that discomfort and self-consciousness and well trained to help you open up.

YOU ARE BRAVE.
Admitting that you need to go to therapy and then actually following through is difficult. Less than half the population living with a mental health challenge follow through with treatment. Be proud of yourself for taking this step.

BE HONEST WITH YOUR THERAPIST.
It can be challenging to talk about things you’re struggling with. Chances are, you won’t be telling your therapist the wildest thing they’ve ever heard. You must be honest about your struggles to access proper care.

KEEP AN OPEN MIND.
Some of the meditations and mantras you learn in therapy seem silly, especially when your therapist is guiding you through them. But these simple exercises can help when you’re alone and struggling with day-to-day life.

BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF.
Your first therapist may not be the right fit for you and that’s okay. So many people have a bad first experience and give up hope. There are a plethora of different types of therapists and treatments and sometimes you must try a few different options before you find what’s best for you.

WHY CHOOSE THERAPY?
Psychotherapy, or talk therapy, is a way to help people with a broad variety of mental health issues and emotional difficulties. Therapy can address troubling symptoms so a person can function better and heal.

HOW TO FIND A THERAPIST:
If you are in crisis, call Crisis Services at 716-834-3131 or the 24-Hour Addiction Hotline at 716-831-7007

Mental Health Advocates of WNY for linkage to community resources, providers, and treatment services.

Call 716-886-1242 or visit mhawny.org.

Erie County Department of Mental Health offers a list of behavioral health agencies.

Anti-Stigma Coalition resource page lists agencies offering mental health providers.

Referrals are not needed, and most insurances are accepted for mental health treatment. Many operate on a sliding scale for patients without insurance.
1

SHARE EMAIL NEWSLETTERS
Share the monthly newsletter to your team via email or print the PDF.

2

SHARE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS
Share posts to your professional and personal networks and help promote Facebook Live events.

@talkstigma

3

REQUEST MATERIALS TO DISTRIBUTE
Brochures, Conversation Starter Cards, Counter Displays, Pop-up Banners, Add logos and graphics to your website or other collateral.

✉️ karen@LetsTalkStigma.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Just for Me—Summer Primetime
August 29 & 30 | EPIC | 1021 Broadway, Suite 4
A teen life skills program focused on enhancing the skills and confidence of teens as individuals. Activities cover eight topics in two main areas: relationships and personal well-being.

Strong African American Families (SAAF)
Tuesdays, through September 5 | EPIC
A fun program for the whole family! Youth ages 10-14 and their caregivers meet separately, then together as a family. Activities include games, discussions, arts and crafts and more- all focused on promoting positive youth development and family relationships. Register by calling 716-332-4126.

Not One More – Stand Together to End Overdose
Wednesday, August 30, 4 PM – 7 PM | Veterans Memorial Park
Spectrum Health and Human Services presents a free evening of remembrance and information at Veterans Memorial Park in West Seneca (1250 Union Rd. behind the Town Hall). This free and family-friendly event is a community collaboration to commemorate International Overdose Awareness Day, a global initiative to raise awareness and remember lives lost.

Mindful Music airing weekly on WBFO
Saturdays at 4 PM & Sundays at 8 PM | Buffalo Toronto Public Media
Hosted by Karl Shallowhorn,

NAMI Programs
Various Dates Through April. Visit namibuffalony.org/programs/calendar.

Endeavor Health Services - Clubhouse

Visit letstalkstigma.org/events for more.