



Encouraging Mental Wellness in the Black Community

According to the Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, Black adults in the U.S. are more likely than white adults to report persistent symptoms of emotional distress, such as sadness, hopelessness and feeling like everything is an effort. Yet, only one in three Black adults who need mental health care receive it.

If someone gets to the point of feeling they can benefit from mental health services, if they don't see service providers that look like them or the diagnostic tools don't reflect cultural differences, mistrust continues.

“While people are more open to having the discussion about mental health, there are deep historically rooted reasons for mistrust of the system,” Dumas said. “If someone gets to the point of feeling they can benefit from mental health services, if they don’t see service providers that look like them or the diagnostic tools don’t reflect cultural differences, mistrust continues. We still have some work to do.”

Stigma results from negative attitudes about mental health struggles, and how mental illness is portrayed in the media can perpetuate these stereotypes.

“I feel that mental health is being covered more sensitively in the media these days, however it depends on what kind of media you’re speaking about,” Shallowhorn said. “For instance, generally the news media has gotten better in its reporting on mental health, however there are still TV programs and films that stigmatize mental health. We’ve come a long way, but there’s still room for improvement.”

NAMI reports that one study showed that 63% of Black people believe that a mental health condition is a sign of personal weakness. As a result, people may experience shame about having a mental illness and worry that they may be discriminated against due to their condition.

Many in the Black community often seek support from their church, faith community, or family and are hesitant to seek professional help for mental health issues. Socioeconomic factors can also contribute to challenges in obtaining treatment.

Working with our community partners and organization members, the Anti-Stigma Coalition works to eliminate stigma and encourage understanding and acceptance for those living with mental health challenges. ■

FACEBOOK LIVE



Panelists discussed the state of stigma around mental health diagnoses in the Black community and how the topic is covered in the media. Stigma around mental illness is prevalent in the Black community, often preventing people from seeking help.

The panel was moderated by Karl Shallowhorn, Director of Youth Programs, Mental Health Advocates of WNY. Panelists were Kelly Dumas, LCSW, Executive Director, Healing Hub of New York, and Pastor George F. Nicholas, Lincoln Memorial United Methodist Church.

UPCOMING EVENTS



September is Suicide Prevention Month

Suicidal thoughts, much like mental health conditions, can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or background. In fact, suicide is often the result of an untreated mental health condition. Suicidal thoughts should not be considered normal and often indicate more serious issues.

What is Suicide Prevention Month?

A time to raise awareness and discuss this highly stigmatized topic. In addition to shifting public perception, this month spreads hope and vital information to people affected by suicide.

What are the warning signs of suicide?

- Talking About Suicide.
- Helplessness And Hopelessness.
- Dramatic Mood Changes.
- Withdrawal From Normal Activities.

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

If you are in a Crisis and are in Erie County

24 hour Hotline: 716-834-3131

If you are in a Crisis and are NOT in Erie County

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Talk Saves Lives— Latinx & Hispanic Communities

September 27 | Virtual | American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Northeastern Division

Talk Saves Lives: An Introduction to Suicide Prevention for Latinx and Hispanic Communities is a community presentation that covers what we know about this leading cause of death, the most up-to-date research on prevention, and the strategies that can help save lives.

Healthy Families for a Healthy Workforce September 28 | 12 PM – 1 PM | Virtual | MHANYS

Join MHANYS for a virtual expert panel on the intersection of family, mental health, and the workforce.

Personality Disorders: Assessment and Treatment Training Course

September 28 & 29 | 9 AM – 1 PM | Horizon

Provided by Christopher Frigon, LCSW and Senior Therapist. It is designed for clinicians and persons working in the behavioral health field who are interested in exploring assessment and interventions for personality disorders, including theory and therapeutic skills in individual and group settings. There will be 8.0 continuing education hours available for LMSW/LCSW, LMHC, LCAT, LMFT & CASAC renewal.

Mindful Music airing weekly on WBFO

**Saturdays: 4 PM - Sundays: 8 PM
Buffalo Toronto Public Media**

NAMI Programs

Visit namibuffalony.org/programs/calendar.

Visit letstalkstigma.org/events for more.

ERIE COUNTY
ANTI-STIGMA
COALITION

ERIE COUNTY ANTI-STIGMA COALITION FOUNDING MEMBERS

BryLin Hospital • Children's Mental Health Coalition of Western New York, Inc.
Community Partners of Western New York • Compeer • Crisis Services of Erie County
Erie County Department of Mental Health • Erie County Office for People with Disabilities
Fellows Action Network • Fuerst Consulting Corporation • Jewish Family Service of Buffalo & Erie County
The Mental Health Advocates of WNY • Millennium Collaborative Care • Patrick P. Lee Foundation
Preventionfocus, Inc. • Telesco Creative Group • The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation