

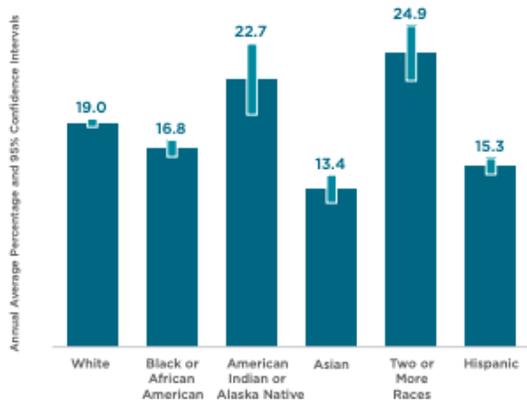
National Minority Mental Health Month

July is National Minority Mental Health Month. This month is observed to recognize and bring public awareness to the unique mental health struggles that ethnic and racial minorities face in the United States.¹ These challenges have been exacerbated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has made accessing mental health and substance-use treatment services more difficult.¹ This year, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Minority Health (OMH) is focused on highlighting and promoting resources that address mental health stigma within minority communities, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹

Mental Health Among Racial/Ethnic Minorities

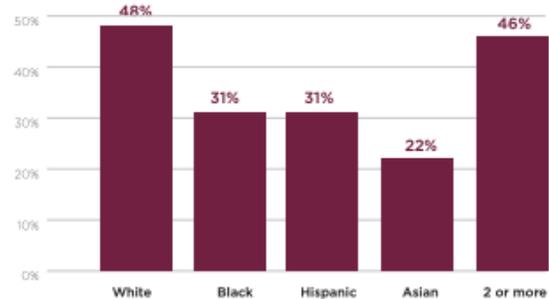
Racial and ethnic minorities are more likely than their white counterparts to face social determinants of health (SDOH) that increase their likelihood of developing a mental health disorder and hinder their ability to receive mental health care.² While rates of mental health disorders are similar across racial and ethnic groups, the severity and persistence of these disorders tends to be more severe among racial and ethnic minorities.³ In addition, racial and ethnic minorities often report experiencing cultural barriers to pursuing mental health care (i.e. cultural/social stigma around mental health).^{2,3} As a result, despite experiencing similar rates of mental health disorders, racial and ethnic minorities are less likely to seek mental health care than their white counterparts.³

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



Source: American Psychiatric Association. Rates of mental illness among US adults by race and ethnicity.

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



Source: American Psychiatric Association. Rates of US adults with mental health disorders who received mental health treatment services.

Risk Factors and Barriers to Care

Experiences such as racism and violence increase the risk of developing mental health disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression.³ Additionally, the following factors are common barriers to receiving mental health care that racial and ethnic minorities face at higher rates than white individuals:

- Low socioeconomic status³
- Limited/lacking education³
- Lack of community resources³
- Lack of transportation³
- Social/cultural stigma around mental health/mental illness³
- Lack of culturally competent providers³
- Lack of insurance/underinsurance³
- Language barriers³

Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Mental Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and worsened the disparate impacts of mental illness among racial and ethnic minorities.⁴ According to the CDC, symptoms of depression were reported 59% more frequently by Hispanic adults than non-Hispanic White adults during the pandemic.⁴ Multi-racial and other racial minority groups also more frequently reported stress and worry about being blamed for spreading COVID-19 than White individuals.⁴ Additionally, the CDC noted that social and structural factors such as inadequate access to safe housing, transportation, healthcare, and healthy foods, as well as experiencing racism, harassment, and discrimination can contribute to chronic stress, worsening overall mental health.⁴

Mental Health Resources

- [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\) Helpline 1-800-950-NAMI \(6264\)](#)
- [Suicide and Crisis Lifeline 988 \(call or text\)](#)
- [American Hospital Association \(AHA\) COVID-19: Stress and Coping Resources](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) COVID-19 Resource: Coping with Stress](#)
- [Mental Health America](#)
- [OMH National Minority Health Month Webinar – Trauma and COVID-19: Addressing Mental Health Among Racial/Ethnic Minority Populations](#)



References:

1. HHS Office of Minority Health - National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month. Home Page - Office of Minority Health (OMH). <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/minority-mental-health/>. Published 2022. Accessed July 18, 2022.
2. Understanding barriers to minority mental health care. USC. <https://nursing.usc.edu/blog/discrimination-bad-health-minority-mental-healthcare/>. Published September 1, 2020. Accessed July 18, 2022.
3. Mental health disparities: Diverse populations - psychiatry.org. <https://www.psychiatry.org/File%20Library/Psychiatrists/Cultural-Competency/Mental-Health-Disparities/Mental-Health-Facts-for-Diverse-Populations.pdf>. Published 2017. Accessed July 18, 2022.
4. The impact of covid-19 on Minority Mental Health. Mental Health First Aid. <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/2021/07/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-minority-mental-health/#:~:text=Seventeen%20percent%20of%20Black%20Americans,of%20the%20over%20U.S.%20population>. Published August 23, 2021. Accessed July 18, 2022.

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