



# African American Communities and Mental Health

## February 2024

*In honor of Black History Month*

For free and confidential counseling, contact your local ESSP Representative or  
CDRs: Hourly – Carelon Behavioral Health: 800-227-9622; HMSA: 800-550-7200  
Salaried – Lyra Health: 1-877-207-9822



# Common mental health misconceptions within minority communities

- 1. Therapy isn't for minority people.**
  - a. Therapy is for everyone.
  - b. Diverse mental health providers are available and increasing.
- 2. Therapy is only for people with severe mental illness.**
  - a. Mental health is a range. Everyone can receive help.
  - b. Seeking professional help is not a sign of weakness but an act of strength.
- 3. Therapy is too expensive.**
  - a. Ford provides this benefit for employees and eligible family members through EAP.
  - b. Ford also provides this through the Ford healthcare plans.

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# Breaking the Stigma in the African American Community

## 6 Things You Can Do to Reduce Stigma

- **Know the facts:** Educate yourself about mental illness including substance use disorders.
- **Be aware of your attitudes and behavior:** Examine your own judgmental thinking, reinforced by upbringing and society.
- **Choose your words carefully:** The way we speak can affect the attitudes of others.
- **Educate others:** Share facts and positive attitudes; challenge myths and stereotypes.
- **Focus on the positive:** Mental illness, including addictions, are only part of anyone's larger picture.
- **Support people:** Treat everyone with dignity and respect; offer support and encouragement.

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[Addressing Stigma | CAMH](#)



# How to Thrive with Minority Stress



**Reclaim your choice:** Focus on the things that you have control over.

**Set helpful boundaries:** You can opt out of conversations or interactions that feel draining, unhelpful, or overwhelming.

**Establish a care routine:** Engage in activities like laughter, sleep, nutrition, and exercise.

**Connect with others:** Connecting with others with similar experiences can help you feel validated and supported.

**Celebrate achievements:** Acknowledge and celebrate personal and professional achievements (the small and the big wins).

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