Embracing Tranquility Behavioral Health LLC
Developing your peace and positivity to achieve Tranquility

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HEY, HOW ARE YOU?
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EMBRACING TRANQUILITY EDITION:

Understanding the Barriers, BIPOC Mental Health Challenges

As we recognize BIPOC Mental Health Month, it's important to shine a light on the unique challenges that impact mental health in **Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color.** Below are key issues that often go unspoken but have a profound effect on well-being and access to care:

Historical and Generational Trauma

Trauma can be passed down through generations, shaping how individuals and families respond to stress and systems of care. For example, the intergenerational effects of the residential school system continue to impact Indigenous families today, leading to deep-rooted distrust in institutions and unresolved grief. Similar patterns are seen in the descendants of enslaved peoples, survivors of colonization, and communities affected by forced migration.

Cultural Stigma Around Mental Health

In many cultures, mental illness is viewed as a weakness or taboo, making it difficult to talk openly or seek support. A person experiencing depression, for example, may be told to "tough it out," "pray more," or "keep it in the family" rather than being encouraged to access therapy or professional help. These attitudes can isolate individuals and delay much-needed care.

Language and Communication Barriers

When mental health services are not available in a person's primary language, or when providers lack cultural understanding, it becomes harder to communicate symptoms and receive appropriate care. Imagine a Spanish-speaking client trying to describe panic attacks in an English-only clinic important emotional details can be lost, misunderstood, or dismissed, leading to frustration and disengagement.

Socioeconomic Challenges and Limited Resources

Poverty, unstable housing, lack of insurance, and job insecurity can all limit access to mental health services. For example, someone working multiple jobs to make ends meet may not have the time, transportation, or money to prioritize therapy even if they desperately need it. These structural barriers often force people to choose between survival and self-care.

Immigration and Refugee Stressors

The mental health needs of immigrants and refugees are often shaped by trauma, loss, and the challenges of resettlement. A refugee who has fled war or violence may experience post-traumatic stress while also navigating a new country, unfamiliar language, and fears around immigration status all without a support system or accessible mental health resources.

By acknowledging these intersecting challenges, we can move toward meaningful solutions: culturally responsive care, policy reform, and community-based support that centers the voices and needs of BIPOC individuals and families. Healing begins with understanding and continues with action.

Understanding Severe Irritability in Children and Adolescents (DMDD)

Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder (DMDD) is a mental health condition in which children or adolescents experience chronic irritability, persistent anger, and frequent, intense temper outbursts. These symptoms are more than just a "bad mood"—they are severe and disruptive to everyday life.
Youth with DMDD often have difficulties at home, in school, and with peers. They are also at increased risk for developing anxiety and depression later in life. Early diagnosis and treatment are essential for improving outcomes.

Signs and Symptoms

Children or teens with DMDD may exhibit:

- Severe temper outbursts (verbal or physical) three or more times per week
- An irritable or angry mood most of the day, nearly every day
- Ongoing symptoms for 12 months or longer
- Difficulty functioning in more than one setting, such as home, school, or with peers

DMDD is typically diagnosed between the ages of 6 and 10. As children grow older, their symptoms may change, tantrums may decrease, but signs of depression or anxiety may emerge.

Typical vs. Severe Irritability

It's normal for children to get upset, especially when frustrated. However, children with DMDD have extreme, frequent outbursts that are out of proportion to the situation.
Example: A child asked to stop playing and start homework might not just complain, but scream, throw objects, or hit others repeatedly, several times a week.

Diagnosis and Evaluation

If you are concerned about your child's behavior, consult a pediatrician or mental health provider. A thorough evaluation may include:

- Interviews with parents, teachers, or school counselors
- Observation of the child in different settings
- Screening for other conditions such as ADHD or anxiety

A correct diagnosis is crucial for determining the most effective treatment plan.

Treatment Options

There are currently no FDA-approved medications specifically for DMDD, but effective treatments do exist and often include:

Psychotherapy

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT): Helps children recognize triggers, manage anger, and develop healthier responses.
- Parent Training: Guides caregivers in using consistent, proactive strategies to reduce outbursts and reinforce positive behaviors.

Medication

- Stimulants: Commonly used for ADHD, may also reduce irritability in DMDD.
- Antidepressants: Medications like citalopram may be prescribed to help regulate mood but must be carefully monitored.
- Atypical Antipsychotics: Sometimes used in more severe cases, especially when other treatments haven't worked. These come with potential side effects.

Treatment should be tailored to the individual, and ongoing communication with healthcare providers is important.

Support for Parents and Caregivers

Caring for a child with DMDD can be overwhelming. Strategies to support both the child and caregiver include:

- Learning about DMDD and treatment options
- Collaborating with teachers and school staff to support behavior plans and accommodations
- Managing caregiver stress through self-care and support groups
- Connecting with local mental health organizations such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) or Mental Health America

To find services in your area, call the SAMHSA Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or visit:

Guidance for Parents and Caregivers of Individuals with Mental Health Conditions

Caring for a child, adolescent, or adult with a mental health condition can be both rewarding and challenging. Whether you are managing daily behavioral needs, attending appointments, or dealing with emotional stress, it is important to remember that you are not alone. Caregivers need and deserve support too.

Learn About the Condition

Understanding the mental health condition your loved one is experiencing can help you better support them and advocate for their needs.

- Ask your provider for trusted, easy-to-understand resources
- Explore national mental health websites such as:
  - National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
  - Mental Health America (MHA)
  - National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Build a Support Network

You do not have to do this alone. Create a network of people and services that can share the responsibilities of care.

- Connect with teachers, counselors, and school support staff
- Work with therapists, case managers, or social workers
- Join caregiver or family peer support groups

Communicate with Providers

Active and open communication with your loved one's healthcare team helps ensure coordinated care.

- Track symptoms, medications, and any behavioral changes
- Ask questions about treatment options, side effects, or care plans
- Share what you observe at home or in other settings

Take Care of Yourself

Being a caregiver can be exhausting. Prioritizing your own health helps you support others more effectively.

- Set aside time for rest and enjoyable activities
- Practice stress-relief strategies like mindfulness, journaling, or walking
- Consider seeing a therapist or joining a support group for caregivers

Caring for yourself is not selfish. It is an essential part of caregiving.

Explore Support Services

These programs offer education, connection, and tools for caregivers:

- NAMI Family-to-Family – A free education course for families supporting a loved one with a mental health condition
- National Federation of Families – Advocacy and resources for parents and caregivers of children with mental health needs
- Mental Health America – Community-based tools and support programs
- SAMHSA National Helpline – Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357) for 24/7 confidential support and referrals

You Are Not Alone

Supporting someone with a mental health condition is a journey that no one should walk alone. Help is available, and connecting with others who understand can make a meaningful difference for you and your loved one.

Understanding Panic Attacks and How to Cope

Panic Awareness Day is observed each year on July 10th to bring attention to the reality of panic attacks and the challenges faced by individuals living with panic disorder or related anxiety conditions. Panic attacks are more than brief moments of nervousness. They are intense and sudden episodes of fear that can feel overwhelming and physically distressing.

What Is a Panic Attack?

A panic attack is a sudden rush of intense fear or discomfort that reaches its peak within minutes. Common symptoms include:

- Rapid heartbeat or chest pain
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Dizziness or feeling faint
- Sweating or chills
- Trembling or shaking
- Nausea or stomach discomfort
- Fear of losing control or dying

Although panic attacks are not life-threatening, they can be frightening. Learning how to respond can make a big difference.

Tips for Managing Panic Attacks

If you or someone you know experiences panic attacks, these strategies can help:

1. Focus on Your Breathing

Practice slow, deep breathing. Inhale for four seconds, hold for four, and exhale slowly for six. This can help calm your body and mind.

2. Use Grounding Techniques

Try the 5-4-3-2-1 method to connect with your senses. Name five things you can see, four things you can touch, three you can hear, two you can smell, and one you can taste.

3. Remind Yourself It Will Pass

Panic attacks usually peak within ten minutes. Telling yourself "This will pass" can help reduce fear.

4. Limit Caffeine and Stimulants

Avoid substances like caffeine or nicotine that can increase anxiety and trigger symptoms.

5. Seek Professional Help

Therapies such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and, in some cases, medication can help reduce the frequency and intensity of panic attacks.

How to Support Someone Having a Panic Attack

- Stay calm and offer steady reassurance
- Encourage them to breathe slowly with you
- Ask what would help them feel safe
- Avoid telling them to calm down or that it is all in their head
- Give them space if they need it, but do not leave them alone if they are afraid

Director's Corner...

Erica Coleman CPRP Founder/ Director

"Be patient with yourself. Self-growth is tender; it's holy ground. There's no greater investment." –Stephen Covey