OMH’s Spotlight series highlights the challenges faced by different New York populations. We recognize the unique issues facing African Americans and invite you to learn more.

Did you Know?

African Americans are **2X MORE LIKELY** to be diagnosed with schizophrenia. *compared to non-Hispanic whites

Only 1 in 3 African Americans who need mental health care receives it.

African American high school females were **70% MORE LIKELY** to attempt suicide in 2017. *compared to white female classmates

Did You Know? Experiencing racism negatively impacts both physical and mental health

African Americans are **20% MORE LIKELY** to experience serious mental health problems. *compared to the general population

African Americans are **MORE LIKELY** to use inpatient mental health services. **LESS LIKELY** to use medication or outpatient services. *compared to white Americans

Data from American Psychiatric Association and Anxiety.org

Take Action

General Public:

**Educate yourself** on the history of the African American community. Learning more about the experiences, culture and traditions of African Americans can lead to better understanding and connection. Here’s a good place to start: [https://www.pbs.org/show/african-americans-many-rivers-cross/](https://www.pbs.org/show/african-americans-many-rivers-cross/)

**Get Involved** with local organizations and community groups to promote social justice efforts impacting the African American community. By becoming involved, you can help bring awareness and show support.

Providers:

**Check-in** with clients to see if experiences of racial discrimination are impacting their day-to-day life.

**Discuss** their responses openly.

**Bookmark** the DSM-5 Cultural Formulation Interview to use when needed.

**Validate** individual experiences of trauma.

**Learn more:** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Think Cultural Health

Business Leadership:

**Check your** unconscious biases, and give your staff a chance to do the same. The Harvard Implicit Bias test is a great place to start.

Need tools to help staff overcome bias? Our favorites are:

- [The Space2 Model Of Mindful Inclusion](https://space2.org/)
- University of California, San Francisco’s [Strategies to Address Unconscious Bias](https://medicine.ucsf.edu/psychiatry/strategies-to-address-unconscious-bias).

Need a blueprint to create organizational change? We recommend:

- **National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS).**

Connect to Help:

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** 1-800-273-8255
**Crisis Text Line** Text Got5 to 741741
**NY Project Hope Emotional Support Line** 1-844-863-9314
**OMH’s Customer Relations** 1-800-597-8481

[New York State Office of Mental Health](https://www.ny.gov/omh)