



The Mental Health Challenges facing Black Children and Youth

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Why/How Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs) matter

- Cumulative and harmful effects of racism on Black children and adolescents by:
 - Assailing their sense of integrity
 - Invalidating them as racial/cultural beings
 - Sapping their spiritual/psychic energies
 - Imposing a false reality on them
- Black adolescents frequently report feelings of anger, frustration, low self-esteem, depression and other strong emotional reactions

BARRIERS

- WAIT TIMES
- CRISIS LED ACCESS
- FINANCIAL AND GEOGRAPHIC CONSTRAINTS
- IMPLICIT BIAS

**WAITING
LIST**





TRUST

- **FEARS**
- **CULTURAL STIGMA**
- **CLINICAL BARRIERS**
- **RACIAL DISCORDANCE**

Family and Community's Role

■ Primary sources of support:

- **Faith-Based Practices:** Leverage the role of faith in promoting healthy sleep habits. Encourage rituals such as prayer, meditation, or scripture reading before bed to foster relaxation and a sense of peace
- **Community Activism:** Engage in community-led initiatives that promote resiliency, such as workshops, sleep awareness campaigns, and forums. These can

importance of self-care
well-being



■ Focused Help-Seeking:

- **Empowering Help-Seeking Behavior:** Encourage individuals to seek help for mental health in culturally relevant and/or safe settings, such as community health centers or through trusted community leaders. Create pathways for accessing mental health resources that resonate with cultural values
- **Education and Awareness:** Provide tailored information about mental health and encourage community discussions to normalize conversations around sleep issues



■ Racial socialization:

- **Encouraging Resilience:** Promote the belief that improving mental well-being is a journey. Encourage community members to view setbacks as opportunities for learning rather than failures
- **Celebrating Progress:** Acknowledge and celebrate individual achievements in improving mental health, reinforcing positive changes and motivating continued growth

Self-Knowledge Approaches: Learning from Black History for Better Health

Historical Awareness:

- **Cultural Legacy:** Explore the rich history of Black communities and how historical experiences, including trauma and resilience, shape current health behaviors, including mental health prevalence
- **Impact of Systemic Factors:** Discuss how historical injustices, such as slavery and segregation, have led to ongoing stressors that impact mental health

Integration of Traditional Practices:

- **Cultural Healing Traditions:** Highlight traditional practices and beliefs related to sleep within various Black cultures, such as the use of herbal remedies, communal storytelling, and rituals that promote relaxation and well-being
- **Connection to Ancestry:** Encourage individuals to draw strength from ancestral knowledge and practices, fostering a sense of identity and belonging that can enhance mental and emotional health

Empowerment through Knowledge:

- **Fostering Critical Reflection:** Encourage youth to reflect on how historical context affects their health can lead to positive lifestyle change. Promote discussions that connect past experiences to present challenges
- **Building a Supportive Community:** Create spaces for open dialogue about stress, health, and history, empowers youth to share their experiences and learn from one another

“Exposure to Black history was found to positively impact racial identity development” –Chapman-Hillard and Besley, 2018)

Adams-Bass (2014) found that Black youth who were knowledgeable about Black history were less likely to endorse stereotypical and pejorative media images