

# WELL BALANCED<sup>o</sup>

- JULY 2024 -  
Minority Mental Health



Mental health affects nearly every aspect of our lives, including our emotional, psychological, social, and even physical well-being. When our mental health is not at its best, it impacts how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is a spectrum and can change over time—When a person is experiencing ongoing conditions affecting their thinking, mood, or behavior, they may be dealing with mental illness. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that more than one in five U.S. adults live with a mental illness.

People in historically underrepresented groups face additional challenges that may make it more difficult to seek the help they need, such as fear of judgment, cultural beliefs, generational differences, and lack of access to resources. To overcome these barriers, it is essential to foster open and honest conversations about our mental health. Here are a few steps you can take toward healing and prioritizing mental wellness for all:

#### » Understand the Disparity

Take time to learn about the barriers you and others may face when accessing mental health services, such as cost of care, stigma, and a limited availability of providers from diverse backgrounds. Experiences of discrimination create additional traumas that contribute to mental health challenges faced by individuals from historically underrepresented groups. Learning to recognize implicit bias and microaggressions and avoiding discriminatory actions can create a healthier environment for everyone.

🔍 Visit [nami.org](https://nami.org) to find more resources and to hear stories of courage, culture, and community.



#### Want more mental health resources?

Talk to your employer to find out what is available to you through your employee assistance program (EAP) or employee wellness program.

#### » Break the Stigma

Stigma can manifest itself in many ways. It can look different based on culture, family values, and community views. Many people face internal and external judgment regarding their mental health, seeing it as a weakness and making it more difficult to seek help when needed. Challenge this notion by talking openly about mental health using inclusive, non-stigmatizing language. Use recovery-oriented language that does not imply people are helpless and be sure to use respectful and accurate terms when referring to mental health. Don't make assumptions. Show compassion for yourself and others rather than judgment.

#### » Listen and Empathize

Open and honest conversations can break down barriers and prioritize mental health. Oftentimes, just providing a listening ear and a shoulder to lean on is enough for friends and loved ones to feel seen and heard in times of strife. Encourage sharing, be patient, offer reassurance, and show empathy for everyone's experiences.

» Practice Self-Care

There's an old saying: You can't pour from an empty cup. In order to support others and be a force for positive change, it is necessary to ensure you are taking proper care of your own well-being. Take time to prioritize your mental health and encourage others to do the same. Self-care can look different for everyone, but in general, engaging in enjoyable activities that support your personal wellness or simply taking time for proper rest and relaxation is a great start.

» Share Your Knowledge

One of our most important resources in dealing with mental health is community. Maybe you've found some breathing exercises that help you stay calm during stressful times, or you have an easy go-to meal for those days when you just don't have the energy. Learning healthy coping skills is essential for maintaining positive mental health. Take it one step further and share your resources and knowledge on mental health—You never know what those around you may be experiencing.

Additional Resources:

- » Prioritizing Minority Mental Health (cdc.gov)
- » QTBIPOC Mental Health and Well-Being (hrc.org)

Sources:

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/features/minority-mental-health/index.html#:~:text=Learn%20about%20healthy%20ways%20to,and%20use%20non%20stigmatizing%20language>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/learn/index.htm>
3. <https://mhanational.org/bipoc/mental-health-month>
4. <https://www.stepupformentalhealth.org/ways-to-prioritize-minorities-mental-health-collectively/>
5. <https://www.gabrielslight.org/blog/ways-to-show-support-minority-mental-health-month>



**Up for a Challenge?**

Participate in the National Wellness Institute's **21-Day WELL Challenge** to expand your understanding of wellness through a multicultural lens: <https://nationalwellness.org/21-day-well-challenge/>.

