

MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

How Culture Impacts Mental Health

Everyone has their own unique experiences, challenges and needs when it comes to seeking and obtaining mental health services. Members of culturally diverse groups are far more likely

than their Caucasian counterparts to experience joblessness, poverty and exposure to violence, trauma and bullying. People of color are far less likely to be diagnosed with a mental illness and have less access to care according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. They often face barriers to treatment due to stigma, socio-economic status/lack of insurance and general mistrust. Given these barriers, it is easy to see why people of color are less likely to reach out for help. In addition, language barriers, racial disparities, and a lack of culturally competent mental health providers all play a role in quality of treatment.

The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** reported the following information regarding treatment of mental health conditions in minority populations:

- African American and Hispanic Americans seek treatment at only half the rate of Caucasian Americans, while Asian Americans only do so at one-third the rate
- It is estimated that only one in three of those who identify as Black or African American that have been diagnosed with a mental health condition will receive mental health care

The **American Psychiatric Association** reports the following:

- 25% of people who identify as being two or more races are diagnosed with a mental illness
- People who identify as being two or more races are **most likely** to report any mental illness
- American Indians/Alaskan Natives report higher rates of post traumatic stress disorder and alcohol dependence than any other ethnic/racial group.

No matter your background or culture, you are not alone. Support is available to you around the clock. EAP staff are non-judgmental, culturally competent professionals, ready to take your call.