

Mental Health and the effects on African Americans

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There are many myths about depression and African Americans like: “*Why are you depressed? If our people could make it through slavery, we can make it through anything.*” “*When a black woman has a mental disorder, the opinion is that she is weak. And weakness in black women is intolerable.*” “*You should take your troubles to Jesus, not some stranger/psychiatrist.*” (Depression in African Americans n.d.).

Black/African Americans of all ages are more likely to be victims of serious violent crime than are non-Hispanic whites, making them more likely to meet the diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Black/African Americans are also twice as likely as non-Hispanic whites to be diagnosed with schizophrenia. African Americans are also not as forthcoming in receiving treatment for mental illness. (Black & African American Communities and Mental Health. n.d.).

Historical adversity, which includes slavery, sharecropping, and race-based exclusion from health, educational, social, and economic resources, translates into socioeconomic disparities experienced by African Americans today. Socioeconomic status, in turn, is linked to mental health: People who are impoverished, homeless, incarcerated, or have substance abuse problems are at higher risk for poor mental health. Despite progress made over the years, racism continues to have an impact on the mental health of Black/African Americans. Negative stereotypes and attitudes of rejection have decreased, but continue to occur with measurable, adverse consequences. Historical and contemporary instances of negative treatment have led to a mistrust of authorities, many of whom are not seen as having the best interests of Black/African Americans in mind. (Black & African American Communities and Mental Health. n.d.).

References:

[Depression in African Americans. \(n.d.\).](#)

[Black & African American Communities and Mental Health. \(n.d.\).](#)