Better Mental Health Through Better Understanding for Racial and Ethnic Minority Communities
2023 Reading List

This brief bibliography contains a variety of resources focused on the mental health of racial and ethnic populations, mental health literacy, culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health care services, and improving access to mental health care and information for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP). The list contains three sections: factsheets and resources for consumers, reports for mental health providers, policy makers, and other professionals, and peer-reviewed journal articles. All the resources in this list are available to read and download for free. For more resources on the mental health of racial and ethnic minority populations, contact the OMH Knowledge Center or browse the online catalog.

Mental Health and Mental Health Literacy: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Some examples of mental health conditions among adults are depression and anxiety. Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, anxiety, and behavioral conditions are common in school-aged children and teens. Treatments for mental health disorders depend on the condition and may include medication, counseling or therapy, or both.

In the United States, about 1 in 5 adults live with a mental illness, with rates being higher for females (27.2 percent) than for males (18.1 percent). Compared to older individuals aged 50 and older (15.0 percent), young adults aged 18-25 are more affected (33.7 percent). Adults reporting two or more race categories also experience a high burden (34.9 percent), followed by American Indian / Alaska Native (AI/AN) adults (26.6 percent), with the lowest rate found among Asian adults (16.4 percent) (nimh.nih.gov).

Although mental health conditions are preventable and treatable, racial and ethnic minority populations experience barriers to adequate mental health care, due in part to poor social determinants of health (socioeconomic status, education, neighborhood and physical environment, employment, social support networks, racism and racial discrimination, and stigma), which leads to increased psychological distress and negative mental health outcomes.

Mental health literacy is an individual’s knowledge or beliefs about mental disorders and ability to recognize, manage, and/or prevent their condition. A high level of mental health literacy ensures that an
individual is able to recognize mental health problems and symptoms and is aware of where to seek information and treatment as needed. Poor mental health literacy is associated with poor health care seeking behavior, leading to poor mental and physical health outcomes.

**Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Mental Health Care Services:** Addressing mental health will require addressing the social determinants of mental health and eliminating social inequalities for racial and ethnic minority populations. Culturally and linguistically appropriate interventions have been shown to be effective in improving mental health outcomes.

**Improving Access to Mental Health Care and Information for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP):** Differences exist in the receipt of mental health treatment among adults in the United States. Women and non-Hispanic white adults are more likely to receive treatment compared to men and other racial and ethnic minority groups. Among children 5-17 years in 2021, older children were more likely than younger children to receive mental health treatment, and more boys took mental health medications than girls. White children were more likely to receive mental health treatment than racial and ethnic minority groups. Engaging individuals with LEP in mental health research will inform service priorities and strategies to improve mental health care information dissemination and service use for this population.

There is inequitable access to mental health services for racial and ethnic minority groups; therefore, it is important to improve mental health literacy for these populations. Increased awareness of an individual’s mental health condition is likely to build self-efficacy and motivation to seek treatment, which will improve not only mental health outcomes but also behavioral health, leading to overall mental, physical, and emotional well-being.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The below resources are for your information. They are intended for racial and ethnic minorities or mental and behavioral health professionals to learn more about issues that affect mental health and effective strategies to improve mental health outcomes. Please click on the title to learn more about each topic.

**Fact Sheets and Consumer Resources**


Fact Sheets from American Psychiatric Association:

- **Mental Health Facts on Refugees, Asylum-seekers, & Survivors of Forced Displacement,** American Psychiatric Association, psychiatry.org, 2018.

• Asian American and Pacific Islander
• Black/African American
• Hispanic/Latinx
• Indigenous

**Latino Mental Health: Key Factors and Challenges.** UnidosUS, unidosus.org, 2023.

**Reports**


**Immigration Toolkit: Displacement, Trauma and Mental Health Among Migrant Youth and Their Families.** American Psychiatric Association, psychiatry.org, 2023.

**Lessons from Black Colleges on Mental Health and Wellbeing: Practical Approaches for Historically Black Colleges and Universities to Support Student Belonging and Mental Health.** Active Minds, activeminds.org, 2023.

**Mental Health and Schools: Best Practices to Support Our Students.** The Baker Center for Children and Families, bakercenter.org, 2023.


**The State of Mental Health in America 2023.** Mental Health America, mhanational.org, 2022.


**Journal Articles**


Depression Screening and Education: An Examination of Mental Health Literacy and Stigma in a Sample of Hispanic Women. *BMC Public Health*, v. 18, Article 646, 2018.


Requesting Help to Understand Medical Information Among People Living with HIV and Poor Health Literacy. *AIDS Patient Care and STDs*, v. 27, #6 (June), p. 326-332, 2013.

Social Determinants of Mental Health: Where We Are and Where We Need to Go. *Current Psychiatry Reports*, v. 20, #1 (September 17): Article 95, 2018.


---

The OMH Knowledge Center contains a collection of over 70,000 documents, reports, books, consumer materials, and journal articles related to the health status of racial and ethnic minority populations. Knowledge Center staff can respond to requests from the public by providing selective bibliographies of articles and books in its collection.

For more information contact:
Email: KnowledgeCenter@minorityhealth.hhs.gov
Website: [https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov](https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov)
Search the online library catalog at: [https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/opac](https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/opac)