

DAY 16: BIPOC Mental Health Matters

NOTE: As context for the importance of mental health, today's content references historical events-- acts of police violence and slavery-- some participants may experience as triggering.

"You're looking at somebody you know, love, trust and respect and are proud of, but you can't help them," Blake told CNN's Sara Sidner. "You sort of have to remove yourself in order to maintain your sanity." -- Justin Blake

Today's quote comes from [Jacob Blake](#)'s uncle Justin. In it, he encapsulates the private feelings that only a family member could feel in this moment. He also summarizes what many of us, who aren't kin to the Blake family, feel as well. Unfortunately, the uncertainty about how to process the violence inflicted upon Black people is a repetitive process. One in which mental health, as Justin points out, is very much at risk. **To that end, we are making an appeal to all those committed to racial equity to also commit to healing and self care.**

Much has changed since the first Equity Challenge, launched in January 2020. With the subsequent deaths of [George Floyd, Breonna Taylor -- and many others](#) -- mental health conditions are being triggered due to the compounding impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic crisis and repeated racist incidents and murders of people of color. Research also shows that [BIPOC individuals](#) are less likely to seek care than White people. In a recent study, Asian Americans cited the stigma surrounding mental health and lack of knowledge of available resources as barriers to care. As noted by Dr. Christine M. Crawford, "[the root of mental health stigma among Black people can be traced back to slavery.](#)"

Each one of us can take steps to become an ally to someone—especially in the BIPOC community—who is experiencing mental illness. We can all work to:

- Bring awareness to the use of stigmatizing language around mental illness
- Educate family, friends, and colleagues about the unique challenges of mental illness within the BIPOC community
- Become aware of our own attitudes and beliefs toward the BIPOC community to reduce implicit bias and negative assumptions ([source](#))

- **Did you know?**
- [Asian Americans are now Ann Arbor's biggest minority.](#) Check out this [editorial in the Michigan Daily, which cites the ways in which employers must move beyond statements of solidarity to support the mental health of AAPI.](#)
- University of Michigan professor [Dr. Enrique W. Neblett, Jr.](#) is one of the leading scholars on racism-related stress and the impact it has on physical and mental health. His research has been cited in Psychology Today articles on [why students of color feel like imposters](#) and [why it is important for black parents to talk about racism.](#)

For BIPOC folks in particular, we want to lift up the following resources designed to support self care, and mental health:

- [Local mental health resources](#) and [Washtenaw CARES team](#)
- [Black Mental Health Alliance](#) - (410) 338-2642 Provides information and resources and a “Find a Therapist” locator to connect with a culturally competent mental health professional.
- [Melanin and Mental Health](#) Connects individuals with culturally competent clinicians committed to serving the mental health needs of Black & Latinx/Hispanic communities.
- [Ourselves Black](#) Provides information on promoting mental health and developing positive coping mechanisms.
- [POC Online Classroom](#) Contains readings on the importance of self care, mental health care, and healing for people of color and within activist movements.
- [Nonprofit Enterprise at Work](#) is convening an online space for learning, rest and renewal designed specially for communities of color. [Learn more about Centering Justice here.](#)

For people identifying as Asian American Pacific Islanders:

- [AAPI mental health support services](#) The AAPI (Asian American and Pacific Islander) organization provided this list of resources during their Heritage Month
- [Asian Mental Health Collective](#)- offers the APISAA Therapist Directory which connects people to mental health providers based on where you live in the United States.
- [Asians Do Therapy](#) has content about reducing the stigma around therapy in AAPI communities and provides guidance on how to get started.
- [Project Lotus](#) is a youth-led organization educating and empowering today’s Asian-American communities, advancing the movement of Asian-American’s blossoming, and addressing mental health stigma, shame, and overall perception of mental health.
- [MannMukti](#) encourages open dialogue around mental health challenges for South Asians

For people identifying as Black womyn:

- [Ebony's Mental Health Resources by State](#) List of Black-owned and focused mental health resources by state as compiled by Ebony magazine.
- [Sista Afya](#) Organization that provides mental wellness education, resource connection and community support for Black women
- [Therapy for Black Girls](#) Online space dedicated to encouraging the mental wellness of Black women and girls.
- [Unapologetically Us](#) Online community for Black women to seek support.

For people identifying as Black men:

- [Brother You're on My Mind](#) launched by Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. and NIMHD to raise awareness of the mental health challenges associated with depression and stress that affect Black men and families.
- [Black Men Heal](#) Limited and selective free mental health service opportunities for Black men.

Today's Challenge:

OPTION: Take time to reflect and journal your thoughts on ways you can be an ally and then share these resources with your network and loved ones.

Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag **#unitedforequity** and tag **@uwashtenaw**.