

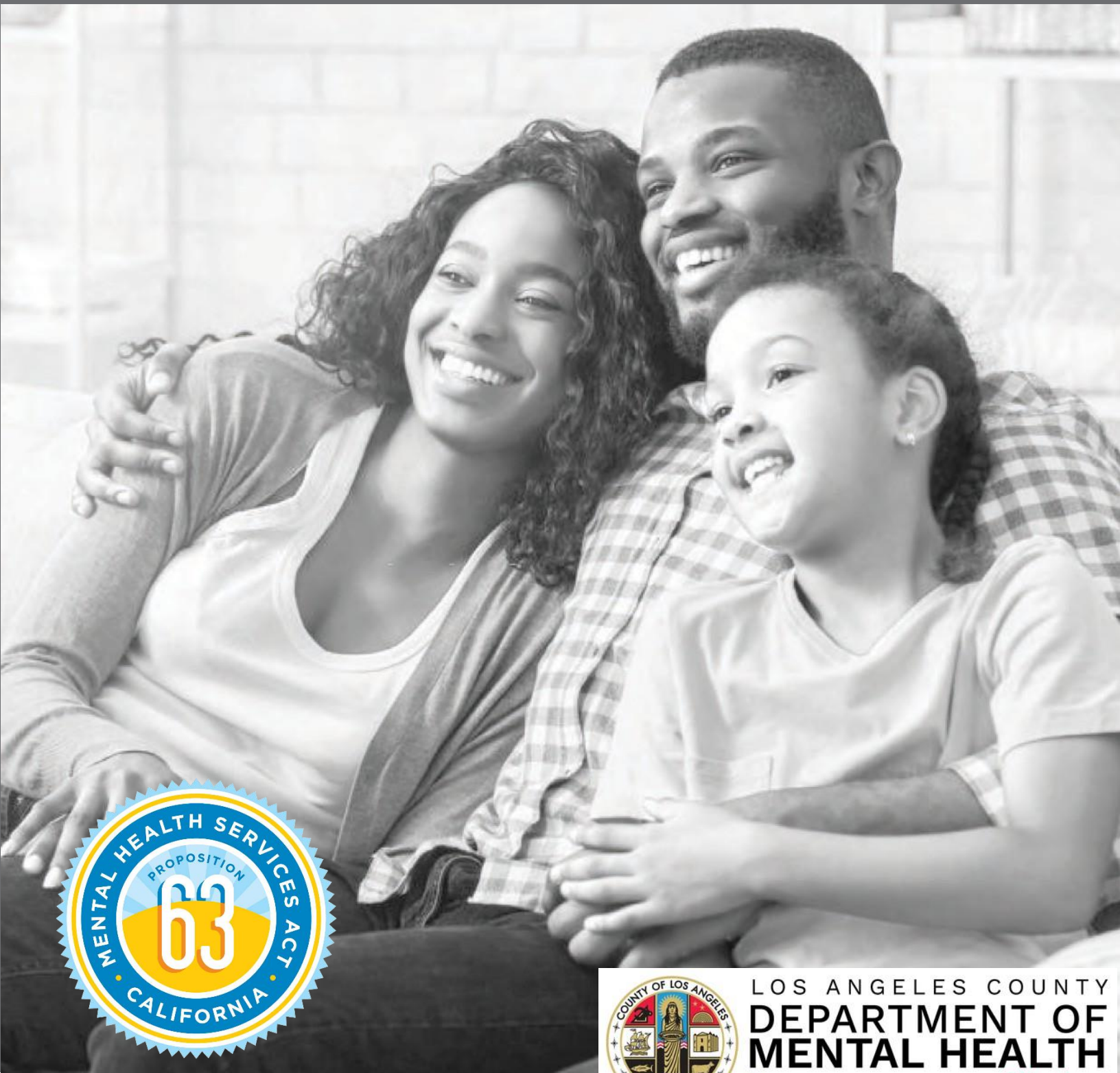


# Community Agents of Change

## African & African American Under-Served Cultural Committee

### Capacity Building Project

### Final Project Report



LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
**DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH**  
hope. recovery. wellbeing.

# Project Description & Overview

The African/African American Under-served Cultural Communities (UsCC) subcommittee was established under the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) to:

- Reduce disparities,
- Increase Mental Health access, and
- Amplify stakeholder priorities to positively influence county-wide services and partnerships.

The African/African American UsCC project was built using Mindful Training Solution's unique **Strength-Based Community Equity Model**. This model honors the significant differences between equality & equity while valuing assets over deficits as an approach to address systemic concerns. While *equality* provides identical provisions for all constituents, *equity* provides people with the resources required for success. When equity philosophy is filtered through a lens of strength building & asset identification, pathways to authentic change can be activated. It is in this spirit that the project was conceived, developed, delivered & evaluated across LA County Service Provider Areas Six and Eight (SPAs 6 & 8).



# Phase 1: Needs Assessment & Phase 2: Recruitment & Training



WELLNESS • RECOVERY • RESILIENCE



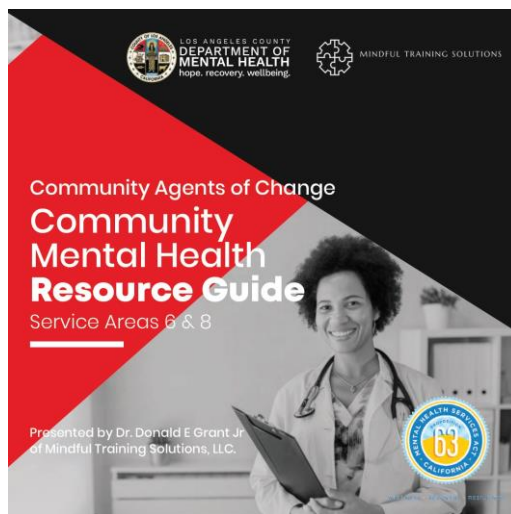
LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH hope. recovery. wellbeing.

## Phase 1

- ❖ Four Community Focus Groups were conducted in SPAs 6 (Compton & Leimert Park) & 8 (Inglewood & Gardena).
- ❖ All curricular modules and training protocols were built using insights identified by community stakeholders.
- ❖ A comprehensive *Black Mental Wellness Resource Guide* was created using research, community assets and the insights provided by focus group participants.

## Phase 2

- ❖ Community Agents of Change Educators (CACE) identified from SPA's 6 & 8.
- ❖ CACE trained across five interactive modules on Black Mental Wellness.
- ❖ Community Presentations were refined based on input from CACEs.
- ❖ CACE's assisted in the identification of community partners to host the 30 community workshops.



### 2 | COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE GUIDE

Mental Wellness is not a luxury. It is a birthright. It is important that each person advocates for their mental wellness and that of those who are unable or unwilling to do so for themselves. Mental illness is often viewed as a weakness or personality flaw that must be kept secret, but it is NOT!

Black communities must work hard to break the stigma associated with mental illness while increasing knowledge surrounding wellness habits and behaviors. Risk factors like race-related stress, historical trauma, disproportionate poverty rates and significant health disparities create unique experiences for Black Americans.

Resilience has been a key factor in Black communities across time and will continue to promote survival across generations. As critical as survival is, it isn't sufficient, the goal is not to just survive, but to SUCCEED. Please use this Resource Guide along with other community assets to succeed in the following ways:

- Identify and engage community based mental health services.
- Demand that community-based services, clinicians and programs use culturally empathic practices.
- Advocate for mental wellness programs at the local, county, state and federal level.
- Talk openly with friends and family members about mental wellness and mental illness.
- Learn more about your family's mental health history.
- Check on friends and loved ones.
- Coach and mentor Black students in disciplines related to psychology, marriage and family therapy, social work etc.

Service Area 6 includes, but is not limited to the cities and communities of Compton, Watts, Leimert Park, the Crenshaw District, Lynwood and Inglewood.

Service Area 8 includes, but is not limited to Carson, Inglewood, Long Beach, El Segundo, Gardena, Hawthorne, Catalina Island and San Pedro.

\*Disclaimer: Neither Mindful Training Solutions, LLC nor LA County Department of Mental Health guarantees or take responsibility for services or agencies identified as part of this Resource Guide.

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**BLACK MENTAL HEALTH**

African American, African American, Caribbean and Afro-Latinx residents of Los Angeles County often face unique risk factors that negatively impact overall mental wellness.

Mental Wellness is not a coincidence, many factors impact one's ability to be well. According to the American Psychiatric Association, over 25% of Black Americans live below the poverty line and 15% are not covered by health insurance. As a result, Black Americans have higher death rates than non-Hispanic Whites from heart disease, stroke, cancer, asthma, HIV/AIDS and diabetes ([www.psychiatry.org](http://www.psychiatry.org) 2017)

Although Black Americans experience mental illness at similar rates as non-Hispanic Whites, they often receive a lower quality of care from clinicians without adequate training in culturally empathic practices. This is evident in that only seven times Black Americans who need mental health actually get services.

**COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE GUIDE | 3**

**HOSPITALS WITH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

**SPA 6**  
 Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital  
 1650 E 120<sup>th</sup> St Los Angeles, CA 90009  
 (424) 338-8000  
 Email: info@mlkch.org

**SPA 8**  
 Long Beach Memorial Medical Center  
 3747 Long Beach Blvd Long Beach, CA 90807  
 (562) 933-2000

**Kindred Hospital South Bay**  
 1245 W 155<sup>th</sup> St Gardena, CA 90247  
 (310) 323-5330

**Harbor UCLA Medical Center**  
 1000 W. Carson St. Torrance, CA 90509 (424) 308-4000  
 Email: info@harbor-ucla.org

**St. Francis Medical Center**  
 3530 S Imperial Highway Lynwood, CA 90262  
 (310) 900-8900

**South Central Family Health Center**  
 4425 S Central Ave Los Angeles, CA 90008  
 (323) 908-4200

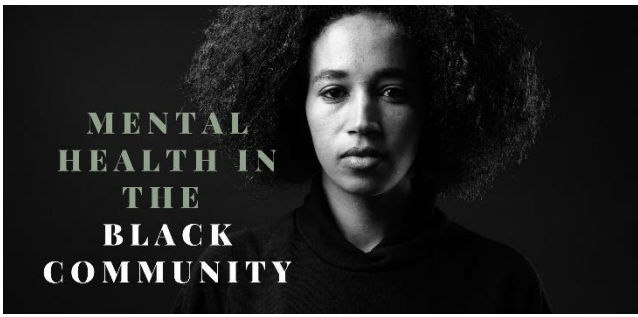
Be sure and talk to your doctor about your mental wellness needs. If you are unable to make contact with a mental health professional on your own, ask your primary care doctor, your OB/GYN or anyone else responsible for your medical care to help.

Your doctor may also be able to connect you to wellness resources like yoga, meditation, smoking cessation, anger management and fitness programs to support wellness habits.

**COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE GUIDE | 9**

**INTERSECTIONAL RESOURCES**

<b>SENIOR SERVICES</b> Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Oasis Senior Center 4005 S Crenshaw Blvd Los Angeles, CA 90008 (323) 738-3444 Dadeland Community Senior Center 30 N Torrance Ave Compton, CA 90222 (310) 955-9888	<b>LA County Community 6 Senior Services</b> 3333 Wilshire Blvd Los Angeles, CA 90010 (323) 738-4004 Long Beach Senior Center 2921 4 <sup>th</sup> St Long Beach, CA 90802 (562) 570-9500	<b>INTERSECTIONALITY</b> Intersectionality is this space where all of the benefits and risks of our social identities co-occur. Individuals who are Black are already automatically exposed to the stress associated with racism and the effects of "intergenerational trauma. When their other identities come into play, those factors are magnified. Examples of Intersectionality: • A Black man who is a veteran and an amputee. • A Black woman who is Transsexual. • A formerly incarcerated Black woman who is unemployed. • An elderly Black man. Being disabled, LGBTQ+, formerly incarcerated or poor all come with their own set of prejudices that create discrimination. This is added to the racial prejudice already in play.	
<b>LGBTQ+ SERVICES</b> Black Lesbians United (BLU) 4550 N. Bascom Ave #404 Los Angeles, CA 90038 (323) 739-4838 www.blacklesbiansunited.org The LGBTQ Center Long Beach 207 E 4 <sup>th</sup> St Long Beach, CA 90804 (562) 434-4455 www.lgbtcntr.org	<b>in The MacIntyre Men's Shelter</b> 2149 W Adams Blvd Los Angeles, CA 90018 (323) 732-4838 www.inthemacintyremensshelter.org South Bay LGBT Center 1695 Crenshaw Blvd Torrance, CA 90504 (310) 328-6550 www.southbaycenter.org	<b>VA Medical Center 130</b> Veterans Blvd Los Angeles, CA 90073 (213) 418-2701 Military Veterans Affairs 769 W 3 <sup>rd</sup> St San Pedro, CA 90731 (310) 855-9005	<b>Victoria Childs Line</b> (800) 279-9258 Gardena Community Based Outpatient Clinic 845 W 80 <sup>th</sup> St Gardena, CA 90248 (310) 588-0505
<b>VETERAN SERVICES</b> VA Medical Center 130 Veterans Blvd Los Angeles, CA 90073 (213) 418-2701 Military Veterans Affairs 769 W 3 <sup>rd</sup> St San Pedro, CA 90731 (310) 855-9005	<b>Multi-Service Center</b> 330 W 12 <sup>th</sup> St Long Beach, CA 90801 (562) 570-9500 HHRP Compton Homeless Assistance 216 S Wilshire Blvd Compton, CA 90220 (310) 955-9227	<b>HOMELESS SERVICES</b> Housing Rights Center 3206 Wilshire Blvd #102 Los Angeles, CA 90010 (213) 418-2701 Housing Authority Los Angeles 216 Wilshire Blvd Los Angeles, CA 90017 (213) 222-2000	



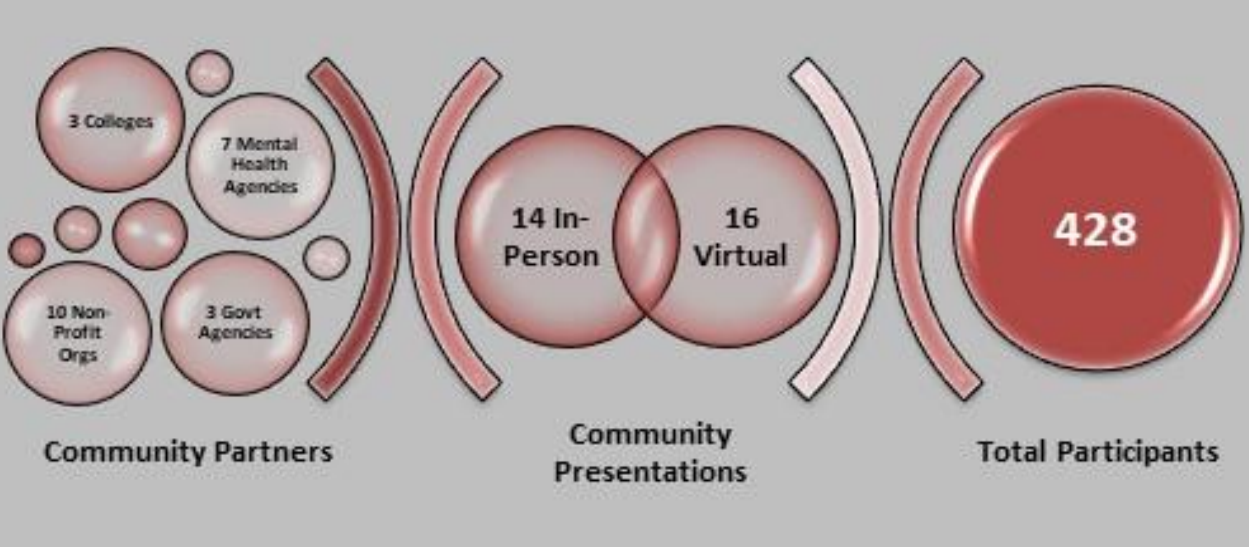
**Community Presentations**

Many factors impact one’s overall mental wellness. How we sleep, what we eat, where we live and who we love all impact how well - or not - we are able to be. Black Americans are impacted by factors that create unique environments where their mental wellness thrives.

Community Agents of Change Educators (CACEs) participated in 5 (five) discrete workshops in the following areas:

- Historical Context of Stigma & Racial Injury
- Intergenerational Trauma & Epigenetics
- Black People & Media Influences
- Race Based Stress, Anxiety and other Mental Health Concerns common to Black Americans
- Post-Traumatic Growth, Prevention & Early Intervention

These topics were consistently identified as priorities for our Focus Group participants, our CACEs and the 400+ Community Members who participated in each of our 30 workshops.



We have had the privilege of partnering with some of the most amazing organizations in Los Angeles County to make this series of over 30 workshops possible. Our partners included, but were not limited to:

- Los Angeles Trade Technical College
- Strategic Action for a Just Economy (SAJE)
- California State University Dominguez Hills
- The City of Long Beach
- Black Infant Mental Health
- The Oscar J Bryant Foundation
- The Metaphor Club
- Childnet Youth & Family Services
- Wellnest
- Best Start West Athens
- African American Infant/Maternal Mortality (CAT)
- Los Angeles County
- Faith Based Community Leaders



# Lessons Learned



## The Virtual Pivot

The COVID-19 disruption forced us to pivot from live presentations to Zoom and other virtual platforms. In just the first two weeks of virtual offerings 275 people registered for these workshops and more than 170 of those registrants participated (62%).

### Lessons:

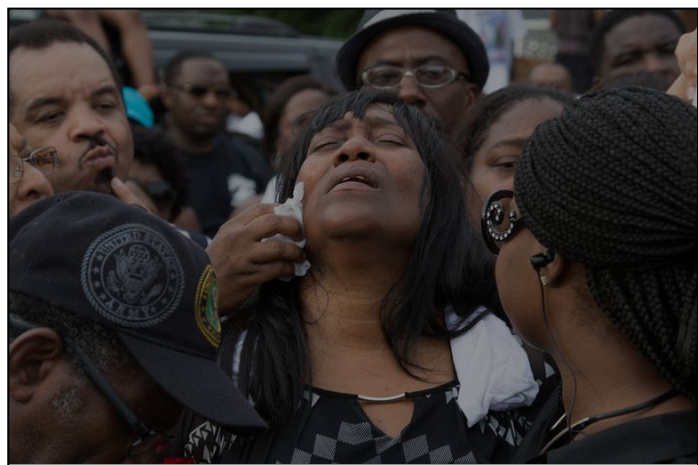
- Although the *Digital Divide* remains a significant factor in Black America, virtual opportunities increased participation.
- Virtual Meetings increased service provider (clinics, FFA's, internship sites, etc.) capacity to participate and send larger teams.
- Virtual Meetings improved cost efficiencies.

## Black Grief, Mourning & Death

Black Americans have been placed in a position to experience *grief, mourning and death* at disproportionate rates. Experiences with mass trauma are the result.

### Lessons:

- Black Americans need more tools to manage the distress associated with grief and mourning.
- "Homegoing Ceremonies" (funerals) are important parts of the Black grieving process and their loss due to COVID-19 is significantly impactful.
- Racism and White Supremacy's role in Black Death negatively impacts healing & resilience.



## Stigma

Stigma remains one of the most significant barriers to mental health access, therapeutic engagement and treatment continuity in Black Communities.

### Lessons:

- Addressing Stigma at all costs is critical.
- The severe lack of Black Mental Health Clinicians contributes to stigma.
- Stigma self-perpetuates through Black Communities very fluidly.

## Black & African History Matters for Mental Wellness

Participants felt that knowledge and insight regarding Black and African History created protective factors for resilience.

### Lessons:

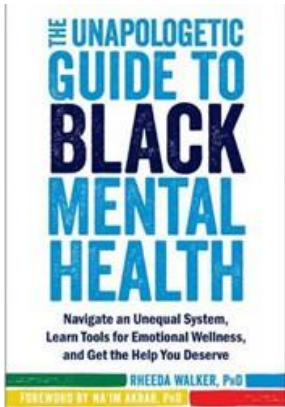
- Adding information on important historic African Kings and Queens promoted a sense of resilience.
- Connecting Black American History to a context that pre-dates Black enslavement is critical to building wellness and resiliency tools.



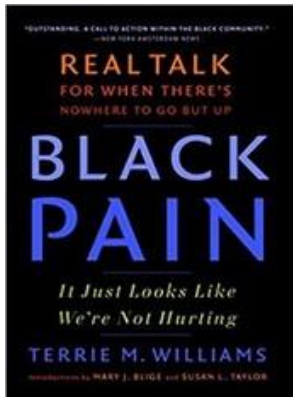
Racism, Discrimination, Prejudice & Social Injustice continue to negatively impact the capacity and ability for Black Americans to meet with positive Mental Wellness Outcomes.



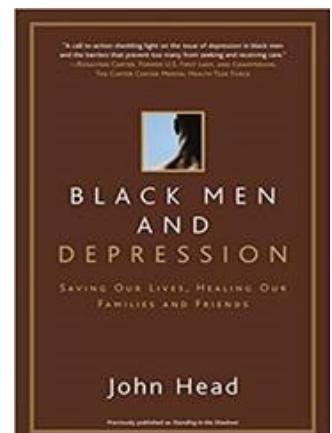
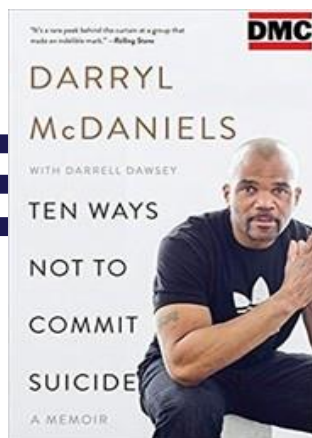
# Recommendations



*The Color of Hope:*  
PEOPLE OF COLOR MENTAL  
HEALTH NARRATIVES  
CO-EDITED BY  
VANESSA HAZZARD & BRESHIA PROOT, MEd



1. **Increase and Improve Tools & Resources for Black Community Mental Wellness:** The resource gaps in Black Communities are striking. People are seeking opportunities to gain access to mental wellness tools they can use at home and in their communities alongside formal interventions.
2. **Reduce Barriers to Accessing Mental Health and Wellness Programs:** Programs aimed at the provision of services are often riddled with barriers and risk factors that create access challenges in Black communities.
3. **Increase numbers of Black Mental Health Clinicians:** Although research shows that race-matching is not the primary factor in outcomes, we do know that treatment engagement and time in treatment are improved when people see therapists that include members of their ethnic, cultural and/or religious community.
4. **Partner with Colleges and Universities who train Culturally Empathic Clinicians:** Local colleges like Cal State Dominguez Hills and Pacific Oaks College have MFT and/or MSW training programs aimed specifically at training clinicians to work effectively with Black families.
5. **Understand culture and its' impact on overall wellness outcomes:** We must create programming that appropriately attends to the historical context of the US and its' consequential impact on Black Mental Wellness.
6. **Acknowledge that Racism, Discrimination and White Supremacy play significant roles in Black Mental Wellness efforts, strategies, prevention, intervention and outcomes.**
7. **Incorporate Black Historical Frameworks into all Black Mental Wellness Efforts:** Historic frameworks and contexts provide Black Americans with significant protective factors to improve success opportunities.
8. **Mandate Cultural Empathy Training for ALL clinicians who work with Black Families:** Building *Cultural Empathy* is different from understanding *unconscious bias*. Cultural empathy ensures that clients *feel heard, seen and valued* while in the clinical space.
9. **Mental Health Systems must engage in Fights Against Social Injustice:** To authentically address the Mental Wellness of Black Communities, systems must work deliberately to dismantle systems of oppression including but not limited to *Racism, Sexism, Classism, Homophobia and Ableism*. This includes legislation, policy reform, fund procurement etc.
10. **Increase Access for Birth to Five Mental Health Awareness:** Knowledge and practice in support of infant mental health is severely lacking and plays a significant role in global outcomes for Black Americans.
11. **Build Strong Community Partnerships:** Black Mental Health is an ecological concern that can only be adequately addressed with the inclusion of participants from all systems that touch Black Americans.
12. **Honor Intersectionality** and the dangerous synergies that arise when marginalization is multiplied across several identity statuses.
13. **Use Virtual Platforms** (Zoom, Google Meets etc.) to increase participation capacity when live events return.



# Challenges

**Total Project Cost**  
**\$39,820**

**Phase 1: \$12,904**

**Phase 2: \$8,434**

**Phase 3: \$14,582**

**Phase 4: \$3,900**



**BOA ME NA ME MMOA WO**  
*"Help me and let me help you."*  
Symbol of Cooperation and  
Interdependence.

## **Program Challenges**

### **COVID-19**

Although this disruption created a significant challenge, it also created a unique opportunity. The program should now always incorporate a virtual participation component to maximize participation.

### **One on One Consultation**

There was a severe under-utilization of one-on-one consultation. A more strategic plan must be created to incorporate outreach to participants alongside the passive offerings.

### **On-Going Stigma Reduction**

Stigma regarding discussions on Black Mental Wellness remain a significant barrier to engagement. In addition to these concerted efforts future program iterations will need to incorporate a normal cadence of communication through social media, print ads, commercials etc.

## **Global Challenges**

In addition to challenges with the program itself, it is critical to address the systemic concerns that limit the effectiveness of the program's recommendations.

### **Culturally Competent Clinicians**

There continues to be gaps in the availability of culturally empathic clinicians in the community mental health sector.

### **Affordability & Access to Insurance**

There remains an array of gaps related to the ability of consumers to afford cohesive and on-going care and associated services.

### **Prevention & Early Intervention**

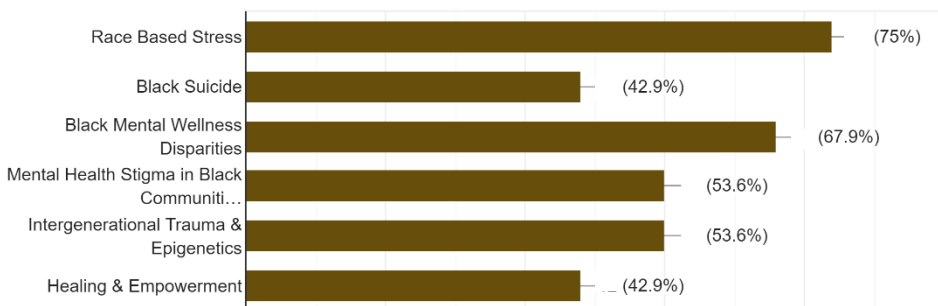
Many of the recommendations rely upon self-care activities to increase and ensure wellness. There remain gaps in the access to and awareness of preventative mental wellness services.

# Participant Learning, Reflection & Motivation

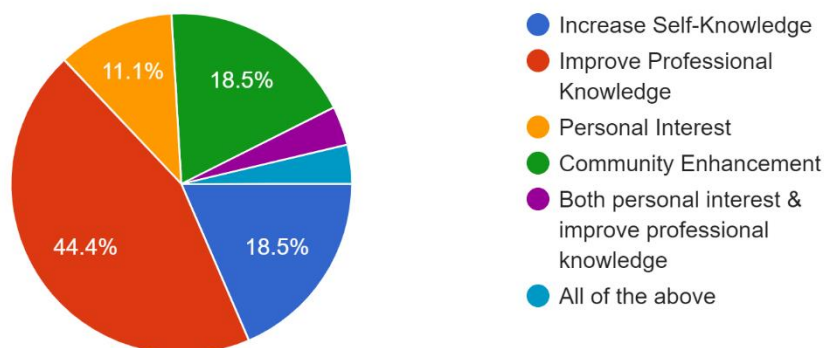
**89% of participants** report significant improvements in knowledge of issues affecting Black Mental Wellness.

**82% of participants** felt that their ability to explain how racism and discrimination impact Black Mental Wellness

I learned new information about the following important Black Mental Wellness concepts during this workshop.



Why did you choose this course?



## What was most valuable?

*"I have knowledge in this area. It provided additional information for me to share with my network."*

*"Placing the mental health concepts in a historical context was extremely helpful."*

*"Every aspect of the training was valuable."*

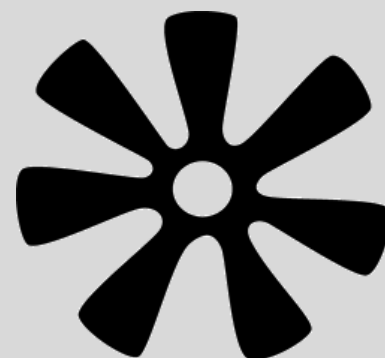
*"Resources to review afterwards."*

*"The information on Black Mental Health disparities and the impact if intergenerational trauma."*

*"On a personal level. I now understand the derivation of my mental health issues."*

*"The fact that it reminded me of the struggles of Black people in the workplace of having to work twice as hard to get half as far."*

*"The most valuable aspect of this course was that (the) session was allowed to be attended online."*



**ANANSE NTONTAN**

*"Wisdom and complexity in life."*



# Participant Learning, Reflection & Motivation



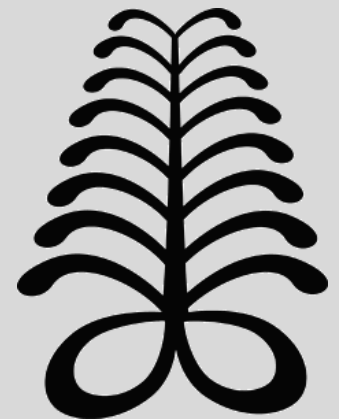
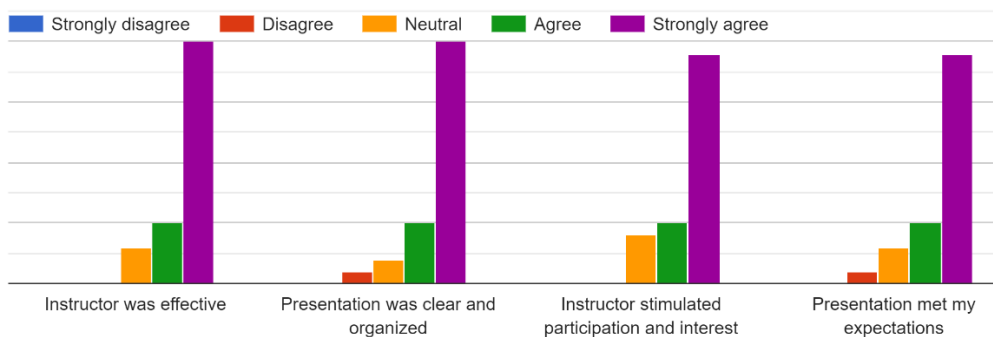
## How would you improve this program?

- "Share it with a wider audience."*
- "(Have) Separate workshops on children and gender."*
- "Increase time allotted."*
- "I wouldn't change anything."*
- "Nothing except for a follow up course. We need to keep the awareness and dialogue going."*
- "Continue to dialogue frequently."*
- "At least 4 weeks of sessions, covering one full topic per session."*
- "Hold courses on a regular basis."*

Contribution to learning

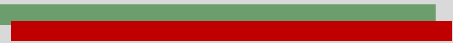


Skill and Knowledge of the instructor



AYA

*Endurance and growth through tough times.*



To learn more about LA County Department of Mental Health's (DMH) Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) and the Black & African Heritage Under-served Communities subcommittee:

Visit [www.DMH.LACounty.gov/about/mhsa](http://www.DMH.LACounty.gov/about/mhsa) and search *Underserved Cultural Communities*.

To learn more about DMH Services:

Visit [www.DMH.LACounty.gov/our-services/](http://www.DMH.LACounty.gov/our-services/) | Call (800) 854-7771 | Text "LA" to 741741



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WELLNESS • RECOVERY • RESILIENCE



MINDFUL TRAINING SOLUTIONS

For more information on this report, the programming described or any of our other services, please visit Mindful Training Solutions at [www.MindfulTrainingSolutions.com](http://www.MindfulTrainingSolutions.com) or call us at 323.790.4906 to chat with our

Executive Director Dr. Donald E Grant Jr.

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