Faith, Disability, Mental Health, and Research: Engaging Black People of African Descent in the Dialogue

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A Collaborative Dialogue

Disability
Mental Health
Faith

Black History
Knowledge

Black People of African Descent

SPARK
Simons Powering Autism Research

RESEARCH

Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities at Kennedy Krieger Institute
What we know about mental illness, autism, and the Black community

- Mental illness, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and Black people
- Underidentified, Misdiagnosed, and Underserved
- Role of religion and culture in the diagnosis and treatment of ASD
- Autism-related stigma and culturally insensitive service delivery
Common barriers to diagnosis and treatment access

- Stigma
- Historical trauma
- Institutional structures
- Socio-political context
- Adversity and other perceived barriers

Help us break the barriers
Community as Host

• What defines individuals with disabilities, their abilities, and their health outcomes more often depends on their **community**.

• Meeting the disability and health objectives requires all hands on deck to develop and implement ways to include individuals with disabilities in community program activities.

• Community-based efforts are needed to address the competing concerns and to reduce the stigma and negative consequences of having a mental illness, autism, intellectual and/or developmental disability (I/DD).
What is Meaningful Partnership?

Effective Outreach and Connection

Collaborative Engagement

Sustained Relationship

Positive Health Outcomes as defined by ALL
Ofondu, M.E & Garrido, A (2021). Faith, Mental Health, and Disability: Effective Strategies for Inclusive Practices in Faith Communities
Addressing barriers through a cultural lens

• Meaning of health varies across cultures
• Understanding of health and illness are influenced by culture
• Partnerships should be built on a foundation of pre-existing and trust-based relationships
• Knowledge and expertise that Black people and their families bring into research and treatment services should be built on
• Cultural sensitivity should be followed by cultural responsiveness
Strategies for culturally responsive research

What is ethical research?

What is equitable research?

Addressing barriers to research participation

Research through a disability justice lens

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The role of faith communities in health promotion

- Faith-based organizations and their leaders play a critical role in supporting families and dismantling the stigma surrounding mental illness, autism, intellectual and other developmental disabilities.
  - They provide a safe and judgment free zone that allows families to navigate the challenging situations in their lives.
- Faith leaders are socio-cultural mediators and social influencers.
Strategies for addressing barriers (Micro level)

- Recognize that the differing views of the nature, causes, and treatment of mental illness can influence inclusive practice.
- Inclusive practice does not just mean addressing the architectural, programmatic, and communication barriers. It also means addressing the attitudinal barriers.
- Provide activities that are oriented to abilities and strengths, respectful of differences, person-centered, and easily accessible.
- Foster individual and community partnerships, collaborations, and recognition of self-advocacy.
Strategies for addressing barriers (Macro level)

• Establish and maintain closer relationships with disability organizations and provide safe spaces and opportunities to building connections with all.

• Join efforts that promote social justice through community activities and religious teachings that positively portray people with disabilities.

• Support and host disability etiquette trainings for your faith community and practice power/voice sharing.

(Griffin, 2012)
Resources

National:
• National Alliance on Mental Illness: African Americans
• Mental Health America
• CDC: Mental health
• National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
• Online chat
• Video relay service/voice/caption phone- Dial 800-273-8255; TTY: Dial 800-799-4889
• Crisis Text Line: text HELLO to 741741 or call 911

Maryland: Call 2-1-1, press 1; Text 898-211
• MD CrisisConnect.org
• Kennedy Krieger Institute
• Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities at Kennedy Krieger Institute
• Maryland’s UCEDD’s Helpful Training Handouts
Resources

- U.S. HHS Office of Minority Health
- Animated Teen narratives
- HHS Cultural Health
- Psychology Today Directory of African American Therapists
- BIPOC Therapist Directory for Maryland
- AAKOMA (African American Knowledge Optimized for Mindfully Healthy Adolescents)
- Go Ask Alice
- Suicide Prevention
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
Resources

- The Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide (SPTS)
- Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)
- Suicidal Ideation Treatment Centers in Maryland
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- Hotlines, Organizations, Websites, Resources, Survivor Support Groups, and Training/Education
- American Association of Suicidology
Resources

• A Guide to Disability Rights Laws
• The CARES act may help your church
• CDC resource page for community & faith-based leaders
• Faith Leaders Creating Community Connections
• HHS resource on faith, community and mental health
• SAMHSA Faith-Based and Community Initiatives
• U.S. HHS Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives
• U.S. Department of Education’s Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives
• American Psychiatric Association Suicide Prevention Page
• Maryland Division Rehabilitation Services
References


• SAMHSA. 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH): African Americans.

Thank you!

Website: www.mcdd.kennedykrieger.org
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