



# Minority Trauma & Mental Health

Mental health is essential for everyone, which is why it's important to highlight the different needs and experiences of those who identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color). By acknowledging the unique identities and experiences of underrepresented communities, we can better comprehend and address the varying range of mental health needs and work towards an inclusive and safe environment.

## How Societal Factors Affect Each Community

Systemic oppression, cultural factors and individual experiences all pose mental health risks for the BIPOC community. For example, Black individuals often contend with the trauma of historical and ongoing racial discrimination, leading to higher rates of anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Latino communities face similar challenges, compounded by immigration-related stressors, language barriers and limited access to culturally competent mental health care. Native and Indigenous peoples suffer from trauma from colonization, displacement and cultural erasure, contributing to disproportionately high rates of substance abuse, suicide and depression. Asian/Pacific Islander communities also face unique pressures, including the “model minority” myth, which can obscure mental health struggles and impede their ability to seek help. Multiracial individuals struggle with identity complexities, often encountering discrimination from both within and outside their communities, which can exacerbate their feelings of isolation and invalidation.

## BIPOC Microaggressions

Among the examples of discrimination and microaggressions that may cause trauma for BIPOC are:

- Being avoided, ignored, excluded or feared by others
- Being stereotyped, criticized or ridiculed by others
- Profiling by authorities, peers or businesses
- Unfair policies, practices and inequitable opportunities within established institutions

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Societal factors that affect BIPOC include trauma from racial discrimination, immigration-related stressors, language barriers, displacement, the “model minority” myth and multiracial-identity complexities.

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- Educational or professional curriculum that ignores or minimizes BIPOC history and contributions to a shared society
- Lack of representation
- Devaluing or minimizing of thoughts, feelings and experiences
- Exposure to outdated and offensive views and terminology

An inclusive, culturally sensitive approach is crucial to helping minority groups overcome stigma and find providers who can meet their mental health needs. Providing culturally tailored educational materials and resources in multiple languages can help bridge gaps and empower BIPOC to seek help. In communications, emphasizing first-person language, avoiding blame and stigmatization, and refraining from terms that may imply fault are key. Applying a racial equity lens to all efforts can help us better understand and effectively respond to the range of experiences held by these diverse audiences.

There is no “right” way for BIPOC to react to racism and the trauma caused by it. It is important for BIPOC to acknowledge and accept their feelings, discuss experiences with trusted individuals, seek support to help facilitate positive coping mechanisms, and practice self-care and empowerment by using their voice however they feel comfortable.

### For additional resources:

- Call the number on your insurance card to be referred to a trained mental health professional.
- Reach out to your local community and faith-based organizations for support.
- Talk with your doctor about your concerns.
- Contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

### #MinorityMentalHealthMatters #NotaCharacterFlaw

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health issue, help is out there.  
Contact the Mental Health America 24/7 Crisis Text Line (Text MHA to 741-741).

