

# Let's Talk About Mental Health

## Mental Health Awareness

Mental health is important to all of us. If we understand how mental health impacts our communities, we can help make sure people receive the help they need.

A mental health condition refers to a wide range of disorders or illnesses that can affect mood, behavior, feeling, or thinking.<sup>1</sup> Serious mental health conditions are a smaller and more severe group of conditions and can have a large impact on 1 or more major life activities.<sup>1</sup>

**~1 in 20**

American adults experiences serious mental health conditions, like depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia.<sup>1</sup>



Each condition has its own signs and symptoms, such as feeling very sad or low, having difficulty perceiving reality, or being unable to do daily activities.<sup>2</sup>

## Mental Illness Impact

Mental illness can affect anyone. In fact, rates of mental illness are similar among Black, Hispanic, and white adults.<sup>1</sup>

In North Carolina,

**~1,469,000**  
adults have a mental illness.<sup>3</sup>

**833,000**  
of those adults reported they did not receive mental health treatment.<sup>4</sup> That is about 56.5%.<sup>4</sup> For racial and ethnic minorities, this unmet need is greater.<sup>1,4</sup>



“

My Church helped me to understand that it's okay to seek services. It helps when other people start talking about their services.

— From NC adult with lived experience

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## Overcoming Disparities in Care

Disparities in mental health diagnosis make it hard for Black adults living with serious mental illness to seek, access, and sustain culturally competent care. It may be difficult to find care teams and services that understand the impact of culture, beliefs, and racial bias.

**Culturally competent care means your healthcare provider values and includes all the factors that make you who you are into your care. These factors include your values, beliefs, cultural background, race, ethnicity, and preferred language.**

A comprehensive treatment plan can be very important to an individual's recovery journey and well-being. This may include therapy, medication, and support services. Having information on services and resources that are available may help.

### If seeking information and care, consider:

- Reaching out to loved ones for honest and open conversations
- Finding resources and support services through local mental health advocacy organization websites
- Asking a trusted mental health professional for help
- Discussing your culture and beliefs with healthcare providers so they can account for what is important to you
- Taking actions, such as making lifestyle changes, participating in support groups, and setting realistic goals to help improve well-being

## There are many ways to play a role in helping yourself, a loved one, or a member of your community.

Fill in this section with resources, tips, and contacts to help on the journey to well-being.

### If you are an adult living with a mental health condition

#### What kind of support would be most helpful to you?

Example: Having someone join me for support groups or doctor's appointments

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### If you are a caregiver, family member, or friend of someone living with a mental health condition

#### How can I help?

Example: Listen and learn about available support resources

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### If you are a community member

#### How can I help?

Example: Be nonjudgmental and know when professional help may be needed

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1. National Institute of Mental Health. Mental Illness. Accessed February 2022. [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness#part\\_2540](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness#part_2540)  
 2. What is mental health? Accessed June 2022. <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/what-is-mental-health>  
 3. Mental Health America. 2021. The State of Mental Health in America. Accessed February 2022. <https://mhanational.org/issues/2021/mental-health-america-all-data>  
 4. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Racial/ Ethnic Differences in Mental Health Service Use among Adults. 2015.