

HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIORS IN BLACK COLLEGE STUDENTS



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OBJECTIVES

- Identify at least three obstacles that hinder black students from seeking professional mental health.
- Identify at least three factors that could increase the likeliness of a black student reaching out to their counseling center.
- Learn at least three practical strategies that UCCS can use to increase accessibility to black students.

INTRODUCTION

- Black students = single-race or multiracial non-Hispanic students & black Hispanic students ¹⁴
- General trend of racial and ethnic minorities being less likely to seek mental health services
 - Black college students under-utilize college mental health services ¹³
 - More likely to seek services when issues have become severe ¹³
- 2020 survey at UC Berkley: ⁵
 - 40% of black college students screened positive for depression vs. 33% white counterparts
 - 40% of both categories screened positive for GAD
- Steve Fund Crisis Response Task Force: 26% of black students sought treatment vs. 46% of white students ⁶

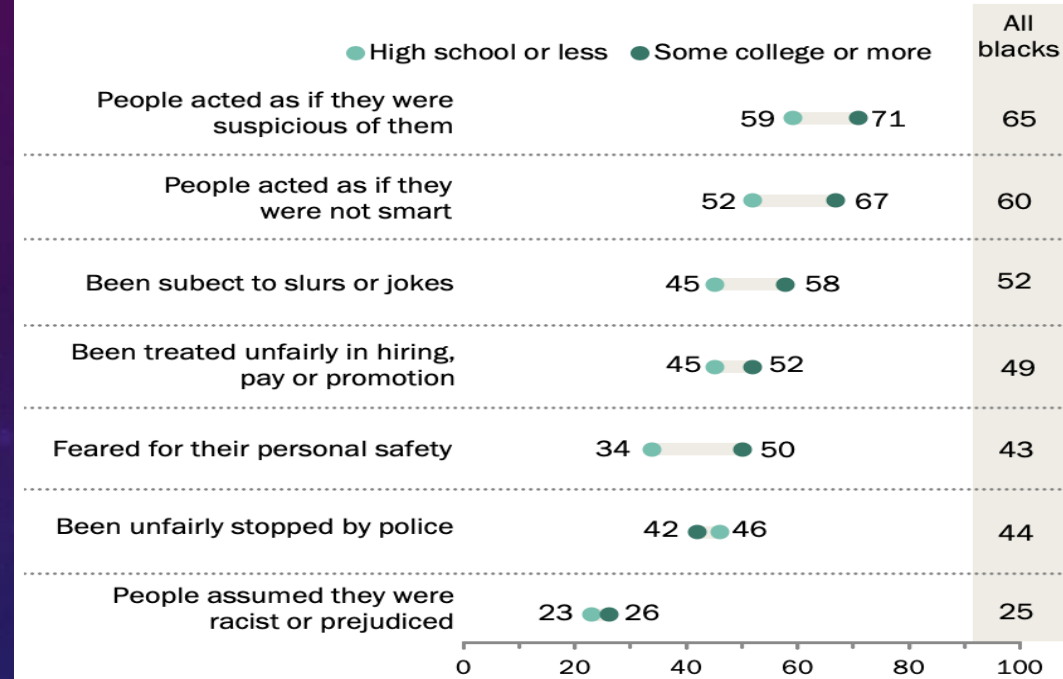
HOW CAN WE BRIDGE THE GAP?

STRESSORS ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

- Minority status stress – racism, discrimination, microaggressions, & hostility, hate crimes
 - More likely to experience MSS than other minority groups
 - Even greater at PWIs
- Imposter Syndrome₂
- Stereotype threat₂
- Current events & campus response₃
- Antiracism/activist work & racial battle fatigue₃
- Pew Research Center: Black adults who attended college more likely to say they have faced a number of discriminatory incidents₈

Blacks who have attended college are more likely than those who haven't to say they've faced certain situations because of their race

% of black adults, by educational attainment, who say each of the following has happened to them because of their race or ethnicity



Note: Blacks include those who only report being one race and are non-Hispanic. "Some college or more" includes those who have an associate's, bachelor's or advanced degree and those who have attended college but did not obtain a degree. "High school or less" refers to those who have a high school diploma or its equivalent and those who did not complete high school.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 22-Feb. 5, 2019.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

"Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future, and renders the present inaccessible.

-Maya Angelou

THE IMPACT

A survey of research shows:

- Increased anxiety
- Trauma responses
- Increased depression
- Feelings of detachment
- Internalized stigma → Self-fulfilling prophecies
- “John Henryism”
- Lower retention rates
- Feeling out of place/lonely



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BARRIERS TO UTILIZATION

- Higher rates of perceived stigma of mental illness₇
- Cultural stigmas & misconceptions about mental health and treatment₃
 - Emphasis on religious faith₁₀
 - Self-stigma such that mental health issues → personal weakness₉
 - Grit & perseverance / “John Henryism”₉
 - Cultural mistrust₁₀
 - Stigma from and preference of in-group support (family, friends, church)₁₀
- Lack of diversity on staff₃
 - Some students seek someone who can relate
 - Representation increases students’ willingness to give counseling a try₃
- Lack of awareness about mental health issues₁₃

STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING UTILIZATION

- Colleges acknowledge racism as problem that they are not immune to ₄
- Hire diverse counselors with experience or expertise in race-based stress ₄
- Foster collaboration with “natural partners” (DEI Office, Student Affairs, etc.) to expand reach ₆
- “Let’s Talk” program – meet them where they’re at ₇
- Conceptualization of anti-racism as wellness ₇
- Programming that raises awareness and acknowledges cultural stigma ₁₂
 - Consider connecting with student organizations
- Programming that affirms and explore ethnic identity ₂
 - Strong ethnic identity → higher likelihood of seeking help/ associated with higher psychological well-being ₂

STRATEGIES IN THE COUNSELING ROOM

- Adopt cultural humility ₃
- Validate cultural mistrust ₄
- Discuss intersection of culture and help-seeking early on ₁₃
- Commit to multicultural competence & lifelong learning ₁₁
 - Knowledge
 - Awareness
 - Skills
- Cultural-specific treatment models > culture-sensitive treatment ₁₁
- Assess for & incorporate role of religion/spirituality ₁₃

"THE BEAUTY OF

ANTIRACISM

IS THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO PRETEND
TO BE FREE OF RACISM TO BE AN
ANTI-RACIST. ANTIRACISM IS THE
COMMITMENT TO FIGHT RACISM
WHEREVER YOU FIND IT,
INCLUDING IN YOURSELF.
AND IT'S THE ONLY WAY FORWARD."

IJEOMA OLUO

REFLECTION

- Who are the black students on our campus?
- What's the relationship between your UCC and the black student population? How does it feel?
- How does your UCC display inclusivity and cultural competency to both students who utilize services and those who do not?
- How is your UCC engaged in anti-racism work?
- How do you tailor outreach efforts to black students?
- What professional resources and supports are available to your staff for their growth in cultural competency?

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THANK YOU!
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