

# SUNDAY MORNING HEALTH CORNER

## Talking About Serious Mental Health Conditions in the African American Community

A **mental health condition** refers to a wide range of disorders or illnesses that can affect mood, behavior, feeling, or thinking. **Serious mental health conditions** are a smaller and more severe subset and can have a substantial impact on 1 or more major life activities. **There are many different types of serious mental health conditions, including depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia.**<sup>1</sup>



### How common are serious mental health conditions?



It is estimated that **1 in 25 adults** in the United States experience serious mental illness.<sup>2</sup>

### What do I do if I believe that I or my loved one has a serious mental health condition?



**Recognize** and acknowledge that individuals diagnosed with these diseases can live full, rewarding lives, especially if they seek and follow treatment as needed.



**Research** using reputable sources to identify the symptoms of mental health conditions and find support and care services.



**Reach out** to family members, friends, advocacy organizations, or your healthcare professional (HCP) to help build your support network.



**Regroup** with your HCP to find the right treatment plan and learn about available resources. Talk about your concerns, feelings, and ways to improve your mental health.



Remember, mental health conditions are nothing to be ashamed of. They are medical conditions, like heart disease or diabetes. **It's important to speak up, speak out, and actively communicate with an HCP.** Finding the right treatment plan can make a difference for you or a loved one living with a mental health condition.

If you or a loved one is in crisis, call 911 as soon as possible. If you or a loved one needs someone to talk to, there is confidential support available 24/7 for everyone in the United States by calling **1-800-273-8255** for the National Suicide Prevention Hotline.

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1. National Institute of Mental Health. Mental Health Information. Mental Illness. Available at: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness.shtml>. Accessed April 10, 2020.

2. National Alliance on Mental Illness. Mental Health By the Numbers. Available at: <https://www.nami.org/mhstats>. Accessed April 22, 2020.

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