

# SUNDAY MORNING

## HEALTH CORNER

### Mental Health Awareness

Mental health awareness is essential, especially during COVID-19, because many Americans are dealing with excessive stress and loss. According to The Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, Black adults in the U.S. are more likely than white adults to report persistent symptoms of emotional distress, including sadness, hopelessness, and feeling like everything is an effort.

Despite the need, research shows that only one in three Black adults who need mental health care receive it. Being mentally well is essential to sustaining healthy relationships and physical well-being.

**Here are a few ways to improve your mental wellness:**



**Allow yourself to feel.** Sometimes, societal pressures encourage people to shut down their emotions, often expressed through statements like, “Big girls don’t cry,” or “Man up.” These outdated ideas are harmful, not helpful. Everyone has emotions—they are part of the human experience—and you have every right to feel them.



**Don’t bottle up your feelings.** Ignoring our feelings or pushing them aside without addressing them can lead to a build-up of emotion that can explode later. If you cannot process your emotions at the moment, then try to as soon as you can.



**Talk it out.** Find someone you trust that you can talk to about how you’re feeling. You may find that people are eager to share similar experiences they’ve had or times they have felt the way you are feeling.



**Try journaling.** Each night write down at least three feelings you had over the day and what caused them. Just a few sentences or bullet points to help you practice being comfortable identifying and expressing your emotions.



**Seek a mental health professional.** If you are taking steps to be more in touch with your feelings, but are having trouble dealing with them, mental health providers like counselors and therapists have been trained to help.



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