

1-Pager: **How Mental Health Looks Differently for People of the Global Majority and How to Sustain Ourselves**

As the world continues to move forward, there is a consistent stream of new information coming to light that examines how mental health symptoms differ between people of the global majority and white people. This is an incredibly important issue, as it highlights how people of color are often invisible and overlooked when it comes to mental health. The reality is that this invisibility has a significant negative impact on the mental health of people of color, making it even more difficult to address.

Recent studies have shown that the symptoms of depression vary greatly between white people and black women. As a result, depressive symptoms of non-white individuals often do not fit the criteria described by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). This means that those individuals may not be diagnosed or may even be misdiagnosed, leading to inadequate treatment. This lack of proper diagnosis is due to a lack of cultural, social, and racial understanding. It is important to recognize that mental health issues can manifest differently in different contexts, and that failing to recognize this may prevent individuals from getting the help they need. Therefore, it is crucial that healthcare providers become more aware of the varying symptoms of depression in different populations. Only then can we ensure that individuals of all backgrounds get the proper diagnosis and treatment they need.

The Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, a federation of American health insurance companies, released a report in May 2022 that revealed a concerning disparity in access to mental health treatment. Marginalized racial and ethnic communities, such as Black and Hispanic Americans, were found to be more likely to experience severe and debilitating symptoms of major depression, yet less likely to receive the beneficial treatments they need. It is essential to ensure that everyone has the same access to mental health services, regardless of race or ethnicity. Doing so will help to reduce the mental health disparities in marginalized communities and create a more equitable society.

Experts at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, warn that when left untreated, depression can quickly worsen, increasing the risk of developing other serious health issues such as chronic pain, substance abuse, self-harm, and even suicide. This is why it's so important to seek help for depression and take the necessary steps to address it before the condition can get out of control. If you or someone you know is struggling with depression, it's essential to get the help needed to make sure that the issue is properly addressed and treated. Doing so can avoid any of the serious health issues that may arise from ignoring the condition.

Structural systems that have caused and continue to fuel our mental illnesses, we risk being shut down and dismissed. We are told the problem is “in our heads” and that can only be solved with individual effort and change. This completely ignores the larger context of oppression and violence that has created the mental health crisis we are in.

It is important to recognize that mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and trauma are not isolated, but rather deeply rooted in systemic racism and oppression. The stigma surrounding mental health is still strong, and when racism is a factor, this can be even more challenging. We must continue to strive for an open and understanding environment when discussing racism and other systems of oppression effect on one's mental health. Only then can we create a safe place to receive the support and help we need.