

Navigating the Intersections of Mental Health

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Overview

- **Intersectionality**
- **Black + Mental Health**
- **LGBTQ+ Mental Health**
- **Navigating the intersections**
- **Advocating for Black & LGBTQ+ Mental Health**

Starting Thoughts:

1. Acknowledge the ancestors
2. Being mindful that this isn't a moment to bond in trauma
3. Fearlessness, resourcefulness & relentlessness
4. We all have a responsibility to act (When you know better, you do better)

Audre Lorde once said:

“There is no thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.”



Intersectionality

- Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw
- Defined as the social, economic and political ways in which identity - based systems of oppression and privilege connect, overlap and influence one another
- Our lived experiences are rooted in who we are and can't be separated from how we see the world.





1. Black & Mental Health

Feeling Like a Walking Statistic

- Overrepresented in high-risk populations
 - 40% of the homeless population
 - 50% of the prison population
 - 45% of children in the foster care system

Black Struggle

- Feeling pressured to over perform even when so many of the things happening to me/around me keeps me from doing so
- Always feeling like the “odd person out”
- Being noted as “trouble” before I even opened my mouth



2. LGBTQ+ & Mental Health

LGBTQ+ Struggle

- 61% have depression
- 45% have PTSD
- 36% have anxiety associated with their gender identity/sexuality

LGBTQ+ Struggle

- Prejudice/Discrimination
- Compound shame
- To Black to be queer, too queer to be Black

Where do I fit in when no one wants me around?



3. Navigating the Intersections

Intersectional Struggle

- 62% Black LGBTQ people feel connected to their wider community
- 29% of Black trans adults felt connected to their wider community
- 82% of Black LGBTQ+ respondents struggle with injustice on a routine basis

Intersectional Struggle

- Understanding the Rage
- Grief
 - Black trans women are killed at a higher rate
 - Jailed at a higher rate
- Fear
- Desire to disconnect from white/non-Black peers
- Numbness/Jadedness
- Stigma

4. So what can you do to better support Black LGBTQ+ people's mental health?

Don't just be an Ally - Be an Advocate

- **Promote the lived experiences of Black queer people**
 - Amplify their voices and their stories
- **Commit to an ongoing process of evaluating and changing viewpoints**
 - uncovering biases in your own perspective is an ongoing process

Don't just be an Ally - Be an Advocate

- **Constantly assess equity within the ways you work with marginalized people**
- What actions are you taking in your workplace to make sure Black LGBTQ+ people's stories are taken seriously?
- **Support/work with organizations that empower resilience**
 - Donate and support organizations that offer resources to Black queer people within the community

Overcoming the Mental Health Stigma by Shifting our Cultural Narrative

It's crucial that we tell stories that prove that people can overcome mental illness and lead rich, fulfilling, successful lives. This requires a shift in the way we portray mental illness in film, TV shows and the media as a whole.”



- Ruth White, Clinical Associate Professor, USC

Black lives matter.

Black (queer) mental health has to matter too.

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— Adding a Bit More Color To Your Rainbow —

Question & Answer

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