

Mental Health Disparities and Inequities Among African Americans

Program Description

African Americans have less access to mental health than their White counterparts, are less likely to receive needed care, and are more likely to receive poor quality care when they are treated. There are many barriers that contribute to these racial disparities in services. For instance, everyone has implicit (unconscious) biases that can influence our behaviors, interactions. These biases, which we may not be aware of, often impact the services we provide and contribute to racial disparities in mental health. It is important that mental health professionals working with diverse populations be aware of the impact of implicit bias on client outcomes as well as other barriers preventing our African American clients from receiving quality care.

In this workshop participants will be provided with activities aimed to increase awareness of their unconscious biases. Case studies will be reviewed to practice cultural humility and to practice strategies to mitigate unconscious biases. Participants will develop a plan of action to build rapport, positive therapeutic relationships, and to provide more culturally appropriate services to African American clients.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this workshop, participants should be able to:

1. Identify personal biases that may impact services provided to African Americans.
2. Describe factors contributing to mental health disparities and racial inequities.
3. Examine the role of culture in treatment.
4. Develop strategies for providing culturally appropriate services to African Americans.

Target Audience

This workshop will be beneficial to social workers, counselors, mental health care providers, case managers, human service workers, and anyone who is interested in the topic.

Contact Hours

3.0 credit hours

Program Agenda

9:00 - 10:30 AM	Implicit Bias, Stigma, Mistrust, and Fear as Contributing Factors of Mental Health Disparities Among African Americans; Power and Privilege Activities
10:30 - 10:45 AM	Break
10:45 – 12:00 NOON	Cultural Humility, Culturally Appropriate Assessments, Case Study to practice skills
12:00 - 12:15 PM	Q/As

Faculty

Andrea Murray-Lichtman, PhD, LCSW, MSW is a Clinical Associate Professor and the Interim Associate Dean of the MSW program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work. She has a combined 21 years of physical health, mental health, and substance misuse treatment experience within integrated healthcare and criminal-legal settings serving people living with comorbid mental health, substance misuse, and chronic physical health diagnoses. Andrea received the Dean's Excellence in MSW Advising Award in 2021 and 2018 and the Dean's Recognition of Teaching Excellence Award in 2015. Andrea's research interests include racial equity in access and outcomes across social systems, racial consciousness, and the differential occurrence and impact of traumatic experiences. She partners with the criminal-legal system to provide mental health and substance use clinical consultations. Andrea served on the Council on Social Work Education Task Force for Anti-racism. She has presented and consulted nationally and internationally on co-morbid mental health and substance use disorders and interventions within the criminal legal system, culturally relevant mentoring, trauma-informed care, equity-informed wellness practices, and spirituality and mental health.