



THE HEALTH EQUITY NEWSLETTER

Nassau County Department of Health

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NATIONAL MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

July is National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

From: <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/minority-mental-health/#:~:text=National%20Minority%20Mental%20Health%20Awareness%20Month%20is%20observed%20each%20July,illness%20in%20the%20United%20States.>

National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month is observed each July to bring awareness to the unique struggles that racial and ethnic minority communities face regarding mental illness in the United States. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it harder for racial and ethnic minority groups to get access to mental health and substance-use treatment services.

Throughout the month, the HHS Office of Minority Health (OMH) will focus on promoting tools and resources addressing the stigma about mental health among racial and ethnic minority populations, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

OMH encourages state, tribal, and local leaders, community-based organizations, faith leaders, healthcare providers and individuals to educate your communities regarding mental health stigma.

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Disparities Within Minority Mental Health Care

JUL. 31, 2017

By Larry Shushansky, LICSW

As hard as it is for anyone to get proper mental health care in the United States, it's even harder for racial, ethnic, religious and gender minorities. Not only are there the problems most of us experience—issues with insurance, long wait times, difficulty finding specialists, sky-rocketing deductibles and co-pays—but there are added burdens of access and quality-of-care.

Why Is This Happening?

“Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General” states: “Despite the existence of effective treatments, disparities lie in the availability, accessibility and quality of mental health services for racial and ethnic minorities.” This report talks about the lack of large-scale research that applies specifically to minority populations. Research is necessary to gain information about prevention, access, service delivery and quality-of-care. And the scary thing is: This report came out in 1999 and its findings still hold true today 18 years later—research and information about minority mental health is still severely lacking.

In “Eliminating Mental Health Disparities by 2020: Everyone's Actions Matter,”

Regina Bussing and Faye A. Gary write: “In the decade since the Surgeon General's landmark publication, its basic findings of striking disparities for minorities in mental health services have not changed. As shown in the most recent National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Reports, racial and ethnic minorities still have less access to mental health services than whites, and when they receive care, it is more likely to be of poorer quality.”

There are many **reasons** why minorities aren't getting proper care. Here are some of them:

- A lack of availability
- Transportation issues, difficulty finding childcare/taking time off work
- The belief that mental health treatment “doesn't work”
- The high level of mental health stigma in minority populations
- A mental health system weighted heavily towards non-minority values and culture norms
- Racism, bias, and discrimination in treatment settings
- Language barriers and an insufficient number of providers who speak languages other than English

FAREWELL AND THANK YOU TO HEALTH COMMISSIONER DR. LAWRENCE EISENSTEIN

Thank you Dr. Larry for 13 years of true leadership. From day one, your professional manner lead us through countless public health emergencies and everyday public health concerns. It is no wonder why we became the National Health Department of the Year (2018) and the first NY Health Department to become accredited (2017) !! Although it is sad knowing that you will leave us soon, we want to tell you that you are a true leader and an inspiration to all of us. Your guidance and support have been instrumental in helping us achieve our professional goals, and for that we are forever grateful.

Thank you! I All the best.

- A lack of adequate health insurance coverage (and even for people with insurance, high deductibles and co-pays make it difficult to afford)

How Can We Help Change The Status Quo?

The mental health system is flawed. We all know that and many of us have experienced it personally. But all mental health advocates should band together in improving the status quo for those who are the least likely to both seek and receive treatment. Those who are most vulnerable to the systemic disparities of getting help. Those who only get the spotlight for one month out of the year. Together, we need to raise the bar for better mental health care for everyone, especially minorities. You can get started by doing the following:

- Encourage mental health organizations to include minorities on staff or boards of directors.
- Write, call or talk to legislators—both local and federal—to support efforts to improve access to and the quality of mental health services in your area.
- Be a spokesperson when there is an opportunity to speak out on behalf of minority mental health.
- Share information you've learned about accessing quality care to others.
- Try to be more open and understanding towards what minority communities might be experiencing that you might not.

Whether you have personally experienced the challenges associated with minority mental health or whether you are advocating for a better mental health system, anyone can help make a difference. Opening the doors to quality mental health care for minorities is challenging, but we can all do our part in making the right keys for easier access and quality care.

Resources

copy and paste links below

African Americans, Anxiety and Depression Association of America:
<https://adaa.org/find-help/by-demographics/black-african-american-communities>

Information on choosing providers and accompanying ADAA articles on topics such as how to overcome unique obstacles and the link between racism and stress and anxiety for Black Americans.

Black/African American, Behavioral Health Equity, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

<https://www.samhsa.gov/behavioral-health-equity/black-african-american>

information page from agency that runs the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255) for confidential support for those in distress and National Helpline (800-662-4357) for treatment referral and support.

Black and African American Communities and Mental Health, Mental Health America:

<https://www.mhanational.org/issues/black-and-african-american-communities-and-mental-health>

fact sheet about prevalence of, attitudes about, and treatment for mental health issues with information specific to bipolar disorder and clinical depression.

Mental Health Association of Nassau County

<https://www.mhanc.org/>

Nassau County CRISIS HOTLINE AND SERVICES

<https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/1700/Crisis-Hotline-Services>

516-227-TALK



Myths vs. Facts: Do People of Color Need Sunscreen & Sun Protection?

Holly Cooper Ford 6/10/2021 General Health, Prevention
<https://blog.uvahealth.com/2021/06/10/people-of-color-sun-protection/>

Studies show that minority populations, particularly Hispanics and Blacks, do not regularly wear sunscreen or take other steps to protect themselves from the sun.

Dermatologists Darren Guffey, MD, and Arturo Saavedra, MD, PhD, addressed common myths and misconceptions that may keep people of color from taking sun protection seriously.

Myth: The Sun Doesn't Damage Dark Skin

Fact: Sun damage — including sunburn — happens no matter what color the skin.

Myth: People with Dark Skin Don't Need to Wear Sunscreen

Fact: Sunscreen provides added protection against the UV rays that can cause skin cancer and is recommended for all skin types. Sunscreen increases the skin's natural resistance to sun damage by absorbing and reflecting sunlight.

Myth: Skin Cancer in People of Color Is Less Common

Fact: It's true skin cancer is more common in those with lighter skin. But people of color are more likely to die of the disease. That's because they often don't get a diagnosis until it's at a later stage.

Myth: Skin Cancer Looks the Same in All Skin Types

Fact: Skin cancer symptoms differ depending on the type of cancer and skin color. Not sure what to look for? These are the three most common types of skin cancer in people of color.

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HOW TO PROTECT DARKER SKIN

Regardless of your skin color, sun protection will lower your risk for cancer. If that's not enough of an incentive, keep in mind that those pesky UV rays also cause signs of aging like fine lines, wrinkles and age spots.

Here's how to ensure your skin remains protected and retains that youthful glow:

- Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen that's at least SPF 30 or higher. Apply every 2 hours when you're out in the sun. (There are more sunscreen options these days, including tinted lotions for different skin tones.)
- If you're in the water, be sure to choose waterproof or water-resistant sunscreen, and follow instructions about reapplying after swimming.
- Avoid peak hours when the sun's rays are strongest — between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.
- Wear photoprotective clothing.
- Don't forget a hat and sunglasses.

Most importantly: Pay attention to your skin! Talk to your doctor if you have any questions about even minor skin changes.

SUMMER SAFETY GUIDE 2022



PLAYING IT SAFE IN THE SUN

Don't Forget the Shades

One of the most common misconceptions about wearing sunglasses is that they're just a fashion statement.

"Sunglasses with 100% UV protection are critically important to overall long-term eye health," says ophthalmologist, Dr. Raymond Girgis. One of the leading reasons why eye protection is important is to slow the progression of cataracts—when the lenses in our eyes become hard and cloudy. An increase in UV exposure can also result in scar tissue formation—called pinguecula or pterygium (growths on the eye's clear covering over the white part of your eye). Exposure may also play a role in macular degeneration, a disease affecting the center of the retina that causes a decrease in vision.

Heat, Humidity and Heatstroke

Summer heat requires a different "dress code." Wear lightweight cotton and loose-fitting, light-colored clothes to help air circulate and allow your body to "breathe." Clothes made with synthetic fabrics will also help keep you cool as they wick the moisture from your body. The early morning hours are the best time to exercise and work on your outdoor to-do list.

On hot and humid days replenishing your body's fluids is a must to prevent dehydration or heat exhaustion. Spending too much time in the hot sun can be dangerous, especially for adults 65 and older. Heat-related illnesses, such as heatstroke, occur when the body is no longer able to stay cool. People 65 and up account for the most heat-related hospitalizations because they cannot adjust as well to sudden changes in temperature, making them especially vulnerable in hot temperatures.

Know warning signs of heatstroke. While it presents in younger adults as clammy hands or a dry mouth, symptoms in older adults include:

- Delayed or reduced sense of thirst
- Lack of perspiration
- Change in behavior
- Inability to concentrate
- Fainting



How to Pick the Right Sunscreen

However you enjoy your summer, it's always important to protect your skin from the sun's rays. First and foremost, always look for sunscreen that's labeled "broad spectrum" or mentions that it protects against both UVA and UVB rays. UVB rays cause sunburn and increase our risk of skin cancer, while UVA rays mainly contribute to skin damage that ages us, like wrinkles and leathery texture.

The second thing to look for is the SPF level—this is how much longer it will take untanned skin to redden with the sunscreen than without it. For instance, when wearing SPF 30 sunscreen, it'll take 30 times longer for your skin to burn than with no sunscreen at all. Values between 30 and 50 will offer adequate protection. You should be using a quarter teaspoon of sunscreen on your face and about an ounce—approximately one shot glass worth—for the rest of your body. If using spray-on sunscreen, apply two layers.

Water Safety for Kids

“Drowning is one of the leading causes of death in children ages 1 to 4”

If you have a pool at home, putting up a fence around it is one of the most important steps you can take for your children’s safety. The fence should be at least four feet high, with no openings underneath or slots between that exceed four inches. It should also include a latching gate that stays closed at all times.

Whether at home or away, paying attention to your children around the pool is essential. **Someone should always be assigned to watch children in the pool, especially at group gatherings and parties.** Assign adults to 15-minute intervals of pool watch—a reasonable amount of time for them to not get distracted by their phone or other activities. And, it’s equally as important to pay attention to children at the beach. **“Make sure you’re directly supervising children around the ocean because waves can be very unpredictable,”** says Dr. Jacob. “It’s a good idea to look up the tides and currents to stay aware of what’s going on around you.”

Playground Safety

Nearly 80% of playground injuries are caused by falls. Watch out for these potential hazards when taking kids to the playground, and report any hazards observed.

- Improper ground surfaces: Surfaces around playground equipment should have at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel, or mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials.
- Overcrowded play areas. The area under and around play equipment should be a minimum of six feet in all directions while swing set areas should be twice the height of the suspending bar, both in back and in front of the swings.

- Unprotected elevated areas. Platforms higher than 30 inches should have guardrails or barriers.
- Head entrapment spaces. Openings between rails, bars, rungs and even ropes of cargo nets should be less than 3.5 inches or more than 9 inches.
- Sharp points and edges. Playground equipment should be free of protruding bolt ends, “S” hooks, and other sharp points and edges.



Running on the Beach Comes With Risks

Many people bring their workout regimen with them to the shore. It is commonly thought that the soft sand better cushions the lower extremity joints, making running on the beach even more beneficial. However, the beach surface changes drastically from extremely soft to hard, and oftentimes, slope dramatically as it approaches the water.

Keep the following preventive measures in mind to avoid injuries:

- Choose the most appropriate footwear. The ideal running shoes provide shock absorption, motion control and stability.
- Be careful to increase the duration and speed with which you run. Running “too much, too fast, too soon” is one of the hallmarks of training error and injury during the summer months.
- Be aware of your particular anatomic makeup. Some runners may have high foot arches, one leg shorter than the other, scoliosis (curvature of the spine), or excessive muscle tightness which may increase his/her susceptibility to injury during training.
- Stretch the involved muscles for at least three to five minutes before and after exercising.
- Respect the environment in which you run. Be aware of the temperature, altitude and terrain.

Safely Enjoy the Bike Ride

Bicyclists face a host of hazards. They often must share the road with vehicles, and injuries can happen even on designated paths. With about 80 million bicyclists sharing the road with motorized vehicles, it is vital that bicyclists – and drivers – take some safety precautions.

Always inspect your bike prior to riding:

- The seat should be adjusted to the proper height and locked in place
- Make certain all parts are secure and working properly; check that the tires are inflated properly
- Make sure the bike is equipped with reflectors on the rear, front, pedals and spokes
- A horn or bell, a rear-view mirror and a bright headlight also are recommended

Helmets appropriate for bicycling should be worn by everyone – adults and children – on every bike ride regardless of length of the ride. Follow these guidelines from NHTSA to properly fit the helmet:

- Adjust sizing pads or fit ring until the helmet is snug.
- Position the helmet level on your head, covering the forehead and not tipped backward or forward; this will be about one to two finger widths above the eyebrow.
- Adjust the side straps so they form a “V” shape under and slightly in front of your ears; center the buckle on the chin strap under your chin.
- Buckle and tighten the chin strap until it is snug; no more than one to two fingers should be able to fit between the chin and strap.
- When fitted, the helmet should not rock more than one inch side to side or front to back on your head.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission advises that unless manufacturers recommend otherwise, you should get a new helmet every five to 10 years as the material inside the helmet begins to break down over time.

Driving Safety

At any given daylight moment across America, approximately 660,000 drivers are using cell phones or electronic devices while driving, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Summer time means even more travel to get away spots, so when you’re behind the wheel– whether alone or with passengers – driving safely should always be your top concern. We’re more distracted than ever, so it’s crucial to know the basics of safe driving and practice them every time you’re on the road.

- Don’t allow children to fight or climb around in your car – they should be buckled in their seats at all times. Too much noise can easily distract you from focusing on the road.
- Avoid driving when you’re tired. Be aware that some medications cause drowsiness and make operating a vehicle very dangerous.
- Always use caution when changing lanes. Cutting in front of someone, changing lanes too fast or not using your signals may cause an accident or upset other drivers.
- Don’t be a hostile driver, road rage never accomplishes anything but potential disaster.

Food Handling and Grilling

As summer weather ramps up, you might be ready to head outside and fire up your grill for some awesome parties. Before you do, make sure you’re following proper grilling safety guidelines. Here is a list of the most important grilling safety tips for you to follow the next time you break out the charcoal:

- Clean your grill, but avoid using wire grill brushes. The small, sharp bristles can break off as you’re cleaning, get stuck to your grill’s cooking surface and may accidentally be ingested. Thousands have ended up in the ER as a result.
- Cook away from other objects
- Place your grill on stable ground
- Check for gas leaks; have a fire extinguisher on hand

.Continued from page 7

- Stay by the grill; keep children and pets away
- Know how to safely start your grill and clean out any debris (spider webs ,etc.) that may be inside the area you use to ignite a gas grill
- Avoid loose clothing
- Shut down your grill correctly

When handling foods in the summer heat be sure to avoid these most common mistakes:

- Washing meats in the sink, they may leave germs in the sink and cross contaminate.
- Eating raw batter or dough, including cookie dough, and other foods with uncooked eggs/uncooked flour.
- Thawing or marinating food on the counter.
- Not cooking meat, chicken, turkey, seafood, or eggs thoroughly.
- Peeling fruits and vegetables without washing them first.
- Not washing your hands.
- Putting cooked meat back on a plate that held raw meat.
- Tasting or smelling food to see if it's still good.
- Leaving food out too long before putting it in the fridge.

Bug Safety

Mosquitoes and ticks have long been taking a bite out of warm-weather fun. Those bites can also carry with them the danger of Zika virus, West Nile virus, Lyme disease and more. Everyone can protect themselves and their families by following simple preventive measures:

- Use Environmental Protection Agency-registered insect repellent with DEET and wear long-sleeve shirts and long pants.
- Read product labels when using insect repellent and apply as directed.
- Do a head-to-toe-check for ticks and if you find one, learn how to properly remove it.

For mosquitoes:

- Do not leave doors or windows propped open.
- Once a week, scrub or empty planters, birdbaths, vases and flowerpot saucers; mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water.
- Use EPA-approved indoor and outdoor flying insect spray or foggers.
- Turn on air conditioning; mosquitoes prefer warm, damp and dark spaces.

Leave Fireworks to the Experts

Summer is synonymous with barbecues, parades and fireworks. The National Safety Council advises everyone to enjoy fireworks at public displays conducted by professionals, and not to use any fireworks at home. If you choose to use them, be sure to follow these safety tips:

- Never allow young children to handle fireworks; older children should use them only under close adult supervision.
- Never use fireworks while impaired by drugs or alcohol.
- Anyone using fireworks or standing nearby should wear protective eyewear.
- Never hold lighted fireworks in your hands; never light them indoors.
- Only use them away from people, houses and flammable material.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Only light one device at a time and maintain a safe distance after lighting; never ignite devices in a container.
- Do not try to re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks.
- Soak both spent and unused fireworks in water for a few hours before discarding; keep a bucket of water nearby to fully extinguish fireworks that don't go off or in case of fire.
- Never use illegal fireworks.



Nassau County DOH Information

For more information call 516-227-9440
[https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/3925/
Public-Health-Emergency-Preparedness-
PHE](https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/3925/Public-Health-Emergency-Preparedness-PHE)

Let's Get Started Today and Be Prepared!

- Make your family emergency plan
- Build a Kit
- Register for Nassau County and New York State Emergency Alerts
- Meet your neighbors to see who might need help and ask for an emergency contact number
- Contact your utility and fire department if you have access or functional needs
- Plan for your pets

<https://www.ready.gov/plan>

[https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2021-04/family-
emergency-communication-plan.pdf](https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2021-04/family-emergency-communication-plan.pdf)

[HTTPS://WWW.READY.GOV/SITES/DEFAULT/FI
LES/2021-04/FAMILY-EMERGENCY-
COMMUNICATION-PLAN.PDF](https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2021-04/family-emergency-communication-plan.pdf)

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PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS (PHEP)

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS (PHEP) IS TASKED WITH RESPONDING TO A RANGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH THREATS—INCLUDING INFECTIOUS DISEASES; NATURAL DISASTERS; AND BIOLOGICAL, CHEMICAL, NUCLEAR AND RADIOLOGICAL EVENTS. OUR GOAL IS TO BUILD A MORE RESILIENT COMMUNITY THAT IS PREPARED TO DEAL WITH AND RAPIDLY RECOVER FROM THREATS AND EMERGENCIES THAT AFFECT THE HEALTH OF THE PUBLIC.

A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY EXISTS WHEN THERE IS A POTENTIAL TO OVERWHELM THE ROUTINE COMMUNITY CAPABILITIES ESTABLISHED TO ADDRESS THEM.



FAST FACT

During the summer months, the hottest time of the day is between noon and 4 p.m.

BASIC DISASTER SUPPLIES KIT

To assemble your kit store items in airtight plastic bags and put your entire disaster supplies kit in one or two easy-to-carry containers such as plastic bins or a duffel bag. A basic emergency supply kit could include the following recommended items:

- Water (one gallon per person per day for several days, for drinking and sanitation)
- Food (at least a several-day supply of non-perishable food)
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert
- Flashlight
- First aid kit
- Extra batteries
- Whistle (to signal for help)
- Dust mask (to help filter contaminated air)
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape (to shelter in place)
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties (for personal sanitation)
- Wrench or pliers (to turn off utilities)
- Manual can opener (for food)
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery



Additional Emergency Supplies

Since Spring of 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended people include additional items in their kits to help prevent the spread of coronavirus or other viruses and the flu.

Consider adding the following items to your emergency supply kit based on your individual needs:

- Masks (for everyone ages 2 and above), soap, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes to disinfect surfaces
- Prescription medications. About half of all Americans take a prescription medicine every day. An emergency can make it difficult for them to refill their prescription or to find an open pharmacy. Organize and protect your prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, and vitamins to prepare for an emergency.
- Non-prescription medications such as pain relievers, anti-diarrhea medication, antacids or laxatives
- Prescription eyeglasses and contact lens solution
- Infant formula, bottles, diapers, wipes and diaper rash cream
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Cash or traveler's checks
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records saved electronically or in a waterproof, portable container
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Complete change of clothing appropriate for your climate and sturdy shoes
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels and plastic utensils
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

The official hurricane season for the Atlantic basin is from June 1 to November 30



RECIPE OF THE MONTH



Watermelon Feta Salad

Ingredients

2 cups cubed Watermelon
1 cup thickly sliced Cucumbers
¼ cup crumbled Feta Cheese
Juice of ½ a lemon
1 tablespoon olive oil
A generous pinch of Sea Salt
Freshly Cracked Pepper
1 teaspoons dried mint
Chopped Fresh Mint for garnish
(optional)

Directions

- Add the watermelon, cucumbers and feta to a bowl.
- In a separate bowl, whisk lemon juice, olive oil, salt, pepper and dried mint
- Drizzle over and gently mix with salad .
- sprinkle with fresh mint and serve.

<https://chefandsteward.com/2012/09/08/succulent-summer-salads-with-a-recipe-for-watermelon-feta-salad/>

References

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[health/#:~:text=National%20Minority%20Mental%20Health%20Awareness%20Month%20is%20observed%20each%20July,illness%20in%20the%20United%20States.](https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/minority-mental-health/#:~:text=National%20Minority%20Mental%20Health%20Awareness%20Month%20is%20observed%20each%20July,illness%20in%20the%20United%20States.)

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Mental Health Association of Nassau County

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Nassau County CRISIS HOTLINE AND SERVICES

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516-227-TALK

SUMMER SAFETY GUIDE 2022

From: <https://thehealthnexus.org/summer-safety-guide-2022-tips-for-keeping-mishaps-at-bay-as-the-weather-heats-up/>

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from:

<https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/3925/Public-Health-Emergency-Preparedness-PHE>

Basic Disaster Supplies Kit

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