



DIALOGUE GUIDE

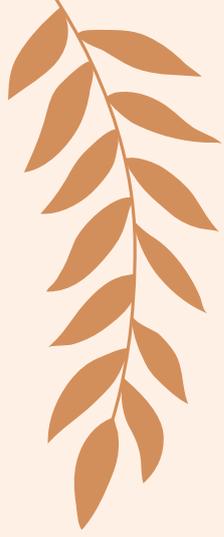
Healing Through Dialogue - Focusing on Mental Well Being

Service Area Leadership Team
(SALT) 6

Black History Wellness and Resource Fair

February 15, 2024





“It is through knowing who and what we are that we can identify our strengths and build upon them. Then, using our strengths, we need to heal from the injuries of our history. We need to heal ourselves. We need to heal our families. We need to heal our communities.” Dr. Joy DeGruy – Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America’s Legacy of Enduring Injury & Healing.

A few stats on the mental wellbeing among Black Folks[1]

Access to cultural competent services

- According to the 2018 American Community Survey in California, 3.1 percent of therapists are Black, and 73.8 percent are White, while the total population of Black individuals is 6 percent statewide.
- Black Americans constitute only 5 percent of psychologists in the United States, compared to 82.3 percent for White individuals.
- Despite evidence of a demonstrated need, youth of color do not engage in traditional clinical mental health services at rates that are proportionate to the need due to limited access, social stigma, misgivings about the efficacy of treatment and distrust of predominantly white providers.
- Youth shared greater awareness of heavily advertised smartphone app-based therapy services over community providers, however most app-based services are not accessible without insurance or out-of-pocket expenses.
- The Affordable Care Act (ACA) expanded health insurance coverage to more individuals and expanded coverage to include mental health and substance abuse treatment.

COVID’s Impact on Mental Wellbeing

- The Black population in California represents 5.1 percent of COVID-19 cases and 6.8 percent of deaths in California while making up 6 percent of the population.
- Children’s experience of social isolation from friends during the COVID pandemic are experiencing higher levels of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation.
- After the onset of the pandemic, pandemic-related stressors such as the need for caregiving, issues at home, work, and negative hospital or health care experiences added an additional layer of stress on top of pre-existing trauma.
- Lack of social support, uncertainty about the future, lack of routine, and absence of mourning rituals denied those who lost loved ones during the pandemic, the basic opportunity to grieve adaptively.
- The prevalence rates of prolonged grief disorder have risen drastically during the covid 19 pandemic.
- Social networks have been highly affected during the pandemic leading to disenfranchised grief in most individuals. Disenfranchised grief is conceptualized as unexpressed grief in public, social, or cultural terms.

Mental Illness

- 11 percent of non-Medi-Cal Black Californians have an unmet mental health need, compared to 8 percent of white Californians.
- 50.1 percent of Black adults with serious mental illness did not receive treatment.
- Compared to their non-Black counterparts, Black people in the County are second most likely (after Latino/Hispanic people) to be at risk of major depression (12.9% compared to 15.2% for Latinos/Hispanics) and to report that they are currently depressed (15.3% compared to 16.5% for Whites).
- In Los Angeles, 41 percent of the jail population has a diagnosed mental health condition, is experiencing mental health symptoms, or is taking psychiatric medication, a number that has increased 21 percent since 2020[2].





Youth and Suicide

- Death by suicide was the third leading cause of death youth ages 10 – 24 in L.A. County between 2016 and 2020.
- Non-fatal suicide attempts among youth were even more common than fatal suicides; for each death, 16 youth were treated for suicide attempts in hospitals and emergency departments (Table 1).
- Youth are treated for suicide attempts in emergency departments at a rate ten times higher than people 55 and over, and are hospitalized for suicide attempts at a rate twice as high.
- The suicide rates for Black boys and girls ages 15 to 24 years old increased by 47 percent and 59 percent, respectively from 2013 to 2019.
- Emergency room visits for suicide attempts rose 50.6% for teenage girls during the pandemic, compared to only 3.7% for boys

Racial Trauma

- Many youth reported parents or household members experiencing unmet mental health needs, from immigration trauma to police brutality and other community violence.
- School discipline policies embed implicit bias and systemic oppression of youth of color and disproportionately place young people of color in detention, suspension or expulsion for externalizing their pain, rather than meeting their mental health needs with care and compassion.
- Black, Indigenous and Latinx youth have borne the brunt of the consequences of centuries of colonization and violence. These generational and community traumas have collectively conspired to disconnect these young people from cultural protective factors that would serve as buffers to toxic stress and poor health and well-being.
- In Los Angeles County, Black/African Americans make up 31.7% of the homeless population, yet only 7.6% of the general population.
- The populations of Black or African American women and women of two or more races experiencing homelessness are more than 3.5 and 2 times that of Black or African American people and people of two or more races in the general population of Los Angeles County, respectively[3].

Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Mental Wellbeing[5]

- EI is “the ability to perceive, use, understand, manage, and handle emotions.”
- EI has been shown to positively impact key psychological components, such as self-esteem, life satisfaction, and self-acceptance.
- Stressed individuals demonstrate lower emotional intelligence and are unable to adopt the appropriate positive methods and techniques needed to minimize the negative effects of stress on physical and mental health.
- An effective response to stress often involves using coping strategies found in higher EI that develop important behavioral patterns and are highly favorable in such situations.
- Empathy is an aspect of emotional intelligence that helps you understand what others feel and may motivate you to action. it also involves how you respond to these emotions.

References:

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- YOUTH-CENTERED STRATEGIES FOR HOPE, HEALING AND HEALTH Sydney McKinney, PhD Dayanara Ruiz, MPH Angela M. Vázquez, MSW Mayra E. Alvarez, MHA May 2022.
- State of Black Los Angeles County - <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/cc7914ce627845448d235549b353f411?item=6>



Dialogue Questions

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1. How are you really feeling today? (See the Feelings Wheel Poster below)
2. What does mental wellbeing mean to you? How do you truly know when you are feeling well? i.e. Sleep patterns, eating habits, communication with loved ones.
3. What is your mental wellness/ self-care practice? How did you come to adopt this practice?
4. What self-care activities did you observe your caretakers, aunts/uncles, parents, siblings, or others practice?
5. What are your trusted community resources where you or people you know can access mental health services?
6. What barriers do people face in accessing mental health services?
7. How do we overcome cultural stigmas that may prevent some people from accessing mental health services?
8. Besides “talk therapy” – what are non-traditional forms of mental health services that are practiced in the community?
9. How has navigating the COVID 19 era impacted members of the community? What have been some forms of coping? How have you or people you know managed grief during these times?
10. Trauma has become a popular term to describe a form of individual or collective harm. What forms of trauma impact our diverse communities?
11. What are cultural ways to talk about death by suicide with youth? What are some of the barriers associated with talking to youth about death by suicide?
12. Where are community-based practices and/or trusted places that youth can access to address their mental health needs?
13. What does emotional intelligence mean to you? How does it help us develop empathy for others?
14. How are emotional intelligence, racial justice, and healing justice linked together?
15. What are three traits of a healthy relationship?
16. How do you establish boundaries? How do you know when others are violating your boundaries?
17. What is the role of spirituality in restoring and/or sustaining our mental wellness?
18. What are some spiritual practices that help you maintain your mental wellness?
19. How important are the arts (e.g., music, dance, poetry, writing, painting/drawing) as a pathway to spiritual wellness?
20. What are additional mental health topics that you would recommend for future dialogues?



In 1995, Los Angeles' deeply divided reaction to the verdict in the criminal trial of O. J. Simpson underscored how far apart the diverse communities of Los Angeles and the nation stand on some basic issues. As a result, then - Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas called together a meeting of civic leaders and community activists to diffuse escalating tensions. Out of this was born an innovative, non-partisan initiative, Los Angeles' first citywide discussion – A Day of Dialogue on Race Relations. Since then, thousands of people, both locally and nationally, have participated in Days of Dialogue programs, from political Town Hall forums in large civic auditoriums, to small group meetings in neighborhood libraries, schools, churches, and fire stations.



daysofdialogue.org