



BROTHER, YOU'RE ON MY MIND

Changing the National Dialogue Regarding Mental Health Among African American Men

Have you known men who wouldn't admit that something was wrong?

Have you tried to tough it out in times of psychological stress?

Life can be hard. Everybody has trouble coping sometimes. But mental illness, including depression, is a major public health problem. Every year, more than 40 million Americans struggle with mental illness. African American men are as likely as anyone else to have mental illness, but they are less likely to get help.

Depression and other mental illness can be deadly if left untreated. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among African Americans 15 to 24 years old. Untreated mental illness can make African American men more vulnerable to substance abuse, homelessness, incarceration, and homicide.

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., and the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) have launched an initiative to help start conversations about mental health: *Brother, You're on My Mind: Changing the National Dialogue Regarding Mental Health Among African American Men*.

This initiative has two major goals:

GOAL 1:

To collaborate on efforts to educate Omega members, their families, and related communities on the effects of depression and stress.

GOAL 2:

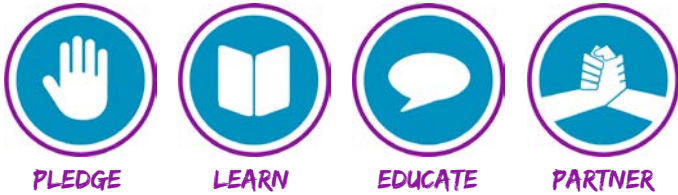
To communicate the importance of seeking help for mental health problems and to encourage affected individuals to get information, possibly by talking with their health care providers, in order to obtain appropriate treatment.

National Alliance on Mental Illness. (2015). Mental health by the numbers. Retrieved from <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-By-the-Numbers>

National Alliance on Mental Illness. (2015). Mental health: know the warning signs. Retrieved from <http://www.nami.org/akaresources>

Black Mental Health Alliance. (2003). Souls of black men: African American men discuss mental health. Retrieved from <http://www.consumerstar.org/pubs/Souls.pdf>

This initiative will use a variety of activities to raise awareness of the mental health challenges associated with depression and stress that affect African American men and their families.



NIMHD will lead the development of materials about depression and stress that are based in the science of mental health. The materials will be disseminated by Omegas through national, regional, and chapter meetings and events. NIMHD will also support an evaluation to determine how well the initiative is working and will connect Omegas with other resources, including mental health experts who can speak at events.

NIMHD envisions an America in which all populations have an equal opportunity to live long, healthy, productive lives.

To accomplish this, NIMHD raises national awareness of the prevalence and impact of health disparities and disseminates effective individual-, community-, and population-level interventions to reduce and encourage elimination of health disparities.

<http://www.nimhd.nih.gov/>

The Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., mission is to bring about union of college men of similar high ideals of scholarship and manhood in order to stimulate the attainment of ideas and ambitions of its members; occupy a progressive, helpful, and constructive place in the political life of the community and nation; foster the humanity, freedom, and dignity of the individual; and aid downtrodden humanity in its efforts to achieve higher economic and intellectual status.

<http://www.omegapsiphifraternity.org/home.asp>

Omega chapters will be encouraged to participate in a variety of ways:

- Ω Find their local (state or county) mental health resources and providers.
- Ω Have a mental health professional speak during a chapter meeting to discuss depression.
- Ω Display and distribute print materials at key locations (e.g., barbershops, churches).
- Ω Host a community forum on mental health for men.
- Ω Participate in a health fair and distribute materials.
- Ω Work with congregations and health ministries to focus on mental health.
- Ω Develop local partnerships that make larger workshops and a wider impact possible.
- Ω Encourage local mayors and city officials to establish proclamations on men's mental health.

The following resources and websites offer additional information on mental health:

- Ω *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General* (1999), <http://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/ps/access/NNBBHS.pdf>
- Ω *Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity—A Supplement to Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General* (2001), <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44243/>
- Ω National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>
- Ω Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), <http://www.nichd.nih.gov>
- Ω U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), <http://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/>
- Ω Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), <http://www.samhsa.gov>
- Ω National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), <http://www.nami.org>
- Ω American Psychological Association (APA), <http://www.apa.org>