

20
23

**CULTURE,
COMMUNITY,
& CONNECTION**
BIPOC MENTAL HEALTH
OUTREACH TOOLKIT

In commemoration of Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month



FOREWORD

Mental Health America's mission to promote mental health as a critical part of overall wellness has been rooted in a commitment to justice since our founding in 1909. We pride ourselves on our long-standing commitment to the strength of communities, including those who may be marginalized or persecuted. Communities form on the basis of shared lived experience and often revolve around identity and geography. We recognize the inherent strengths of all communities and the unique ability of individual community members with lived experience to guide the creation of effective interventions. Mental Health America believes community-led solutions must be prioritized and sustained to build a more mentally healthy future.

Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities have always been at the forefront of social change. Even when displaced, underserved, and oppressed by systems not built for them, there have always and will always be ways that individuals find connection with one another and embrace traditions.

When advocating for community spaces and resources, we must always pay homage to the originating communities and leaders who have paved the way. Each July, we highlight the legacy of trailblazer, advocate, and author Bebe Moore Campbell by proudly commemorating Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month. It is through Moore Campbell's devotion to the mental health of minoritized communities that we are able to celebrate each July and continue to build a better future for individuals of all backgrounds.

There is promise in the strength of community, as Moore Campbell demonstrated. Within communities and environments, the ability to build and maintain authentic connections and a sense of belonging is a foundational element of wellness. Culture and community can tie people to their ancestors and give a sense of pride or purpose.

Even amidst the past and present attacks on BIPOC folks, strong communities persist, continuing not only to survive but to thrive and flourish. This toolkit and campaign are intended to highlight this historical resilience. We encourage each of you to build up *your* communities for your collective well-being, and for allies outside of the BIPOC community to support in these efforts. Please join us in being inspired by and uplifting the innovative ways in which BIPOC communities care for each other and protect community wellness.



Schneider Strickling

President & CEO, Mental Health America

THE LEGACY OF BEBE MOORE CAMPBELL: CULTURE, COMMUNITY, AND CONNECTION



Each July we honor the legacy of author, advocate, and trailblazer Bebe Moore Campbell by recognizing Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month (also known as BIPOC Mental Health Month). Moore Campbell's ability to tell impactful stories highlighting themes of racism, mental health, and family left a lasting mark on this world and is a foundation for much of the work that continues in support of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) mental health.

This year, July's theme is Culture, Community, and Connection. Community engagement, cultural preservation, representation, and advocacy all play major roles in Moore Campbell's books and her advocacy efforts. By delving into the complexities of cultural identity, community dynamics, and interpersonal connections, Moore Campbell highlighted both the tragedies and the joys that come up in life.

Throughout her work, Moore Campbell did not shy away from the realities of what it meant to live as a Black person in America. Her book, "Your Blues Ain't Like Mine," was inspired by the murder of Emmett Till and deemed as one of the most influential books of 1992 by The New York Times. Moore Campbell continued to write of real events that impacted Black and marginalized communities, such as her work in "Brothers and Sisters," which takes place in Los Angeles following the Rodney King riots. By highlighting these issues, Moore Campbell brought themes of environmental impact, race, and community connections to the forefront of American literature.

Moore Campbell was no stranger to the impact of environment on community and the need for stronger connections to one's culture and community members in order to survive and thrive. Her early books drew attention to the harsh realities of racism and the way that this continued trauma can show up in everyday life. Her later books continued with similar themes and included strong ties to mental health, as well as the importance of community bonds, leaning on family and friends, and finding support during an individual's treatment and recovery journey. Additionally, through her advocacy efforts, Moore Campbell continued to engage with community members, connect individuals to support networks, and create spaces that were truly inclusive for those within them.

Moore Campbell passed away on Nov. 27, 2006, but through her powerful storytelling, advocacy, and strong community roots, fellow advocates continued her fight. At Mental Health America, we honor her unforgettable legacy each July by releasing an outreach toolkit and campaign that gives individuals throughout the country the tools they need to educate themselves and others. Her legacy lives on, providing a powerful foundation for marginalized communities to thrive and be known.

INTRODUCTION TO CULTURE, COMMUNITY, & CONNECTION



The theme of Mental Health America's 2023 BIPOC Mental Health Campaign, developed in commemoration of Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, is ***Culture, Community, & Connection***. Our lives are deeply intertwined with the environments around us. Who and what we are surrounded by impacts our mental health and overall wellness. In particular, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) populations are faced with disproportionate amounts of historical trauma and displacement that have challenged how these communities remain sustainable and continue to thrive. Despite countless attempts to take away power, erase histories, and diminish future successes, BIPOC communities continue to prosper. Culture, community, and connection are pillars that support and uplift BIPOC individuals when the dangers of oppression and systemic racism threaten the environments where BIPOC individuals live, work, play, and thrive.

In many ways, BIPOC communities have had to look out for themselves and for each other in order to simply survive the systemic racism that most still face to this day. There have been numerous attempts to erase BIPOC communities through genocide, war, famine, displacement, loss of power, loss of culture, and even loss of language. Despite that, BIPOC communities have been powerful, unyielding, and revolutionary in combating these attempts to diminish their worth and value. In addition, historically, the mental health narrative around BIPOC communities has been defined by disparities, trauma, and oppression – but what could BIPOC stories and lives look like if the narrative was changed? Imagine a narrative that instead uplifted and accepted community-created systems of support as fundamental cornerstones connecting one another and providing a safe haven.

BIPOC communities throughout history have carved out systems of support in order to sustain collective well-being. These systems have centered around community and connection, deeply rooted in sustained cultural traditions, language, stories, food, art, and more. Community has been an anchor, allowing connection in a world that is seeking to ostracize and isolate. It is the power of community that has brought forth movements and social change, health and wellness, knowledge, and strength.

The cultures of BIPOC communities are born from the richness of ancestral wisdom, survival practices, and support systems that have not only sustained life but allowed it to thrive and bloom in even the most hostile of environments. BIPOC communities look out for one another and ensure survival, and in cultural hubs, BIPOC communities remind their loved ones of cultural practices that may have otherwise been forgotten.

When we reach out for help, we not only begin to heal ourselves, but we heal our communities. If trauma and displacement have been illnesses, then connection is our medicine. Connection allows us to be known and to know others. We can lean on one another. We can support each other and get support in return. We challenge each other to be better. We challenge each other to keep going.

TOOLKIT CONTENTS

Mental Health America's 2023 BIPOC Mental Health Toolkit provides free, practical resources, including information about how an individual's environment impacts their mental health, suggestions for making changes to improve and maintain mental well-being, and how to seek help for mental health challenges. This year's toolkit includes:

Media Materials

- Key Messages
- Sample Proclamation

Social Media

- Sample Social Media Messages
- Shareable Images

Factsheets

- Community Displacement and Its Influence on Mental Health
- Improving Mental Health of BIPOC Communities Through Community Advocacy
- Connecting with Your Community

Worksheets

- Creating a Community Safety and Connection Plan
- Advocating for Better Community Spaces

Posters

- Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month Poster
- Screening Poster

Other

- Outreach Ideas
- Additional Resources

Mental Health America hopes that the 2023 BIPOC Mental Health Campaign supports you in connecting with your community and in advocating for more community-led and mentally healthy spaces.

We will be reaching out in mid-August to ask about your outreach and impact. Make sure to keep track of your efforts by doing things like:

- Counting how many handouts you distribute;
- Tracking media hits and impressions;
- Downloading analytics for social media posts during BIPOC Mental Health Month;
- If you do a screening event or health fair, keep count of how many people visit your booth and/or take a screen; and
- Conducting a pre/post survey to see how you've increased knowledge about mental health issues among those you reach. Set up a quick survey of up to 10 questions for free online using SurveyMonkey.com.

LIKE OUR MATERIALS? WANT MORE?

MHA merchandise is available through the Mental Health America Store to supplement your outreach efforts. Visit the store at store.mhanational.org.

*MHA Affiliates – One of the benefits of being an affiliate is getting a discount on materials at the MHA store. Contact Valerie Sterns at vsterns@mhanational.org if you need help getting your affiliate discount code.

QUESTIONS?

If you have further questions about the BIPOC Mental Health Campaign, please contact Allissa Torres, Director of Mental Health Equity, at atorres@mhanational.org.

Check out past years' campaigns here:

- [2022: Beyond the Numbers](#)
- [2021: Strength in Communities](#)
- [2020: Impact of Trauma](#)
- [2019: Depth of My Identity](#)
- [2018: My Story My Way](#)