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# Heart Disease and Mental Health Among Black Women



- **Stressful life events** — such as the death of a spouse or other family members, divorce, abuse, job loss or financial problems — are linked to **HIGHER INCIDENTS** of heart attack, stroke and other types of **cardiovascular disease** in Black women.<sup>i</sup>
- Disparities in mental health are due to **STRUCTURAL RACISM** and conditions in which people are born and live called **SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH**.<sup>ii</sup>
- Women are at least **TWICE AS LIKELY** to experience an episode of major depression as men,<sup>iii</sup> and **FEW AFRICAN AMERICANS** receive any form of depression treatment.<sup>iv</sup>
- Rates of mental health among Black people in the U.S. are similar to other groups. But **SIGNIFICANT DISPARITIES** among Black people exist in mental health services.<sup>v</sup>

## Barriers to quality care include:



Stigma associated with mental illness



Distrust of the health care sector



Lack of providers from diverse backgrounds



Lack of insurance, underinsurance<sup>vii</sup>



**ONLY 1 IN 3 BLACK PEOPLE**  
in America who need mental health services receives it.<sup>vi</sup>



[reclaimyourrhythm.heart.org](https://reclaimyourrhythm.heart.org)

<sup>i</sup> Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity - NCBI Bookshelf (nih.gov)

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.prevention.com/health/mental-health/a33686468/black-women-mental-health-crisis/>

<sup>iii</sup> Products - Data Briefs - Number 303 - February 2018 (cdc.gov)

<sup>iv</sup> Prevalence and distribution of major depressive disorder in African Americans, Caribbean blacks, and non-Hispanic whites: results from the National Survey of American Life - PubMed (nih.gov)

<sup>v</sup> Primm A, et al. "Black Americans," chapter in Disparities in Psychiatric Care. Ruiz and Primm editors. Washington, DC: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins. 2010.

<sup>vi</sup> Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity - NCBI Bookshelf (nih.gov)

<sup>vii</sup> Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity - NCBI Bookshelf (nih.gov)