



KEY BLACK FIGURES IN MENTAL HEALTH

Presentation by
SAIL/ Aging in Place Program

MENTAL HEALTH JOURNEY IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

What happens at the intersection of mental health and one's experience as a member of the Black community?

While the experience of being Black in America varies tremendously, there are shared cultural factors that play a role in helping define mental health and supporting well-being, resiliency and healing.

Parts of this shared cultural experience — family connections, values, expression through spirituality or music, reliance on community— are enriching and can be great sources of strength and support.

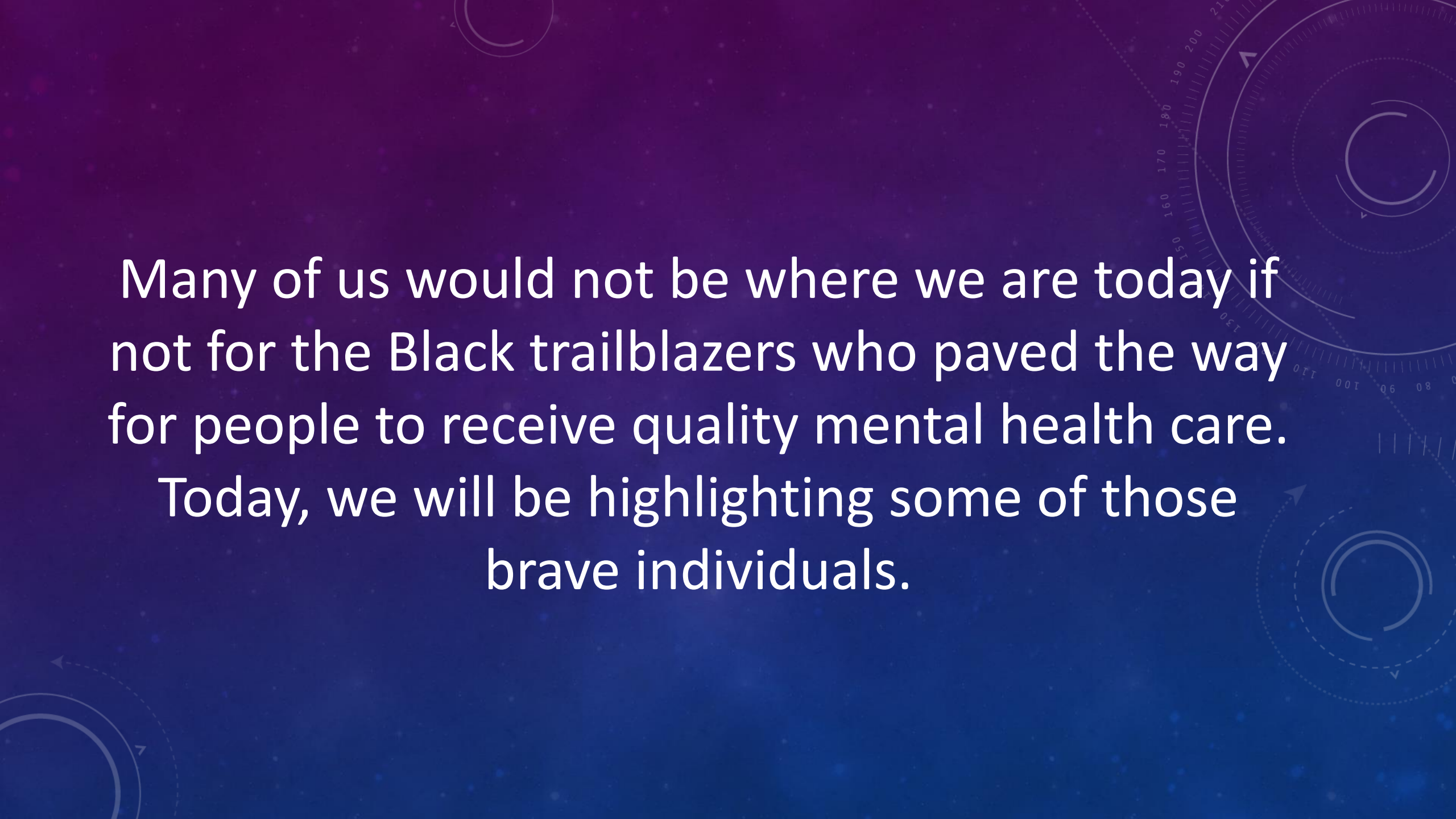




However, another part of this shared experience – being subject to racism, discrimination and inequity – can significantly affect a person’s mental health. Additionally, members of the Black community face structural challenges accessing the care and treatment they need.

Despite the needs, only **one in three** Black adults with mental illness receive treatment. According to the American Psychiatric Association’s Mental Health Facts for African Americans guide, they are also:

- Less likely to receive guideline-consistent care
- Less frequently included in research
- More likely to use emergency rooms or primary care (rather than mental health specialists)



Many of us would not be where we are today if not for the Black trailblazers who paved the way for people to receive quality mental health care.

Today, we will be highlighting some of those brave individuals.

PAUL BERTAU CORNELY

Dr. Cornely was a founder of the National Student Health Association in 1939

Served as president of the Physician's Forum in 1954

Founder and first president of the DC Public Health Association in 1962

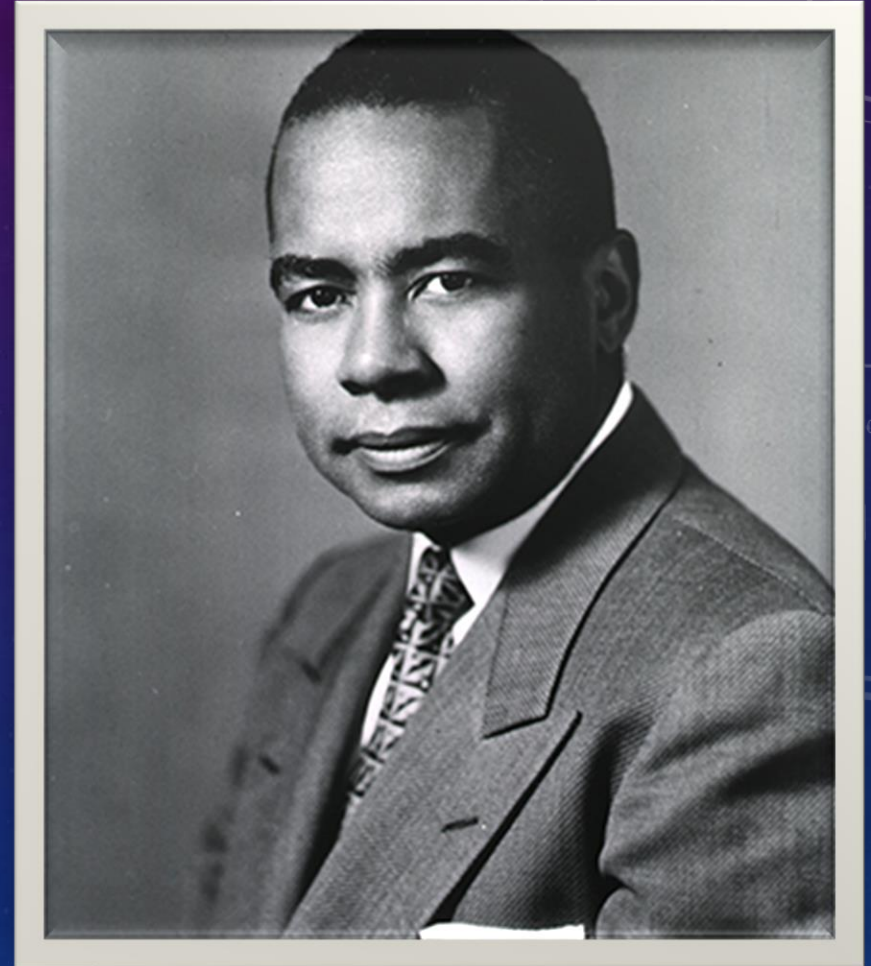
Dr. Cornely was the first African-American elected as President of the American Public Health Association in 1968.

Dr. Cornely's professional work focused on the development of public health initiatives aimed at reducing healthcare disparities among the chronically underserved.

He also made significant contributions to civil rights movements through his efforts to desegregate health facilities across the U.S.

Dr. Cornely conducted research studies on tuberculosis, venereal diseases and scarlet fever; and the effects of social and cultural factors on health and health care utilization.

Dr. Cornely retired in 1973 as Professor Emeritus in the Department of Community Health and Family Practice of Howard University College of Medicine.



JENNIFER EBERHARDT

Jennifer Eberhardt received her BA from the University of Cincinnati in 1987, attended Harvard University and received her MA in 1990, then her PhD in 1993.

She is an esteemed professor of psychology at Stanford University.

Dr. Eberhardt is an expert on the consequences of the psychological association between race and crime and has done extensive research on the topics of implicit bias, criminal justice, and the education system, and her work has provided the evidence needed to educate law enforcement officers in implicit bias training.

In 2014, Dr. Eberhardt's work earned her the famous MacArthur "Genius Grant" Fellowship.



QUESTION FOR THE CROWD



What are some of the most challenging mental health experiences you have faced, if you don't mind sharing in two minutes or less? You could know someone or have experienced these challenges yourself.

SOLOMON CARTER FULLER

Dr. Solomon Carter Fuller was a pioneering African American psychiatrist who made significant contributions to the study of Alzheimer's disease.

He was born in Liberia, the son of a previously enslaved African who had purchased his freedom and emigrated there.

He graduated from Boston University School of Medicine, which as a homeopathic institution, was open to both African American and women students.

He spent most of his career practicing at Westborough State Mental Hospital in Westborough, Massachusetts. While there, he performed research on the physical changes to the brains of Alzheimer's patients.

Dr. Fuller was one of the first known Black psychiatrists and worked alongside Dr. Alois Alzheimer, who first discovered the traits of Alzheimer's disease in 1901.



MAXIE CLARENCE MAULTSBY JR.

Dr. Maultsby was the founder of the psychotherapeutic method, rational behavioral therapy.

Dr. Maultsby explored emotional and behavioral self-management. Dr. Maultsby's unique contributions include making emotional self-help a legitimate focus of scientific research and clinical use.

Through rational behavior therapy, he formulated a system of cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy and counseling that incorporated the most recent neuropsychological facts about how the brain works in relation to emotional and behavioral self-control.

In addition to authoring books for health professional therapists and counselors, Dr. Maultsby has written four pioneering books that describe his method of emotional self-help, called rational self-counseling.



1



2



3



4





QUESTION FOR THE CROWD

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE DOLL STUDY? IF SO, WHAT WAS YOUR OPINION ON THE STUDY?

MAMIE PHIPPS CLARK AND KENNETH BANCROFT CLARK

Mamie Phipps Clark was the first African American woman to earn a doctorate degree in psychology from Columbia University. She previously earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees from Howard University.

The Clarks are best known for the famous "Doll Study" in which more than 200 Black children participated. Both Mamie and Kenneth Clark worked on this study, providing invaluable evidence in favor of ending school segregation in the supreme court case Brown vs. The Board of Education, citing that school segregation was psychologically harmful to black children.

Dr. Kenneth Clark was the first Black president of the American Psychological Association.

Dr. Mamie Phipps Clark's dedication and passion for adequate mental health services for all prompted Dr. Clark to open her own agency to provide comprehensive psychological services to the poor, blacks, and other minority children and families.

In February 1946, Dr. Clark and her husband opened the doors of "The Northside Center for Child Development" for those in the Harlem area. She worked in the center counseling and providing other psychological services from 1946 until 1979 when she retired.

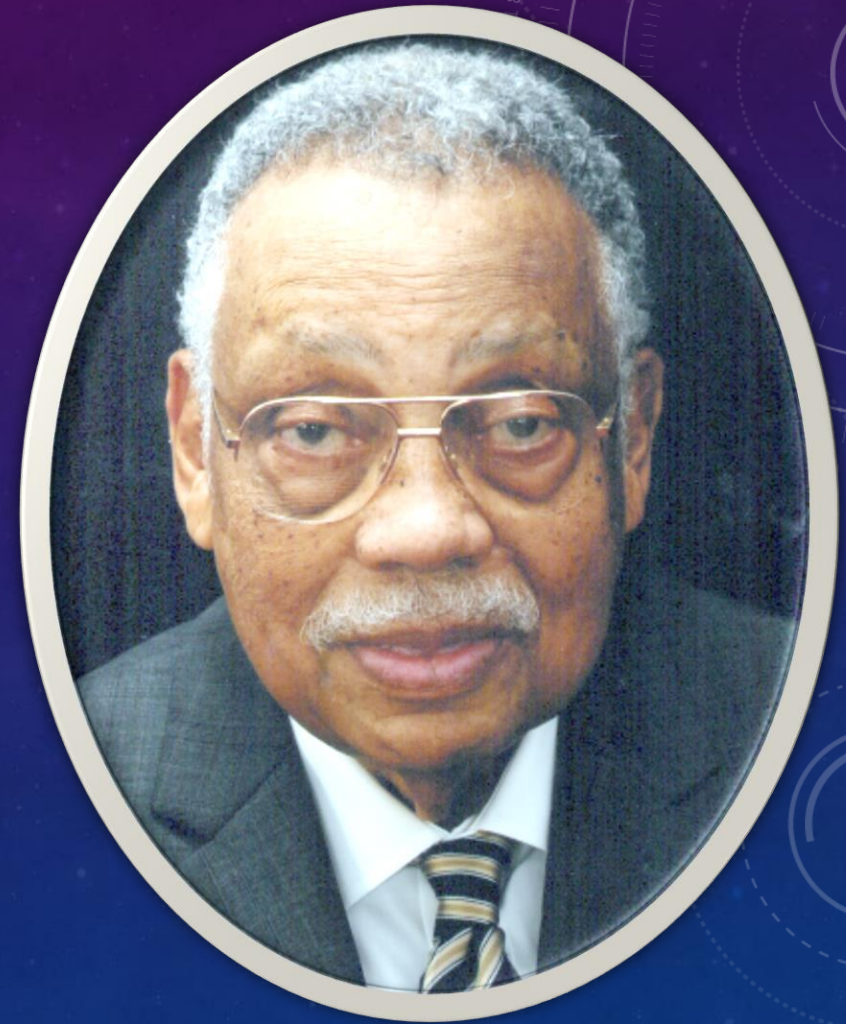


HERMAN GEORGE CANADY

Herman George Canady was a prominent Black clinical and social psychologist.

He is credited with being the first psychologist to study the influence of rapport between an IQ test proctor and the subject, specifically researching how the race of a test proctor can create bias in IQ testing.

He helped to provide an understanding of testing environments that were suitable to help Black students succeed.



BEBE MOORE CAMPBELL

Bebe Moore Campbell was an American author, journalist, teacher, and mental health advocate who shed light on the mental health needs of the Black community and other underrepresented communities.

She founded NAMI-Inglewood in a predominantly Black neighborhood to create a space that was safe for Black people to talk about mental health concerns.

On June 2, 2008, Congress formally recognized Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month taking place in July to bring awareness to the unique struggles that underrepresented groups face regarding mental illness in the US.



It does not need to be Black History Month in order to acknowledge and celebrate Black history. However, it does happen to be Mental Health Awareness Month! These pioneers not only contributed to advancing the field of mental health but also worked to ensure that the unique needs of Black individuals and communities were addressed.

I hope everyone was paying attention because we are doing a trivia next month and will be referring to one or two things from this presentation ;)

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**EDUCATION IS THE MOST
POWERFUL WEAPON WHICH
YOU CAN USE TO CHANGE
THE WORLD."**

- NELSON MANDELA

SAIL/ AGING IN PLACE

Successfully Aging in place is the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level.

Our goal for the SAIL program is to help people do just that through referrals for mental health services, medical services, social services and anything in between.

Whether you identify as Black or know someone who is, the perspectives of these crucial Black mental health figures have helped pave the way for a more diverse understanding of mental health. Aging in place also means addressing and getting the help you need for yourself and your community members. We are in this together.

SUCCESSFUL AGING FOR INCREASING/IMPROVING LONGEVITY (SAIL) PROGRAM

Are you 55+?

Jamaica Hospital Medical Center is partnering with Flushing Hospital Medical Center and the NYC Department for the Aging in an Office of Mental Health sponsored program to support your independence, health, and quality of life. Come meet with us for a free and comprehensive evaluation of your needs!



OUR SERVICES

- MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING
- PEER SUPPORT SERVICES
- PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS FITBIT PROGRAM
- SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES
- HELP MAINTAIN INDEPENDENCE
- PROVIDE DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT (IE. WALKERS, GLUCOSE MONITORS, BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORS)
- WELLNESS CHECKS
- ADVOCACY SERVICES

CONTACT INFO

Please call to schedule an evaluation:
718-206-6904 or email
Aginginplace@jhmc.org

Felicia Meyers, LMSW
Junette Williams, LMSW
Azali Cyril, Peer Advocate
Susan Breen, CRPA Peer Advocate

RESOURCES

- <https://www.mcleanhospital.org/essential/black-mental-health>
- <https://www.nami.org/your-journey/identity-and-cultural-dimensions/black-african-american/>
- <https://www.casapacifica.org/2025/02/03/5-black-mental-health-pioneers-who-transformed-the-field/>
- <https://mhanational.org/resources/black-pioneers-in-mental-health/>
- <https://www.activeminds.org/blog/ten-black-leaders-in-psychology-and-mental-health-you-need-to-know/>