



Behavioral Health Services

# Mental Health: Cultural Considerations

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12pm-1pm

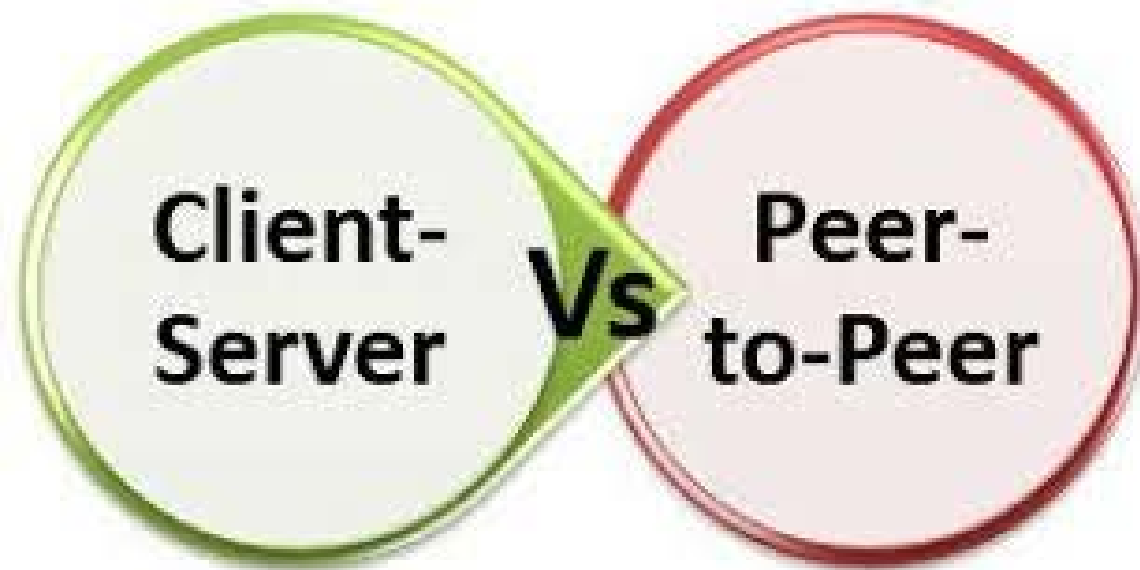


Mental Health  
Awareness Month

# Welcome!

# What we'll explore

- ▶ Culture, race, ethnicity, and cultural identity
- ▶ Improving Cultural Competence and humility
- ▶ Considerations when working with multicultural clients



# Culture, race, ethnicity

- ▶ Culture is a dynamic force that often influences client responses to treatment and subsequent outcomes
  - ▶ Culturally responsive behavioral health treatment results in...
    - ▶ greater credibility for the provider
    - ▶ better client satisfaction
    - ▶ more client self-disclosure
    - ▶ greater willingness among clients to continue with treatment

# Culture, race, ethnicity

- ▶ Race: social construct that describes people with shared physical characteristics
- ▶ Why is race relevant?
  - ▶ Can have tremendous social significance regarding behavioral health services, social opportunities, status, wealth, etc.
  - ▶ The perception that people who share physical characteristics also share beliefs, values, attitudes, and ways of being can have a profound impact on their lives regardless of whether they identify with the race to which they are ascribed by themselves or others
- ▶ Major racial groupings designated by the U.S. Census Bureau
  - ▶ African American or Black
  - ▶ White American or Caucasian
  - ▶ Asian American
  - ▶ American Indian/Alaska Native
  - ▶ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

# Culture, race, ethnicity

- ▶ Ethnicity: social identity and mutual sense of belonging that defines a group of people through common historical or family origins, beliefs, and standards of behavior (i.e., culture).
  - ▶ Differs from race in that groups of people can share a common racial ancestry yet have very different ethnic identities. Thus, ethnicity is an explicitly cultural phenomenon. (i.e., Caucasian → race; Irish, Italian → ethnicities)
  - ▶ \*\*\*Because Latinx can belong to a number of races, the Census Bureau defines them as an ethnic group rather than a race.

# Culture, race, ethnicity

- ▶ Cultural Identity: individual's affiliation or identification with a particular group or groups
  - ▶ Arises through the interaction of individuals and cultures over the life cycle
  - ▶ Are not static; develop and change across stages of the life cycle. People reevaluate their cultural identities and sometimes resist, rebel, or reformulate them over time.
  - ▶ All people, regardless of race or ethnicity, develop a cultural identity.
  - ▶ Cultural identity is not consistent, even among people who identify with the same culture. The saliency of one's cultural identification is shaped by their particular life experiences (e.g., being raised in an urban or rural community; belonging to an upper or middle class family)
    - ▶ Example...BHS



# Cross-cutting Factors in Race, Ethnicity and Culture

- ▶ Language and communication
  - ▶ Language is a key element of culture, but speaking the same language does not necessarily mean that people share the same cultural beliefs
    - ▶ Various countries speak English but the ethnicities and cultures associated with those places are vast
    - ▶ Someone can ascribe to a specific culture or ethnicity and not speak the language of origin
  - ▶ Styles of communication and nonverbal methods of communication are important aspects of cultural groups
    - ▶ High-context cultural groups vs. Low-context cultural groups
      - ▶ Asian Americans > African Americans > White Americans

# Cross-cutting Factors in Race, Ethnicity and Culture

- ▶ Geographic Location
  - ▶ Cultural groups form within communities and among people who interact meaningfully with one another
  - ▶ Norms could be less related to race/ethnicity and more-so related to culture associated with one's geographic location. (rural vs. city; upper-class neighborhood vs impoverished neighborhood)
    - ▶ Higher rates of substance use and serious mental illness in urban, metropolitan areas compared to rural areas (SAMHSA, 2013)
- ▶ Worldview, Values, and Traditions
  - ▶ Cultural groups define the values, worldviews, and traditions of their members—from food preferences to appropriate leisure activities—including use of alcohol and/or drugs (Bhugra and Becker 2005).
  - ▶ Providers are encouraged to speak with their clients to learn about their worldviews, values, and traditions and to seek training and consultation to gain specific knowledge about clients' cultural beliefs and practices.



# Cross-cutting Factors in Race, Ethnicity and Culture

## ► Family & Kinship

- Although families are important in all cultural groups, concepts of and attitudes toward family are culturally defined and can vary in a number of ways,
  - relative importance of particular family ties, the family's inclusiveness, how hierarchical the family is, and how family roles and behaviors are de-fined (McGoldrick et al. 2005).

## ► Gender Roles

- Diverse cultural groups have different understanding of the proper roles, attitudes, and behaviors for men and women. The level of ascription to traditional norms differs based on the person's acculturation level and personal experiences
- SAMHSA indicates that culturally defined gender roles appear to strongly impact substance use and abuse
  - In societies with more egalitarian relationships between men and women, women typically consume more alcohol and have drinking patterns more closely resembling those of men in the society

# Cross-cutting Factors in Race, Ethnicity and Culture

- ▶ SES and Education
  - ▶ Impacts a person's ability to accumulate material wealth, access opportunities, and use resources
  - ▶ Health disparities- Differences in the incidence, prevalence, morbidity, and burden of diseases and other adverse health conditions that exist among specific population groups
    - ▶ Most persistent and prominent cause of health disparities appears to be disparities in SES, which affect insurance coverage and access to quality care (SAMHSA, 2020)
  - ▶ Social determinants of health: conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that impact a wide range of health, functioning, and quality of life outcomes and risks.

# Social determinants of health

- ▶ Access to educational, economic, and vocational training; job opportunities; transportation; healthcare services; emerging healthcare technologies; availability of community based resources, basic resources to meet daily living needs, language services, and social support; exposure to crime; social disorder; community and concentrated poverty; and residential segregation
  - ▶ Serious mental illness among adults living in poverty has a prevalence rate of 9.1% (SAMHSA, 2010).
    - ▶ Poverty and its consequences, including limited access to resources, increase stress and vulnerability among individuals who may already be predisposed to mental illness
    - ▶ Bidirectional relationship between SES and mental illness in that stress from poverty leads to mental illness vulnerability and mental illness leads to difficulty in maintaining employment and sufficient income.
    - ▶ Lower SES and the concurrent lack of either money or insurance to pay for treatment are associated with less access to substance abuse treatment and mental health services (Chow et al., 2003).

# What is cultural competence?

- ▶ Lifelong process
- ▶ Actively work to develop the ability to engage in actions or create conditions that maximize the optimal development of clients and client systems
- ▶ Aspirational
- ▶ Consists of acquiring awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society
- ▶ Involves acquiring the ability to communicate, interact, negotiate, and intervene on behalf of clients from diverse backgrounds
- ▶ Involves advocating effectively to develop new theories, practices, policies, and organizational structures that are more responsive to all groups

# What is cultural humility?

- ▶ Maintaining an interpersonally open and genuinely respectful stance regarding the clients' cultural identities, backgrounds, and experiences.
- ▶ **Clients are the experts in their own cultural journeys**
- ▶ An attitude of humility makes it easier to navigate through cultural conflicts (i.e. microaggressions) if and when they do arise
- ▶ Each client will have a unique individual identity and group identity
- ▶ Helpful to
  - ▶ Ask the client what culture they identify with
  - ▶ Do they identify with more than one culture?
  - ▶ How salient is each identity
  - ▶ Consider acculturation levels



# Improving cultural competence

## ► Improving cultural competence

- Cultural awareness
- Racial, ethnic, and cultural identities
- Assess your worldview
- Explore personal histories of prejudice, cultural stereotyping, and discrimination
- Trust and Power
  - Understand the impact of your role and status within the client-provider relationship
  - Does the client's perception of the provider and the process inhibit or facilitate progress? Does it affect the level of trust?
    - **These issues should be identified and addressed early on. Clients should have opportunities to talk about and process their perceptions, past experiences, and current needs.**
- Dispel the myths of sameness and that familiarity = competence
- Frame issues in a culturally relevant way
  - Is family or independence important? Frame interventions as such



# Cultural identities



- ▶ Individuals belonging to the same culture are not monolithic
  - ▶ Important to recognize shared experiences as well as individual experiences
- ▶ Be aware of differences in cultural values, communication styles, as well as racial and ethnic identities
- ▶ This will often depend on how salient traditional cultural norms are for the client and their level of acculturation to Westernized society

# Servicing multicultural groups

- ▶ To be culturally competent means to understand the history of oppression experienced by marginalized groups in society
- ▶ It is imperative not to minimize or neglect their experiences of discrimination and pain
- ▶ When determining abnormal behavior, consider the cultural norms of the client



# Servicing African American clients

- ▶ Family structure is complicated and consists of the nuclear and extended family
- ▶ Historically have strong spiritual and religious values
- ▶ Positive ethnic identity or racial pride
- ▶ Flexible family roles
- ▶ Value familial, extended kin, and community support
- ▶ Value education but often experience systemic discrimination

# Servicing with American Indian/ Native American clients

- ▶ The tribe is of fundamental importance
- ▶ Variations in the familial structure, ranging from matriarchal structures and patriarchal structures. Strong roles for women. Children are raised by various family members in separate households
- ▶ Value sharing, cooperation, noninterference, greater focus on the present instead of the future, spirit mind and body are all interconnected, value nonverbal communication

# Servicing Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders

- ▶ Collectivistic orientation
- ▶ Hierarchical relationships that are patriarchal
- ▶ More authoritarian and directive parenting styles
- ▶ Strong emotional displays are considered signs of immaturity or lack of self-control. Fathers may be perceived as emotionless and uninvolved with the children
- ▶ Holistic view of mind and body
- ▶ Academic and occupational goal orientation



# Servicing the latinx population

- ▶ Deep respect and affection among a large network of family and friends
- ▶ Traditionally oriented families are hierarchical with special authority given to parents, older family members, and males
- ▶ Spiritual and religious values
- ▶ Value education but often experience systemic discrimination



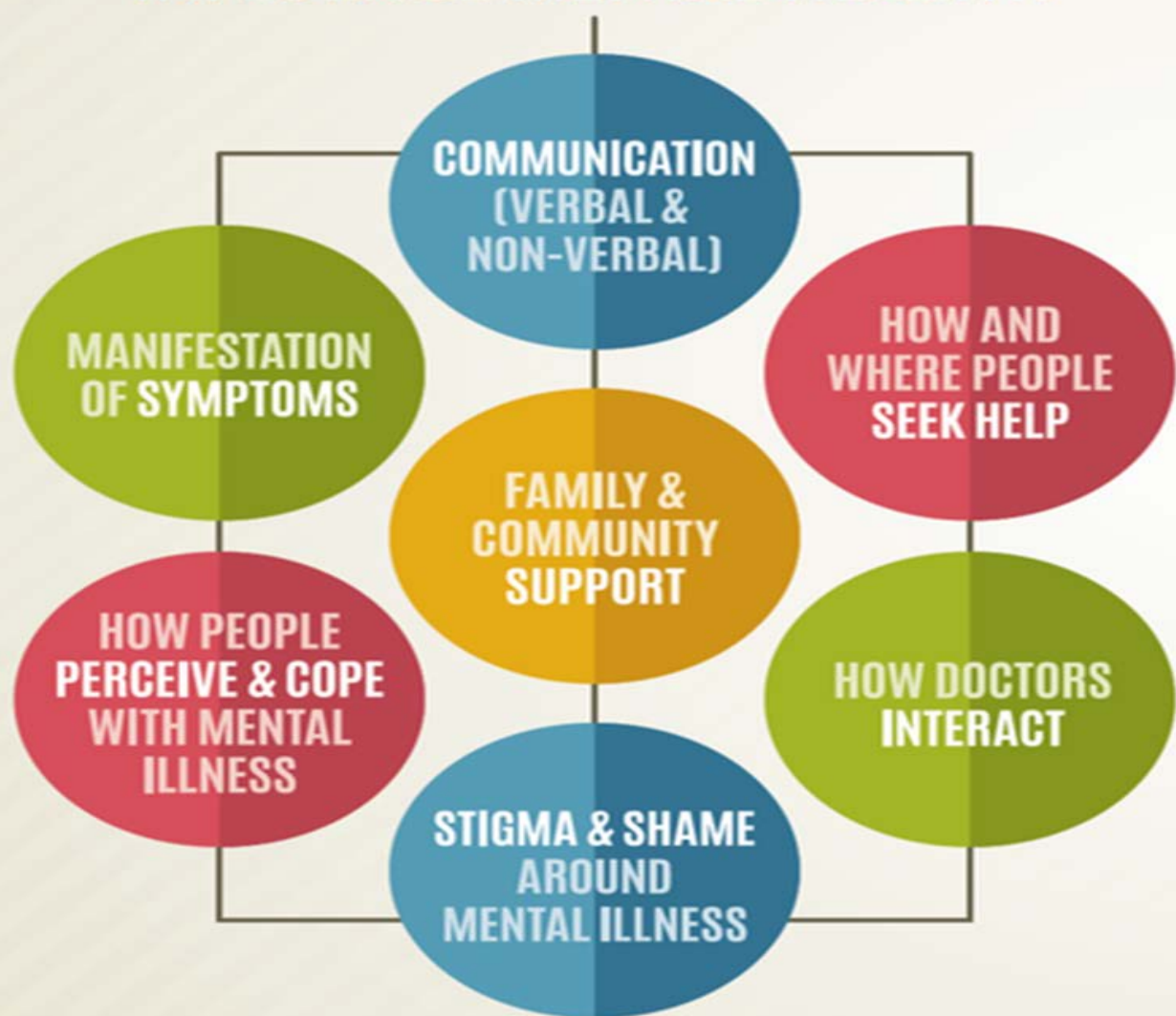
# Servicing Arab Americans & Muslim Americans

- ▶ Strong religious and spiritual values
- ▶ Value hospitality, familial dependence and interdependence
- ▶ Strong sense of community and identity that revolves around culture and religion
- ▶ Family structure tends to be patriarchal
- ▶ Collectivistic ideals and values

# Multicultural counseling and therapy (mct)

- ▶ both a helping role and a process that uses modalities and defines goals consistent with the life experiences and cultural values of clients
- ▶ recognizes client identities to include individual, group, and universal dimensions
- ▶ advocates the use of universal and culture-specific strategies and roles in the healing process
- ▶ balances the importance of individualism and collectivism in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of client and client systems (Sue & Torino, 2005)

## How Can Race/Ethnicity/Culture INFLUENCE MENTAL HEALTH?



# microaggressions

- ▶ brief and commonplace daily verbal or behavioral indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults that potentially have a harmful or unpleasant psychological impact on the target person or group. They can also be delivered environmentally through the physical surroundings of target groups, where they are made to feel unwelcome, isolated, unsafe, and alienated.
- ▶ Tend to be
  - ▶ (a) subtle, unintentional, and indirect,
  - ▶ (b) occur in situations where there are alternative explanations
  - ▶ (c) represent unconscious and ingrained biased beliefs and attitudes
  - ▶ (d) more likely to occur when people pretend not to notice differences, thereby denying that sex, race, sexual orientation, religion, or ability had anything to do with their actions.

# Microaggressions (cont.)

- ▶ Microassult

- ▶ blatant verbal, nonverbal or environmental attack intended to convey discriminatory and biased sentiments. Related to overt racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and religious discrimination where individuals deliberately convey derogatory messages to target groups.

- ▶ Microinsult

- ▶ unintentional behaviors or verbal comments that convey rudeness or insensitivity to demean a person's racial heritage/identity, gender identity, religion, ability, or sexual orientation identity.

- ▶ Microinvalidation

- ▶ verbal comments or behaviors that exclude, negate, or dismiss the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a target group.



**Table 2**  
*Examples of Racial Microaggressions in Therapeutic Practice*

Theme	Microaggression	Message
<b>Alien in own land</b> When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born	A White client does not want to work with an Asian American therapist because "she will not understand my problem." A White therapist tells an American-born Latino client that he/she should seek a Spanish-speaking therapist.	You are not American.
<b>Ascription of intelligence</b> Assigning a degree of intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their race	A school counselor reacts with surprise when an Asian American student had trouble on the math portion of a standardized test. A career counselor asking a Black or Latino student, "Do you think you're ready for college?"	All Asians are smart and good at math. It is unusual for people of color to succeed.
<b>Color blindness</b> Statements which indicate that a White person does not want to acknowledge race	A therapist says "I think you are being too paranoid. We should emphasize similarities, not people's differences" when a client of color attempts to discuss her feelings about being the only person of color at her job and feeling alienated and dismissed by her co-workers. A client of color expresses concern in discussing racial issues with her therapist. Her therapist replies with, "When I see you, I don't see color."	Race and culture are not important variables that affect people's lives. Your racial experiences are not valid.
<b>Criminality/assumption of criminal status</b> A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race	When a Black client shares that she was accused of stealing from work, the therapist encourages the client to explore how she might have contributed to her employer's mistrust of her. A therapist takes great care to ask all substance abuse questions in an intake with a Native American client, and is suspicious of the client's nonexistent history with substances.	You are a criminal. You are deviant.
<b>Denial of individual racism</b> A statement made when Whites renounce their racial biases	A client of color asks his or her therapist about how race affects their working relationship. The therapist replies, "Race does not affect the way I treat you." A client of color expresses hesitancy in discussing racial issues with his White female therapist. She replies "I understand. As a woman, I face discrimination also."	Your racial/ethnic experience is not important. Your racial oppression is no different than my gender oppression.
<b>Myth of meritocracy</b> Statements which assert that race does not play a role in succeeding in career advancement or education.	A school counselor tells a Black student that "if you work hard, you can succeed like everyone else." A career counselor is working with a client of color who is concerned about not being promoted at work despite being qualified. The counselor suggests, "Maybe if you work harder you can succeed like your peers."	People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder. If you don't succeed, you have only yourself to blame (blaming the victim).
<b>Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles</b> The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant/White culture are ideal	A Black client is loud, emotional, and confrontational in a counseling session. The therapist diagnoses her with borderline personality disorder. A client of Asian or Native American descent has trouble maintaining eye contact with his therapist. The therapist diagnoses him with a social anxiety disorder. Advising a client, "Do you really think your problem stems from racism?"	Assimilate to dominant culture. Leave your cultural baggage outside.



## 1 GENDER

Whistling as a woman walks by. **Message:** You are a sex object. That is, women's appearance is for the enjoyment of men. (Source: Derald Wing Sue)

## TYPES OF



## 2 MICROASSAULT

"Explicit racial derogations" meant to hurt, such as calling somebody "colored" or "Oriental." (Source: Visions, Inc.)



## 3 MICRO-INVALIDATION

Negating the thoughts, feelings, or experiences of a person of color. Ex: "Don't be so sensitive." (Source: Visions, Inc.)



## 5 IMITATING ACCENTS

Mimicking foreign accents reinforces stereotypes & often mocks groups for struggling with English.



## 6 AScription OF INTELLIGENCE

Assigning smarts based on race or gender. "How'd YOU get into that school?" (Source: Gwen Miller)

# BRAIN



# BLAST

## MICROAGGRESSIONS



## EXAMPLES

## 7 MICROAGGRESSION STATEMENTS

- "You don't sound like a black person."
  - "So, like, what are you?"
  - "You're really cute for a brown-skinned girl."
  - "Why do you sound white?"
  - "You're smart for a girl."
- (Source: BuzzFeed)

## 4 AVOID SAYING...

- A) "Where are you from?"  
**Message:** You're not American.
- B) "You're so articulate."  
**Message:** Your group isn't usually as intelligent as Whites.
- C) "I'm not racist; I have several black friends."  
**Message:** I'm immune to racism because I have friends of color.
- D) Saying to an Asian person: "Speak up more. You're so quiet."  
**Message:** Assimilate to the dominant culture.
- E) "You people..." **Message:** You don't belong. You are lesser. (Source: Wing, et. al., 2007 via U. of Minnesota)

## DEFINITION

Indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group. Hidden messages may "communicate they are lesser human beings, suggest they do not belong with the majority group, threaten & intimidate, or relegate them to inferior status & treatment." (Source: Derald Wing Sue)



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Themes	Microaggression	Message
<b>Alien in Own Land</b> When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born	“Where are you from?” “Where were you born?” “You speak good English.” “A person asking an Asian American to teach them words in their native language.”	You are not American.  You are a foreigner.
<b>Ascription of Intelligence</b> Assigning intelligence to a person of color based on their race	“You are a credit to your race.” “You are so articulate.”  Asking an Asian person to help with a math or science problem	People of color are generally not as intelligent as Whites It is unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent. All Asians are intelligent and good in math/sciences.
<b>Color Blindness</b> Statements that indicate that a White person does not want to acknowledge race	“When I look at you, I don’t see color.” “America is a Melting Pot”  “There is only one race, the human race”	Denying a person of color’s racial/ethnic experiences. Assimilate/accurate to dominant culture.  Denying the individual as a racial/cultural being.

# Cultural humility in the workplace

- ▶ Individuals within cultures have unique experiences
- ▶ A lack of identification or knowledge about an experience does not negate the reality of that experience for the individual



# Cultural humility in the workplace

- ▶ Considerations when interacting with co-workers
  - ▶ Social and political unrest in the current climate has everyone experiencing various thoughts and emotions
  - ▶ People are experiencing emotional exhaustion and fatigue
- ▶ What might your minority co-workers be experiencing?
  - ▶ (a) struggle with containing their anger and rage toward their clients and view them as oppressors
  - ▶ (b) difficulty understanding the worldview of their clients
  - ▶ (c) hindered in their ability to establish rapport
  - ▶ (d) have difficulty empathizing with their clients

# Cultural humility in the workplace

- ▶ Five challenges that mental health professionals of color are likely to encounter
  - ▶ (a) others questioning their competence
  - ▶ (b) desiring to prove their competence
  - ▶ (c) compartmentalizing animosity about racial and societal injustices
  - ▶ (d) being viewed as super minorities
  - ▶ (e) dealing with client expressions of racism



# TOGETHER

## for Mental Health

Mental health is an incredibly important part of overall health.

With a growing number of Americans experiencing mental health symptoms, we need to join together to advocate for improving our nation's mental health care system.



# resources

- ▶ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSA)
- ▶ Derald Wing Sue & David Sue
  - ▶ Counseling the Culturally Diverse



# Questions?

Thank you for your participation!

For more information, please contact BHS

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