

AACT-NOW November 2024 Newsletter

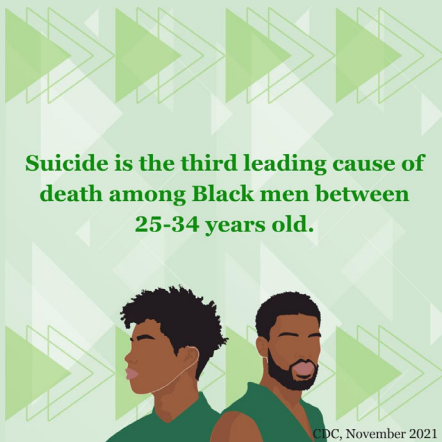
November is Men's Mental Health Awareness Month



November is Men's Mental Health Awareness Month! This is a month for supporting, uplifting, and creating safe spaces for men to talk about their mental health experiences.

Understanding Mental Health for Black Men

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among Black men between 25-34 years old.



CDC, November 2021

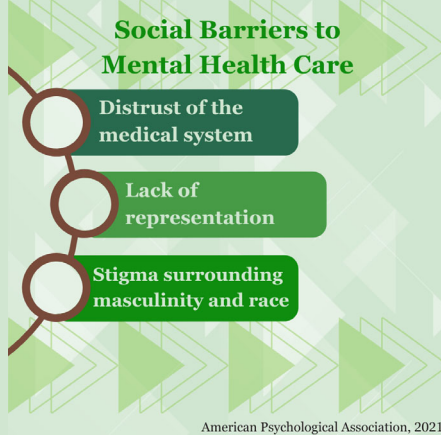
While suicide rates dropped by 3% across the United States in 2020, they have increased among Black men and men of color during that same time period.

Suicide is also the third leading cause among Black men 25-34 years old, and Black people 10-24 years old.

[Read More Here](#)

There are many reasons why Black men are not receiving the mental health care they need. Three main social factors are:

- A distrust of the medical and mental health system due to everyday racism.
- A lack of representation in the mental health and medical system.
- The overall stigma surrounding their



masculinity and race.

Reasons also include a difficulty in accessing resources, and financial barriers like insurance and affordability.

[Read More Here](#)

Resources for Black Men's Mental Health

Mental health resources that understand and are empathetic to the unique challenges that Black men face are available, and accessible in New Jersey. Here are three local resources for you or a loved one.

Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation (BLHF)

BLHF works to de-stigmatize language surrounding mental health with programs, awareness campaigns, and education initiatives. With their Mental Wellness Support Program (MWSP), you can receive 5 complementary therapy session with licensed, culturally aware clinicians.

[Click Here](#)

Black Men Heal

Black Men Heal is a grassroots nonprofit that aims to provide access to mental health care for Black men. They offer limited and free mental health resources for Black men. You can also fill out an interest to be part of their Individual Therapy Program (ITP) where you can receive 8 free therapy sessions.

[Click Here](#)

Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective (BEAM)

BEAM is dedicated to helping Black people access mental health care and staying connected to their healing journey. They offer multiple programs, like Black Masculinity (Re)Imagined, to assist with healing and de-stigmatizing.

[Click Here](#)

November is Caregivers Month!

November is also National Caregivers Month! This is a time to recognize the efforts of those who support us and our needs. This is done by educating communities and raising awareness about the efforts and support caregivers give their loved ones.

This observation is led by [Caregiver Action Network \(CAN\)](#), a nonprofit that provides free education, peer support and other resources for caregivers.

Supporting Caregivers and Families: Join Us for Our Monthly Family Support Group!



AACT-NOW Family Support Group

Date: November 21st, Every 3rd Thursday

Time: 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Location: Online!

AACT-NOW is back with our Family Support Group meetings! This is a free, online support group for those who have loved ones with mental health illnesses. With us, you can receive resources, information, support, and understanding.

Price: FREE

[Register Here!](#)

Other Events Around New Jersey



Exiting the Labyrinth: Men's Mental Health Symposium

Date: Saturday, November 9th

Time: 10:00 am

Location: Essex County College, Newark, NJ

This event includes workshops centered around key areas of mental health, onsite screenings and resources, and discussions with mental health experts.

Price: FREE

[Register Here!](#)

National Black Male Mental Health Tour: Just Heal Bro

Date: Friday, November 8th

Time: 7:30 pm



Location: Kean University

This event includes a mental wellness hour at 6:30 pm where men can be tested and offered mental health resources.

Price: FREE

[Register Here!](#)

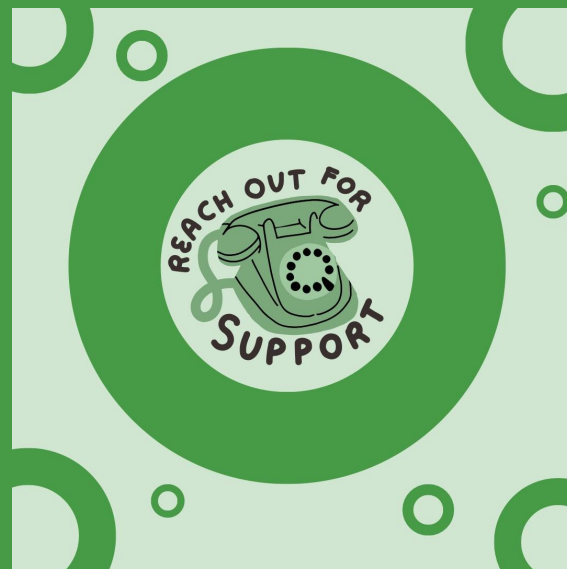
Keep Up with Us!

View Our NAMI NJ Calendar!

To keep up with all of our upcoming events, visit our calendar! This will include information for Family Support Groups, NAMI events and presentations, NAMI Basics, and more!

[Click Here](#)

Find Your Local NAMI



NAMI NJ has local affiliates across the state. If you or a loved one are looking for support and resources that are within your local area, consider reaching out to your local NAMI affiliate.

[Find Your Local Affiliate](#)

"Any Little Thing" by Griot Media

In December, AACT-NOW will be working with Griot Media for a multicultural conversation. So, we'd like to take this opportunity to highlight their recent work

with Black men's health! Read more below.

Disclaimer: The opinions and views expressed in this podcast and other Griot Media creations are the creator's own and do not reflect the organization's views or opinions.



"Any Little Thing" was created as an online audio series, or podcast to encourage African American men to seek behavioral and mental health support when in need. Emotional and behavioral treatment for Black men in need is often avoided due to a disproportionate notion of self-reliance, shame, mistrust and the stigma associated with the treatment process. "The Stoic Man", a film we created two years prior with the same goal fostered constructive and healing dialogues in the post screening questions and answer session. Our thinking is that a dramatic storytelling of a man under stress and his journey toward emotional well-being could reach more people than we could assemble in a room through podcasting.

The impetus to create the podcast came during the time of COVID when there was an uptick in the stressors faced by African Americans including depression, suicide, domestic violence, healthcare disparities and systemic racism. We developed the first series of four dramatic episodes addresses the issues of one Black man, not unlike many, who face similar individual and family issues. The aim is to continue to launch reluctant African American men into discussions and positive actions regarding their mental health and emotional well-being.

With "Any Little Thing", we want to offer men a chance to think differently without being compelled by a life crisis, but to see that being open to help from; a family member, a peer group or a professional is a path to empowerment and not a sign of weakness.

In the discussions we were able to create around the podcast episodes, both men and the women in their lives seemed to find that by simply normalizing the conversation about emotional well-being that the stigma so dreaded, could step by step be whittled away.

In our work, we continue to blend the power of media and drama with healthcare in a manner that promotes healing. Practically speaking, an emotionally healthy man is

more prepared to be more freely involved in the workforce, family and more engaged as a father. Using audio with online support is a powerful tool in this pursuit.

Meet Ralph and Zelda, Founders of Griot Media and Creators of "Any Little Thing"



Ralph Patterson is a graduate of the University of Iowa, earning a B.A. in film and broadcasting. He is a Master of the Arts graduate in Media Studies from New School University. He is a veteran news cameraman for WNBC and NBC in New York City and served as the Technical Supervisor for 17 crews for WNBC New York. Ralph is a recipient of numerous prestigious awards for newsgathering including: The New York Press Club Best Spot News Award for 9/11, and an Emmy for his work on "9/11 We Remember," a 10th anniversary special which aired on WNBC. His footage also appeared in National Geographic's "9/11: One Day in America" that was created for the 20th anniversary event.

Zelda Patterson is a graduate of the University of Iowa with a Masters degree in Psychiatric Nursing, a Clinic Nurse Specialist and an Advanced Practice Nurse. Zelda served as an adjunct and full-time faculty for Fairleigh Dickinson and Seton Hall University. She has developed numerous teaching tools using film and video, focusing on such topics as: dysphagia, hand-off communications, trauma and reducing the practice of seclusion and restraint, which garnered this practice. It was also highlighted in her video, "Better, One Woman's Journey in and out of Seclusion and Restraint," and was presented at the National Conference of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association. Zelda is also an active member of the prestigious New York Women in Film and Television.

In 2006, Ralph and Zelda Patterson formed Griot Storyteller Media to blend the power of storytelling with health-related issues. The company produced "Better," a drama informed tutorial to reduce seclusion and restraint in hospitals, "A Woman Under Construction," a documentary on a woman's journey from addiction, "Stoic Man," a deconstruction of mental health stigma for Black men, and the podcast/discussion series "Any Little Thing" supporting mental health wellness among African-American men.

In 2023, Zelda and Ralph Patterson were cited as "Champion of Hope" by the New Jersey Integrated Nurses Association for their work on mental health issues.

[Click Here to Listen!](#)



AACT-NOW is an African American Support Group for Family Members with loved ones affected by mental illness. Our facilitators work to provide an understanding and caring environment.

Our initiative is to provide help to African American individuals and families and those suffering from mental illness. We are taking a stand to promote awareness, provide resources, and act as a support system.

**Disclaimer: the information contained in this e-newsletter is provided strictly for information purposes only and should not be construed as an endorsement or referral of services.*

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We welcome donations to support our work in the community!

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