

A NARRATIVE REVIEW OF MENTAL ILLNESS STIGMA REDUCTION INTERVENTIONS AMONG AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE UNITED STATES

Kevo Rivera, MD
University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

Background: Among African Americans, the chronicity and severity of mental illness correlates with worse health outcomes and widens health disparities. Stigma related to mental illness compounds mental health disparities by creating barriers to help-seeking behavior.

Aims: We aim to review the literature pertaining to mental illness stigma reduction interventions among African Americans. We examine the current tools designed to reduce mental illness stigma and promote improved mental health outcomes among African Americans.

Methods: Our team developed a focused literature search across four databases: PubMed, Embase, Scopus, and APA PsycINFO. Articles underwent initial screening by reviewers, followed by further full-text assessment for final selection using eligibility criteria.

Results: Initial searches identified 120 articles, from which six studies were included as reporting on mental illness stigma reduction interventions among African Americans. We describe and evaluate these four quantitative and two qualitative studies.

Discussion: There have been various interventions used among African Americans to reduce mental illness stigma, and the level of efficacy and effectiveness is not well studied. Our review demonstrates a need for more robust studies to yield strong evidence on effectiveness among stigma reduction interventions in this target population. The evidence supports tailoring interventions and studies to this population. Effectively engaging and partnering with key stakeholders, including schools, community organizations, and faith-based institutions enhances the acceptance and delivery of stigma reduction interventions.

Full List of Authors

Kevin John R Rivera, Jenny Yu Zhang, David C Mohr, Annie B Wescott, Aderonke Bamgbose Pederson

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the existing studies examining interventions to reduce mental health stigma among African Americans.
2. Propose ways future studies might build upon the current body of evidence examining these interventions.