

Eating disorders are historically underdiagnosed in Black Americans. It is important to know why that is and how you can help change it. That's the only way to make sure this community gets the treatment and support they need.

Eating Disorder Prevalence in Black Americans

- Black Americans suffer more often from binge eating than any other eating disorder.^{1, 2}
- Black Americans may experience nearly the same or higher incidence of binge eating as White Americans.^{3, 4, 5}

What factors help trigger eating disorders in Black Americans?

- ✓ Food Insecurity
- ✓ Food Deserts
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Racism, Discrimination, Microaggressions
- ✓ Stress
- ✓ Strong Woman/Superwoman Syndrome
- ✓ Trauma

Why Black Americans require different assessments

- ✓ Acculturative stress
- ✓ Comorbidities
- ✓ Cultural implications of food
- ✓ Food insecurity
- ✓ History of eating patterns
- ✓ Self-examination of cultural biases and beliefs
- ✓ Trauma

Eating disorder symptoms aren't as recognizable in Black Americans

Clinician bias may prevent some eating disorders from being discovered⁶

Individuals may not know that their symptoms may signal an eating disorder⁷

Additional reasons that eating disorders may go unnoticed:



The person isn't underweight or overweight



Clinicians may only look for anorexia nervosa and not other disordered eating patterns



Clinicians may overlook signs of eating disorders if their only focus is on Type 2 diabetes or weight issues

*Body Mass Index

Black Americans are less likely to receive treatment for eating disorders^{5, 8}

Black women
8%
receive treatment⁹

White women
22%
receive treatment⁹

When Black Americans do receive treatment, they're more likely to drop out before completion¹⁰

There simply isn't enough research on eating disorder treatments in Black Americans

Guidelines are sparse — not enough studies have been done on eating disorders in communities of color



Only 2.5% of studies include samples of Black and/or Indigenous individuals, which is a relatively small sample.¹¹



More studies are needed to understand the best treatment options for Black Americans.¹²

How can we make eating disorder treatment more accessible for Black Americans?

- ✓ Consider changes in treatment settings to increase access
- ✓ Decrease stigma so people feel empowered to seek care
- ✓ Incorporate appropriate sociocultural factors into treatment to make it more relevant
- ✓ Increase eating disorder awareness among the general public
- ✓ Increase education for health care providers on screening and treatment
- ✓ Use culturally appropriate language around eating disorders

This infographic developed in partnership with



African American Behavioral Health
CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

Sources:

- Taylor, J. Y., Caldwell, C. H., Baser, R. E., Faison, N., & Jackson, J. S. (2007). Prevalence of eating disorders among Blacks in the National Survey of American Life. *Int J Eat Disord*, 40 Suppl, S10-14. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.20451>
- Udo, T., & Grilo, C. M. (2018). Prevalence and Correlates of DSM-5-Defined Eating Disorders in a Nationally Representative Sample of U.S. Adults. *Biol Psychiatry*, 84(5), 345-354. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsych.2018.03.014>
- Goode, R. W., Cowell, M. M., Mazzeo, S. E., Cooper-Lewter, C., Forte, A., Olayia, O. I., & Bulik, C. M. (2020). Binge eating and binge-eating disorder in Black women: A systematic review. *Int J Eat Disord*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.23217>
- Lydecker, J. A., & Grilo, C. M. (2016). Different yet similar: Examining race and ethnicity in treatment-seeking adults with binge eating disorder. *J Consult Clin Psychol*, 84(1), 88-94. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000048>
- Marques, L., Alegria, M., Becker, A. E., Chen, C. N., Fang, A., Chosak, A., & Diniz, J. B. (2011). Comparative prevalence, correlates of impairment, and service utilization for eating disorders across US ethnic groups: Implications for reducing ethnic disparities in health care access for eating disorders. *Int J Eat Disord*, 44(5), 412-420. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.20787>
- Gordon, K. H., Brattole, M. M., Wingate, L. R., & Joiner Jr, T. E. (2006). The impact of client race on clinician detection of eating disorders. *Behavior Therapy*, 37(4), 319-325. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.beth.2005.12.002>
- Scott, T. N., Gil-Rivas, V., & Cachelin, F. M. (2018). The need for cultural adaptations to health interventions for African American women: A qualitative analysis. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 25(3), 331-341. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000228>
- Striegel-Moore, R. H., Dohm, F. A., Kraemer, H. C., Taylor, C. B., Daniels, S., Crawford, P. B., & Schreiber, G. B. (2003). Eating disorders in white and black women. *Am J Psychiatry*, 160(7), 1326-1331. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.160.7.1326>
- Pike, K. M., Dohm, F. A., Striegel-Moore, R. H., Wilfley, D. E., & Fairburn, C. G. (2001). A comparison of black and white women with binge eating disorder. *Am J Psychiatry*, 158(9), 1455-1460. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11532731>
- Thompson-Brenner, H., Franko, D. L., Thompson, D. R., Grilo, C. M., Boisseau, C. L., Roehrig, J. P., Richards, L. K., Bryson, S. W., Bulik, C. M., Crow, S. J., Devlin, M. J., Gorin, A. A., Kristeller, J. L., Masheb, R., Mitchell, J. E., Peterson, C. B., Safer, D. L., Striegel, R. H., Wilfley, D. E., & Wilson, G. T. (2013). Race/ethnicity, education, and treatment parameters as moderators and predictors of outcome in binge eating disorder. *J Consult Clin Psychol*, 81(4), 710-721. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032946>
- Source: Mikhail, M. E. & Klump, K.L. (2020). A virtual issue highlighting eating disorders in people of Black/African and Indigenous heritage. *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 54. (3), p.459-467. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.23402>
- Lydecker, J. A., Gueorguieva, R., Masheb, R., White, M. A., & Grilo, C. M. (2019). Examining race as a predictor and moderator of treatment outcomes for binge-eating disorder: Analysis of aggregated randomized controlled trials. *J Consult Clin Psychol*, 87(6), 530-540. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000404>