



Stress Levels Are Increasing Among Minorities: How to Raise Awareness During Minority Health Month

By Raven Lolia

Stress is a mental state causing a person to feel they are in a constant state of worry. Depending on the circumstances, stress may be short-lived or persist for an extended period. The types of triggers that can intensify stress are specific to each individual. What science teaches us about stress is that there are secondary health problems, some of which can be harmful and affect a person's quality of life. A few examples of physical illnesses brought on by stress are:

- **Weight Gain**
- **Stroke**
- **Heart Attacks**
- **Migraine Headaches**
- **Depression**

It's not a secret that most people may experience stress at some point.

Particularly minorities, of various ethnic backgrounds experience stress at disproportionate rates

Reports from the American Psychological Association indicate minorities report increased levels of stress-inducing encounters in the workplace and learning institutions. Also, while maintaining safe housing, acquiring impartial justice in a biased legal system, and seeking healthcare, among other factors.

Increased levels of stress introduce behaviors that people may engage in to "self-soothe" and are prominent among those who struggle with managing stress. These behaviors may include cigarette smoking, excess alcohol consumption, and overeating. Learning what your triggers are is understanding how to interact during interactions that are deemed intense.

How can you help? What can you do to assist someone else? April is known as the National Minority Health Month. April is a prime time to encourage family and friends to complete annual or semi-annual preventative health screenings. Many organizations offer free testing, screenings, and immunizations to heighten awareness. Explore options outside traditional primary care providers and emergency rooms for health needs. For example, doulas, coaches, midwives, and counselors offer platforms to help their communities seek the care they deserve. Seeking support in groups with people of similar interests is also a way to decrease worry and anxiety, but having someone to provide a safe space without judgment is sure to minimize stress levels. Continuing to express oneself is a form of self-care. Helping others realize that is a priority can play a role in encouraging health awareness. Let April be the month when you begin to take control of your health and wellness.

References:

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