

# Talking Tazewell

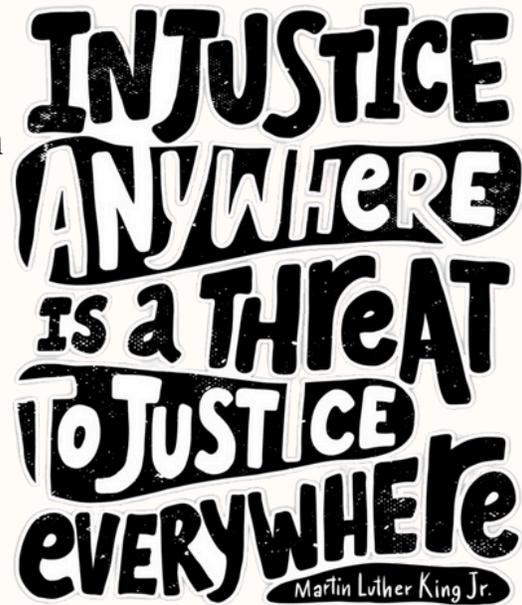
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The Wellness Playbook

Welcome to the July edition of the Wellness Playbook! This month, we are turning our focus to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) Mental Health Month. This is a time dedicated to raising awareness about the unique mental health challenges that are faced by members of the BIPOC community, while also celebrating the resilience, strength and cultural richness that exists within these communities.

Mental health doesn't exist within a vacuum – history, identity, access and community all shape how we experience and talk about mental wellness. That's why it is important not only to acknowledge the disparities, but to also highlight stories of strength, healing, advocacy and the importance of culturally responsive care.

Let's take this month to continue to learn, uplift and build spaces where everyone feels seen, safe and supported.



## DID YOU KNOW...

### JULY IS BIPOC MENTAL HEALTH MONTH!

Local data<sup>1</sup> shows that people in the tri-county area who didn't have adequate health insurance for their needs were more likely to identify as Black or Hispanic. This serves as a clear reminder that access to care still isn't equal for everyone in our communities.

<sup>1</sup> Partnership for a Healthy Community (2025). Community Health Needs Assessment. [healthyhoi.org](http://healthyhoi.org)



Accessing mental health care isn't easy for anyone – but for many members of the BIPOC community, it's even more difficult. Minority communities often face significant barriers when it comes to finding affordable, culturally competent mental health support. Let's take a look at some of the specific challenges faced by minority populations:

- **Financial barriers**
  - Members of BIPOC communities are more likely to be uninsured or underinsured. This limits their options for care. Even for folks with insurance, high deductibles and out-of-pocket costs can make mental health care feel completely out of reach.
  - Additionally, it is difficult to find providers who accept Medicaid or offer sliding scale fees. The providers who do accept Medicaid often have long waiting lists and not all sliding scales are affordable or realistic or all.
- **Lack of culturally competent care**
  - People feel most comfortable with those who look like them or have similar backgrounds/experiences with respect to culture and community. Mental health providers who understand and reflect the backgrounds of BIPOC communities are few and far between, especially in Central Illinois.
    - Language is also a barrier to care. If a person doesn't speak English, this limits their options even more. Now, they are left to find someone in Central Illinois who not only speaks their language and also accepts their insurance. Or, they have to rely on a translation service. Mental health support is hard enough to ask for – can you imagine having to relay deeply personal, vulnerable and potentially traumatic information through a third party on a screen?
- In some cultures, both mental health challenges and mental health care are deeply stigmatized. For many, past experiences with racism or discrimination within the healthcare system can create mistrust. As a result, some in the BIPOC community may avoid seeking help altogether.

In our next edition, we will dive into what we can do as mental health providers, advocates, and community members to move toward a more equitable and accessible society for all, as well as highlight the resilience that exists within BIPOC communities.

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HAVE AN IDEA OR TOPIC YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT?  
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