Black People's Mental Health Is Under Siege

COVID-19 and police brutality take a toll on the mental health of African Americans.

March 29, 2021 By Kate Ferguson

A recent poll by Axios-Ipsos, the world's third-largest market research company, shows that Black Americans felt anxious about the pandemic's effects on their lives.

The poll found that nearly 30% of Black Americans knew someone who died of the coronavirus compared with only 11% of their white counterparts, and at least 41% knew someone who tested positive compared with 31% of white poll respondents.

In addition, more than half (61%) of employed Black Americans expressed worry about their job security, and 33% of African Americans said their personal finances are in poor shape.

Results noted that less than one in five (18%) Black people trusted the federal government to have their family's best interests in mind, and 75% of African Americans were seriously concerned about the damage people of color sustained from the pandemic. Of those individuals, 70% expressed worry that the official pandemic response was biased against certain groups of people.

Black Americans were also less likely to have a high level of trust in local police (36%).

According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, anxiety among Black Americans increased by 26%, and depression increased by 22% in the weeks after George Floyd's death at the hands of several Minneapolis police officers.

Helath experts confirmed that felt the heaviest impact from the continued violence by police and the coronavirus crisis. Black Americans are 20% more likely to experience serious mental health woes than the general population, findings show. In addition, young Black people exposed to violence are 25% more likely to experience posttraumatic stress disorder.

Prior research observed that police killings have overloaded Black Americans with a huge mental health burden and generated 55 million poor mental health days among Black Americans each year.

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