

Focusing on Mental Health in the Black Community

A new research project will identify the most effective ways for people of color to manage stress.

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A University of Florida (UF) professor has launched a research project to improve the [mental health](#) of Black Americans.

Carolyn Tucker, PhD, a professor of psychology and professor of community health and family medicine at UF, aims to destigmatize mental health therapy in the Black community. Tucker's project will include mostly Black adults and young people as both coaches and participants in supervised virtual mental health coaching and counseling sessions.

"As a clinical psychologist, I see many Black people struggling with stress and feelings of isolation," Tucker said in a [Gainesville Sun article](#). "They often want therapists who look like them."

Tucker's research project, the first of its kind, aims to reduce [stress](#), [depression](#), anger and grief in African Americans. The data collected will be used to identify which methods of stress management are most effective in the Black community.

Despite often having high levels of stress or anger that contribute to mental health issues, Black Americans do not receive mental health treatment at the same rate as white Americans. In fact, a National Healthcare Disparities Report found that in 2011, only 54.3% of adult Black Americans with a major mental health problem received treatment compared with 73.1% of white Americans.

Properly managing stress can lead to overall improvements in other health issues, including heart disease, hypertension, stroke and obesity. Having diverse staff on hand in health care settings can also encourage patients of color to seek treatment.

"We're empowering communities to take care of their mental health," Tucker said. "We're creating an infrastructure of community members who can work with others."
