



# BROTHERS WHO CARE



## Don't be Ashamed, Take Action; May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Survey after survey will tell you that people consistently rank health as one of the most important things in life. Sadly, however, optimal mental health is often neglected, and in the African-Caribbean community, it is entirely ignored. Mental health is many times the proverbial “elephant in the room”—we know that it is there, but it makes us uncomfortable to address it.

Stigma, misinformation, and disinformation all create substantial barriers when it comes to addressing mental health awareness, with stigma being the most problematic of these.

Stigma is defined as a mark of shame or discredit. Stigma is a label placed upon people to set them apart, to make them feel ashamed, disgraced, or embarrassed about who they are, often because of factors beyond their control.

Brothers Who Care is shifting this narrative, and this edition is focused on minding YOUR mental health.

### TRIGGER WARNING

Some of the information provided could potentially trigger traumatic memories or emotions. If you are triggered, it might be that time to seek professional help.

**DON'T BE ASHAMED; TAKE ACTION!**

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There is so much happening at Brothers Who Care, and the best way to stay up to date is by visiting us at <https://brotherswhocare.com/>.



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## Distinguished Dialogue with David Griffiths

*I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation for your unwavering loyalty to our newsletter. Your continued support and engagement with our content has not gone unnoticed, and we are truly grateful for your readership.*

*As a team, we work hard every month to bring you the latest news and insights, and we are constantly striving to improve our offerings to better serve your needs.*

*Your feedback and comments have been invaluable to us, and we have learned so much from your insights and suggestions. We truly value your input and will continue to use it to shape our content and improve our services.*

*So once again, thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your continued loyalty and support. We hope to continue to be a valuable resource for you in the years to come.*

*Now, let's tackle the rest of May and talk about MENTAL HEALTH!*

*As a Black man, I will be the first to tell you that we face unique challenges that affect our lives in significant ways. These challenges can be related to social, economic, and cultural factors that disproportionately impact us.*

*One of the challenges that Black men face is systemic racism. This can manifest in many ways, including: employment discrimination, police brutality, and unequal access to: education, housing, and healthcare. Black men are also more likely to be incarcerated than any other demographic group, which can have a significant impact on their families and communities.*

*Another challenge that Black men face is the stereotype of being violent and aggressive. This stereotype can lead to racial profiling and discrimination; they are expected to conform to traditional masculine norms, which can create pressure to suppress emotions and limit their expression of vulnerability.*

*These challenges can create a toxic environment for Black men, leading to mental health issues that require specialized and culturally sensitive care, and of course, our men are not seeking out this care.*

### **Black Men, What are you Ignoring**

*Brothers, you deal with a lot, and it is important to acknowledge the challenges that you face. Let's take a look at some of them:*

*Black men are often subjected to racism and discrimination, which leads to chronic stress and anxiety. This often results in undiagnosed: depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).*

*Black men are less likely to seek mental health care due to the cultural stigma surrounding mental health. These mental health challenges go undetected, and unfortunately are passed down from generation to generation.*

*Black men are more likely to live in poverty and experience financial stress, which contributes to poor mental health. There is a lot on your shoulders, and not being able to provide will affect you as a man*

*I am proud to say that we have cultivated a space where men are able to express how they feel without being looked at as weak.*

## What's up in the Month of May?

We are happy to announce that our **"I SEE ME INVESTMENT COMPETITION"** is in full swing, and we have an amazing group of mentors and participants this year.

The "I SEE ME" Youth Investment Competition for students grade 4-12, runs through to June 2nd, 2023. The competition has provided an excellent opportunity for our young Black youth to learn about money and apply it to real world situations in the stock market. They are using the application, **The Stock Market Game™** (<https://www.stockmarketgame.org>), which has proven to be a powerful platform.

We extend our deepest thanks to our sponsors **CIBC Wood Gundy, Longo's, One Voice One Team, Y.A.A.A.C.E.** Their support has been instrumental in our journey.

We recognize and appreciate the trust our sponsors have placed in us, and we value the strong relationships we have built together. Their belief in our mission has empowered us to push boundaries, innovate, and create meaningful experiences.

We are inviting YOU to our **"I SEE ME" Youth investment Competition** celebration that is coming up on **June 10th, 2023**. For those who attended last year, they will tell you that the day offered an engaging and memorable experience. There were entertaining performances, informative presentations, interactive activities, and delicious food and drinks of course.

**STAY TUNED FOR MORE DETAILS, and don't forget to visit us at <https://iseemeclub.com/>**



## Dates to Remember

**May 15th, 2023**

**International Day of Families  
2023 Theme: Demographic  
Trends and Families**

The 2023 International Day of Families observance is to raise awareness of the impact of demographic trends on families.

**May 17th, 2023**

**World Hypertension Day**

Stress is a known risk factor for hypertension, but it is not the only cause. If you experience stress on a chronic basis, your blood pressure can remain elevated over time, which can contribute to the development of hypertension.

We cannot ignore the fact that our mental health and physical health are connected.

**May 24th, 2023**

**World Schizophrenia and  
Psychosis Day**

World Schizophrenia Awareness Day is commemorated every May 24. It is a day dedicated to raising awareness of the mental illness that affects over 20 million people worldwide.

Schizophrenia is highly stigmatized since it's not talked about and lacks accurate representation in the media. World Schizophrenia Awareness Day was created to fight against stigma and to make it easier for people to seek different resources to get help. It lifts the lid on the challenges that thousands of people with Schizophrenia — from all over the world — have to contend with every day of their lives.



# Your Mental Health Challenges will Sneak Up on You

Expectations surrounding Black masculinity, such as the requirement to be strong and stoic, have often prevented Black men from seeking mental health care. Due to this, mental health issues can sneak up on them in several ways.

Here are a few examples:

## Gradual Onset

Mental health issues may start with mild symptoms that gradually worsen over time. You may not even notice the changes happening until the symptoms become more severe.

One day everything is okay, and then BOOM! All of a sudden it is not!

## Ignoring Early Warning Signs

Mental health issues may have early warning signs that are easy to ignore or dismiss. For example, feeling more tired than usual, trouble sleeping, or feeling more anxious or irritable than usual.

## Coping mechanisms

You may have developed coping mechanisms to deal with stress and anxiety, such as overeating, drinking, or using drugs. While these coping mechanisms may provide temporary relief, they can eventually lead to mental health issues.

## Stigma and shame

Stigma and shame around mental health issues can prevent you from seeking help when you need it. You may feel embarrassed or ashamed to admit that you're struggling, or you may worry that others will judge you.

## Life changes

Life changes such as a major illness, relationship breakdown, or job loss can trigger mental health issues. You may feel overwhelmed by the changes and struggle to cope.

It's important to be aware of these potential risks and to seek help if you notice any changes in your mental health. With early intervention and treatment, you can manage and overcome mental health issues.

Unfortunately Black men are not only affected by the general barriers to medical treatment that many in the Black community face, but also have internalized certain behaviors that fit within the social constructs of Black masculinity — ultimately impacting their help-seeking behaviors.

Despite known or suspected mental health issues, Black men are for numerous reasons often reluctant to seek treatment.



## Is Black Masculinity an Issue?

In her book [We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity](#), the social and cultural critic **bell hooks** examined the impact on Black men of social expectations that they'll behave in ways associated with Black masculinity, and described how the expectation to follow a specific set of behaviors creates a toxic environment.

Viewed inside a stereotype, Black men can become dehumanized and invisible, and their psychological and emotional health suffers. This, along with the lack of love and acceptance that many of them face can create a separate emotional crisis.

Black men have been inundated with images in film, television, and social media that depict them as overly masculine and, in some cases, aggressive and hypersexual.

Open displays of emotion are often frowned upon and not socially acceptable, sending a clear message to some Black men that to be accepted, they must fit a particular gender role in which strength and stoicism are mandatory.

As a community, we have to find ways to help our men feel comfortable **FEELING!**

## CARE LEADERSHIP RETREAT

It is our vision to equip and inspire leaders to be all that they can be by drawing on the power of the collective and creating a Center of Influence that mobilizes Social, Political and Economic growth and outcomes.

We provide our community the opportunity to rally together around the causes that matter most to Black Men and their families. Our efforts amplify the voices and the impact of the leaders in our community through the use of mentoring, coaching, and sponsorships.

We are guided by the five core values of Family, Community, Brotherhood, Health & Wellness and Financial Growth.

## About the Project: Care Leadership Development Academy (CLDA)

The CLDA is a vehicle for Black Males to network and create opportunities to accelerate their personal and professional growth. The academy focuses on Mentoring, Coaching and Sponsorship to create the necessary connections and open up new pathways to success.

There are 6 key focus areas:

1. Leading Self Development
2. Leading People
3. Leading Change
4. Leading Innovation
5. Leading for Growth
6. Leading Social Responsibility

## REST, HEAL, REJUVENATE

Slotted for September 9th - 10th, 2023, Black Males aged 25 - 55 are invited for two days, and one night of leadership bonding.

This is NOT an exclusive "Boy's Club," but rather one that uses the supportive nature of a men-only space to help men grow.

**We are looking for enthusiastic volunteers like you to help us bring the retreat to life. If you are interested in being a volunteer Email us at [info@brotherswhocare.com](mailto:info@brotherswhocare.com)**

The retreat will mobilize efforts to reduce inequalities and better position Black Males to build sustainable cities and communities.

Success is measured by the things one achieves and the impact one makes in areas of their lives. A key objective of Brothers Who Care is to break down and dispel the psychological barriers that keep us hostage to our fears.



## The Black Business Initiative (BBI-SBCCI)

The Care Leadership retreat is made possible through **The Black Business Initiative (BBI-SBCCI)**.



**The Black Business Initiative (BBI)** is a Province-wide business development initiative committed to fostering the growth of businesses owned by members of the Nova Scotia Black Community.

The BBI is committed to growing the Black presence in a diverse range of business sectors, including: high-tech, manufacturing, tourism, and the cultural sector.

For more information about the Black Business Initiative you can visit: [www.bbi.ca](http://www.bbi.ca)

**Invitation to Participate in Our Survey - Your Opinion Matters!**

This survey will provide an opportunity for you to voice your thoughts and shape Brothers Who Care future initiatives.

The survey will take approximately 5 - 6 minutes to complete. We assure you that all responses will remain strictly confidential, and will only be used for the purposes of this research project.

To participate in the survey, simply click on the following link: <https://survey.brotherswhocare.com/survey/6446e31aac184e00128148cf>

# Spotlight Series: Reflecting on Anti-Black Racism

Skills for Change launched the Spotlight Series in 2020, to lead critical conversations on social justice issues of today and come together to explore cross-sectoral solutions as a community.

Moderated by our CEO Surranna Sandy, their thematic and multi-sectoral approach brings to the forefront real solutions to social justice issues. The series was first launched in June 2020 in response to the worldwide call to action on Anti-Black Racism, Equity and Anti-Oppression.

Their first event was joined by 850+ national and international attendees. Since then, they have held monthly sessions to feature important discussions on a wide range of topics with expert guest speakers and thought leaders from Canada and globally.



## Reflecting on Anti-Black Racism: A Critical Look from 2020 to 2023 and Beyond

**Event Date:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023

**Event Start/End Time:** 11:00AM - 12:00PM EDT

**Event Registration Link:** <https://SpotlightSeriesMay23.eventbrite.ca>

**Admission:** Free

**Event Type:** Virtual

2020 marked a watershed moment in the fight against Anti-Black racism. The world witnessed the killing of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, by a Minneapolis police officer, sparking a wave of protests across the United States and around the globe.

This tragedy led to protests, with millions of people demanding an end to systemic racism that the Black community has been facing for over 400 years. With the Black Lives Matter movement gaining momentum, powerful displays of solidarity were seen around the world, also highlighting the deeply rooted nature of Anti-Black Racism in our societies. In response, many companies and organizations made commitments to address racism and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.



### Panelist: David Griffiths

*'Unfortunately, now three years later, as we reflect on our actions, the findings show that while some companies have taken meaningful action, others have fallen short, or worse, used the moment to engage in performative activism without making real change. The fight against Anti-Black Racism is ongoing, and it is crucial that we continue to push for meaningful change and hold those in power accountable.'*

#### *Did you know?*

- In a survey conducted by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation in March 2021, 58% of Black Canadians reported experiencing racial discrimination in the past year, with the highest rates reported in interactions with police, employment, and healthcare.*
- In a survey conducted by Ipsos in June 2021, 44% of Black Canadians reported experiencing police discrimination, compared to 23% of non-Black Canadians. Black Canadians were also more likely to report experiencing discrimination in healthcare, employment, and education.*

*These are just two out of many more statistics that demonstrate that Anti-Black Racism continues to be a pervasive issue in Canada, and that more needs to be done to address systemic barriers and promote racial equity.*

*As such, we invite you to join David Griffiths for a panel discussion engaging in a discussion about Anti-Black racism and critically assess the progress made since 2020.*