

THE STRONG RAM PROGRAM

Changing the Stigma Regarding Mental Health

Have you known men who wouldn't admit that something was wrong?



Have you tried to tough it out in times of psychological stress?

Life can be hard; everybody has trouble coping sometimes. But mental illness, including depression, is a major public health problem. Every year, more than 40 million Americans struggle with mental illness. African American men are as likely as anyone else to have mental illness, but they are less likely to get help. Depression and other mental illness can be deadly if left untreated. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among African Americans 15 to 24 years old. Untreated mental illness can make African American men more vulnerable to substance abuse, homelessness, incarceration, and homicide.

The Most Excellent Prince Hall Grand Chapter of Holy Royal Arch Masons have launched **the Strong RAM Program**: changing the stigma regarding mental health with an aim to raise awareness and help start conversations about mental health.

This initiative has three major goals:

Goal 1: Collaborate on efforts to educate Royal Arch Masons on the effects of depression and stress.

Goal 2: Communicate the importance of seeking help for mental health problems and to encourage affected Companions to get information from their health care providers to obtain appropriate treatment.

Goal 3: To enhance our organizational well-being and effectiveness by creating a climate of mental health wellness within our Chapters.

This initiative will use a variety of activities to raise awareness of the mental health challenges associated with depression and stress that affect African American men and their families.



PLEDGE



LEARN



EDUCATE



PARTNER

The Most Excellent Prince Hall Grand Chapter of Holy Royal Arch Masons will use and disseminate materials about depression and stress that are based in the science of mental health developed by **NIMHD and giveanhour** (change direction campaign). It is our aim that materials will be disseminated by Companions through the Grand Chapter, Regional, District and Chapter meetings and events.



NIMHD envisions an America in which all populations have an equal opportunity to live long, healthy, productive lives. To accomplish this, NIMHD raises national awareness of the prevalence and impact of health disparities and disseminates effective individual-, community-, and population-level interventions to reduce and encourage elimination of health disparities. <http://www.nimhd.nih.gov/>

Royal Arch Chapters will be encouraged to participate in a variety of ways:



Adopt the Companion You're on My Mind Campaign; visit or telephonic call of at least 3 x members a week (must see or hear from a Companion).



Find their local (state or county) mental health resources and providers; develop partnerships



Have a mental health professional speak during a chapter meeting to discuss depression.



Display and distribute print materials for our Companions and families.



Host a community forum on mental health for men & community.



Participate in a health fair and distribute materials.



Discuss and know the five signs of emotional suffering.



Encourage local Mayors and City Officials to establish proclamations on men's mental health.

The following resources and websites offer additional information on mental health:

Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General (1999),
<http://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/ps/access/NNBBHS.pdf>

Mental Health: Culture, Race, and Ethnicity— A Supplement to Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General (2001), <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44243/>

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>

Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD),
<http://www.nichd.nih.gov>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), <http://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA),
<http://www.samhsa.gov>

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), <http://www.nami.org>

American Psychological Association (APA), <http://www.apa.org>

National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD),
<http://www.nimhd.nih.gov>

