

Honoring National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month: A Commitment to Equity and Access

This July, we observe National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, a time to shine a light on the unique mental health challenges faced by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities and to reaffirm our commitment to accessible, equitable, and culturally responsive care for all.

Founded in 2008 in honor of mental health advocate Bebe Moore Campbell, this observance reminds us that while mental health conditions affect nearly 1 in 4 U.S. adults, the path to care is often more difficult for individuals from minority communities.

Barriers such as cultural stigma, language challenges, discrimination within healthcare settings, and lack of culturally informed services can prevent individuals from seeking, or receiving, the support they need.

The Path to Equitable Care Begins with Understanding

At Bridgeway Behavioral Health Services, we believe that meaningful change starts with listening and learning. Research shows that people from ethnic minority communities often struggle to engage with services that fail to recognize their cultural, religious, and social contexts.

This can lead to delayed care, increased crisis situations, and a profound sense of not being seen as a priority.

Cultural responsiveness means more than language access, it requires understanding how identity, racism, discrimination, and community values shape mental health experiences. It means creating safe spaces where individuals can share their struggles without fear of judgment or exposure.

For many, community-based support and connections with providers who understand their background are essential to building trust and engagement.

Bridgeway's Commitment: Care That Meets People Where They Are

Our mission to restore lives and renew hope is rooted in meeting people where they are, both physically and culturally. Through our Center for Integrated Outpatient Services in Union County, we are expanding access to urgent care, individual and group therapy, and medication management in a space designed to serve more youth and adults with greater efficiency and compassion.

Bridgeway is proud to be part of the Woods System of Care, a network dedicated to advancing integrated, person-centered care for individuals with complex behavioral health needs. This partnership strengthens our ability to draw on national expertise while remaining deeply rooted in the diverse communities we serve across New Jersey.

How You Can Support Mental Health Equity

This month, we invite you to join us in breaking down stigma and building a culture of inclusion:

- Start a conversation. A simple “How are you really doing?” can open the door to healing.
- Learn about cultural barriers. Understanding the challenges BIPOC communities face is the first step toward change.
- Share available resources. Help ensure that everyone knows support is available, regardless of background or language.

Together, we can ensure that every individual, no matter their ethnicity, culture, or language, has access to the care they

deserve. Because mental health is just as important as physical health throughout our lives.