

# State of Mental Health for Youth of Color 2022

Presented by The AAKOMA Project



## \*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\*

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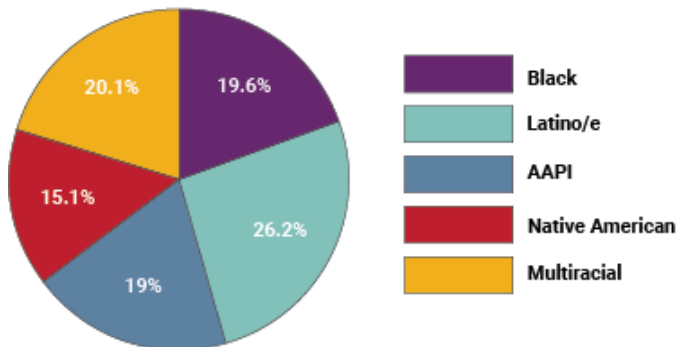
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## The AAKOMA Project Spearheads First of its Kind Survey That Studies the State of Mental Health for Youth of Color in the U.S.

*Study shows more than half of the those surveyed reported experiencing moderate to severe depression or anxiety*

### Race and Ethnicity



**WASHINGTON, D.C.-** Dr. Alfiee Breland-Noble, renowned psychologist and founder of The AAKOMA Project, today released the first of its kind national survey which focuses on the mental health of Youth of Color.

The [State of Mental Health for Youth of Color \(SOMHYOC\)](#) surveyed almost 3,000 young people of color ages 13 to 25 to study their current state of mental health.

“When I started my research 20 years ago, I knew that a study like this needed to be done,” **said Dr. Breland-Noble.** “Study after study of the general population of young people did not capture what we have done with this report. We hope that with the representation of so many different cultures in this study, we can pour truth and knowledge into how we study mental health, how policy in this area is created and how we help our children grow out of what binds them to multi-generational cycles. I am so proud of the work we are presenting today and look forward to scaling and continuing my work in this area of science for years to come.”

The study covers four specific areas: (1) Use of Mental Health Services, (2) Exposure to Racial Trauma, (3) Impact of COVID-19, and (4) Support Circles and resilience. Unlike many other



studies, SOMHYOC made a special effort to have a relatively equal representation of races in order to equitably assess and lay some much-needed groundwork to support all youth.

The survey showed that at least half of Youth of Color in the sample reported experiencing moderate to severe depression or anxiety. Some Youth of Color reported significantly higher depression and anxiety severity scores. Specifically:

- Latino/e and Native American Youth had significantly higher scores of depression and anxiety severity than AAPI Youth (26% - 19%)
- Overall the most commonly reported symptom of depression was being tired and having low energy (76% - 85%)
- The most commonly reported symptom of anxiety was feeling anxious, worried and nervous (68% - 78%)
- Youth of Color also reported engaging in non-suicidal self-injurious behavior (22%), having suicidal ideation (27%), and attempting suicide at least once (18%)
- Of the Youth of Color who attempted suicide, 5% reported needing medical treatment

There are many factors in today's world that affect the mental health of young people. The COVID-19 pandemic has altered the future for generations to come and many experience effects in different ways.

The survey found that young People of Color were more likely to be affected or have a loved one with COVID-19. They are more likely to experience social, racial and climate injustice in addition to the strong stigma against seeking treatment that is common among families of color.

Most strikingly, the report found that 61% of Youth of Color were hopeful about their future.

Said Dr. Breland-Noble: "With this report, we aspire to inject truth and hope into the mental health community so that more resources can be allocated to help those who suffer in silence."

Read more about the survey results behind the study [here](#).

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