



# Resist the Current:

Upstream Pathways to Mental  
Health Supports & Services  
for Black Youth

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# Introduction

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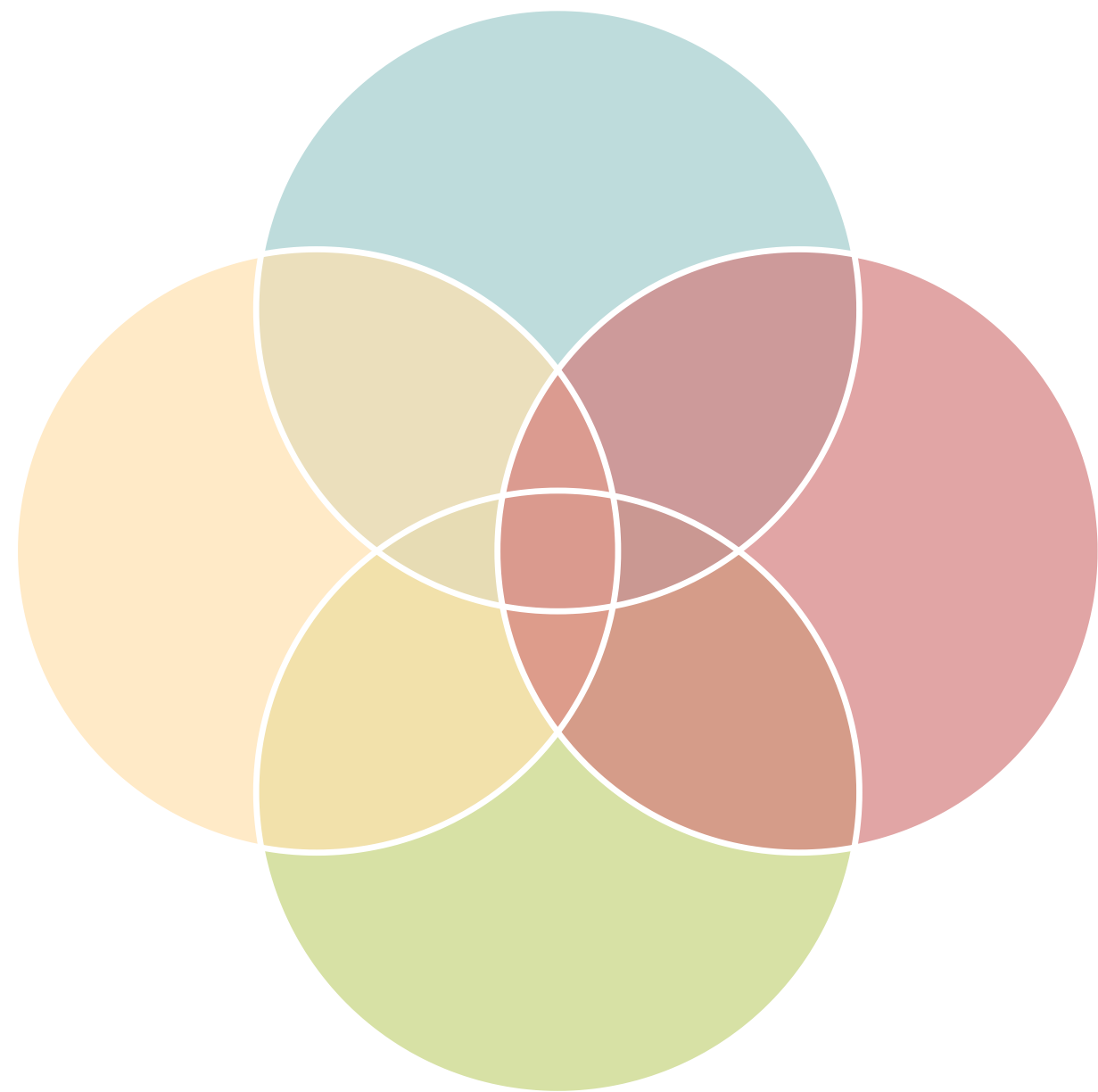
# Objectives

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- ➔ **Outline pathways to access mental health supports and services (MHSS).**
- ➔ **Describe barriers to Black youth accessing mental health supports and services (MHSS).**
- ➔ **Discuss strategies to increase upstream access to mental health supports and services (MHSS).**

# Types of MHSS

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**Diagnostic support**

**Counselling, therapy &  
support groups**

**Community programming**

**Medication**

# Pathways to MHSS



**General practitioner**

This can be a pediatrician (children), family doctor or nurse practitioner who feels comfortable providing **counselling, diagnosis, and/or medication.**



**Referral to psychiatrist**

A referral to a psychiatrist by another health care provider for **counselling, diagnosis, and/or medication.**



**Self-refer to community programs**

Community programs may be available that you can identify and get access to that do not require a referral from another health care provider.



**Private counselling & therapy**

You can find trained psychotherapists who charge hourly for their services, some who accept insurance if you have benefits, and some who do not.



**Emergency room**

Once a Black youth is in the middle of a mental health crisis, the emergency room is often the immediate pathway to care.



**Police**

If a Black youth has a crisis in at home or in public with harm to themselves or others, police may be called, with a number of outcomes.



# Barriers to MHSS

- Anderson et al. (2015): More likely to access services via "aversive pathways to care" (i.e. emergency room, police)
- Fante-Coleman & Jackson-Best (2020): wait times, poor access to practitioners & financial barriers



# Upstream strategies to access MHSS

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- ➔ Have conversations about mental health in families & communities
- ➔ Increase access to primary care
- ➔ Increase Black youth engagement in culturally relevant community programming
- ➔ Decrease financial barriers to counselling

# **Have conversations about mental health in families & communities**

- Start conversations about mental health/well-being early
- Be open to vulnerability with your youth
- Ask youth how they are ACTUALLY doing
- When they tell you how they are ACTUALLY doing, including how they are coping, take that seriously



# Increase access to primary care

- Ask friends or family members if their doctor is accepting new patients
- Register for "Health Care Connect," a program by the Ministry of Health to connect you with local doctors and nurse practitioners (need OHIP)
- Find your local Community Health Centre (CHC), and identify available services (does not require OHIP)
- Identify whether your nearest hospital has a family practice unit

# **Increase Black youth engagement in culturally relevant community programming**

- Community programming connects youth to other people who may pick up on when the youth is not doing okay
- Community engagement may connect them with other youth who they do feel comfortable opening up with

# Decrease financial barriers to counselling

- Community health centre counselling
- Sliding scale psychotherapy
  - Black Therapist List
- Post-secondary school coverage via school benefits
- Virtual services
  - Online cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).
  - Black youth helpline
  - What's Up Walk In programs
  - Black Mental Health Canada (can help you to find a counsellor considering financial barriers)
  - Wanasah (Black youth and families in Regent Park/Downtown)



# Thank you!

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