

LACK OF ACCESS

A Toolkit for Practitioners





CURRENT STATE

Black women are disproportionately affected by socio-economic and systemic challenges and psycho-social trauma that limits access to medical care, healthy lifestyle-promoting activities and environments, and support systems.

These challenges include, but are not limited to:

- Racism and sexism that increase the allostatic load of Black women.
- Prohibitive costs of healthcare (including mental health) and medical insurance.
- Long distances and limited public transportation to each healthcare facilities and medical care.
- Work and caregiving demands that inhibit health-seeking behaviors and decisions
- Unavailable or inaccessible specialists and facilities for high-quality treatment and care
- Limited health education, patient advocacy, mental health care, case management and other wrap-around social services
- High cost and low availability of healthy food and safe places to exercise like parks and recreation centers.
- Exposure to chemicals, toxins, and other environmental injustices that contribute to poor health



ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Build Rapport

Show compassion and get to know each patient individually. Understand their life experiences, needs, and how that may impact how they navigate through this world, especially as a Black woman. Creating an environment of inclusion and comfort will go a long way. This is all part of building trust with your patients.



Affordability

There are common concerns with affordability. There are a number of reasons that contribute to this, and patients concerns may be:



Insurance Access



Geographic location and travel



Wage gap (not earning enough)



Single parenting while working and managing healthcare



No access to low-cost exercise and wellness centers

There are also opportunities to train physicians on how to talk about financial aspects of treatment/care. Have financial resources readily available (brochures, financial counselors, insurance experts, etc.) When patients build rapport with their physician, they are more comfortable sharing their needs and getting information from their healthcare team.

Policy

Policies shouldn't be created for patients as much as they are created by them. Their needs and actions should inform the policies being created. Think through policies about:

- Affordability and Payment
- Transportation and Lodging for those traveling from rural areas
- Access to preventative and regular care for those in rural areas
- Insurance Coverage
- Quality of screening, testing, care during treatment, clinical trial access and quality of life





Potential policies can include:

- RX for exercise/yoga/etc. (Those with insurance can receive coverage)
- Psycho-social support
- Protection of job/wages
- Invitation to participate in clinical trials



Advocacy

Implement patient education programming. This can be through partner organizations as well.

Culture

Ensure that you are hiring for culturally competent providers that can break health literacy barriers (and work well with translators, if needed). They should understand cultural limitations as well as generational and individual trauma in the medical system.

Tiger Tips

Organizational (hospitals, physician offices, organizational policies, etc.)

- Explore grants that can offer cost coverage for mental health services
- Cultural Competency Training/Implicit Bias Training
- Advocacy Training
- Create a culture of equity and inclusion (how?)
- Quality and equity go together
- Incorporate patient perspectives into policies/decision making?
- Share case study examples?
- Implement patient education programming
- Provide high quality/accessible interpreter services
- Train physicians on how to talk about financial aspects of treatment/care (financial toxicity)
- Have financial resources readily available (brochures, financial counselors, insurance experts, etc.)
- Ensure providers work with patients to get a clear understanding of barriers patients face and work with them to create individualized plans to eliminate these barriers



Individual (healthcare providers themselves)

Getting a better understanding of what others have gone through with Breast cancer can be another avenue to pursue when learning about what you may experience. Peer communication can be beneficial as they can offer insight and provide clarity and support on what you can expect during treatment.



Be an advocate & speak up



Show empathy



Use inclusive language



Have detailed conversations about lifestyle, desires, preferences, etc. Related to their care



Consider serving/working/volunteering in MUAs



Know the cost of treatment



Have financial conversations about treatment plans (financial toxicity link)





BARRIER RESOURCES

At Tigerlily we are committed to providing you with the most up to date information along with resources to help you on your journey. We want to provide you with resources not only Tigerlily offers, but also our partners. Check out our Barriers Resources page to find additional resources available to you.

