



**BORIS LAWRENCE
HENSON FOUNDATION**



IMPACT | 2018- 2023 REPORT





The work of Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation has been transformational in providing access to mental health resources and wellness support that enhances African American lives and families. Our mission lives, adapts, and is action oriented (or operationalized) because we are active members of the African American community advocating and encouraging social change by empowering people to enhance their wellbeing through mental health support.

- Aristide Collins, Board of Director





It brings us great joy to share the Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation's 2023 Impact Report with you. Within this report, you will learn about the landscape before us, current programming, our successes, the BLHF team, sponsors, and partners.

2023 marks the 5th year anniversary of The Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation. As we reflect on the past five years, we would like to pause to express gratitude to our donors, partners, and community. Since we first launched in 2018, we have remained committed to our mission to eradicate the stigma around mental health in the Black community.

We know that most Black people are taught to keep their feelings to themselves. We have a long and difficult history of penalization and demonization for expressing how we feel. We continue to dedicate ourselves to changing that narrative by speaking out, and encouraging others to share their challenges with mental illness and get the help they need.

Through our programming and services over the years, we have seen a significant increase in participation and conversations around mental wellness, but we have more work to do. The systemic challenges that Black communities continue to face are deeply rooted. We are committed to breaking the barriers to access and change. We're excited about what we have planned this year and the impact we will continue to make – with your help – as we strive towards mental health equity for all. Joy is indeed our birthright.

XOXO

Taraji P. Henson and Tracie Jade Jenkins



WHAT WE DO

WHAT WE DO

As an organization, our mission is to offer the African American community the tools and resources needed to help break the silence and the stigma that keeps so many of us from asking for, and receiving the help we need. We aim to help every individual in the communities that we serve, to discover the pathway to peace, a safe route to freedom from suffering and to empower Black individuals with guided decisions about their 'personal best' wellbeing. We're helping our communities to choose JOY over everything. And to experience life on the other side of suffering. Joy is our North Star. And that is deep ancestral knowledge of our birthright while being revolutionary at the same time.



THE CHALLENGE

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Our communities face significant disparities in mental health care. Compared with Non-Hispanic Whites, African Americans are:

- Less likely to receive guideline-consistent care
- Less frequently included in research
- More likely to use emergency rooms or primary care (rather than mental health specialists)
- More highly exposed to violence, trauma, racism/discrimination, financial disparity, and higher rates of psychological distress
- Less likely to have access to culturally competent care
- Less likely to encounter providers that are BIPOC due to the high demand and low availability of African American providers

Concerns about stigma, medications, clinical misdiagnosis, bias, not receiving appropriate information about services, and dehumanizing services have also been reported to hinder African Americans from accessing mental health services.



THE LANDSCAPE

THE LANDSCAPE

BLHF is committed to helping African Americans find and live their joy. We recognize that Actualizing Black Joy is unique to every individual and the landscape of mental wellness in our community demonstrates the work we have to do.

- There are over 192,497 therapists currently employed in the United States. Only 4% of them identify as Black/ African American. Among psychiatrists only 2% of this specialized medical practice are Black.
- In 2019 suicide was the 2nd leading cause of death for Black Americans aged 15-24 and these numbers continue to rise at an alarming pace. The data hold true that Black children between the ages of 5 and 12 years old are twice as likely to die by suicide as White children of the same age.
- 16% of African Americans report having a mental illness and major depressive episodes have increased across the board for African American aged 12-49.
- 50 to 755 of youth in the juvenile justice system who are disproportionately Black, meet the criteria for a mental health disorder.
- Black women routinely experience the stigma of seeking services, hesitancy in being comfortable with wearing the self-care hat, grappling with breaking generational cycles of what it means to be 'strong,' often have difficulty finding a safe space to emotionally let go without feeling judged, and also often experience a lack of empowerment to call out trauma in its various forms.
- Because of structural racism and Black men's unique history in this country, their mental health and treatment are intimately tied to factors such as implicit bias on the part of medical providers, high poverty rates, and low access to quality psychological and psychiatric services. Only 26.4% of Black men ages 18 to 44 who experienced daily feelings of anxiety or depression were likely to seek and use mental health services, compared with 45.4% of non-Hispanic White men with the same feelings. When Black men do seek help they prefer a same-race provider, of which there is an absence.

OUR APPROACH

Celebrating 5 years of service in 2023, BLHF continues to make bold and revolutionary strides towards actualizing Black Joy. We recognize that what joy looks like for each member of our community is unique and we celebrate that uniqueness. We continue to combat hopelessness with hopefulness as the pioneering advocacy group in Black Mental Health in the US, with a curated network of corporate and community partnerships. And a robust network of Black professionals in our Can We Talk Resource Guide.

Founded by Academy Award and Emmy nominated actress and advocate Taraji P. Henson, and led by Emmy nominated producer, educator and visionary Tracie Jade, the Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation provides access to localized and culturally competent therapy resources through a network of Black clinicians and service providers, counselors, and thought leaders. With the support of donors and partnerships, BLHF offers services including free mental wellness support, specialized group Hangouts for psychoeducation, scholarships for African American students in mental health care fields, programs to reduce the recidivism rate, and African American cultural competency training. BLHF is also emphasizing the self-modulating practices of maintaining joy through integrated wellness with the promotion of Hangouts for art therapy, meditation, mindfulness, plant therapy, sound and dance therapy, and yoga.

As a revolutionary new part of our 'Meeting You Where You Are' initiative, we are launching BLHF Wellness Pods. Our inaugural Wellness Pod launched on April 14, 2023 as a SHECare Wellness Pod (SCWP) on the HBCU campus of Alabama State University in historic Montgomery. After a successful inaugural launch at Alabama State University, BLHF and kate spade are expanding the initiative to a second HBCU campus location, Hampton University in Virginia. This revolutionary initiative will be followed by HECare and THEYCare Wellness Pods nationwide. This empowering concept provides hassle free access to mental wellness resources in traditional and non traditional spaces and places where our communities are already gathering. We will also feature 'pop' up mental wellness events at Beauty Salons, Barbershops, gatherings and community centers across the nation.

Our vision remains the same as when we founded BLHF in 2018; to eradicate the stigma around mental health in the Black community by breaking the silence and breaking the cycle of shame associated with it. We want people to know that it is ok to seek help for mental health. We want to help every individual find their pathway to peace. We consciously chose to be a revolutionary light on the path to what joy looks like for every individual in the communities we serve. At BLHF we will forever champion joy as our North Star and our birthright.

OUR TIMELINE

2018-2023

2018

- **January 2018:** BLHF launched - started from the lived experience of the founder's father who suffered from PTSD, brought to life
- **Developed Infrastructure & Ops strategy for BLHF**
- **Story-telling:** Stating the lived experience no one knew about the mental health stigma in the Black community
- **Introduced first pillar of work:** Awareness and Stigma of mental Health in the communities of color
- **TPH** - Breakfast Club Launch Interview
- **TPH Boutique of Hope Event** - Calling to Community for Mental Health Awareness and Hope



2020

- **April 2020:** COVID-19 FREE THERAPY CAMPAIGN
- **December 2020:** Peace of Mind (Facebook Watch Series)
- **Partnered with Zoom for engagement:** Youth Groups/Hangouts (Hip Hop artists etc.)



2019

- **Young (middle/high schoolers)** - Peace Rooms
- **(Maria Schriver interview)**
- **June 2019:** TPH testifies Capital Hill (16 billion impressions and views)
- **June 2019:** Inaugural Can We Talk? - National Conference that addresses Black mental health and services and practitioners
- **Launch of the Let's Talk! Resource Guide**



2021

- **May 2021** - Unspoken Curriculum / Write To Education Initiative - Global Event
- **Launch of Scholarship Fund**
- **PG County District Schools Outreach** - Mental Health Alliance Initiative
- **HBCU Expansion** - Wellness Wednesdays



2022

- **June 4th, 2022** - National Black Mental Health Providers Day
- **June 2022** - Partnership w/BET One Million Hour Joy Challenge
- **Joe Biden Appointment of TPH to HBCU Advisory Board**



BORIS LAWRENCE HENSON FOUNDATION
SELF-CARE WELLNESS PODS

SHE CARE

2023

- **April 2023** - BLHF's SHE-Care Wellness Pod Launch at ASU
- **September 2023** - Joy Joints! Initiative, Raised 100,000 hours of Joy Nationwide
- **October 2023** - BLHF's SHE-Care Wellness Pod expansion to Hampton University

SCALE

PARTICIPATION PIPELINE (2021-2022)

Coming out of COVID the primary grievance amongst our served communities has been unemployment, financial, and mental instability which impacted individuals and increased depression/mental health. Our top priority was to connect our clients with Culturally Competent professionals who would not only help with self-regulatory modalities but offer them a sense of hope and well-being. We are proud to report that in 2022, we had our highest increase in response to programming as a result of the outcry for help.

37 States

Reached (Over 600 Cities) this year

21 Programs

have been launched

6

Mental Wellness Support Programs

15

Hangouts

Over 6,000

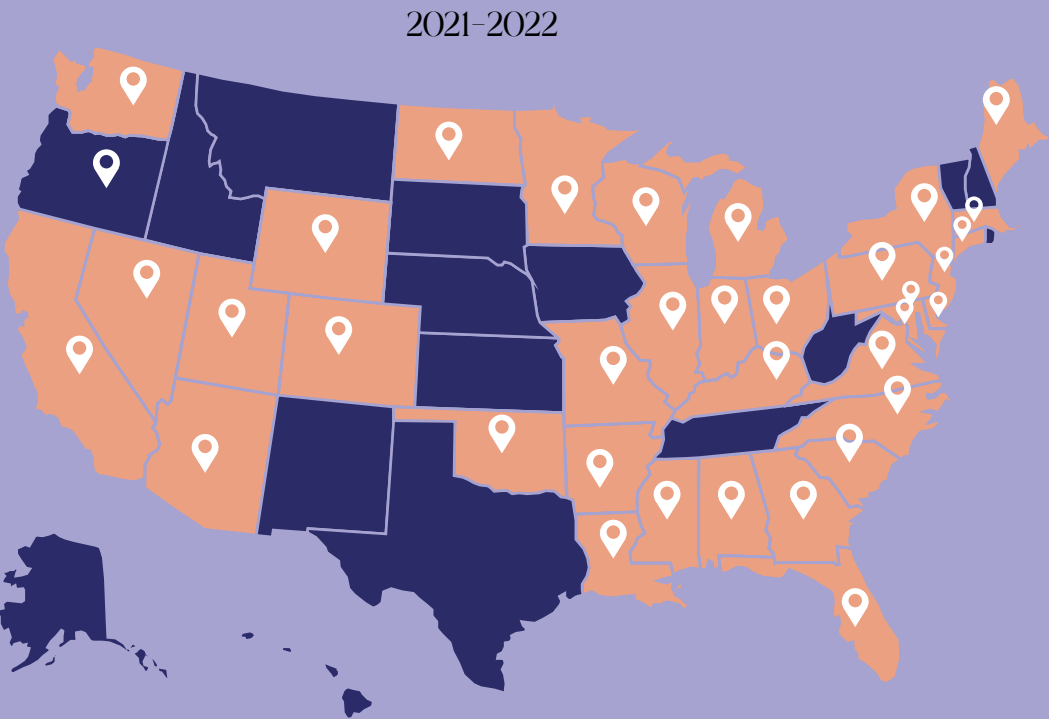
Participant Hours in total

90% Increase

in clients receiving sessions compared to last year

Over 2000 people

served this year



PARTICIPATION PIPELINE (5 yr.)

Cumulative Participant Hours Over 200,000 (2020-2023)

47 States

Reached in total

68

Hangouts

31 Programs

have been launched

21,082

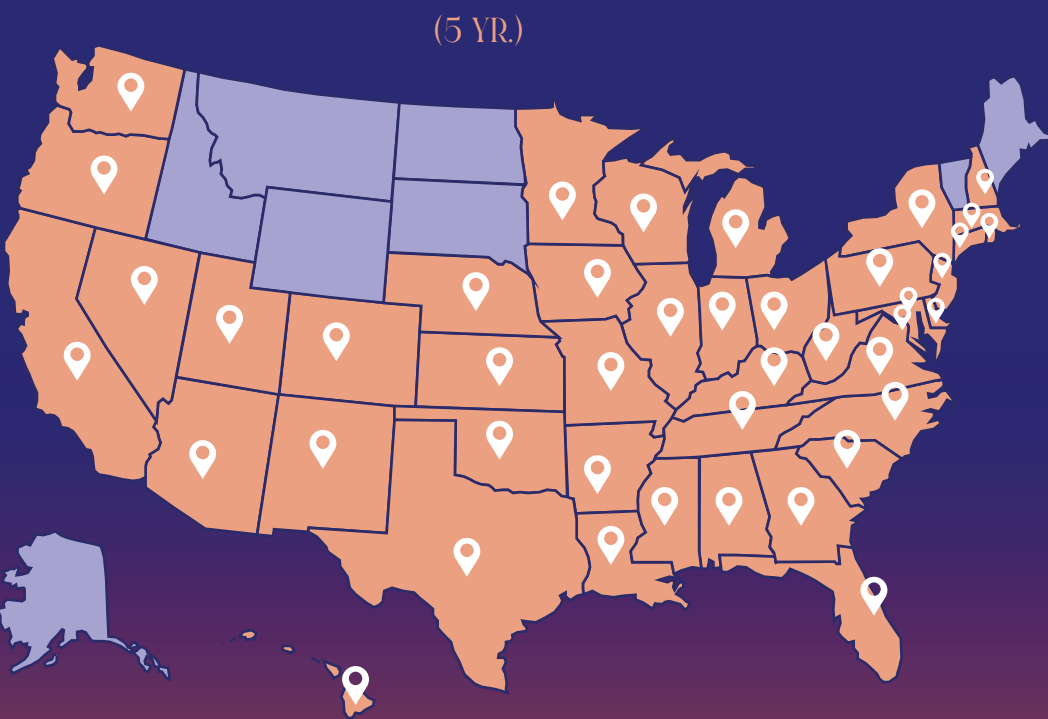
Free Therapy Hours in total

20

Mental Wellness Support Programs

Over 9500

participating clients



We cover **90%** of the nation.

GROWTH

INCREASED PARTICIPATION

in schools by creating Hangouts and working with the Prince George County Public Schools (100% increase in participation)

LAUNCH AND EXPANSION

of BLHF's SHE--Care Wellness Pods

CREATED

the initiative of Wellness Wednesdays in HBCUs

200% INCREASE

in Mental Wellness Programs since inception

33% INCREASE

in number of Scholarships awarded



Over the past five years since its founding, the Boris L. Henson Foundation has made life-changing and life-affirming investments in mental health supports for the black community. The impact of Boris L. Henson Foundation on individuals in need of critical mental health access and supports from culturally relevant providers has reached members of the black community at all stages and phases of life, including those who are seeking services and those who provide them. The Boris L. Henson Foundation is a critical organization ensuring that the prioritization of mental health support for the black community is a reality.

- Jeanette McCune, Board of Director's Chair



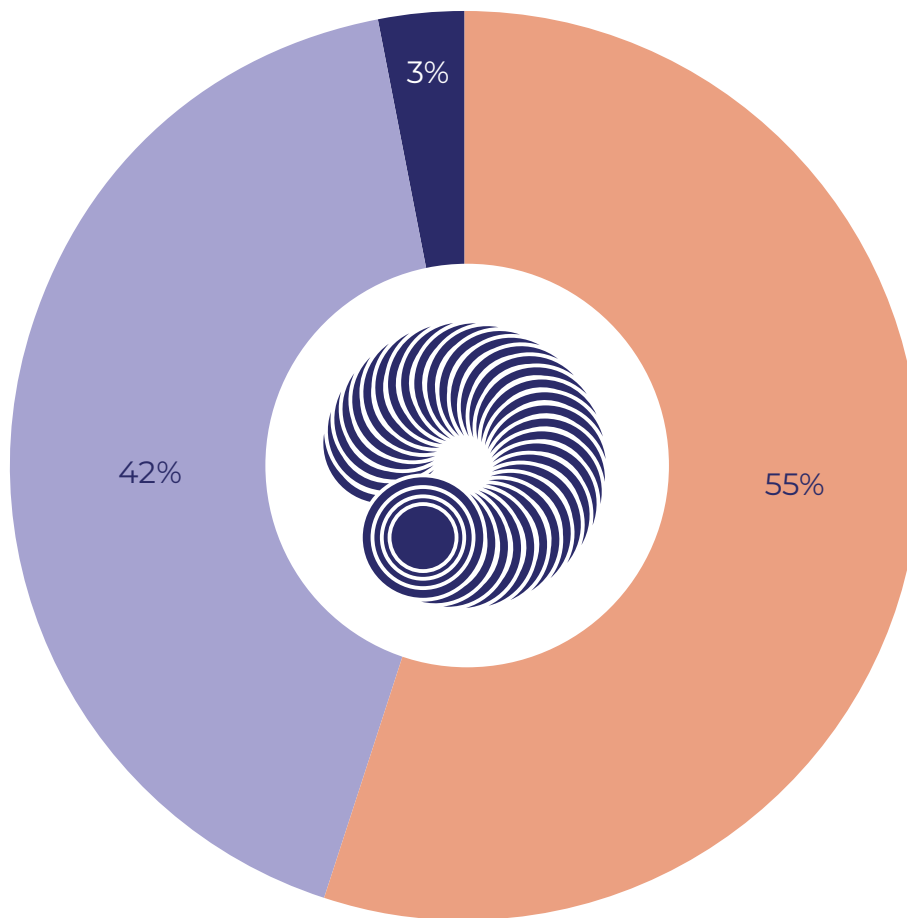
GROWTH

SUPPORTING OUR MISSION – 5-YEAR AVERAGE

We have increased our donors in five years to **over 7,300 champions** to BLHF.

Over 85% of our donors contribute online

6% of our donors give monthly donations



■ Individual Contributions ■ Foundations/Corporate Contribution ■ Traning, Membership & Merchandise

SCHOLARSHIPS





The path to JOY is not dependent on your present circumstances, those circumstances merely determine where you start.

The health of our mind, body, and soul are critically important and allows us to do all the amazing things we love for all the people and communities we care about. For many, maintaining holistic wellness can be a challenge in the consistently stressful environments where we live, work, and play. At the Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation, our mission is to create new ways of healing in Black communities, clearing pathways that allow People of Color to see what their lives look like on the other side of suffering. We also strive to produce a diverse workforce that will be successful in improving the capacity of individuals, families, and diverse communities to promote productive, satisfying, healthy, and safe lives across the lifespan. Mental health challenges are common with 1 out of 4 individuals experiencing a mental health disorder at some point in their lifetime. And in the Black community, we are still disproportionately underutilizing mental health supports and services. As an organization, we work diligently to create bridges and pathways to care, providing information, support and services in Black communities that often lack trusted mental health support systems and where informed relatable support is necessary. I am so proud to be a member of this organization and the work we have done, and continue to do, to innovatively improve mental health in Black communities and help individuals find their pathway to joy.

*Dr. Kyaien Conner, PhD, LSW, MPH
Provider Training and Outreach Coordinator
Interim, Clinical Director*





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