

Institutional Racism and the effects it has on Anxiety

Inspire Shell
 University of California, San Diego

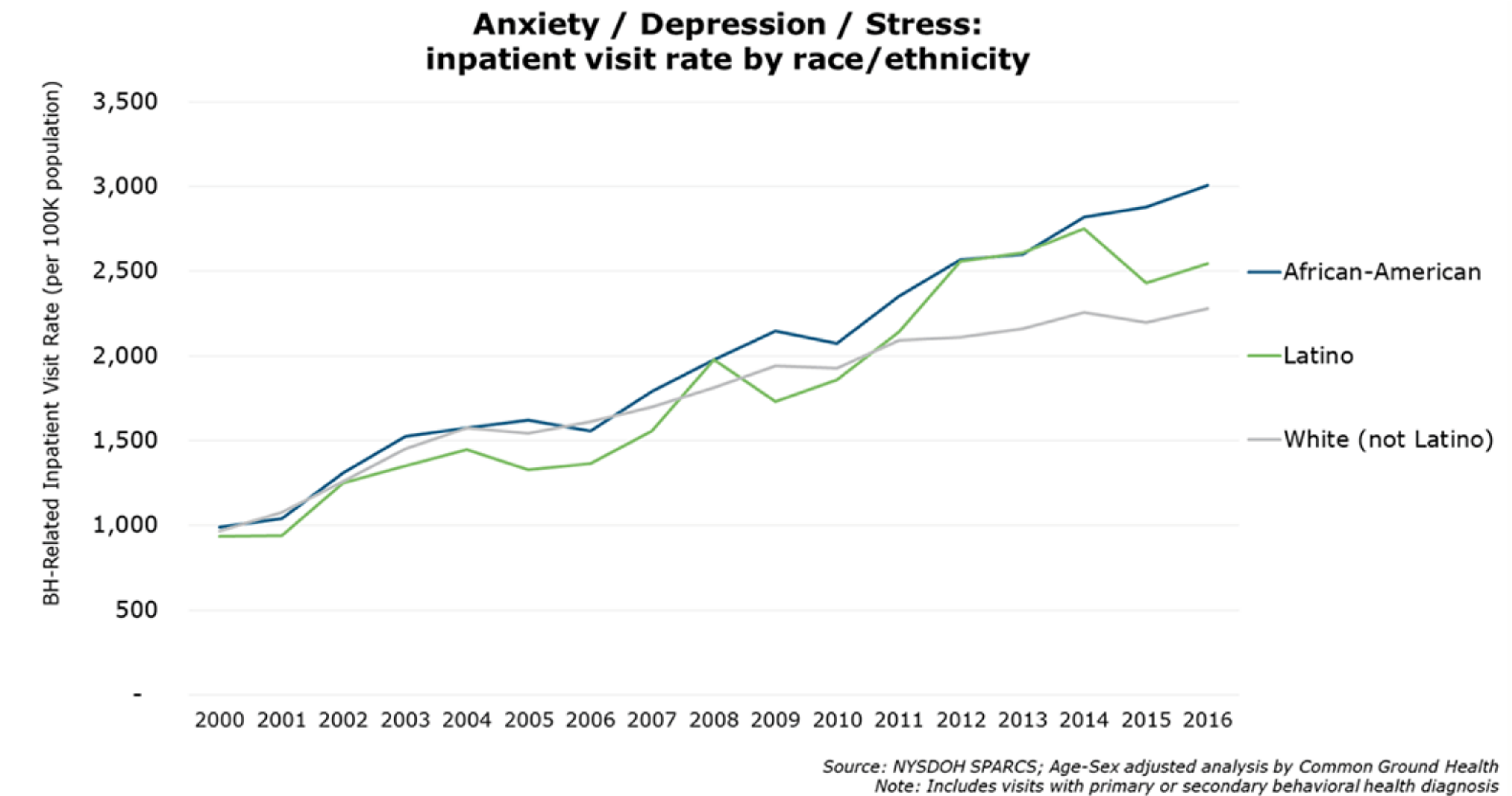
Purpose

The effects racism has on the anxiety level of a community of people can sometimes go unseen and unnoticed. Anxiety has links to depression and hypertension which are both prevalent within African American communities. It is also easy to recognize things when the physical appearance has been altered. It is difficult to understand when someone is suffering emotionally or mentally in silence. Giving a voice to the voiceless is a major step in helping individuals who are suffering in silence. The more people feel heard, the more they will speak about the pain and anxiety they are experiencing. The variety of ways racism contributes to anxiety levels needs to be highlighted.

Introduction

Anxiety disorder manifest itself in different ways. North America has a long tradition of treating black people as inferior creating anxiety when interacting with each other. Understanding the emotional and mental scars caused by institutional racism needs to be highlighted. Throughout history, we have documented situations where institutions are at the forefront of contributing to the anxiety of black people.

- Police interactions
- Segregation
- Mass incarceration
- Tuskegee Experiment



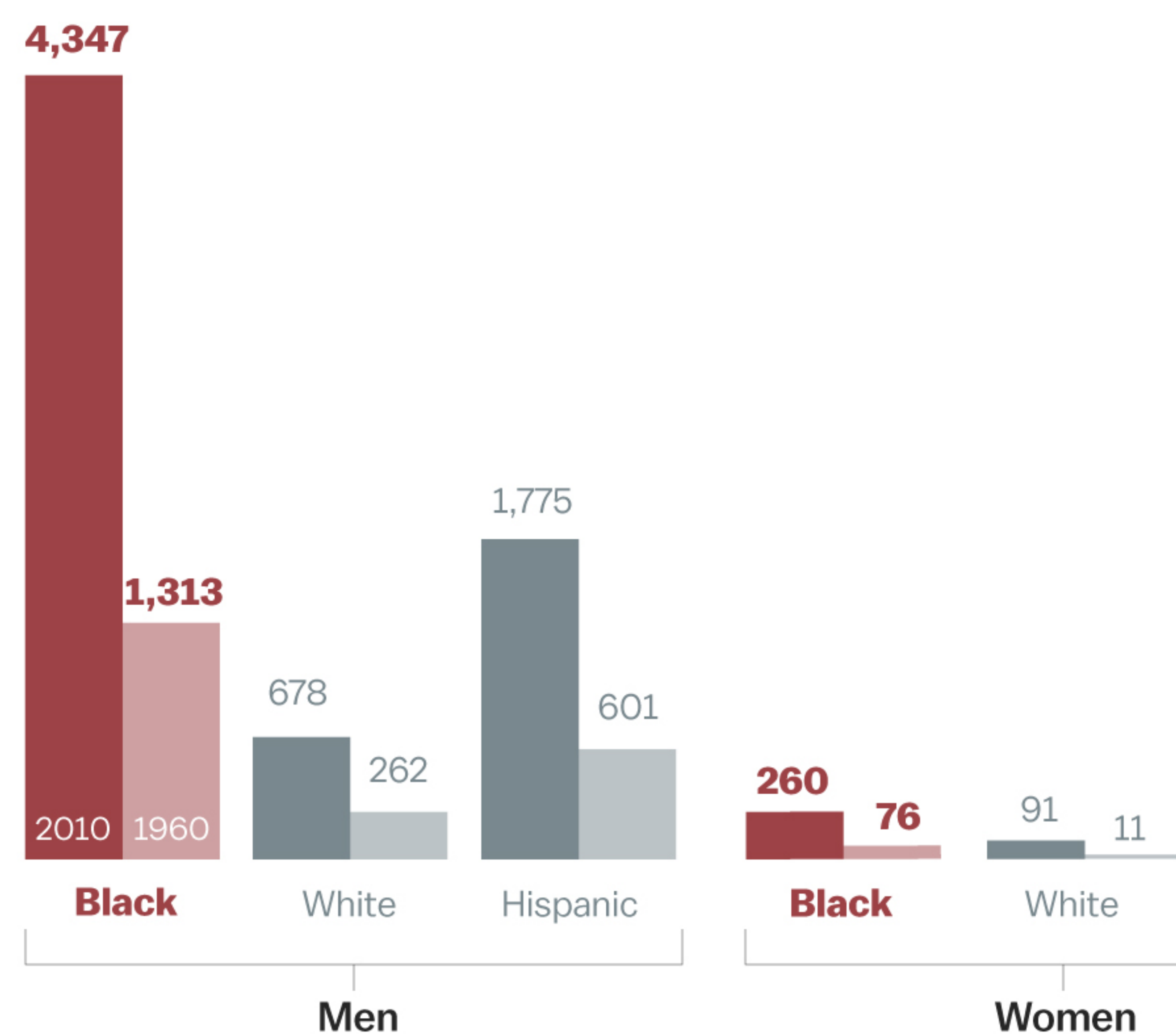
Conclusion

The effects of racism is like a silent killer. It sits in a person's psyche and gives them anxiety, depression, Hypertension, etc. Anxiety is a hard thing to measure, especially when the people that are suffering from it feels as if they don't have a voice. We, as a society need to continue to apply pressure to state institutions to stamp out the seen and unseen biases that exist within American institutions.

References - Kmietowicz, Zosia. "Tackling Racism in Medical Schools: Five Minutes with . . . Gurdas Singh." *Bmj*, 2020, p. m583., doi:10.1136/bmj.m583.

- Green, Bernard Lee, et al. "Participation in Health Education, Health Promotion, and Health Research by African Americans: Effects of the Tuskegee Syphilis
- Neal, A. M., & Turner, S. M. (1991). Anxiety disorders research with African Americans: Current status. *Psychological Bulletin*, 109(3),

Incarceration rates from 1960 and 2010 per 100,000 residents.



Source: Pew Research Center

Discussion

1. Anxiety disorders is higher in African Americans community because of mass incarceration. Black males accounted for over 30% of the total prisons population while only being less than 12% of the total population.
2. Anxiety does not effect high blood pressure long-term, but dealing with episodes of racism can cause dramatic, spikes in a person's blood pressure.
3. The Tuskegee Experiment hurt the relationship between the black community and healthcare providers. The mistrust that this experiment created additional anxiety about black people visiting the doctor.
4. Diagnosed anxiety has been on a rise for African Americans even though mental and emotional help is considered taboo