

# Black In America



## ***Written by Darryl Turpin, Director of Equity and Cultural Engagement***

Black History Month is upon us again. Unfortunately, like most things in our society it seems to have lost much of its substance. Black people continue to be a focus on television programs, political proclamations, and social media posts from people across lines of race, who struggle to differentiate Frederick Douglass from Fred Hampton.

When Carter G. Woodson began “Negro History Week” in 1926, he wrote, “If a race has no history, it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated.” Malcolm X was correct when he proclaimed, “Of all our studies, it is history that is best qualified to reward our research.”

We must also be clear that there can be no serious engagement of American History without understanding Black peoples’ place on that landscape. We have been, and continue to be, criminalized, villainized, and dehumanized. Such historical study during and beyond truly exemplifies the need and focus on Black History then, Black History now, and the future.

## **Black History is American History**

This month, we will highlight our predecessors who lived and died for our country’s values. We can, will, and must continue to live and stand up for these values. Black people fought for liberty, freedom, justice, and equality for all.

As Director of Equity and Cultural Engagement at Lines for Life, mental health is at the forefront of our work. We highlight cultural and linguistic responsiveness and recognize it as an integral part of best practices in a behavioral healthcare setting. Awareness of cultural responsiveness and practices in the delivery of mental health prevention services is essential to understanding an individual’s presenting problems and creating culturally responsive policies and procedures. Additionally, effectively responding to individuals within a cultural context is critical in providing clinical excellence and quality of care.

It is appropriate to close as we began — with Carter G. Woodson, who wrote in 1933, “If you can control a man’s thinking, you do not have to worry about his action. When you determine what a man shall think, you do not have to worry about what he will do. If you make a man, feel inferior, you do not have to compel him to accept an inferior status, for he will seek it himself. If you make a man, think he is justly an outcast, you do not have to order him to the back door. He will go without being told, and if there is no back door, his very nature will demand one.”

The contributions and influence of Black Americans span more than 400 years. I hope that Black History becomes more than just a month during the year but an integral part of American History.

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