

**Title:** A Pilot Study to Improve Community Resiliency in African Americans with Memory Impairment (CRAMI)

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**Background:** Long-standing systemic health inequities have put elderly African Americans at increased risk of COVID-19 and worse health outcomes. The Community Resiliency Model (CRM) is a new evidence-based behavioral intervention that teaches sensory awareness skills to improve resiliency.

**Objectives:** To pilot the use of a CRM intervention on African Americans with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) and evaluate its effectiveness on mental health outcomes.

**Methods:** Nine African American participants with MCI were recruited from a primary care clinic to participate in a 3-hour online CRM workshop in November 2021. Participants completed surveys pre and post intervention to measure stress (PSS-10), depression (PHQ-9), somatic symptoms (SSS-8), resilience (CD-RISC), and anxiety (GAD-7). Data were analyzed using two-sided paired t-tests.

**Results:** We had complete data on eight participants. Average age was 66 years and 88% were female. Participants showed significant improvement in mean scores for depressive symptoms (mean difference: PHQ-9: 1.4 (95% CI: 0.2, 1.6),  $p = 0.03$ ). All other measures also showed improvement but were not significant (mean differences: resilience: -1.9 (-6.9, 3.1),  $p = 0.41$ ; somatic symptoms: 2.1 (-0.4, 4.7),  $p = 0.09$ ; stress: 4.0 (-2.6, 10.6),  $p = 0.19$ ; anxiety: 1.5 (-0.5, 3.5),  $p = 0.12$ ).

**Conclusions:** In our pilot study, elderly African Americans with MCI reported high levels of stress, depression, and anxiety, which were improved by a brief online CRM intervention. Behavioral interventions such as CRM are scalable and may reduce mental health burden during the COVID-19 pandemic, meriting further study.