

BIPOC Mental Health

Mental health affects everyone regardless of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. However, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) are significantly more likely to develop mental health conditions and face unique barriers to accessing treatment and support, such as:

- Language barriers
- Racism, bias, and discrimination in treatment settings
- Lack of diversity among mental health care providers
- Lower chance of health care coverage
- Greater mental health stigma

Mental health treatment may require a referral from your insurance company, primary care physician, or employee assistance professional. You may need to advocate for yourself by conducting online research, asking family and friends, or contacting cultural organizations in your community for recommendations. Use the worksheet, “Choosing the Right Mental Health Care for You”, to determine the best options and course of action.

Make sure to ask about the provider’s cultural competence, such as:

- Do you have any experience treating someone from my background?
- Have you had cultural competence training?
- How would you include aspects of my identity into my care?

At your first session, if you feel like your provider doesn’t understand you, it’s okay to leave. It might take a bit of effort to find the right provider, but mental health treatment is worth it.



Self-Care Actions for Mental Health

Caring for yourself is one of the most important and often the most difficult things when dealing with mental health. That’s why early intervention is so critical. Taking a free, confidential screening at mhascreening.org is one of the easiest ways to check on your mental health.

- **Manage Mental Health** – Mental health care can look different for everyone, and you don’t need to choose just one option. Options may include therapists, psychiatrists, primary care providers, employee assistance program professionals, healers, faith leaders, community members, or self-help practices. A combination of methods can be extremely helpful, especially when seeking culturally responsive care.
- **Culturally Responsive Care** – Be confident when disclosing relevant information about your beliefs, culture, sexual orientation and/or gender identity that could potentially affect your care. Your provider will play a vital role in your treatment, so make sure you feel comfortable and can communicate well with them before committing to treatment.
- **Support from Loved Ones** – You deserve support with your mental health issue. Speaking with family or friends can be a good first step. Use the worksheet, “Talking to Your Loved Ones About Mental Health”, to help identify your feelings or thoughts, decide what and whom to share with, what you or the person may need more information about, and what kind of support you want from them.
- **Available Networks** – It’s a helpful and comforting feeling knowing you’re not alone. Explore story-sharing platforms like [Ok2Talk](#) and [You Are Not Alone](#) where everyday people write about their deepest struggles with mental illness and their hopes for recovery.