

Connect to culturally competent care

July is BIPOC Mental Health Month



For many, entering the healthcare system can be fraught with fear and distrust, based on a well-documented history¹ of discrimination, mistreatment and misdiagnosis.

However, now more than ever, trustworthy, culturally competent help is available in the Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

Find a provider who's right for you

Increasingly, health systems and clinics are implementing initiatives to bridge cultural gaps and create better experiences and outcomes for BIPOC community members. This includes incorporating cultural diversity and inclusion training into programs for medical and mental health care professionals, offering language interpreters, and making information available in multiple languages.

Culturally competent providers understand the role that cultural differences play in the diagnosis of a condition and can incorporate cultural needs and differences into your care.

It also means the care professional knows and respects from a human and clinical perspective how social determinants of health – i.e., the conditions in the environments where someone is born, lives, learns, works, plays and ages – can affect your overall health and quality of life outcomes and risks.²

So, for example, for a person of color coping with race-based trauma, a culturally competent mental health professional will have an understanding of racism, be comfortable working with people of the same or a different race, and be knowledgeable and trained in the social and clinical effects of racial trauma.

Connect to culturally competent care

The following sites provide “get started” resources and a directory of culturally competent providers for:

- [Black and African American communities](#)
- [Native and Indigenous communities](#)
- [Latinx/Hispanic communities](#)
- [Asian American/Pacific Islander communities](#)
- [LGBTQ+ BIPOC communities](#)

You also can use the following tips for finding culturally competent care.³

Research providers:

- Contact providers or agencies from your same cultural background or look for providers and agencies that have worked with people who have a similar cultural background
- Ask trusted friends and family for recommendations
- Look online or ask for referrals from cultural organizations in your community

Ask providers these questions:

- Are you familiar with my community's beliefs, values and attitudes toward health care and/or mental health? If not, are you willing to learn about my cultural background and respect my perspective?
- Do you have experience treating people from my cultural background?
- Have you had cultural competence training?
- Are you or members of your staff bilingual?
- How would you include aspects of my cultural identity, such as age, faith, gender or sexual orientation, into my care?

Other things you can do:

- Tell the provider about traditions, values and beliefs that are important to you
- Tell the provider what role you want your family to play in your treatment
- Learn about your condition, particularly how it affects people from your culture or community
- Look around the provider's office for signs of inclusion. Who works there? Does the waiting room have magazines, signs and pamphlets for you and your community?

For the full downloadable/printable list, [go here](#).

Get involved

For additional resources on BIPOC mental health, visit [Mental Health America](#)

To help support BIPOC mental health and raise awareness:

- [Become a fundraiser](#)
- [Pledge to be StigmaFree](#)



Among the U.S. population, in the last year, the number of people who reported having a mental illness include⁴:

7 million Black or African American individuals

827 thousand Native American or Alaskan Native individuals

10 million Latino or Hispanic individuals

2.9 million Asian American or Pacific Islander

The stock images are being used for illustrative purposes only.

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2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Social determinants of health." <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health> Accessed May 6, 2022.
3. The Commonwealth Fund, "TRANSFORMING CARE: Understanding and Ameliorating Medical Mistrust Among Black Americans." <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/newsletter-article/2021/jan/medical-mistrust-among-black-americans> Accessed May 6, 2022
4. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)'s public online data analysis system (PDAS) Annals of Family Medicine, "Discrimination and Medical Mistrust in a Racially and Ethnically Diverse Sample of California Adults." <https://www.annfam.org/content/19/1/4> Accessed May 10, 2022.
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This program should not be used for emergency or urgent care needs. In an emergency, call 911 if you are in the United States or the local emergency services phone number if you are outside the United States, or go to the nearest accident and emergency department. This program is not a substitute for a doctor's or professional's care. Due to the potential for a conflict of interest, legal consultation will not be provided on issues that may involve legal action against Optum or its affiliates, or any entity through which the caller is receiving these services directly or indirectly (e.g., employer or health plan). This program and all its components, in particular services to family members below the age of 16, may not be available in all locations and are subject to change without prior notice. Experience and/or educational levels of Employee Assistance Program resources may vary based on contract requirements or country regulatory requirements. Coverage exclusions and limitations may apply.

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