

BIPOC Guide to Mental Health Care

Purpose

This pamphlet was collaboratively created to support the mental health needs of the BIPOC of Auburn University. By providing the readers of this pamphlet with helpful information, we hope to empower them to seek services if and when they choose to do so.

Disparity in Care

The mental health needs of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) continue to be unmet. In addition, BIPOC continue to experience both institutional and individual racism, which affects their mental health and in turn, their quality of life. As a result of racism, the health trends of BIPOC display the disparities of medical and mental healthcare.

What is therapy?

Therapy can be referred to as counseling or psychotherapy. However, they all converge on the same message: collaborative treatment built on a foundation of the relationship between the client and counselor. Based on the availability in your area, financial considerations, or other personal needs, you may meet with a social worker, counselor, psychologist or even a psychiatrist who provides therapeutic services. Therapy is a confidential space where clients are met in a nonjudgmental, supportive manner to focus on their goals.

Multicultural Competency

Regardless of the type of mental health professional who provides therapeutic services, each must abide by certain guidelines. Multicultural guidelines can be found across disciplines (i.e., social work, psychology, and psychiatry). These guidelines raise awareness, provide knowledge and skills, so that racial, cultural, and gender influences are under consideration when working with BIPOC. However, mental health professionals, similar to any other group, are not immune to internalizing biases, stereotypes or values which can be a disservice to their clients. Currently, there is no gold-standard training or certificate which recognizes professionals who are culturally competent versus those who are not.

First Session

The first session is what many consider to be an intake, an extended session where the clinician collects information about the client to determine the client's goals, past involvement with therapy, and whether or not the clinician is trained to provide the services the client is requesting. However, this session as well as subsequent sessions, are also a time when clients can determine whether or not this clinician is a good fit for their needs. Below we have listed some potential questions to ask a prospective mental health provider.

General Questions to Ask

- What's your training?
- How long have you worked as a therapist?
- What types of therapy do you think might help me? Why?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to treatment, including medication?
- How does the type of treatment you recommend work?
- What are the chances that treatment will succeed?
- How soon should I start to feel better?
- What are your thoughts on assessment?
- What should I do if I don't feel better?
- How much will treatment cost?
- What are your thoughts on out-of-session assignments?
- What if I want to change the treatment approach?

Culturally Competent Therapists

Asian Mental Health Collective
asianmhc.org

Black Mental Health Alliance
blackmentalhealth.com

Therapy for Black Girls
therapyforblackgirls.com

Therapy for Black Men
therapyforblackmen.org

Therapy for Latinx
therapyforlatinx.com

Native American Therapists
psychologytoday.com/us/
therapists/native-american

Auburn University Psychological Services
Center (AUPSC)
334-844-4889

Auburn University Student Counseling and
Psychological Services (SCPS)
334-884-5123

Auburn University Marriage and Family
Therapy Center (AU MFT Center)
334-844-4478

Kerri Baharanyi, LICSW, PIP
Soul Affirming Counseling
334-539-8051

Madalyn Caldwell, Ed.S., LPC
Anchor of Hope Counseling Center
334-231-6687

Michelle Crumbly, LPC, LLC
334-521-5045

Sheila Holmes, M.Ed, LPC, NCC
Revision Counseling Center
334-384-8158

Evelyn A. Hunter, PhD
Auburn Psychological Wellness Center
334-219-0425

Angela Nelms-Griffin, MS, LMFT
AU MFT Center
334-319--3524

Diversity Specific Questions to Ask

- How do you define diversity?
- What experience do you have working with people who identify as (insert facet of identity here)?
- What assessment tools do you use to understand diverse clients?
- How do you deliver effective treatment to people of different backgrounds?
- What does cultural competency mean to you and your therapy practice?
- How do you conceptualize oppression in the United States in regard to mental health?

** Special thanks to Margaret Caruso, MA for creating this resource**