

# Mental Health Toolkit

Mental health shouldn't exist in a vacuum and you don't have to be clinically diagnosed to experience anxiety or stress. We're here to give you the tools you need to improve your mental health and overall emotional well-being.

**feals**<sup>TM</sup>



When it comes to the state of mental health in America, the prevailing sentiment seems to be that there isn't one. To invoke an old philosophical cliché: The glass is half full. The glass is also half empty.

When you look back on the last century, there's no denying that we've made progress when it comes to the public discourse surrounding issues of mental health and mental illness. According to a [Harris poll](#) conducted in November 2018, 87% of American adults agreed that "having a mental health disorder is nothing to be ashamed of"—a perspective that was certainly not held by the majority a half-century ago.

But here's where that half-empty glass comes in: While there's better and broader access to resources and treatment, it's become clear how far-reaching mental health issues and mental illness are. There is a [rising mental health crisis](#) in America, and one that is near infinite in nuance and complexity; nearly [1 in 5 Americans](#) currently experience mental illness, with minority populations comprising the [vast majority](#).



1 in 5 Americans currently experience MENTAL ILLNESS, with MINORITY POPULATIONS comprising the VAST MAJORITY.

An increasingly robust public discourse has shed light on how ill-prepared we are to meet the current moment; as a [2018 findings from a survey](#) co-conducted by the National Council for Behavioral Health describes it: "The demand for mental health services is stronger than ever, with nearly six in ten (56%) Americans seeking or wanting to seek mental health services either for themselves or for a loved one...[and yet] the overwhelming majority of Americans (74%) do not believe such services are accessible for everyone."

We've compiled resources on how to approach the subject of mental health in conversation, as well as ways to seek additional support for yourself and for your loved ones.



Advocates and experts in the mental health space point out that one of the first steps we can take in helping reduce stigma around mental illness is to change the ways we have long been conditioned to speak about it.

# Reduce **STIGMA** around mental illness by **CHANGING** the ways we've been **CONDITIONED** to speak about it.

A language guide published by the [Mental Health Coalition](#), an initiative founded by Kenneth Cole, explains it this way: "The way we talk about mental health conditions often puts blame on the individuals experiencing the disorders. We can play a role in alleviating some of this blame while also using language to reduce the distance between 'us' (without mental health conditions) and 'them' (with mental health conditions) because everyone has mental health."

EVERYONE



HAS



MENTAL



HEALTH

Phrases such as “that’s crazy,” “that’s insane,” or “you’re nuts” are deeply ingrained in our culture and can thus seem innocuous, but they are ultimately pejoratives that reinforce stigma. And the casual appropriation of mental illness when we say things like “I’m so depressed that...” or “I’m so OCD about...” likewise contribute to the trivialization of individuals who are truly experiencing those conditions. Consider this slight, but impactful reframing: instead of saying, “struggling with mental illness,” it’s “living with a mental health condition.”

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These efforts to reshape jumping-off points in conversations and to foster a more empathetic approach to mental health ultimately help foster a more positive environment in which everyone’s mental well-being can better thrive.

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# Where to seek support and help

Resources for seeking support on issues of mental health are more abundant and accessible than they've ever been, despite there being much room for improvement. If you or a loved one is in search of support, we've compiled an evolving list of useful resources.

For the last 10 years, [Bring Change to Mind](#), co-founded by actress and activist Glenn Close, has been working to end the stigma and discrimination that surrounds mental illness. Recently they've added race and mental resources for their clubs, invited their youth community to speak about racial injustice, and offered facilitated conversations around protecting your mental well-being.

The [National Alliance on Mental Health](#), or NAMI for short, is a comprehensive online toolkit that provides guidance on identifying symptoms and warning signs, treatment options, and guidance on how issues impact different groups such as veterans, minorities and BIPOC, LGBTQ+, as well as young adults. They can also connect you to support groups and online discussion groups, and provide additional resources on becoming an advocate and ally in moving the conversation forward.

[The Jed Foundation](#) connects the dots between mental health issues as they relate to young people transitioning into adulthood. Resources focus on high schoolers, college students, young adults, and their families. For those looking to get more involved with advocacy, the Jed Foundation offers volunteer and fundraising opportunities as well.

[Made of Millions](#) is focused on changing global perceptions of mental health through the use of art, media, and digital technology. They offer a robust schedule of [live streaming content](#) focused on mental health issues and self-care practices, as well as an ever-evolving roster of campaigns you can support or contribute to that deal with specific issues such as [mental health in the workplace](#).

[Mental Health America](#) adheres to what's known as a "Before Stage 4" philosophy, which means that they believe mental health conditions should be treated well before they reach a critical point. They offer a series of mental health screenings that you can take from the privacy of your own home and tackle a variety of topics including depression, anxiety, PTSD, and eating disorders designed to help you find the right tools for support.

**Painted Brain** sits at the intersection of art, technology, and mental health. Run by Dave Leon, Rayshell Chambers, and David “Eli” Israelian, all of whom have faced mental health challenges of their own and believe that those living with mental illness can support each other.

Programming in their LA community center is run by a team of peer leaders, occupational therapists, social workers, and mental health survivors who organize group art interventions to build trust, promote communication, and offer support. They teamed up with the LA County Department of Mental Health to create a digital health literacy curriculum to help manage day-to-day tasks, capture behavior (symptoms and mood), as well as set goals for better health and wellness. Painted Brain is the first mental health partner in Feals’ “Feel Good, Do Better” giving initiative.

**The UnLonely Project** is an initiative launched by the **Foundation for Art & Healing** and specifically focuses on addressing the negative impacts isolation can have on our mental health. The initiative’s content hub features personal stories, a short film festival, a crowd-sourced playlist, and special calls-to-action on isolation in the workplace and school campuses.

**The Trevor Project** provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning young people under 25. The content-rich site tackles topics like how to protect your well-being on Instagram, addressing Black LGBTQ youth mental health, as well as a guide to being an ally to transgender and nonbinary youth. They’re available 24/7 for guided counselor support via hotline, text, or chat.

## Community-Based Resources

### AAPI COMMUNITY

With an emphasis on “whole patient health” **Asian Health Services** provides mental health case management, nutrition, and dental care to a community of more than 50,000 in both English and 14 Asian languages including Mandarin, Cantonese, and Vietnamese. Their group of counselors is well-versed in tackling many of the stigmas associated with mental health conditions in AAPI communities.

With the goal of offering high-quality mental health services for all, the **National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association** (NAAPI-MHA) has compiled a database of providers in all 50 states that serve the AANHPI community, as well as offers COVID-19 resources for those in need.

For many members of the Asian Diaspora, there is often a cultural stigma around addressing mental health experiences head on. Part of the mission of **Asian Mental Health Collective** is to facilitate difficult conversations through their Facebook group, resource library, and meet-up groups.

**Asian Mental Health Project** (AMHP) works to tackle the ongoing cultural stigma around mental health care. Every Wednesday from 6-7:30 pm PST, they offer free weekly check-ins for their community to openly discuss topics including overcoming discomfort around culture and race and understanding racial drama.

**National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance** (NQAPIA) has a helpful API Healer Network and Therapy Resources List that connects healers and therapists of Asian and Pacific Islander descent to one another. Many offer sliding scale services to more widely reach their communities.

## BLACK AND BIPOC COMMUNITY

**The Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation** is a non-profit led by actor, writer, and producer Taraji P. Henson, whose father, a Vietnam Vet, lived with a mental health condition for years without seeking support. The BLHF focuses its efforts on connecting urban schools with mental health support, reducing the recidivism rate in prisons, and increasing the number of African American therapists.

**Black Mental Health Alliance** is a community-based membership organization that offers tools and educational resources for clinicians, educators, and families in need.

Founded by energy healer and entrepreneur Maryam Ajayi, **Dive in Well** offers digital workshops and panels with various wellness practitioners and leaders in an effort to promote a more inclusive wellness industry.

**Ethel's Club** is a social community for people of color. The current offerings include digital salons and live-streamed classes, as well as workouts and wellness sessions designed to foster a creative and well-rounded community.

Helmed by writer and activist Rachel Cargle, the **Loveland Foundation** gives access to resources for healing and therapy for women and girls seeking mental health care.

**Melanin & Mental Health** is an online network that connects mental health clinicians with Black and Hispanic communities. Their "Between Sessions" podcast addresses timely topics including "Mental health and the Black man" and "Why we grieve for people we don't know."

**NQTTCN** is an educational resource committed to transforming mental health for queer and trans people of color.

The **Sad Girls Club** is a rich, welcoming resource for mental health issues particularly as they pertain to millennial and Gen Z women of color. Their blog touches on substance abuse, sexuality, spirituality, self-care, and relationships. For every \$100 donated they provide a safe space for up to ten community members to heal with an accredited wellness professional through their "Soul Sessions" initiative.

**Sista Afya** is a platform started by social worker Camesha Jones that leans heavily on building community and offers access to low-cost mental health services.

[The Steve Fund](#) works to mend the gap for students of color who may experience discrimination and disparities in mental health by offering several avenues of support. On a regular basis, they host workshops, professional development and conferences across the US to raise awareness around the mental health needs of young people of color to ensure they may thrive in future pursuits.

## LATINO / HISPANIC / LATINX COMMUNITY

NAMI's [Compartiendo Esperanza](#) is a bilingual 90-minute presentation that can help address mental health awareness in Latino communities by tackling topics about how to talk about mental health and decrease stigma as well signs and symptoms of anxiety disorders.

Brandie Carlos started [Therapy for Latinx](#) after losing a best friend to suicide and struggling to find the right support. Available in both Spanish and English, the site serves as a database of therapists who either identify as LatinX or have closely worked with the LatinX communities and have a deep understanding of their needs.

## NATIVE AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

According to Mental Health America, 19% of Native and Indigenous people in the US report having experienced mental illness in the last year. [One Sky Center](#) aims to improve presentation and treatment of mental health and substance abuse problems amongst Native populations. They work to provide training and products to educate practitioners particularly those working within Native and Indigenous communities.

Over at the Colorado School of Public Health, the [Centers for American Indian & Alaska Native Health](#) is the largest program of its kind in the country. Their mission is to promote the health and well-being of American Indians and Alaska Natives through ongoing education, research and information dissemination.

*If you or someone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts, or just want to talk to someone, text the Crisis Text Line at 741741 or call the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at 1-800-273-8255.*

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