



**A COMMUNITY CREATED RESOURCE
& INFORMATION GUIDE**



**BLACK
MENTAL
HEALTH
MATTERS**



Peer Support Space, Inc.

*Where Chosen Family
Heals Together.*




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This Black Mental Health Matters Resource Guide has been curated over two years with input, perspective, and wisdom shared by the communal Black Mental Health Matters planning committee. While the information included centers lived experience and perspective by and for Black community, we recognize that no one identity is a monolith and there are nuances in our culture. This is a non-exhaustive guide, please use it as a launching point to deeper exploration of mental health and what that looks like for you and those you love.



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Learn more at www.peersupportspace.org

BLACK MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS MOVEMENT

Black Mental Health Matters is an emotional justice movement responding to the need for healing and emotional support systems for Black community members.

Our goal is to expand mental health awareness by destigmatizing mental health through intentional outreach, education and conversation. We are a movement led for and by Black individuals.

This movement is led by a public planning committee.

How can I be a part of this movement?

Join the Planning Committee This movement is led by a public planning committee open to the public.

Help Lead a Peer Group We have a peer-led healing space for the general Black community. We are looking for facilitators to start a group for Black Men, Black LGBTQ+ Folx, Crime Survivors, and Returning Citizens. As well as folx interested in co-facilitating a group for Autistic Adults, Genderqueer communities, marginalized LGBTQ+ marginalized genders

Create a Curriculum Locally, there are cultural-education workshops for mental health providers working with communities such as the LGBTQ+ community, but there is a need for education around Black communities. We are looking for individuals with personal and professional backgrounds interested in helping create a new, valuable workshop to this end.

Share Your Voice Join a Speakers Bureau of individuals sharing their personal and/or professional wisdom.

Learn more Visit peersupportspace.org/bmhm-movement

Email Us Reach out to Jeffrey McCary with any questions at Mccar322@knights.ucf.edu

YOUR BLACK MATTERS

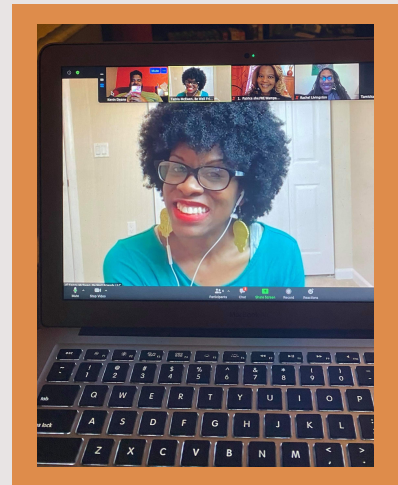
A space led for and by the Black Community in order to hold space and give one another support. We meet digitally the Last Monday of each month from 6PM-7PM(EST).

Register at: yourblackmatters.eventbrite.com

ALL Black people are welcome, there is no such thing as “not Black enough” -- if you identify as Black, you are Black, and you are welcome.

Join us as we build community and support one another, and hold space for each other to talk about the Black experience in a safe space.

This peer-space is not therapy and not a dating service. This space IS, however, a safe space to be heard and build a community.



In This Space We:

- Understand that this is a gathering of community supporting one another, not a clinical support group.
- Acknowledge you are just as valuable listening as you are sharing.
- Strive for everyone to feel welcome here, regardless of how you identify your Blackness
- .Do not have to agree with each other to still hold space for one another.
- Here, we see and respect our shared humanity and every voice is heard, even if it differs from our own.
- Only give advice when asked for it and speak from our own experience
- Understand that it is okay to be vulnerable and you don't have to put on a “strong face”.
- Invite one another to show up as our authentic selves, take up space, and be genuine.
- Give one another an equal chance to take up space.
- Encourage exchanges that are respectful and mutual, in and out of this space.
- Honor that what is shared here stays here.
- Encourage you to self-advocate for your needs.
- Collectively work together to create a safe space.

This group is made possible thanks to a sponsorship by [Maven Leadership Collective](#).

THE COMMUNITY THAT BREATHES TOGETHER, HEALS TOGETHER AND BUILDS TOGETHER

BY TAMIA A. MCEWEN, PHD

Some of us had an established wellness routine before COVID 19 and had to shift to meet the social distancing requirements. Some were just beginning our wellness routines and are having to shift because what we had access is longer available because of COVID 19 restrictions. Some of us are just now starting a wellness routine as a result of stress related to COVID 19. Some of us want to do something to be well, get well or stay well but we do not know where to start. Let us start with the breath.

Just breathe: Come to a comfortable position. If seated, sit where you are comfortable but alert. If seated or standing try to add something to support your back: A wall, pillow, bolster, someone you love and trust. Something solid or able to hold the weight of you. Just breathe in through your nose at your regular breathing pace and simply notice your breath. Without restrictions, tune into your breath.

As the air comes in and travels through your airways, notice its path. Place one hand on your heart (maybe your right hand), one on your belly (perhaps your left hand), below your navel (about 3 fingers below your navel) and tune in to the path of your breath.

Take 3 breaths here. Inhale. Exhale. Now breathe in through your nose. Breathe out through your mouth. Your eyes may be open, or you may keep them close. Your hands may remain positioned on your heart and belly or you may rest them gently in your lap, on your thighs, or by your sides, whatever is comfortable.

Inhale. Exhale. Notice your breath. As you inhale through your nose into your belly notice the rise of your belly as you breathe into your diaphragm. This is called Diaphragmic Breathing, Deep Breathing, or Belly Breathing. This breath that connects all the way to your abdomen activates your bodies relaxation response: **Rest, Repair, Recover.**

And as you exhale through your mouth notice the fall of your belly. Belly breathing is how babies naturally breathe. We are relearning and remembering to breathe.

Take a few more breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth at your own pace, allowing the inhales to become longer and the exhale to match in length.

Just breathe.

Find your rhythm.

Notice your breath.

Imagine your entire body breathing beyond just your lungs.

Now take a long inhale through your nose. Take a slow exhale out your nose. Press your lips together for a fuller breath in and out that opens your nostrils and airways. Take one more breath in, raising your arms over your head, palms up to extended prayer position, slow exhale as you bring your hands down to heart center.

Take one breath in through you nose. Let one breath out through your mouth with an audible sound or sigh.

When you are ready, open your eyes.

Be Well, Friends and Family, Love Tamia

MENTAL HEALTH: FINDING WHAT WORKS FOR YOU

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

Every person is going to be unique in their mental health needs and care. We gently encourage you to lean into exploring what feels right for you. For some, it is therapy. For others it is connecting with peers, healing through art, staying physically active, listening to podcasts, cooking, comedy... There is no one way to take care of your mental health.

Whatever works for you, works for you. Sometimes it is helpful to talk to your friends and family when you need support. Sometimes, you may need to call in a mental health professional. This is okay, too. We have provided some resources in this packet to help you in that journey.

Remember, you are the expert on yourself and your experiences.



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THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF RACIAL DISPARITIES IN THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

Full resource found [here](#), written by Tahmi Perzichilli for Counseling Today:

Racial disparities, or unfair differences, within the system of mental health are well documented. Research indicates that compared with people who are white, black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) are:

- Less likely to have access to mental health services
- Less likely to seek out services
- Less likely to receive needed care
- More likely to receive poor quality of care
- More likely to end services prematurely

Regarding racial disparities in misdiagnosis, black men, for example, are overdiagnosed with schizophrenia (four times more likely than white men to be diagnosed), while underdiagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder and mood disorders. Additionally, concerns are compounded by the fact that for BIPOC, mental health care is often provided in prisons, which infers a multitude of issues.

BIPOC are overrepresented in the criminal justice system, as the system overlays race with criminality. Statistics show that over 50% of those incarcerated have mental health concerns. This suggests that rather than receiving treatment for mental illness, BIPOC end up incarcerated because of their symptoms. In jails and prisons, the standard of care for mental health treatment is generally low, and prison practices themselves are often traumatic.

The vast majority of mental health treatment providers in the United States are white. For example, approximately 86% of psychologists are white, and less than 2% of American Psychological Association members are African American. Some research has demonstrated that provider bias and stereotyping are relevant factors in health disparities. For nearly four decades, the mental health field has been called to focus on increasing cultural competency training, which has focused on the examination of provider attitudes/beliefs and increasing cultural awareness, knowledge and skills.

Despite such efforts, racial disparities still exist even after controlling for factors such as income, insurance status, age, and symptom presentation.

Established barriers for BIPOC are the following:

- Different cultural perceptions about mental illness, help-seeking behaviors and well-being
- Racism and discrimination
- Greater vulnerability to being uninsured, access barriers, and communication barriers
- Fear and mistrust of treatment

In addition to emphasizing culturally competent services, other recommendations to bridging the gaps and addressing barriers have largely focused on diversifying workforces and reducing stigma of mental illness in communities of color.

One area not often noted is the historical (and traumatic) context of systemic racism within the institution of mental health, although it is well known that race and insanity share a long and troubled past. This focus may begin to account for how racial differences shape treatment encounters, or a lack thereof, even when barriers are controlled for and the explicit races of the provider and client are not at issue.

Click [here](#) to read on about the historical context of racial disparities.

SOME TERMS TO KNOW:

Chosen Family: nonbiological kinship bonds, whether legally recognized or not, deliberately chosen for the purpose of mutual support and love. These are often formed when there are needs not being met by one's biological family.

Colorism: favorable treatment given on the basis of skin color. This is typically referring to discrimination against individuals with a darker skin tone that are among people of the same racial group.

Cumulative Trauma: psychological, emotional and physical distress associated with direct or indirect repeated exposure to traumatic events.

Generational Trauma: a traumatic event that began years prior to the current generation and has impacted the ways in which individuals within a family understand, cope with, and heal from trauma.

Micro-aggressions: Everyday remarks, questions, or actions that have to do with a person's membership in a group that is discriminated against. These may be intentional or unintentional and may come off as subtle alone but cumulatively can take a toll of one's emotional wellbeing (like having a bunch of mosquito bites).

Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: Stems from the research of Dr. DeGruy, refers to the residual impacts of generations of slavery and the adaptive survival behaviors in African American communities. Encompasses the lack of opportunity to heal or access benefits available in U.S. society.

Racial Imposter Syndrome: A feeling of self-doubt when one's internal racial identity doesn't match with others' perception of their racial identity. May also occur when a mixed race person doesn't believe they belong to any identities.

Race-Based Trauma: the psychological distress associated with experiences of racism.

Toxic Masculinity: a set of attitudes and ways of behaving stereotypically associated with or expected of men, regarded as having a negative impact on men and on society as a whole. For instance, expecting men not to express emotions and "man up" can have negative consequences on their emotional and physical health. This uniquely affects Black men.



@alyseruriani

THERE IS HOPE

Despite the historical disparities and current challenges being faced, there is hope. Your life matters. Your mental health matters. Please feel encouraged to utilize the resources below (not an exhaustive list) as a launching point as you explore what works best for you. **Take care of yourself, we are so happy you are here.**



@kellyberryart

RESOURCES

The following resources have been added to this document after being recommended by a community member. Peer Support Space does not endorse any of the following resources by including it in the following resource packet. To recommend additional resources or for any concerns or questions please email dandelion@peersupportspace.org

NETWORKS AND DIRECTORIES

Black Female Therapists (BFT) www.blackfemaletherapists.com

Designed by and for Black female therapists to create a space for Black women to discuss their mental health and discover new wellness strategies through their [blog](#), [podcast](#), and therapist directory.

Melanin & Mental Health melaninandmentalhealth.com

Serving the mental health needs of Black & Latinx/Hispanic communities by offering a therapist directory and a [podcast](#) focused on mental health and communities of color.

Therapy For Black Girls therapyforblackgirls.com

Encouraging the mental wellness of Black women and girls. They have a database of local therapists and a [podcast](#).

Therapy for Black Men therapyforblackmen.org

A dedicated space for men and boys of color to educate themselves on mental wellness, connect and encourage each other, and control their own narrative on mental health matters. Tools include a database of local therapists and life coaches, a dedicated space to [share your story](#), and [relatable articles](#) written by and for Black men.

Inclusive Therapists inclusivetherapists.com

A directory for culturally responsive, social justice-oriented therapist serving the needs of marginalized populations, including BIPoC, the LGBTQ+ community, neurodivergent folk, and people with disabilities.

LGBTQ Psychotherapists of Color lgbtqpsychotherapistsofcolor.com

Provides support, networking, leadership development, and community building opportunities for LGBTQ+ PoC in psychology, social work, and counseling. They provide a therapist directory for in-person and virtual counseling.

Therapy for QPoC therapyforqpoc.com

A mental health network based in Atlanta, GA dedicated to connecting QPoC with affirming services. They maintain a blog full of insightful thoughts on mental health, boundaries, and relationships as well as host virtual events.

The National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color nqttcn.com

A healing justice organization that works to transform mental health for queer and trans people of color in North America. They offer a directory that helps queer and trans People of Color locate mental health practitioners as well as a mental health fund for those in need.

Open Path Collective oppc.mentalhealthexcellence.org

A non-profit nationwide network of mental health professionals dedicated to providing in-office mental health care—at a steeply reduced rate—to individuals, couples, children, and families in need.

RESOURCES (CONT.)

FREE OR LOW COST COUNSELING

Greater Orlando Trauma Response Network greaterorlandotrnr.org/

Provides up to five free EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) sessions for those impacted by community-wide traumatic experiences including COVID-19 and the death of George Floyd.

Total Health Guidance totalhealthguidance.com

Holistic healthcare for the mind, body, and spirit. Provides services including counseling, acupuncture, massage, nutrition, and yoga

Orange Blossom Family Health orangeblossomfamilyhealth.org

A local medical and mental health care center which offers behavioral health and substance abuse counseling and case management. Provides services on a sliding scale fee. They do not turn clients away for their inability to pay, especially for the homeless population.

Outlook Clinic mhacf.org/outlook-clinic

Free psychiatric services for adults that have a primary diagnosis of depression or anxiety, are uninsured, live with a co-morbid medical condition, and live in Orange County.

The Loveland Foundation thelovelandfoundation.org

Offers financial assistance for Black women and girls seeking therapy

UCF Community Counseling and Research Center ccie.ucf.edu/ccrc/

Free local individual, couple, and family counseling sessions provided by advanced graduate students from the Counselor Education Program at the University of Central Florida

CLINICAL SUPPORT GROUPS

Institute for Healing Identity (IHI) Therapy Center ihitherapy.org/groups

Offers online, group therapy. Has a group for QTPOC individuals as well as one for gay men. Costs \$10 to attend.

Sista Afya sistaafya.com

Offers low-cost online support group/group therapy, workshops, and events for Black women 18+.

RESOURCES (CONT.)

PEER SERVICES

Harriet's Apothecary <http://www.harrietsapothecary.com/>

A collective of Black healers creating space for BIPOC can explore and restore their power, aliveness, and wholeness through conversation, community skillshares, sharing stories, and providing support groups.

Just Davia's WoC Therapists: A Supportive Circle

justdavia.com/woc-therapists-supportive-circle

For practicing women of color therapists only. Meetings consist of a brief guided meditation and a dialogue to support and affirm one another.

FearlessFemme100 fearlessfemme100.com

Offers peer counseling for queer/nonbinary/trans PoC. Intake application required to attend.

Liodelonte @liodelonte on Instagram

Sliding scale peer support counseling. Black and queer lived experience.

Peer Support Space peersupportspace.org

Organization that put on this event and put together this resource packet. Offers a variety of free peer-led services for historically underserved communities. Resources include community-led advocacy initiatives, digital and in-person community gatherings, a drop-in center and soon a peer respite center.

Treasure Coast Peer Network facebook.com/tcpeernetwork/

Located in Southeastern region of Florida, a space for peers to come together to share and educate one another on recovery, wellness and nutrition.

YOGA/MEDITATION

Black Girls Breathing instagram.com/blackgirlsbreathing

Community centered around meditation for black women to relax & de-stress.

blkTemple instagram.com/blktemple

Community hosting yoga flows and starting conversations about mental wellness and the Black community.

Liberate Meditation App onelink.to/liberate

A meditation app for people of color created by Julio Rivera, identifies as Afro-Latino (he/him)

YogaGreenBook directory.yogagreenbook.com

An online yoga studio for Black yoga and wellness teachers

RESOURCES (CONT.)

ADVOCACY

All Black Lives Fund tinyurl.com/ALLBLACKLIVESFUND

Launched by Contigo Fund -- dedicates funding to frontline LGBTQ+ organizing groups (not individuals) and efforts that are Black LGBTQ+ led in Central Florida

BEAM Collective beam.community/bvtn

A collective of advocates, yoga teachers, artists, therapists, lawyers, religious leaders, teachers, psychologists and activists committed to the emotional/mental health and healing of Black communities. They offer virtual events and recorded trainings.

BMHA (Black Mental Health Alliance) [Blackmentalhealth.com](https://blackmentalhealth.com)

A nonprofit providing training, consultation, support groups, resource referral, public information, and educational resources regarding mental health and mental illness issues.

Fireweed Collective fireweedcollective.org

A collective dedicated to mental health education and mutual aid through a Healing Justice lens. They offer a plethora of resources, including a crisis toolkit, educational webinars, and online peer support through a closed Facebook group.

Let Your Voice Be Heard [Letyourvoicebeheardinc.com](https://letyourvoicebeheardinc.com)

A local Orlando nonprofit, created with the vision of uniting minority communities, which has monthly meetings and various outreach programs.

'Never Walking Alone' Ministry at Majestic Life Church

facebook.com/MajesticLifeChurchPastorRivaTims/

A mental health and disability Ministry aimed towards banding together to "shut down the stigmas of mental health and disabilities and to help families who are suffering in silence to know that they're not alone". Hosted by former panelist Rosemarie McCoy McLoyd

The Sanctuary In The City thesanctuaryinthecity.org/

Sanctuary in the City is a black led, woman led organization founded with the awareness of the need for accessible, safe, and affirming healing spaces for Black Indigenous people of color.



@The Unapologetic Guide to Black Mental Health

LOCAL LEADERS & ORGS

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Be Well, Friends LLC www.macbewell.com

A black women owned wellness business providing yoga, meditation, mindful movement, wellness education: plant based eating tips, and lifestyle as wellness support webinars

Black Youth Project blackyouthproject.com

Highlights the voices and ideas of Black millennials.

Bros in Convo Initiative brosinconvo.org

Promotes and protects the health equity of Black gay, bisexual, queer, and same gender loving (GBQ/SGL) men ages 18 - 35 living in Central Florida.

Divas in Dialogue [Facebook.com/DivasinDialogue](https://www.facebook.com/DivasinDialogue)

A sisterhood for trans women of color empowering, building and strengthening each other.

Gender Advancement Project genderadvancementproject.org

A trans-led grassroots movement dedicated to the progression and inclusion of Transgender/GNB individuals in all facets of society

Higher Heights for America higherheightsforamerica.org

Political home for Black women and our allies to unleash our collective organizing power from the voting booth to elected office

Maven Leadership Collective mavenleadership.org

Consistently invests in creative social impact leaders who are queer and trans people of color and allies to build communities that thrive even in the face of crisis, transition, and tragedy. Our Co-Founder went through the leadership collective before launching Peer Support Space.

Miracle of Love miracleofloveinc.org

Provides comprehensive, multicultural HIV/AIDS care, education and prevention services that are effective and responsive to the Central Florida communities.

QLatinX qlatinx.org

A grassroots racial, social, and gender justice organization dedicated to the advancement and empowerment of Orlando's LGBTQ+ Latinx community.

Soul Sisters Leadership Collective soulsistersleadership.org

Supports new leaders that have "lived and breathed" the inequalities of our legal, educational, and economic systems.

Tamia A. McEwen, PhD Wellness Content & Support

macbewell.com, [Instagram.com/DrTamiamc](https://www.instagram.com/DrTamiamc), [Facebook.com/BeWellFriendsLLC/](https://www.facebook.com/BeWellFriendsLLC/)

The Movement for Black Lives m4bl.org

a space for Black organizations across the country to debate and discuss the current political conditions and develop shared assessments
Trans Inclusive Group

GIVE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA A GLOW-UP

There's something empowering about having a loving and authentic online community to connect with. Here is a list of Black & Brown therapists, mental wellness leaders, artists, and self-love advocates to crowd your Instagram with affirming and relatable mental health gems.

- [@alex_elle](#) [Self-Love + Vulnerability + Affirmations]
- [@_beamorg](#) [Peer Support + Black Healing]
- [@blackdisabilitycollective](#) [Disability Justice + Racial Justice]
- [@blhensonfoundation](#) [Mental Health Stigma + Advocacy]
- [@basseyworld](#) [Mental Health Advocacy + Inner Self + Check-ins]
- [@black_minds_matter](#) [Mental Health Advocacy]
- [@blackandembodied](#) [Fat Liberation + Social Justice]
- [@blackhealthcommission](#) [Health Equity + Social Justice + Education]
- [@connectwithoumou](#) [LGBTQ + Trauma Recovery + Mental Wellness]
- [@depressedwhileblack](#) [Depression + Advocacy]
- [@dralfiee](#) [Mental Health + Affirmations + Boundaries]
- [@drebonyonline](#) [Trauma Recovery + Diet Culture + Self-Advocacy]
- [@dr.candicenicole](#) [Relationships + Social Justice + Self-Care]
- [@drearlturner](#) [Self-Care + Emotional Intelligence + Anti-Racism]
- [@lalahdelia](#) [Healing + Self-Compassion + Inner Self]
- [@rwenshaun](#) [Boundaries + Men's Mental Wellness]
- [@minaa_b](#) [Healing + Check-ins + Personal Growth]
- [@morganharpnichols](#) [Reminders + Empathy + Affirmations]
- [@nedratawwab](#) [Boundaries + Introspection + Growth]
- [@thenapministry](#) [Anti-Oppressive Advocacy + Workshops]
- [@the_queer_counselor](#) [LGBTQIA + Fat Liberation & HAES + Trauma]

PODCASTS TO FOLLOW

A Different Perspective

Balanced Black Girl

Black Girls Heal

Black Girl in Om

Brown Girl Self-Care

Divas in Dialogue

Fireflies Unite

Hats off

hey_girl.

In Re:trospqct

Intersectional Existence

Naming It

The Black Girl Bravado

The Black Girl Healing Project

The Friend Zone

This Too Shall Suck

What's the Remedy?

With Love and Rage