

A Healthy Hottie's Guide to Therapy



CENTERING OURSELVES

On November 13th, 2020, Our Health Matters, an organization dedicated to supporting the well-being of Black women, including their mental, professional, physical and personal health, hosted *Centering Ourselves: A Conversation about Black Women's Mental Health amidst Crises*. The event featured **Dr. Joy Harden Bradford**, **Dr. Cindy T. Graham**, **Dr. Monica Johnson** and **Dr. Jess Joseph**. Through this event and this guide, Our Health Matters seeks to demystify therapy, while dismantling barriers and stigmas to accessing mental health care.

THERAPY IS IMPORTANT

When you break your arm, you go to the doctor. Over the next few weeks, you nurture your arm, being extra careful and cautious, eventually practicing strengthening and mobility exercises, provided by the doctor, to restore your arm to its former activity. Taking care of your mental health is just as important as taking care of your physical health, and psychotherapy (aka therapy) is an excellent way to do that. In its most basic sense, therapy is “a form of treatment aimed at relieving emotional distress and mental health problems.” According to Dr. Rheeda Walker, professional help can help boost your psychological fortitude, which anything-- anxiety, distress, depression, communication, fears, fatigue-- can derail. Keeping in mind that it is a journey, therapy provides you with “new tools for your toolkit” for taking care of your mental health. Finding a therapist and type of therapy (individual, group, couples, etc.) that works for you is key. Therapy is hard work, but it is important work.

STIGMA SURROUNDING MENTAL HEALTH

Stigma surrounding mental health within the Black community is still one of the leading causes of people of this community not seeking out treatment. Let's destigmatize and demystify some things here:

- **Mental illness isn't a "white people thing"**
 - Possible high risk within the Black community due to events of racism, discrimination, and inequality
- People who are diagnosed with a mental illness can live very normal, happy fulfilling lives with the correct help
- **Vulnerability is a strength** in life, not a weakness
- **Therapy does not have to compromise your cultural or religious beliefs**
- here are some ideas that continue to reinforce the stigma surrounding mental illness
 - **Identity:** Does someone believe symptoms of depression are a normal part of life? Do they think symptoms surrounding anxiety are a sign of a physical health issue?
 - **Cause:** Do symptoms stem from a spiritual weakness, personal weakness, or character defect? Or, can anyone develop a mental illness the same way they might develop a physical health issue?
 - **Timeline:** someone might assume depression should resolve within a certain time period or they may believe anxiety lasts a lifetime in all cases.
 - **Consequences:** Do individuals think that untreated mental illness has consequences? Or do they think that mental illness serves a helpful purpose (like depression sparks creativity)?
 - **Controllability:** How much does an individual trust that an illness can be treated? Do they think it can be cured or do they believe that treatment won't help?

Possible Resources

- [Therapy for Black Girls](#) Podcast
- [The Unapologetic Guide to Black Mental Health: Navigate an Unequal System, Learn Tools for Emotional Wellness, and Get the Help you Deserve](#) by Rheeda Walker
- [The Nap Ministry | Rest as Resistance](#)
- [I'm Telling The Truth, but I'm Lying: Essays](#) by Bassey Ikpi
- [Black Girl in Om](#) Podcast
- [Soothe Your Nerves: The Black Woman's Guide to Understanding and Overcoming Anxiety, Panic, and Fear](#) by Dr. Angela Neal-Barnett
- [Another Round](#) Podcast
- [The Color of Hope: People of Color Mental Health Narratives](#) by Iresha Picot
- [Brocollete Meditation Album](#)



WHAT ARE NEXT STEPS?

Thank you for attending **Centering Ourselves: A Conversation about Black Women's Mental Health Amidst Crises** presented by Our Health Matters. You may find that you still have questions or even feel ready to take the next step in your mental health journey. The following resources are specifically curated to support you and your intersectional identity through this process.

I'm looking for...

A database of culturally-competent therapists:

Therapy for Black Girls

Therapy for Black Girls is an online space dedicated to encouraging the mental wellness of Black women and girls, founded by Dr. Joy Harden Bradford. In addition to a wonderful podcast and a site full of resources, Therapy for Black Girls provides a directory of both in-office and virtual therapy providers.

Inclusive Therapists

Inclusive Therapists provides a safe and simple way to search for care online. This resource has a therapist matching tool that takes into account all of the unique aspects of your identity including LGBT+ identity, neurodiversity, and spirituality.

Open Path Collective

Open Path Collective connects you with affordable, in-office and online psychotherapy sessions between \$30 and \$60. This non-profit serves people of all identities with financial need, including those without health insurance/mental health coverage.

Black Emotional and Mental Health (BEAM)

BEAM is a treasure trove of mental health resources including online workshops, tool kits, and educational materials. In addition to these features, BEAM provides a wellness directory in their pursuit of healing justice. BEAM is also well-known for their support of the Black trans community and the reimagining of Black masculinity.

Black Female Therapists

Black Female Therapists provides just that, a directory for you to find a black female therapist in your area. Check out their blog, podcast, and social media sites as well for tough, but necessary, conversations with inspirational women.



I'm looking for...

An app that helps me center myself:

Shine

The Shine app was created by women of color for women of color to focus on self-care as a daily practice. You can download the shine app for free for access to meditations and the Shine Squad community or upgrade to the premium membership for more features.

Liberate

Liberate is a daily meditation app meant to create a safe space for the Black community. Meditations and talks are specifically designed for the Black experience and taught by BIPOC. Additionally, downloading the app puts you in touch with a diverse community from around the world.

Ayana Therapy

At Ayana Therapy, finding the right therapist is a right, not a privilege. This app connects LGBT+, POC, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups to online therapy right through the app using a culturally sensitive questionnaire matching process.

More tools to support my mental health:

Black Mental Wellness

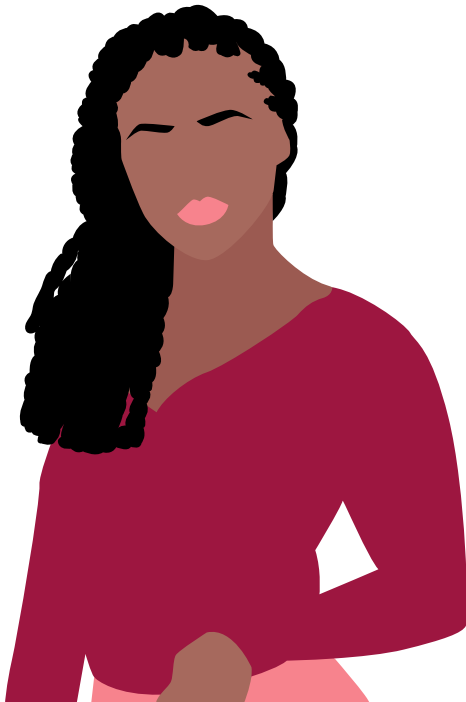
Black Mental Wellness is a launch pad for all things mental health including information about more apps, podcasts, and literature you can use to learn more. This includes an especially useful guides with strategies for coping with COVID-19 amongst other struggles.

Dive in Well

Dive in Well's goal is to cultivate space, community, conversations, and change for a more equitable and accessible wellness industry. They provide a variety of free virtual events centered around wellness and mental health, especially in a professional space.

Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation

The Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation was founded by Taraji P Henson to eradicate the stigma around mental health issues in the African-American community. Most notably, the foundation is accepting applications for Round 3 of their Virtual Therapy Support Campaign that provides five FREE individual therapy sessions to recipients. The foundation also funds a \$10,000 scholarship for those who are interested in fields focused on mental health.



MORE ON OUR HEALTH MATTERS

Our Health Matters is an organization dedicated to supporting the well-being of Black women, including their physical, mental, professional, and personal health. We strive to create an inclusive and uplifting community where everyone is supported wholistically. For more information, follow [@ohmprinceton](#) on Instagram and visit our website at ourhealthmatters.squarespace.com.