

Culture and Diversity

CAPS strives to provide a welcoming, safe and affirming space for all students. In order to provide that space, we must remain willing to challenge ourselves and others to learn about lived realities, support individual needs, and celebrate our differences.

Cultural Concerns and Mental Health

Counseling is a very individual experience, and culture plays significantly into the uniqueness of that experience. Mental health difficulties are common to all people; however, cultural differences impact how those difficulties are experienced. Culture refers to the beliefs, customs and values of a particular group. It includes race and ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and many other differences. It is manifested in behavior and communication style. Culture influences how individuals think about mental health conditions, how they describe their difficulties, how they communicate with counselors or other health professionals, and how receptive they are to treatment.

Cultural differences often result in the experience of microaggressions and sometimes outright discrimination, which negatively impacts mental health. Some effects of those experiences include:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Sleep disturbances
- Decrease in or loss of confidence
- Feelings of helplessness
- Loss of drive or motivation
- Intrusive thoughts

If you are experiencing prejudice, discrimination or racism, talking to a culturally competent counselor may be helpful. Culturally competent counselors are continually learning about other cultures and accept our differences. Understanding those differences allows them to be aware of how culture impacts mental health and to be able to create safe environments where you can explore your feelings and learn coping skills. If cultural differences have not yet been brought up in counseling, here are some ways you can start that conversation.

- What is your experience counseling people from my cultural background?
- Have you been trained in multicultural issues?
- Would you like to learn about my culture's beliefs, values and attitudes toward mental health?
- How can we include aspects of my cultural identity (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation) in my care?

Campus Resources

Center for Multicultural Affairs and Inclusive Excellence

Gender and Sexuality Center

Office of Accessible Services Individualized for Students (OASIS)

Websites:

The Steve Fund

The Trevor Project

Equity in Mental Health

Health Disparity Fact Sheet

Understanding Racial Microaggression and Its Effect on Mental Health

The Impact of Discrimination as a Social Determinant of Health

Racial Trauma Toolkit

Podcasts/Videos

Podcast: The Element of Inclusion

Podcast: Deep Diversity Dive

Podcast: We Were So Happy: Microaggressions and Where They Happen

TED Talk: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “*The Danger of a Single Story*”

TED Talk: Hayley Yeates, “*It’s (Past) Time to Appreciate Cultural Diversity*”

TED Talk: Whitney Grinnage-Cassidy, “*Why Microaggressions Aren’t So Micro*”

Books

“*So You Want to Talk About Race*” by Ijeoma Oluo.

“*We Are Everywhere: Protest, Power, and Pride in the History of Queer Liberation*” by Matthew Riemer and Leighton Brown.

“*Yellow*” by Frank H. Wu

“Blind Spot: Hidden Biases of Good People” by Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald.

“No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement” by Joseph P. Shapiro.

“White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism” by Robin DiAngelo

“Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America” by Ibram X. Kendi

“Why Are All The Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: A Psychologist Explains the Development of Racial Identity” by Beverley Daniel Tatum

African American Students:

[National Alliance on Mental Illness – Black/African Americans](#)

African American Mental Health

To be Female, Anxious and Black

Anxiety in Black Communities

Depression in Black Communities

Bipolar Disorder and Black Americans

Latinx Students:

[National Alliance on Mental Illness – Hispanic/Latinx](#)

NAMI: Speaking with Latinos about Mental Health (PDF)

Mental Health in Latinx Communities

Anxiety and Depression Association of American – Latinx & Hispanics

Asian American/Pacific Islander Students:

[National Alliance on Mental Illness – Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders](#)

Model Minority Stereotype for Asian Americans

National AAPI Mental Health Association

AAPI communities and Mental Health

Why AAPI community members don't go to therapy- NAMI

Native American/Indigenous People:

[National Alliance on Mental Illness - Indigenous](#)

Native American Communities and Mental Health

[Mental Health in Native and Indigenous Communities](#)

[Mental Health Statistics in Native Americans: Numbers Don't Lie](#)

[The Danger Mental Illness Presents to Indigenous Peoples](#)

[We R Native](#)

LGBTQIA+:

National Alliance on Mental Illness - [LGBTQI](#)

Understanding Anxiety and Depression within LGBTQ Population

Social Anxiety Disorder as an LGBTQ person

Coming Out

It Gets Better

Disability

The Mental Health of People with Disabilities

National Alliance on Mental Illness – People with Disabilities

How Does Acquiring a New Disability Affect Mental Health?