



Indigenous Mental Health

How and Where to Seek Culturally Competent Care

When meeting with a provider, it is important to ask questions to get a sense of their level of cultural sensitivity. Providers expect and welcome questions from their patients since this helps them better understand what is important in their treatment. Here are some questions to ask:

- Have you treated other Indigenous people?
- Have you received training in spirituality or traditional practices?
- How do you see our cultural backgrounds influencing our communication and my treatment?
- Do you have training in trauma-informed care?

Whether seeking help from a primary care doctor or a mental health professional, you should leave the appointment feeling heard and respected. The amount of respect shown by the provider is the most important basis for an effective treatment relationship. It is essential see an effort on the part of the provider to: overcome any barriers, understand the past and present experiences of Indigenous peoples and have respect and empathy towards alternative practices and worldviews. You may want to ask yourself:

- Did my provider communicate effectively with me?
- Is my provider willing to integrate my beliefs, practices, identity and cultural background into my treatment plan?
- Did I feel like I was treated with respect and dignity?
- Do I feel like my provider understands and relates well with me?

The relationship and communication between a person and their mental health provider is a key aspect of treatment. It's very important for a person to feel that their identity is understood by their provider in order to receive the best possible support and care.

Resources

Please note: The resources included here are not endorsed by NAMI, and NAMI is not responsible for the content of or service provided by any of these resources.

[Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services American Indian/Alaska Native Information and Resources](#)

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Division of Tribal Affairs works closely with American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN) communities and leaders to enable access to culturally competent healthcare to eligible to CMS beneficiaries in Indian Country.

[Circles of Care: Creating Models of Care for American Indian and Alaska Native Youth](#)

Describes the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's grant program, Circles of Care, which develops culturally appropriate interventions to serve youth with serious behavioral health challenges.



Indian Health Service

A Federal program for American Indians and Alaska Natives. Website includes FAQ for patients and section on Behavior Health services in the AI/AN health care services.

One Sky Center (503-970-7895)

Provides resources and a “Find a Therapist” locator for treating mental health and substance use disorder within Native American communities.

StrongHearts Native HelpLine (844-762-8483)

StrongHearts Native Helpline is a domestic violence and dating violence helpline for American Indians and Alaska Natives, offering culturally appropriate support daily from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. CT via phone and online chat. StrongHearts Native Helpline's one-on-one chat sessions with advocates can be accessed by clicking on the “Chat Now” icon at strongheartshelpline.org.

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Please be reminded that support is always available through the Employee Assistance Program. **CCA@YourService** can help you and your family members by providing free, confidential access to emotional and mental-wellbeing resources, including:

- 24/7 phone access to counselors for in-the-moment support
- Referrals to short-term professional counseling for any issue that’s on your mind
- Resources and referrals to support medication management, and self-care for mind, body and spirit
- Online articles, tips and self-assessments to help identify signs, symptoms and treatment options for various conditions

Call **800-833-8707**, or visit www.myccaonline.com to get started.