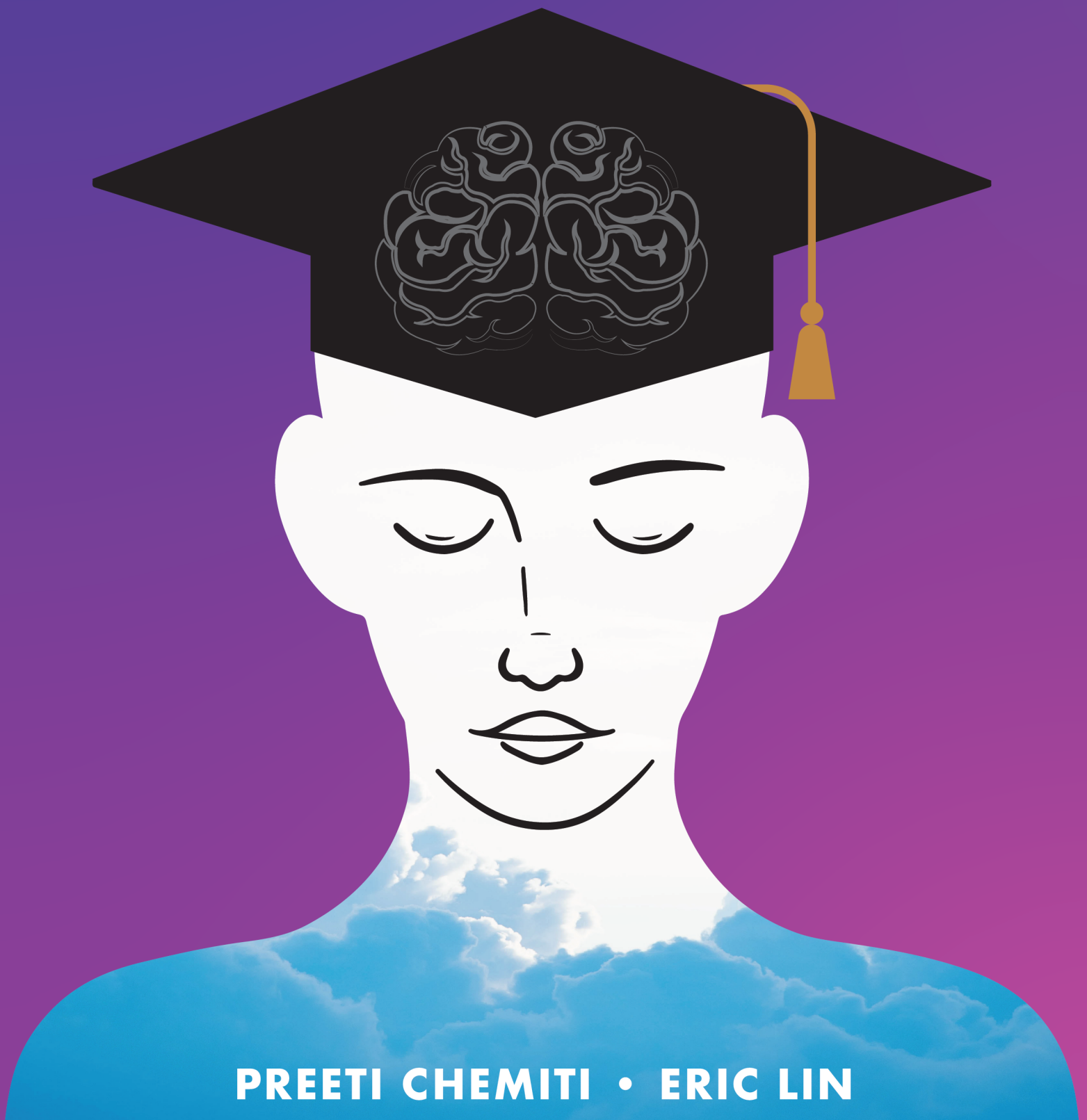


MIND MATTERS.

NAVIGATING
MENTAL HEALTH
CONCERNS
WITH STUDENT
RESOURCES



PREETI CHEMITI • ERIC LIN

MIND MATTERS.



PREETI CHEMITI

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■ TABLE OF CONTENTS ■

About the Team • 2

About the Book • 3

Acknowledgements • 4

Student Support • 5

1. Overview of Mental Health • 6

Definition of Mental Health • 7

Mental Health at Princeton • 9

2. Student Life at Princeton • 14

Students & the COVID-19 Pandemic • 15

Mental Health Concerns • 17

Looking Ahead • 18

3. Addressing Mental Health in the BIPOC Community • 20

Why is Access to Mental Health Resources Inequitable? • 21

Systematic Barriers • 22

Responsive Mental Health Treatments • 25

4. Additional Student Resources • 28

Mental Health Support • 29

Campus Organizations • 34

Help Support Services • 36

Appendix (Sources) • 37

*Note: Designs and images incorporate modified photos and vectors from
freepik.com, pexels.com, unsplash.com, and all-free-download.com.*

ABOUT THE TEAM

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The material in this version of 'Mind Matters' features input from various health professionals and organizations, including Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS).



ABOUT THE BOOK



Our work is written by and for Princeton students in order to encapsulate real mental health experiences. Although factors such as stigmatization can prevent many from validating their pain and feelings, mental health concerns are affecting students at an all-time high. Regardless of how you are affected by mental distress and illness, being equipped with the information and resources in order to effectively cope can change your life. No issue is too minor to seek help for.

This guide is a condensed and modified version of the full Mind Matters guidebook and introduces resources and student perspectives specific to the Princeton University community. Please feel free to use the resources and specialized sections that best suit your needs, or refer to www.mindmattersbook.org to download the free and comprehensive version of Mind Matters.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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[STUDENT] [SUPPORT]



1

OVERVIEW OF MENTAL HEALTH



MIND MATTERS.

DEFINITION OF MENTAL HEALTH

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health “as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.” Improved mental health is linked to a range of developmental outcomes, including better health, higher educational achievement, enhanced productivity, improved interpersonal relationships, and an improved quality of life.



Being well in emotional and mental health generally means individuals can find safety in relationships and their environment, including learning how to positively cope with life’s challenges. Mental distress and illness encompass a wide variety of conditions that range from very mild to very severe. It is critical to consider what mental health means to you and how you currently maintain it.



ACCORDING TO PRINCETON STUDENTS, WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

(Anonymous responses by Princeton students)

"An assessment of your personal psychological state that may affect your day-to-day life."

"Making sure I process my emotions in a healthy way."

"Just being able to enjoy a normal day without feeling particularly negative."

"I think physical health is always linked with mental health, so having adequate physical strength and energy, as well as fulfilling relationships and activities."

MENTAL HEALTH AT PRINCETON



Higher education institutions such as Princeton can also present a unique and dynamic set of difficulties when it comes to maintaining your mental health.

Dr. Anthony Rostain, author of *The Stressed Years of Their Lives*, states that college students today are experiencing an “inordinate amount of anxiety” — much of it centered on “surviving college and doing well.”



OVERVIEW OF MENTAL HEALTH



Being placed in a new environment like a university setting can be daunting and intimidating for anyone. According to the American Psychological Association, over one-third of incoming college students are impacted by mental health challenges.



Statistics like these only further illuminate the significance of our mental health – particularly when considering the long-lasting repercussions of COVID-19. Results from a 2020 survey conducted by the Journal of Medical Research show that among 2,030 college students, 48.14% showed moderate to severe levels of depression, and a majority of all participants, or 71.26%, indicated that their stress and anxiety levels had increased during the pandemic.

At Princeton, the feelings of our fellow students reflect these trends. In March of 2020, 30.4% of students reported that they felt hopeless at least “some of the time”, according to data from the National College Health Assessment. Additionally, 11.7% of students reported that they felt restless or fidgety “most of the time” over the same period.

Mental health problems are common. Ignoring their prevalence is statistically proven to let down the students who need help the most. Always remember that you are not alone and that there are support systems for you at Princeton that can help improve resilience and your ability to manage your health.

TIPS FOR SUCCEEDING IN SCHOOL

Whether you have experienced difficulties in the past or find yourself experiencing new issues for the first time in college, you can explore some actions to strengthen your health.



1 • Build support systems. Connections with your friends, family, and communities at home are an important source of stability, but building support networks through Princeton is also critical. These can include your Director of Studies, Dean of Student Life, Faculty Academic Advisor, Residential College Advisor, Peer Academic Advisor, professors, and peers.

2 • Utilize academic resources. If you find yourself falling behind, you can always seek advice from professors and departmental representatives. The staff of the Office of the Dean of the College is available to discuss academic questions or problems, and Princeton also offers specific resources for managing your workload, including the McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning, the Writing Center, and the Center of Career Development for professional interests.

3 • Monitor symptoms and subjective experiences. Maintaining a daily record of key symptoms such as your mood and anxiety levels can help you notice if your symptoms are worsening. College can make it hard to stay on a regular schedule, which also makes it harder to notice changes in your eating or sleeping patterns. If you notice worsening symptoms, know that you can talk to a counselor in CPS about anything – nothing is “too small” of an issue.

4 • Maintain healthy habits. Exercising, eating food that helps you feel nourished, and getting enough sleep each night will give you more energy, help you focus better, and keep you emotionally resilient. Given the high academic demands of college, remember that struggling to navigate and balance your work with self-care is not a personal failure or shortcoming.

5 • Avoid drugs and alcohol. Alcohol and other drugs are poor ways to cope with stress. If you have a mental illness, you should avoid and limit your use of drugs and alcohol.



MANAGING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH



If your mental health ever interferes with your ability to manage your academics, your Director of Studies can provide immediate support and even help communicate with your professors about your circumstances. You can find their contact information on your residential college website:

- **Butler College**
- **First College**
- **Forbes College**
- **Mathey College**
- **Rockefeller College**
- **Whitman College**

If you need long-term accommodations for mental health, you will need to register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) by filling out their **Request for Accommodations form**. ODS is dedicated to providing reasonable accommodations, and students can apply regardless of their learning circumstances. Accommodations are granted on a rolling basis, meaning that you can apply at any time!

2

STUDENT LIFE AT PRINCETON



STUDENTS & THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Concerns about heightened stress, anxiety, and trauma among students are not new. Even prior to the onset of COVID-19, research has pointed to a growing mental health crisis among college students across the nation, including at Princeton. During the 2020-21 academic school year, Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) saw the highest number of appointments made in its history. This crisis exists at the confluence of numerous external factors: the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, sociopolitical violence and unrest, changes in collegiate social structures, imposter syndrome, increased stress, and more.



As we start to return to “normal”, we recognize that our view of the future has been fundamentally shaped by experiences of the past. Every student has encountered a unique set of challenges, and our collective mental health ought to be a priority in our academic lives.



The impacts detailed above provide a fundamental baseline for how various types of people may react to this pandemic. However, this is by no means representative of each reader's unique experience. By turning to the real-life perspectives of students, we can emphasize our voices in these difficult times.



Please note that the following quotes are anonymous statements from Princeton students regarding their thoughts on mental health. Additional interview responses from students across the nation can be accessed at www.mindmattersbook.org.



MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

2

STUDENT LIFE
AT PRINCETON



Elevated feelings of stress, anxiety, and fear can carry many negative impacts, such as affecting school, work, and close relationships. Many of our student interviewees reported mental health concerns related to their school experiences.



WHAT HAS MADE YOU MORE ANXIOUS ABOUT SCHOOL?



"Maintaining my relationships at home, worrying about learning at home for this upcoming semester, and being stuck at home with my parents."

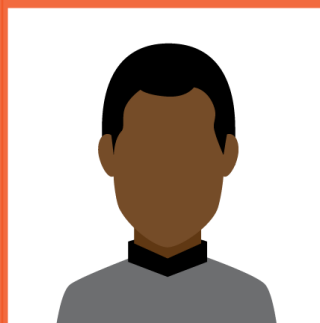
- "It's mostly schoolwork, college administrative decisions, and family interactions."
- "The unknown in general, including health and academics."
- "The school year, 100%."
- "I've suffered from anxiety in the past and I'm worried about how 'imposter syndrome' might be heightened..."

LOOKING AHEAD

The end of the emergency phase of the pandemic is in sight for the United States. But as the weight of the crisis is lifted, experts are also anticipating long-term impacts on people's mental health. Students are continuing to find planning for the future difficult, particularly as the effects of exacerbated mental health challenges linger.



ADVICE FOR FELLOW STUDENTS...



"Regardless of whatever major decisions you make this upcoming school year, know that you are always a part of our Princeton family! Make the choices that are best for you and your mental health.."

- "Just try your best to adapt to this time, make space, and talk to people."
- "It's hard to feel secure when you don't have a sense of what the rest of the year will look like. Know that you are not experiencing this alone."
- "Though it may not feel like it, you're not alone! There are people who are struggling, just like you. Though it may be scary, don't be afraid to reach out! People are generally so receptive to getting to know you, especially in these difficult times!"
- "Don't be too hard on yourself...The only thing you need is to look after yourself, in the best way that you can."

- "Having a shared project like a problem set, reading group, or a fun activity can make it a lot easier to stay connected to other students."
- "Be proactive about reaching out—I've found that some of my professors were more than understanding when I let them know that I needed an extension on an assignment or had questions about projects."



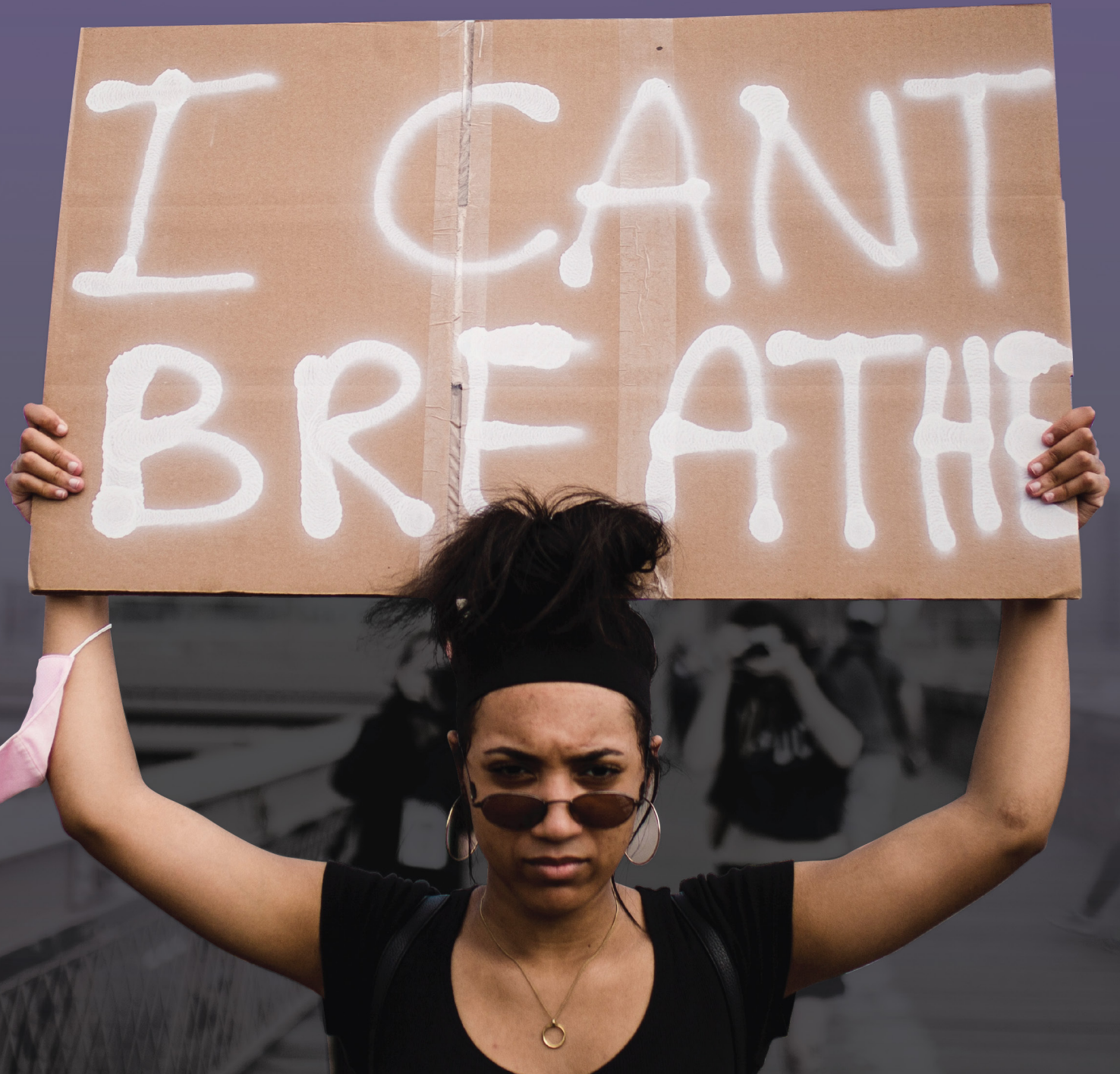
YOUR RESPONSES...

Is there a definition of mental health that you personally have?

What has made you more anxious about school?

3

ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR



There is an enormous unmet need for mental health services in student populations writ large, and students of color face an even greater number of unmet mental health needs relative to white students. Researchers specifically worry about communities that were already more vulnerable to mental health issues also bearing disproportionate psychological damage in the wake of the pandemic.

Communities that the virus struck hardest, including Black, Latino, and Indigenous people, have indeed seen higher rates of mental health issues, highlighting the intersectionality of this issue. Comprehending and addressing the mental health needs of racially diverse students is essential to supporting their success and creating equity. The following section will analyze mental health in communities of color, but due to its complexity, we encourage our readers to educate themselves independently as well.



WHY IS ACCESS TO RESOURCES INEQUITABLE?

Mental health concerns disproportionately impact marginalized groups. For instance, *Black communities suffer from a higher rate of anxiety and depression than any other demographic*. The increased incidence of psychological difficulties in Black communities is related to the lack of access to appropriate and culturally responsive mental health care, prejudice and racism inherent in the daily environment of Black individuals, and historical trauma. Moreover, given that many communities exist at the intersection of racism, classism, sexism, and health inequities, their mental health needs are often exacerbated in comparison to other groups. Issues related to economic insecurity, violence, and criminal injustice further serve to compound mental health disparities across a variety of populations.

It is critical that we analyze how efforts to attain true social justice are hindered by inequalities embedded within the healthcare industry. In striving for a more just society, we cannot ignore the need for more accessible mental health resources.

Analyzing why such disparities exist in our healthcare system is a complex answer that can range based on a variety of factors. However, 'Mind Matters' aims to close these gaps and encourage those who need it to seek mental health help.



SYSTEMATIC BARRIERS



Due to the complex nature of mental illness, successful treatment often requires regular access to support services or mental healthcare professionals. Unfortunately, certain types of barriers can drastically impact access to treatment.

Common barriers to mental healthcare access include limited availability to mental healthcare services, expensive treatments, insufficient mental healthcare policies, lack of education about mental illness, and stigmatization.

DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU FACE ANY CULTURAL BARRIERS, I.E. STIGMATIZATION, IN TERMS OF RECEIVING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT?



- "I think Asian-Americans face a unique set of challenges based on our cultural upbringing. It's difficult to actively seek help when Asian Americans are vastly underrepresented in the counseling field and it's difficult to relate and explain my experiences to a therapist who has never gone through similar experiences. "
- "Mental health is conventionally not spoken about often in my culture, and partially due to this, I feel like I don't consider my mental wellness on a daily basis. It fundamentally stems from a lack of education and personal knowledge about how to provide for my health in this way."
- "My friends, who come from a variety of backgrounds and races, were really supportive in letting me know that resources were available, but I think I was the one who talked myself out of pursuing the resources. I instead resorted to talking with one of my close friends about what I was going through, and I got through that disheveled state of mind not long later. I think I'm just more comfortable talking through my mental health with people who I know and trust."
- "I care about my mental health, but that sentiment has never been echoed by my family. I know I would be judged for asking for help, which just compounds the stigma surrounding mental illness in my home."

In one study, researchers studied more than 13,000 college students of color in order to examine the prevalence of their mental health problems (Lipson and colleagues). Using data from 43,375 undergraduate and graduate students at 60 institutions over a three-year span, researchers assessed data from African-American, Latinx, Asian/Asian-American and Arab/Arab-American students to analyze possible variations across race/ethnicity.

Their findings also pointed to shocking disparities in mental healthcare provisions. In total, 21% of African-American students with a mental health problem received a diagnosis compared with 48% of white students.



Overall, white students with mental health conditions had the highest prevalence of treatment (46%), while Asian/Asian-American students with mental health conditions had the lowest prevalence (23%), according to the release.

Systematic barriers can be pervasive in many communities of color. Minorities tend to be overrepresented in high-risk populations, which are defined by Columbia Psychiatry as groups that are often impacted

by specific negative occurrences. In this regard, the inability to access treatment, exposure to violence, and incarceration rates can increase the chances of developing a mental illness and thus proliferate mental health needs.



RESPONSIVE MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENTS

If you decide to seek treatment, it is important to recognize the role mental health providers play and whether they are the best fit for your needs. Remember that there are a variety of treatment options that may work for you!

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR

- » Black Emotional Mental Health Collective: BEAM is a 501 (c)(3) organization with the mission to remove the barriers that Black people experience getting access to or staying connected with healthcare. (www.beam.community)
- » Black Mental Health Alliance: The Black Mental Health Alliance aims to develop, promote and sponsor trusted culturally-relevant educational forums, trainings and referral services that support the health and well-being of Black people and other vulnerable communities. (blackmentalhealth.com)
- » National Alliance for Mental Illness: NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. (www.nami.org)



- » Inclusive Therapists: Inclusive Therapists is an online network that strives to provide more equitable access to healthcare by allowing people to connect with a culturally responsive therapist. (www.inclusivetherapists.com)
- » The Marsha P. Johnson Institute: The MPJI protects and defends the human rights of black transgender people by organizing and creating an intentional community to heal and develop transformative power. (www.marshap.org)
- » National Organization for People of Color Against Suicide: NOPCAS is a voluntary non-profit that provides support services, information on suicide prevention and intervention, and community training. (www.nopcas.org)
- » Therapy for Black Men: An online directory helping men of color in their search for a therapist. (www.therapyforblackmen.org)
- » Therapy for Black Girls: An online directory helping young women connect with therapists. (www.therapyforblackgirls.com)
- » National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network: The National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network is a justice organization committed to transforming mental health for queer and trans people of color (QTPoc). (www.nqttcn.com)

- » The Loveland Foundation: With a particular focus on women and girls of color, the Loveland Foundation brings opportunities and healing through fellowships, residency programs, and more.
(www.thelovelandfoundation.org)
- » The AAKOMA Project: The AAKOMA Project is a non-profit focused on mental health for youth of color by conducting research and outreach for depression, anxiety, and mental illness.
(www.aakomaproject.org)
- » Melanin and Mental Health Directory: A virtual directory of culturally competent providers for Black and Latinx/Hispanic communities.
(www.melaninandmentalhealth.com)



TIPS FOR SEEKING OUT CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PROVIDERS

- » Don't be afraid to ask a potential provider about their treatment approach. How would they describe it? Do they provide care that considers one's culture?
- » Seek attention from someone who is aware and affirming of your identities. These include considerations such as your race, class, gender, and cultural background.
- » Be mindful that some providers do not use methods that involve a cultural treatment framework!

*For additional mental health resources,
please refer to our next section.*

4

ADDITIONAL STUDENT RESOURCES



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT



4

ADDITIONAL
STUDENT RESOURCES

CPS

Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) is the primary resource for mental health on campus. CPS provides a range of services, including counseling, urgent consultations, drop-in hours, psychiatric consultations, group therapy, community building space, listening circles, mind-body programs, campus outreach and training, specialized treatments, and referrals to local mental health providers.

You can schedule an appointment with CPS at princeton.edu/myUHS. If you have an urgent need after business hours, call (609) 258-3141 and press 2.

CPS CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

CPS does not release information to anyone outside of CPS or disclose that you have received care without your written permission. This includes parents, guardians, administrators, faculty, and potential employers.

Below are the only exceptions of CPS's confidentiality policy:

- *When required by law (such as in cases of child abuse)*
- *In life-threatening situations*
- *In the case of emergency hospitalization*
- *To consult with other providers in UHS to collaborate in care*

CPS also provides gender affirming care, including free, confidential, supportive, and gender affirming counseling for any issue, including experiences and questions related to gender identity. Some medical providers, outside of UHS, request that you provide a letter from a mental health professional when accessing certain gender-affirming medical care. CPS can work with you to provide such letters. If you have questions about gender affirming care and coverage, please visit <https://uhs.princeton.edu/gender-affirming-care>.



OFF-CAMPUS COUNSELING

There are many reasons a student may seek off-campus counseling, including seeking specialized care, long-term care, as the result of a referral, and more.



HOW CAN I FIND A PROVIDER?

- **Through your insurer:** If you are on the Student Health Plan (SHP), you can search for in-network providers by location and type of care with the Aetna Navigator (www.aetnavigators.com). Alternatively, you can find a list of providers within Princeton's Exclusive Provider Network (EPN) at <https://princeton.thrivingcampus.com>.
- **CPS counselors:** CPS counselors can provide referrals as well! Meet with your counselor or schedule an initial consultation.
- **The CPS Clinical Treatment Coordinator:** Jessica Cichalski is the UHS Clinical Treatment Coordinator and helps students identify off-campus providers. She can be reached at jec@princeton.edu.

GROUP COUNSELING

CPS wants to make community building and group space more accessible to support students regardless of where they are located including therapy groups, drop-in listening circles, and community spaces. Please check out CPS's Group Counseling & Support page for more information. Below are a few examples of the different types of counseling available:

- *Coming Out*
- *Back at Princeton (for students returning from leaves of absence)*
- *Managing Eating and Emotions*
- *Graduate Student Therapy*
- *International Students Support Space*
- *Womxn and Femmes of Color Community Support Group*
- *Women's Mediation*
- *Tigers Caring for Cubs Peer Support Group*
- *Adult Children Empowerment Group (ACE) Group*
- *...and more!*



PAYING FOR TREATMENT

If you are on the Student Health Plan (SHP), off-campus providers will fall into one of three categories: in-network, out-of-network, and Exclusive Provider Network (EPN). If you receive therapy services at CPS (either with a SHP or without), *then you also don't pay for therapy.*

If you are not on the SHP and have insurance through your parent or guardian, you must determine your policy's coverage and benefits by logging into your insurance plan's website or contact your provider.

Princeton also has several emergency funds to help students! These can be found here.

If you're not sure about your options, want to discuss payment options, or to learn more about what questions to ask your provider, please contact CPS.



EMERGENCY RESOURCES

- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: [1-800-273-8255](tel:1-800-273-8255)
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: [1-800-799-7233](tel:1-800-799-7233)
- Family Violence Hotline: [1-800-996-6228](tel:1-800-996-6228)
- The Trevor Project: [1-866-488-7386](tel:1-866-488-7386)
- Self-Harm Hotline: [1-800-366-8288](tel:1-800-366-8288)
- Crisis Text Line: Text “REASON” to [741741](tel:741741) for free and confidential help
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: Provides referrals to support groups and mental health professionals, resources on loss, and suicide prevention information at www.afsp.org
- SAMHSA Treatment Locator: Provides referrals to mental healthcare at www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov
- Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA): Provides information on the prevention and treatment of anxiety, depression and other related conditions at www.adaa.org
- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) Provides information on bipolar disorder and depression and offers in-person and online support groups at www.dbsalliance.org

CAMPUS ORGANIZATIONS

- **Carl A. Fields Center** The Fields Center works to empower, engage, and educate individuals within the University community to develop, implement, and support systems of inclusion. As Princeton's unique cultural center, diverse perspectives and experiences of race, class, gender, and their intersections are supported and challenged through the celebration of heritage months, dialogues, discussions, the Princeton University Mentoring Program, and the Fields Fellows peer education program.
- **Our Health Matters** OHM is an inclusive and supportive community dedicated to promoting the well-being of Black women on Princeton's campus and beyond. OHM offers educational resources, self-care tips, affirmations, a wide range of virtual programming for this upcoming year, and more. Contact: ohm@princeton.edu
- **Women*s Center** The mission of the Women*s Center is to recognize and redress historic and persistent gender inequality at Princeton and beyond. By helping students learn from the history of women's and other movements for social equality, students are empowered to identify systems that reproduce gender inequity in the present and to envision and create a more just future.
- **LGBT Center** The Princeton University LGBT Center supports and empowers lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual students and employees by providing community-building, education, events and initiatives. While centering the needs of LGBTQIA students, they serve the entire campus community through training, consultation and advocacy.

- **Princeton Peer Nightline** Princeton Peer Nightline is an anonymous peer listening service. Their listeners are trained and certified as helpline volunteers who provide empathetic, non-judgmental support to Princeton University students who wish to share a problem, are in need of information, or simply want to talk.
- **Disability Collective** The Disability Collective (DisCo) is an organization run by and for Princeton students in the disability community. Their work is centered on principles of disability justice and includes community building, resource sharing, reading circles on disability literature, and advocacy work countering ableism on-campus and beyond.
- **Letters to Strangers** L2S is a global youth-run organization seeking to destigmatize mental illness and increase access to affordable, quality treatment. Within our Princeton community, this is done through anonymous letter-writing exchanges, peer education & events, and policy-based advocacy. Contact: dianachao@princeton.edu
- **USG Mental Health Task Force** USG's team that focuses on mental health advocacy. The task force works with students to discuss concerns about mental health services at Princeton and advocates to Counseling and Psychological Services and other campus life offices.
Contact: afliu@princeton.edu



HELP SUPPORT SERVICES

- American Psychiatric Association:
www.psychiatry.org
- American Psychological Association:
www.apa.org
- Children's Mental Health Initiative Technical Assistance Center:
www.cmhnetwork.org
- College Drinking - Changing the Culture:
www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov

APPENDIX (SOURCES)



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