

Mental Health Care: How to Find a Therapist You Can Trust

Mental Well-Being

Many people have faced unfair treatment in health care. Instead of healing, they've experienced harm.

This is especially true in mental health care, where stigma is common and cultural understanding is often missing.

"We have a long history of ignoring pain, getting diagnoses wrong, and failing to protect people who don't fit into the dominant culture," says Alex Karydi, PhD, LMFT, CASAC II, a behavioral health provider at VNS Health. "A lot of our systems weren't built to serve marginalized people."

Why Mental Health Care Hasn't Felt Safe for Everyone

For many, their experiences with mental health care have been shaped by bias and exclusion. For example:

- Black patients may not be believed about their symptoms
- Immigrants may face language or cultural barriers
- LGBTQ+ people may be judged or turned away
- Others, including women, veterans, teens, older adults, and people with disabilities, may be ignored or spoken to in hurtful ways

A New Kind of Mental Health Care

Today, more providers are listening and making changes. "At VNS Health, we build programs that reflect the people we serve," says Dr. Karydi.

That means:

- Hiring therapists from different cultures and backgrounds
- Offering care in many languages
- Meeting people where they are — at home, in clinics, or in the community
- Using trauma-informed care that centers empathy and respect

“We know many people have experienced trauma, so we lead with empathy,” says Dr. Karydi. “We don’t ask, ‘Why are you here?’ We ask, ‘What happened to you?’ That small change matters.”

How to Speak Up for the Care You Deserve

When you’re dealing with anxiety, depression, or substance use, asking for help can feel scary — especially if you’ve been mistreated before.

You deserve care that helps you feel seen, heard, and respected. “You are not a burden because of your skin color, religion, gender identity, or disability,” says Dr. Karydi. “You have a voice — and a right to use it.”

Here are ways to advocate for yourself:

- Ask for a therapist who shares your background or speaks your language
- Request a translator or someone to help you speak up
- Say no to care that doesn’t feel right — and look for someone new
- Speak up if something feels unsafe or disrespectful

It’s not always easy, especially if you’ve been ignored before. But every time someone speaks up, it helps make care better for others too.

“Real change starts when people say, ‘I deserve better,’” says Dr. Karydi.

How Counseling Can Help You

Mental health counseling can help you:

- Understand your feelings
- Cope with stress, anxiety, or sadness
- Heal from trauma

- Build stronger relationships
- Feel more confident and in control

You don't have to go through this alone. The right therapist can help you feel better — and feel seen.

How Mental Health Care Helps Communities

When mental health care works, it helps more than just one person. It helps families, neighborhoods, and whole communities.

"We know many people have experienced trauma, so we lead with empathy," says Dr. Karydi. "We don't ask, 'Why are you here?' We ask, 'What happened to you?' That small change matters."

"Helping one person heal can help a whole family. A whole block. A whole community," Dr. Karydi says.

[Learn about VNS Health's Behavioral Health Care](#)

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