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TRAUMA FOCUSED THERAPIST CALLS FOR GREATER MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS AND AWARENESS FOR BIPOC COMMUNITIES

Thought Leader Highlights The Importance of Rising To Meet Mental Health Needs And Eliminating The Barriers To Treatment For BIPOC Populations

Arlington, Texas (July 17, 2023) – It's BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) Mental Health Awareness Month and even with all the media attention the issue has received within the past few years, accessing quality mental health is still difficult among the BIPOC community.

According to [Mental Health America](#), 17% of Black people, 15% of Latinx/Hispanic Americans, 13% of Asian Americans, and 23% of Native Americans live with a mental illness.

"The current mental health system and treatment was built on white, colonial ideals and practices," said Kiva Harper, Owner and Clinical Director at Harper Counseling and Consulting Services. "Mental health treatment is not a one-size-fits-all solution. The signs of anxiety and depression in a white person may look very different in a person of color. Unfortunately, cultural perceptions about mental illness and treatment in BIPOC populations often result in refusing to seek help at all."

As a long-time trauma focused therapist, Harper has emerged as a subject matter expert on combat trauma, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and trauma regarding the suicide or murder of a loved one.

"For some struggling individuals, there's pressure from their families or communities to keep their traumas to themselves, or there's the assumption that people can just get over their experiences by prayer or will-power alone," said Harper. "It's important to challenge these negative attitudes and limiting beliefs so people understand that prioritizing mental health and getting the help they need is a good thing."

Unfortunately, studies have shown that people from racial and ethnic minority groups are less likely to receive mental health care. According to the [American Psychiatric Association](#), some of the barriers to care include:

- Cost or not having adequate health insurance coverage

- Lack of diversity among mental health care providers
- Lack of culturally competent providers
- Language barriers
- Distrust in the health care system
- Stigma or negative ideas about mental health care

"BIPOC individuals are deeply affected by systemic oppression and discrimination in policy, law, and society," said Harper. "It is vital for the mental health community to encourage budding professionals to enter a field that desperately needs more culturally responsive mental healthcare workers."

For more information on Kiva Harper or a hi-res image, please contact:



Kiva Harper, LCSW-S



Arlington, TX 76006, US

About Kiva Harper:

Kiva Harper (<https://www.kivaharper.com>) is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Clinical Director at Harper Counseling and Consulting Services in Arlington, Texas. A graduate of the University of North Texas, she specializes in trauma therapy (EMDR, Cognitive Processing Therapy and Prolonged Exposure Therapy), therapy for depression and anxiety, traumatic grief counseling, work and career issues, stress management, and conflict resolution. She is also a Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council approved supervisor of LMSW's toward LCSW and non-clinical supervision for IPR and an Associate Professor of Practice at The University of Texas at Arlington.

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