

BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month

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Breaking down mental health stigma

People of any race, gender, or identity can experience mental health challenges. However, in many Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities, mental health struggles are often compounded by additional factors including cultural stigma, lower quality of care, and limited access to treatment.

Bebe Moore Campbell was an author, teacher, and mental health advocate. Throughout some of her written works like *Brothers and Sisters* (1994), *Singing in the Comeback Choir* (1998), and *72 Hour Hold* (2005), she embraced the topic of mental health and helped break down stigma in diverse communities. In 2008, the US House of Representatives designated July as **Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month** to honor her dedication to raising awareness for mental health education in BIPOC communities.

Mental health equity and challenges with the Western medical model

Campbell's works help shed light on the reality of mental health care for BIPOC communities in America. Individuals from marginalized groups often face unique challenges — such as finding a culturally responsive therapist — which members of the dominant culture don't have to navigate.

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While everyone — all colors — is affected by stigma, no one wants to say, *'I'm not in control of my mind.'* No one wants to say, *'The person I love is not in control of [their] mind.'*

But people of color really don't want to say it because we already feel stigmatized by virtue of skin color or eye shape or accent, and we don't want any more reasons for anyone to say, *'You're not good enough.'*

Bebe Moore Campbell

🔍 mental health resources |

Expanding culturally relevant care

When seeking treatment for a mental health challenge, people tend to prefer providers who they feel will understand them. However, in 2019 the American Psychology Association reported that only **16% of mental health care providers** are people of color — only 4% are Asian, and 2% are Black — meaning many would-be patients aren't able to find a provider with whom they feel comfortable.





Incorporating new treatment methods

Many providers, such as BIPOC clinician [Eleanor Gil-Kashiwabara, PsyD](#), are highlighting the importance of addressing issues of [equity and equality](#) in traditional approaches to treatment and how these factors impact outcomes for patients. She helps other providers incorporate new methods into their practices that address areas relevant to BIPOC communities, such as:

- **Healing circles** and storytelling
- **Bodywork** such as dance and body positivity
- **Spiritual practices** and connecting with faith leaders
- **Psychosocial tools** that challenge racism or implicit bias when they occur

Honoring the desire to help oneself

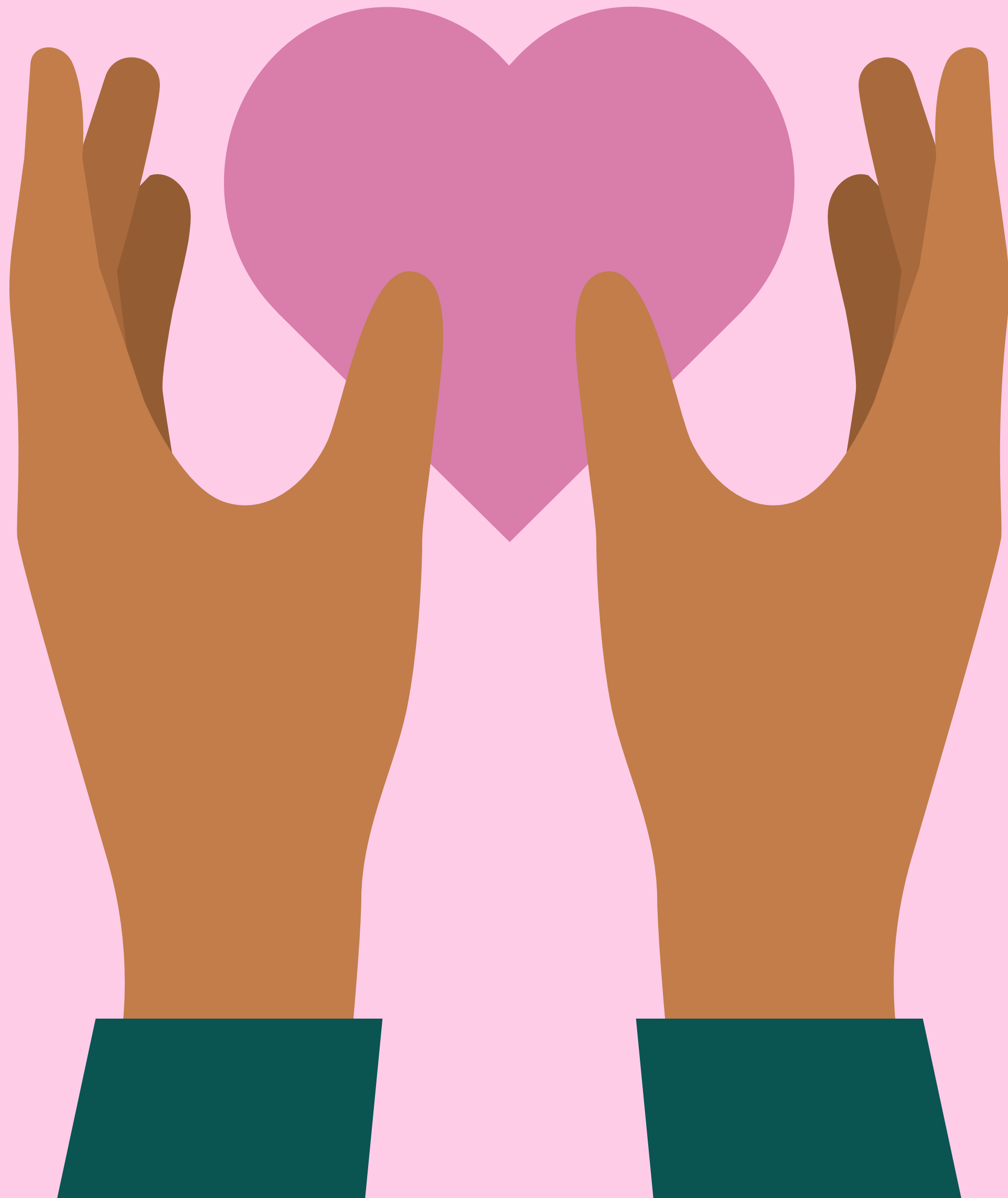
Due to **past discrimination experiences**, many people in BIPOC communities understandably lack trust in the medical system, which can inhibit a strong patient-clinician relationship. Self-directed care (SDC) is another form of treatment that goes beyond the traditional systems of mental health care and empowers people to determine their own priorities. How people talk about and experience mental health is shaped by their background and cultural experience, and this type of care celebrates autonomy, agency, and choice.



Some ideas for practicing SDC

- **Know what will (and won't) work for you:** Understand what services match your lifestyle and expectations.
- **Focus on shared decision-making:** Work as a team with your provider to develop a plan that fits your concerns and needs.
- **Be ready to advocate for yourself:** Speak up for yourself if a provider suggests something that won't work for you or that doesn't fit your needs. If they're not receptive to your input, it's OK to seek out a new provider or treatment options.

Mental health is an important part of our overall well-being. The more we advocate for reducing stigma, providing support, and spreading awareness, the more we can promote inclusive ways of addressing mental health related conditions. If you would like to work with a culturally responsive provider, websites like [**Inclusive Therapists**](#) help to connect you to BIPOC providers across the country.



Mental health care solutions

Those with mental health challenges should be empowered to create their own individualized treatment plan — one that fits into their life and busy schedule. If you find yourself struggling with poor sleep and want to try something different, **CU Health Plan** offers a digital evidence-based solution to you at no cost. **Sleepio** gives you the power to get help for poor sleep that's self-guided, proven to work, and can be completed on your schedule — all in about 20 minutes per week.

To learn more, visit the link below:

[Get started today](#)

Sleepio is available at no additional cost to members enrolled in any CU Health Plan administered by Anthem/CVS.

DOC-1280 Effective 05/2022

Sleepio is available as an adjunct to usual medical care for insomnia disorders for adults ages 18 and older, without FDA review under their [COVID-19 policy](#).

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