

WHAT CAN YOU DO

You can take action to support a community approach to addressing the mental health needs of BIPOC and QTBIPOC individuals. Whether you identify as a member of these communities or want to be a stronger ally, the following steps help promote mental health and increase access to care.

- 1. Examine the current structures and ask questions:** A great starting point is to look critically at different existing systems and networks and analyze how they hurt or help BIPOC mental health. Consider the various barriers to accessing mental health care like cost and stigma and whether the current framework is the best approach to providing quality services and meeting the needs of communities.
- 2. Push for accessibility in traditional health care:** Take action by advocating for BIPOC and QTBIPOC accessibility in our current health care systems. Contact your local elected officials or use your channels like social media to talk about these issues. Call for expanded language services, culturally responsive provider training, expanded public education resources around health literacy, and more.

[Start contacting your elected officials with MHA's action alerts.](#)
- 3. Hold organizations and institutions accountable:** Our health care systems are not the only ones responsible for BIPOC mental health and the barriers to care. Ensure that the systems you are a part of, including workplaces, research institutions, schools, political structures, and beyond, actively assess how they contribute to the problems that exist for BIPOC and QTBIPOC mental health and support solutions to ensure change.
- 4. Think beyond traditional health care:** When advocating or looking for resources for yourself or a loved one, keep non-traditional health care supports in mind. If you find that the mainstream health care systems do not support BIPOC mental health effectively, expand criteria to include community support that may not come up in traditional searches or doctor recommendations. You can also create your support systems if something that fits you or your community's needs does not already exist. The Sustainable Economies Law Center offers a [Mutual Aid Toolkit](#) as a resource for your efforts.
- 5. Give credit to originating communities of healing practices:** As outlined in this year's toolkit, many BIPOC and QTBIPOC identifying individuals and communities developed their resources and supports to address mental health needs. However, they do not always get credit for these practices if they become adopted by mainstream society. If you choose to utilize a BIPOC-established approach, ensure that you give credit to the originating community and encourage others to do the same.