



Dear CCNY Community,

The COVID-19 global pandemic made people across the globe experience loss. We lost loved ones, jobs and opportunities, relationships and, even more, we lost a sense of safety, predictability, control, freedom and security. Undoubtedly, the pandemic has had a major psychological impact and created an unprecedented mental health crisis. If you are struggling to cope, please consider connecting with a mental health professional. Below are some reasons to seek therapy and tips on how to connect and find a therapist.

This week we present:

Letters to Home – Living Through a Mental Health Crisis

Possible Reasons to Seek Therapy: People reach out to mental health help for a variety of reasons and none of them are wrong! At different life stages we struggle with different stressors, problems, and concerns, and all of them can be addressed in therapy. Below are some examples individuals may have to seek therapy:

- **Preventative Care:** You don't need to wait for a crisis to seek therapy services.
- **To Shift from Surviving to Thriving:** Life can be difficult, especially as the world is undergoing a pandemic. It can sometimes feel like thriving in life is difficult. Therapy can be helpful to manage and process life events, help create a strategy for change, and provide support and encouragement. It helps improve our quality of life.
- **To Learn Healthy Coping Skills:** Working with a therapist can help people identify unhealthy thought patterns and behaviors and help them create a new space to explore more adaptive coping styles better suited to manage stress.
- **Changes in Sleep Patterns:** Sleep is an essential component of our overall health and well-being. If you have noticed a change in your sleeping patterns such as decreased sleep, frequently waking up, or an increase of sleep – working with a therapist can help you to identify and address causes that may be related to your mental health.

- **Social Withdrawal:** Although alone time can help us recharge and increase productivity and creativity, sometimes we realize that spending too much time alone is not healthy. If you notice that it has become increasingly difficult to spend time with family, friends, or to partake in social engagements during the current pandemic, therapy can be beneficial in understanding the cause of isolation.
- **Strains in Relationships:** Feeling that some relationships have become strained during the pandemic is a common experience to many. If you notice more tension, stress, or frustration in your relationships, therapy can be helpful in processing the history and evolution of relationships, reduce stress, improve healthy communication, and increase positive interactions.
- **Thoughts of Harming Yourself:** If you are thinking about harming yourself or others, you need to speak with a therapist. A therapist is a confidential professional who can help you develop a safety plan, identify strong sources of support, and improve negative thinking cycles. If you are experiencing thoughts of harming yourself or others, please call the **National Suicide Hotline 1-800-273-8255**.

How to Connect with a Mental Health Professional: Therapy can be an effective treatment for a host of mental and emotional problems. Simply talking about your thoughts and feelings with a supportive person can often make you feel better. It can be very healing, in and of itself, to voice your worries or talk about something that's weighing on your mind. And it feels good to be listened to—to know that someone else cares about you and wants to help.

- The first step is to decide the type of therapy you might be interested in. Below are two of the most popular forms of therapy that folks may seek:
 - **Individual therapy:** Individual therapy is the most common form; you meet with a therapist one-to-one to work on understanding yourself better, learn how to regulate emotions, and develop new coping skills.
 - **Group therapy:** Group therapy typically involves one or more therapists who lead a small group of people to work on a variety of different social-emotional needs. Groups may act as a support network and a sounding board. Some people may participate in both individual and group therapy, while others may participate in group therapy alone.
- **Search online:** If you have health insurance, your insurance provider can help you find a therapist. Insurance companies may provide online search tools or you can call the number at the back of your insurance card for additional help. A few search engines such as [Psychology Today](#) or [Open Path Collective](#) can help you filter your search results according to your preference, needs, or financial abilities. Additional search engines are listed below when searching for a therapist that includes resources for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and LGBTQIA+ communities:
 - [Inclusive Therapies](#)
 - [The Shrink Space Blog](#)
 - [Therapy for Black Girls](#)
 - [Latinx Therapist & Speakers](#)

- [National Queer & Trans Therapists of Color Network](#)
- [The Lighthouse](#)
- [The Manhattan Alternative](#)
- [Therapy for QPOC](#)
- [Headway](#)
- **Normalize the Conversation and Ask around:** It can be helpful to ask trusted friends or family members who have been in or are in therapy for recommendations. It can be comforting to know that someone you trust has had a good experience with therapy. You can also ask your primary care physician for a referral.
- **Other Places:** You can also utilize online apps such as [TalkSpace](#) or [BetterHelp](#).

What to Look for In A Therapist: It is important to understand that therapy is a *collaborative relationship* that allows someone to address their emotional and mental well-being in a safe, non-judgmental space. In addition to understanding this relationship, there are many other important things you may want to be mindful of:

- **Consider Who You May Want to Work with:** Some therapist characteristics people take into consideration are: gender, race, age, religious affiliation, years of experience, professional orientation, etc.
- **Credentials:** Although you do not need to become an expert in licensing credentials, it can be helpful to know and understand what the credentials next to your therapists' name mean.
- **Questions to Ask:** When you find a therapist who you may wish to connect with and set up your first appointment, consider asking some of these questions:
 - What is your treatment orientation?
 - What is your expertise or specialty?
 - What is the cost of therapy per session?
 - What will my treatment plan look like?
- **Therapy is an on-going process:** It can take time to connect with your therapist and feel ready to discuss certain things. Ensure you feel that it is a dual process, that you feel heard, understood, validated, accepted, and safe. Throughout our life we may even see different therapists.
- **Patience!** Because we are experiencing a mental health crisis, it may take longer to get an appointment, find a therapist that matches your availability, or connect with a therapist within your budget. Do not give up! Continue your search and don't be afraid to ask for referrals.

Additional Resources to Engage in Mindfulness and Independent Reflection:

- [Calm](#)
- [Ten Percent Happier Meditation](#)
- [Simple Habit](#)
- [Insight Timer](#)
- [Happify](#)
- [MindTools](#)
- [MindShift](#)
- [iMoodJournal](#)

The Counseling Center is open and providing remote clinical services, via online platforms and phone, to actively enrolled CCNY students. Services provided include screening and assessment, crisis intervention, individual short-term counseling, group counseling, referral and case management, and workshops.

If you are a CCNY student and would like to connect with a counselor, you can do so by:

- Emailing us at counseling@ccny.cuny.edu
- Calling our office's main number (212) 650-8222

For more information, please visit our website: <https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/counseling>

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline \(Lifeline\) 1-800-273-TALK \(8255\)](#) or text the Crisis Text Line (**text HELLO to 741741**). Both services are free and available 24/7. The deaf and hard of hearing can contact Lifeline via TTY at 1-800-799-4889. All calls are confidential.

For immediate mental health support please call NYC Well 1-888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355). NYC Well provides free, confidential services to support mental health concerns. NYC WELL is available 24/7 and can provide assistance in over 200 languages. You can also text WELL to 65173 or access the NYC WELL website at <https://nycwell.cityofnewyork.us/en/> to chat with a counselor.

Stay safe and take care of each other,
The CCNY Counseling Center.