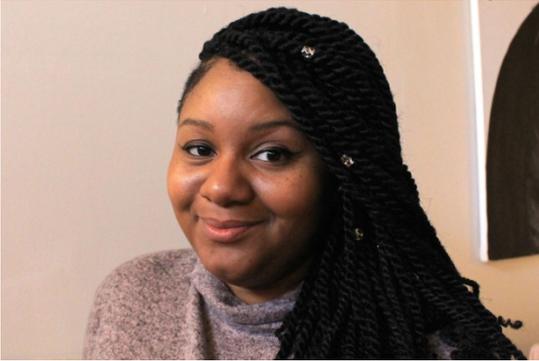


# Millennials need mental-health care, but struggle to access it. Advocates hope to change that.

by [TyLisa C. Johnson](#), Updated: December 31, 2019



**AISHIA CORRELL**

*This article is part of [Made in Philly](#), a series about young residents shaping local communities*

When Aishia Correll struggled with her mental health a few years ago, she thought she had nowhere to turn. So, she began painting and that became her therapy.

Therapy wasn't how issues were solved when Correll was growing up, she said. She recalls her family's matriarchs leaning on each other, not therapy, as refuge. Talk of therapy was coupled with fear and stereotypes of what the services implied. Now 27 and a health-care strategist focusing on patient experiences, she's working to normalize accessible, affordable mental health care and wants to "flip what health care looks like," for millennials, women of color, and the LGBTQ community, she said.

For young people, the need for access to mental health care is real. Millennials and Generation Z are more likely than others [to report their mental health as fair or poor](#), according to a 2018 survey by the American Psychological Association. In the survey, millennials [reported the highest average stress level](#) of all generations. At the same time, young adults are more likely than older generations to receive professional mental-health services. More than one-third of both millennials and Generation Z [reported receiving treatment or therapy](#) from a psychologist or other mental-health professionals. Since 2014, millennials have continued to report the highest stress levels, [a 2017 study said](#). A Pew report from 2014 said that about 22 percent of Philadelphians ages 18 to 34 [had no health insurance in 2012](#), a rate about two times higher than other city residents.

But where Correll is from in North Philadelphia, and other neighborhoods across the city, some residents don't have regular access to services for their mental or physical health, or places that serve as access points, she said. While there's not a complete lack of mental-health services in the city, access and affordability are two large barriers to receiving care, says Jennifer Schwartz, the inaugural director of Drexel University's Psychological Services Center and an associate professor in the department of psychology. Many mental-health providers don't take insurance, so "the fees that are charged are beyond the means of most people," Schwartz said. On average, Correll said, therapy sessions, without insurance, can cost anywhere from \$75 to \$200.

But at Drexel's five-year-old center, clients pay a sliding-scale price, based on household income. The university-based clinic trains doctoral students to provide psychological services. "We have a large demand for our services,

bigger than we could possibly provide,” Schwartz said. “We do get people who call us and are upset by the lack of services that they’ve been able to locate and access.”

Brenda Shelton-Dunston, executive director of the Black Women’s Health Alliance, echoed the concerns. She said many millennial women of color locally are “confronted with all kinds of issues and problems with nowhere to go.” She said she’s talked with many young women of color across the city through programs and events BWA held, and they often believe that they don’t have support. “There is a void in mental-health availability and access to mental-health prevention and support services for women of color in Philadelphia,” she said.

Correll, who has a background in health-care administration, thinks more focused services for millennials, and in the right location, could be one answer. She works with health-care professionals and providers to strategize better ways for hospitals to deliver care to patients. She also works to improve patient experiences, based on patient screening surveys. She’s the driving force behind plans for a “healing” art gallery in North Philadelphia, where she said clients can attend art shows, poetry, and music performances, and discreetly see a professional therapist or seek holistic healing through yoga, meditation, and art therapy -- all at a reduced price.

She’s landed some seed funding, she said, and hopes to get enough to open next spring.

"I didn’t see that my family had a place like that,” Correll said, so “I want to make sure I have a place like that.”



Posted: December 31, 2019 - 8:00 AM

[TyLisa C. Johnson](#) | [@tylisajohnson](#) | [TJohnson@philly.com](#)

