



# *Diversity is our Greatest Strength*

A Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Statement from  
The Utah Mental Health Counselors Association



# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

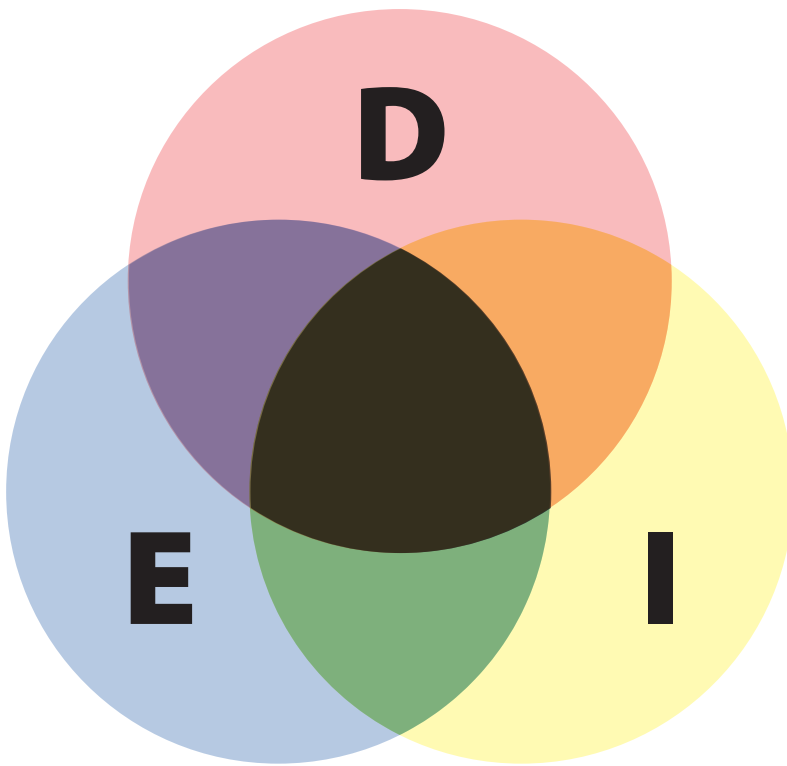
As the Utah Chapter of the American Mental Health Counselors Association, we strive to support our counselors by cultivating a climate of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as an essential cornerstone of UMHCA.

UMHCA is the voice of mental health counselors in Utah and recognizes a sacred obligation to stand as a beacon of belonging. We sit alongside all to find ways to ease the emotional burdens that erode mental health. Finding, supporting, and sustaining diversity, equity, and inclusion is not an easy path to promote and navigate, yet it is our duty to consistently educate ourselves. We endeavor to develop and recognize the symbiotic relationship between diversity, equity, and inclusion which will foster the thriving of our organizations, our counselors, and our clients.

We value all human beings and cultures by promoting safe spaces for authentic, diverse voices; by providing opportunities to enhance cultural competencies through engaging the mental health community with mental healthcare services in the highest ethical manner. We strive to publicly acknowledge the efforts, celebrations, and alignment of diversity, equity, and inclusion to mental healthcare as we represent our membership.







## Diversity

Diversity includes more than the legally protected characteristics of our clients. We call upon all counselors to see past labels – race, age, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, national origin, migratory status, disability/abilities, political affiliation, veteran status, and socioeconomic background – and see the person. We affirm the Civil Rights Act, the Equality Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and how the laws are enacted to vigorously protect against a wide range of discriminatory behaviors. We will continue to be vigilant and work





with our legislators to bring about a stronger and more diverse Utah.

Discrimination is among stressful events that adversely affect health and mental health, placing people at risk for mental health disorders. There are various ways which counselors can engage clients when discussing discrimination and other related risk factors: Asking questions, reflective and emphatic listening, validating, and supporting the client through any discriminatory sources of stress. Counselors who advocate for clients in this way will avoid multiple forms of discrimination when a client happens to relate to multiple identity classes in which they can be discriminated against.

## Equity

UMHCA calls upon its members and all mental health therapists to foster an ethical sense of empowerment within each client, engender identity safety, and demonstrate authentic unconditional positive regard for each individual's uniqueness. This gives rise from micro- to macro-level efforts of providing accessible social justice. We strive for mutual respect while molding an environment that promotes individual comfort in both expression, discussion, and action.

Integrated mental healthcare shows promise for reducing mental health disparities for all groups. Critical components of effective integrated models include cultural and linguistic competence and a diverse workforce, and emerging best practices. To successfully implement integrated models into practice, equity will require guidance from communities, consumers and family members.

# Inclusion

UMHCA will make efforts to take a broad view of inclusion, value unique perspectives, and make efforts to recognize both the visible and invisible characteristics of those we serve. Our diverse counselors and clients often have untapped potential to bring an elevated value to our lives and profession. We recognize our opportunity of association with intelligent people, yet reinforcing the active inclusion of everyone is simply genius.

According to AMHCA (2021), “we emphasize that clinical mental health counselors have historically received graduate education in multicultural counseling. We recognize that many



community problems – including discrimination and racism – have a significant mental health component. We recognize that many societal problems not only affect individual’s life and relationships, but result in economic and mental health burdens on individuals, families, and communities.” To be effective, inclusion must involve informed counselor education, understanding social determinants, and inform interventions; the provision of culturally responsive, evidence-based clinical services.

At the local and state level, opportunities exist for counselors to develop policies and procedures for training and education in mental health counseling to extend culturally-sensitive knowledge about the nature of social determinants of mental health. UMHCA will strive to assume responsibility in continuing educating through collaborations and





partnerships with private and government institutions with the communities we serve. We will work with the other helping professions such as NASW-UT and UAMFT to bring a united front to the mental health needs of our counselors and clients.

*We cannot achieve our greatest strength without  
diversity, equity, and inclusion.*



9192 South 300 West #29  
Sandy, Utah 84070  
(801) 804-5531

[www.umhca.org](http://www.umhca.org)

