

I am a white woman and a survivor of the mental health system. My experience of the MHS was that it was more harmful than helpful. I believe these systems are in need of major reforms and that HB 2949 can help better this system. If not for the support I received from BIPOC service providers I might still be unhappily stuck and stagnating in the MHS. It was BIPOC providers who recognized that the cause of my distress was due to external circumstances that I could address and abusers whom I could create boundaries against. In contrast, white/male providers overwhelmingly directed me towards treatment that looked for "underlying conditions" that ignored or denied traumatic experiences. The white/male approach exasperated the problems and distress I was experiencing. I suffered significant losses due to internalizing and being complicit with that racist/sexist/classist system. Given the recovery I achieved after having BIPOC providers, I believe I would not have suffered those losses if my initial providers understood that oppression exists, saw me holistically and treated me appropriately. Diversity is good for everyone.