



UPHOLDING  
MENTAL HEALTH



## A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

### Big things are happening for Mirci in 2024!

We successfully moved ALL our programs and services into one facility in late May, and everyone survived! Having everyone together under one roof for the first time in two decades has been a gamechanger.

Meetings among different departments no longer require travel to and from. Clients can see a counselor, provider, nurse, housing staff and benefits specialist all at the same location! We're even able to keep all our vehicles on site and we don't even have to borrow parking spaces from neighbors.

In July we closed with the SC Housing Authority on a Housing Trust Fund grant and received awards from United Way of the Midlands and The Leon Levine Foundation for the development of our transitional female youth home. We anticipate breaking ground later this summer on the 10-bedroom home to be located in downtown Columbia.

Our male youth home has assisted almost 70 young men over the last 6 years, with 80% transitioning to safe, stable housing; 90% working or seeking work; and 90% making progress on their personal plans of care. We're excited to provide these same opportunities for young women in our community.

With our new Marketing & Development Officer, Taylor Treacy on board, we're doing more in and for our community around mental health.

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We held the screening of a movie about schizophrenia at the Nickelodeon Theatre, had over 150 of our closest friends at our open house and will be hosting a comedy night at New Brookland Tavern at the end of the month!

These events and our messaging in the community are bringing awareness that mental health matters for everyone.

If you don't already, follow @mircisc on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn for tips, resources and facts about mental and emotional health; find ways to process your emotions, improve your self-care and distinguish between myths and facts about mental health.

I'll leave you with a little free, selfcare advice – slow down, breathe deep and give yourself permission to enjoy even the smallest things; pick a wildflower, savor a cup of coffee, take a walk; and allow yourself time to rest, recharge and find some inner peace.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie Ann Avin".

Julie Ann Avin  
President & CEO

# MIRCI MOVES!



*Mirci Grand Opening Event | Photographed by Terrel Maxwell*

## New location, same mission.

Our move to 2750 Laurel Street has enhanced our ability to serve the community by bringing together all of Mirci's services, including our housing programs, clinical care, client outreach, and more—under one roof. This new space has provided our clients with a more accessible, comfortable, and efficient environment. Thank you to everyone who celebrated this milestone with us at our Grand Opening event in June. We love our new space!

## Upcoming Events

### Laugh Therapy Family Comedy Show, Presented by Healthy Laughter

Wednesday July 31, 2024  
New Brookland Tavern  
632 Harden St, Columbia, SC  
6:00 - 9:00 PM  
Entry \$9.88 (All Ages)  
Tickets: [newbrooklandtavern.com](http://newbrooklandtavern.com)

### Merri Mirci Holiday Party

Thursday December 12, 2024  
Columbia Museum of Art  
1515 Main St, Columbia, SC  
6:00 - 9:00 PM

## Get Involved

Join Mirci in upholding mental health across the Columbia area by partnering, sponsoring or attending an event.

Email [ttreacy@mirci.org](mailto:ttreacy@mirci.org) for more information.

A poster for the Laugh Therapy Family Comedy Show. The title 'LAUGH THERAPY' is in large, outlined letters. Below it, 'FAMILY COMEDY SHOW' is in bold, black letters. The poster features three comedians: DJ Preach Jacobs, Comedian Akintunde, and Joel Byars. It also mentions 'RAFFLES, TRIVIA & SIDE-SPLITTIN' STAND UP!'. The event is on Wednesday July 31 at New Brookland Tavern, 632 Harden St, Columbia, SC. Doors open at 6 PM, the show starts at 7 PM, and entry is \$9.88. A QR code is in the top left. The bottom text says 'proceeds benefit the Mental Illness Recovery Center, Inc.'

LAUGH THERAPY presented by **HEALTHY LAUGHTER**  
LAUGHING YOUR WAY TO A HEALTHIER LIFE

QR CODE

tickets ^

**FAMILY COMEDY SHOW**

**RAFFLES, TRIVIA & SIDE-SPLITTIN' STAND UP!**

**DJ PREACH JACOBS** **COMEDIAN AKINTUNDE** **JOEL BYARS**

**WEDNESDAY JULY 31**

**NEW BROOKLAND TAVERN**

**632 HARDEN ST. COLUMBIA, SC**

**DOORS 6PM || SHOW 7PM || ENTRY \$9.88**

proceeds benefit the Mental Illness Recovery Center, Inc.



# CLIENT CORNER

## ***Nancy Shares Her Story***

### **Tell us a little bit about yourself, your mental health journey and what led you to Mirci?**

I was homeless, addicted to cocaine, and very ill, mentally, in Marion County. I had a mental breakdown 15 years ago. I was hospitalized there, then sent here, to Columbia, to Palmetto Richland Baptist Psychiatric Hospital. I have struggled with depression and trauma for almost my entire life that left me broken, addicted, and alone. I met someone from Mirci while I was inpatient at Baptist, and this person helped me get into Mirci housing, an apartment with two other roommates. I was in that apartment for about 6 months, and then I was able to get my own apartment, by myself, at Spring tree, where I remained housed for 12 years.



Nancy Ceasar, Mirci Client

### **How was Mirci's onboarding process for you?**

I was introduced to Mirci by an outreach worker that came to Baptist Hospital and helped me find supportive housing. I was strung out on cocaine, and very depressed, yet that person helped me and showed me love and support. I was in bad shape, and the MIRCI staff became my biggest supporter and helped me get off the streets and into housing and on medications that I needed so badly. Unfortunately, I did relapse on cocaine, and lost my family, as well, for an extended period of time, however, through a lot of intervention and therapy, and continued support, encouragement, and guidance, I was able to stop using drugs again, gained my kids love and support again, and entered a drug rehab facility to begin to learn how to live in long term recovery."

### **In what ways has your life improved since?**

My life has changed so much since I became a part of Mirci. I learned how to be a mother again, and now a grandmother to 8 grandchildren. I was given a wonderful support system that loves me and helps me stay on track, off the streets, on medication for my depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. I have a wonderful psychiatrist, Dr. Steele, and my case manager, Laney Sutton, who both have helped me learn how to forgive myself, love myself, and live happily and healthily each day. I have been able to learn how to manage my money, despite my mental illness, and I just bought a car recently. I have my own trailer that I rent with my long-term boyfriend and his mom. I also have a very good relationship with my family again--the same family that wanted nothing to do with me several years ago. My case manager and psychiatrist are amazing and the entire Mirci staff has given me a new life that is better than I could ever have done on my own. I just love Mirci so much and I do not know where I would be without them.

### **What are your future goals?**

I am currently looking for a part-time job as a CNA, as I have nursing experience and would like to do something in that field again now that I am well. Also, my goal is to remain stable and consistent with my psychiatric appointments, medication management, and individual therapy sessions as all of that is important for me to remain well. I am also going to continue to remain drug free, one day at a time. I never want to go back to where I was, and as long as I keep doing what I am currently doing, I don't have to worry about that happening.

### **What advice would you give to someone that is struggling with their mental health?**

First, ask for help. It is not easy to do, but Mirci is there for anyone that is struggling. I was in a very bad place and was saved. You can be saved, too. Follow the plan you are given once coming into the program. Take your medications, attend groups, lots of them. I did, and they helped me so much early on. Get connected with a support network and do what they do. I did, and now I am a different person because of it. Mirci saves lives. They saved mine.



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## JULY IS BIPOC MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Studies have found that people of color are less likely to seek treatment for mental health conditions due to stigma, lack of health insurance, socioeconomic barriers, and cultural mistrust.

In 2020 the American Psychological Association reported that 84% of psychologists in the U.S. identify as white. A lack of racial representation among mental health providers can create barriers to BIPOC mental health and perpetuate lower help-seeking rates.

We've compiled a list of provider networks that serve BIPOC communities. Feel free to share these resources with anyone who might need them!

### SOUTHASIAN THERAPISTS.ORG

A directory of South Asian mental health professionals

### LATINX THERAPY

Provides mental health resources and a directory of Latinx therapists

### THERAPY FOR BLACK GIRLS

An online space dedicated to encouraging the mental wellness of Black girls and women

### THE STEVE FUND

Focuses on supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young people of color

### ASIAN MENTAL HEALTH COLLECTIVE

Aims to normalize and destigmatize mental health in the Asian community

### BLACK WHILE DEPRESSED

A blog and community dedicated to sharing the mental health experiences of black people

### THE LOVELAND FOUNDATION

Provides financial assistance to Black women and girls seeking therapy

### NATIONAL QUEER AND TRANS THERAPIST OF COLOR NETWORK

A healing justice organization dedicated to promoting the mental wellbeing of Queer and Trans people of color