

Mental Health Services For Latino And Black Entrepreneurs In Google For Startups

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Startup accelerators and other programs for founders provide entrepreneurs with a range of services and funding. Now, some are including mental health help.



Chantel Cohen

CHRIS EVANS

Take [Google for Startups' Black Founders Fund](#) and [Latino Founders Fund](#). Both year-long programs offer therapy to founders, aiming to address the unique challenges entrepreneurs of color face. (They also provide \$150,000 in cash and \$100,000 in Google cloud credits, plus business coaching).

“It’s great to give founders the hard skills, but it’s not enough,” says Chantel Cohen, who heads Atlanta-based [CWC Coaching & Therapy](#) and provides mental health services to founders in the Black Founders Fund. “They also need the softer skills—and they need mental health support.”

Free Therapy

It started in 2020, when Google for Startups asked Cohen to help provide mental health services to the founders in the Black Founders Fund. She’s worked with three cohorts so far. Founders meet one-on-one for 50 minutes with a therapist for free for six months.

At Latino Founders Fund, therapy services are provided by [Sanarai](#), which has a mental health support platform for Spanish speakers. The startup also was a member of the first cohort, held last year. According to founder Luis Suarez, before it started, the program’s organizers asked if his company could provide services for his cohort. Now, he’s going to offer his platform to members of the next cohort this summer.

Sanarai’s platform includes profiles of participating therapists and coaches. People book 50-minute sessions with them online. There’s also a repository with resources of interest to startup founders.

Tricky Challenges

According to Cohen, a few issues make providing therapy to entrepreneurs of color tricky. First, she cites a distrust of medical professionals among African Americans. In addition, only 5% of therapists are Black, according to Cohen. But, “being able to have a conversation with someone who looks like them and has had the same cultural experiences is important,” she says. As an entrepreneur herself, Cohen also feels she can provide a particularly useful perspective.

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At the same time, entrepreneurs of color face unique challenges, such as more difficulty finding financing. “There are a lot of issues around burnout, stress, depression,” says Cohen. “But a good portion has to do with the lack of access to capital.” Then there’s the matter of frequent microaggressions, like walking

into a meeting where there's an assumption that the white member of a startup team is the CEO. "It starts to get into your head," says Cohen.

Use of the services has been high for both groups. It was around 77% for the Black Founders in the first year; it's 50% now, as is the utilization among members of the Latino Founders Fund.

Suarez started his company in 2020, after he relocated from his native Mexico City to attend business school, and then joined a management consulting firm. In 2020, after the pandemic hit, he sought mental health support, but had trouble finding professionals who were Spanish speakers. That's when he got the idea for his company.

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