Jasmin Pierre PIT-KN: Elevating the Stories and Knowledge from Underrepresented Lived Experiences

PIT In Practice Profiles

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Jasmin Pierre, founder of The Safe Place App
THE CATALYST

I’ve been dealing with mental health issues for most of my life. However, I didn’t start to realize just how severe it was until I was in my late 20s. Even as a mental health advocate, I was still in denial about how much of an impact my mental health issues have had on my entire life. Mental illness is still very stigmatized in society, and even more so if you’re a member of a minority group.

As a Black woman in America, I have found that in my culture mental health issues are often seen as the ultimate weakness, attention seeking, or a sign that you’re not praying to God hard enough. “What happens in this house stays in this house” is a big saying in the Black community. I’ve grown to hate that mantra more and more as I get older, because keeping silent about our abuse doesn’t mean it didn’t happen and merely contributes to generational trauma.

PIVOTING TO PIT

The Vision

The brain never really forgets trauma, no matter how much you try to suppress it. After a suicide attempt in 2014, I decided to address my mental health and became a mental health advocate. I later created The Safe Place, a culturally competent mental health app for the Black community, detailing our mental health experiences in America, how racism and white supremacy play a part in why there are barriers for Black people to access proper health care, and how racism and police brutality can cause trauma to the mental health of Black people.
Breaking Barriers

The app continues to grow every year. I hope that sharing my story can help attract resources and collaboration with practitioners in the field of public interest technology. Black people — my people — really do need culturally competent mental health resources because we face so many systemic barriers in this country.

WHAT I LEARNED

Creating an app such as this was hard for multiple reasons. My mental health can be poor sometimes, and creating tech can be quite the upkeep. Not to mention the need for a money stream. However, I was determined to create something for my community to help us feel safe in talking about our trauma, and a place to help find more resources. People are always on the phone, so I felt an app was a good way to reach the masses about this racial disparity in mental health care.

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