

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
Office of the Deputy Director of Strategic Communications**

LGBTQI2-S UsCC Subcommittee

MINUTES

August 8th, 2019
2:00PM – 4:00PM
600 S. Commonwealth

Present: Terri Jay, Sharon Chapman, Kathryn Aguenza, Gustavo Velez, Bryan Scheihing, Claire Kobren, Brian Navarro, Grey Crouch, Anu Yadav, Mastaneh Moghadam, David Haynik, Stevie Cole, Louis Smith III, Gregory Wilson, Sarah Brock Chavez, Johana Lozano, Jennifer Jiries, Ronald Jackson, riKu Matsuda

By phone: Renato Lira, Hector Ramirez, Jeanie You, Jamar Moore, Ana Bernal, Bill Sive, Josue Vega, Jeffrey King
DMH Admin Kelly Wilkerson, Desire DeShay and Connie Acosta Castaneda

Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions
Welcome/ Introductions	Attendee introductions.
Membership Code of Conduct	The Code of Conduct was distributed to the subcommittee and the members participated in reading it to the group. The subcommittee should sign and turn in to Kelly Wilkerson, signing is voluntary. Code of Conduct agreement only needs to be signed once a year.
June Meeting Notes - Review	July 11 th , 2019 meeting minutes approved, with one correction.
Announcements	<p><u>Ana Bernal:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <u>Q Youth Foundation</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading at La Plaza de Cultura y Artes in Downtown LA at 7:00pm. Sample reading of what the LGBTQIA community playwrights. • Lambda Lit-Fest with LGBTQIA writers and poets. Q Youth foundation will be hosting two more events and more playwriting and poetry that will be coming up. <p><u>Brian Scheihing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <u>The Help Group's Kaleidoscope</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting next week, we will be starting some non-therapy support groups, every Tuesday from 5:00pm – 6:00pm in the Valley, Sherman Oaks. • Parents are Allies group will have a co-facilitator bilingual Spanish speaking. Meeting takes place once a month, August 13, September 17, & October 15, from 5:00pm – 6:00pm and is free to the public. • Teen Movie & Pizza night with LGBTQ theme movies with discussions and support. August 20th , September 24th & October 22 at 5:00pm

- Teen Talk – An LGBTQ+ Topic & Discussion Group, September 10th & October 8th from 5:00pm – 6:00pm ages 13-18

Clair Kobren:

➤ **We Exist**

- Will be having an ongoing support group for LGBTQI2-S TAY in Palmdale, Tarzana, Long Beach and Culver City. There are incentives for people who attend one Peer Group and one Allie Family Member Group. Meetings will be back to back. We also have the capacity to bring this to other organizations and provide this group for people that already have some young people of family members looking for support.

Renato Lira:

➤ **SFV LGBTQ Center**

- Saturday August 10th give away for school supplies for the kids.
- December 1st Our Story of LGBTQ will be airing on HBO

Bill Sive:

➤ **The Gay Elder Circle**

- I will be having a workshop at Models of Pride in October. That workshop will be the state of LGBTQ for the Parent and Professional. It will be a review of the current laws on how they are uneven across the United States.
- The Gay Elder Circle are in discussion right now to do an intergenerational event in October in West Hollywood. Once confirmed, I will send out all the details for that event.
- The Gay Elder Circle will be at the Models for Pride, and have a workshop there. The Gay Elders Circle will be collaborating with The Lavender Effect, this workshop is for the Student Truck, and it is a Time Capsule documenting Elders for the future generation.

Greg Wilson:

➤ **In The Meantime**

- August is Black Gay Wellness month. I would like to thank Kelly for sending out our Black Gay Wellness flyer. Please send it out again. Thank you!

Terri Jay:

➤ **APAIT**

- I have two events coming up in October. I will be sending the flyer to Kelly so she can distribute to the subcommittee.
 1. Indigenous Pride Los Angeles 2nd annual event at The Autry Museum on October 13th, 2019 from 11:00am – 6:00pm
 2. Also on October 13, we will be having our Indigenous People's Day, sponsored by LA City Council District 13 and American Indian Commissioner Board, at the Grand Park in Downtown LA from 4:00pm – 9:00pm.
 3. Terri thanked the subcommittee for attending DMH Town Hall Meeting, held on July 25.

Gustavo Velez:

➤ **The Wall Las Memorias**

- The Wall Las Memorias Project will be having its 25th Anniversary Gala. It will be Downtown at the La Plaza de Culturas

y Artes on September 21st. Grammy Awarding winner Thelma Huston will be performing. They hope to see us all there.

Adding the “A” - Discussion

Terri Jay: The reason why this is part of the agenda, is because a community member had brought to my attention that it would be good to have the Asexual community be represented and added to the LGBTQI2-S acronym for the subcommittee. We also received that feedback from the conference.

➤ **FEEDBACK FROM THE SUBCOMMITTEE**

Jennifer Jiries: So I just had a clarification. I actually had asked this a while ago, why “A” was not included. I am also wondering, I don’t know what the conversation was around pansexual either and including that in the acronym or not? Because I do think that, there are two large communities and they are not included. I am in favor of “A” and “P” being added. I do not know if there has already been discussion around that.

Kelly Wilkerson: Not yet. This is the first official discussion we are having. Originally the subcommittee was LGBTQ+, and then there was conversation around adding “I” for intersex and “2-S” for two-spirit. It has been a while since we really looked at the name, so because of the feedback we got from the conference, and then some discussions, several people actually wrote in the surveys that they felt like the “A” was missing.

Terri Jay: think it is important that for each of the letters in the acronym, we do get a representative from the community to be part of the subcommittee. It defeats the purpose if we put in the “A” and there is no representative from the “A” community so it is important that we outreach to the Asexual community.

Jeffrey King: This is probably the only thing I have to say on this because I do not know if I am one of the oldest, probably the oldest that 60 to be 61 this year. And one of the things that talking with my peers were having some concerns about being unintentionally excluding people and being unintentionally disrespectful. Because, even our Gay and Lesbian center only uses the LGBT, I do not even know if they use the “Q” in their description. We should be clear that as we do this, we’re going to be adding probably five more to this list now, of importance, the acronym that identify different people identified within the broader community. I just don’t know how far we can go. What I am trying to say is that at the end of the day, the only way that I am going to get this right, is that I actually have it written down in front of me when I am referring to the broader community. So I’m more apt to say the broader LGBTQ+ community so that I believe that I am being thoughtful that there is more. At what point do you go, this is a lot to say?

Hector Ramirez: I think I heard somebody from the “A” community, speak up today here before us. I want to thank and honor that. I am not as old as some other people are, and I know that as I come along, our community has grown, and we’ve learned every day we learn, just right now from this conversation we learn, and we realize that we’re bigger than others lead us to believe what we were told. I think being part of this community is finding each other, finding a place where you can be who you are and be part of this community. I know that has been my experience, even when we go to Pride, you are part of the community. There is this old saying that you are one in a million. In LA we have 11 million people so there’s going to be at least 11 of us out there, we’re dying to find each other by traveling and educating and recognizing our presence in this in this gathering in this group. I think we will make yourself stronger, and the letters can go on forever, because we are that big. And we deserve to claim our space. We deserve to be recognized by our preferred pronoun. We deserve to say this is my partner,

my boyfriend, my lover, my husband, and we deserve to add the language, for which we have been removed. I honor the person that spoke from the “A” community, and I am so for including it.

Terri Jay: The reason I wanted to add this to the agenda is for further discussion. I think we should invite a member of the Asexual community to do a presentation, because I do not know if there is anybody here who is representing of the Asexual community. So it would be unfair, and we cannot speak on behalf of the asexual community. I would like to recommend that we invite someone to the subcommittee to do a presentation, to educate and to inform.

Jeffrey King: I think it is a great recommendation. I referred to myself as one of the elders here. You know, I think it is important, whether these things are challenges for us, that we realize how important they are to be included and I think most of us have been around here for a while sitting at the table to be able to do that. So I wanted to state that part. And then the other part as it relates to two-spirit, I want to just interject this as well as it relates to many African cultures, and Aboriginal cultures the person who said that, I believe a black person spoke about two spirit, is because when you begin to explore African culture, you also understand that similarly to the Native Americans, there were two-spirit people within the villages, who held the position as well within African culture and Aboriginal culture. So that's another thing to consider that we were talking about and I hear Native Americans talk about two-spirit, and also think about African culture and how that translates as well.

Terri Jay: I know that the two-spirit language is global, worldwide across all continents. Indigenous includes everybody around the world.

Kathryn Aguenza: This is just a question about like placement of the “A”. Will we get to vote where the “A” goes Is it going to be LGBTQIA2S or LGBTQI2SA? How important is that to the community?

Kelly Wilkerson: It would be up to the subcommittee.

Greg Wilson: I have a question in regards. I know we mentioned we will be voting in regards to adding the letter on to the, the acronym. I was noticing that you guys added the attendance roster which is great, thank you for adding that. I also noticed that there were only 16 people that were qualified to vote. So I know at the last meeting we mentioned looking more into when the actual voting process was started, is it going to be every July 1 to ensure that the 35 that can not vote will actually be a part of the process. The reality is, we have all these people on the list, and only 16 can vote. When is the start date for voting and should it be July 1st.

Kelly Wilkerson: So the bylaws right now are with Mimi and Dr. Sherin, and right now they're looking and making sure that the bylaws, align with the YourDMH proposal. So that's where things are at right now but I will write that down or make sure that I keep that on Mirtala's radar and therefore Mimi's radar. And Dr Sherin's radar, to keep that part of the discussion for sure.

Capacity Building Projects – Discussion/ Proposals

Mastaneh Moghadam

Project Name: Iranian LGBTQ On-line Outreach Project and 4 new LGBTQ+ workshops for Iranian Community.

Project Description:

During the last fiscal year, we had tremendous success in doing Outreach and Engagement programming in order to decrease stigma's and increase knowledge around LGBTQ+ issues with the Iranian-American community residing in Los Angeles County. The outreach we conducted in 2018 included Six Magazine articles; Twenty-Six (26), 22-minute radio programs; and 8 workshops. We are requesting funding to take all of the work that we did last year and move it into the on-line space, where it has the potential to be seen and heard by many more individuals, not only in Los Angeles County, but around the world. This includes airing the radio programs as pod-casts; Editing the 8 workshops and putting them up on YouTube; and placing the Magazine articles in a variety of on-line Iranian forums. We believe that building on the work that we did previously, can really be a good use of funding and continue to serve the Iranian LGBTQ+ community in a very positive manner. Additionally, we would like to have 4 new workshops for the Iranian-LGBTQ+ community and their families in order to continue our engagement efforts in a more face to face/live format as well as to have the opportunity to also film these new workshops thus creating more footage for our on-line programming.

Questions:

- More information requested regarding the obstacles that the Iranian LGBTQ+ community faces. **I think the Iranian community in the whole where they stand on the LGBTQ issues is very comparable to 1950's America. It still is highly stigmatized if at all recognized. I think we have made tremendous strides because of this campaign in Los Angeles. I just went to New York to be there for Pride and to do some seminars around Pride in New York. The LGBTQ+ Iranian community out there asked me to come, because they say, "We don't know what you are doing in Los Angeles but come do it in New York, because we are so still stigmatized and closeted and we can't have conversations with Family and there is no community organizing happening." The Country of Iran still denies the existence of LGBTQ+ individuals. Iran is the only Country in the far East that accepts Transgender individuals. Not that they are not stigmatized as Transgender, but it is not illegal to be Transgender. What happens is that LGBTQ+ people are forced into having surgery. So we are dealing with a lot of traumatized people coming out of Iran, a lot of refugees, a lot of asylum seekers that we are working with and we are still working with, families that are still having a tremendously hard time accepting. A lot of it is not talking about it, it is just lack of knowledge, it is lack of education. So our efforts have really been in education, normalizing, letting the community know how many LGBTQ+ people actually exist within their communities, within their families, are their friends and that they are not some mysterious thing that is on the side that nobody has ever heard about. That is what we are dealing with and that is what we are trying to counter and I think the fact that the Iranian media was willing to talk about it, and are still willing to talk about it, at least in Los Angeles, has made a tremendous amount of difference. I know it has also made a difference in other states where Iranians are like New York, like Chicago, like Florida, these are the places that we got calls from.**
- You mentioned that this project has been funded before 2018. **Yes 2017/2018. But it was a different version of it. This is an online version and would include additional workshops.** Was it facilitated by a DMH staff person, or who is facilitating this project. **It would be contracted out, sent out to bid. For the previous project, it went out to bid, and my agency (Cross Cultural Expressions) was lucky enough to get that bid to do the work, but our liaison was Kelly and she was with us monitoring the project throughout the whole thing.**
- I know that you mentioned about the four workshops. Can you elaborate specifically what these individual workshops are? **So the last series of eight workshops that we did, were called Profiles and Success: Iranian LGBTQ+ profiles and success and the allies who support them. We basically got people who are living very full lives as out LGBTQ+ individuals to come out there, and to speak about and tell their story and talk about their experience. We also ask them to bring wisdom and an ally who was supportive of them, and what difference**

that made in their journey in their life. We got eight very wonderful incredible people to come and talk about their journey, their life, their work, and the very different experiences they had. It really gave the opportunity for the community to see LGBTQ+ individuals who are successful and who are living good lives as out members of the community. It started to normalize and started to make people relate. Some of the feedback that I got after the workshops, and the radio programs, was I had people call and say, you know I still do not understand it, but now I understand that this person is a parent, or this person is somebody's child. It made it easier to normalize the identity for the community at large and it made people have role models. I had so many younger kids say there was never a role model for me to point to. And so having these individuals come and share their stories and live, you know, happy, successful uplifting lives made an opportunity for there to be role models that were not there before.

- Question regarding workshops for this new project, and request to elaborate on each individual workshop including theme and topic for each workshop. **I think that is something that can be probably further detailed and explored. I did not do it here, I would be happy to if that is what you want. So it would probably in my head right now continue with the profiles and success, because I think storytelling and sharing of journey is tremendously helpful for the community. I would imagine that those four consecutive upcoming workshops would continue with that, picking people from the community who are living uplifting lives, who are willing to come and share their journey share their story and allow for open conversation.**
- Is there a way to also reach the larger Middle Eastern community? How can we collaboratively expand the work in general to other Middle Eastern communities. **So many of the different Middle Eastern countries are probably about the same place where the Iranian community is on this issue. I think the only differences is language capacity. So the workshops that we did, either were in Persian or we had simultaneous translation. The 26 radio programs were all in Persian, the articles were all in Persian although they were translated into English as well, so that we have the ability now to publish both for the internet project. I think that the difference would be just, obviously if we wanted to expand this and add extra funds to have all of that subtitling into two or three other languages from the Middle East, and that wouldn't be terribly difficult, it would just require more funds. But wouldn't be terribly difficult to do.**
- Is this project being presented by a staff person of DMH? **No, it is being presented by Mastaneh Moghadam who is a stakeholder in this subcommittee.**
- Concerns expressed that the individuals who have participated in this project previously have not come to this table to be visible and that this project has been completed before. **The original project that this would be an offshoot from was from Fiscal Year 17/18, and it was implemented by a community based agency called Cross Cultural Expressions. Mastaneh who is presenting this new idea is not a DMH employee or a DMH legal entity. The agency is a small community based organization that that proposed this project. When the project went out for solicitation, it was awarded to Cross Cultural Expressions. One of the purpose of these projects is to capacity build for the public Mental Health System, and to also increase the membership of this subcommittee. If this project ends up being selected, one of the elements that we can make sure to include is that it should involve recruitment for the subcommittee. As a unit we are moving towards doing that with all of the projects.**
- **Kelly to send out Final Project Summary on previous project prior to voting.**

Hector Ramirez

Project Name: 2SLGBTIQ Gender Non-Conforming, Non-binary and/or Genderqueer Mental Health Pride Project.

Project Description: Establish a pride event project that includes but may not be limited to a float or parade visibility contingent that participates in Pride events in Los Angeles County , like and no limited to LA Pride. This project would be directed and composed of LACDMH consumers, staff, parents, contracting agencies, and community stakeholders.

Questions:

- Concern expressed regarding the logistics and the cost to invest in this project. **It could be anything from working with Christopher West or some of the other private entities to envision us having a seat at the table. We would need to have a discussion regarding what we want included. One of the challenges in the LGBTQI2-S community is mental health, when one person struggles with a mental health condition, all of us are affected in one way or another. This event could be about helping others deal with trauma and ask for help, link people to resources, and build community.**

Greg Wilson

Project Name: ALL OF US.

Project Description: ALL OF US is the development of a youth initiative for 18-35 year old, ALL Gender Identities, ALL Races/Ethnicity inclusion. This body meets monthly through technology & in person. Develops 2 Community forums, that highlight diversity and synergy within the young LGBTQI-2 Community and focuses on Mental & Emotional Wellness, distributes education materials and capture data related to the young LGBTQI-2 community.

Questions:

- Question regarding the acronym not including the “S” in LGBTQI2-S. Recommendation to continue to include the two-spirit community. **I am glad that you are highlighting some of the things that were missed. We were talking about this with the young people in the office, and the idea was to put something together in a timely manner, so there may be typos in there. We may have unintentionally excluded an acronym because of typing. Some the wording may not be perfect. Overall, the take away is that, certainly, there needs to be adjusting with maybe the language and some of the acronyms but at the end of the day the intention is to be all-inclusive. What would need to be stated for you to feel included? This Proposal talks about the struggle that this body has had since its inception. There is a Latino group, there is an API group, there is an African American group, and then there is this group of Us. We are also all of those things, but we are representing the broader LGBTQI2-S community. This is really saying, let us be as inclusive as possible but not to focus too much on race and ethnicity. This is to prevent projects being funded based on race.**
- Question regarding the age limits. Recommendation to broaden the age limits to be more intergenerational as it could be powerful in a project like this. **I totally agree with you. I mean, it's really difficult when you think about how important all of these things are because they all are important. And I don't necessarily feel one is more important or less important than the other. This is just sort of an option or preference for younger people to see. It has to do with me, they go Mr. King you know when you're in a room sometimes you suck all the air out of the room. But what does that mean, they said it's because you're older than us, and we just feel like we sometimes have to temper what we say and the way that we stay it. And I go, that is a legitimate statement and concern, I have to honor and respect the fact that at my age I'm probably always trying to teach these kids**

these younger people something and I have the nerve to call adult. So, I shouldn't be in that room. No one past a certain age should be in that room so these young people can come together and be able to have important conversations and learn about each other, and learn from each other and share with each other and find synergy without people like me, and others of you who are sitting at that table right now. We all mean well, we're trying to do good, but these younger people need a safe space, safe space sometimes means being safe from the elders, safe enough to be who they are with each other. And that's all, that was just the intention, because most of the work that I do, a lot of the work that I do is very specific to youth 18 to 29. And then there's a lot of intergenerational stuff where elders get to impart wisdom and share our lived experiences but the younger people, they could come together without feeling overly influenced by people who are older than them, that's all.

- Question regarding where the services would be provided, specifically at In The Meantime? **We are submitting the idea, we are not necessarily saying that we would be delivering the project, similar to the last proposal that I put forward, I thought it was important for the community but I did not fight for it. This is what younger people are telling me is important. And I would just love to see something like this happen, and that whoever facilitates it is ensuring that it happens. That it doesn't just get siloed somewhere, and it doesn't really happen where people or younger people are invited and included. The diversity of it is to include everybody.**
- As a queer API woman who has aged out of the transitional age group, I really like this. I see that there's a lot of gaps and a lot of resources that aren't there for people who are like me, so I feel like this is a good start in being more inclusive. I was wondering how you all were planning to reach out to those communities that you want to be inclusive to? **I think that will come from the people who will do the project. At In The Meantime we're doing this clearly because we focus on black gay men. For us, we also have tons of associates and people that we work with, who are Latino, who are white, who are Jewish, or Native American, and so on. We know who those people are, we just need to invite them to the table.**

Ana Bernal

Project Name: Exploring 3rd Space and Story Circles with Mental Health Providers

Project Description:

Support for Mental Health professionals and supporting staff by creating spaces in which they can use story circles/storytelling to create a third space for discussions that will provide self-care, resilience and building community techniques by addressing the everyday stressors.

Questions:

- Is it open to subcontractors? What does that include: Peer Advocates, Nurses who work in the field? Who are the Mental Health Professionals? Also, have you done any research about what DMH is currently doing for their Health Professionals. **Yes, it is open to subcontractors. I am not sure what DMH is currently doing for their mental health professionals but can look into that.**
- In the proposal, it reads LGBTQIA2-S. Recommendation to leave the "A" out until it is voted on by the subcommittee.
- Question regarding timeline and the 4 to 6 meetings in a 12 month period-timeline somewhat confusing. **I wasn't sure about the timeline, but I can clear that up for you all and update it.**
- Can you elaborate on the Q Youth Foundation, somehow that just got thrown in. Can you elaborate on that? **I am the**

	<p>founder of the Q Youth foundation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I don't see a lot of funding going towards solutions for why providers are burnt out in the first place. Can you speak a little bit about where the funding would be going to be reaching out to the entities that can actually implement change and prevent burnout on a longer term. The funding would be going for the facilitators and finding the facilitation spaces that are neutral. I can take a look a little bit more on those training and treatments, things that you mentioned all over. I can definitely come back to the table with that. I am the one that has been funding it.
Next Meeting	Meeting adjourned at 4:05pm September 5 th , 2019 - 2:00PM – 4:00PM - 550 S. Vermont Ave. 9 th floor conference room, Los Angeles, 90020