

**Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
Strategic Communications Division
LGBTQIA2-S UsCC Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 3rd, 2021, 2-4 pm**

Welcome & Introductions: Nicole Kristal, Greg Wilson, Bill Sive, Kathryn Aguenza, Jeffrey King, Hector Ramirez, JavonTae Wilson, Claire Kobren, Gerald Garth, Cynthia Ruffin, Alexis Glenn, Merry Meyers, Jamie Estrada, Mikey Fields, Bobby Dillard, Addison Rose Vincent, Johana Lozano, Gabrielle Villa, Alexandra Casanovas, Diego Echaveste-Avila, Jeffrey Fuentes, Carl Highshaw, Nina Barkers, Gia Olaes, Kyle Gordon, Sharon Chapman, Rebecca Gitlin, Yue Hua Xu, Makesha Jones-Chambers, Andrea Aoun

DMH Staff: Keacha Stewart, Rosario Ribleza, Pinki Mehta, Kelly Wilkerson

Getting to Know You: Gerald Garth works with the AMAAD Institute. He is from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Gerald shared he had a nonprofit called Art Heals Life in New Orleans where he provided arts therapy and the performing and literary arts to communities in Southern Louisiana. Gerald worked as an accountant for almost eight years, then he transitioned into nonprofit efforts. Gerald enjoys connecting with the community and building and supporting great programs. Gerald played the violin since he was 10 years old, through college and picked it back up during quarantine.

Review of May 2021 Meeting Minutes

Meeting Minutes Approved

Black LGBTQ+ Action Coalition

- Gerald Garth & Nina Barkers from AMAAD gave a presentation to the group on the Black LGBT+ Action Coalition (BLAC) project.
- AMAAD's mission is to facilitate and personalize individual access to programs and services that foster safe and supportive healthy environments
- They provide supportive services, community support resources, client-centered, strength-based, interest-based leadership developments, primarily for LGBTQ+ people of color.
- The purpose of the BLAC project was to identify the needs specifically of Black LGBTQIA+ individuals, while also educating and empowering the community on the importance of mental and emotional health, while building awareness and connection. Additionally, the goals were to destigmatize mental health issues and concerns for Black LGBTQIA+ individuals and highlight the diversity at those intersectional identities within the community, all through a culturally sensitive approach through resources and providers.
- BLAC creates a structured space to look at intersectional needs and creates the culture of demonstrated empowerment.
- AMAAD looked at the intersection of mental and emotional health for the Black LGBTQIA+ community that was centered around access to care.
- Participants agreed there are not enough mental and behavioral services for LGBTQIA+ people and many were not sure where to find services for themselves or their community. More than half of the participants noted having difficulty engaging in mental health services.
- AMAAD focused on engaging the gatekeepers and influencers in the community, as well as supporting peer to peer networking projects and worked to foster community driven peer reentry support including pre-release and post release linkage navigation and reentry services. Other goals included building education and advocacy, centering the value of lived experience and increase resources to education and access, developing a competency checklist for agencies and providers, and providing more at home community based options. BLAC also worked to examine mental health services in prison for trauma informed harm reduction approaches.

- AMAAD recommended agencies to designate safe spaces that are physical and cultural, including more funding for materials in physical spaces.
- Additionally, they recommended that DMH develop more opportunities geared towards training, leadership, development and employment; address implicit bias, microaggressions and recognize privilege; create more holistic and integrated approaches to mental and emotional wellness; and providers should acknowledge the unique trauma and experience of the Black LGBTQIA+ community.

Capacity Building Projects: Tabled for next meeting

DMH Accountability Session: Pinki shared We Rise information in the chat box

Announcements: None

Upcoming Meetings (first Thursday of the month, 2-4pm):

7/1/21, 2-4pm, Microsoft Teams Meeting

8/5/21, 2-4pm, Microsoft Teams Meeting

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