

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
Strategic Communications Division
Black & African Heritage UsCC Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday May 20, 2021 2:00pm

Welcome & Introductions

Participants: Desiree Deshay, Wendy Cabil, Nakeya Fields, Cleo Ray, Senait Adamassu, Carlene Davis, Keacha Stewart, Phillip Butler, Joyce Sales, Marilyn Huff, Vickie Xiu, Rayshell Chambers, Dr. Karen Gunn, Erica Melbourne, Karen Gunn, Vincent Galloway, Romalis Taylor, Pinki Mehta, Senait Adamassu, Donna Hill, Shavonda Webber, Jamila Clark, MC Harris, Pinki Mehta

Moment of Silence : 2 Minutes (the group participated in a short exercise)

Approval of Minutes (Minutes Approved) (Seekr correction made)

Reflection/Journaling 2020/ Wendy Cabil shared with the group (Reading)

1. Life is like a camera, Focus on what is important. Capture the good times, Develop from the negatives. If things don't work out, take another shot.
2. Be happy. Not because everything is good but because you can see the good in everything.

How can you apply that in your life, where you can find the silver lining? Wendy asked the group to share in the chatbox or speak out loud.

What does community mean to you?

- Joyce Sales shared showing consideration, not being self involved, giving and allowing others to give to her. Joyce shared she is learning to allow herself to admit to who she is and knowing her worth
- Vincent Galloway shared its more than two people getting together for a common cause, for a purpose, to address a situation.
- Wendy shared the history on how the Black Mental Health Taskforce started, Wendy thanked Nakeya for her empowerment, hard work and dedication.

Black Mental Health TF Update (10 min) - Nakeya/Marilynn

- Black Mental Health Task Force, led by Therapeutic Play Foundation, was awarded a grant from Kaiser to address intergenerational trauma in Black families
- The funds are being used to finish the documentary series, Black Mental Health, Changing the Narrative. Nakeya shared they are now doing regular outreach events and healing retreats.
- The first event was a healing retreat held at Kaiser, along with one of the sponsors from Painted Brain, an organization within the Black Mental Health Task Force, and Rayshell was present as a founder, and a member of the BAH UsCC.
- 30 people attended, there was food provided, a massage therapist on-site. They did some journaling activity that was healing and shared a sound bath.
- Painted Brain was awarded a FEMA contract to hire about 15 crisis workers to support an array of free services for Californians.
- Individuals from the Black Mental Health Task Force were recruited and hired, they are still hiring individuals that were not through DMH.
- T-shirts were provided for the Black Mental Health Task Force for the event, they have the ability to print T-shirts, which is a part of their social enterprise.
- Black Mental Health Task Force website is up, there is a resource page
- Black led and/or black empowering organizations submitted videos so people can learn about their services.
- If anyone is interested in adding a video or their organization to the resource page for the Black Mental Health Task Force, the videos have to be under five minutes

DMH Update...(15-20min) Pinki

- DMH has developed an ARDI, an anti-racism inclusion division within the Department, to dismantle racism at DMH and to serve consumers better
- Town Hall will be held on June 27, 2021, the unit is under the leadership of Dr. Jorge Del Partido Del Torro
- DMH is collaborating and coordinating with the county-wide ARDI, to increase equity in the internal workforce.
- We Rise is still going on, you can find updated information @ WeRise.la or their Instagram and Twitter
- There are mobile vaccine sites @ WeRise. Pop-up sites are offering vaccinations with DPH
- The Departments have been told by the CEO to start assessing what reconstitution looks like for each individual Department.
- The Department is looking at what necessary functions should start resuming in-person activities, such as our clinics.

Dr. Sherin (Guest):

- Dr. Sherin spoke briefly to the group about ARDI, inclusion and anti-racism.
- Dr. Sherin was invited to Juneteenth in Pasadena, he agreed to attend the event
- Nakeya asked Could for an update on the Black health promoters and if there is any way we as a UsCC can work with them directly who were hired for the Black community
- Dr. Sherin shared the Department has expanded their investment in the Promoters program across communities
- The Community Ambassador Network, the CAN, is a way for us to infuse resources into communities most impacted by traumas of the past year plus, to train, certify, and hire individuals of, by, and for the community.
- Dr Sherin hopes other departments help expand the network beyond mental health services so that we can improve access.

- This is an opportunity for us to figure out how to empower communities to manage themselves
- CAN, Community Ambassador Network, invest directly into the communities to empower communities to care for, hold up, build themselves, and lift up.
- Dr. Sherin asked The American Rescue Plan, the ARP, to invest in the development of infrastructure for communities across this county to build out ambassador programs and to hire people from their communities as ambassadors, give them hope, a future, a career path, whether in health and human services
- Rayshell asked Dr. Sherin an update on the stakeholder feedback process for implementation on SB803, and how can Painted Brain work toward supporting and expanding Black peers in the workforce
- Painted Brain has been engaged and is invited to and will be participating in the stakeholder process around all communities. And we need expertise from individuals and also from organizations that have bandwidth on how to go forward with the peer bill.
- Dr Sherin was asked by Marilyn Huff to briefly discuss ARDI and the role he envisions ARDI will share with the UsCCs?
- Department of Mental Health is creating an ARDI unit because it has to be elevated.
- An Advisory council was developed to talk about the internal culture and climate and racism inside the department and inside the county
- We have a representative, an executive, that is being asked to help coordinate that effort so that when UsCCs are feeding information back to the Department, there is a strong pathway to get to me and to the executive leaders and influence or decision making.
- Wendy asked Dr. Sherin to make sure that staff understand how to work with the peers?
- Wendy expressed concerns about the social recovery model through Access California. Wendy stated she isn't able to implement it or see it implemented, Pinki Mehta will connect with Wendy to further discuss.
- Wendy suggested work groups, for those with lived experience, to have a chat session.

Presentations/Awardees Capacity Building Projects 2020-2021 ... (10min): Desiree/ Nakeya Fields

- The Community Agents of Change project, by Dr. Donald Grant is completed. Desi will send the report out to everyone.
- African American Community Youth Ambassadors Project by Candy Lewis for Service Area 1, has been completed
- Desi stated the group can discuss it at the next meeting for follow-up and/or the consideration to have them come in give a report.
- Desi shared the two projects that were voted on were, the Empowering Black African-American Family and Wellness Conversation Series, and the Black African-American Elder Mental Health Project.
- SOWs have been completed, and they are out for bid, and there was an awardee of both of projects. Those projects were awarded to Nakeya Fields of the Therapeutic Play Foundation.
- Nakeya authored the empowerment of the Black African Family conversation series
- Nakeya will be the vendor for these projects, and she will come back and let us know and give us updates on how they're going.

Capacity Building Projects 2021-2022 (3 Confirmations) ...(10min)

- Desi shared in April, three new capacity building projects for 21-22 were approved
- The Seekr Project, a Black artificial intelligence app for the mind, Phillip Butler is the creator of the project.
- Black male outcomes, strengthening community connections for boys and men, the author is MC Harris and Rayshell Chambers

- Black Maternal Health and Early Child Intervention Empowerment Project created by Rayshell & Marilyn
- Desi shared the Statement of Work process will begin for these projects.
- The survey monkey can go out for the three projects to make sure they are the ones that we will be working on the end of 2021, 2022.

Co-Chair Considerations...(10min)

- Nakeya has to step down as the co-chair, along with Wendy
- Because of the County guidelines and bylaws, it's a conflict of interest for Nakeya to be awarded the projects as a vendor and actually facilitate as a co-chair for the subcommittee.
- Nakeya will continue to be a part of the subcommittee, and she will be giving updates with regards to everything with the vendors and for the task force.
- Wendy shared they are open to receiving any nominations, self nominated or from others, and we will make sure to give you all the information that is needed to understand what the position is about.
- Wendy shared they would like to give each person who is willing to accept their nomination, his or her nomination, we will give you a trial (audio distortion), one month, you pick the month, however it turns out, depending on how many are willing to move forward as nominees, just to allow you get a feel and also to share with the rest of the body your background, your interests, why you would like to be the co-chair
- Desi asked members to email her if they are interested in doing a meeting, this would just be a guest co-chairmanship with Wendy.

Public Comment: (Oral: 5min); Written encouraged via email:

- Vincent Galloway shared they are working with a group of young people to release a song on the angel-versary of George Floyd's murder next week, working with the collective called SoLA Collective that starts a summit called the Chiro Summit on that same Tuesday, as that is also apart Unite Africa day or Unite Africa week. So just celebrating that and asking for your prayers on the launch of the song
- Nakeya shared they are are doing a book club in June, it's every Thursday at 5:00 p.m. A book reading club for the book Homegoing
- The purpose of it is to allow conversation about following the story of the two sisters who start in Ghana and they're separated, one goes to America, one stays in Ghana, and it follows their ancestry until they come back together in Ghana and then the healing starts with home going
- Wendy shared that Measure J needs to have our voices heard about the money. They
- Wendy stated if you want to help your community, get involved and speak your truth and lift your voice.
- The group considered and agreed going dark in June and coming back in July

Future Mtgs: Time & Date: 8/19/2021; 2pm-4pm