

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
FAITH-BASED MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

Building Bridges to Wellness & Reconnecting Diverse Communities

May 23, 2023



Photo: Iwan Baan



“

I'm grateful to all our faith-based organizations that provide both a safe and a spiritual space to heal. Belonging is essential to our well-being. The work that our faith-based organizations are doing is helping to promote better mental health by supporting our residents in connecting with community.

”



Holly J. Mitchell
Supervisor, Second District
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors



LISA. H. WONG

Director, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

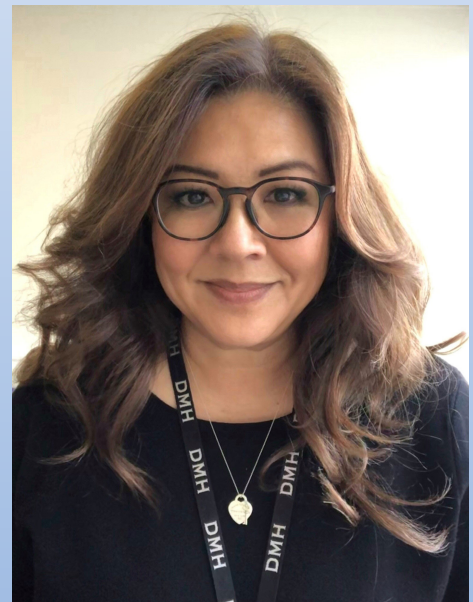
Welcome to the 2023 Building Bridges of Wellness and Connecting Diverse Communities Faith-Based Conference. As the new director of the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH), I know that working with our faith-based partners will help optimize the mental health, well-being and life trajectory of Los Angeles County's most vulnerable through efforts that promote independence within, and connectedness to, the community. One of the first sources of strength for many individuals suffering from life challenges is their faith and faith leaders.

We hope that this conference accomplishes our shared goals of providing supports to communities and families throughout Los Angeles County through the intersection of faith, spirituality and professional mental health services through the public mental health system. We seek jointly to uplift individuals, households and communities suffering from the direct and indirect impact of mental illness.

Thank you for attending this important event. I look forward to listening, learning, networking and sharing strategies for supporting mental well-being through faith and spiritual supports.

Sincerely,

Lisa H. Wong, Psy.D.
Director



WELCOME FROM OUR SENIOR MANAGERS

On behalf of the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, we are honored and pleased to welcome you to the 2023 Building Bridges of Wellness and Connecting Diverse Communities Faith-Based Conference.

This conference highlights the necessity of connecting faith, spirituality, and mental health care, as well as emphasizing the importance of spirituality within our communities. Each panel and workshop has been designed to inspire you, enlighten you, and bring you greater awareness to these connections.

Thank you, Dr. Lisa H. Wong, Keynote Speaker Dr. Marvin J. Southard, panelists, workshop leaders, and most importantly you – our guests – for your commitment and dedication to this cause. We hope that you will have an enriching and moving experience.

Respectfully,

Theion Perkins

Theion W. Perkins, RN, BSN, MSN

Robert Byrd

Robert D. Byrd, Psy.D.



THEION PERKINS, RN, BSN, MSN

*Acting Senior Deputy Director, Outpatient
Community Services Division*



ROBERT D. BYRD, PSY.D.

Deputy Director, Prevention Division

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

MARVIN SOUTHARD, D.S.W.

“Spirituality, Mental Illness and Addiction: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow in Our Families and Communities”

Dr. Marvin Southard is the former Director of the largest county-run mental health services organization in the United States, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, with a budget approaching \$3 billion, serving more than a quarter of a million persons annually. LACDMH supports innovative co-located services within schools, courts, other County departments, and community organizations.



During his tenure as LACDMH Director, Dr. Southard assembled a ground-breaking team that accomplished creative and inclusive work with communities including regional mental health urgent care centers, crisis response teams, children and older adult systems of care, Health Neighborhoods, and partnerships with faith communities to further social justice.

Dr. Southard has focused his career on empowering urban and rural communities to strengthen recovery from mental health and substance use challenges. He served for a decade as a leader of community behavioral health services in East Los Angeles. He has been a leader of numerous organizations and acted in another county government leadership role as Kern County Director of Mental Health.

On leaving government service, Dr. Southard served as a Professor of Practice at the University of Southern California (USC), where he developed the Professional DSW degree program, mentoring the next generation of community service leaders. After leaving USC he and several colleagues formed Capstone Solutions Consulting Group. He is also in the Board of five California and two national non-profit organizations including as mental health advocate on the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine.

CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE

7:30 AM - 8:30 AM

REGISTRATION, BREAKFAST, AND ENTERTAINMENT

Native American Drum Performance by:
Raul Garcia, CCAPP, and Jason Carrasco, L.M.F.T., LACDMH

8:30 AM - 9:05 AM

OPENING REMARKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Mistress of Ceremony: Theion Perkins, RN, BSN, MSN, LACDMH
- Master of Ceremony: Robert D. Byrd, Psy.D., LACMDH
- Land Acknowledgment: Manuel Sánchez
- Opening Prayer: Reverend Dr. Barbara Brooks and Pastor Oliver Buie
- "Renew My Life, Lord Jesus/Renuévame, Señor Jesus"
Performance by: Pastor Joshua Seung Nah
- FBAC Remarks and Acknowledgement: Pastor Christian Ponciano

WELCOME

Lisa H. Wong, Psy.D., Director, LACDMH

9:05 AM - 10:20 AM

MORNING KEYNOTE

Marvin Southard, D.S.W.: "Spirituality, Mental Illness and Addiction: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow in Our Families and Communities"

10:35 AM - 11:35 AM AM WORKSHOPS

11:45 AM - 1:05 PM

LUNCH AND ENTERTAINMENT

Blessing by: Mahomed Khan

1:15 PM - 2:15 PM

PM WORKSHOPS

2:25 PM - 3:45 PM

AFTERNOON PLENARY PANEL

Moderator: James Coomes, L.C.S.W., LACDMH

Panelists:

- Father Germán Sánchez, St. Sebastian Catholic Church, Los Angeles, CA
- Pastor Andrea Humphrey, Ed.D., CEO, IQ Training Inc., Granada Hills, CA
- Rabbi Susan Goldberg, NEFESH, Los Angeles, CA
- Reverend Tera Landers, Throop Unitarian Universalist Church, Pasadena, CA
- Shaykh Suhail Mulla, Resident Scholar, Islamic Society of West Valley, CA

3:45 PM - 3:55 PM

WELLNESS/MINDFULNESS ACTIVITY

Chaplain Ruth Belonsky

4:00 PM - 4:15 PM

CLOSING REMARKS

- Martin Jones, L.C.S.W., LACDMH
- Closing Prayers: Chaplain Imelda Bermejo

CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

AM SESSION: 10:35 - 11:45 AM, PM SESSION: 1:15 - 2:15 PM

Bridging Faith and/or Spirituality and Mental Health

Carlos Fayard, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Chair, Psychiatry & Religion Program, Director, World Health Organization Collaborating Center for Training and Community Mental Health, Department of Psychiatry, Loma Linda University School of Medicine

This workshop creates a space for mental health professionals and members of the faith community to discuss strategies for building a much needed bridge between the two communities and replace the historical tension and mistrust them with a model of cooperation. Participants will be presented with research demonstrating the contributions religion and spirituality make to improved mental health in diverse communities, particularly among people of color. They will learn about the emotional difficulties experienced by exemplars of faith and the importance of paying attention to mental health issues. Discussion will emphasize the need for a whole-person approach to reducing emotional distress and the importance of facilitating comprehensive treatment (including the use of psychotropics when needed) in addition to spiritual beliefs and practices. (1 CEU)

Social Media and Self Image: How Faith/Spiritual and Mental Health Can Support Positive Perspectives

Devon Johnson, Pastor, Worship Encounter Church

This training identifies barriers Faith-Based organizations experience while attempting to engage youth while promoting mental wellness. Discussions will focus on strategies to address trauma many youth from marginalized communities face and how religion can increase the engagement of youth while improving their self-worth. (No CEU)

Faith and the Young Generation: Bridging the Generational Gap while Promoting Youth Well-being

Byron Young, M.D., Mental Health Psychiatrist, LACDMH Specialized Foster Care

Dr. Young explores the gap that exists between the stakeholders of Faith-Based Institutions and youth from marginalized communities. This one-hour workshop will be part didactic and part interactive conversation and will allow participants to interact in real time with the moderator and lecturer. Participants will engage in critical discussions centered on the self-work needed for improved, more humanized engagement of youth from marginalized communities. (No CEU)

CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

AM SESSION: 10:35 - 11:45 AM, PM SESSION: 1:15 - 2:15 PM

LGBTQIA2S+ and Faith: The Emotional & Mental Weight of Denied Sacred Spaces

Andrea L. Humphrey, Ed.D., CEO, IQ Training Inc.

Participants of this workshop will continue to build the bridge between mental health staff and faith leaders in supporting LGBTQIA2S+ communities. Participants will learn how to foster a culture of understanding and acceptance between both communities and expand the lens of commonality between all of God's people... humanity!

The course takes an unbiased position in examining and balancing the needs of the LGBTQIA2S+ community against the basic rights and needs of any individual, regardless of sexual orientation. Learning objectives include increased knowledge of the mental, physical, social, and relational impact created by rejection and exclusion. Topics include the impact of shame, guilt, and the loss of familial relationships, and will help clinicians and clergy in working work together in fostering healthy emotional and mental wellness in a safe space of co-existence. (1 CEU)

Bridging Spirituality and the Maternal and Child Health— Creating A Village from the Beginning

Dretona Maddox, D.S.W., L.C.S.W., B.S.N., RN-PHN, Founder and Executive Director, Purposely Chosen, Inc./Born for Nia Maternity Home

This 1-hour workshop focuses on the integration of spirituality and mental health services to support the well-being of pregnant and parenting teens. The early stages of life play a crucial role in shaping an individual's mental, emotional, and physical development, making it essential to provide a strong foundation for teen mothers and children. The role of spirituality in maternal and child health is vital and this workshop aims to empower Faith-Based communities in building a nurturing environment for families from the outset. Participants will explore the impact of faith and spirituality on mental health, as well as the unique challenges faced by pregnant and parenting teens in need of maternal health supports and advocacy services. By fostering collaboration and community-building, this workshop will empower Faith-Based communities to establish a village of support that contributes to improved mental health outcomes for pregnant and parenting teens.. (No CEU)

TITLE OF WORKSHOP

ROOM

Morning Keynote Address / Afternoon Plenary Panel

Concourse Hall

Bridging Faith and/or Spirituality and Mental Health

502A

LGBTQIA2S+ and Faith: The Emotional & Mental Weight of Denied Sacred Spaces

511

*Bridging Spirituality and the Maternal and Child Health—
Creating A Village from the Beginning*

501

Faith and the Young Generation: Bridging the Generational Gap while Promoting Youth Wellbeing

503

Social Media and Self Image: How Faith/Spiritual and Mental Health Can Support Positive Perspectives

502 B



ABOUT THE PRESENTERS



BYRON YOUNG, M.D., is a child, adolescent, and adult psychiatrist, as well as an emotional wellness program developer and consultant. He works primarily as a psychiatrist and psychiatric consultant with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's Specialized Foster Care Program.

Dr. Young is passionate about being impactful in under-resourced and marginalized communities, particularly communities of color, in both his daily work with the LACDMH and various community oriented projects. He primarily focuses on the intersection of mental health, social justice/racial justice, and the arts through his initiative DointItWell.org. He develops and consults on creative programs and initiatives to impact the collective emotional wellness of communities and organizations from a DEI lens.

Dr. Young has worked on program development and consulted for various organizations like FOKUS, The Youth Opportunity Hub of New York-Presbyterian Hospital, Google's Code Next program, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. Dr Young has developed talks and moderated critical discourse around emotional wellness with many organizations including Sony Pictures, Netflix, Airbnb, Meetup.com, Factset, etc. and has done a ted style talk at the National Council for Mental Wellbeing national conference.



CARLOS FAYARD, PH.D., is a practicing Clinical Psychologist with more than 30 years of experience. As a member of the Department of Psychiatry at Loma Linda University School of Medicine, he is an Associate Professor, Chairs the Psychiatry & Religion Program and is the Director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Center for Training and Community Mental Health. Dr. Fayard has been a consultant for the Catholic Diocese of San Bernardino, contributed to training approximately 5,000 religious leaders on mental health issues in three continents. He has consulted with the United Nations and the United States Institute for Peace on the inclusion of religion/spirituality in the psychosocial support of refugees and migrant populations. He has authored two books and edited two volumes on mental health and religion.



DEVON JOHNSON is a pastor and social media strategist who currently resides in Houston, TX. As a Los Angeles native, Devon spent much of his young adult life engaging college campuses while also being mentored in areas of technology, entertainment, music, videography, and social media at companies like Disney, CW, BuzzFeed, and the Grammy Academy.

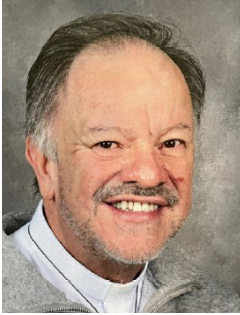
Devon was groomed in the local black church before beginning his education at California State University, Northridge, in Music Industry Studies. With a love for communication and technology, Devon and his wife Raven planted a church while also creating their own media company during the pandemic which started in 2020. Since then, he has had the opportunity to manage social media for faith based leaders such as Albert Tate, Ricky Jenkins, and others. Devon has also provided social media strategies for many non-profit company start-ups while also assisting in growing platforms for various artists and public figures.

Devon's heart is help break ground on the intersection of faith, social media, and mental health awareness by training organizations on the power of social media and spiritual practices.



DRETONA MADDOX, D.S.W., L.C.S.W., B.S.N., RN-PHN, is an esteemed assistant professor of social work at the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (CBSS) at California Baptist University. As a suicide loss survivor who experienced both pregnancy and homelessness as a teenager, Dr. Maddox has faced numerous challenges and has overcome adversity throughout her life. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Phoenix, her Master of Social Work from the University of Southern California, and her Doctor of Social Work from California Baptist University, where she researched barriers to health equity in maternal health for pregnant Black teens.

Dr. Maddox's current research interests and expertise are centered around Black Adolescent Maternal Health, reflecting her passion for improving the well-being of vulnerable populations. Alongside her academic achievements, Dr. Maddox is the founding executive director of Purposely Chosen, Inc., a non-profit organization that provides essential support and advocacy services for pregnant and parenting teens in foster care. Under her leadership, Purposely Chosen, Inc. operates two maternity homes in the Inland Empire of Southern California, providing vital resources and assistance to young mothers in need.



FATHER GERMÁN SÁNCHEZ, currently serves at Sebastian Catholic Church, Los Angeles, CA. He was born in Colombia. He graduated as a medical and surgical doctor in 1982, in Equator. In 1990, he became an ordained as diocesan Catholic Priest in Blois. His native language is Spanish, though he studied French, Italian, and English. He received his Master's degree in Canon Law at the Gregorian University of Rome, Italy, in 1991.



JAMES COOMES, LCSW, is a licensed clinical social worker with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health and currently serves as the Service Area Chief for the Antelope Valley (SA 1). He has been actively involved in crisis prevention, intervention and postvention for over 20 years. James was an active member of the SA 2 Clergy Roundtable and continues to actively support the intersection between spirituality and mental health. In addition to his work in his current assignment, James is a member of the Department's Anti-Racism, Diversity and Inclusion Staff Advisory Council. Outside of the office, James is serving on the Board of Trustees at Neighborhood Unitarian Universalist Church in Pasadena, among other community volunteer activities.



PASTOR ANDREA L. HUMPHREY, ED.D., or "Dr. Dre," as she is playfully called, is a dynamic, humorous and down to earth Pastor, Author, Speaker, Coach, and Leadership Specialist. Not only does she function as CEO of her own executive development company, I.Q. Training Inc., which facilitates training and development and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion sessions for corporations and community centers but, she also serves as founding and Lead Pastor of H.O.P.E.'s House International Ministries. The intersection of the marketplace and ministry is where she feels right at home, this Pastor/businesswoman/entrepreneur is impacting lives daily as the President & CEO of the Hope Community Development Center in Granada Hills. Graced with an unusual capacity to see greatness in people, she is always in pursuit of practical ways to teach the Gospel and help transform lives spiritually, mentally, financially, emotionally and physically. The Core of her heart is acceptance and inclusiveness of all humanity, and the well-being of children. Her work in the community and the church speaks to that heartbeat and the lives that have been impacted span the globe.

PASTOR ANDREA (CONT'D) is a well sought out speaker and has traveled all over the world empowering leaders, business women, pastors and women, to step out of the shadows and live in the fullness of their purpose. She boldly delivers a timely and power-packed message to those in need of an inspired word, educational insights or a challenge to live their best authentic lives. She has traveled internationally to South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia, India, London, the Philippines, Antigua, the Bahamas and many states, empowering those who need to be uplifted and reminded that they are called to be More! As a successful church-planter she also teaches pastors and global leaders how to establish and maintain a local church and include the community in empowering families. Her two books, *More Than Just His Wife*, (*It's Time to Come out of the Shadows*) and *Transformed for Purpose* have impacted people all over the globe but none more importantly than her joy, her two daughters, Lauryn (21) and Sydney (17) and her husband of 34 years Charles.



RABBI SUSAN GOLDBERG, is the founder of Nefesh, an open hearted, progressive spiritual community capturing the energy and vitality of LA's east side. A fourth generation Angeleno raised in Red Hill (that's Echo Park and Silverlake) she has a special focus on revitalizing LA's east side Jewish community to again be an active part of the multicultural beauty of these neighborhoods. She helped to lead the renewal of the historic Wilshire Blvd Temple in Koreatown from 2013–2019 and Temple Beth Israel of Highland Park from 2008–2013. She also served as rabbi in residence for East Side Jews, a project of the Silverlake Independent JCC. She has been featured in the Los Angeles Times, Lilith Magazine, The New York Times, Pasadena Magazine, the Jewish Journal, Southern California Public Radio and more.



REVEREND TERA LANDERS, serves as Pastor at Throop Unitarian Universalist Church in Pasadena, and she is an Assistant Professor at Starr King School for the Ministry. Rev. Tera is pursuing a Doctor of Ministry at Pacific School of Religion, and her dissertation project focuses on crafting a liturgical year based on nature's seasons as a way to deepen ecological consciousness to save our earth. Rev. Tera is a member of the "Pasadena 100" Steering Committee, which has a goal of Pasadena Water & Power transitioning to 100% carbon-free energy sources by 2030. Tera loves permaculture-based gardening and reading mystery novels.



SHAYKH SUHAIL MULLA, is the Director of the Los Angeles branch of the Khalil Center – a community spiritual and psychological wellness center. Shaykh Suhail currently serves as Resident Scholar at the Islamic Society of West Valley in Canoga Park, CA. He also serves as the IOK Muslim Chaplain at both UCLA and CSUN. In addition, Shaykh Suhail serves as Religious Advisor to UMMA Community Clinic. And he is the co-founder of the Muslim Marriage Rejuvenation Retreat.

Shaykh Suhail has worked as a social worker in LAUSD and Sylmar Juvenile Court, has served as an Imam at the Islamic Society of Orange County and as Interim Executive Director and Director of Mental Health at Access California Services.

Shaykh Suhail earned his Bachelor's Degree in African-American Studies from CSUN, his Master's in Social Welfare from UCLA and another Bachelor's Degree in Shari'ah (Islamic Law) from one of the world's most prestigious Islamic seminaries – Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. He also completed a two year Islamic Studies program at Al-Asheera Al-Muhammadiya in Cairo, Egypt where he studied privately with numerous Azhari scholars.

Shaykh Suhail resides in Los Angeles with his wife and four children. He is a student of the outdoors and enjoys hiking, camping, backpacking, woodworking and gardening in his free time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The planning committee would like to thank the DMH Executive Management Team, all LACDMH staff, the Faith-Based Advocacy Committee (FBAC), participating vendors, organizations and volunteers that worked collaboratively to make this conference a success.

Special thanks to Vienna To of the LACDMH Public Information Office for her assistance with the preparing the conference materials.

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Faith-Based Mental Health Conference Planning Committee

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FAITH-BASED ADVOCACY COUNCIL

The Faith-Based Advocacy Council (FBAC) convenes diverse clergy and faith leaders throughout Los Angeles County to decrease mental health stigma and increase access to care. We envision clergy, lay leaders, and all faith communities experiencing wellness and championing mental health. We recognize the vital role of spirituality in mental health prevention, care, and treatment. We aim to increase the integration of spirituality and mental health through sharing information and resources.

For more information about FBAC, please email:
Elaine Waldman at ejwaldman@dmh.lacounty.gov.



(**L-R:** Reverend Oliver Buie, Harvey Keenan, Reverend Najuma Smith-Pollard, Pastor Christian Ponciano, Chaplain Ruth Belonsky, Reverend Barbara Brooks, Pastor Joshua Seung Nah, and Mahomed Khan)

This is a sub-set of the FBAC Executive Board. Not pictured: Chaplain Imelda Bermejo, Manuel Sánchez, Judy Gilliland, and Pastor Andrea Humphrey.

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

Faith-Based Advocacy Council (FBAC)

MEETS EVERY 1ST THURSDAY, 10 AM – 12 PM

WHO WE ARE

FBAC convenes diverse clergy and faith community leaders to reduce stigma and increase access to care. Participate in practical, relevant presentations and workshops connecting spirituality and mental health.

For more information, contact:
Elaine Waldman at
ejwaldman@dmh.lacounty.gov

HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

1. Join virtually on [Microsoft Teams](#)
2. **Enter Meeting ID:**
242 404 362 520#
3. **Call-in:** (323) 776-6996
Codes:
English: 758 655 877#
Korean: 293 126 76#
Spanish: 323 752 518#
4. **Scan below** to join our monthly meeting:



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NOTES

NOTES



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Program designed by Vienna To from LACDMH PIO
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