

**Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health  
LGBTQIA2-S UsCC Subcommittee Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, May 2, 2024, 2-4 pm**

**Welcome/Introductions**

**Present:** Ana Bernal, Mikey Fields, Bill Sive, Merry Meyers, Addison Rose Vincent, Rex Wilde, Eden Luna, Paul Vallejo, Alex Salazar, Mark Gonzalez, Jennifer Jiries, Brooke Balestreri, Vanessa Cervantes Westwood, Mahtab Javed Siddiqui, Rafael Lopes, Rafaela Vargas, Joyce Ma, Courtney Hoffman, Johana Lozano, Judy Kim, Carol DeLilly, Esther Perez-Wiley, Mariana Marroquin, Sharon Chapman, Vicky Xu, Toni Craigs-Thomas, Andrea Aoun, Arven Arguelles

**DMH Admin:** Kelly Wilkerson, Jennifer Alquijay, riKu Matsuda

**April 2024 Meeting Minutes** – Meeting minutes approved (first-Bill Sive, second-Paul Vallejo).

**FY 24-25 Capacity Building Projects – Proposals**

**Aging In Place focus area:**

- Aging in Place-LGBTQ+ Older Adults: The lack of LGBTQ+ older adult programming across the county can be addressed by workshops/forums directly to the LGBTQ+ older adult population, mental health and social service providers. Additionally, providing educational resources in this area for the LGBTQ+ older adult population on historical trauma and aging care. Solutions are to destigmatize mental health among LGTQ+ older adults, collaborating with older LGBTQ+ UsCC Subcommittee Members (Gay Elder Circle - Bill Sive, Cynthia Ruffin, Shawn Griffin) for their unique perspectives guidance and mentoring. Additionally, all efforts are encouraged to be co-generational in planning and execution.
- Breaking Beyond Life Expectancies: The Project's target population is LGBTQIA2S people from across different age groups but with a focus on older adults, as well as other socioeconomic factors, such as race, class, gender, etc. The Project will be open to all ages from 18-65. The goal of the project is to invite sixteen participants to pair up in a mentor-ship program and take part in the series of educational workshops and discussion groups. At the end of the program, participants will earn \$500 as a stipend.
- Aging LGBTQ+ Adults Initiative: Project will: 1. Prioritize advocacy efforts including policy and education for LGBTQIA2-S+ older adults 2. Support aging adults in identifying resources, such as life planning and elder specific care and services 3. Increase public education, awareness, and understanding of LGBTQIA2-S+ aging adults' needs. 4. Create a safe and affirming space for LGBTQIA2-S+ aging adults 5. Provide findings report The project will ensure access through ensuring times and materials and points of access are mindful of mobility, access, and recognizing the critical needs of these communities, activities will include: 1. Culturally affirming promotional and informational materials that prioritize the priority population. 2. A monthly meeting designed for LGBTQIA2-S+ older adults 3. A community survey specifically designed for LGBTQIA2-S+ older adults to help assess needs and gaps as well as opportunities to response.
- Dinner and a Show: Comprised of a series of 6 DINNER engagements of at least 2 hours each where 10 unique to each event adults (5 senior, 5 adult) participants will meet for dinner and share their stories of struggle, identity, and experience with each other so as to

create social bonds of hope. Participants will SHOW each other who they are by sharing their life stories. Throughout these events, participants create community and social bonds around their experiences and conversations while sharing a meal and discussion. At the end of each dinner engagement, participants will highlight what they have learned in a short feedback video about ways to cope with struggle, and the final video will be shared with each of the other engagement groups and UsCC committees (and websites) at the end of the completed project. The video itself can be shared after the events online as a resource.

- **Having Our Say:** Present at least (12) four-hour staff trainings for health services agencies in Los Angeles County during the contract period. The trainings will present results from the What We Think Project surveys and other research on barriers to service for communities of color in Los Angeles County. Trainings will use the inverted triangle model starting with broad ideas about Black Gay Male Elders and communities of color in Los Angeles, stereotypes vs cultural norms, stigma vs truth. Then narrow to provide nuanced guidelines for the agency to overcome barriers to services and provide a comfortable, welcoming environment. The four-hour training will also discuss SUD patterns in the communities of color with a special focus on the history of substance use in the LGBTQIAA2+ communities and how that history may affect Black Gay Male Elders present day.
- **TGI-FAMH:** Transcending Generational Intersections For Access to Mental Health (TGI-FAMH) will be a cohort program of 15-20 TGI+ older adults that will develop skill-sets and toolkits on how to access mental health services and plan ahead as they age. Through a peer to peer model (p2p) demonstrated by the National HIV Behavioral Surveillance Project for Trans Women in LA County in 2019; this model will be replicated for in person workshop trainings where the co-hort will learn how to access online services, navigate technical devices, receive step by step guides on how to access services to plan ahead as they age, and create a community event that fosters connectedness, mental health, and aging in place. All trainings and materials will be in both English and Spanish. TGI-FAMH will be conducted in 5 phases; Phase 1: Recruitment, Phase 2: Training, Phase 3: Address Unaddressed Needs, Phase 4: Community Event, Phase 5: Collect data for report back and present findings.

#### **Harm Reduction focus area:**

- **Safe Tea:** The purpose of Safe Tea is to raise awareness about addiction prevention and harm reduction strategies using peer to peer networks and resources to prevent overdoses. The project will create a harm reduction resource guide with information including but not limited to where to find Narcan, needle exchange services, and Fentanyl testing strips. The project will facilitate a series of live demonstrations on how to test various substances using testing kits. The project will compose teams of three safety roamers, with a total of six teams for eighteen participants, to provide the resource guides and conduct surveys on the ground.
- **Black Harm Reduction Education Initiative:** Responds specifically to Black and African American individuals and communities impacted by or at risk of substance use and abuse, recognizing these communities have historically been underserved and underrepresented. The findings from this project will allow for more informed decision making to better serve, support, and connect Black and African American communities to culturally affirming, trauma informed care, services, and resources. Will include community education and awareness, naloxone education and awareness, and access to substance and recovery care and services.

#### **Internet Safety focus area:**

- **Audacious Athletes:** Aims to create a welcoming and safe space for transgender and nonbinary individuals to participate in various sports activities over a span of 3-4 months. Each month will focus on a different sport, including volleyball, basketball, soccer, kickball, and baseball, providing opportunities for participants to engage, learn, and play in a supportive environment. In addition to sports activities,

the program will incorporate discussion circles around social media and internet safety, as well as education and helpful tips on how to navigate online spaces.

- **Digital Hygiene:** The purpose of Digital Hygiene is to provide critical and life-saving information to LGBTQIA2S people by providing education against Digital Doxing and Internet safety. Much like Outing, Doxing can be a life-threatening act and can place many at risk for discrimination in the workplace, school, and home. For many LGBTQIA2S people, we find community Online via Online support groups, social media and dating apps, as well as in person events organized from online forums. Attacks may even go as far as Swatting, which escalates Doxing to a false police report of a crime at their residence to murder or terrorize the victim. As a result, LGBTQIA2S people have been increasingly vulnerable as the Internet continues to evolve. Digital Hygiene will provide a series of educational workshops to respond to a critical moment in history right now.
- **LGBTQIA2-S+ Documentary Series:** A documentary film series at Gardena Cinema (independent movie theater) which shows documentaries on LGBTQIA2s+ issues. There will be a Q & A session for participants. Snacks and the film will be free of charge in addition to resources for the community. this serves as an alternative to receiving news from social media and fake news for the entire family.
- **Toolbox for Digital Spaces:** comprised of a series of 6 engagements of at least 2 hours each where 10 unique to each event TAY participants will meet collectively with a facilitator and discuss and share their experiences with/in digital spaces. Throughout these events, TAY participants create community and social bonds around their shared experiences and conversations. Additionally, these events create opportunities for youth to learn from their peers and the facilitator about digital spaces and how to best maneuver these contexts through the various educational activities associated with each event. At the end of each engagement, TAY participants will highlight what they have learned via survey or some way the facilitator and these lessons-learned will be organized by the facilitator as a digital project and shared with each of the other engagement groups and UsCC committees (and websites) at the end of the completed project.

#### **Suicide Prevention & Awareness for LGBTQIA2-S youth focus area:**

- **Harmony Harvest:** Harmony Harvest focuses on teaching gardening and cooking as a means of self-sustainability. Participants will learn how to grow their own food and prepare meals using the produce they cultivate. The program will span over 8 weeks, with the first 4 weeks dedicated to gardening lessons and the subsequent 4 weeks focused on cooking lessons. This program is specifically designed for LGBTQIA2S+ youth who are experiencing depression and suicidality. It aims to empower them with the knowledge and skills to take care of their bodies and minds through self-sustainable practices. During the course of the program, they will build community, gain skills, and grow their palettes!
- **Youth Rites of Passage:** The Youth Rites of Passage (YRP) is a program that uplifts and celebrates the significant life transitions for QTBIPOC (Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous, People of COLOR) community members aged 7-26 years old. Organized by age, participants engage in age-appropriate discussion groups about navigating daily stress, conflict resolution and dialogue; self-care classes that include hygiene, healthy eating and the celebration of body changes; and hands-on workshops including plant identification, journaling, fire tending, drumming and crafting.
- **Pride & Prevention:** A Youth-Driven Suicide Awareness Campaign for LGBTQ+ Youth and Allies, a program that activates LGBTQ+ youth to implement LGBTQ+ youth specific suicide prevention educational tools and outreach for LGBTQ+ youth, their allies, and youth development partners. -Organize and host suicide prevention conferences tailored to the needs of LGBTQ+ youth and development

providers. -Design and produce educational toolkits for distribution at these events. -Execute a comprehensive outreach campaign to maximize resource accessibility and community engagement.

- Two Rainbows Suicide Prevention Video Campaign: Produce a library of engaging, educational, evidence-based and awareness-driving animated videos targeting LGBTQIA2S+ youth and their families, guardians, and caregivers. The videos will be designed to convey information that reaches this audience with the goal to inspire, educate, engage, and prevent suicide. Individual videos will be easily consumable short (1-2 minute) suitable for social media or other uses.
- LGBTQIA2-S+ Youth Educators Program: The LGBTQIA2S+ Youth Educators Program is an educational program that provides learning opportunities to teachers, faculty, and school personnel throughout K-12 Schools in Los Angeles County about LGBTQIA2S+ Youth Support & Suicide Prevention with the ultimate aim of addressing LGBTQ+ youth suicide.
- Transcending Cis-styms for Youth: a cohort program of 15-20 LGBTQ+ youth that will develop skill-sets and toolkits on how to access mental health services and create social media campaigns to raise awareness on mental health and lower suicidal rates amongst LGBTQ+ youth. Through a peer to peer model (p2p) demonstrated by The Center for Trans Youth Health and Development at CHLA; this model will be replicated for in person workshop trainings engaging in, stress releasing arts, mental health awareness as they create their own awareness campaigns. TCY will be conducted in 5 phases; Phase 1: Recruitment, Phase 2: Host Retreat, Phase 3: Implement Cohort Training and Campaign Ideas, Phase 4: Youth Create Social Media Campaigns, Phase 5: Collect Data for Report Back and Present Findings on social media campaign metrics.

#### **Current Capacity Building Projects – Update**

- Updates on capacity building projects currently being implemented:
  - What We Think Project – Currently in final phases, completion date pending.
  - The Panthera Project – Project extended, completion date pending.
  - Neurodivergent Voices Album Project – currently in second phase including artist recruitment.
  - Liberation Workshop Series Project – currently in third phase including hosting the series.
  - LGBTQIA2-S Violence Prevention Lab Project – currently in third phase including hosting Lab.
  - LGBTQIA2-S Housing Listening Sessions Project – currently in third phase including hosting the sessions.
  - Proyecto Mariposa Monarca – currently in second phase including participant recruitment.
  - Transforming Community Care: API LGBTQ+ Mental Health and Wellness Project – currently in fifth phase including hosting workshops.
  - Two-Spirit Storytelling Project – currently in fourth phase including hosting final gathering.
  - Bi+ Affirming Mentorship and Storytelling Lab – currently in third phase including hosting Lab.

#### **General Announcements/Resources**

- Send any resources to Kelly via email ([KeWilkerson@dmh.lacounty.gov](mailto:KeWilkerson@dmh.lacounty.gov)) to be sent out to the listserv.

**Upcoming Meetings (first Thursday of the month, 2-4pm):** 5/2/24, 6/6/24, **7/11/24**, 8/1/24, 9/5/24, 10/3/24, 11/7/24

[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#); 323-776-6996, Conference ID: 542 042 921#

Meeting minutes can be found at <https://dmh.lacounty.gov/about/mhsa/uscc/lgbtqia2-s-uscc/lgbtqia2-s-uscc-meeting-minutes/>