

THE QUARTERLY

STAKEHOLDER NEWSLETTER



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
MENTAL HEALTH
hope. recovery. wellbeing.



A Platform for Your Voice

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) and the Anti-Racism, Inclusion, Solidarity and Empowerment (ARISE) Division are excited to introduce a quarterly newsletter, designed specifically for you — our stakeholders, partners, and most importantly, individuals with lived experience. Whether you identify as a mental health consumer, advocate, peer supporter, or ally, this space belongs to you.

The Anti-Racism, Inclusion, Solidarity and Empowerment (ARISE) Division, and the LA County Department of Mental Health, are excited to introduce a new quarterly newsletter, designed specifically for you — our stakeholders, partners, and most importantly, individuals with lived experience. Whether you identify as a mental health consumer, advocate, peer supporter, or ally, this space belongs to you.

Our goal is simple: to create a platform where your stories, experiences, and voices are heard, valued, and shared. We know that every journey through mental health is unique, and through sharing, we can build understanding, inspire hope, and foster a sense of belonging. This publication is meant to reflect the diverse perspectives that make up our community, because your voice matters and your story deserves to be told.

We invite you to make this space your own by submitting personal stories, reflections, poetry, or art for future editions. This is a chance to celebrate your victories, express challenges, or share what has given you strength along the way. Whether it is a new

insight, a small win, or the courage to take the next step, each experience adds value to our collective journey.

Our hope is that this newsletter becomes a place where everyone feels welcome, seen, and heard. A space where we uplift one another and highlight the power of lived experience. Together, we can break down stigma, spark conversations, and strengthen our shared community.

We look forward to reading your contributions and creating a publication that reflects the heart of who we are. This is your platform — let's build it together.

Welcome to the beginning of something special. Welcome to your newsletter.

With All My Heart,

Lisa H. Wong, Psy.D.
Director, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

KALENE GILBERT, LCSW | MHSA Coordinator

A Message from Kalene



Welcome to our LA County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) community of clients, service partners, providers, and community members. We are all excited to launch this newsletter by stakeholders for stakeholders.

The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Administration's role is to support MHSA services provided by the Department, ensuring we provide quality services and positive outcomes while meeting the requirements of the MHSA and working with people in our community to make sure their voices are included in planning and feedback.

The MHSA was passed by California voters in November 2004 and imposed a 1% tax on all personal income over \$1 million to fund recovery- and resiliency-focused mental health services. The MHSA supercharged the community mental health system by adding a focus on client-driven, recovery-oriented services and incorporating peer and parent-partner services, housing, and Prevention and Early Intervention services to reduce trauma and the impact of mental illness.

In March 2024, voters approved Proposition 1 which changes the MHSA to the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) that will be implemented in July 2026. The passage of Proposition 1 and the implementation of BHSA do not provide new funds. Rather, it changes how we spend our annual MHSA/BHSA funds. Under the BHSA, more of

our funds - previously used for outpatient programs - will be used for intensive field-based services and housing. LACDMH is planning a stakeholder process to talk about the plan.

There are a lot of changes coming in the next few years with the implementation of the BHSA, and your voice is important as we think through the decision-making and changes ahead. Our goal is to keep you informed, so you can join us in the planning phase which will begin in early 2025. We hold monthly stakeholder meetings, and all are welcome.

To learn more, visit: <https://dmh.lacounty.gov/about/mhsa/>.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kalene Gilbert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

“your voice is important as we think through the decision-making and changes ahead”

Lived Experience

A message from the Chief of Peer Services, **Dr. Tonica Robinson**

LACDMH LEADERSHIP | SPOTLIGHT SECTION



The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's Office of Peer Services focuses on individuals with lived experience throughout the Department. Peer Services works to manage, inform, and educate around the evidence-based practice of using peer support services to aid consumers through the process of recovery. Recovery is defined as a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.

By collaborating with the Department's clinics and centers, Peer Services implements programs and projects that use lived experience and specialized training to provide whole person care to consumers. Lived experience refers to representation and understanding of an individual's human experiences, choices, and options and how those factors influence one's perception of knowledge based on one's own life.

Essentially, Peer Services serves as the subject matter expert on the use of lived experience to change lives. Peer Services operates with the belief that people with mental illness can have meaningful, productive, and fulfilled lives. The office acts as a resource for all those with lived experience.

Peer Services manages career development pathways; systemwide Peer network groups; client-run contracts; Peer respite facilities; lived experience volunteers; Peer education and training, ensuring that Peers are at every table throughout the system of care; and Peer advocacy and wellness.

The Department also has a Peer Advisory Council that gives informed feedback and acts as a focus group for the Department. The Peer Advisory Council is currently accepting applications for new members.

For more information, please email Roxanne Pitts at lpitts@dmh.lacounty.gov.

Dr. Tonica Robinson,
Chief of Peer Services

**Lived experience refers to
representation and
understanding of an
individual's human
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Submission Deadlines

Detailed information about how to submit content will be shared via email and other channels. Here is a heads up for the submission deadlines:

Friday, January 10, 2025 **Call for Content Submissions Opens**
Friday, January 31, 2025 **Content Submissions Due**

Submissions Deadlines for the 2025 First Quarter Stakeholder Newsletter

In 2025, we want to hear from you! The Stakeholder Newsletter is a place for the community to share education, resources, and tools – and creativity. The ultimate goal of the Newsletter is to amplify the personal experiences and voices of community members your unique and varied experiences.

Detailed information will be shared via email and other channels about how to submit but here is a heads up about the submission deadlines:

Friday, January 10, 2025 **Call for Content Submissions Opens**
Friday, January 31, 2025 **Content Submissions Due**

We hope you feel inspired to share and submit. Submissions are welcome in any format and all content will represent diverse voices from the LA community. Submissions will be equitably sought from all stakeholder groups (e.g. Service Area Leadership Team (SALT), Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC), Cultural Competency Committee (CCC), Healthy Neighborhoods, Faith-Based partners, Peer Counsel) and can include content and all topics of interest, anecdotal experiences, and reflections. We welcome articles/stories, poetry, recipes, original artwork, and photography.

Next year, we want to hear from you!

Wellbeing Tips for Winter Blues & Holidays



The holiday season is often seen as a time of joy, celebration and togetherness between friends, family and loved ones. Yet, for many Los Angeles County residents, the fall and winter months — specifically between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day — can also bring added stress, loneliness and feelings of depression.

These emotional challenges, traditionally known as “Holiday Blues,” can overwhelm the festive spirits of the season with feelings of sadness or anxiety. Additionally, millions of Americans feel sad, alone or depressed due to Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) which is caused by the change in seasons and shorter daylight hours.

Whether it's the financial stress of buying gifts, the stress of family gatherings, or the loneliness or sadness of missed loved ones, there are ways to manage and find support during the upcoming holidays:

- Reduce holiday stress by being proactive and compassionate. Prioritize tasks by focusing on what truly matters and letting go of non-essential activities. Take short breaks to recharge, practice mindfulness, set a budget, and limit commitments.
- Understand that holidays don't have to be perfect. Traditions can change or be simplified. This holiday season doesn't have to be exactly like previous years.

- Plan ahead. Create schedules for activities and set financial limits to alleviate last-minute stress.
- Maintain regular routines. Take breaks, connect with supportive people, and practice mindfulness and gratitude.
- Recognize stress triggers and limit exposure to them. Focus on meaningful activities, practice kindness and forgiveness, and limit substance use.
- Recognize when someone isn't doing well. Signs that someone might be struggling include behavioral changes (e.g., withdrawal from social activities or a noticeable shift in mood), emotional shifts (e.g., increased irritability, sadness, or expressions of hopelessness), and physical symptoms (e.g., changes in sleep patterns, appetite, or energy levels, difficulty concentrating, increased substance use, and expressing negative thoughts).

If the “Holiday Blues” or SAD become too much for you or a loved one, LACDMH is here to help. Hope is just a call away. The Department offers a 24/7 Mental Health and Substance Use Help Line at 1-800-854-7771. You can also visit LACDMH's website at dmh.lacounty.gov.

About All of Us

This newsletter is developed with heartfelt thanks to the collaborative efforts of all LACDMH Stakeholder Groups, UsCC and CCC and SALT teams.

Cultural Competence Committee

<https://dmh.lacounty.gov/ccu/ccc/>



The Cultural Competency Committee (CCC) serves as an advisory group for the infusion of cultural competency in all of Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) operations. The CCC advocates for the needs of all cultural groups. Its membership includes the cultural perspectives of consumers, family members, advocates, directly operated providers, contracted providers, and community-based organizations. Additionally, the CCC considers the expertise from the Service Areas' clinical and administrative programs, front line staff, and management essential for sustaining the mission of the Committee. The CCC is led by two Co-Chairs who are community representatives and elected annually by members of the Committee.

Access for All UsCC

<https://dmh.lacounty.gov/about/mhsa/uscc/access-for-all-uscc/>



The Access for All Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC) subcommittee was established under the Mental Health Services Act for the purpose of increasing mental health access and to produce stakeholder priorities which will advise LACDMH's action planning toward development and improvement of its services and partnerships to better engage underserved and marginalized cultural and ethnic communities in Los Angeles County.

American Indian/ Alaska Native (AI/AN) UsCC

<https://dmh.lacounty.gov/about/mhsa/uscc/american-indian-alaska-native-ai-an-uscc/>



The American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC) subcommittee was established under the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), with the goal to reduce disparities and increase mental health access and to produce stakeholder priorities which will advise LACDMH's action planning toward development and improvement of its services and partnerships to better engage underserved and marginalized cultural and ethnic communities in Los Angeles County. According to the 2010 USA Census Bureau report, Los Angeles County is the home to the largest AI/AN population, which is approximately 160,000 residents.

The AI/AN UsCC subcommittee provides LACDMH with community-driven and culturally specific capacity building project recommendations and/or project concepts for implementation to increase mental health access, awareness, promotion, and decrease stigma with the ultimate goal to reduce cultural and ethnic disparities in access to care and service delivery.

Asian and Pacific Islander (API) UsCC Subcommittee

<https://dmh.lacounty.gov/about/mhsa/uscc/asian-pacific-islander-api-uscc/>



The Asian Pacific Islander (API) UsCC subcommittee was established under the Mental Health Services Act for the purpose of increasing mental health access and to produce stakeholder priorities which will advise LACDMH's action planning toward development and improvement of its services and partnerships to better engage underserved and marginalized cultural and ethnic communities in Los Angeles County.

The API UsCC subcommittee provides LACDMH with community-driven and culturally specific capacity building project recommendations and/or project concepts for implementation to increase mental health access, awareness, promotion, and decrease stigma with the ultimate goal to reduce cultural and ethnic disparities in access to care and service delivery.

Black and African Heritage UsCC

<https://dmh.lacounty.gov/about/mhsa/uscc/black-african-heritage-uscc/>



The Black and African Heritage Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC) subcommittee was established under the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), with the goal to reduce disparities, increase mental health access, and to produce stakeholder priorities which will advise LACDMH's action planning toward development and improvement of its services and partnerships to better engage underserved and marginalized cultural and ethnic communities in Los Angeles County.

This subcommittee provides LACDMH with community-driven and culturally specific capacity-building project recommendations and/or project concepts for implementation to increase mental health access, awareness, promotion, and decrease stigma with the ultimate goal to reduce cultural and ethnic disparities in access to care and service delivery.

Eastern European / Middle Eastern (EE/ME) UsCC

<https://dmh.lacounty.gov/about/mhsa/uscc/eastern-european-middle-eastern-eeme-uscc/>



The Eastern European Middle Eastern (EE/ME) Underserved Cultural Communities (USCC) subcommittee was established under the Mental Health Services Act for the purpose of increasing mental health access and to produce stakeholder priorities which will advise LACDMH's action planning toward development and improvement of its services and partnerships to better engage underserved and marginalized cultural and ethnic communities in Los Angeles County. The EE/ME UsCC subcommittee provides LACDMH with community-driven and culturally specific capacity building project recommendations and/or project concepts for implementation to increase mental health access, awareness, promotion, and decrease stigma with the ultimate goal to reduce cultural and ethnic disparities in access to care and service delivery.

Latino UsCC

<https://dmh.lacounty.gov/about/mhsa/uscc/latino-uscc/>



The Latino UsCC subcommittee was established under the Mental Health Services Act for the purpose of increasing mental health access and to produce stakeholder priorities which will advise LACDMH's action planning toward development and improvement of its services and partnerships to better engage underserved and marginalized cultural and ethnic communities in Los Angeles County.

The Latino UsCC subcommittee provides LACDMH with community-driven and culturally specific capacity building project recommendations and/or project concepts for implementation to increase mental health access, awareness, promotion, and decrease stigma with the ultimate goal to reduce cultural and ethnic disparities in access to care and service delivery.

LGBTQIA2-S UsCC

<https://dmh.lacounty.gov/about/mhsa/uscc/lgbtqia2-s-uscc/>



The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two-Spirit (LGBTQIA2-S) Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC) subcommittee was established under the Mental Health Services Act for the purpose of increasing mental health access and to produce stakeholder priorities which will advise LACDMH's action planning toward development and improvement of its services and partnerships to better engage underserved and marginalized cultural and ethnic communities in Los Angeles County.

The LGBTQIA2-S UsCC subcommittee provides LACDMH with community-driven and culturally specific capacity building project recommendations and/or project concepts for implementation to increase mental health access, awareness, promotion, and decrease stigma with the ultimate goal to reduce cultural and ethnic disparities in access to care and service delivery.

Q1 2025 Diversity and Multicultural Calendar by Month

Courtesy of the ARISE Division - Cultural Competency Unit and the Cultural Competency Committee

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January

01 New Year's Day

16 National Day of Racial Healing

MONTH-LONG OBSERVATION

04 World Braille Day
(Human rights for blind and partially sighted people, United Nations)

21 World Religion Day

Co-dependency Awareness Month (U.S.)

06 Christmas
(Armenian Orthodox Christians)

24 International Day of Education

National Braille Literacy Month

Feast of the Epiphany and Three Kings Day
(Reyes Magos)

World Day for African and Afro-descendant Culture

National Mentoring Month

07 Christmas
(Eastern Orthodox Christians)

25 Mahayana New Year
(Buddhist)

Poverty in America Awareness Month

11 Human Trafficking

27 International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust
(United Nations)

National Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness Month

13 Korean American Day

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

15 Makar Sankranti
(a major harvest festival in India)

Jan.15-March 8
Kumbh Mela
(a mass pilgrimage event / Hindu)

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February

01 National Freedom Day
(African American)

03 National Missing Persons Day

04 World Cancer Day (Global)

07 International Day of Black Women in the Arts

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD)

10 Lunar New Year
(China, Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia and Mongolia, etc.)

11 Anniversary of the Black Cat Tavern Protest on February 11, 1967 (LGBTQ+)

World Day of the Sick
(Global)

13 Autism Sunday
(2nd Sunday of Feb.)

14 National Donor Day (U.S.)

Valentine's Day (U.S.)

National No One Eats Alone Day

15 Nirvana Day (Buddhist)

International Childhood Cancer Day (Global)

Lantern Festival (China)

Maghi-Purnima (Hindu)

16 Maghi-Purnima (Hindu)

20 World Day of Social Justice

21 International Mother Language Day

Presidents' Day (U.S.)

21-27 Eating Disorder Awareness Week (U.S.)

28 Peace Memorial Day
(Taiwan, Republic of China)

MONTH-LONG OBSERVATION

Black History Month

Ethnic Equality Month

Jewish Disability Awareness & Inclusion Month (U.S.)

National Therapeutic Recreation Month

Wise Health Care Consumer Month

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March

- 01** Disability Day of Mourning (U.S.)
 - Independence Movement Day (Korean)
 - International Wheelchair Day (Global)
 - Lailat al Miraj (Celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's journey)
 - 01-06** Celebrate Your Name Week (First full week)
 - Words Matter Week (First full week)
 - 02** Ash Wednesday (Christian)
 - 04** Employee Appreciation Day
 - 08** International Women's Day
 - 10** National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (U.S.)
 - 12** Capitol Crawl Day (People with Disability)
 - 14** Write Your Story Day
 - 16-17** Purim (Jewish holiday commemorating Jewish people's salvation from Haman)
 - 17** St. Patrick's Day (Irish)
 - 18** Holi (Hindu festival celebrating the arrival of Spring)
 - Client's Day
 - 19** National Certified Nurses Day
 - Naw-Ruz (Baha'i New Year)
 - 20** International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (United Nations)
 - 21** International Nowruz Day (Persian New Year, United Nations)
 - National Wellderly Day (or Well-Elderly Day, 3rd Monday of March)
 - 21-25** National LGBTQ+ Health Awareness Week
 - 22** Hindi New Year (Hindu)
 - 23** National Atheist Day
 - 25** International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade
 - 27** Mothering Sunday (English Mothers' Day, 4th Sunday in Lent)
 - 30** World Bi-polar Day
 - 31** International Transgender Day of Visibility (Global)
 - 31** Cesar Chavez Day
 - 31** Transgender Day of Visibility (LGBTQ+)
- ### MONTH-LONG OBSERVATION
- Bisexual Health Awareness Month
 - Brain Injury Awareness Month
 - Color Therapy Month (U.S.)
 - Deaf History Month
 - Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month (U.S.)
 - Ethnic Equality Month
 - Gender Equality Month
 - Greek-American Heritage Month
 - Irish-American Heritage Month
 - National Nutrition Month
 - National Women's History Month
 - Red Cross Month (U.S.)
 - Self-Injury Awareness Month
 - Social Work Month
 - Transgender Month of Action for Healthcare Equality