



Speak. Share. Be Heard.

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) and its Anti-Racism, Inclusion, Solidarity and Empowerment (ARISE) Division are excited to share the next 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.

Voices of Unity: Centering Culture, Compassion & Connection

As we move toward the early signs of fall, LACDMH invites you to pause and reflect on what this season of transition means for your personal and collective journey toward wellness.

This quarter, our newsletter centers on the theme of Voices of Unity: Centering Culture, Compassion & Connection – a time to honor the stories, traditions and acts of care that bring us together and strengthen our mental health. In a place as vibrant and diverse as Los Angeles, this season offers moments to celebrate our shared humanity while embracing the uniqueness of each community.

We asked you:

- How do you see culture shaping mental wellness in your life and community?
- In what ways can compassion inspire connection and healing?
- How do we, together, create spaces where everyone belongs?

Whether it's through sharing a personal story, engaging in community work, practicing mindful compassion or simply listening with an open heart, your experiences matter.

We hope you enjoy this issue of The Quarterly and that the perspectives, stories and creative works shared here inspire reflection, empathy and action. If you discover something new, connect with a resource or are moved to participate in an initiative after reading this issue, we'd love to hear from you at: DMHCC@dmh.lacounty.gov.

ADRIAN THOMAS

The Promissory Note

I the stranger have come here
Black and Southern
I examined this mythical land
A stranger in this new land
You welcome me
You welcomed the stranger
I became Us
A small family without family
This home of Dreamers
Living Angeles
This living land of Hills and Lights
Where the earth shakes and seas rise
Still, I have been baptized into the Los Angeles River
We Angelinos
Roll on
Our Concrete River
Our Queer Folk who walk freely with Pride
Our Overpriced homes that are too expensive to believe
But we stay here in this holy soil
Yet we build
We repair We reclaim We are Hollywood
Each street is home and unhoused are familia
Each street a dream of Brown and Black Folk Living
Our people who were Asians
Who were Italian But now American

Angels in America
Blessing us with Food Trucks and Donut shops
Greek Gyros and Homilies by AME Choirs
Highways and Freeways That all seem to lead back to the 5
Smog and Beautiful Beaches
Our burns scars
We will not abandon those who live in Dena
Altadena
Pasadena
Pacific Coast Highway and We plant seeds of hope
Hope and love
Salsa on Sundays
Picking Avocados from good neighbors' trees
Come
Come home
Come here you who are afraid
We are not standing for ICE raids
We extend our homes ADUs
We need you fresh ideas and value you
We welcome you to our Temples and Catholic Cathedrals'
You who go to Buddhist temples in North Hollywood
Travel to Westwood for my daughters bat mitzva
Our day of the dead is alive and well
When you finish leaving food at the La Ofrenda
Come down and Sit in the Hollywood Bowl with me
My favorite jazz festival is this weekend



ANTHONY J. MORICA

Finding Unity in Broken Places

Growing up Latino with drug-addicted parents, jail separations and family struggling with mental illness, I learned early how to survive chaos. Those experiences shaped me, but they also gave me compassion and the ability to connect deeply with others who've been through similar pain.

Community wasn't always about blood for me; it became about the people who showed up when I needed it most. Neighbors who brought meals, friends who checked in, even strangers who listened. Those small acts of kindness helped me feel less alone and taught me the power of connection.

Cultural traditions keep me grounded: cooking family recipes, playing old Spanish music, and sharing loud, joyful meals. They remind me I come from resilience, not just struggle.

Living with my own mental health challenges and having a family shaped by them has made me an empathetic peer support specialist. I understand what it feels like to fight battles people don't see. That's why I volunteer, mentor and support others in crisis.

My story taught me that unity isn't about where you come from; it's about lifting each other up, until the broken pieces start to look like something whole.




ANTHONY RAMIREZ (A.K.A. C@\$MO, LA POETA)

This is How You Heal

*“There is a quiet moment that whispers,
and if you put your hand out and open,
palm up, and fingers cupped,
and if you have peace,
it will find you.*

*Remember:
Hand out and open.
Palm up. Fingers cupped.
Like you are ready to be joined
with someone.”*



CHARLENE LOGAN

Leadership in Nonprofit Management, Federal Government Service and Advocacy for Marginalized Communities

With over three decades of experience in federal agencies, nonprofit organizations and program initiatives, I have dedicated my career to serving others with a compassionate and inclusive approach. My work in nonprofit management and federal service, combined with my ongoing mental health advocacy, has allowed me to cultivate lasting relationships with marginalized communities.

My leadership journey began with interviewing people seeking benefits under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Listening to people from diverse countries and cultures, whose voices often carry stories of unspeakable hardship. In this role, I learned the art of empathy and detachment, allowing each individual's testimony to speak for itself without the influence of personal opinion. Whether a person needed to sit on the floor facing a wall or needed a quiet space to collect themselves, I was there, focused only on the dignity and integrity of their experience.

I was always known for leaving my analysis out of the interview process. I believed that each person was credible until proven otherwise. This approach not only honored the humanity of those I worked with but also built trust and respect within the communities I served.

Having had the privilege of being trained in global country conditions, I consider this knowledge a gift that expanded my worldview and deepened my understanding of systemic oppression and human suffering. Working with individuals from countries where human rights abuses are rampant has been eye-opening and humbling. I firmly believe that exposure to these realities educates and broadens one's capacity for empathy and effective action.

Throughout my time in leadership roles at organizations like National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and Catholic Charities, I have remained deeply committed to education, mental health advocacy and immigration reform.

Through all of this, I've learned that self-care is not just a practice but a proactive approach to maintaining personal wellbeing. Setting boundaries, coupled with consistent practice, leads to growth and acceptance. I believe that people are inherently not born to hate, discriminate and stigmatize others derived from learned behaviors. On the other hand, compassion, kindness, and inclusion can become practiced habits that transform lives and communities.



DAWNEL

Through the Fire: A Story of Kindness, Fear and Friendship

Hi, I'm Dawnel, and I am part of the Connect with Hope Warmline team with National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Greater Los Angeles County. We're a group of Certified Peer Support Specialists offering emotional support through our warmline, a free, confidential space for folks to talk, be heard and feel less alone. Each of us brings our own lived experience, whether through our own mental health journey or by supporting a loved one, in supporting help-seekers. While we don't handle crisis calls, we're here to walk alongside people through life's everyday struggles, help them navigate finding resources and get connected to NAMI programs, and remind them that they're not alone.

One woman reached out during the L.A. wildfires, completely overwhelmed by fear. You could hear it in her voice, trembling, tired, unsure what to do. The fires weren't right outside her door yet, but her mind was already deep in panic. She didn't know where in her apartment it was safe to sleep. She was afraid that if she chose the wrong room, she'd be trapped. She wasn't sure if she was supposed to evacuate or wait. She had no one else to call, so she called us.

And then she called again. And again. Night after night.

Each time, we answered. Each time, we gently helped her walk through the fear, piece by piece. We talked through the fire maps and evacuation zones based on the information she could give of her location. We reassured her that, at that moment, she was safe, and we reminded her that someone was right there with her, ready to help her think through her next step.

We didn't have magic answers or instant fixes. What we offered was presence. Kindness. Reassurance without pressure. And slowly, something changed, her voice softened. She began to take deeper breaths. She was able to rest for the first time in days – not because the fires had disappeared, but because she no longer felt completely alone in them.

It was as if she needed someone to give her permission to pause, to release the fear she'd been gripping so tightly, and trust that someone had her back.

What started as a call during a disaster became something more: a connection rooted in compassion. And sometimes, that's all it takes to help someone begin to breathe again.

DOMENICK NATI
AND GIOVANNE SCHACHERE

Breaking Cycles, Building Bridges:

One Father's Journey Through Justice,
Healing and Higher Education



As a father of five, a justice-impacted individual, and a nonprofit leader working across California and Washington, my journey has never been conventional. I didn't go back to school for a degree, I went back for my family, my community and every person who has ever been counted out.

This year, I earned my Master's in Human Services from Capella University, a milestone that represents more than academic success. It's a symbol of resilience, of what happens when lived experience and higher education come together to create real change.

In honor of my late mother Mysti, I founded Mysti's Adult and Family Services, two community-based organizations that serve individuals and families navigating re-entry, housing insecurity and systemic neglect. Our work includes culturally grounded case management, housing navigation and healing-centered events that bring together people from all walks of life, from block parties and award shows to peer-driven recovery groups.

From South Los Angeles to Monterey County and now into Washington State, I've stayed grounded in my roots while helping others break cycles, reclaim their narratives and access the support they deserve. For many of us, especially in Black and Brown communities, systems weren't built with our healing in mind. That's why we build our own.

This season, as we uplift the voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, reflect on suicide prevention and celebrate the power of culture and connection, I hope my story reminds others that leadership should look like us, speak like us, and rise from the very places we've survived.

Education matters. But so does compassion. So does community. So does every act of courage to try again.



MAURA WATSON, PSYCHIATRIC RN

A Ministry of Presence:

Suicide Prevention in Crisis Care

At Pacifica Hospital of the Valley Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center (PHVUCC) in Sylmar, we meet people in crisis, individuals overwhelmed by suicidality, psychosis, trauma or simply the exhaustion of holding it all together. Some are brought in by first responders. Some walk in on their own. All of them, in one way or another, are asking the same question: Is there any hope left for me?

PHVUCC is a Medi-Cal certified psychiatric urgent care facility, providing short-term crisis stabilization under California's Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) Act. We offer an alternative to hospitalization for those whose mental health needs are urgent but do not require inpatient care. Many of the people we serve are navigating complex challenges, chronic mental illness, homelessness, substance use or systems that have failed to meet them with compassion. We are here to intervene early, stabilize quickly and offer a bridge back to safety, connection and care.

I became a psychiatric nurse because I've been on the other side of the chart. I'm someone with lived experience of mental illness, with a history of hospitalization. I've been in crisis. I've sat in rooms much like our unit at PHVUCC. I've felt what it's like to be treated as a problem to be managed rather than a person to be understood.

It wasn't one dramatic moment that pushed me into this field; it was a quiet realization over time: There must be a better way.

And now, through my work at PHVUCC, I get to help build it.

At PHVUCC, suicide prevention doesn't always look dramatic. Sometimes it looks like offering someone a warm meal. Or sitting beside them while they cry. Or taking the time to explain their rights when the rest of the world is moving too fast.

We don't always have easy answers. But we can offer presence. And presence is powerful. In our work, it often becomes the thing that keeps someone going long enough to find the next step forward.

I believe in clinical excellence, but I also believe in eye contact. In gentleness. In not backing away from someone's pain.

I believe that healing often begins not in fixing, but in witnessing.

At PHVUCC, we see this every day.

A breath taken instead of a final act.

A safety plan made with, not for, a person.

A discharge that ends with hope instead of fear.

This is the heart of our work: holding space when someone feels like they've run out of it and helping them believe, again or for the first time, that life might still have something left to offer.

HEATHER SEVIER

From Shadows to Success:

My Journey from Addiction to Empowerment



Introduction

The path of my life has taken many turns, most notably spiraling through the depths of addiction and the confines of incarceration. Once entrenched in the drug trade, my existence was characterized by chaos and a sense of hopelessness. However, through perseverance and support, I transformed my life, emerging as a business and nonprofit owner dedicated to uplifting others who have faced similar struggles. This essay recounts my journey from darkness to light, illustrating the challenges I overcame and the mission I embraced to foster change in my community.

Early Life and Introduction to Drugs

Growing up in a challenging environment, I was exposed to drugs and their allure at a young age. The thrill of quick money and the false sense of security they provided drew me into the world of selling drugs. I quickly became entrenched in a lifestyle that prioritized profit over personal wellbeing, losing sight of the person I once was. My nights were filled with fear and paranoia, while my days were spent chasing the next high or financial gain.

The Descent into Addiction and Incarceration

As the years progressed, the drugs I sold became the drugs I consumed. My addiction stripped away my relationships, ambitions and sense of self-worth. I found myself caught in a vicious cycle of dependency that led to my arrest and eventual incarceration. It was during this dark chapter that I hit rock bottom, a moment that would become the catalyst for my transformation.

Turning Point: Seeking Help


In prison, I had the opportunity to reflect on my life and the choices that led me here. With the help of mental health professionals, support groups and educational programs, I began to confront my addiction and the motivations behind my past actions. Embracing rehabilitation was not easy, but it laid the foundation for my change. I learned about accountability, personal responsibility and the importance of making amends.

Re-entry: A New Beginning

Upon my release, the world outside felt alien and overwhelming. The struggle to reintegrate into society was daunting; however, I was determined to forge a new path. I sought employment and volunteered with organizations that supported recently released individuals. This experience not only helped me build new skills but also ignited my passion for giving back.

Conclusion

Today, I stand as a testament to the power of transformation. My journey from an addicted inmate to a business and nonprofit owner was not just about overcoming my past but utilizing it to uplift others. Each success story of those I support reinforces my belief in second chances. By sharing my story, I hope to inspire others to recognize that no matter how deep the darkness, there is always a path toward the light, a journey worth taking for oneself and the community.



JINEEN PERRY-MYLES

A Rainbow in the Clouds

I became a first-generation African American college graduate. I decided to study sociology. I wanted to be an integral part of making positive changes in society, especially with those who have been disregarded and disadvantaged, and whom I'm proud and eager to represent. I felt the weight of prejudice and being disadvantaged and it hurt, down into the depths of my soul. I didn't want anybody to go through what I had to endure. So, I dedicated myself to providing service to all mankind and filling in the gaps. My heart resonated with people who had a lack of education. It is no secret and that education opens many pathways to becoming self-sufficient. Some of my role models growing up were African American women teachers. Being under their tutelage, it inspired me to dedicate myself to the education field. I cultivated high regard for high educational standards. Specifically in students who had mental health challenges and who were deprived of many opportunities due to living in households afflicted with substance abuse, poverty, and neglect for instance.

My godfather was a psychologist at the college I attended. This was a great privilege. He, along with family members, instilled in me the idea to

have goals that are not self-imposed with limits or fitting into someone's expectations. This was the beginning of my path to resilience, momentum and determination. I developed faith (not to be mistaken as arrogance) and strengthened my voice, allowing me to break free from systemic racial and gender inequality lies and distractions. I had to trust in divine provision. Because I was trained to work extra hard, be a leader and be a champion, this would later have a rippling effect on the communities which I served. I am grateful for this.

Every day, I must continue to take my personal inventory, being very careful not to harbor any resentments, practice forgiveness and stay grateful to set myself free from mental health challenges. If I expect to grow, move forward and manifest great things, I must constantly stay in alignment with the law of attraction, positive self-talk and the self-fulfilling prophecy. Currently, each day is a day when I can be grateful, pray, affirm and share. My thoughts, actions and behaviors are intentional. I pray for good health, peace and prosperity for myself and others.

NINA WOMAK

Voices of Unity: Centering Culture, Compassion & Connection



In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to overlook the healing power of community, culture and compassion. As a Peer Support Specialist on my own mental health recovery journey, I've learned that healing isn't something we do alone; it's something we do together. This truth inspired me to launch Let's Be Whole, a peer-led nonprofit, in 2018. Our mission is to promote whole-person wellness through authentic community connection. It's been an honor to offer genuine compassion and connection to people from all walks of life.

Staying Connected to Our Community

My connection to the community is deeply rooted in showing up. Whether it's distributing nutritious groceries with my team of volunteers in Leimert Park and across South L.A. or organizing holistic health fairs and trauma-informed workshops, I stay connected by meeting people where they are. Let's Be Whole serves the houseless, individuals navigating mental health challenges, single mothers, minority seniors, immigrants and anyone in need. We bring nourishment, wellness support and dignity directly to streets, parks and neighborhoods.

Cultural Practices for Mental Wellness

As a Black American woman born in Los Angeles with African ancestry, reconnecting with my cultural roots has been essential for my wellbeing. My humanitarian efforts in L.A. and abroad led to me being honored with traditional leadership titles in Ghana and Nigeria. I continue to champion mental wellness both personally and collectively, at home and abroad, inspired by these experiences.

My past role as Co-Chair of the Black and African Heritage (BAH) Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC) subcommittee with LACDMH allowed me to advocate for culturally informed mental health resources. Today, I carry that advocacy into my daily life. I practice grounding rituals

like meditation, African drumming and music, dance, plant medicine and spiritual arts. These ancestral practices connect me to an ancestral lineage of resilience, creativity and strength. Storytelling is also a powerful healing tool, helping me process pain and reclaim purpose, and I encourage others to do the same. Our culture, whether our own or others', is vital to self-care.

Compassion, Kindness & Inclusion in Action

Compassion is the foundation of everything I do because I've been there. Sometimes it means taking extra time to listen without judgment; other times, it means organizing events that share healthy food, teach self-care or connect people to essential mental health and social services.

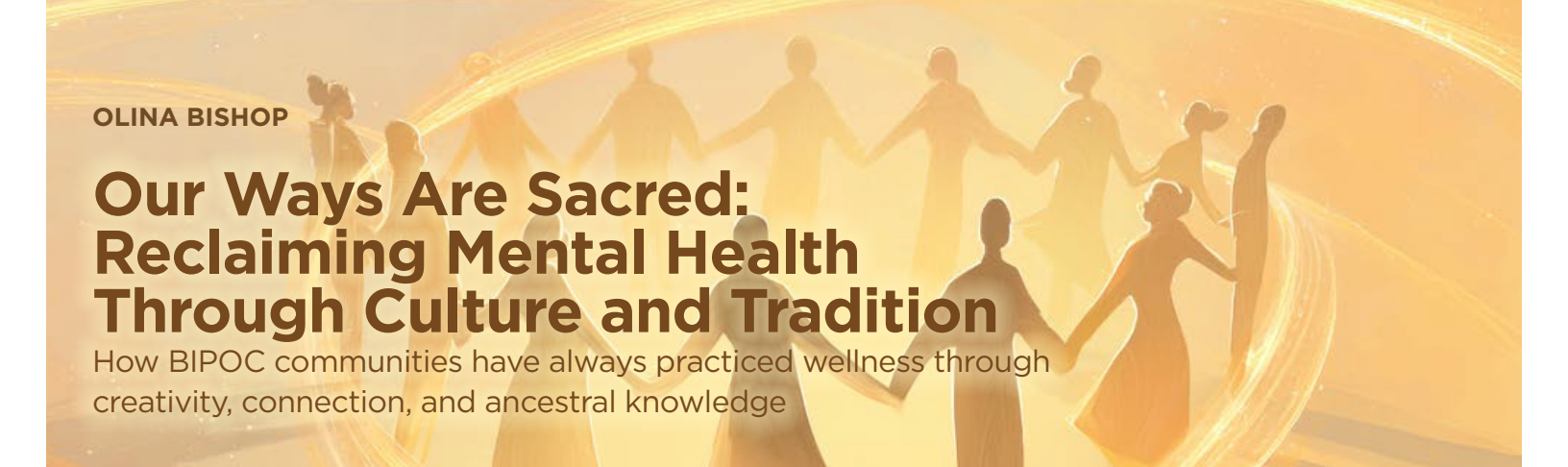
Every Let's Be Whole program is infused with culturally relevant education, trauma-informed care and radical inclusion. I know what it's like to feel invisible, and it's my mission to ensure others feel seen, heard and valued.

A Collective Healing Journey

To me, "Voices of Unity" means we rise together. The African philosophy of Ubuntu," I am because we are," reminds us that our individual humanity is deeply tied to the wellbeing of others. This belief fuels collective healing through empathy, interconnectedness and mutual care.

Ubuntu teaches us that healing comes from honoring the cultural identities that give us pride, from everyday acts of compassion and from building authentic relationships based on trust, unity and community.

In Love & Light,
Queen Nina Womack
Founder, Let's Be Whole



OLINA BISHOP

Our Ways Are Sacred: Reclaiming Mental Health Through Culture and Tradition

How BIPOC communities have always practiced wellness through creativity, connection, and ancestral knowledge

In our communities, healing has never followed a single path. It has always existed in multiple forms – woven into our rhythms, reflected in our rituals and nurtured through our relationships. While mainstream mental health frameworks often disregard the deep cultural roots of wellbeing, those of us from Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities hold a truth that predates the language of therapy: we have always known how to care for ourselves and one another. Wellness is not a trend – it is heritage, resistance and joy passed through generations. Our healing is historical, deliberate and grounded in a legacy of autonomy and communal care.

This legacy is most vividly revealed through the way we create. For us, creativity is not simply a hobby. It's preservation, a release valve for emotion and a bridge to understanding. We are artists out of instinct and necessity. We are storytellers with our hands, visionaries in thought and architects of beauty through every hue and gesture. Whether painting murals, writing poems, braiding hair or crafting wearable narratives, we have long used creative expression as a language of healing and strength. Long before clinical labels existed for emotional processes, we were already transforming our experiences into meaning and magic.

Just as our stories are painted and woven into life, they are also sung. Music, like visual art, holds space for what language cannot always hold. It carries our celebrations, our sorrows, our resistance and our reverence. We all know those melodies – the gospel hymn that transports us to a grandmother's arms, the soul ballad that carried our heartbreak, the rap verse that said what we couldn't. In BIPOC communities, music is never merely background – it is inheritance. It provides cadence to our courage and harmony to our memories. It stirs us when words fall short. It is the pulse of our past, and the soundtrack of our survival.

That pulse often beats strongest in the presence of others. Beyond rhythm and representation, true healing blossoms in community. Connection has always been our refuge. Togetherness is not a buzzword – it is a cultural lifeline. We descend from those who gathered, who shared stories, who laughed until they wept and who wept without shame in the presence of kin. Our traditions uphold mutual care and accountability. I remember growing up in the South and hearing elders say, "Be careful who you date because they might be your cousin," not in jest, but as a reminder of how deeply our lives intertwine. Our ties go beyond genealogy; they are grounded in shared experience and reciprocal protection. We cling to one another because we know survival is collective. It lives in the storytelling, the shared stillness, the kitchen counters and porch steps where healing takes root.

That healing is also reflected in how we show up, in the way we carry ourselves and present our identities. Our appearance is never simply about aesthetics but a living reflection of pride, protest and legacy. From Sunday church hats to meticulously coordinated family outfits, our style is a declaration of resilience and reverence. When we dress ourselves, we're honoring our lineage. From braids that once held maps to freedom, to ceremonial attire that marks sacred milestones, our fashion tells tales of identity and endurance. Looking good has never been about vanity; instead it was used to uplift our spirits, confirm our worth and stand fully in our power. Our garments become a mirror of our journey – where we come from and how we continue forward.

This same spirit of expression lives in how we move. Healing isn't confined to how we dress – it flows through what we feel, how we release and what we remember. Movement has always been medicine. Our bodies have long known how to stride, sway and leap their way back to balance. As children, we played without knowing we were nurturing emotional wellbeing. Racing cousins down the block, jumping rope on cracked sidewalks, choreographing dances in the living room – these were more than games; they were practices of joy and self-regulation. As adults, movement reconnects us to that freedom and anchors us in the now. We may not all be athletes, but we descend from those who danced through joy and hardship alike. That ancestral rhythm still lives in us, reminding us that we can access joy, even amid adversity.

And when we pause – to stretch, to breathe, to sit in stillness, one constant healer continues to rise for us: the sun. The sun has always been a balm for our spirits. We are people of the light – drawn to its glow, restored by its warmth and empowered by its energy. It fortifies our bones, enriches our melanin, lifts our moods and nourishes our land. Even in our darkest seasons, the sun rises again. That rising is a quiet promise: no matter how heavy the moment, light always returns. This, too, is part of our restoration, knowing we are never too distant from the light.

All of it, our creativity, music, community, style, movement and connection to the natural world comprises the foundation of our mental and emotional wellbeing. These elements are not separate from mental health; they are mental health. These ancestral ways have kept us whole, even when systems refused to see our wholeness. As we continue to reclaim and reimagine what healing means for us, may we never forget: our healing is not new. It has always existed. The world is only now beginning to awaken to what we've always embodied. That our ways are sacred, and our wellness is inseparable from our culture, our traditions and one another.



TERI RUSHAWN ROGERS

Together, We Break Stigmas and Build Hope

Dear Friends, Allies and Change Makers,

In a world overwhelmed by silence and stigma, our voices are sacred instruments of unity, healing and transformation. I am proud to share my journey and the work of Breaking Stigmas Treatment Operation with you, rooted in culture, compassion and our shared connection.

This mission is deeply personal.

I am a Skid Row survivor, a woman once discarded by systems not designed to hold my pain. My story, like so many others, could have ended in silence. Instead, it became a seed for change.

I told that story in America's Game Girl: Bridging the Gaps – A Journey of Love, Mental Health, and Overcoming Stigma, a memoir I self-published in 2024. It went on to win the Impact Book Award in the Addiction & Recovery category and is now distributed in major retailers and across every U.S. prison, a lifeline of language for those searching for hope behind bars. I'm honored to be a 2025 Finalist for Author of the Year, with results announced this October. Many of you may know me as the main protagonist of the two-time, award-winning feature documentary, "Game Girls", which captured raw, unscripted scenes of survival, sisterhood and stigma within Skid Row. But the deeper truth is: I am not just the subject of someone else's lens – I am the author of my life and the architect of change.

Culture, Compassion & Culturally-Grounded Mental Health

My healing and leadership are deeply influenced by my African American and Native (Brulé Lakota) heritage. The resilience in our bloodlines reminds me that mental health is not merely clinical, it is cultural, spiritual and ancestral. Whether through storytelling, drumming, prayer or shared meals, I've witnessed the power of culturally rooted practices in restoring balance and dignity. Our work integrates these approaches into peer support and program delivery.

Suicide Prevention and Acts of Connection

I have lost loved ones to suicide. I have stood on that edge myself. But it was acts of kindness, a stranger's hug, a friend's invitation to dance, a therapist who saw me, that pulled me back.

Breaking stigmas embeds suicide prevention into every community initiative we lead, centering connection over isolation. From trauma-informed art circles to healing walks across Skid Row, we prove that you don't have to be a clinician to save a life, you just have to care.

Anti-Bullying and Intergenerational Mental Wellness

Whether in schools, shelters or group homes, the language of cruelty can leave lasting scars. Our outreach addresses anti-bullying as a mental health issue, particularly for youth, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and Black and Brown communities. We champion emotional literacy, restorative justice and affirmation as tools of prevention and empowerment across ages and identities.

Reflection and Gratitude

As I reflect on my path from homelessness and heartbreak to healing and global recognition, I am moved most by the strength in community; the aunties who fed me, the women who walked with me, and the ancestors who whispered, "You are more than your wounds."

This unity is what I now offer back. Through our programs, partnerships and platforms, we are building a world where mental wellness is a human right, not a privilege; where every voice is honored, and no one is left behind.

To those who have walked with me, thank you. To those just joining us, welcome. You are needed.

With unwavering hope and revolutionary love.

Submissions Deadlines and Information Stakeholder Newsletter

Q4 2025

Get ready for the Q4 Quarterly publishing in December to close out the year! We hope after seeing this issue that you feel inspired to share and submit your story, art or creative idea for the next issue. Submissions that share personal experiences and journeys with wellbeing are welcome in any format and all content will represent diverse voices from the L.A. community and equitably sought from all stakeholder groups (e.g., SALTs, UsCCs, CCC, Health Neighborhoods, Faith-Based Partners, Peer Counsel).

The theme for the next issue is: “Heritage, Healing & Humanity”

As we approach the final months of the year, the LACDMH invites you to share your stories, reflections and creative expressions inspired by the richness of our shared humanity. From October’s celebrations of heritage, diversity, inclusion and disability awareness – including Down Syndrome Awareness Month, Filipino-American History Month, Global Diversity Awareness Month, Learning Disability Awareness Month, LGBTQ History Month, National Disability Employment Awareness Month and more – to November’s focus on Alzheimer’s Awareness, family caregiving, Native American Heritage and transgender visibility, and finally to December’s HIV/AIDS Awareness Month, Universal Human Rights Month, and end-of-year cultural and religious holidays, this season calls us to honor the many ways we connect, support and stand with one another.

We welcome submissions that explore:

- Stories of resilience, advocacy and community belonging
- Cultural heritage and the ways it shapes mental health and wellness
- Experiences that illuminate the importance of inclusion and accessibility
- Acts of caregiving, compassion and allyship
- Reflections on identity, intersectionality and shared humanity
- Artistic expressions of hope, remembrance and celebration

Whether through personal narratives, poetry, essays, artwork or photography, share how you see the threads of heritage, healing and humanity interwoven in your life and community. **Please refrain from submitting content that is promotional or could be perceived as an advertisement for a specific agency or businesses.**

Together, let’s create a space where every voice is valued, every story matters and our diversity becomes our shared strength.

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

Monday, October 6, 2025 : Call for Content Submissions Opens

Monday, October 27, 2025 : Content Submissions Due

Q4 2025 Diversity and Multicultural Calendar

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

October

MONTH-LONG OBSERVANCES

01	International Day of Older Persons (United Nations)	ADHD Awareness Month (U.S.)
02	International Day of Non-violence Mehregan Festival (Persian)	Bullying Prevention Month
05	American Veterans Disabled for Life Awareness Day (U.S.)	Depression Education and Awareness Month (U.S.)
05-11	National Mental Illness Awareness Week	Domestic Violence Awareness Month Down Syndrome Awareness Month (U.S.)
06	Chuseok (Korean Thanksgiving) Mid-Autumn Festival (Taiwan, Republic of China)	Family History Month
06-13	Sukkot (Jewish Festival for the Fall Harvest)	Filipino-American History Month
08	National Day of Bullying Prevention (U.S.)	German-American Heritage Month
09	Hangul Day (Celebration of Korean Alphabet) World Blind Day / World Sight Day (Global) National Depression Screening Day	Global Diversity Awareness Month
10	National Day (Taiwan, Republic of China) World Mental Health Day (Global)	Islamic History Month
11	National Coming Out Day (LGBTQ+)	Italian-American Heritage Month
13	Canadian Thanksgiving (2nd Monday of October) National Indigenous Peoples Day (2nd Monday of October, U.S.)	Learning Disability Awareness Month (U.S.)
15	Blind Americans Equality Day (U.S.) White Cane Safety Day (For Persons with Vision Loss Awareness) International Pronouns Day Disability Mentoring Day (U.S.)	People with Specific Learning Disabilities
19	Spirit Day (LGBTQ+ and anti-bullying)	LGBTQ History Month
20-26	Ace Week (Asexual Awareness, formerly LGBTQ+)	National Disability Employment Awareness Month (U.S.)
21	Diwali (Hindu)	National Work and Family Month
22	International Stuttering Awareness Day Birth of the Bab (Baha'i Holiday)	Polish-American Heritage Month
26	Intersex Awareness Day (LGBTQ+)	Selective Mutism Awareness Month (U.S.)
29	Cyrus the Great Day (Iranian) World Stroke Awareness Day	
31	Halloween	

Q4 2025 Diversity and Multicultural Calendar

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

November

- 01** All Saints' Day (Christian)
- 02** Day of the Dead (Mexican)
- 05** International Stress Awareness Day
- 11** Veterans Day (U.S.)
- 15** Roc Your Mocs Day (Native American & Indigenous Peoples)
White House Tribal Nations Summit (AI/AN)
- 16** Dutch American Heritage Day (U.S.)
International Day for Tolerance (United Nations)
- 19** International Men's Day
- 20** Transgender Day of Remembrance (LGBTQ+)
- 25** International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
(United Nations)
- 27** Thanksgiving Day (U.S.)
Anniversary of the Assassination of Harvey Milk (LGBTQ+)
- 28** Native American Heritage Day
- 29** Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Anniversary
Sand Creek Massacre Commemoration (AI/AN)

MONTH-LONG OBSERVANCES

Alzheimer's Awareness
Month (U.S.)

National Family
Caregivers Month

National Native American
Heritage Month

Transgender Awareness
Month

Q4 2025 Diversity and Multicultural Calendar

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

December

MONTH-LONG OBSERVANCES

HIV/AIDS Awareness
Month

National Giving Month

National Impaired Driving
Prevention Month

Universal Human Rights
Month

01 World AIDS Day

03 International Day of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations)
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Reauthorization

05 International Volunteer Day

10 International Human Rights Day (United Nations)

14-22 December 14-22 – Hanukkah (Jewish)

16-24 Las Posadas (Various Latin American countries)

21 Yule Winter Solstice (Pagan)
National Homeless Persons' Remembrance Day

25 Christmas (Christian)

26-1 Kwanzaa (Celebration of African American heritage and culture)

26 Dakota 38 (AI/AN - Honor the lives of the Dakota people who were
executed on December 26, 1862)

31 New Year's Eve

About All of Us

Cultural Competency Committee

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, frontline 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.



dmh.lacounty.gov/ccu/ccc

Access for All UsCC

The Access for All UsCC subcommittee was established under the original Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), now known as the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), 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.



dmh.lacounty.gov/about/mhsa/uscc/access-for-all-uscc

American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) UsCC

The American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Underserved Cultural Communities subcommittee was established under the original Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), now known as the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), 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.

dmh.lacounty.gov/about/mhsa/uscc/american-indian-alaska-native-ai-an-uscc

Asian and Pacific Islander (API) UsCC Subcommittee

The Asian Pacific Islander (API) UsCC subcommittee was established under the original Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), now known as the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), 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.

dmh.lacounty.gov/about/mhsa/uscc/asian-pacific-islander-api-uscc

Black and African Heritage UsCC

The Black and African Heritage Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC) subcommittee was established under the original Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), now known as the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), 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.

dmh.lacounty.gov/about/mhsa/uscc/black-african-heritage-uscc



Eastern European / Middle Eastern (EE/ME) UsCC

The Eastern European Middle Eastern (EE/ME) USCC subcommittee was established under the original Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), now known as the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), 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.

dmh.lacounty.gov/about/mhsa/uscc/eastern-european-middle-eastern-eeme-uscc



Latino UsCC

The Latino UsCC subcommittee was established under the original Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), now known as the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), 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.

dmh.lacounty.gov/about/mhsa/uscc/latino-uscc



LGBTQIA2-S UsCC

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two-Spirit (LGBTQIA2-S) USCC subcommittee was established under the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), now known as the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA), 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.

dmh.lacounty.gov/about/mhsa/uscc/lgbtqia2-s-uscc



Disclosures and Acknowledgments

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING RESOURCES

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) supports the wellbeing of our County residents and communities. The LACDMH Help Line is available 24/7 to provide mental health support, resources and referrals at: **800-854-7771**. Additional LACDMH resources are available at: dmh.lacounty.gov/get-help-now.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: **Call or Text 988 or chat online at 988lifeline.org**

Crisis Text Line: Text "LA" to 741741 crisistextline.org

CA Peer-Run Warm Line: **855-600-WARM (9276)** calhope.org

iPrevail: Access a Unique Mental Health Network on Any Device with Interactive Lessons, Peer Support Chats, and Community Groups All in One Place. lacounty.iprevail.com

Teen Line: 800-852-8336 Nationwide (6 - 10 PM PST), text "Teen" to 839863 (6 - 9 PM PST)
teenline.org

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