



**Educate, Advocate,
Lead**

April 2018

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Attention: Adrienne

MAKING WAVES

ACBHCS' Office of Ethnic Services' and POCC African American Empowerment Committee's Annual Black History Month Celebration and Training

This year, the annual Black History Month Celebration and Training was held at the African American Museum and Library at Oakland (AAMLO), and attracted a culturally diverse group of people from a variety of walks. Guests were treated to a day of precision-oriented presentations. One powerful and impactful presentation on Black History was led by Bre Williams. Bre's slide presentation dug deep and exposed racial and cultural traumas and the psychological impact on the lives of African Americans. Dr. Wade Nobles delivered an eye-opening and sobering keynote address that discussed the evolution of Black Psychology, with critique and correction of Western Mental Health paradigms and practices, including nosology, traditional spirit science and client-centered healing. While dissecting the rationale of some European philosophers whose work set out to dehumanize, nullify, and devalue the lives of Africans throughout the diaspora, and not skipping a beat, he paid homage to Dr. Joseph L. White, a pioneer and co-founder of the Association of Black Psychologists. Dr. White, affectionately known as the Godfather of Black Psychology, transitioned to the realm of the ancestors in November 2017.

Lunchtime entertainment at the First Unitarian Church came from the eclectic and smooth sounds of Camille Safiya and her band, Futurelic. After their rhythmic and captivating sounds, the guests waltzed back to AAMLO to participate in the final workshop of the day. Dr. Amber McZeal introduced the concept of decoloniality. Her workshop built upon the foundational works of black psychologists throughout the 20th century, and explored new theoretical and intellectual gestures in the field of mental health that create more culturally competent models, approaches, and health determinants. The Office of Ethnic Services gives thanks to the Office of Consumer Empowerment, the POCC African American Empowerment Committee, the African American Steering Committee, all the volunteers, and others for their support in making this year's Black History Month Celebration and Training a huge success! See you next year! Javarré Wilson



Below, left to right: Dr. Wade Nobles; Aisha Brown (Legislative Aide to Supervisor Keith Carson); Javarré Wilson, ACBHCS Ethnic Services Manager.



Bre Williams Making Waves for Black History Month

For the past 3 years, the POCC's African American Empowerment Committee has partnered with Behavioral Health Care Services Ethnic Services Department to provide a Black History Month Event. This year's event was one to remember.

The POCC's very own Bre Williams was one of the keynote speakers, along with the esteemed Dr. Wade Nobles, and Ph.D. candidate Amber McZeal. While it is always essential to have the information and opinions of those who have had years of studying given to the general population, Bre Williams brings a fresh perspective of what healing in the black community looks like, being a person who has not only studied, but lives with mental health experiences, and uses her culture to heal.

True to her form, Bre began her presentation by centering and settling her anxious feelings, and inviting the audience to take a deep breath with her. She then went on to present a three-part power point, titled, "Black History: Resiliency 101." The goal of the presentation was to give audience members a new insight into the Black American experience and history, which is one of triumph and resiliency. All too often, these stories are painful reminders of a painful past, filled with slavery, lynching, and overarching feeling of Blacks being powerless and degraded to sub human status, like slaves.

Bre intentionally highlighted stories we rarely hear of or know about, ones that contradict the negative and powerless view of African Americans past; such as: contributions to humanity and civilization from Africans, Africa before slavery and colonization, successful rebellions and revolts, freeman (blacks who were not enslaved during slavery), the Abolitionist and Back to Africa movement, Black inventors and scientists, and other key events that occurred at the hands of resilient Black Americans. Bre ended her presentation with a message that Black Americans still face many of the same hurdles we faced hundreds of years ago, but highlighted various organizations, like the Association of Black Psychologists, that are doing the work to create sustainability and healing for the Black community in America. The audience gave a standing ovation. Be on the lookout for more from Bre Williams!



Bre Williams



CERTIFIED FORENSIC PEER SPECIALIST TRAINING

by Mary Hogden

This month, the Pool of Consumer Champions hosted an exciting new Certified Forensic Peer Specialist Training and a Train the Trainer event. Forensic Peer Specialists embody the potential for recovery for people who confront the dual stigmas associated with serious mental health challenges and criminal justice involvement.

Thanks to many of our community based organizations (such as La Familia, BACS, FERC, ACNMHC, and POCC) that work with individuals who have been involved in the criminal justice system, for their participation. The group learned about the Sequential Intercept Mapping, beginning with where in the system people enter the criminal justice system. This evidence based training has a curriculum developed through Drexel University and the facilitators are peers working with Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers Association.

Participants in the training gained knowledge and skills:

Using lived experience as an example of recovery and resiliency;

Identifying and advocating for the needs of individuals in the criminal justice system;

Assisting an individual in navigating service systems (mental health, criminal justice);

Modeling self advocacy in advocating for oneself;

Supporting an individual's journey toward achieving personal recovery goals.

The office of Consumer Empowerment and the POCC will house the Forensic Peer Specialist Training. Stay tuned if you are interested in attending our next training. We will send out a notice through e-mail, website www.pocc.org or snail mail.





The POCC Consumer Employment Advisory Taskforce & the Vocational Program IPS collaborated on a March Workshop

Three exciting panelists spoke at a presentation on “Rediscovering Ourselves, Exploring Our Dream Job.” They were Ifafunke Oladigbolu, an African American businesswoman, who spoke about her apparel business.

Louis Quindlen told us about his education that led to him becoming a Machine Technology Teacher at Laney College. And Cheryl Diston, also an African American businesswoman, told us about her organization, “Kevi-Dem’s Straighter Path.” Cheryl is the founder and E.D. of this business that deals with incarcerated women in the penal system.

There was networking and arts & crafts, and resources were distributed. Small groups held workshops about making an Action Plan toward a Dream Job. Special thanks go to Chris Llorente of the Vocational Program, Marlena Willis, Nonviolent Communication teacher, and the CEAT. **Ernest Hardmon, III**

What I learned from the "Rediscovering Ourselves, Exploring Our Dream Job" event, by *Rev. Dr. Wilson Chan*

陳偉姓 博士 牧師 鞠躬 The panelists told their personal stories of initially coming from adversarial environments with behavioral health issues. Eventually, they realized their hope of wellness and recovery, and were successful in their business and vocations. My dream job is to be a Peer Support Specialist. I explored my dream job by joining the BestNow Peer Support Specialist training program. “Pathways—Wardrobe for Opportunity” offered us an additional training program to find and keep a job and build a career. It taught me how to set a goal at my dream job. It had to be SMART. 1. Specific. Goals should be as specific as possible. When you say what your goal is, a clear picture of what it looks like should emerge. 2. Meaningful. Goals must have real meaning for you. 3. Achievable. Your goal must feel achievable in order for you to be motivated to take the necessary action steps. 4. Realistic. Do you have the tools, resources, and skills to achieve the goal? If not, how will you go about obtaining these? 5. Time-framed. Your goals should come with some reasonable expectations of when they will be achieved.

I am grateful to Wardrobe for Opportunity for dressing me up professionally with their free gift of suits and presentable attire. Wearing a smart suit, I presented myself to the PEERS WRAP Facilitator training program. They acknowledged that my dream job has become a reality. I am very happy I attended this "rediscovering ourselves" event. I reaffirmed and rediscovered myself tremendously in it.

Gratitude for a Vision & Partnership

Dr. Aaron Chapman, Medical Director of BHCS, had a vision and shared it with Mary Hodgen, POCC Manager. Mary partnered with the BHCS Workforce Development Manager, Sanjida Mazid, in empowering interested POCC members to enroll at Merritt College in the Medical Assistant program.

The Medical Assistant program was first piloted in 2017. Several POCC members attended the program orientation, and started the program. Not all of the members have been able to continue the process. Those who have, Susana Iraheta, Rosalva Contreras and Melody Parker, paved the way for POCC and other consumers as re-entry students.

This program guaranteed that upon successful completion, members would be placed into employment in one of the county Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) or other medical facilities. The partnership between ACBHCS and Merritt College is a significant tool that has promoted collaboration, consumer empowerment, and service. ACBHCS will become known for this project and the success of its participants. This pilot program has strengthened the bond among consumers and eliminated communication barriers caused by stigma in the medical field. Through the Medical Assistant program, I envision consumers advocating for themselves with providers and cultivating supportive interactions. It is phenomenal to participate in a program that equips consumer participants for better health outcomes.

As Susana, Rosalva and I look forward to our commencement ceremony on May 23, 2018, we know that doors will be opened for consumers, and there is more to come.

Thank you,

Melody Parker



Left to right, POCC members Melody Parker and Rosalva Contreras

Who Am I? By Ernest L. Hardmon III

As I sit in this darkened room, it is lit only with the enlightened thought of consciousness. I brave myself to speak on a subject very dear to me, but I must call on your intellectual diligence, for this is my personal opinion and not that of others. I write this premise with due respect for your teachings. I am an Indigenous American. And why do I call myself an Indigenous American, you ask?

A black man is something out of the crayon box. Have you ever seen a “Black Man?” African American means that you were once enslaved, and enslavement means that you are property of the oppressor. Property can never be a citizen. Unless we claim our national heritage and pledge allegiance to a nation, we cannot claim citizenship to that nation.

We have been named over and over again. I remember when we were called colored. Colored means you are an artificial person. So when we use these terminologies and trickeries of words, we need to research and understand what they mean. This history has led to trauma and has effected African Americans to this day.

“When you talk about mental illness in the black communities, I think you have to begin with the experience of trauma, and how trauma continues to process itself in our communities.” Not only are the scars of slavery passed down through generations to generations, there may be a genetic manifestation that goes along with it. It is called Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS).

In response to PTSS, Dr. Linsey advocates for “Culturally Competent Care,” because African American patients are turned off when they perceive inauthenticity in their care provider.

If an indigenous American, I am none of the above, I am American. So, I hope I have shed light and increased your appetite for this topic. We can further research this topic by reading recommended authors such as Michael Eric Dyson, Dr. John Hedrick Clark, Dr. Amos Wilson, Dr. Claude Alexander, Dr. Michelle Alexander, Dr. Joy DeGruy on PTSS and Dr. Cornell West.



(Ernest Hardmon, III)

Below is a reprint from one of our 2011 newsletters. This time, to honor not only three members of Adrienne's family, but also Nancy Thomas, a long time consumer-survivor who is mentioned in the article and who passed away this year.

Those Who Have Gone Before Us

by Adrienne

From 2011

On September 16th, the California Memorial Project ("CMP") held its 11th annual remembrance ceremony at state hospitals. The project seeks to honor residents of state hospitals who were buried on the grounds without gravestones or markers indicating who is buried there.

This year at Napa State Hospital the attendees were mostly hospital residents. As we waited in McGrath Auditorium for the program to begin, a consumer guest called out with alarm, "What are the police doing here?" No one answered. Alicia Mendoza of Disability Rights California opened the ceremonies with a welcoming address. A prayer was led by Father Castro of the Department of State Hospitals.

Drumming was performed by "The Heartbeats," a group of hospital residents led by Rehabilitation Therapist Greg Cordes, and there was a performance by a resident choir. Poems were read. A few people spoke at the open mic., including a former resident now living independently nearby.

A Public Information Officer read the names of residents who died at the hospital over the past year. My thoughts wandered to my grandmother and aunt, who also passed away on the premises, and whom I never met. They were not buried on the hospital grounds, but were claimed by family and laid to rest close to home.

After light refreshments of lemonade and cookies, some of us ventured out to the field where bones lay below. Rows of chairs had been set under the trees for further ceremony. As a gentle breeze blew wisps of her hair, Nancy Thomas of Alameda County Network of Mental Health Clients stood in the sunshine and sang a few of the songs that the Threshold Choir sings at the bedside of those close to passing. "Sally likes this one," she said.

"How could anyone ever tell you
You were anything less than beautiful?
How could anyone ever tell you
You were less than whole?
How could anyone fail to notice
That your loving is a miracle?
How deeply you're connected to my soul?"

The tears began to fall and my face crumpled up
as I held my precious son in my heart, referred to in the papers as "mentally ill," after the police took his life.

"Look! It's a prairie dog." I was saved from my sorrow by the former resident, who pointed out some comical, inquisitive little creatures in the field. Deer, too, nibbled plants in the clearing, pausing every so often to look around. And so the day went on. We climbed into our cars and drove back to our present-day lives, fragments of our hearts strewn about the sunny field, words scattered in the breeze.

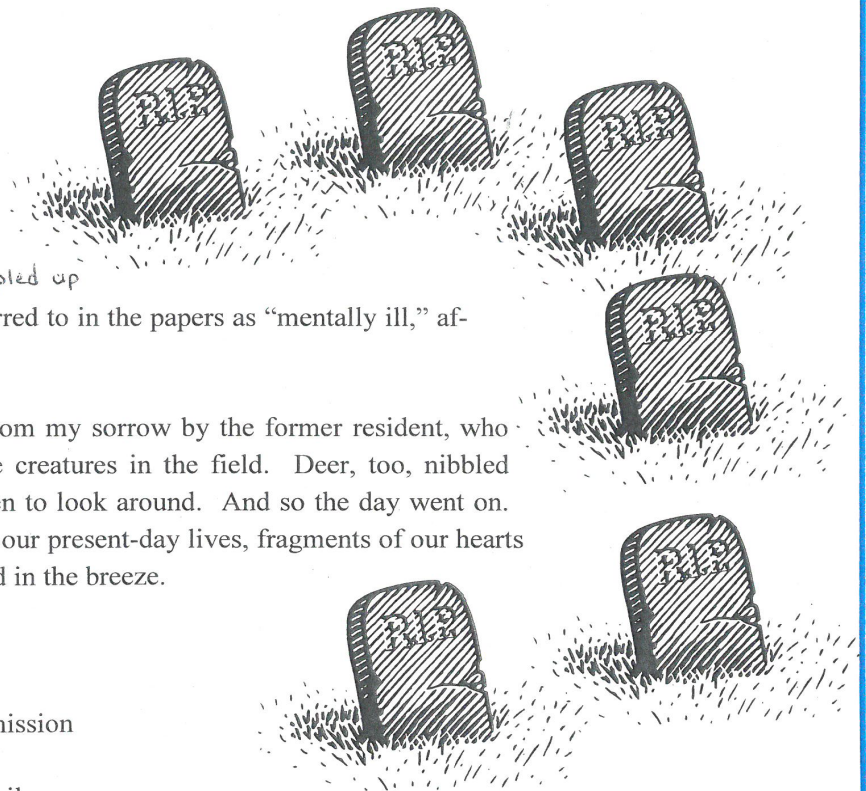
HOW COULD ANYONE

Words and music by Libby Roderick

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From the recording "How Could Anyone"

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IN MEMORY OF OUR FRIENDS & COLLEAGUES:

Mauricio Carcamo: POCC member, born in El Salvador and worked for the federal government for 20 years.
Passed away on November 2, 2017.



Janice Bolanos: Mother, daughter in law, POCC member.
Passed away on January 22, 2018.



Wayne Kinsey: POCC Member and beloved brother of POCC Member Kerrie Kinsey; Passed away on February 2, 2018.



Nancy Thomas: Berkeley Consumer Movement Activist & ED & Financial Dir. of ACNMHC;
Passed away on February 5, 2018



Linford Gayle: Director, Office of Consumer & Family Affairs, San Mateo County; Passed away in April 2018.



Who Am I?

By Ernest L. Hardmon III

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We have been named over and over again. I remember when we were called “colored.” Colored means you are an artificial person. So when we use these terminologies and trickeries of words, we need to research and understand what they mean. This history has led to trauma and has effected African Americans to this day.

“When you talk about Mental Illness in the Black Communities, I think you have to begin with the experience of **trauma**, and how trauma continues to process itself in our communities.” Not only are the scars of slavery passed down through generations to generations, and there may be genetic manifestation that goes along with it. It is called Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS).

In response to PTSS, Dr. Linsey advocates for “**Culturally Competent Care**,” because African American patients are turned off when they perceive inauthenticity in their care provider.

PTSS is also called **epigenetic inheritance**. A new study has found that the **Black Holocaust, (also known as a MAAFA)** and its survivors passed down scarred genes to their descendants – scars caused by extremely stressful conditions. Thus the collective experience of a people become individualized, passed down person by person from one generation to another.

Dr. Linsey further states, “I think that what happens for a lot of individuals is that they **suffer in silence**, with respect to having a mental illness. Some African Americans go to church and talk with their spiritual advisor... It is sort of artificial to the American ethic, which is to be strong and courageous; to pull yourself up by the bootstraps; to whether the storm.” How can we end this trauma if we are not American?

In answer to the original question of why I call myself an indigenous American, I am none of the above, I am American. So, I hope I have shed light and increased your appetite for this topic. We can further research this topic by reading recommended authors such as Michael Eric Dyson, Dr. John Hedrick Clark, Dr. Amos Wilson, Dr. Claude Alexander, Dr. Michelle Alexander, Dr. Joy DeGruy on PTSS, and Dr. Cornell West.