



12TH ANNUAL



LET'S GET BETTER TOGETHER CONFERENCE

OCTOBER, 18-19, 2023

Hosted by:



REMEMBERING

Scott Haverstock

OCTOBER 14, 2023

It is with heavy hearts that we remember Scott, a cherished member of our Let's Get Better Together Conference community. Scott's dedication and enthusiasm for our event left an indelible mark, and his passing has left us in profound sadness.

Scott's vibrant spirit shone through his role on the planning committee, where he contributed significantly to our past conferences. His creativity was a source of joy for us all, particularly in the memorable skits performed during our awards ceremonies. Those moments of laughter and camaraderie will forever remain in our memories.

In addition to his vital role on the planning committee, Scott ensured that the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence generously donated gift cards and prizes for our annual raffles, adding an extra layer of excitement to our gatherings. His dedication extended even further as he staffed a table for La Frontera Empact, making a tangible impact in the mental health community.

As we come together for this year's conference, we aim to honor Scott's enduring contributions to our community. We will explore ways to acknowledge his legacy throughout the event, whether through moments of reflection, the recognition of his exceptional service, or the inclusion of his photographs from past conferences in our program.

Scott's absence is deeply felt, and his memory will continue to inspire us as we carry forward the spirit of unity and progress that he so passionately embodied.

With heavy hearts and gratitude for having known Scott,
The Let's Get Better Together Conference Team





WELCOME TO LET'S GET BETTER TOGETHER 2023!

Greetings!

On behalf of the entire organizing committee, our sponsors, speakers, and volunteers, we are thrilled to welcome you to the 2023 Let's Get Better Together: A Quality Look at Healthcare Conference! This conference brings people together from all corners of the state to celebrate the diversity and strength that define the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. This conference is not just an event; it's a testament to the power of unity and advocacy.

We hope that this conference will provide a platform for open dialogue, networking, and empowerment. The lineup of speakers and workshops promises to be both informative and enlightening, covering a wide range of important topics that impact the community. It is our hope that this event will be a space for growth, reflection, and the celebration of experiences that make up our community and the people we serve.

We hope you enjoy your time with us and have a memorable experience. Let's Get Better Together is a space where everyone is welcome and where every voice is valued. Whether you've attended in the past or are brand new, your presence contributes to the vibrancy of this event, and your participation makes a difference. We encourage you to connect with fellow attendees, visit with our sponsors who provide so many needed services in the community, and find yourself refreshed and renewed for the year to come.

Thank you for being here!

Amy Meyertholen, Donna McHenry, Holly Figueroa, & Sam Castro
Conference Co-Chairs

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Annual Let's Get Better Together
Conference!

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LET'S GET BETTER TOGETHER CONFERENCE

We are an annual Arizona conference to increase education, resources and understanding of health providers serving the LGBTQ+ community.

Photos throughout program are courtesy of Scott & Anna Griessel / Creatista



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CONFERENCE CHAIRS



Holly Figueroa (She/Her)

Tribal Liaison, BCBSAZ Health Choice

Holly Figueroa is Ohkay Owingeh and Hopi from the village of Sipaulovi and is Sun Clan. Holly serves as the Tribal Liaison for BCBSAZ Health Choice. As the Tribal Liaison, she works to strengthen tribal relations with 17 tribes in BCBSAZ Health Choice service area, focusing on Access to Care, Prevention, Coordination of Care, Nation Building, Training & Education, Reducing Health Disparities, Stigma Reduction, and cross sector tribal collaborative efforts.

With a Cultural Competency background, Holly works to ensure that culturally responsive services are delivered to all including Health Choice members and that providers meet the language and unique cultural needs of those they serve. Holly also develops education and awareness programs for staff and residents of the Health Choice service area to help reduce the stigma aimed at diverse cultures and to raise awareness and decrease health disparities they are often faced with. Holly was born into a military family and is the spouse of an Operation Desert Storm & Operation Vigilant Warrior Veteran. Holly is a certified Adult, Youth, and Veteran Mental Health First Aide Trainer. Holly serves on the Arizona Town Hall Board of Directors; she is a

Northern Arizona Healthcare Foundation Certificate Holder; she serves on the President for Arizona Rural Health Association; the MPOWRD Board of Directors. Holly is also a dedicated Ally who works to advocate and ensure Safe Spaces for 2SLGBTQ individuals and community. Additionally, Holly pursues other ways to give back to her community and to be an effective advocate for Native American people everywhere.



Sam Castro (She/They)

Sam Castro is currently the Diversity, Equity, and Belonging Partner at Choice Hotels International, as part of their Talent and Culture Department. She also has her Master's of Science Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling with years of experience in providing therapy and psychoeducation services for those in the LGBTQ and BIPOC Community. Sam is an experienced leader and mental health advocate focusing on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging work. She is versed in program development, management, facilitation/public speaking. Sam currently serves on several boards and committees in the Greater Phoenix area. She is proud to be a first generation Filipina and identifies as part of the queer community. In her free time, Sam enjoys traveling, going to concerts, visiting home in San Francisco, and trying new cuisines.



Donna McHenry (She/Her)

Donna McHenry serves as the Cultural Sensitivity Administrator for Mercy Care, and is one of the co-chairs for the Let's Get Better Together Conference. As Mercy Care's Cultural Sensitivity Administrator, Donna is responsible for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion for historically under-represented communities.

Donna is a South Phoenix native and an active community member. She currently serves on the City of Phoenix Civil Service Board as Vice-Chair. She also had the honor to have served: AmeriCorps, Youth Justice Leadership Fellowship, One Community's Multicultural Advisory Board, Arizona Association for Foster and Adoptive Parents (AZAFAP) Board and as a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. During her leisure, Donna enjoys hosting cookouts, vacationing with her wife and children, and volunteering during the holidays as the GRINCH!



Amy Meyertholen (She/Her)

Amy Meyertholen is the Director of Strategic Initiatives with the Arizona Council of Human Service Providers. After earning a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from the University of Arizona, Amy went on to earn her Master's in Social Work from Arizona State University. With over 15 years as a Social Worker, Amy's experience includes direct practice with children and families, program development, and project management. When away from work, Amy enjoys hiking, quiet spaces, and spending time with her favorite people and pets.



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Conference Emcee: Shawnté Rothschild (she/her)

CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE DAY 1 WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18TH CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE INSTITUTE

Wednesday, October 18th will be our Champions of Change Institute. Attendees in the Champions of Change institute will participate in a day-long immersive learning and practical experience with the aim of improving knowledge and skills necessary to being an advocate for self and the communities they are a part of/serve. Attendees will also learn about the work for and against the rights of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, families, and allies in the current local legislative system. **All activities are in Main Room.**

8:00 am Check in and Registration

8:30 am Welcome

8:45 am Keynote Speaker: Rev. Louis Mitchell

9:45 am A Family's Story of Advocacy
Lizette Trujillo and Daniel Trujillo

10:45 am Break

11:00 am Building Healthy, Resilient Communities
Onyekachi Ekeogu &
Jannah Scott, YWCA

12:00 pm Lunch

1:00 pm Creating Welcoming Spaces: The Role of
Design in 2SLGBTQIA+ Healthcare
Heather Brown, Cultural Sponge

2:30 pm Break & Refreshments

2:45 pm Characters of an Advocate
Mandee Bahadar, PhD, LPC

3:45 pm Advocacy Planning Session

4:00 pm Closing

CONFERENCE DAY 2 THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19TH GENERAL CONFERENCE

8:00 am Registration

8:30 am Opening Remarks

8:45 am The Arizona LGBTQ Quiz Show
Tari Hanneman

9:45 am Award Presentation and Recognition

10:15 am Break

10:30 am Workshop Session 1

12:00 pm Lunch

1:00 pm Workshop Session 2

2:30 pm Break & Refreshments

2:45 pm Workshop Session 3

4:15 pm Closing Remarks

***Please make sure you check out our
sponsor exhibitors!***



REV. LOUIS MITCHELL **2023 Keynote Speaker**

Rev. Louis Mitchell is a pioneering “intentional man.” Known around the country and abroad as an elder, advocate, trainer, teacher, student, minister, parent and friend. He is currently serving as the Senior Pastor of Rincon Congregational United Church of Christ in Tucson Arizona. He is a co-founder, with Mx. Chris Paige, of Transfaith.

Rev. Mitchell is a proud father to his daughter, Kahlo (like the artist), and co-parent with her mother, Krysia L. Villon. He is supported by a team of trusted friends and family (by birth and connection).

Louis has been in recovery for nearly four decades and has been involved in the fight for health, respect and self-determination since the early 1980s, with deep engagement in political, mental health, recovery, and spiritual contexts.

He brings his own learned experiences, a broad range of resources, theories and studies, to offer a fresh, “on the ground,” open-hearted, holistic strategy to the work of individual and community healing, intersectional diversity planning and commitment to personal and community agency and solvency. He is a confirmed believer in the restorative power of truth telling in the voices of those whose stories are often told about them rather than with them.

His teaching and trainings have been sought by government agencies, universities, churches, denominational bodies and businesses around the country.

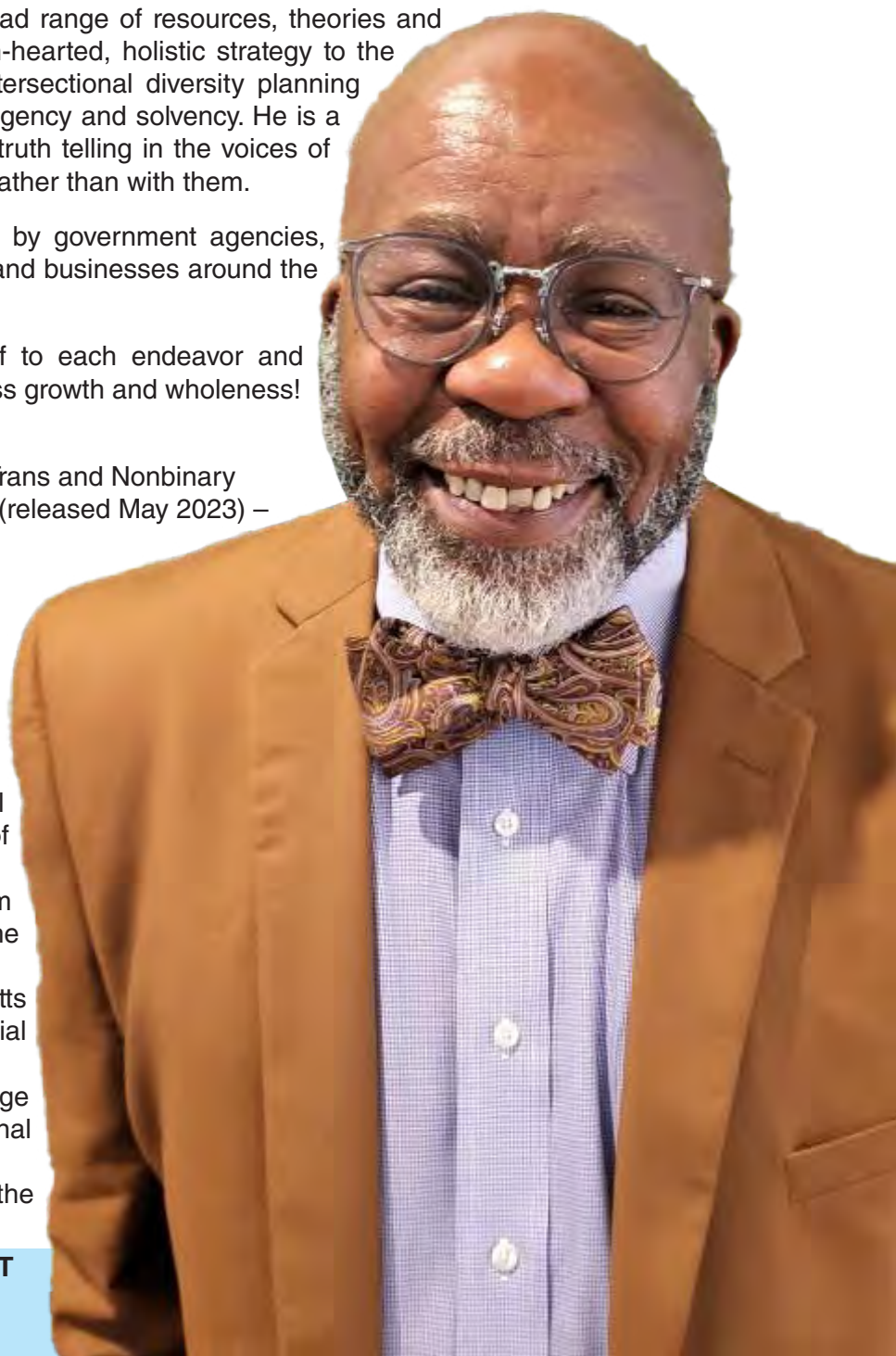
Engaging and witty, he brings his whole self to each endeavor and appreciates the opportunity to guide and witness growth and wholeness!

Some key accomplishments include:

- Contributor, “Authentic Selves: Celebrating Trans and Nonbinary People and Their Families,” Peggy Gillespie (released May 2023) – May 2, 2023
- Profiled in the documentaries
Still Black: A Portrait of Black Transmen (2008, Zeigler & Lora), Gender Journeys: More than a Pronoun (2016, Luke Allen) and More than T (2017, Silas Howard)
- 2022 The I Am Human Foundation Lifetime

Service Award

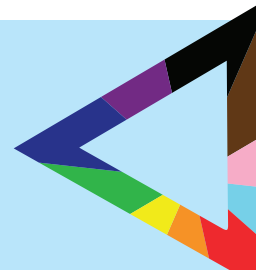
- 2017 International Jose Julio Sarria Civil Rights Award from the Imperial Court of Western Massachusetts
- 2015 Claire Skiffington Vanguard Award from the Transgender Law Center for his long-time advocacy for the disenfranchised
- 2011 Haystack Award from the Massachusetts Conference of the UCC for his work in Social Justice and Social Ministry.
- President’s Award from the Wells College students for his 2015 Residency on Intentional Inclusion and Building Diversity
- Recognized as a part of the 2014 edition of the Trans 100



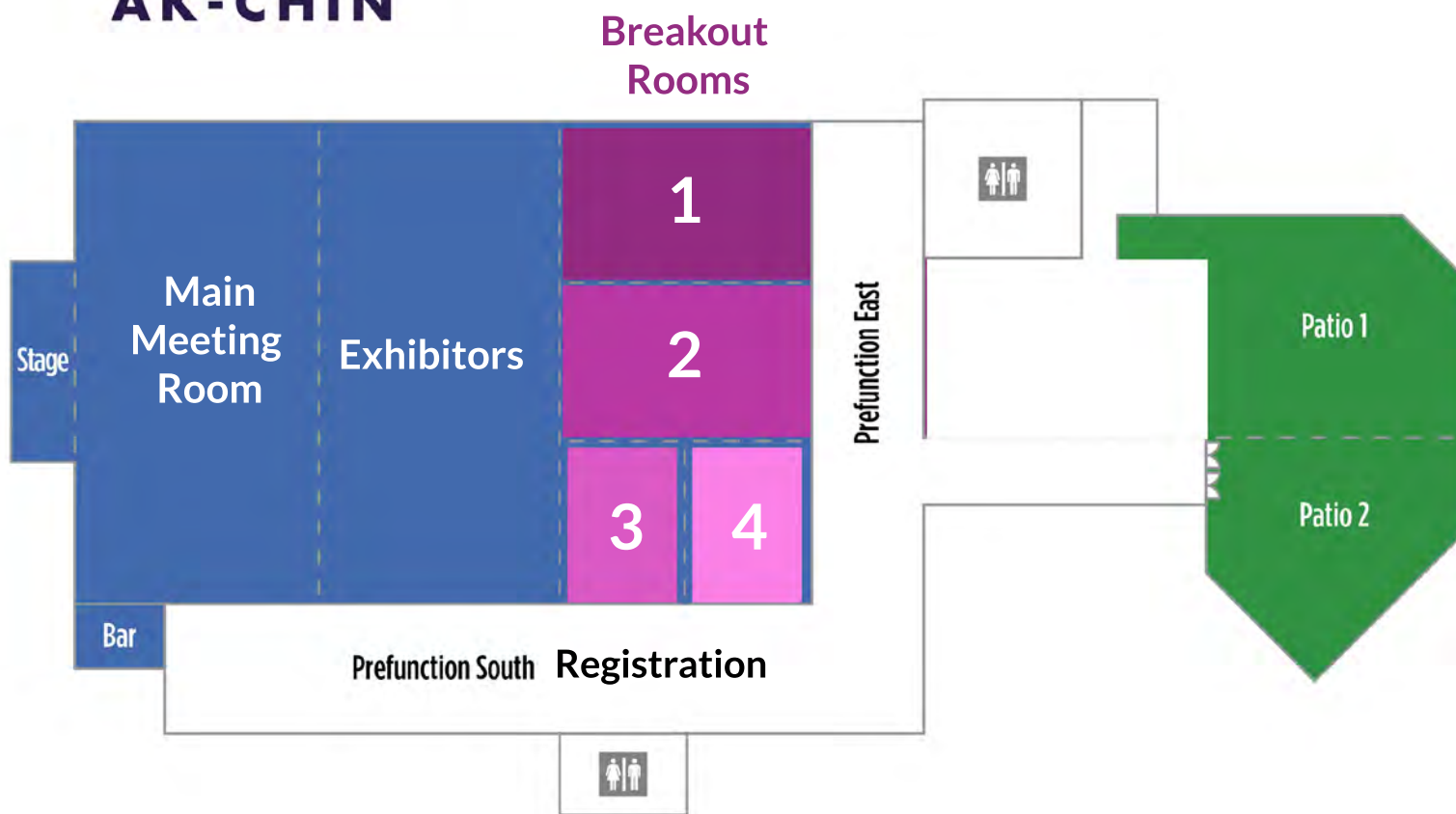
**CLICK HERE TO READ MORE ABOUT
REV. LOUIS MITCHELL**



CONFERENCE MAP



Harrah's
AK-CHIN



Land Acknowledgment

Let's Get Better Together Conference Committee honors the tribal sovereignty of the Ak-Chin Indian Community. We are respectful visitors to these lands that have since time been, still remain and will forever be the home of the Akimel O'odham and Tohono O'odham people. We are humbled by the hospitality of the Community in hosting our conference. Just as the Ak-Chin Indian Community is one of the largest farmland producers in the country, we hope the partnerships we grow here emulate the Ak-Chin Him-Dak and sustain our efforts today and for a thriving future.

DESIGNING CHANGE, CREATING IMPACT

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DAY ONE PRESENTATIONS

On Day 1, all presentations are in Main Room.

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Louis Mitchell

A Family's Story of Advocacy

Presenter(s): Lizette Trujillo and Daniel Trujillo

Building Healthy, Resilient Communities

Presenter(s): Onyekachi Ekeogu & Jannah Scott with YWCA

Description: Building Healthy, Resilient Communities - The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted racial and gender disparities in access to healthcare. YWCA Metropolitan Phoenix has focused on achieving post-COVID race and gender equity in mental health in Northwest Maricopa County. Through a “systems change” process—participatory research, data analysis and thought partnership with providers, advocates, and families—YWCA gained invaluable insights into challenges facing these communities, and potential policy instigations that could engender positive change.

During this session, we will delve into the topic of race/gender equity in mental health for LGBTQ Young people, specifically in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will share invaluable insights from our work as part of the YWCA Metropolitan Phoenix Systems Change Initiative. YWCA conducted a structured “systems change” process called “RETOC” Race Equity Theory of Change—comprised of examining the conditions affecting mental health, naming the preconditions necessary to achieve a goal of equity in mental health, and using the social determinants of health model to highlight important intersections for marginalized populations. Join us to learn, discuss and apply these insights to your own systems, and begin to think about how we can work together to mitigate barriers preventing individuals from getting necessary help—barriers like unjust policies, disaggregated care, stigma, and race/gender discrimination.

Creating Welcoming Spaces: The Role of Design in 2SLGBTQIA+ Healthcare

Presenter: Heather Brown with Cultural Sponge

Description: In this presentation, we will delve into the critical role of design, branding, and web strategies in improving healthcare access and services for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Our focus will be on equipping healthcare professionals and service providers with essential tools and practices to create inclusive and welcoming environments.

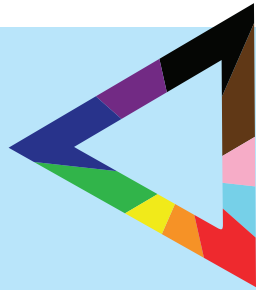
Characters of an Advocate

Presenter: Mande Bahadar, PhD, LPC

Description: The objectives of this section of champions is to reflect on the characteristics of a healthy advocate that attendees (1) can use in their advocacy work and (2) develop to improve the internal and external impact of their work.



DAY TWO WORKSHOPS



On Day 2, morning presentations will be held in **Main Room**.

Breakout sessions room numbers are listed below with each presentation. Please refer to the map on page 10.

The Arizona LGBTQ Quiz Show

Room: Main

Presenter(s): Tari Hanneman

Description: The Arizona LGBTQ Quiz Show - This highly interactive keynote session will provide an overview of Arizona's LGBTQ+ landscape, covering everything from the impact of stigma and discrimination on Arizona's 2SLGBTQIA+ population to key imperatives to advance 2SLGBTQIA+ health equity. Bring your coffee and thinking cap and get ready to test your knowledge and maybe learn something new too. There will be prizes!

SESSION 1 OPTIONS 10:30AM - NOON

Navigating Menopause Treatment in Vulnerable Populations

Room: 4

Presenter(s): Jennifer Flack with Obsidian Health and Wellness, LLC

Description: The heteronormative definition of menopause is defined as the cessation of the menstrual cycle for 12 consecutive months. Menopause is marked by the decline of Estrogen production in the ovaries that impacts the body's equilibrium. Often Lesbian, Trans-men and non-Binary individuals experience a disparity in treatment due to the limitation of knowledge of the menopause transition in these populations. The research for treating menopause in cisgendered heterosexual women is limited and education of providers is often only an elective class in medical school. For those who identify as Lesbian, Trans-men and non-Binary the research for treatment is near non-existent. The purpose of this presentation is to identify challenges to obtaining appropriate medical care with a skilled provider and ways to encourage inclusion through understanding and education.

Creating an Inclusive Healthcare Environment

Room: 1

Presenter(s): Natasha Bhuyan, Md, Alex Leonard, Ann Andrews with Natasha Bhuyan, Md, Alex Leonard, Ann Andrews

Description: Panel Discussion on how we've created a medical office and workplace environment that is LGBTQIA+ inclusive through:- Employee training- Gender inclusive restrooms- Tech support (e.g., pronouns in medical records)- Education on an inclusive language guide- Recruitment/retention efforts

Advancing Health Equity Strategies and Implementation in the 2SLGBTQIA+ Space

Room: 2

Presenter(s): Jessie Barbosa, Ben Mesnik with Arizona Department of Health Services Office of HealthEquity

Description: 2SLGBTQIA+ health is an essential component of any public health equity effort. On the one hand, notable progress has been made following the HIV pandemic and the subsequent activism of community members. Most recently, the rapid response and mobilization in addressing the Mpox outbreak and the widespread focus on the behavioral health concerns of 2SLGBTQIA+ students demonstrate vast improvement in public health response, and the work of health equity offices nationwide. Public health response and preparedness efforts of today will very likely have long-term implications for the health of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. For those in public health practice and those concerned with equity, this is a crucial moment when attention and action are needed. The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) Office of Health Equity (OHE) is charged with supporting health equity efforts within our agency and across the state. Our team works to reduce health disparities through the establishment of meaningful two-way partnerships and relationships with tribes, local health departments, and community-based partners. Public health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic have had a historically disproportionate impact on traditionally



marginalized and underserved communities. The more recent outbreak of Mpox has continued to highlight the disparities that these communities face in accessing public health resources including vaccines, testing, and treatment, particularly LGBTQIA+ communities of color. Our office has responded to feedback and concerns from leaders, community members, and stakeholders within affected communities who identified that their diverse needs were left out of the statewide pandemic and outbreak response. Our office responded by shifting both our emergency response, and continued recovery, resilience, and maintenance plans to elevate community needs and voices. At the conclusion of this interactive conversation with our Workforce Development Manager, and our Vaccine Equity Manager, we hope participants will walk away with the skills and knowledge to effectively define health equity, and apply health equity best practices within the Arizona public health infrastructure. Participants will also walk away with a number of public health emergency response and preparedness strategies that center around equity, inclusion, and the elevation of community voices, particularly members, leaders, and stakeholders within the 2SLGBTQIA+ in Arizona.

Two Spirit Transgender Elder

Room: 3

Presenter(s): Trudie Jackson with Walking In Two Worlds As A Two Spirit Transgender Elder

Description: Embarking on the role of a Two Spirit elder, I am sought out to offer Land Acknowledgement, Opening Blessing, and sharing of personal lived experiences. The teachings shared with me by Two Spirit Elders has helped me to carry on the teachings handed down to the next generation. Some areas that I will highlight include the following: Montana Two Spirit Society, East Coast Two Spirit Society, Bay Area American Indian Two Spirit Society, and the Southwest Two Spirit Society. The significant meaning of prayer, smudging, and embracing identity as a Two Spirit person are often shared. Discussing the impact of settler colonialism, Christianity, and heteropatriarchy within Sovereign Nations from lived experiences will be shared including from an urban Two Spirit Elder perspective.

Working to Create Safe and Inclusive Schools and How You Can Too

Room: Main

Presenter(s): Andi Young with GLSEN

Description: Learn more about how GLSEN Arizona goes about empowering our community members to rise up for LGBTQ+ K-12 students, and how you can get involved in this important work. Whether it's through building crucial leadership skills in young people, actively dismantling adultism, sharing testimony at a legislative committee hearing, or showing up at a school board meeting, anyone can contribute. Our research shows that when LGBTQ+ students feel safer in schools, all students feel safer in schools; when the most marginalized are supported, we are all supported.

SESSION 2 OPTIONS 1PM - 2:30PM

Beyond Demographics: GSRM Population Geography and Collaborative Solutions

Room: 4

Presenter(s): William Marsh, MA, PsyD, Chelsea Grieve, M.A., Oralia Gutierrez, LCSW, Kasey Mattson with Southwest Behavioral & Health Services

Description: Arizona is a unique state with unique people and needs. This panel will explore the uniqueness of Arizona by conceptualizing its geographies as it pertains to the health and wellness of those who are within the Gender, Sexual, and Romantic relationship Minority (GSRM) population. Examining the social determinants of health (SDOH) across the state and U.S. will provide context for a rich discussion related to the history and experiences of GSRM people. Poverty will be uniquely defined and incorporated into the framework of addressing Arizona's needs as approximately 12.8% of Arizona lives in economic poverty. Utilizing the intersectionality of poverty and the undeniable resiliency among GSRM people, focus will be placed on identifying and understanding the successes and challenges to the health and wellness of GSRM people. Panelists will challenge conventional biopsychosocial constructs through systems theories, psycholinguistic properties, and fundamental human behavior. Experiential activities will be incorporated into the discussion to further evidence the purpose of this presentation, and to move toward a collaborative, solution-focused process.

Strengthening LGBTQ+ Health Equity using a National Online Survey

Room: 1

Presenter(s): Tari Hanneman with Human Rights Campaign and Manuel Soto-Griego, RHIA with Valleywise Health

Description: The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has increased awareness of the existing disparities for minority and underserved populations in our communities. The increased visibility of the LGBTQ+ population has led to a growing awareness of the healthcare disparities faced by this population and the need to include the LGBTQ+ population in diversity, inclusion and health equity efforts. Yet, how are healthcare facilities to know what policies and best practices are needed to provide LGBTQ+ patient-centered care in order to improve LGBTQ+ health equity? For the past fifteen years, the national Healthcare Equality Index (HEI), has been promoting the adoption of LGBTQ-inclusive policies and practices, helping hospitals and other healthcare



facilities to adopt these policies and practices using a national online survey to benchmark progress. The HEI can be used by hospitals and healthcare facilities as a roadmap to LGBTQ+ health equity, allowing them to determine what policies and practices are needed and will work best in their community and healthcare settings. The workshop presenters will provide an overview of the HEI, including insight from the HEI 2022 report, what healthcare facilities are doing in the LGBTQ realm, and what gaps still exist. What policies and practices affecting LGBTQ+ patients and employees have healthcare facilities been swiftest to implement? Which do they find more challenging? What strategies and resources have proved most effective in encouraging facilities to provide competent care? Presenters will also provide a case study of how Valleywise Health has used the HEI as a tool to increase the adoption of LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and practices and will facilitate group discussions about you can increase LGBTQ+ equity and inclusion at your healthcare facility.

Adventures in Academic Detailing: Utilizing Status Neutral and Pleasure Based Approaches for Improved Sexual Health Equity.

Room: 2

Presenter(s): Rocko Cook, Dave Watt, Dr. Maria Auguilar-Amaya, DM, MAOM, Anaid Gonzalves, MSW
with ASU SIRC Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center

Description: The presenters are staff from DISH-AZ (Detailing for Improved Sexual Health in Arizona), a program of Arizona State University's Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center in partnership with Arizona Department of Health Services. With our skills and resources as Academic Detailers, we focus on individualized and ongoing educational outreach and relationship-building with Arizona providers and healthcare workers on subjects that impact S2LGBTQIA+ patients and clients. We offer small session workshops and one-on-one connection, education, and support to improve equity and healthcare for people of any HIV status or sexual identity, regardless of how an agency is funded. One strategy for improvement involves program development and education with a status-neutral and pleasure-based biomedical approach toward outreach methods, protocols, and clinical practices that can be adopted throughout an entire organization, which we refer to as Whole Clinic Care.

Many Arizona providers have confirmed that fear-based and risk-assessing approaches are not leading to equitable S2LGBTQIA+ patient and client care. We provide connection, education and support to increase the quality of healthcare that is being provided. Similarly, we create educational materials and methods based on community needs and at the request of HIV healthcare providers. By utilizing status-neutral and pleasure-based approaches with all patient or client interactions, organizations can increase accessibility and acceptability of their services to the S2LGBTQIA+ community while also addressing stigma and fear-based trauma. A status-neutral and pleasure-based approach from outreach staff to providers unifies the messaging and methods to create a welcoming and inclusive patient/client-centered environment which can lead to improved equity and sexual health for all.

Avoiding Mental Health Pitfalls with Transgender and Nonbinary clients: For Professionals

Room: 3

Presenter(s): Avilio A. Vieira, Psy.D with Breakwater Psychological Services and Dalena Watson LPC, FAMI, MT-BC
with Dalena Watson Counseling

Description: Are you a mental health professional working with trans and nonbinary clients? There are numerous obstacles, changing standards, and unique factors in helping our clients. This intermediate level presentation focuses on common clinical pitfalls encountered by mental health professionals and how to best avoid common pitfalls in order to provide competent and ethical care for trans and nonbinary clients.

SESSION 3 OPTIONS 2:45PM - 4:15PM

Social Determinants of Health and LGBTQ Identities

Room: 2

Presenter(s): DeAnn Wegwert with Northern Arizona Healthcare

Description: Social determinants of health are the nonmedical factors that impact health. In the Department of Health and Human Services/Healthy People 2030 initiative, the social determinants are addressed in 5 categories: education access and quality, health care and quality, neighborhood and environment, social and community context, and economic stability. While these social determinants affect everyone, this presentation will examine these categories through the lens of LGBTQ identity. Issues such as unemployment/underemployment, lack of health insurance, homelessness, substance use, inability to find competent caregivers, and the all-too-often unwelcoming manner of healthcare spaces are examples of social determinants that challenge LGBTQ people and deserve closer examination. This presentation will unpack these various factors and their intersectionalities. The social, cultural, legal, and economic vulnerabilities of the LGBTQ population complicate and further marginalize this population. Even a cursory glance at the current cultural and political moment illustrates this marginalization: the recent legislative attack on trans*



healthcare, the Supreme Court's "permission giving" to those who would openly discriminate under cover of religious beliefs, and the culture war assault on the self-expression of Drag Shows all bring into focus the precarity of LGBTQ identities. These vulnerabilities clash head on with healthcare systems woefully unprepared to support LGBTQ individuals.

Working with 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth and Their Families

Room: 3

Presenter(s): Lily Hanscom with JFCS of Southern Arizona

Description: Working with 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth and Their Families" is a Power Point Presentation focusing on basics of working with the 2SLGBTQIA+ population. This presentation is specifically designed for clinicians, behavioral health professionals, and direct support staff. This presentation starts with what 2SLGBTQIA stands for as an acronym, focusing on the idea of an "umbrella term." After that quick overview, the presentation calls for audience participation by posing questions about first impressions – such as where and when people were first exposed to the 2SLGBTQIA+ population. We will discuss the Genderbread person, identifying the differences among gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and sexual orientation. From there, the presentation has a True or False quiz (on screen – nobody is mandated to participate/answer), identifying further misconceptions about mental health as it relates to the LGBTQ+ community. Next, the presentation offers basic 2SLGBTQIA+ identifications and terms to help audience members understand basic language as it refers to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. This discussion of language leads into a "Do and Don't" and "Say This Not That" portion of the presentation, focused on what to say and what not to say, identifying derogatory terms while offering more helpful and inclusive words and language. Finally, the presentation delves into how to support parents, foster parents, and caregivers of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth.

Equine and Animal-Assisted Therapy: Bridging Healthcare Access and Racial Justice in the 2SLGBTQIA+ Community

Room: 1

Presenter(s): Ayla Perez, Andy Riffle with Rancho Del Pacifico

Description: Our workshop discusses the therapeutic benefits of equine and animal-assisted therapy, highlighting its effectiveness in supporting mental health and overall well-being. The approach acknowledges the intersectionality of challenges experienced by the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, emphasizing the importance of inclusive and anti-racist healthcare practices. Through case studies and real-world examples, the proposal illustrates successful integration of equine and animal-assisted therapy in healthcare settings, particularly in supporting marginalized communities. These therapies offer a unique approach to mental health support, promoting empathy, connection, and resilience. As such, they hold potential in mitigating the effects of racial trauma and addressing the healthcare disparities faced by individuals in poverty within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. The proposal concludes with recommendations for future research and implementation of equine and animal-assisted therapy in healthcare settings. By acknowledging the role of these therapies in promoting racial justice work, healthcare providers can work towards more equitable and accessible healthcare practices for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, ultimately fostering improved well-being and social support networks.

The Disproportionate Impact of HIV within Transgender Communities

Room: 4

Presenter(s): Heather A. Smith, LMSW with Gilead Sciences, Inc.

Description: This breakout session will provide an overview of the disproportionate HIV burden among transgender persons, particularly among transgender women.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand what it means to be transgender and how key transgender-related concepts and terms are defined.
- Review and define key terms related to HIV care and prevention
- Acknowledge the prevalence of HIV among transgender people and the implications, including discrimination, stigma, and mistreatment.
- Identify tools, resources, and approaches to increase awareness of HIV among transgender people at risk for or living with HIV
- Recognize key challenges transgender persons face to engage in HIV care and practical ways to help overcome these barriers.



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SPEAKERS

**Conference Emcee: Shawnté Rothschild (she/her)**

Shawnté Rothschild (she/her) is an Arizona based passionate advocate for social justice and equality and believes that everyone deserves access to healthcare that is respectful, affirming, and culturally competent.

With a background in healthcare and public health, Shawnté has dedicated her career to reducing health disparities and addressing the unique healthcare needs of marginalized communities particularly the LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC communities. She is a strong believer in the power of community-based organizations and grassroots movements to effect positive change. She recently founded The Rainbow Connection, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and improving the health and well-being of the LGBTQIA+ community. She currently serves as a National Co-Chair for CVS Health's Colleague Resource group. In her free time, Shawnté enjoys traveling, reading, and spending time with her family and friends.

**Lizette Trujillo, she/her/ella**

Lizette Trujillo is a 1st generation Chicana/Tucson small business owner and community advocate for transgender youth and families. She spends much of her time volunteering for the Southern Arizona Gender Alliance, where she and her spouse facilitate a local support group for families of transgender, gender creative/non-conforming youth called Families Transformed. She also co-facilitated a support group for Latinx/Spanish speaking families for the national organization TransFamilies.org, which is part of Gender Diversity. Her local efforts have brought her national attention and she has served as a member of the Human Rights Campaign Parents for Transgender Equality National Council for the last four years. When she is not helping families, she is providing school trainings or at conferences to help bring awareness around the transgender youth and family experience. She helped create a website landing page of resources for families for the Society of Research on Adolescence, as well as a parent's guide on how to Socially Transition for the Human Rights Campaign. Lizette has also been a constant voice at the Arizona State Capital advocating for transgender youth and their families. Lizette is a proud mother to a 15-year-old transgender son, and enjoys being a mother above all else. You can hear about her experience, the experiences of others, and the importance of allyship on the podcast she co-hosted with Dr. Drew Cronyn called "I Stand by You with Lizette and Drew." She has also launched a new podcast "The Parent Advocate" that she co-hosts with Stephen Chukumbah. Lizette has learned so much through her child's experience, and is committed to continuing to bring awareness regarding the rights and intersectional needs of families of transgender youth locally and nationally.

Daniel Trujillo, He/him/el

Daniel Trujillo (he/him), is a 16 year old Tucson, Arizonan. He loves drawing, playing guitar, bass and drums, building LEGO, playing percussion and singing in my trans choir- THEM Youth Ensemble. He enjoys listening to all types of music but his favorites are jazz, classic rock and Radiohead. Daniel has been advocating for trans kids with his family since he was 9 and has become passionate about fighting for his community. Daniel feels it's important to communicate that trans kids are more than just a political debate- but rather whole human beings with families and communities that love and value them. Daniel recently helped plan a national action in Washington DC called TransProm where over 200 trans youth and families showed up in protest in front Congress.

"When my friend Libby and I had the idea for Trans Prom, we were so excited to create an environment where trans kids like ourselves are supported, loved and celebrated. I feel like it is critical to show our political leaders and nation that transgender youth deserve joy and that we are proud to live authentically and free." - Daniel



Onyekachi Ekeogu is a Program and Data Analyst for the Systems Change Initiative. Onyekachi works as a member of the YWCA Metro Phoenix team to promote racial equity and equality for all Arizonans. Onyekachi is proud to use their experience and insight on research, policy, and political strategy to advance cross-industry collaboration and transformation centering Communities of Color, LGBTQ+, and the many marginalized communities in Arizonans.



Jannah Scott is Director for Systems Change Initiatives with YWCA Metropolitan Phoenix. She has over three decades of experience in policy, program development and systems change. Prior to her work with YW, Jannah spent many years with various Arizona nonprofits. Jannah also has an illustrious government career, having spent 8 years with the Obama Administration, 5 years with the Napolitano Administration and several years in Arizona and California state government. She holds an MPH from UC Berkeley School of Public Health and an honorary doctorate from Rapha Deliverance University.



Heather Brown, She/Her

Heather Brown is a passionate advocate for inclusive marketing and a dedicated professional with two decades of experience empowering LGBTQ+ and nonprofit organizations. As the founder of Cultural Sponge, a unique marketing and design agency, Heather is committed to supporting organizations in their mission to create a positive impact in the world.

Heather holds a BFA in fine art and is an experienced trainer on topics such as inclusive marketing, digital publishing, WordPress, print design, and social media. Her dedication to nonprofit clients has earned her numerous accolades, including the Kiwanis' Service Above Self Award and the Spotlight On Local Heroes Award.

In addition to her professional achievements, Heather has been actively involved in public service, supporting organizations like HRC, Special Olympics, Shop with a Cop, and serving as a PTA President. She also has a background in education, having served as an Adjunct Faculty member at Grand Canyon University and Estrella Mountain Community College, where she taught courses in design, marketing, social media, and more.

In her free time, Heather enjoys spending quality time with her spouse, two children, and a delightful array of pets. Her dedication to creating positive change through inclusive marketing and her extensive contributions to the LGBTQIA+ community exemplify her commitment to building a better, more inclusive world.



Mande Bahadar, PhD, LPC

Mande Bahadar is a Licensed Professional Counselor in the State of Arizona. Mande received her Master's in Counseling at Arizona State University in May 2003 and her Doctorate in Human Services/ Counseling Studies in February 2010.

Dr. Bahadar has extensive experience in working clinically with individuals, couples, and groups regarding the therapeutic experience and emotional impact of living with chronic illness and other stigmatized identities. She values the connection between our bodies, our thoughts, and our emotions and strives to treat the whole person.

Dr. Bahadar has also worked as a counselor educator and clinical supervisor since 2012, assisting new counselors obtain the knowledge and skill to become effective helpers and find passion in the profession. She has also had various opportunities to present at local, state, and national seminars and conferences on LGBTQ health and cultural competency, clinical supervision of counselors, and self-care for those in the helping professions.



Tari Hanneman (she/her) is the Director of the Health and Aging Program at the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, where she oversees the annual LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Index, the Long-Term Care Equality Index, and other projects related to LGBTQ+ health and aging. Tari has over 25 years of experience in the nonprofit and philanthropic sector, primarily focused on the areas of health and women's issues. Prior to joining HRC, she served as the initial Director of The Women's Fund of Winston-Salem where she led all aspects of developing The Fund's programs and brand in the community. Prior to her move to North Carolina, she served in a number of roles at The California Endowment, one of the nation's largest health foundations. She has also worked for elected officials and non-profits focused on the environment, reproductive rights, and HIV. She has a Master's in Public Administration with an emphasis on Nonprofit Management from the University of Southern California.



Jennifer Flack, LCSW holds a Master of Social Work from the University of Denver. She is the co-founder and Clinical Director of Obsidian Health and Wellness, LLC of Phoenix, Arizona. She has more than 15 years of direct clinical practice as a behavioral health professional and has worked with diverse populations across the lifespan in various treatment settings. Since 2018, Jennifer has held the position of Secretary for the Social Work Academic Review Board through the Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners.

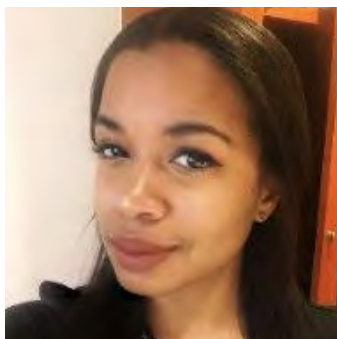
Jennifer became interested in the impact of menopause after her own experiences left her feeling frustrated and hopeless. The current lack of understanding and awareness by the medical community led Jennifer to begin educating others about the impact of sex hormone deficiencies in the mind and body as we age. Her work focuses on helping clients move beyond debilitating trauma responses, navigating the menopause transition, and understanding the impact of hormonal changes to mental health.



Natasha Bhuyan is a family physician and Vice President of In-Office Care at One Medical. In her role, she is responsible for driving clinical innovation at One Medical as well as growth, strategic partnerships, care model design, and quality primary care. She is also an assistant clinical professor at the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Phoenix.

Dr. Bhuyan has served in several national leadership positions, including as an adviser to Family Medicine for America's Health, as well as on the board of directors for Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors. She currently serves on the national board of directors for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Dr. Bhuyan was the chair of the Arizona Care Network's Medicare Shared Savings Program Board of Managers. She is on the editorial board for the Family Practice Management journal.

With a background as a medical unit writer for ABC News and as a contributing writer for the American Academy of Family Physicians, Dr. Bhuyan works to empower people to take the reins of their own health through educational guidance. She is dedicated to staying active in the community and volunteers her time with numerous organizations and local events, advocating for education in marginalized communities and providing access to health care for people who are unhoused. Natasha's areas of interest include preventative care, LGBTQ+ care, gender-affirming hormone therapy, cardiometabolic care, and public health. Her health and wellness commentary has appeared in outlets such as The Wall Street Journal, HuffPost, ABC News, Prevention, Well+Good, NBC News, and Insider.

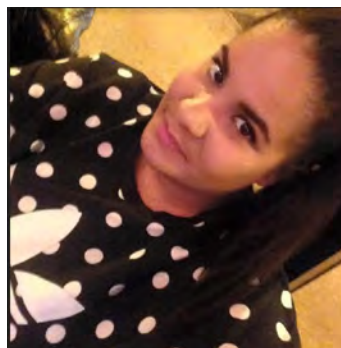


Alex Leonard is the Office Manager of the One Medical Biltmore office. In her role, she support the day to day operations of the office, including access, patient experience, inventory management, development of her team, and more. Previously, Alex served as a Member Support Specialist. Alex lived in South Korea for 9 years.



Ann Andrew's mission is to promote a healthy balance of physical, mental, and spiritual wellness. She believes in educating patients to make the best decisions for themselves and supporting them wherever they are in that process. She's especially interested in LGBTQ health, HIV management and prevention through PrEP and PEP, STD/STI screening and treatment, and transgender health, including hormone therapy and maintenance for adults.

To stay healthy, Ann does yoga and meditates. In her free time, she enjoys reading, traveling, and spending time with family. She also volunteers with Peaceworks Medical, a nonprofit, free clinic for uninsured, Spanish speaking transgender people as well as RipplePhx, a nonprofit for HIV awareness and prevention. Ann earned her family nurse practitioner degree from the University of Phoenix School of Nursing. She's board-certified by the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, and an active member of the American Academy of HIV Medicine and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health.



Jessie Barbosa, Vaccine Equity Manager (she/her)

Jessie Barbosa leads the Vaccine Equity initiative for ADHS. She is tasked with bridging healthcare, social equity, and community partners to address health disparities, community needs and social determinants of health. She currently manages the statewide COVID-19 and Mpox mobile vaccination programs, and oversees the COVID-19 Testing Program. She works closely with ADHS' Bureau of Immunization Services (BIZS) as well as statewide immunization partners. Jessie has worked extensively in the fields of youth services/positive youth development, HIV and STI's and behavioral health. She earned her Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology from Grand Canyon University. In her spare time Jessie serves in several local leadership and volunteer capacities within her community.



Benjamin Mesnik, Workforce Development Program Manager (he/him)

Benjamin Mesnik is the Workforce Development Program Manager in the Office of Health Equity (OHE) at the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS). In his role, he oversees the implementation of the Public Health Infrastructure and Workforce Development Grant, managing partnerships, activities, and budgeting with 13 counties. He partners with leadership to develop and drive key equity strategies and tools to eliminate health inequities and promote inclusion. Ben also represents ADHS & OHE on the 2023 Arizona Rural Health Association Conference Planning Committee. Prior to joining ADHS, Ben was with the University Design Institute at Arizona State University, where his role focused on leadership development and global higher education initiatives and partnerships. Ben holds a Bachelors of Science in Science of Health Care Delivery, with certificates in Sales and Marketing Essentials, and Cross-Sector Leadership from Arizona State University.



Trudie Jackson (she/her/hers) is an enrolled member of a federally recognized tribe of the Navajo Nation. Her Clans are born of the Bitterwater People and born for of the Folded Arms People. Her maternal grandfather is of the Mexican People and paternal grandfather is of the Yucca-Strung-Out-In-A-Line People. She is a product of the Indian Boarding School which lead Her to attend the Phoenix Indian School then has remained in Phoenix for 40 years as an urban Dine'. Trudie has been an active member within the urban American Indian community advocating for inclusion of Two Spirit Transgender Relatives by breaking down the gender binary of social construct. Prior to colonization, American Indians did not "labeled individuals," but were acknowledged for their contributions as a whole to the communities. Two Spirit Relatives were once revered and honored but assimilation/acculturation tactics by the US Government forced colonial beliefs and Christianity that being Two Spirit was frowned upon. Trudie's list of accomplishments include running as a Presidential candidate for the highest office of the Navajo Nation as the first openly Two Spirit Transgender Relative in 2018. She will be sharing a chapter "Two Spirit Health In North America" that she wrote with the attendees on Transgender Health from a Two Spirit Transgender Relative perspective by decolonizing the narrative.

>> Disclaimer: No Recording or Photography During Trudie Jackson's Presentation

We kindly request that you refrain from recording, taking photographs, or any form of audio or visual documentation during Trudie Jackson's presentation. This policy is in place to respect the privacy and intellectual property of the speaker, as well as to create an environment where everyone can fully engage with the content without distractions. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. Thank you.



Andi Young, LMSW, Board Co-Chair of GLSEN Arizona

Andi Young is the co-chair of the GLSEN Arizona Board of Directors, a licensed therapist with LGBTQ+ adolescent and adults, and a parent of a transgender adolescent. In her role at GLSEN Arizona, Andi works to ensure every student has access to a safe, supportive, and LGBTQ-inclusive K-12 education. As a therapist, Andi understands how not being affirmed, accepted, and supported for who you can have detrimental effects on mental health. Finally, as a mom, Andi is passionate about teaching other families how to create supportive environments that allow their gender diverse children to thrive.



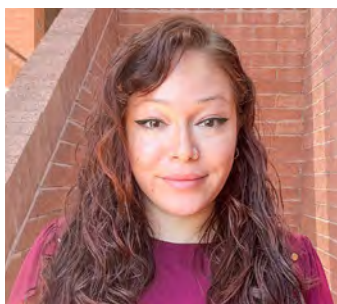
Dr. William Marsh (he/him) is a licensed Clinical Psychologist and Clinical Director with Quality Management, overseeing Specialized Training and Population Health Management at Southwest Behavioral & Health Services (SB&H). He is a founding member of SB&H's GSRM Workgroup that has paved the way for greater access to gender affirming services and LGBTQIA+ programming. He also serves as a clinical trainer and supervisor for SB&H's APA-accredited doctoral internship training program and an adjunct professor at Midwestern University and Northern Arizona University.

In his work, Dr. Marsh engages others in dynamic and interactive ways using experiential approaches to therapy and training. He applies knowledge and skills from evidence-based theories and practices to foster learning, growth, and lasting meaningful change. Taking an integrative and affirmative approach to all of his work, he focuses on quality services that are culturally-responsive and trauma-informed.

Dr. Marsh has diverse clinical experiences and training that ranges from inpatient psychiatric and medical hospital care to school-based and outpatient programming. He has specializations in Ericksonian hypnotherapy and experiential psychotherapies, treating ADHD and behavioral concerns, ASD, mood disorders, and chronic medical conditions. Dr. Marsh actively works with the LGBTQIA+ community through clinical care, training, and advocacy. In addition to his clinical experiences and practices, he has been invited as a speaker to multiple agencies, conferences, podcasts, and a guest-author for a local LGBTQ+ magazine.



Chelsea Grieve (she/her) received a M.A. in Communication with a Specialization in Women's Studies from the University of Maine. She utilizes her prowess in communication as a Learning and Development Specialist at Southwest Behavioral & Health Services (SB&H) and volunteers in her community to raise awareness on domestic and sexual violence. She believes the power of storytelling and performance have the ability to bring people together and offer healing spaces for ongoing growth and conversation. As a change-maker, Chelsea is a founding member of SB&H's GSRM Workgroup that works to promote best practices in service delivery and an inclusive, affirmative culture. She has a natural gift for empathic connections and social networking that amplifies her passions and capacity to bring awareness and change to crucial areas of need.



Oralia Gutierrez (she/her) is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), Program Director at Southwest Behavioral & Health Services (SB&H), and a founding member of SB&H's GSRM Workgroup. As an Arizona native and first-generation bilingual Mexican-American, she sought to give back to her community by earning her M.S.W. from ASU. Oralia utilized her education, passion, and dedication to serve and support marginalized and underserved populations across the state and beyond. She played a fundamental role in advocating for, and providing, gender affirming services within her local communities, and is an undeniable asset to the LGBTQIA+ and ethnic minority communities through promoting inclusive, safe spaces wherever she goes. She has presented at the Let's Get Better Together conference in the past and is actively involved in advocating for change that will support and affirm GSRM at an agency and systematic level.



Meet **Kasey Mattson (she/her)**, a remarkable transgender woman who is making a significant impact as an LGBTQ DV (domestic violence) advocate and Care Coordinator at Southwest Behavioral & Health Services (SB&H). With her unwavering determination and compassionate nature, Kasey has become a beacon of hope for individuals facing the challenges of domestic violence within the LGBTQ+ community.

Born with an unyielding spirit, Kasey embarked on her journey of self-discovery and embraced her true identity as a transgender woman. This personal experience has not only given her a unique perspective but has fueled her passion to create a safe and inclusive environment for all survivors of domestic violence. She thinks outside of the box and employs creative approaches to advocacy, finding innovative solutions to the complex issues faced by LGBTQ+ survivors. She serves her community by collaborating with various organizations, helping to bridge the gap between the LGBTQ+ community and support services. With her sharp intellect and extensive knowledge of LGBTQ+ rights, Kasey has become a trusted resource within the wider community. She actively educates others on the specific challenges faced by transgender individuals and advocates for policies that protect and empower survivors.



Manny Soto-Griego, RHIA – is a health information management (HIM) professional with over 37 years of healthcare experience in healthcare consulting, revenue cycle operations, electronic health record (EHR) applications, document management, and project management. Manny has served in administrative, interim management, and consulting capacities within large academic and urban hospitals. His experience in the healthcare industry has focused on improving operational and financial performance in a variety of healthcare settings. Manny is the HIM Director for Valleywise Health. Manny also served on the Board of the Arizona Health Information Management Association (AzHIMA) with over 1,000 members, as President, Past President, and Advocacy Director. AzHIMA a component state association of the American Health Information Management Association with over 103,000 members. Manny continues to volunteer for AzHIMA as the Membership Committee Chair. Manny is also on the Board of Directors for One n Ten, which focuses on serving the LGBTQ youth and young adults 11 – 24. One n Ten provides supportive programs and services that promote self-expression, self-acceptance, leadership development and healthy life choices. Manny also leads a small team for Valleywise Health's Healthcare Equality Index Certification efforts. Valleywise Health has been certified by the Human Rights Campaign as a Leader in Healthcare Equality since 2019. Most recently, Valleywise Hospital and Valleywise Maryvale Behavioral Health have just completed their recertification process for 2024.



Rocko Cook serves as the Program Manager for DISH-AZ (Detailing for Improved Sexual Health in Arizona), a program of the Office of Evaluation and Partner Contracts for the Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center (SIRC) at Arizona State University in partnership with Arizona Department of Health and Human Services. Rocko began working in the field of HIV in 1994 and is a community leader with over 15 years of experience implementing prevention and care programs in Arizona, Ohio, and Kentucky. In addition to his duties as a program manager, Rocko has served as a public speaker, presenter at local and national conferences, and as a consultant and leader for HIV community planning groups. Rocko has been living with HIV since 2002 and is passionate about improving sexual health for all communities.



David Watt serves as a Sr Academic Detailer at DISH-AZ (Detailing for Improved Sexual Health in Arizona), a program of the Office of Evaluation and Partner Contracts for the Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center (SIRC) at Arizona State University in partnership with Arizona Department of Health and Human Services. His work focuses on educational outreach related to HIV and sexual health to healthcare workers statewide. As a former classroom teacher, he brings experience and a passion for education. Dave has been working in the field of HIV for over 18 years with a focus on community sexual health education and status-neutral messaging to alleviate stigma. He serves on the board of directors for the local Queer Center and on the national Ryan White Grantee 340B Patient Advisory Committee. As founder of the anti-stigma campaign Team Friendly, he has hosted hundreds of HIV awareness events and presented on a national level on how to fight HIV stigma in Friendly ways.



Dr. María Aguilar-Amaya is Associate Director of the Office of Evaluation and Partner Contracts at the Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center at Arizona State University. She is a Faculty Associate in the School of Social Work. Her current research focuses on health disparities, substance use disorder, and opioid use disorder. She has extensive experience in conducting quantitative and qualitative research and survey development for the past 25 years and strong skills in all areas of program evaluation. Dr. Aguilar-Amaya served nearly 25 years working in the Arizona Judiciary in various capacities, having worked with juvenile and adult probationers as well as crime victims. She has conducted dozens of research studies and numerous ad hoc reports in the areas of population projections, cost savings analysis, reentry, recidivism, Drug Courts, substance abuse, evidence-based practices, and probation supervision. Dr. Aguilar-Amaya possesses the following certifications: Real Colors Facilitator by the National Curriculum & Training Institute, ACEs Trainer by the Arizona ACEs Consortium, CTC Facilitator by the UW, The Center for Communities that Care, Arizona Court Management Program and the Executive Court Management Program by the National Center for State Courts, Advanced Public Speaker by Achieve Global, and as a Motivational Interviewing Facilitator. Dr. Aguilar-Amaya possesses a Bachelor of Science in Administration of Justice with a minor in Communications, a Master of Arts in Organizational Management, and a Doctorate in Management and Organizational Leadership. She served as President for the Arizona Evaluation Network (AZENet), as a Director at Large for the Arizona Courts Association, and as a member of the Arizona Governor's Office Substance Abuse Epidemiology Work Group.



Anaid Gonzalez manages the research aspects of several projects at Arizona State University's Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center (SIRC) in the School of Social Work. She has been at SIRC since 2016, and has a background in prevention and working with Spanish-speaking populations in Arizona and Mexico. She received her bachelor's in psychology at Arizona State in 2005, and after working for several years in the logistics field, returned to ASU, where she completed her master's of social work in 2016.

Breakwater Psychological Services



Dr. Avi Vieira is a nonbinary individual of Latino heritage from Santa Fe, New Mexico, and a Post-Doctoral Resident currently running the Gender and Sexuality Services Program at Breakwater Psychological Services in Mesa, Arizona. Avi earned their Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from the Arizona School of Professional Psychology at Argosy University. They are an early career member of WPATH, the American Psychological Association's Society of Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity, and the Arizona Psychological Association. Their professional interests focus on clinical care of and advocacy for the LGBTQ+ community. During their clinical internship at the University of Colorado - Boulder, Avi helped to create an interdisciplinary treatment team for transgender concerns, consisting of licensed psychologists, medical providers, and psychiatric providers; as well as setting treatment guidelines and standards for clinicians and trainees working with Trans and Nonbinary clientele. Avi regularly provides trainings and consultations for mental health professionals in the Southwest on best practices in working with Transgender and Nonbinary individuals, and ethical practice in working with Gender and Sexual minorities. Avi has also worked with numerous LGBTQ community organizations in the southwest including oneten, CampOUTdoors, TransSpectrum, GLSEN, PFLAG, and many more.



Dalena Watson, LPC, FAMI, MT-BC has a bachelor's degree in Music Therapy from ASU and a master's degree in Counseling from Prescott College. She is a Fellow of the Association for Music and Imagery and trained in the trauma processing techniques of EMDR and Flash. She has worked in adult mental health at the Arizona State Hospital, Arizona Community Protection and Treatment Center, Mountain Valley Counseling, and has been in private practice with adult mental health for over 20 years. Dalena has taught classes at Arizona State University, Southwest College of Healing Arts, Argosy University and designed and taught a variety of continuing education classes/workshops. Dalena specializes in treating trauma and has been actively assisting people in their gender transitions for 23 years.



DeAnn ("Dee") Wegwert is a registered nurse and works at Northern Arizona Healthcare in the Quality Department. Dee has worked for many years as a Critical Care nurse, as a clinical educator, and as a unit manager. She holds a B.S. in Nursing from the University of Iowa and a M.S. in Nursing from Northern Illinois University. Dee conducted a study examining the healthcare experiences of LGBTQ-identified patients at Flagstaff Medical Center. She has presented on issues of gender and sexuality at several national conferences.



Lily Hanscom is a Clinical Supervisor at JFCS of Southern Arizona in Tucson, Arizona. Lily grew up in Chicago and attended Ripon College in Ripon, WI where she was the president of “The Network,” the campus’ Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA). There, Lily received a grant from the school and led a group of students in an unprecedented trip to Washington D.C. to fight for equal marriage rights for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Lily earned her Master’s Degree in Clinical and Counseling Psychology from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, where she was awarded both the “Geared Up for Service Award,” a volunteer service award from the school, and the “President’s Volunteer Service Award,” an award from former President Barack Obama, for her volunteer work in a juvenile detention center. Lily began her clinical work with incarcerated individuals in two detention centers and in a police department, finding her passion for working with clients who have experienced significant trauma. In an effort to reach people before incarceration, Lily began working with foster-care involved youth and families, both as a therapist as well as a trainer, helping foster parents learn the tools and skills necessary to support youth in care. In 2019, Lily became a Certified Clinical Trauma Professional. Since moving to Tucson in 2022, Lily has been a Clinical Supervisor with JFCS of Southern Arizona, continuing to support youth, families, and clinicians.



Ayla Perez

Ayla is a licensed Master of Social Work and has a second master’s degree in Women and Gender studies. She is certified in compassionate bereavement care, registered trauma-informed yoga, and prenatal yoga instructor. She is EMDR trained and is also a TRE (trauma, tension, and stress relief) provider. Ayla specializes in grief, trauma, mindfulness, gender-based violence/abuse, culture, and religion. Ayla has worked in the substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence/abuse, and refugee resettlement field providing services for families and individuals. Ayla enjoys being outdoors with her family and traveling. She also volunteers her time teaching yoga in recovery centers and shelters.



Andy Riffle

Andy is a Behavioral Health Technician and Equine Specialist at Rancho Del Pacifico. As a BHT Andy has been Serving as a mentor to Children, Teens, and Adults. Andy has experience working with individuals and horses to create healthy bonds, communication, connection, and confidence to help individuals to meet their goals. Andy is known for being compassionate, empathetic, and intuitive to provide care.

Andy has a gift to be able to communicate with all animals through his love and passion for them. Since he was a young boy he has always wanted to help and be around animals. Andy enjoys spending time with his horse, dog, and bunny, and volunteering at a local animal rescue.



Heather A. Smith, LMSW, She/Her

Heather has been a consistent advocate and ally who has passionately supported equal civil rights, gender equality, LGBTQ+ causes, and other social justice movements. Heather has been a leader in HIV, PrEP, HCV, and STI reduction having worked in numerous social services functions including case management, counseling, practice administration, as well as program management. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Biology with a minor in Criminal Justice from Columbus State University and a Master’s degree in Social Work from Florida State University. Additionally, she is a licensed social worker (LMSW). Heather currently works as a Community Liaison for Gilead Sciences but has also held roles at CAN Community Health, Iowa Department of Public Health, The Project of Primary Health Care in Iowa and in partnership with the Florida Department of Health, Big Bend Cares and the Kearney Center all focused-on HIV, PrEP, STI, testing and social services for the HIV and HCV communities. Additionally, Heather has vast experience in leading program development, mobile unit fleet procedures, operations implementation, and protocol optimization around HIV/STI prevention that influenced statewide key care continuum programs including TeleTesting, TelePrEP and Tele-HIV rapid start. Heather currently resides in Chandler, AZ with her trusted companion and senior dog Molly.

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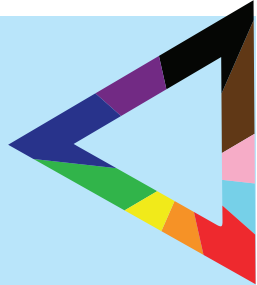
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AWARDS



CHAMPION FOR CHANGE AWARD

Michelle Blau

Michelle Blau began her career in the social-service industry over 20 years ago. Having started her work in direct service positions and with a variety of communities and individuals experiencing: Severe Mental Illness, Intellectual Developmental Disabilities, Substance Use, Homelessness, and HIV/AIDS, Michelle has honed her skill set to be diverse and notable. With a bachelor's degree in communications/public relations, a master's degree in general psychology, and a certification as a Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner, Michelle's academic accomplishments aid in the development and continuation of her career aspirations.

In 2015, Michelle was selected to assist in launching a new (at that time) housing intervention program: Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). As the Program Director of PSH services, Michelle's focus was on providing voluntary and flexible services to individuals experiencing homelessness, in hopes of assisting them with maintaining their decent, safe, and affordable community-based housing. In 2019-2021, Michelle was employed with the City of Phoenix as the Homeless Solutions Program Director. Here, she cultivated her inherent leadership/management abilities and successfully implemented fundamental and procedural transformations within the Human Services Department including the creation and implementation of the City of Phoenix Homeless Strategies Plan. Presently, Michelle is the Director of Shelters for Housing and Community Integration at Community Bridges, Inc. focused on ensuring that homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring. Overseeing state-wide shelters, Michelle works to ensure that service delivery is evidence-based and operates within the fidelity of housing first principles.

Michelle is a fierce advocate for social justice and LGBTQ+ rights. In partnership with her academic and career-based expertise, her passion for equity and inclusion leads her to public speaking engagements, presenting and training on topics such as: Coming Out & Mental Health Recovery, How to Be an Affirming Practitioner, Trauma Informed Principles, Person-Centered Language, Health Inequities within the LGBTQ+ Community, and so forth. Michelle has held many leadership positions within various PRIDE Committees for multiple agencies including Vice President of the City of Phoenix chapter. It is Michelle's personal mission is to not only encourage healthcare professionals and direct social service practitioners to become educated about affirming practices but also to advocate within her own community as well. Michelle teaches an LGBTQ+ identity acceptance and celebration youth-group at her Synagogue and has assisted in organizing many PRIDE events for her congregation members- most notably an open conversation style Q & A panel, allowing for educational opportunities and parent support networking. Michelle seeks to Be The Change in all things and in all ways.



AWARDS

UP-AND-COMING LEADER AWARD

Dillon Mathew-Gilmore

Dillon is a passionate change-maker and community advocate from Pāhoa, Hawai'i, currently working as a case manager for the Gender Affirming Program at Southwest Center. Dillon is pursuing

their master's degree in social work, with a certificate in non-profit management, at Virginia Commonwealth University and will graduate in December. Working under the Gender Affirming Program for the past two years, Dillon has specialized in working with the transgender community, assisting clients in navigating their medical, social, and legal transition goals such as gender affirming surgeries and legal name changes. Dillon has also assisted in creating and implementing different programs and developing resources for the transgender community, including a housing program with Arizona Housing Incorporated, a name change fund with AZ Typo, and a general resource guide for the LGBTQ+ community. Dillon is passionate about noticing where there are gaps in community needs and finding creative, collaborative solutions to solve them. In their personal life, Dillon is a dancer and drag king, and enjoys spending time with their family working on projects at home, playing pickleball, or traveling.

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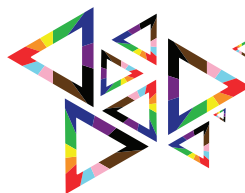
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THANK *you*

On behalf of the Queer Resource Collective, it is our honor to thank the Let's Get Better Together Planning Committee. As always, without these dedicated volunteers, this event could not happen. If you see them, please thank Amy Meyertholen, Donna McHenry, Holly Figueroa, Sam Castro, Amy D'Arpino, Nichol Porter, Dillon Mathew-Gilmore, Lydia Kennedy, Mande Bahadar, Jason Vail Cruz, Teresa Peña, Trey Jenkins, and Jeanette Mallory.

THANK YOU to our sponsors – you make it all possible! We appreciate your support!

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THANK YOU to all our attendees! We are so glad you joined us today and we hope you had a great day full of diverse learning opportunities!

SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!

Sincerely,

Amy Meyertholen, Donna McHenry, Holly Figueroa, & Sam Castro

Conference Co-Chairs



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