

# **BLACK** #BLACKEXCELLENCE **MENTAL HEALTH** **CONFERENCE**



## THE BLACK MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

# 2026

RALEIGH MARRIOTT  
CRABTREE VALLEY  
4500 Marriott Dr,  
Raleigh, NC 27612

CONTACT  
[www.thebmhconference.com](http://www.thebmhconference.com)  
[thebmhmovement@gmail.com](mailto:thebmhmovement@gmail.com)

# THE BLACK MENTAL HEALTH MOVEMENT

PAGE 01



The BMH Movement is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to fostering a community where Black individuals feel empowered, supported, and understood in their mental health journeys. Through advocacy, education, and culturally responsive resources, we strive to dismantle stigma, promote healing, and create equitable access to mental health services.

## THE CULTURE

Together, we are committed to nurturing resilience, celebrating Black joy, and building a future where mental wellness is a fundamental right for all.

## THE MISSION

The purpose of the Movement is to promote mental health awareness, advocacy, and access to culturally responsive mental health services within the Black community.

## THE GOALS

The Movement seeks to address systemic barriers to culturally responsive mental health care, reduce stigma, and empower individuals to prioritize their mental wellbeing.

# WHAT TO ANTICIPATE AT THE BMH CONFERENCE

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The BMH Conference was designed to EMPOWER, REPRESENT and INFORM Black mental health professionals across all disciplines. Social workers, behavioral health specialists, counselors, psychologist, managed care workers, life coaches, school counselors, marriage and family practitioners, community health workers and anyone who has an investment in the mental health of Black consumers are welcomed to attend.

Interactive workshops, panels and keynote addresses will be offered throughout the event. Each will feature skills, techniques, frameworks and lived experiences that support the work we do. Mental health professionals will gain up to 7 CEU's as well as opportunities to network with other professionals who share their mission to offer culturally responsive practices.

*The BMH Conference is not only an educational space, it's a relational space. Its a space where we can embrace our culture, dismantle stigma, learn new skills...and feel safe and loved while doing it.*

**-Dr. Lashaunda J. Lucas**  
CEO, The Black Mental Health Movement





## Conference Itinerary

### FRIDAY, FEB 13TH

- 9AM-9:30AM: WELCOME
- 9:30AM-10AM: OPENING SPEAKER
- 10AM-11AM: PANEL (COLLECTIVISM)
- 11:15AM-12:15PM: SESSION 1
- 12:30PM-1:30PM: SESSION 2
- 1:30PM-3PM: LUNCH & PANEL (SUPER POWERS)
- 3:15PM-4:15PM: BMH CONVERSATIONS
- 4:15PM: VENDOR SHOWCASE
- 7PM-10PM: NETWORKING EVENT

### SATURDAY, FEB 14TH

- 9AM-9:30AM: WELCOME
- 9:30AM-10:30AM: PANEL (MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH)
- 10:30AM-11:30AM: SESSION 1
- 11:45AM-12:45PM: SESSION 2
- 1PM-2:30PM: AWARDS LUNCHEON & KEYNOTE  
(MEAGAN GOOD MAJORS AND JONATHAN MAJORS)
- 2:30PM-3PM: CLOSING
- 3PM- VIP MEET & GREET

# SESSION SCHEDULE

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Friday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026

## SESSION 1: 11:15AM - 12:15PM

**Rachael E. DuBose, M.S.Ed., LPCC-S, CCTP**

### **Decolonizing Ethics: Reclaiming Cultural Wisdom in Clinical Work**

This presentation invites participants to critically examine how culture, power, and history shape the ethical foundations of the healing professions. By moving beyond Western-centric models, participants will explore culturally grounded frameworks that honor ancestral knowledge, community values, and lived experience. Through case-based learning and reflective dialogue, the session equips practitioners to navigate complex ethical dilemmas in diverse settings while centering justice, equity, and relational accountability. Attendees will strengthen their capacity for ethical reflexivity and cultivate practices that restore trust, dignity, and cultural wisdom in clinical care.

**Corinna Young, LCMHC**

### **The Future Is Black and Brilliant: Using AI to Create Resources Without Losing the Soul of Your Work**

AI is here to stay – but for many Black clinicians, educators, and creatives, the concern is: How do I embrace these tools without watering down my voice, my culture, or my story? This presentation bridges innovation with authenticity. We'll explore how AI can be a powerful assistant for Black mental health professionals and creatives, helping streamline content creation, develop culturally relevant resources, and expand reach – all while staying rooted in our values and communities. Participants will learn how to use AI as a collaborator instead of a replacement, so that the brilliance, nuance, and soul of Black work is not only preserved but amplified.



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**BREAKOUT  
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# SESSION SCHEDULE

PAGE 04

## SESSION 1: CONT'D



**Dr. Quadric R. Witherspoon ED.D, M.Ed**

### **Are You Okay: Reclaiming Mental Health and Emotional Strength Among the Black Community**

Are You Okay: Reclaiming Mental Health and Emotional Strength Among the Black community is a powerful and necessary conversation centered on the intersection of social and emotional learning (SEL) and mental health within Black individuals. This session explores the cultural, societal, and systemic barriers that often prevent Black people from addressing their emotional needs and seeking mental health support. Through research-based insights, lived experiences, and practical strategies, participants will gain a deeper understanding of how to foster safe, affirming spaces that support the emotional well-being and resilience of the Black community.

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**Dr. Alexándrea Evans O'neal PsyD**

### **Black Adoptees: Claiming Power. Claiming Space**

The voices of Black adoptees, especially those raised in same-race families, are frequently omitted from adoption narratives. This session attempts to fill that void by weaving together personal reflection, lived experiences and research to confront the myth that racial matching solves the identity challenges most adoptees face. We examine what it means to be Black, adopted, and still unseen — in family systems, community spaces, and policy. This presentation is a call to reimagine belonging, visibility, and healing for Black adoptees whose stories have always existed but have rarely been featured.

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# SESSION SCHEDULE

## SESSION 2: 12:30PM - 1:30PM



**Dion Chavis , Founder of The Glad Dad LLC**

### **H.E.R.O. in Real Life: Mental Strength and Purposeful Leadership for Brothers Who Carry It All**

This world often tells Black men to stay strong, stay silent, and keep moving forward. We carry expectations, pressure, and pain without enough space to pause or reflect. H.E.R.O. in Real Life is a session created to change that. The workshop introduces the HERO Framework, built on four pillars: Honor the Journey, Evolve, Respond With Intention, and Offer Empathy and Grace. It provides practical tools for emotional wellness, identity, and leadership. This space is designed for Black men who are leading families, classrooms, teams, or communities and want to stay connected to who they are while doing it.

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**Kimberly C. Ward, LICSW, LCSW-C, LCSW, RPT**

### **Trigger Zones: Childhood Trauma in the Shadow of Community Violence**

This session explores the hidden and lasting impact that exposure to violence leaves on Black children, teens, and families. These “trigger zones” are the spaces, sounds, and situations that can reawaken deep fear, anxiety, or survival responses connected to earlier traumatic experiences. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of: How community violence shapes emotional and developmental health in children and adolescents. The ways trauma responses show up in school, at home, and in peer relationships. Strategies for parents, caregivers, and professionals to identify and respond to trigger zones with compassion and cultural sensitivity.

**BREAKOUT  
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# SESSION SCHEDULE

## SESSION 2: CONT'D



**Kirk James, LPC-R**

### **Rooted in Strength: Elevating Wellness Through Self-Care for BIPOC LGBTQ+ Communities and Allies**

In the spirit of the "Black Power" theme, this presentation, titled Rooted in Strength: Elevating Wellness Through Self-Care for BIPOC LGBTQ+ Communities and Allies, seeks to amplify the importance of self-care as a foundational tool for enhancing mental health and wellness within LGBTQ+ Black and people of color (POC) communities. The session will create a dynamic space for attendees enabling them to engage with practical, culturally responsive self-care techniques. By cultivating an interactive environment, we aim to empower attendees to better support their clients in nurturing their well-being and strengthening communal bonds in the face of systemic adversity.

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**Adriana Londono, LCSW, LCAS, CCS**

### **From Stigma to Strength: A Culturally-Responsive Approach to Black Wellness in Substance Use Treatment**

Substance use and its associated challenges disproportionately affect Black communities, yet historical and systemic inequities often create significant barriers to effective care. This presentation will shift the focus from a deficit-based model to one of strength, resilience, and empowerment. Drawing on clinical expertise, evidence-based practices, and an understanding of lived experiences, we will explore how to dismantle the stigma surrounding addiction while integrating culturally-aligned strategies. The session will provide a framework for treatment that honors identity, community values, and the historical context of Black Americans. Attendees will leave with practical tools and a renewed perspective on providing care that empowers individuals, strengthens families, and promotes holistic Black wellness across generations.

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# BLACK MENTAL HEALTH CONVERSATIONS

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A Black Mental Health Conversation is a roundtable discussion focused on addressing mental health challenges, resources, and solutions specifically relevant to the Black community. These discussions aim to foster open dialogue, raise awareness, and create actionable strategies to improve mental health outcomes in Black populations.



**"WEALTH, WELLNESS & WORTH:  
FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT FOR  
MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPIONS"**

*Concierge Financial Advisory*  
**BREAKOUT ROOM - A**



**SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF MENTAL  
HEALTH ASSOCIATED WITH  
PERINATAL HEALTH OUTCOMES IN  
DIFFERENT RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUPS:  
A NARRATIVE REVIEW OF REVIEWS**

*American Psychiatric Association*  
**BREAKOUT ROOM - B**



# BLACK MENTAL HEALTH CONVERSATIONS (CONTD)



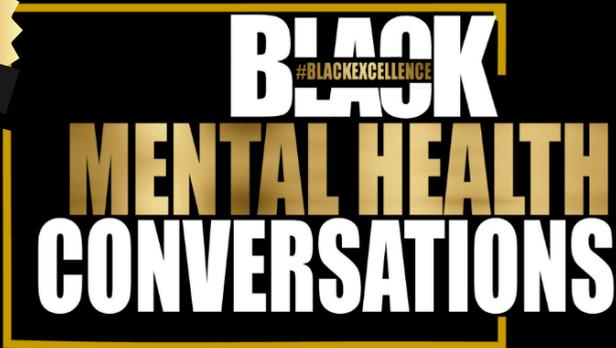
S.M.A.S.H.: CONNECTING WITH YOUTH THROUGH CREATIVE EXPRESSION, ARTS, AND HIP-HOP

BREAKOUT ROOM - C

FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION: BUILDING COLLECTIVE STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT BLACK MENTAL HEALTH

*The Black Mental Health Movement*

GENERAL SESSION



# CONFERENCE PANELS

## CONFERENCE PANEL

The Power of Collectivism: Building Wellness Through Unity

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**Councilman Corey Branch**  
Raleigh City Council, District C



**Judge William Dawson**  
Administrative & Presiding Judge of the East  
Cleveland Municipal Court



**Dr. Angelene E. Brinkley**  
Faith Leader

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## CONFERENCE PANEL

Super Powers: How Black Women's and Men's Strength  
Roles Shape Each Other's Wellness



**Da'Vonne Hudson**  
Founder & CEO of LABELED



**Jimmy Evans**  
Barbershop Therapy  
Foundation



**Nikquan Lewis**  
MS, LPC, LMFT, CST  
Intimate Connections PLLC



**God,  
Cornelius Kirk**  
Speaker, Coach, &  
Community Builder

## CONFERENCE PANEL

Power Moves: The Revolutionary Impact of Men's Mental Health

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**Stefon Pettigrew**  
National Brand Consultant



**Miguel "Ruff" Rivera**  
Entrepreneur, Independent Artist & Fitness  
Professional



**Mike Little LMFTA**  
Therapist & Spiritual Enthusiast

# SESSION SCHEDULE

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## Saturday, February 14th, 2026

SESSION 1:  
10:30AM - 11:30AM

**Kirk James, LPC-R**

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**Anthony Lucas M.S., CCST, EHE, NDE, DFE**

### **Secure Minds, Secure Data: Maintaining Cyber Safety in Mental Health Practice**

Wherever your clients need you to be - in the office, at home, in the community, or on a screen - client trust and sensitive information travel with you. As mental health professionals working in hybrid and virtual spaces, protecting client data now includes everyday decisions about email, Wi-Fi, devices, and digital communication. This session translates cybersecurity concepts into practical and, relatable practices, highlighting how tools like encrypted email settings, secure networks, VPNs, routine device updates, and everyday cyber safe decisions that support ethical practice. Attendees will leave with greater awareness and confidence to recognize secure tools, make informed choices, and protect client trust wherever their work takes them.

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# SESSION SCHEDULE

## SESSION 1: CONT'D



**Ashley McGirt-Adair, MSW, LCSW**

### **Breaking the Silence: Culturally Responsive Care and Strength-Based Healing in Black Communities**

This interactive session draws from *The Cost of Healing in Silence: Navigating Racial Trauma and the Call for Culturally Responsive Care*. Participants will explore how silence, stigma, and systemic barriers shape Black mental health, and will leave with culturally responsive practices, strength-based approaches, and concrete skills they can implement in their daily work.

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**Adriana Londono, LCSW, LCAS, CCS**

### **From Stigma to Strength: A Culturally-Responsive Approach to Black Wellness in Substance Use Treatment**

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# SESSION SCHEDULE

## SESSION 2: 11:45AM - 12:45PM

**Dr. Cecily Batiste Dawson, PhD, LPC-S**

### **Centering Race-Based Trauma in Counseling: Competency, Care, and Action**

This session draws from original research examining Licensed Professional Counselors' competencies and preparedness to address race-based incidents experienced by Black Americans in the Southern United States. Too often, counseling spaces fall short in acknowledging and treating the deep impacts of race-based trauma. Through a bioecological lens, this presentation will highlight systemic gaps in counselor training, explore the discomfort clinicians experience in broaching racial issues, and underscore the importance of empathy, validation, and culturally responsive practices. Participants will leave with both research-based insights and practical tools they can integrate into their clinical work with Black clients impacted by race-based trauma.

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**Scott Manningham M.S. LMHC**

### **Light Up the Darkness: Hope, Healing, and Real Tools to Help Our Youth Rise Above Anxiety and Depression**

This presentation explores the creation and impact of Light Up the Darkness — a multimedia mental-health movement that began as a conversation and evolved into a transformative book, curriculum, and visual storytelling platform. Guided by Bryce's emotional journey through struggle, identity, and healing, this talk unpacks the importance of culturally resonant tools for addressing depression, anxiety, suicide prevention, and emotional literacy among youth—especially in Black and Brown communities. Participants will gain insight into the philosophy behind the program, why mental-health education must evolve, and how intentional storytelling, creative tools, and grassroots engagement can bridge gaps that traditional systems have failed to reach.

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# SESSION SCHEDULE

## SESSION 2: CONT'D



**Tameka L. Gant, LPC-MHSP**

### **Out With The Old....Stop Acting Brand New**

This training examines the current U.S. political climate—specifically the impact of Trump’s second inauguration and the implementation of Project 2025—as significant collective stressors increasingly reflected in client presentations. Participants will explore the critical distinction between individual pathology and collective, systemic stress responses. The training offers a deep dive into the limitations of traditional, individual-focused therapeutic interventions and why they are often insufficient for addressing the emotional, psychological, and behavioral impacts of the current sociopolitical environment. Clinicians will be challenged to reframe assessment and intervention through a lens that acknowledges collective stress, power, and sociopolitical context.

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**Dr. Rasheeka Fogg, DPC, LCMHC-QS, LCAS, CCS**

### **A Holistic Sexology Approach to Black Women’s Intimacy Recovery**

Intimacy recovery is a vital yet often overlooked dimension of Black women’s healing. This session brings forward a holistic sexology approach that addresses the intersections of trauma, shame, self-trust, and pleasure through culturally responsive and embodied practices. Participants will explore how sexual anxiety, emotional disconnection, and cultural narratives disrupt intimacy, and they will gain practical tools to help Black women reclaim wholeness and connection as a source of strength and liberation.

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# KEYNOTE CONVERSATION

## The Power of Healing: What It Means to Heal Out Loud, Together, and in Real Time



### Lead by Dr. Lashaunda Lucas

Through honest reflection, lived experience, and intentional dialogue, Meagan Good and Jonathan Majors join Dr. LaShaunda Lucas to examine healing as an ongoing process rooted in self-awareness, accountability, faith, community, and personal growth. It invites audiences to reflect on how healing shows up in relationships, identity, purpose, and the choices we make when facing adversity. The audience will identify pathways toward healing that include faith, support systems, and professional care.

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