

# Community Empowerment Through Black Men Healing Conference



June 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Metropolitan State University 700 East Seventh Street, St. Paul MN 55106

## CONFERENCE HOSTS/ORGANIZERS/KEYNOTE



**Sam Simmons** a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor, who has over 27-year experience as a behavioral consultant specializing in practical culturally sensitive trauma informed work with African American males and their families with a focus on chemical dependency, interpersonal violence and historical trauma. For over 9 years Sam developed and managed a culturally-specific trauma informed project and curriculum that engages African American males. Sam was awarded the 2009 Governor's Council on Faith and Community Service Initiatives Best Practices Award for his work with MN Department of Veterans Outreach Services, prison reentry and in the African American community. Sam received the 2016 Black Tear Drop Award for his vision and leadership in culturally sensitive trauma informed work in the African American community and around the country. In 2017 Sam received the Champions for Children Award for his work in making the world a better place for children from Minnesota Communities Caring for Children. He is co-host of "Voices" radio show on KMOJ FM that addresses issues of the urban community. Sam is co-creator the Community Empowerment Through Black Men Healing conference called "Groundbreaking and Visionary".

## CONFERENCE KEYNOTES



**Resmaa Menakem, M.S.W.**, is a licensed clinical social worker specializing in trauma, highly conflicted couples therapy and domestic violence prevention. Resmaa is also the author of *Rock the Boat, Using conflict to heal and deepen your relationship*. He is a former radio talk-show host who has appeared on Oprah and Dr. Phil as an expert on domestic violence and couples in conflict. From 2011 to 2013, Resmaa was a community care counselor for civilian contractors in Afghanistan, managing the wellness and counseling services on fifty-three U.S. military bases. He has served as the director of counseling services for Tubman Family Alliance, a domestic violence treatment center, and as the behavioral health director for African American Family Services in Minneapolis, MN. For over twenty years, Resmaa Menakem MSW LICSW has worked with people facing difficult life circumstances. Resmaa has demonstrated that working within a ecological systemic paradigm to aid people in addressing issues is the most productive way to help challenge, resolve and confront important problems in our relationships and ourselves. As a nationally recognized leader in the fields of diversity, strategic planning, organizational development, and trauma therapy, Resmaa empowers people to better understand their past and present successes and obstacles. Individuals, couples and families then use this information to build a more intentional future.



**Dr Delishia M Pittman** is an Assistant Professor in Counseling Psychology at George Washington University. She is trained as a generalist practitioner with clinical expertise in diagnosis, assessment, and intervention with dually diagnosed populations, the treatment of trauma and substance abuse/dependence histories, as well as working with African/African American populations. Additionally, her work focuses on areas of diversity (broadly defined) and cultural competence in clinical training and supervision. Dr. Pittman is a behavioral scientist. Her research addresses social, psychological, and cultural determinants of racial/ethnic disparities in health behaviors and health outcomes among marginalized populations and communities. Dr Pittman is also associated with Portland Community College and Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare as Counselor.



**Matt Burton, Founding Chairman & CEO of Helping Men Heal.** Matt is a social entrepreneur and leader, has spent the past 20 years of his life focusing on helping men and women address their own trauma, loss and related symptoms with an emphasis on recovery and healing. In 2012, Matt decided to pursue a lifelong vision of founding a non-profit, Helping Men Heal, to continue these efforts. Helping Men Heal is focused on reducing the negative impacts that loss and traumas have on men and women's ability to live full, meaningful lives. Helping Men Heal seeks to mediate the

relationships between traumatic experiences and negative life impacts, through a focus on trauma prevention, early intervention and treatment services that positively impact outcomes among males and females living with traumatic experiences.

## MORNING WORKSHOPS



**Sameerah Bilal-Roby** is the Director of African American Babies Project and the African American Babies Coalition "Brains Are Built Campaign". Her career includes foster parent, mentor, coach, instructor and trainer in colleges and community based institutions. The focus of her work is on early childhood education, culture diversity, and trauma and toxic stress awareness. Her past experience as Executive Director has given insight into non-profit leadership and emerging trends in the field. She devotes most days sharing expertise through adult training and development. Her leadership prioritizes exploring concerns of the underrepresented and then highlighting their voices. She feels the most useful as a catalyst for systemic change by enhancing cross-cultural communication and community action. Her passion is working on strengthening the community's awareness to ethnic, cultural and social equity by building authentic relationships supporting efforts that leads to inclusion. Sameerah was honored to be presented with the Friend of the Family Award from the Minnesota Family Council on Relationships (MCFR).



**Nedra R. Robinson** is the Early Childhood Specialist for the Young Parent Program at Simpson Housing Services where she works with young parents experiencing homelessness. She is an adjunct instructor teaching undergraduate early childhood education courses at St. Paul College, MN and undergraduate and graduate early childhood education courses for Concordia University, St. Paul. She consults and trains extensively and nationally on topics regarding early childhood education, multicultural education, diversity, and cultural issues. She received her B.A. at Hamline University, St. Paul, and her M.A. Ed, Early Childhood Education at Concordia University, St. Paul. Nedra has been an active member in the Minnesota early childhood professional community working in several capacities and roles for over 20 years. One of her most recent projects is researcher for the African American Babies Collation.



**Donavan Bailey** has served as a Dispositional Advisor with the Minnesota 3rd District Public Defender Office for the past 10 years. His past experience includes work as a chemical dependency youth counselor, police officer and juvenile residential program supervisor. He serves on various committees such as the DFO Taskforce Committee, The Olmsted County Drug Court Community Committee, The 3rd District Equal Justice Committee and the Von Wald Group Home Advisory Committee. In the past he served on the MN State Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage, and the Olmsted County Human Rights Commission. He holds, a Masters of Educational Leadership, and is a Licensed Graduate Social Worker. He currently is completing an Ed. D. in Leadership at St. Mary's University of Minnesota.



**Jasmine Boudah, M.Ed**, is the founder of Black Lotus Mothers which provides a safe space for Black womben to discuss their unique motherhood experiences and gather to receive emotional, spiritual and physical support from their peers and other community members. She is also the founder of the Ubuntu Minneapolis, LLC, a breastfeeding, parenting and literacy initiative—a community focused program aimed to provide conscious parenting and breastfeeding education and early literacy skills to new parents. Jasmine is passionate about eliminating disparities in education and maternal-infant health nationally but places a laser focus on Minneapolis where she currently resides. Among other things, she is a mother, healer, educator, parent educator, social justice and breastfeeding advocate, and birth worker.



**Andre Koen** is an energetic presenter, a powerful communicator, and a dynamic teacher. There are many words that describe him. The most illustrative is, "Andre, the Enkindled Spirit". Andre is a diversity trainer in Minnesota. He provides face-to-face and online courses on diversity education including leadership development, empowerment training, cross-cultural competence, sensitivity training, anti-racism training and team building. Most of his clients include professionals needing continuing education credits. His weekly blog includes ideas for controlling, removing, and fighting discrimination. Koen also offer one-on-one training and coaching.



**Lee Buckley, MA**, Community Reentry Coordinator For The Minnesota Department Of Corrections. In this role she coordinates with field service offices and community corrections agencies as well as works with other government, faith-based and community based organizations that deliver reentry services to individuals transitioning from prison to community. She serves on a number of committees, workgroups and advisory boards, including leading the Strengthening Families Affected by Incarceration Collaborative. She holds a M.A. in Community Ministry Leadership from Bethel Seminary, is a licensed and ordained minister and an Associate Minister at Progressive Baptist Church in East St. Paul.

### AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS



**Kamyala Howard, MSW, LICSW**, has over 22 years of experience working with children and families within diverse communities, including experience in early childhood program development and management, intercultural community relations, direct clinical practice, and executive leadership. She specializes in creating innovative models and programs aimed at program and leadership development, cultural responsive practices, trauma-informed care and intercultural community based interventions. She is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker and graduate of the University of Minnesota. She recently was the Director of Children’s Services for Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery. Currently Ms. Howard is an independent consultant/trainer who has a proven ability to create innovative models aimed at dismantling barriers, integrating intercultural theory, culturally responsive trauma-informed practices, and community based interventions towards building resiliency and supporting positive change. Kamyala has a history of bringing many voices to the table in creating solutions to complex challenges. She is an active participant on many advisory council’s and continues to build a large network through community outreach, collaborating, and advocating for systems change.

**Chanelle Lynn Ellison** has been supporting various communities for 13years. Ms. Ellison holds an Associate’s degree in Sociology and Criminal Justice. She currently lives in Houston, Texas where she is a Mental Health Technician for the Center for Success and Independence, an inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation and support clinic for adolescence. She is a native of Minneapolis, MN and grew up in the Powderhorn neighborhood. At a very young age Ms. Ellison was forced to “survive” various adverse life experiences. She learned early on to adapt to the negative circumstance of her environment. She is a natural born leader and now spends most of her career supporting and advocating at-risk youth. Her hope is to dismantle the cycles of community, historical and familial trauma that many of her clients face. At the prime age of 28, Ms. Ellison is more than a conqueror. She is a huge advocate for Equity, Youth Empowerment and Community Self-healing.



**Kasim Abdur Razzaq** is a native of St. Paul, Minnesota. He holds a bachelors degree in Psychology and Master’s degrees in both Clinical Social work and Education. Kasim has served the twin cities and surrounding areas for more than 15 years through his work in social services and education. He is accomplished in the areas of research, workshop facilitation, service delivery and speaking addresses. Kasim holds the professional license of LICSW, which he uses to support individuals, couples, families and communities with Psychotherapy services. In all capacities of his work Kasim brings alternative perspectives, fresh strategies and clarity of vision that empower clients to reach new milestones in their growth and development. Kasim continues to further his knowledge of research and social frameworks to better serve people and organizations. Kasim is passionate about social justice and institution building. He is committed to seeing our world transformed to a space where life is celebrated and lived zestfully by all members of our global community.

**Salma Hussein** is a Licensed Independent Social Worker (LISW) in the State of Minnesota. Salma graduated from University of Minnesota with a Master’s degree in Social work, with an emphasis on Families and Children. Salma is deeply committed to social justice and is active in the Somali community, especially as a mentor to Somali girls. Salma is known for a warm and relaxed approach to counseling that is non-judgmental. Salma works with clients from a strength-based and affirming perspective. Salma works with a wide range of issues, including depression, anxiety, self-esteem/self-empowerment, relationship/family concerns and individual counseling for personal and emotional growth



**Curtis Marshall, MS** is a Public Health Educator and Consultant for the Wisconsin Division of Public Health (WDPH). From 1991-2005 he worked with the Sexually Transmitted Disease Program as their Syphilis Eliminator Coordinator, reducing congenital, primary and secondary syphilis in Milwaukee County. Through the mobilization of the community by the Community Action Team, this team was recognized by the Center for Disease Control as a model for public health and community partners. Currently, he works with the WDPH as a consultant with local health departments, health consortiums

and community based organizations and disparity workgroups. He provides technical assistance to assist the development and implementation of strategies, policies and protocols toward achieving 2010 Healthy Wisconsin objectives. He provides consultation to fatherhood service providers to increase awareness and skills to increase father paternal education and involvement. He served 2005-2008 on the Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative Board of Directors as Program Chairperson.



**Charisma Smith** holds a Bachelor in Human Services Administration and is has 24 years of direct service provision experience in the human services field. Currently program director of The Family Partnership's PRIDE program, she oversees direct services for victims and survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. Charisma has worked for numerous nonprofits and has been with The Family Partnership for 5.5 years. Charisma is currently pursuing a Masters in Non-Profit administration at Metropolitan State University.



**Rashida Fisher, MS, LPCC, LADC**, is a counselor and counselor educator. She is Faculty and the field experience coordinator for the Co-Occurring Disorders Program at Adler Graduate School. She also is an adjunct instructor at Century College. She has over a decade of clinical and leadership experience in addiction and co-occurring mental health treatment delivery, supervision, and program development. Rashida has worked with diverse populations including individuals involved in the criminal justice system, addiction, and co-occurring mental health disorders, and trauma. The foundation of Rashida's work is a passion for social justice, advocacy, and multicultural counseling competencies. Rashida believes that positive change occurs through building on individual's strength and focusing on the power of relationships by identifying resilience, abilities, knowledge, and one's past success as the primary source of healing.

## PANELISTS



**Dr. Reba Peoples, M.D.** is a holistic psychiatrist who delights in appreciating those unique traits and qualities that make each of us who we are. This appreciation allows her to create customized wellness solutions for individuals and organizations who may be struggling with burnout, overwhelm or lack of career engagement. Dr. Peoples founded Imara Health and Wellness in June, 2015 to help further her mission of providing tools to help people reclaim a sense of joy and purpose in their lives. 'Imara' is a Swahili word that translates to 'one with strength or fortitude'. In keeping true to that moniker, Imara's ultimate mission is to empower healthcare consumers with the tools needed to become stewards of their own health and architects of their own destiny. Imara Health and Wellness recognizes that one size does not fit all when it comes to attaining and maintaining emotional wellness. This insight has helped Imara develop an extraordinary approach to whole-person healthcare that recognizes that true emotional wellness involves much more than simply balancing brain chemistry. Dr. Peoples is a graduate of the Medical College of Ohio. She is board certified in Psychiatry and has additional training in Functional Medicine via the Institute for Functional Medicine (IFM). She has also completed a Certificate Program in Traumatic Stress Studies via the Trauma Center at Justice Resource Institute (JRI) in Brookline, Massachusetts.



**Alex Merritt** is the creator and host of Dessert & Discussion who is affectionately known as The LOVE Engineer --- Dessert and Discussion is an engaging unscripted discussion between men and women about love, sex, and relationships. Ms. Merritt earned her bachelor's in mechanical engineering at the Missouri University of Science and Technology (Missouri S&T). In 2010, Missouri S&T and the Sacramento Observer named her one of "30 Future Leaders under 30." She spent 14 yrs as a Supply Chain leader with General Mills before venturing into her passion full-time. Ms. Merritt has been featured in several leading publications such as the NSBE magazine, Sparkman, and St. Louis American. As someone who is passionate about developing healthy relationships, Ms. Merritt is on a mission to transform the quality of relationships between men and women – one discussion at a time. For more than 15 years, she has garnered empirical observations related to relationship dynamics along with informal relationship research which is used as the foundation for her work. Ms. Merritt has developed an enlightening understanding of relationship dynamics that she uses to help individuals to have better interactions with the opposite sex. In 2009, Ms. Merritt launched "Dessert & Discussion", which is a provocative experience where men and women walk away understanding the opposite sex like never before. In 2015, she developed the Loveinar™ a powerful interactive relationship course that defines and explains the art and science of relationships and most recently launched The War on Love™ game. Her discussions, courses, and unique perspective is changing the LOVE GAME forever.