



HELPING + HEALING

# UNSTOPPABLE

The Power of Healing & Growth

What We Heard: Disability Awareness & Sensitivity



LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF  
MENTAL HEALTH  
*hope. recovery. wellbeing.*



*Preliminary Findings | Black/African Communities & Disability*

**By: Erica Robinson**

**President, Health Matters Clinic**

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# About Us

**Health Matters Clinic (HMC)** is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing health equity across Los Angeles County.

We provide mobile health outreach, mental health education, pop-up clinics, and wellness programs that bring care directly to under-resourced communities.

OUR MISSION IS ROOTED IN ONE PURPOSE:  
HELPING + HEALING.

Through volunteer-driven services and trusted community partnerships, we meet people where they are — on the streets, in schools, and beyond.



# Meet Team Unstoppable



**Dr. Dawn Bounds, PhD,  
PMHNP-BC, FAAN -**  
Curriculum & Facilitator Training  
Development



**Jenny Fotang, MA -**  
Facilitator Training & Planning



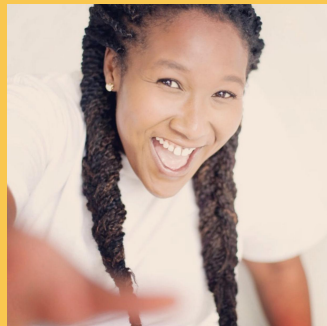
**Brianna Johnston, BA, MA -**  
Facilitator Training & Planning



**Dr. Leon Maultsby, DBH -**  
Facilitator



**Erica Robinson, BBA -**  
Curriculum Development &  
Facilitator



**Dechelle Richardson -**  
Facilitator & Community  
Engagement Lead





Erica Robinson,  
Health Matters Clinic

# Meet the Team: Erica Robinson

**Erica Robinson** is the President of Health Matters Clinic, where she leads innovative community health initiatives with a focus on advancing health equity in underserved populations. With a background in Computer Information Systems and nearly a decade in technology and engineering, Erica bridges gaps between healthcare, tech, and community systems to reduce barriers to care.



## Dr. Dawn Bounds, PhD, PMHNP-BC, FAAN

**Associate Professor**, UCI Sue & Bill Gross School of Nursing  
**Director**, Centering Youth & Families for Empowerment and  
Resilience (CYFER) Lab

# Meet the Team: Dr. Bounds

**Dawn Bounds, PhD, PMHNP-BC, FAAN**, is an associate professor in the Sue and Bill Gross School of Nursing and creator and director of the Centering Youth & Families for Empowerment and Resilience (CYFER) Lab at the University of California, Irvine. Her experience as a PMHNP with marginalized youth on the westside of Chicago informs her program of research focused on the risk and resilience of youth. Dawn has addressed gaps in both policy and practice related to youth homelessness, family functioning, and commercial sexual exploitation/sex trafficking. Her current NIDA funded R01 focuses on leveraging biofeedback to deliver a health coaching intervention to adversity-impacted youth and their caregivers.

As a teen mental health expert and current fellow in the Betty Irene Moore Fellowship for Nurse Leaders and Innovators, Dr. Bounds leads a youth participatory action research project focused on understanding the impact of our shift online during the COVID-19 pandemic on youth mental health and how online spaces can be leveraged for good.



## Dr. Leon Maultsby, DBH

**Faculty Instructor**, Dept. of Pediatrics, Charles R. Drew  
University of Medicine and Science  
**Associate Director**, Drew Cares  
**Founder**, Maultsby and Co

# Meet the Team: Dr. Maultsby

**Leon Maultsby, DBH**, is a healthcare executive and educator with over 10 years of experience advancing health equity in mental health, HIV prevention, and public health. He serves as Associate Director at Drew CARES, where he leads training programs in HIV, STI, PrEP, and PEP, and directs health equity initiatives across domestic and international platforms. Dr. Maultsby holds a Doctorate in Behavioral Health from Arizona State University, along with degrees in Psychology and Healthcare Administration. His global work includes technical assistance and capacity building in Zambia. As Co-Chair of the Black Caucus on the LA County Commission on HIV, Dr. Maultsby leads community engagement and policy advocacy to address disparities among Black communities, LGBTQ+ populations, and immigrants. A Lean Six Sigma Black Belt, he brings a strong foundation in operational excellence and program leadership to all his work.

# Why We're Here

We set out to host a series of community workshops rooted in a five-module curriculum designed to open up healing-centered, empowering conversations around mental health in Black communities impacted by disability.

Our goals were to:

- Deliver culturally responsive, evidence-based education
- Reduce stigma around disability and mental health
- Explore how race, disability, and mental health intersect
- Identify barriers to care and access
- Uplift family and community support systems
- Share tools for advocacy and connect participants to resources

This summary reflects what we heard from attendees—the voices, questions, and needs that surfaced during these presentations.

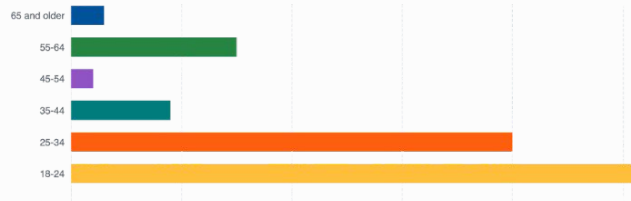
# What We Asked

Participants completed a pre- and post-session questionnaire to assess changes in their knowledge, comfort, and awareness related to mental health in the Black community. They reflected on their ability to recognize mental health challenges, support others, and identify local resources—both before and after the workshop. Open-ended questions invited feedback on what resonated most, how they plan to apply what they learned, any personal experiences, and suggestions for improvement.

# Who Participated

## 2. Age Group

(120/120)



## 3. Gender

(120/120)



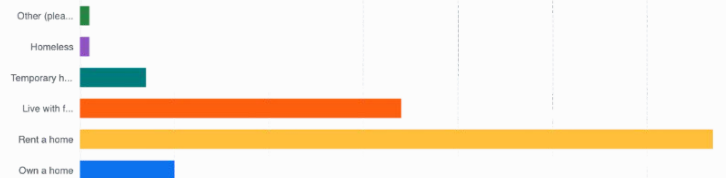
## 4. Race/Ethnicity (Check all that apply)

(120/120)



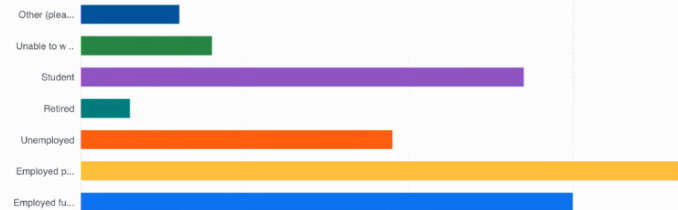
## 5. What is your current living situation?

(120/120)



## 6. What is your current employment status?

(120/120)



## 7. What is your primary source of income?

(120/120)



# Strengths We Heard

“ This workshop made me realize how crucial it is to address systemic barriers and promote mental health resources that are accessible to everyone.”

“ I have learnt many ways of coping with stress.”

“ I can refer back to the workbook that was given from this workshop and find more mental health workshops in my community”

“ After this workshop, I understand why African Americans utilize mental health services less and the challenges distinct to the black community. My understanding has changed by now being more aware and capable of identifying where barriers to service utilization may arise. It has changed by me being more knowledgeable.”

“ Good reminder how mistrustful many in our community can be and how we need to talk about it more intentionally.”

“ This was really good all around and don't think anything

19. What is one key concept from this workshop that you found most valuable?



A word cloud containing terms such as 'health', 'mental', 'depression', 'stress', 'support', 'managing', 'community', 'symptoms', 'resources', 'anxiety', 'self', 'types', 'others', 'own', 'open', 'help', 'black', 'found', 'available', 'videos', 'recognizing', 'seeking', 'key', 'different', 'understanding', and 'anxiety'.

20. How do you plan to apply what you learned in your daily life or work?



A word cloud containing terms such as 'health', 'mental', 'plan', 'life', 'help', 'resources', 'support', 'share', 'sharing', 'daily', 'friends', 'check', 'sure', 'need', 'positive', 'family', 'others', 'implement', 'mindfulness', 'care', 'self', 'talk', 'work', 'community', 'coping', and 'life'.

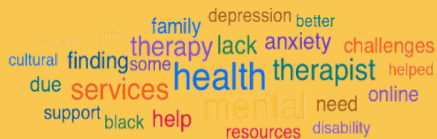
21. How has your understanding of mental health services or community challenges changed after this workshop?



A word cloud containing terms such as 'health', 'mental', 'community', 'services', 'accessible', 'workshop', 'understanding', 'support', 'need', 'changed', 'black', 'know', 'our', 'better', 'open', 'resources', 'help', 'it's', 'understand', 'people', 'aware', 'awareness', 'many', 'good', and 'open'.

# Barriers + Challenges

22. Can you share any personal experiences or challenges you have faced that



“When I was in rehab first time actually opening up to a therapist and they finding out you have a new therapist and have to start from square one.”

“Being isolated from the community and afraid to be around the public.”

“not being able to make enough to live on.”

“I had so many challenges and still finding black women therapist that I connect with who are actually available”

“Not enough mental health options.”

“Availability and times that work for those who work.”

“Lack of insurance coverage or access to resources that can link me with the types of support I need.”

“Church was my only "therapy" growing up.”

“Fear of CPS kept me from seeking help as a parent.”

“Lack of proper care for the disabled.”

“Used online forums because I didn't trust therapists.”

“Long wait times, unaffordable costs, and lack of disability understanding from some professionals hindered my access to mental health services.”

“I fell into depression, primary cause was unemployment, pressure from the family, wanting to achieve my dreams at a younger age”

“More mental health awareness is needed with youth involved in the criminal justice systems and aftercare in the homes and homeless shelters.”

“Being a young black male growing up in a single woman-led household I was always told not to be overly emotional (crybaby) or not to move so much (ADHD), so from a young age I was always overly self-conscious. Also, I don't think my parents knew mental health was covered by insurance..”

“Had to drive 2 hours to find a Black therapist.”

“I consider myself a shy person. I have never tried to access mental health services due to the cost. Knowing now that there are groups and resources available, I plan to change that in the near future.”

“Waited 6 months for a psychiatrist appointment.”

“Disability can lead to being stuck in life.”

# Growth in Knowledge

## Mental Health Perception & Knowledge (Before vs. After)

### 1. Comfort Discussing Mental Health in the Black Community

**Before:**

63% Agree/Strongly Agree (Agree: 36%, Strongly Agree: 28%)

**Now:**

93% Agree/Strongly Agree (Agree: 24%, Strongly Agree: 69%)

→ Strongly Agree jumped from 28% to 69%

### 2. Understanding Systemic Challenges

**Before:**

63% Agree/Strongly Agree (Agree: 35%, Strongly Agree: 28%)

**Now:**

94% Agree/Strongly Agree (Agree: 25%, Strongly Agree: 69%)

→ Strongly Agree jumped from 28% to 69%

### 3. Awareness of Community Resources

**Before:**

56% Agree/Strongly Agree (Agree: 35%, Strongly Agree: 21%)

**Now:**

95% Agree/Strongly Agree (Agree: 37%, Strongly Agree: 58%)

→ Strongly Agree rose from 21% to 58%

### 4. Feeling Equipped to Support Others

**Before:**

57% Agree/Strongly Agree (Agree: 35%, Strongly Agree: 22%)

**Now:**

94% Agree/Strongly Agree (Agree: 41%, Strongly Agree: 53%)

→ Strongly Agree more than doubled from 22% to 53%

### 5. Identifying Symptoms in Black Youth/Adults

**Before:**

58% Agree/Strongly Agree (Agree: 43%, Strongly Agree: 15%)

**Now:**

92% Agree/Strongly Agree (Agree: 35%, Strongly Agree: 57%)

→ Strongly Agree increased from 15% to 57%

# What Stuck With Them

“ Good info given, Appreciate being able to obtain the resource guide.”

“ The help is there but now I know better where to look”

“ I learned about some of the resources available”

“ Mental health and a therapist”

“Understanding that it is ok to talk to someone who listens”

“I have more self awareness and myself esteem is boosted.”

“I can refer back to the workbook that was given from this workshop and find more mental health workshops in my community”

Participants were able to download the free Workshop Digital Companion — a guide for navigating mental health, claiming their power, and building a better—from the inside out.

***This guide grows with participants.*** We'll let them know when the next version with new resources and information are available.





# What They Want to See Next

## 1. Peer support

Most participants wanted more peer support groups; this was requested during each workshop.

## 2. Community-Based Spaces

Participants wanted more community-based safe spaces to connect with peers at times that are not during business hours and “Mental health facilities open rapidly.”; this was the most requested and requested during each workshop.

## 3. Virtual/Digital Accessibility

This was frequently requested by both those with physical disabilities and those who face challenges accessing reliable transportation (nearly 20 percent of survey respondents do not have access to reliable transportation).

## 4. “More Workshops”

Participants stated that they felt there is a need to have “more conversations about mental health”, “group therapy, or talk sessions (monthly)”, “Free group therapy programs for black men on a monthly basis”, “Community get togethers”, “Men's Talk Circle is a good thing try to hook that up.”, and “More training”.

**Integrate Peer-Led Discussions**

**Recruit and train community leaders and individuals with disabilities to serve as co-presenters or discussion facilitators.**

**Expand Culturally-Tailored Workshops**

## Recommendations to LACDMH

**Continue developing presentations specifically tailored to Black and African heritage communities.**

**Offer Multi-Session Learning Opportunities**

**Shift from one-time workshops to a series-based approach for deeper engagement and sustained behavior change.**

# UNSTOPPABLE

*Experience*

**A VIRTUAL  
MEETUP  
TO RESET  
YOUR  
MINDSET.**

**LEVEL UP + YOU CAN  
A WIN \$25 GIFTCARD**

WHETHER YOU'RE BUILDING COMMUNITY  
OR JUST NEED A RESET-JOIN US ON  
ZOOM FOR AN INSPIRING SESSION  
PACKED WITH MOTIVATION, REAL TALK,  
AND TOOLS TO HELP YOU MOVE  
FORWARD WITH CONFIDENCE.



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT  
[WWW.HEALTHMATTERS.CLINIC](http://WWW.HEALTHMATTERS.CLINIC)

**WE'RE  
LIVE THE  
3<sup>RD</sup>  
MONDAY  
OF EACH  
MONTH**

JOIN US ON ONLINE  
6-8 PM

# What's Next

Minority Mental Health Month Workshops

-  *Free & open to the community*
-  Topics include stress, stigma, communication, and more!

 **RSVP & July workshop schedule**

Visit: [www.healthmatters.clinic/#Upcoming-Events](http://www.healthmatters.clinic/#Upcoming-Events)

*Join us in creating safe spaces to talk, learn, and grow together.*



# Thank you!

Contact Us

 [education@healthmatters.clinic](mailto:education@healthmatters.clinic)

 [www.healthmatters.clinic](http://www.healthmatters.clinic)

Thank you!



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