

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

It was an honor and a privilege to be present at our recently concluded Spring Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Though I was not able to attend the entire conference due to a death in my family (thank you to those of you who shared your condolences), what I did see and hear showed how many of us are "Shaping Health Equity:



BPA President Stephen McLeod-Bryant, MD

Fighting for Our Minds" in important and innovative ways.

I want to thank Dr. Sarah Vinson for sharing Morehouse School of Medicine's Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and her home in hosting our conference. The contributions of their faculty and trainees to the conference program are greatly appreciated. Armed with new knowledge and connections, we face the great current challenges in improving mental health outcomes in marginalized communities.

Thanks to Drs. Ja'Nelle Blocker, Francois Williams, and Melissa Gray, we have begun linking mentors to mentees to support the growth of our younger colleagues in joining the fight to lift



The 2025 Transcultural Conference will be held in Grenada from November 6 - 10, 2025.

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President's Address, cont.

minds. We are partnering with the NMA, APA, media platforms such as MJH Life Sciences, and other healthcare organizations to advance our knowledge and exert positive change in our communities. In addition, we are inviting experts within and outside of our organization to assist us in strategizing for the present and the future.

And, we seek nominations of members committed to BPA to serve as our future President-elect, Secretary, or South, Midwest, or International Trustee to keep our organization's momentum strong. As we continue this journey together, let us recommit to shaping a future where mental health care is accessible and equitable for all.

Thank you all for your support of this vital work.

Stephen McLeod-Bryant

President, Black Psychiatrists of America

BPA 2025 Spring Conference: Shaping Health Equity, Fighting for Our Minds

By Rahn Kennedy Bailey, MD

The Black Psychiatrists of America (BPA) successfully convened its Spring Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, from April 3-6, 2025, centered on the vital theme "Shaping Health Equity: Fighting for Our Minds". This year's conference, held in collaboration with the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Morehouse School of Medicine, represented a significant moment for the organization, striving to be the "largest and most impactful conference in many years" while maintaining a strong focus on culturally informed psychiatric care and addressing the persistent disparities in mental health care.

The conference served as a call to action, urging participants to remain steadfast in their commitment to shaping a future where mental health care is accessible, equitable, and empowering for all. The event was notable for the breadth of its attendance, drawing together medical students, residents, aspiring psychiatrists, and our esteemed colleagues, underscoring the growing dedication to our field and the urgent need to advance equitable mental health services. The program highlighted the importance of the collaboration with Morehouse School of Medicine, whose commitment to advancing Black mental health strongly aligns with the BPA's vision.

The conference featured a comprehensive range of sessions designed to equip attendees with the knowledge and tools to promote health equity. These sessions included important discussions on:

- Cultivating a culture of reflection to address microaggressions within medical training.
- Strategies for fostering resilience and equity among Black male trainees.
- The critical intersection of health equity and financial freedom.
- Forensic psychiatry and its role in achieving equity.
- The challenges of algorithmic biases in neuroimaging and cognitive measures.
- The complex impact of social media on mental health across different age groups.

Furthermore, the conference directly addressed specific mental health challenges that disproportionately affect the Black community, such as the impact of misdiagnosis, the far-reaching effects of trauma, and the unique considerations for women's mental health throughout the reproductive cycle. The program also embraced innovative and emerging approaches, including nutritional psychiatry and the potential of incorporating plant and psychedelic science into residency training.

Beyond the educational sessions, the conference fostered a strong sense of community, connection,



BPA 2025 Spring Conference: Shaping Health Equity, Fighting for Our Minds, cont.

and renewal. BPA President Dr. Stephen McLeod-Bryant emphasized the importance of attendees connecting with colleagues and sharing their passion for improving mental health outcomes in marginalized communities. In this spirit, attendees had numerous opportunities for networking and collaboration, reinforcing the importance of our collective efforts to drive meaningful change. As noted in the program, the organizers hoped that attendees would leave Atlanta feeling energized and empowered to continue working towards a future where mental health care is truly accessible and equitable for all.

In alignment with the BPA's commitment to professional development, the conference offered continuing medical education credits. These credits supported physicians in their ongoing efforts to implement evidence-based interventions, advocate for policies that advance mental health equity, and prioritize self-care as an essential component of quality patient care.

The BPA gratefully acknowledges the generous support of sponsors including Otsuka, Bristol Myers Squibb, Johnson & Johnson Innovation Medicine, AbbVie, Axsome, Liva Nova, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychiatric Association Foundation, Neurocrine Biosciences, PRMS (Professional Risk Management Services), Collegium Pharmaceutical, Noven, Sage Therapeutics, SCLA Mgmt., Biogen, and Takeda whose contributions were vital to the success of the conference.

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President-Elect's Reflections on a Powerful Gathering: The BPA 2025 Spring Conference

Dear Members of the Black Psychiatrists of America,

As your incoming president, I am honored to share my reflections on the extraordinary 2025 Spring Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Under the resonant theme, "Shaping Health Equity: Fighting for Our Minds," this conference proved to be a watershed moment for our organization and a testament to our collective strength.

Atlanta, a city steeped in the history of our ongoing struggle for justice and equity, provided the perfect backdrop for our convening. In collaboration with the esteemed Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Morehouse School of Medicine, we assembled what many have called our largest and most impactful conference in recent memory.

It was truly inspiring to witness the convergence of such a diverse group – from our dedicated medical students and residents, the future of our field, to our accomplished psychiatrists whose work has paved the way. The program was rich and varied, tackling the multifaceted challenges of achieving mental health equity. Sessions addressed critical issues such as:

- The pervasive impact of microaggressions in medical training
- Strategies for fostering resilience and equity among Black male trainees
- Innovative approaches to financial wellness for Black physicians
- The complexities of forensic psychiatry and algorithmic bias
- The unique mental health needs of Black women and youth
- And, importantly, the essential work of addressing trauma within our communities.

The conference was more than just an exchange of knowledge; it was a reaffirmation of our shared purpose. We forged new connections, strengthened existing bonds, and left Atlanta with a renewed sense of commitment to our mission.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the conference organizers, the faculty and presenters who shared their expertise, our sponsors whose support made this event possible, and each of you who participated with such passion and engagement.

President-Elect's Reflections on a Powerful Gathering: The BPA 2025 Spring Conference, cont.

As we look ahead, the work of "Shaping Health Equity" continues. Let us carry the momentum from this conference forward, united in our dedication to fighting for the minds and well-being of our communities.

In solidarity,

Rahn Kennedy Bailey, MD President-Elect, Black Psychiatrists of America, Inc.

Acknowledging the contributions of the following individuals in producing this message:

Aaron Mack, MD Howard University Psychiatry Resident PGII

Michael Okoronkwo, MD LSU ER Resident Graduate June 2024



2025 BPA Spring Conference, Atlanta, GA



















Thank You to the 2025 BPA Spring Conference Sponsors!







































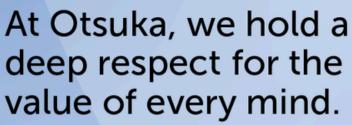










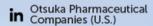


We will not rest until mental illnesses and brain diseases are approached with the same priority and urgency as our physical health and recognized as chronic diseases that warrant early, equitable, and accessible intervention.

Through products, programs, policies, and advocacy, Otsuka-people will defy any limitation that stands in their way until every mind is valued.



Discover our commitment to health for every mind













2025 Communications and Social Media Committee Internship Application Now Open

We are pleased to announce that we are accepting applications for the 3rd cohort of the BPA Communications and Social Media Committee Internship. If you are aware of a student with interest in psychiatry who is either off-cycle or unmatched for the 2024-2025 academic year, please share this link with them and encourage them to apply.

This gives them the opportunity to stay connected with psychiatry through their work on the BPA social media platforms. They have the ability to engage with organization leadership and to establish relationships with mentors as they prepare to start their careers in psychiatry.

Sincerely,

Ifeanyi Olele, DO, MBA, MS Communications and Social Media Committee, Chair

Nicole B Washington, DO, MPH Communications and Social Media Committee, Co-Chair



For the honors bestowed on them by the American Medical Womens Association at their 110th Annual Meeting Gala, the Black Psychiatrists of America, Inc. congratulate:

Tiffani Bell Washington, MD, MPHEarly Career Physician Award

Ja'Nelle Blocker, MDExceptional Mentor Award

And, congratulations to AMWA and all of the Association's awardees!

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Explore New Career Opportunities with BPA's Career Center



At the Black Psychiatrists of America (BPA), we are committed to supporting your professional journey and ensuring job satisfaction within our field. As part of this commitment, we want to ask you a few simple questions:

- Are you happy with your current job?
- Are you considering new career opportunities?
- Do you feel you are appropriately compensated for your work?

If any of these questions give you pause, we encourage you to explore our **Career Center**, powered by Webscribble Solutions, at <u>blackpsychs.org</u>. Our platform offers a **wide variety of psychiatry positions** across the United States and its territories, including:

- Department Chairs & Leadership Roles
- Faculty Positions
- Staff Psychiatrist Roles
- Part-Time & Locum Tenens Opportunities
- **Telemedicine Positions** for flexible work options
- In-Person Roles at leading hospitals, clinics, and academic institutions

Whether you're looking for career advancement, greater work-life balance, or new professional challenges, our **Career Center** is designed to help you find the right fit.

BPA is dedicated to fostering a community where our members feel valued and fulfilled in their careers. If you're not where you want to be, take a moment to browse our Career Center—you may find the perfect opportunity waiting for you.

<u>Visit the BPA Career Center today</u> and take the next step in your career!



We want to feature **YOU** in our next newsletter! Share your wins so we can celebrate you. <u>Submit your highlight or article</u> by April 1, 2025.

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Call for Papers Open for the 2025 Transcultural Conference

We'll see you in... Grenada! Join us for the 2025 Black Psychiatrists of America Fall Transcultural Conference taking place from November 6-10, 2025. Our theme this year is Roots of Resilience: Confronting the Legacy of Racism and Advancing Mental Health in the Diaspora. More details will be available soon.

Abstracts for the Transcultural Conference are now being accepted. Please <u>submit your abstract</u> no later than Friday, June 20th at 11:59 PM by clicking the button below.

SUBMIT YOUR ABSTRACT



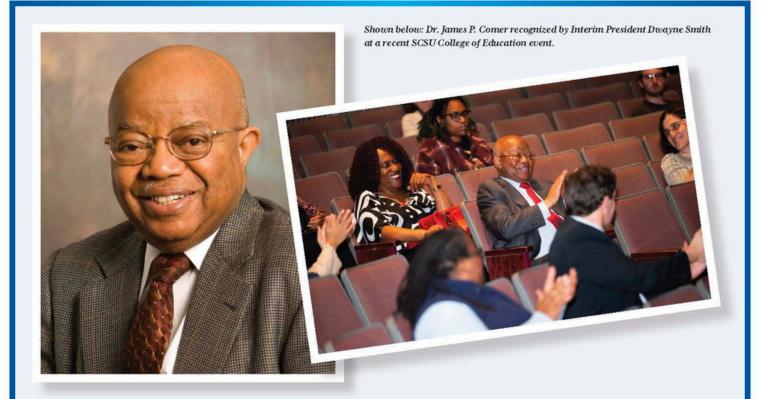
NEW BPA THINK-TANK

Dear Colleagues,

In light of growing inequities in mental health, education, and economic stability, we have established an ad hoc "Think Tank" within the Black Psychiatrists of America (BPA). This initiative will leverage our collective expertise to address current crises and establish a long-term vision for Black Psychiatry.

Rooted in discussions from our 2024 Transcultural Conference, this effort aims to anticipate future challenges and provide sustainable solutions to address the emotional and systemic toll on our communities. The Think Tank will not only respond to current events but also develop a proactive strategy to combat the long-term effects of systemic inequities.

We invite your participation in this transformative initiative by <u>clicking here to sign up</u>. Your insights are vital to this process. Together, we can shape a future of equity and resilience for Black communities.



The Dr. James. P. Comer Chair in Child and Adolescent Development and Family Engagement

THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AT SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
WILL SOON BEGIN RAISING FUNDS TO ESTABLISH
THE DR. JAMES. P. COMER CHAIR IN CHILD AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT
AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT.

DR. JAMES P. COMER, one of the world's foremost child psychiatrists, is renowned for his groundbreaking work to improve the academic achievement of children from low-income and minority backgrounds. He is the founder of the Comer School Development Program, which promotes a holistic approach to education that emphasizes the importance of collaboration between parents, teachers, and the broader community. Through this initiative, Dr. Comer's work has transformed the educational experience for countless students, helping them thrive academically and ultimately pursue higher education.

Once the necessary funding goal is met, THE DR. JAMES. P. COMER CHAIR IN CHILD AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT will be established within the College of Education's Department of Curriculum and Learning. This endowed chair will serve as a lasting tribute to Dr. Comer's decades of dedicated work, ensuring that young people and their families across Connecticut and nationwide experience schools as inclusive, supportive environments where they are not only welcomed but actively encouraged to engage and take ownership of their educational journey. Please, use the link below to make your pleage of support.

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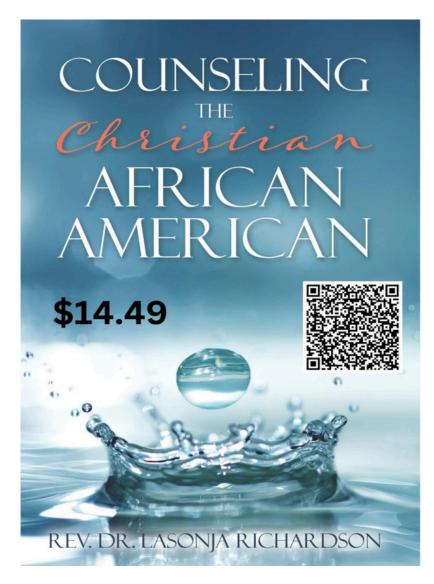
Dr. Christopher Trombly
College of Education
(203) 392-5989, TromblyC1@SouthernCT.edu



Counseling the Christian African American

Counseling the Christian African American is written from the dissertation Pastoral Counseling in the African American Churches of Metro Atlanta: Breaking the Stigma Associated with Asking for Help. It deals with the stigma that exists in the African American Christian community that seeking counseling services displays a lack of faith and is therefore unspiritual. However, as a new generation emerges with more liberal views on counseling and the role of the church, an opportunity to enhance pastoral counseling to bring it more in line with the licensed professional counselor exists.

The current lack of trained pastoral counselors in the African American church negatively affects the church's spiritual health, but offering counseling services can increase spiritual maturity. African American churches must re-evaluate their stance on counseling and begin to emphasize counseling as an acceptable and healthy practice.



Pastors must understand formal training is

vital to offer counseling and develop a referral network. They hold a unique and significant position in their congregants' lives and need to prepare themselves for the challenges that come with it.

This work delves into some of the reasons African Americans do not seek professional counseling and why they migrate toward clergy to discuss their issues.

Available in print or ebook at Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com or scan the QR code

Contact the author at: info@ablenwilling.com

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PRMS manages The Psychiatrists' Program, a medical professional liability insurance program for psychiatrists and behavioral healthcare groups, and has been a committed supporter of our organization throughout the years. Through our new partnership, that support will be expanded to further facilitate our efforts on behalf of psychiatrists and our patients. Additionally, PRMS will offer BPA members risk management resources, as well as collaborate on residents' outreach initiatives.

We encourage our members to consider their services when comparing liability insurance options. Please take a moment to complete this short <u>survey</u> and join us in welcoming PRMS as a partner. For more information about PRMS and their offerings, visit <u>PRMS.com</u>.



Congratulations to past Member-In-Training Trustee, Dr. Ja'Nelle M Blocker, MD, for being awarded one of AMWA's (American Medical Women's Association) 2025 Exceptional Mentor awards!

