THIRD QUARTER 2025



PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Much has happened since our memorable Spring Conference in Atlanta. Though many of these events have been troubling or tragic, I am reminded of the strength, unity, and purpose which define the Black Psychiatrists of America. The connections we forged and knowledge we shared the continue to inspire our collective efforts to shape



BPA President Stephen McLeod-Bryant, MD

health equity and fight for our minds.

One of the tragic events since the Spring Conference was the loss of our beloved colleague, Dr. Melissa Gray, who was tragically killed in a motor vehicle accident. Dr. Gray's passion for mentorship and her unwavering commitment to nurturing the future generations of Black psychiatrists left an indelible mark on our organization. In honor of her legacy, we wish to name our mentorship program The Dr. Melissa Gray Mentorship Program. This will serve as a living tribute to her spirit, dedication, and the countless lives she touched.

Our advocacy and leadership remain strong on the national stage despite attacks on diversity, inclusion, and health equity.



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

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President's Address, cont.

The BPA will be well-represented in the Psychiatry section at the NMA Annual Meeting in Chicago. In addition, many of our members are actively supporting the APA's efforts to recognize July as Bebe Moore Campbell's National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, amplifying the importance of mental health awareness in our communities. We are also collaborating with MJH Life Sciences to develop and distribute online content focused on Black mental health equity and disparity, ensuring our expertise and perspectives reach a broader audience.

As my tenure as President approaches its end, I reflect with gratitude on the progress we have made together. It has been an honor to serve alongside such dedicated colleagues. I look forward to passing the torch to Dr. Rahn Bailey, our President-elect, whose wealth of leadership experience in academia, the APA, and NMA will undoubtedly guide the BPA to new heights. He'll be joining an eager new group of Board members elected by the membership in the next couple of months to lead the organization. I also look forward to learning from invited experts from within and beyond our ranks forming our think tank to shape our strategic plan to address persistent disparities, support our members, and foster resilience in the face of ongoing challenges.

Our leadership transition will take place at the Fall Transcultural Conference in Grenada in November. Preparations are nearly complete with this year's theme, "Roots of Resilience: Confronting the Legacy of Racism and Advancing Mental Health in the Diaspora", inviting us to explore our shared history, celebrate our strengths, and chart a path forward for healing and growth across communities worldwide.

In closing, I thank you all for your unwavering support, your compassion, and your commitment to our mission. Let us continue to honor those we have lost by lifting each other up and working tirelessly to achieve mental health equity for all during these difficult times.

Stephen McLeod-Bryant

President, Black Psychiatrists of America

THIRD QUARTER

Fisk University's 2025 Commencement Speaker



BPA Immediate-Past President, Cynthia Turner-Graham recently celebrated her 50th college reunion at Fisk University. In addition, she was honored to serve as the Fisk University 151st Commencement speaker. "It was an amazing weekend, even if somewhat surreal" she commented. "It's hard to believe that so many years have passed!" Though a chemistry major, Cynthia attended college on a music scholarship, playing flute with the college Jazz Ensemble, the "Orchestrated Crowd," performing with Duke Ellington, Quincy Jones, Clark Terry and others notables of that time.







Juvenile Justice Pre-Conference: A Powerful and Inspiring Success

By Napoleon B. Higgins, Jr., MD

BPA's 2025 Spring Conference kicked off with a powerful virtual pre-conference program, *Juvenile Justice: Identifying Problems, Presenting Solutions*. This impactful event brought together students, residents, mental health professionals, and advocates to explore the deep connections between mental health and the juvenile justice system.

We extend our sincere thanks to **Dr. Dawn Porter** for helping coordinate this important discussion. Her leadership was instrumental in making the event possible. We are also incredibly grateful to **Professor Kristin Henning** for her insightful keynote address, where she highlighted the systemic criminalization of Black youth and shared key lessons from her groundbreaking book, *The Rage of Innocence*.

A heartfelt thank you goes to **Jason Davis**, whose personal story and work in violence prevention moved and inspired all in attendance. His honesty and ongoing efforts to transform communities deeply enriched the conversation.

We also thank **Clarence Davis, MD** and **Jourdon Robinson**, OMS-4, for grounding the dialogue in historical context and contributing thoughtful, actionable ideas for change. Their participation exemplifies the power of the next generation to lead reform and healing.

Together, we explored urgent issues and solutions—advocating for mental health care, policy reform, and justice-driven care for vulnerable youth. Thank you to all who attended and contributed to this vital conversation.



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 October 3, 2025.

The Black Psychiatrists of America Presents

2025 TRANSCULTURAL CONFERENCE

Roots of Resilience: Confronting the Legacy of Racism and Advancing Mental Health in the Diaspora



CONFERENCE INFORMATION

November 6-10, 2025 | St George's, Grenada

Hosted at the Royalton & St. George's University

Learn More & Register



Why I Do This Work: Letters from the Field

By Philipa Owusu-Antwi, MD

Dear healer,

I want to share what they don't often say out loud in lectures and conferences – the work we do is sacred but also hard. Sometimes beautiful. Sometimes gutting. Always necessary. Especially when doing it as a Black psychiatrist serving communities that were never meant to survive systems you now move within

There are days I wonder if I'm doing enough. If the weight of all the lives, traumas, and expectations is too much. I remember a patient who looked me in the eye after weeks of silence and said, "I didn't know a doctor could look like me. It makes it easier to breathe." I remember a mother who brought her son back to CPEP, not because he had improved, but because she had finally come to trust that we saw them as human beings. I remember the quiet dignity of a man who had been dismissed and criminalized his whole life, finally being listened to, not labeled.

It's not just about the diagnoses. It's about showing up in places where hope is holding the grief that's too heavy to carry alone. It's about telling a young Black girl with scars on her arms that her pain is real and healing is possible. It's about disrupting a system that still sees our people as statistics rather than as souls.

I didn't become a psychiatrist by accident. I was drawn to the mind, but even more so to the marginalized communities that the world forgets. I wanted to understand why certain systems repeatedly failed specific communities and what could be done to change that. I wanted to walk alongside those who have been gaslit by institutions, families, and even themselves and say, "You're not crazy. You're surviving."

I believe in redemption and harm reduction. The language of psychiatry should not be a gatekeeping code but a bridge between suffering, recovery, and support, between silence and voice. I do this work because someone once did it for me, whether it was a mentor who reminded me that I belonged or a patient who reminded me that healing isn't linear, I carry these moments with me.

To those just entering the field,

Imposter syndrome can be loud, but it's a lie. You belong here. Your perspective, shaped by your lived experience, culture, and community, is not a liability. It's your superpower. Don't assimilate into silence. We need you.



Why I Do This Work: Letters from the Field, cont.

To those who are tired,

Rest. Burnout is real, especially when you carry more than your share. Reclaim your peace. Let joy be your strategy.

Thank you to those who showed up, stayed, and built clinics in deserts, conducting research that centered on us and training the next generation, like me, with integrity and tenderness.

This letter is a reminder that our labor is not in vain. We are part of a long lineage of healers, agitators, caregivers, and bridge-builders. We are the work, the medicine, the reason someone made it through the day.

With hope and solidarity,

Hear from the bridge-builders, unwavering, who are transforming systems and standing in the gap.

"It's a privilege and honour to partner with persons affected by SUD to help them achieve their recovery goals."

-Dr. Adina Bowe

"I think this discussion of why we do this work is so important because, as Black psychiatrists, we have to join the enduring nature of the sociological plights of our patients."

-Dr. Rahn Bailey

"Our community deserves peace and wellness, and better than what we've gotten for mental health treatment."

-Dr. Danielle Hairston



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- 1. Click here to sign in.
- 2. Scroll down to see your membership level.
- 3. Select Auto-Renew, One-Time Payment, or Offline Payment.
- 4. Follow the prompts to pay.



Dr. Dionne Powell, the First of African Descent to be Elected to the Board of the International Psychoanalytic Association

By Stephen McLeod-Bryant, MD

This past spring, Dr. Dionne Powell was elected as the first Africandescended person to sit on the International Psychoanalytic Association Board as one of the North American Representatives. This association was founded by Sigmund Freud in 1910.

Dr. Powell adds to her already distinguished career: she holds the positions of Training and Supervising Psychoanalyst at the Columbia University Center for Psychoanalytic Training and Research and at the Psychoanalytic Association of New York (PANY), affiliated with NYU. Dr. Powell is also an Adjunct Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia University and a Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical College. She was also a member of the Holmes Commission and co-author of the seminal report, "In Pursuit of Racial Equality in American Psychoanalysis: Findings and Recommendations From the Holmes Commission", initially published on Juneteenth 2023.

We are indebted to her for her fierce pursuit of racial equity and equality in psychoanalysis and psychiatry!



Dionne Powell, MD

Have you visited BPA's Career Center? Click here!

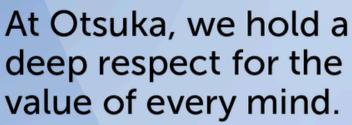










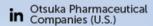


We will not rest until mental illnesses and brain diseases are approached with the same priority and urgency as our physical health and recognized as chronic diseases that warrant early, equitable, and accessible intervention.

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



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THIRD QUARTER 2025

BPA Spring 2025: A Record-Breaking Conference in Atlanta

By Napoleon B. Higgins, Jr., MD

The 2025 Black Psychiatrists of America Spring Conference in Atlanta was truly one for the books. With over **300 registrants** and support from more than **25 industry sponsors and grant partners**, this was our **highest attended Spring Conference in recent history**—and one of our most memorable.

We are especially grateful to **Dr. Sarah Vinson** and the **Morehouse School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry** for serving as our gracious host institution. Their partnership, warmth, and southern hospitality helped set the tone for the entire conference. It was a joy to meet and engage with Morehouse's **faculty, residents, students, and pre-medical scholars**, who opened their doors and made us feel right at home. Their presence was invaluable in creating a welcoming and enriching environment.

Held at The Starling Hotel Atlanta, the accommodations and venue exceeded expectations, offering a beautiful and functional space for meaningful connection and exchange.

Our **scientific sessions were "On-Point,"** offering rigorous dialogue and fresh insights that advanced the conversation on Black mental health in meaningful ways. The energy was electric.

With nearly one-quarter of our attendees made up of students, residents, and aspiring psychiatrists, the future of BPA is bright. This energy was beautifully complemented by the presence of senior psychiatrists, who provided wisdom, leadership, and mentorship throughout.

Thank you to every person who contributed. Your attendance, engagement, and support made this historic gathering possible. It will be hard to top, but we're already looking forward to doing just that in **New Orleans in 2026**.

—The Executive Team of the Black Psychiatrists of America



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Introducing The Transformed Minds — Where Healing Meets Evidence-Based Conversation

By Philipa Owusu-Antwi, MD

We're thrilled to announce the launch of The Transformed Minds, a new podcast, blog, and newsletter that brings together evidence-based literature, clinical expertise, lived experience, and meaningful dialogue to tackle the most pressing issues in psychiatric and addiction care.

Hosted by Philipa Owusu, Transformed Minds is an NIDA-funded and NMA-supported project focused on literature dissemination. It's more than just another mental health podcast — it's a movement to reimagine care through research, equity, and practical insights. Episodes feature real stories, expert guests, and grounded reflections on topics such as harm reduction, substance use, stigma, the role of faith in recovery, and how systems can improve their service to the people they support.

Premier Episode:

We kicked things off with the brilliant Dr. Ayana Jordan from NYU and The Jordan Wellness Collaborative as we unpack what collaborative care means for addiction treatment, community trust, and culturally competent systems.

Upcoming Guests:

- Dr. Sandra Gomez-Luna (Yale) on the Monitoring the Future survey and adolescent substance use trends
- Dr. Adina Bowe (CAMC) on breaking down barriers to evidence-based opioid use treatment and why stigma still lingers.

Tune in if you're a:

- Clinician seeking culturally-informed, evidence-based discussions
- A person with lived experience or a loved one navigating mental health or substance use
- Advocate, policymaker, trainee, or student looking to learn and transform systems from within

Listen now on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, or wherever you stream.

- Attps://open.spotify.com/show/6w4k1kWytMF75yxKcC693w?si=4cd3c5a12fcf4b11
- https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-transformed-minds-pod/id1823846113
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Introducing The Transformed Minds — Where Healing Meets Evidence-Based Conversation, cont.

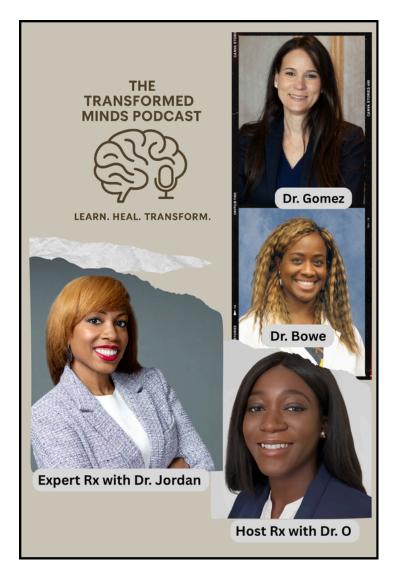
By Philipa Owusu-Antwi, MD

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Whether it's a Host Rx, Expert Rx, or Lived Rx, join insightful discussions with guests and the host at The Transformed Minds Podcast.

Expanding Horizons: A Full Day of Career Growth and Networking for Future Psychiatrists

By Napoleon B. Higgins, Jr., MD

On April 3rd, we hosted an inspiring and empowering **Research**, **Industry**, **and Career Speed Networking Event** at the Black-owned social club, **The Gathering Spot** in Atlanta. Over **75 trainees**, including medical students, residents, and aspiring psychiatrists, joined us for a full day dedicated to professional development, wellness, and career exploration.

The day was designed to address both the challenges and opportunities that come with a career in psychiatry. Attendees participated in sessions covering financial wellness, managing the stress of residency, and building sustainable strategies for success—featuring shared experiences and best practices from those who've been there.

A key highlight was our focus on **career pathways beyond the clinic**, with sessions that introduced attendees to **research, consulting, speaking engagements, and pharmaceutical industry roles**. We emphasized how these non-clinical roles can be meaningfully integrated into a traditional medical career.

Throughout the event, attendees heard from dynamic speakers who are actively working in psychiatry and related fields. They shared honest insights, practical tools, and inspiring stories that helped trainees envision a wider range of career possibilities.

We also offered **professional headshots** and encouraged participants to bring resumes, CVs, and business cards to connect directly with industry leaders and mentors.

This event was more than networking—it was about **empowerment**, **exposure**, **and preparation** for the future of psychiatry. As one participant put it: "You don't have to get ready if you stay ready."

We're proud to support the next generation of psychiatrists in building careers that are both impactful and fulfilling—inside and outside the clinic.

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Exciting News: New Post from One of Our Members Featured on PRMS Blog

We are thrilled to share that Dr. Oluwatosin Adebiyi, MD, MPH, a valued member of our community, has recently contributed an insightful article to the PRMS Blog titled "2024 Black Psychiatrist of America Transcultural Conference: Bridging Cultures and Centering Black Mental Health".

This article delves into the importance of transcultural engagement in mental health, particularly within the Black community, and offers a powerful reflection on the 2024 Black Psychiatrist of America Transcultural Conference.

Excerpt:

"As mental health professionals, it is vital that we recognize the cultural nuances that shape the mental well-being of Black individuals. The 2024 conference served as a transformative space to engage with the complexities of mental health, emphasizing the need to center Black voices and experiences in our practice. The discussions were not just about addressing the challenges, but about celebrating the resilience, strength, and contributions of Black communities."

We invite you to read the full article on the PRMS blog for an in-depth exploration of these critical themes and to reflect on how we can continue to support and uplift Black mental health in our work.

2024 Black Psychiatrist of America Transcultural Conference: Bridging Cultures and Centering Black Mental Health Reflection

As part of PRMS' ongoing commitment to behavioral health, we invited Dr. Oluwatosin Adebiyi, MD, MPH, a University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) Psychiatry Resident and incoming Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Public Track Fellow, to be featured as a guest blogger this month. Dr. Adebiyi reflects on her experience attending and presenting at the 2024 Black Psychiatrists of America (BPA) Transcultural Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, which PRMS was honored to support.

Read the full article here: https://www.prms.com/prms-blog/articles/2025/june/2024-black-psychiatrist-of-america-transcultural-conference-bridging-cultures-and-centering-black-mental-health-reflection/



Congratulations to Brittany Thompson who was selected for the 2025 American Psychiatric Association SAMHSA-Funded Resident Fellowship Program. This highly competitive fellowship recognizes residents who demonstrate outstanding leadership, clinical excellence, creativity, and a strong commitment to advancing the field of psychiatry.



Brittany Thompson, MD

On June 12, 2025, she also received two awards from her residency program:

Holly Fickle Award

Given to the resident who best embodies perseverance, courage, and spirit — in honor of Holly, a beloved PGY1 who passed away during residency from Marfan Syndrome.

Resident of the Year

Awarded to the resident (from any class year) who stands out for their work ethic, patient care, passion for psychiatry, and engagement in the program.

