



**BLACK MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE**  
**KEEP THE *WE* IN *WE*LLNESS**

Saturday, May 18, 2024 | 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM  
Hope + Elim Church | 2500 University Ave., DSM 50311

# *SCHEDULE*

*9:00 AM – 10:00 AM*

Registration Opens / Lite Breakfast / Vendors

*10:00 AM – 10:50 AM*

Welcome

Breanne Ward, CRC, LMHC | Keynote Speaker

*11:00 AM – 11:30 AM: Adult Track*

Art of Storytelling and Mental Health

Speaker: **Teresa Zilk**

Black LGBTQ Mental Health and Experiences

Speaker(s): **Kayla Bell-Consolver and Maxwell Mowitz**

Health Prevention: Addiction Trends and Common Challenges in Early Recovery - Facilitated by Mercy One

Speaker(s): **Breia Bell, Rebecca Peterson, and Kimberly Vancleave**

*11:35 AM – 12:05 PM: Adult Track*

Art of Storytelling and Mental Health

Speaker: **Teresa Zilk**

Black LGBTQ Mental Health and Experiences

Speaker(s): **Kayla Bell-Consolver and Maxwell Mowitz**

Health Prevention: Addiction Trends and Common Challenges in Early Recovery - Facilitated by Mercy One

Speaker(s): **Breia Bell, Rebecca Peterson, and Kimberly Vancleave**

*11:00 AM – 12:05 PM: Teen Track*

How to Talk to My Parents About Mental Health and Identity

**Moderator: Sir Michael Carrington Williams-Thomas**

Perfectionism and Self-Esteem

Presenters: **Deb Brewer-Cotlar & Amari Love**

*12:05 PM – 12:35 PM*

Lunch

*12:40 PM – 1:30 PM*

Black Mental Health Panel

*1:30 PM – 1:35 PM*

Closing

*1:35 PM – 2:00 PM*

Vendor Fair



## Meet Our Speakers

### Keynote




**Breanne Ward, MS, CRC, LMHC**  
(she/her)  
CEO, ForWard Consulting, LLC

**Breanne Ward** is a licensed Mental Health Counselor and a nationally recognized certified rehabilitation counselor with the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC). She earned a Master degree in Counseling from Drake University. Her undergraduate degree was obtained at Iowa State University, receiving a bachelor degree in Child, Adult, and Family Services with a specialization in Youth.

Breanne has extensive experience in the behavioral health field serving as a crisis interventionist, child and youth therapist, and community speaker. In 2014, she founded ForWard Consulting, LLC to provide culturally relevant speaking engagements and motivation-led conversations focusing on community change. March 2019, she was granted approval to provide mental health therapeutic services to persons 14 years old and up through this entity. Breanne has expertise in race-related, childhood, sexual, and intimate partner trauma. She utilizes CBT, EMDR, and trauma informed care practices to assist with changing the mindsets of those she works with. In 2020, Breanne became a state trainer for IHHS, formerly known as DHS, where she provides courses on Trauma Fundamentals and Inclusion Through a Different Lens.

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|  | <p>In January 2021 Breanne and her husband, Moses A Ward, Sr opened a group practice to fulfill their purpose and passion to support and guide people to obtain their overall wellness. Recently, Breanne has become a contributing author for Amazon’s Best Seller, <i>“We Are Women of Substance: Volume 2.”</i> She successfully completed and graduated from the Goldmans Sach 10K Small Business Program in May 2023 becoming a certified targeted small business through the State of Iowa.</p> <p>Mrs. Ward has great faith and continues to be a vessel in carrying out the work of her community and welcomes opportunities to strengthen and empower others.</p> |
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**Adult Track Speakers**

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|  <p><b>Teresa Zilk</b><br/>She/her<br/>Owner, Teresa Zilk Consulting, LLC</p> | <p><b>Teresa Zilk</b>, is the visionary behind the award-winning storytelling platform, <b>“Stories to Tell My Daughter.”</b> Stories to Tell My Daughter is dedicated to highlighting the stories and lived experiences of Black women and women of color in Des Moines and across the state.</p> <p>She is the owner of Teresa Zilk Creative Consulting LLC, a small business dedicated to helping organizations amplify their impact through storytelling. She provides consulting, facilitation, workshops, and uses a participatory approach to foster empathy, understanding, and to drive results.</p> <p>Teresa is a speaker, panelist, writer, and mental health advocate.</p> <p>She believes in the quote by poet Gwendolyn Brooks, <i>“We are each other's harvest; we are each other's business; we are each other's magnitude and bond.”</i></p> |
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**Maxwell Mowitz**  
He/They  
Program Director, One Iowa

**Max Mowitz** is the Program Director at One Iowa, Iowa's statewide LGBTQ advocacy organization. Max oversees organizational programming, direct service, and community education. Max has been active in LGBTQ advocacy work since coming out in high school, focusing on comprehensive LGBTQ education to the broader community as a component of LGBTQ liberation. Max is a certified Community Health Worker and specializes in topics related to the Trans and Nonbinary community, LGBTQ birth work, LGBTQ-inclusive healthcare, and mental health.

Max serves as a board member for the Iowa Trans Mutual Aid Fund. Max is pursuing their birth and postpartum doula certification and is practicing as a gender-affirming doula, serving Trans and Nonbinary individuals as they come out, access gender-affirming care, and live as their authentic selves. Max is passionate about justice and the liberation of all marginalized peoples. Max is a harpist, powerlifter, baker, abolitionist, and spouse to Austin.



**Kayla Bell-Consolver, MS, LMHC**  
She/Her  
Owner, Question Kayla, LLC

**Kayla** is a queer-identifying therapist and has worked in the mental health field since 2016. She completed her undergraduate and graduate degrees at Drake University. Kayla is the Owner of Question Kayla, LLC, which is a mental health training and public speaking business, and a mental health content creator, in which she has over 11k followers on Tik Tok. Kayla primarily serves as the Director of the Broadlawns Drake Student Counseling Center and is an upcoming Adjunct Professor of Counseling at Drake University Graduate Counseling Program, is a member of the National Physical and Mental Health Subcommittee and Des Moines Alumnae Chapter Tri-Chair for the Physical and Mental Health Committee for Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She is a QPR Gatekeeper instructor, which is a suicide prevention practice that teaches you effective ways to prevent suicide. She specializes in trauma informed approaches, especially as it relates to racial and LGBTQ+ related trauma, inner child work, and shame/low self-esteem.

In her free time, Kayla enjoys dancing, content creating, playing the clarinet, playing basketball, lifting weights, and spending time with loved ones.

Kayla is a certified One Iowa approved inclusive provider for the LGBTQ+ community.



**Kimberly VanCleave, MPA**  
She/Her  
House of Mercy

**Kimberly VanCleave** obtained a BS in Psychology and MPA (emphasis in Nonprofit Organizational Management) from Upper Iowa University. She has 25 years of experience working with government and non-profit organizations addressing policies, practices, and activities concerning human behavior in organizational settings and its implications. Much of Kimberly’s experience is focused on working with organizations at the intersection of human resources, law and social work, having worked in interdisciplinary teams to provide services and direction. She has worked at House of Mercy since 2015 as a Resident Counselor and currently as a Residential Services Manager. Kimberly provides guidance to behavioral health staff emphasizing/insuring the provision of qualitative therapeutic services and trauma informed care.



**Breia Bell, LMHC, IADC**  
She/Her  
House of Mercy

**Breia Bell** strives to provide all her clients with compassionate care and a safe place to process thoughts and feelings as they create change and reach their goals. She has helped individuals with a variety of issues including anxiety, depression, trauma, co-dependency, and addiction. She has worked as a primary counselor and mental health therapist at House of Mercy since 2015. She opened her private practice in 2023 to expand her reach serving the community. She is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) and Certified International Alcohol and Drug Counselor (IADC). She graduated from Drake University with her master’s degree in counseling in 2017.



**Rebecca Peterson, LMHC, IADC**

She/Her

House of Mercy

**Rebecca Peterson** has over 16 years of experience treating individuals and families impacted by substance use disorders and mental illness. She serves as the Executive Director of MercyOne House of Mercy, a CARF accredited mental health and behavioral health treatment facility. She is an adjunct professor in the Counseling Department at Drake University. She is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) and a Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor (CADC). She is trained in evidenced-based practices such as dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), child parent psychotherapy (CPP), intuitive eating, mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), circle of security (COSP) and eye-movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR). She provides clinical supervision to students and new counselors. She obtained her EdD in Leadership from Drake University. Her research focuses on racial health equity in healthcare settings. She currently serves as chairperson for the Iowa Council on Health and Human Services.



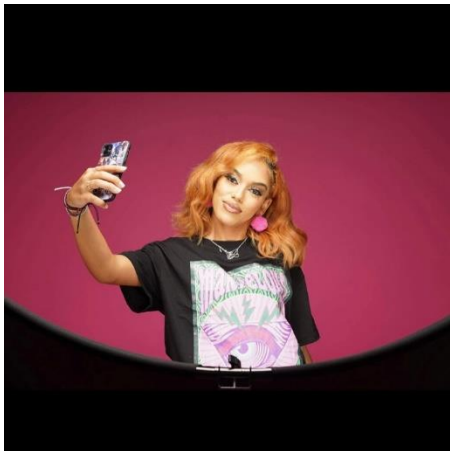
## Teen Track Panelist



**SirMichael Carrington Williams-Thomas**

Panel Moderator

**SirMichael Carrington Williams-Thomas**, is a young man focused on academic excellence, community stewardship, forming strong friendships via collaboration and authentic connections, highly values and respects the differences of others, is a staunch advocate who believes that it is his moral responsibility to fight for what is right as well as for those who do not have a voice, and with fidelity, exhibits servant leadership both within our community, his school, our state, and the nation. Currently, an exceptional freshman at Timberline School - Waukee, SirMichael Carrington Williams-Thomas is an honor student whose favorite subjects include AP Human Geography and Honors English. Despite his extremely busy extracurricular schedule, he maintains a 3.62 GPA and is a highly regarded member of the school Golf team. Serving as a vehicle for change, presently, Carrington serves as the Regional Teen President for the Central Region of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., overseeing the states of Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Colorado. He is a member of the National Teen Board (NTB), where he and his six peers help to strengthen and amplify the voices of Black teens on a national level. When he finds free time, avidly enjoys scuba diving, public speaking, playing golf, reading, listening to music, hanging with friends, riding horses, and spending quality time with his family.



**Nevaeh Hawkins**

Teen Panelist

**Nevaeh Hawkins**, is 18 years old and will be graduating from Roosevelt High School this year! Some of her favorite things are the color pink, airheads candy and helping people. She is always smiling and happy (even if it doesn't look like it). Nevaeh is excited about life and what her future brings.



**Hadley Harvey**

Teen Panelist

**Hadley Harvey**, is currently a Junior at Roosevelt High School in Des Moines and a member of the National Honor Society, C.O.R.E., Varsity Dance Team, and other organizations. She is also dual enrolled at Des Moines Area Community College, where she is pursuing coursework in Political Science and History. Hadley has served in many leadership roles including serving as the current chair of the City of Des Moines Youth Advisory Board and the current public relations chair of the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council. She is very passionate about youth advocacy and the wellbeing of others, and she continues to use her passion for others to amplify the voices of youth. Beyond just advocacy, Hadley loves music, is a successful speech and debater, and is a creative artist who loves to dance.



**Joshua Crawford**

Teen Panelist

**Joshua Crawford** is an 8th grader at Johnston Middle School. Josh serves as a youth leader at Life Church DSM where he uses his talents as a drummer and keyboardist. He serves as the Teen Chapter President of the Des Moines Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. He is a member of the NAACP. Joshua takes an active role in the community service and has a passion for helping and connecting people.



**Ayanna Murray**

Teen Panelist

**Ayanna Murray** is a graduating Senior at Ankeny High School. She has enjoyed her high school experience and is an active member in Student Council, Mental Health Club, Black Student Union, a Student Ambassador and Prom/Homecoming Committee. Outside of the school she is a Captain on the Ankeny Thunder Lacrosse Club, a Youth Leadership Initiative Alum, and Hero Academy Class of 2022. In the fall she will be attending the University of Iowa where she will be studying Communications and the US Air Force ROTC.

## ***Teen Track Speakers***



**Deb Brewer-Cotlar**

She/her  
Owner, Lifestyle Logistics

**Deb Brewer-Cotlar** is the owner of Lifestyle Logistics, which provides consultation and personal care concierge services to individuals and families dealing with life-changing events. In addition to her business, she currently works part-time at Talbots. She has worked as a Human Resources Professional in the areas of training and development, employment, and employee relations at Iowa Methodist Medical Center (now Unity Point), Dupont/Pioneer Hi-Bred International (now Corteva Agriscience), Drake University, Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa and Toys “R”/Babies “R” Us. She was Executive Director of the YWCA of Greater Des Moines. Throughout her career in human resources, non-profit management, anti-racism, social justice, and youth have been her passion and a unifying thread in her work and philanthropy. A lifelong volunteer she has dedicated service to the following organizations, Goodwill Career Connection Center, Mary E. Wood Scholarship, James B. Morris Scholarship Fund, Anawim Housing, Inc., Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences, Junior League of Greater Des Moines, Jack and Jill of America, Inc., Iowa Youth Chorus, and Des Moines Alumnae Chapter (Helen Lemme Scholarship

Committee). She has served on the Board of Trustees and Vestry at Corinthian Baptist and St. Andrews Episcopal Churches. Deb is a trainer for the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa co-facilitating a racial reconciliation program entitled, "Dismantling Racism". Deb recently accepted an appointment to serve on the Executive Council Committee on Anti-Racism and Reconciliation. She will be supporting the work of The Episcopal Church's commitment to Racial Healing, Justice and Reconciliation and other initiatives of churches in the region. She also serves our community as an elected official serving on the Polk County Ag Extension Council.

Born and raised in Iowa, Deb holds a Bachelor of General Studies in Business from the University of Iowa and received lifetime certification as a Senior Professional in Human Resources. She is a graduate of Dowling Catholic High School and is listed in the Who's Who of American Music Students. She enjoys golfing, gardening, and singing and is active in two book clubs. She has two children, Zachary Brewer, Zac (Sara) Couture and three wonderful grandchildren Oliver, Frederic, and Emma.

Deb Cotlar was inducted into our Beloved Sister in March 1978, Historic Delta Chapter on the campus at the University of Iowa. During her tenure with Delta Chapter, she served as Dean of Pledges.

As a member of the Des Moines Alumnae Chapter, Deb is the First Vice President | Program Planning & Development Chair overseeing the chapter's five programmatic thrust. She has served on the Helen Lemme Scholarship committee and as chair of the Arts and Letters committee. Under her leadership the Arts and Letter committee received an award at the Central Region Conference.



**Amari Love**

She/her  
Advisor & Graduate Student

**Amari Love** (*she/hers*) originates from the Southside of Chicago! Her roots in the Des Moines area began in her pursuit of completing a Bachelor of Science in Psychology at Drake University in 2017. In working so closely with people across many different intersections of life, she's come to love & appreciate making authentic connections with those around her.

With a passion for Mental Health, Amari is garnering a master's degree in clinical Mental Health & Rehabilitation Counseling, while serving in the capacity as an Academic Advising Specialist for the College of Arts & Sciences at Drake University. In addition to her professional role, Amari also serves as a mentor to Crew Scholars and an active advisor for the Coalition of Black Students, a student organization on Drake's campus.

Within her work with others, Amari aims to cultivate spaces of inclusivity and makes social justice an attachment of her work. She is a firm believer in creating equitable opportunities for all, but especially for those in the Black community. In her spare time, she loves to write poetry, blast music, make gourmet meals, accomplish DIY projects, and laugh lots with friends & family.



## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

