



Continuing the Conversation:
Addressing the Intersectionality between Historical Trauma and Mental Health in the Black Community

Wed., February 28, 2024 | 6:30PM – 8:00PM

Opening Remarks

- **Tee Leonardo-Santiago**,
Director of Outreach & Community Relations - New Jersey Division on Civil Rights

Moderator

- **Patricia D. Williamson**
Community Relations Specialist - New Jersey Division on Civil Rights

Continuing the Conversation Panelists (in Alphabetical Order)

- **Juan A. Rios, DSW, LCSW** - Assistant Professor of Social Work at Seton Hall University
- **Monique Swift, PsyD, LPC, LMHC** - Swift Solutions Consultant Services, LLC
- **Dwana Young, MPA**

Introduction to NJ Division on Civil Rights and the NJ Law Against Discrimination

- **Patricia D. Williamson**
Community Relations Specialist - New Jersey Division on Civil Rights

Bios & Headshots



Tee Leonardo-Santiago

*Director of Outreach & Community Relations
NJ Division on Civil Rights (Opening Remarks)*

Tisha “Tee” Leonardo-Santiago (she/they) holds the proud distinction of being the first Latinx Director of Outreach and Community Relations at the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights (DCR), where they provide strategic oversight and implementation of the Community Relations Unit’s statewide outreach and programming to support and uplift the Division’s initiatives, social media presence, and crisis response efforts to prevent and eliminate discrimination and bias in the Garden State. Tee’s team is also a crisis response unit following major civil rights incidents. As a community mediator, they engage in complex mediation, restorative justice practices, and community dialogue with a trauma-informed care lens. In recognition of the Unit’s exceptional outreach and Tee’s leadership, in 2023, Attorney General Platkin presented the Community Relations Unit the “Excellence in Community Outreach” Award and Tee the “Excellence for Exceptional Service Award.”

Before joining the Community Relations Unit, Tee began her career at the Division as a Bilingual Investigator in the Enforcement Unit, investigating employment and place of public accommodation cases while assisting with Division outreach. They served as the bilingual subject matter expert in developing and implementing the online complaint portal, the New Jersey Bias Investigation Access System (NJBIAS), launched in November 2020. Before joining DCR, Tee was the first Bilingual General Adjuster for one of the oldest insurance adjustment firms in the country, where they investigated commercial fire & theft, personal lines, fine arts & fidelity claims. Tee is a second-generation Latinx from Hudson County and a first-generation college graduate receiving their undergraduate and graduate degrees in Criminal Justice from New Jersey City University.



Patricia D. Williamson

*Community Relations Specialist
NJ Division on Civil Rights (Moderator)*

Patricia D. Williamson (she/her) is a Community Relations Specialist and Community Mediator in the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights' Community Relations/Crisis Response Unit. Patricia is the unit's lead on programming initiatives for race and religion. She is based in Trenton, and her primary counties are Somerset, Warren, Monmouth, Middlesex, Mercer, Burlington, and Hunterdon. Prior to this position, Patricia was the New Jersey Counts Project Director at the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice.

Patricia led the Institute's work to ensure a complete and accurate count of New Jersey's urban communities in the 2020 Census. Patricia was part of the Census 2020 NJ Coalition, and convened a sub-coalition of African American community-based organizations, non-profits, and institutions (such as clergy). Patricia worked for over 20 years as a systems engineer in the optical networking area of various telecommunications companies in New Jersey. She was also an adjunct professor at Bloomfield College.

Patricia resides in central New Jersey. She earned a BA in Mathematics from Hampton University, an MS in Computer Science from Howard University, and an MA in Education and Human Development in the Educational Technology Leadership Program at The George Washington University.



Dr. Juan Rios, DSW, LCSW

*Assistant Professor of Social Work
Seton Hall University*

Dr. Juan Rios, an Afro-Latino luminary in the mental health arena, is celebrated for his pivotal role in advancing social work and mental health advocacy. His journey is marked by a steadfast dedication to enhancing mental well-being, underscored by his rich educational tapestry and innovative contributions to the field. Holding a Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate in Social Work, Dr. Rios's academic prowess is further enriched by a certificate in Non-Profit Leadership from Fordham University and a certification in

UX/UI Design. He currently enriches minds as a full-time faculty professor at Seton Hall University, where he has also led as the Director of the Master of Social Work program. His expertise extends to clinical lectureships at Seton Hall Law School and adjunct lectureships at New York University, making significant academic impacts.

Dr. Rios's research ventures into vital areas such as the trauma experiences of Latinx migrant women, the benefits of mindfulness in undocumented children, and the intricate relationships between masculinity and depression. His work not only propels academic discourse but also influences national conversations on mental health challenges and solutions. A prominent figure in policy and public dialogue, Dr. Rios has shared his insights as a TEDx speaker and White House consultant, notably contributing to discussions on AI Equity and designing equitable, just communities. His scholarly contributions shed light on the adversities faced by marginalized groups, significantly enriching social work literature.

Dr. Rios has introduced groundbreaking curricula that leverage virtual reality to teach social justice, demonstrating his commitment to innovative and inclusive education. His active participation in diversity and inclusion initiatives at Seton Hall University and the Truth Racial Healing and Transformation Center initiative underscores his dedication to fostering social equity. In clinical practice, as the founder and Clinical Director of Rios and Associates Therapeutic Solutions, LLC, located in Jersey City, NJ where he works predominantly with racialized Black and Brown men, Dr. Rios employs a person-centered therapeutic approach. His integration of various clinical modalities reflects a profound empathy and understanding of the human condition. His diverse accomplishments and influential work establish Dr. Rios as a formidable advocate for mental health and a source of inspiration in social work. His resilience and optimism are further exemplified by his support for the Knicks, showcasing his unwavering spirit.



Dr. Monique Swift, PsyD, LPC, LMHC

Swift Solutions Consultant Services, LLC

Dr. Monique Swift, proprietor of Swift Solutions Consultant Services, LLC, is a psychologist, a NJ Licensed Professional Counselor, and a NY Licensed Mental Health Counselor. She has almost 30 years of clinical experience in the field of mental health and operates a private practice in Rahway, NJ where she specializes in couple's therapy and trauma.

In addition to her clinical work, Dr. Swift also offers keynote talks, curriculum design, personal development workshops, and professional training. She consults with religious, community-based, and non-profit organizations, public and private schools, as well as with private groups. As a trauma expert, she offers consultation to organizations that want to become trauma-informed. She specializes in issues that form at the intersection of trauma and race.

Dr. Swift is actively involved in racial social justice efforts and initiatives. Her extensive volunteer work typically benefits the Black community specifically, and oppressed and under-served populations, in general. Her volunteer activity often involves grassroots and civic organizing, personal and community empowerment building, and addressing issues of racial inequality, and racial trauma.

Dr. Swift serves on several boards including the Board of Advisors for Volunteers of America, the Newark Community Collaborative Board, the Board of Advisors for the Newark Community Street Team, and the Union County Juvenile Conference Committee under the Family Division of the Superior Court. Since 2014, she has also served as an executive board member of the New Jersey Chapter of The Association of Black Psychologist and is immediate Past President of the chapter. Dr. Swift additionally chairs the Strategic Planning Committee of the national board of The Association of Black Psychologist.

Dr. Swift's special interests include youth empowerment, race and social issues, and holistic health.



Dwana Young, MPA

Dwana is a seasoned professional with an extensive background in both state and federal spheres, accumulating an impressive 18 years of experience. Her journey has been marked by a steadfast commitment to child advocacy, policy development, and community engagement, making her a standout leader in the field.

Motivated by an innate passion for equity and justice, Dwana has dedicated herself to serving communities with unwavering knowledge and excellence. As the owner and principal consultant at Seed to Sequoia, LLC, she specializes in providing exceptional consulting services

in various areas, including Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), curriculum design, program development, and more.

Dwana's educational journey began at Montclair State University, NJ, where she earned her Baccalaureate degree in Humanities and Human Services Counseling. Her academic achievements continued as she graduated Summa Cum Laude from Fairleigh Dickinson University with a Master's degree in Public Administration. Later, she assumed the role of an adjunct professor within the same department, contributing to the education of future leaders.

Her expertise extends to being an ACEs trainer, holding certificates in Public Management, Adolescent Advocacy, LGBTQI Safe Spaces, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the workplace. Dwana has actively engaged in discussions and panel sessions with renowned figures such as Dr. Rob Anda, Laura Porter, Dave Ellis, Congressman Andy Kim, and Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, showcasing her influence in the field.

Participating in critical dialogues surrounding ACEs, Dwana has collaborated with organizations like the Passaic County Prospectors office and the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights, shedding light on the impact of trauma in New Jersey communities.

Dwana's involvement extends beyond her professional endeavors; she is an integral member of the Thomas Edison State University's Human Services Advisory Committee and the New Jersey Federation of Democratic Women, Burlington County. Her past contributions include membership in the Rutgers University and Department of Child Protection (DCF) and Permanency (DCPP) new worker training curriculum design team, DCF Race Equity strategy team, DCF Truth and Reconciliation committee, and the Office of Resilience (OoR) Actions 4 ACEs strategist.

Recognized by both private and public organizations, Dwana has received accolades for her extraordinary commitment to advocacy and equality. Beyond her professional life, Dwana is a caring sibling, a loyal friend, and the proud parent of a 1-year-old mini goldendoodle. Her multifaceted approach to life reflects a deep sense of purpose and a genuine dedication to making a positive impact in the world.