

PSYCHES OF COLOR
MENTAL HEALTH THAT
LOOKS LIKE YOU.

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2024 -
DECEMBER 31, 2025

This is a snapshot of Psyches of Color's work, highlighting our impact, programs, financial health, and growth over the course of 12 months. It's a way to share our successes, challenges, and the stories that shaped our journey over the past year.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Inside, you'll find reflections from our leadership, data and milestones from our core programs, our mission, vision, our team, our service. This report celebrates the people, partnerships, and progress driving our mission forward.





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OUR STORY

Psyches of Color, Inc (POC). was founded by engaging the youth in South Central LA in a mixed method community-based participatory randomized control trial research pilot, which is rigorous community-based research, that assists us in bridging the gap between academic and the community. The goal was to hear the voices of the Black and Brown communities and found that, similar to literature results, mental health systems are lacking cultural relativity. Also, the mental health system is lacking a connection with Black and Brown communities, which may result in Black and Brown people believing that therapy is not for them. Their voices moved us to establish Psyches of Color and guided us in how to specifically engage Black and Latinx youth through culturally appropriate outreach, service and research. Our cultural priorities center the mental health needs of Black and Latinx youth in ways that are sensitive and responsive to systemic and historic barriers that have kept Black and Brown youth from accessing and seeking mental health support. With this foundation we have structured our service model to be accessible, Youth Led, and reflective of our leadership's lived experience.

TABLE OF **CONTENTS**

- About POC
- Welcome Message
- Our Vision
- Our Mission
- Our Service
- Our Programs' History
- Exert Your Voice
- Nurturing POC
- Penpal POC
- Research Lab
- Black and Brown Minds M.A.T.T.E.R.
- Mentoring POC Healing Arts
- Family Support
- Meet Our Team
- Stay Connected with us!



PSYCHES OF COLOR
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ABOUT PSYCHES OF COLOR

Psyches of Color, Inc. (POC) was founded by psychologist, activist, professor, and researcher, Dr. Tierra T. Ellis, to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline given the following alarming facts: 1 in 3 Black boys born today will be incarcerated at some point in their life; Black girls are 6 times more likely to be suspended when compared to White counterparts; Latinx youth are 2-3 times more likely to be incarcerated when compared to White counterparts; and Black and Latinx youth are disproportionately suspended and expelled and, due to mental health stigma, are least likely to seek mental health services. Dr. Tierra piloted Black Minds Matter that served as a catalyst to the establishment of POC.

POC addresses the urgent gap in mental health by delivering strengths-based and culturally relevant mental health support that equips Black and Latinx adolescents and young adults to take charge of their mental health and become leaders of their communities through the POC youth-led program model. Psyches of Color positions Mental Health at the core of its work while integrating it with various arts-based and hands-on learning approaches that complement our culturally relevant approaches for our Black and Latinx adolescents and young adults and their families.



PSYCHES OF COLOR
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ABOUT PSYCHES OF COLOR (CONTINUED)

Students, community members, and mental health professionals are trained to teach strengths-based and culturally relevant mental health curriculum for Black and Latinx adolescents and young adults between the ages of 13-25. POC's interventions provide constituents with the tools and support necessary to address the mental health of BIPOC families and communities through community-based participatory research integrated in our programs, allowing opportunities to pilot and evaluate the effectiveness of our programs. POC has established a Research Lab that is also led by Dr. Tierra T. Ellis.

POC is committed to providing a safe, brave, and affirming space so that we allow our youth to feel liberated in being their authentic selves in our spaces. This further fosters healing in a healthy and organic way, and debunks the myth that "mental health is for White people," a sentiment often expressed in BIPOC communities. POC conducts ongoing Community-Based Participatory Research using the Ellis Community-Based Participatory Research (E-CBPR) Liberation model on our programs to evaluate our programs' effectiveness and to include the community in our research processes. Our founder, Dr. Tierra T. Ellis established the POC Research Lab and has invited students at various local universities; the students work closely with the POC nonprofit throughout every step of the way. Since its founding, POC has served over 18 cities, and six countries as we have globally welcomed Black and Latinx youth across the country. POC has also provided local and global formal internship and practicum opportunities to college and graduate students in Los Angeles, CA, Kutztown, PA, and The Netherlands.



WELCOME MESSAGE

Dr. Tierra Therese Ellis is the Founder and Executive Director at Psyches of Color, Inc. Dr. Tierra earned a Ph.D. in School Psychology from Howard University; two Bachelor Degrees in Psychology and African & African American Studies, and a minor in Dance at Arizona State University. Dr. Tierra is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Licensed School Psychologist, and Community Psychologist. She founded Psyches of Color, Inc. after facilitating the Black Minds M.A.T.T.E.R program where she conducted rigorous research in South Central LA with youth enrolled at a continuation school with court-involved youth who all had been arrested at some point in their lives. She created the Black Minds M.A.T.T.E.R program pulling from her experiences while working at the DC Superior Courts where she conducted psychological evaluations on court involved youth and after working at the schools in the prisons in East Baltimore and Jessup, MD, where she supported the mental health of youth charged as adults who were in special education. She further pulled from her own personal marginalized youth experiences that assisted her with creatively creating the intervention. She stands strongly by the phrase, "Be who you needed when you were younger." The qualitative results and needs of the pilot research study - as indicated from the youth's voices - are what created the Psyches of Color, Inc. nonprofit organization. She currently holds the title of Miss Compton USA and will compete in the Miss California USA pageant competition this August 2025. Her platform is centered on the work she does at Psyches of Color.

OUR VISION

VISION 01

DESTIGMATIZATION LEADS TO RADICAL HEALING

Addressing the stigma around mental health in Black and Brown communities paves the way for radical healing and positive growth among Black and Latinx youth.

VISION 02

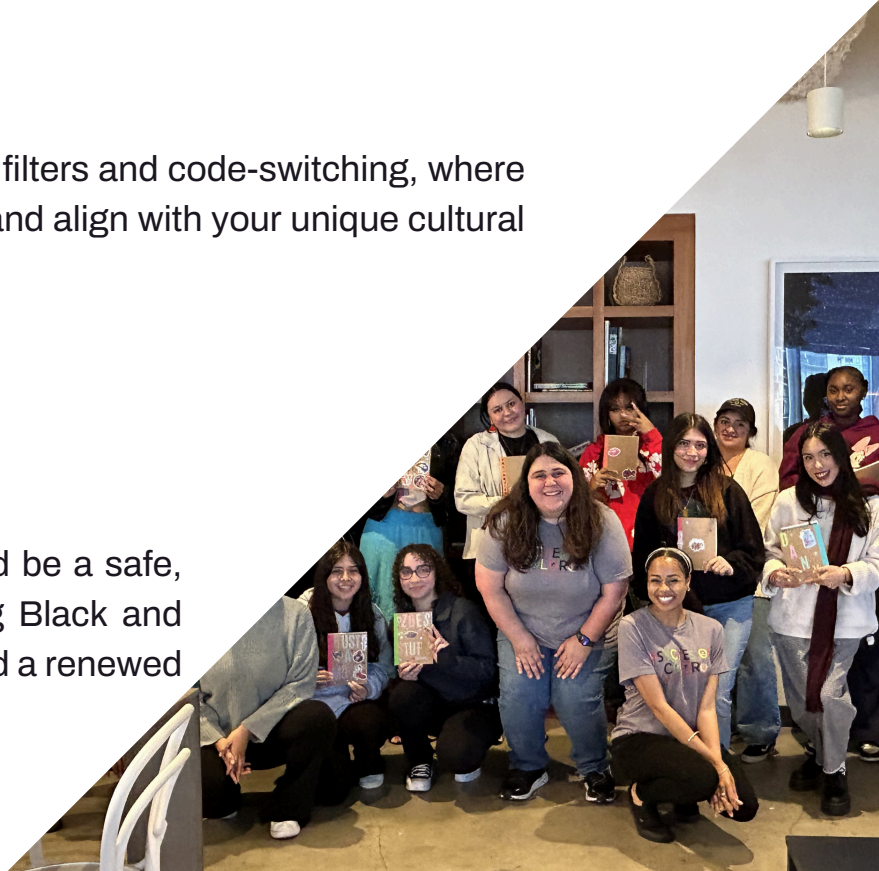
MENTAL HEALTH THAT LOOKS LIKE YOU

This is a culturally sensitive space free from filters and code-switching, where mental health care is made to look like you and align with your unique cultural identity.

VISION 03

NEVER DIM YOUR LIGHT

Mental health support and advocacy should be a safe, empowering, and inspiring journey, guiding Black and Latinx youth toward liberation, optimism, and a renewed sense of excitement and hope.





OUR MISSION

MISSION

Psyches of Color, Inc. is a grassroots nonprofit that uses strengths-based and culturally grounded approaches to support at-risk Black and Latinx adolescents and young adults. Our mission is to decrease mental health stigma, promote radical healing, and help youth become agents in their own mental health while developing a sustainable pipeline of future Black and Latinx mental health professionals through training, leadership development, and research pathways.

GOAL

Our goal is to normalize mental health to help adolescents and young adults increase motivation to approach goal-oriented outcomes as well as build on their strengths using culturally relevant approaches, which may foster more positive perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes related to self, others, and their education.

OUR SERVICE

Psyches of Color, Inc. was founded specifically to engage Black and Latinx youth through culturally appropriate outreach, service, and research. The cultural priorities of our organization are to meet the mental health needs of Black and Latinx youth in ways that are sensitive and responsive so that mental health is inviting to our youth. In 2020, POC was founded by engaging the youth in South Central LA in a mixed method community-based participatory randomized control trial research pilot. Thus, their very perspectives, experiences and values laid the foundation for POC's programming. POC is also Black and Latinx youth-led which ensures that youth always have a voice in our programming. Since inception, we have created multiple opportunities to listen to the youth we serve to develop and adapt our services. We have the POC Research Lab, led by Dr. Tierra T. Ellis, where we conduct community-based participatory research that is structured in such a way where experts and community members work alongside each other to evaluate our innovative programmatic impact. In addition, to build trust and ongoing relationships with the youth we serve, families, artists, and cultural practitioners, POC invites them to our board meetings to share their insights so that we may incorporate their voice into our programming, upholding our grassroots approach to being transparent with the community and addressing their needs.

Our organization currently serves Black and Latinx adolescents between the ages of 13-25 and their families. Our two-prong approach include 1) strengths-based and culturally relevant approaches to provide mental health support – to at-risk Black and Latinx adolescents and young adults – to decrease the stigma of mental health and promote radical healing and 2) expose and provide access to culturally sensitive mental health care through mental health education, trainings and workshops, innovative culturally sensitive approaches, and advocacy skills through developmentally appropriate tracks to Black and Latinx adolescents and young adults (13-25).

Our planned work involves expanding our workforce development initiative and civic engagement. Our goal is to expand our work and provide paid internships and positions for our youth and professionals. In addition, we plan to scale our programs by supporting students in high schools in LA county to address the mental health needs of Black and Latinx students.



OUR PROGRAMS' FOUNDING HISTORY



Exert Your Voice – June 8, 2020

Family Support – June 8, 2020

Black and Brown Minds Matter (POC's Catalyst program) –
January, 2019

Mentoring Psyches of Color Healing Arts – June 8, 2020

Nurturing POC – February 23, 2021

Penpal POC – March 6, 2021

POC Research Lab – May 22, 2022

POC Pride – June 2024

Workforce Development Psychology Internship and Fellowship –
March 29, 2025

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP & FELLOWSHIP

The POCWDPIF program offers a yearlong, developmentally tailored internship/fellowship for high school, college, graduate, and post-graduate students. Interns and fellows engage in specialized tracks offered in all of the programs and integrate clinical and community psychology. With a strong focus on individual and collective goals, the program nurtures emerging leaders across the mental health field by centering culturally responsive training, mentorship, and hands-on experience.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP & FELLOWSHIP GRADUATES



Beverly Biscocho
Exert Your Voice Program Chair



Michael Calderon-Journell
Research Lab Assistant



DeArie Coleman
Nurturing POC / Precollege Track



Lylah Franco
Nurturing POC / Precollege Track



Natalie Gonzalez
Nurturing POC Program Chair



Deonce Green
Research Lab Assistant



Goodness Oniyelu
*Mentoring POC Healing Arts
Youth Lead Chair*



Kenya Cedillo Osorio
Research Lab Assistant



Lirio Pelayo
Penpal POC Program Chair



Erica Reynoso
Penpal POC Youth Program Chair



Jessica Venegas
*Mentoring POC Healing Arts
Program Chair*

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP & FELLOWSHIP WORKSHOPS PT. 1



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP & FELLOWSHIP WORKSHOPS PT. 2



EXERT YOUR VOICE

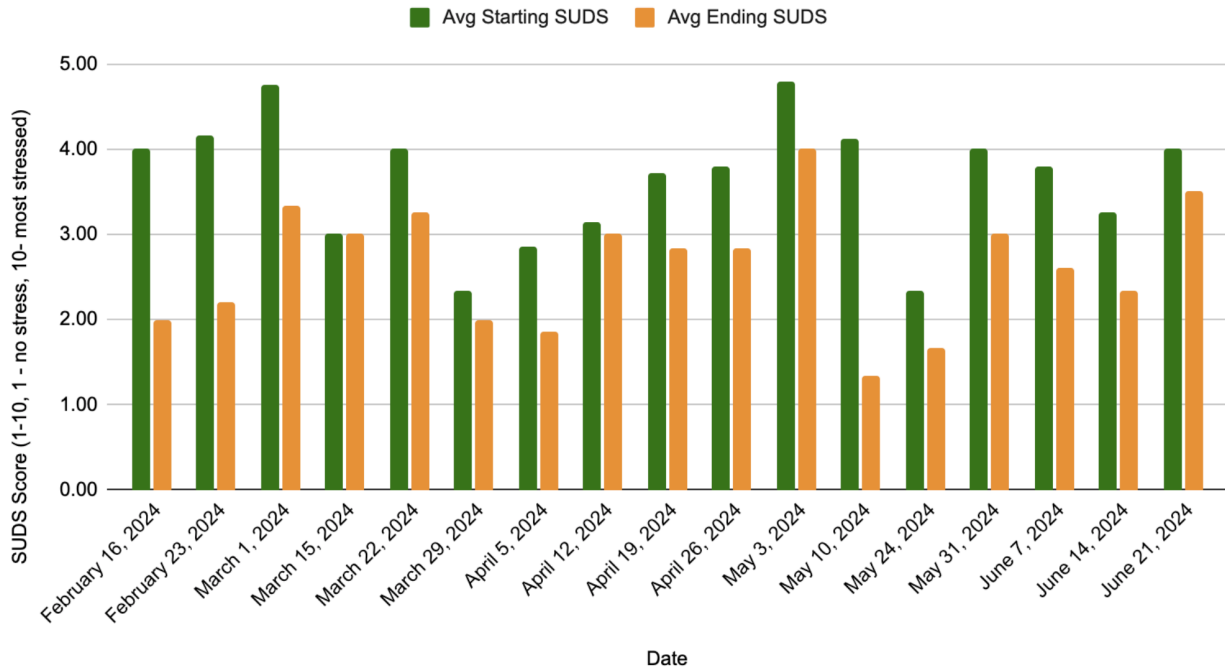
EXERT YOUR VOICE

The Exert Your Voice program offers workshops that provide youth with creative outlets to express themselves through journaling, music creation (e.g., hip-hop, rap), storytelling, and other artistic forms. Recognizing the importance of releasing intense emotions, the program uses creative expression as a tool to help youth process, explore, and communicate their feelings in safe and meaningful ways.

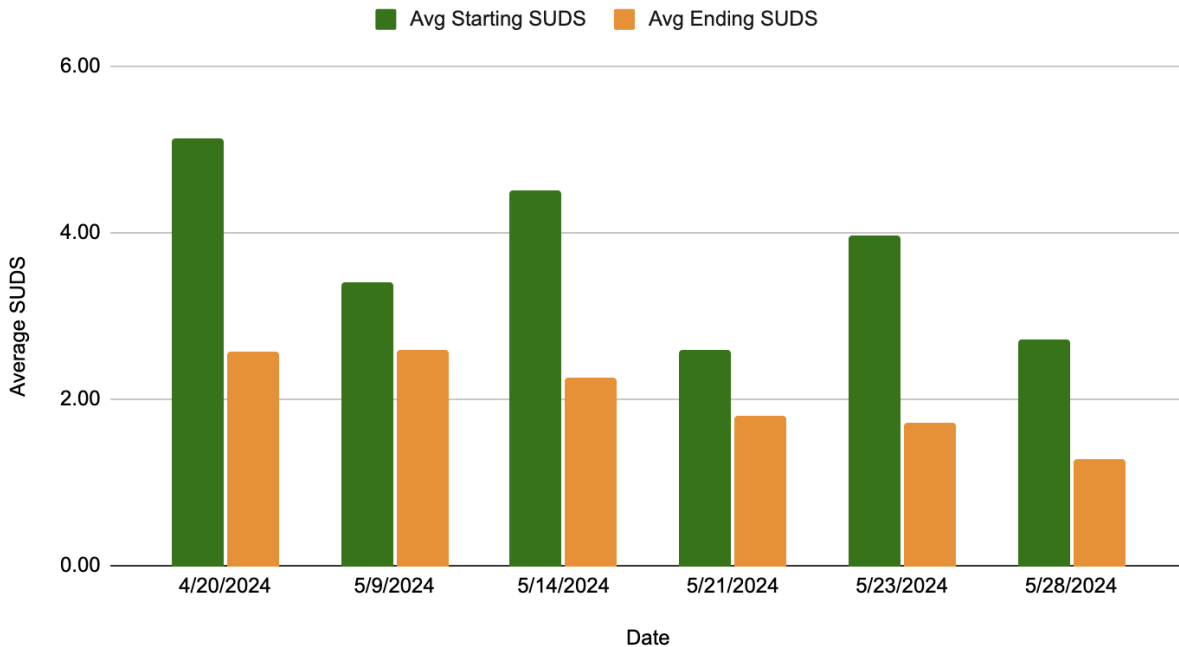


EXERT YOUR VOICE SUBJECTIVE UNIT OF DISTRESS SCALE (SUDS)

EYV Online Instagram Lives 2024 Avg Starting SUDS and Avg Ending SUDS



2024 EYV in person Avg Starting SUDS and Avg Ending SUDS



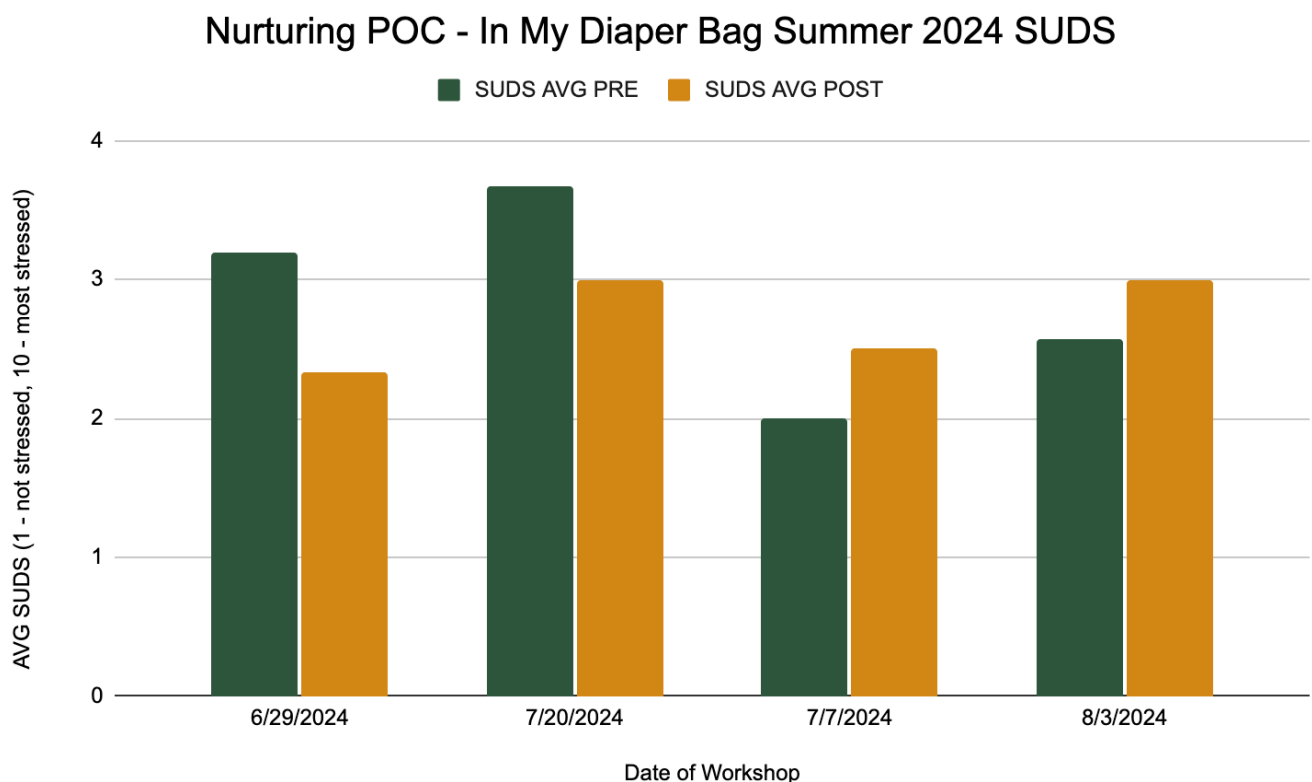
NURTURING POC

NURTURING POC

Nurturing POC is centered on supporting teen/young adult parents and their babies by 1) providing resources to support their mental wellness related to parenting and 2) provide prevention-based mental health education and resources on mental health-related parenting topics from a culturally sensitive framework and 3) reduce feelings of isolation by providing opportunities for teen/young adult parents to connect with others through education/support groups. We encourage all parents to take advantage of our support, especially those who have babies with developmental concerns or “diverse abilities.”



NURTURING POC SUBJECTIVE UNIT OF DISTRESS SCALE (SUDS)



It should be made of note that the young mother's had their children with them and this may have distracted them.

PENPAL POC

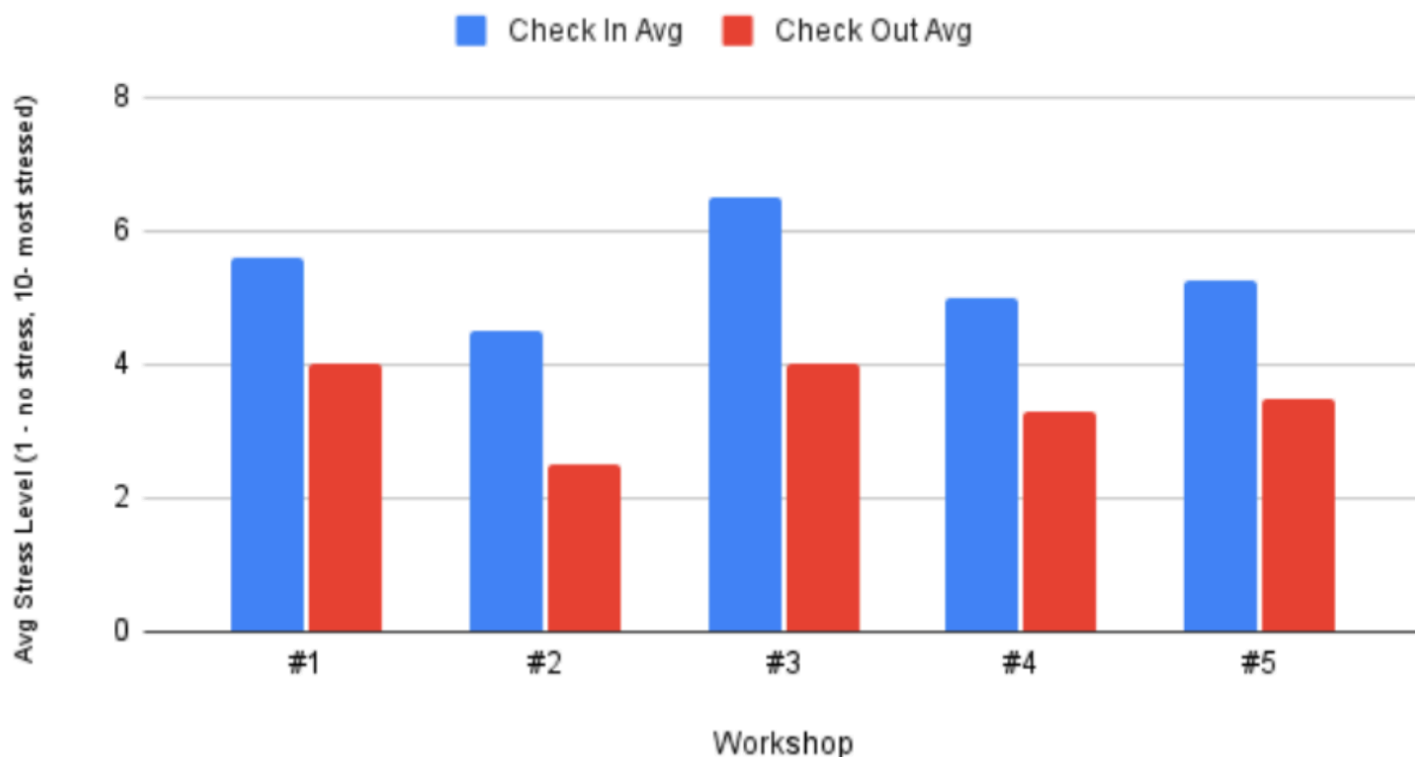
Penpal POC is a creative program that gives youth the opportunity to engage in meaningful written dialogue about life beyond system involvement. System impacted Psyches of Color POC youth connect with peers who have shared experiences, fostering hope, solidarity, and the understanding that true freedom mentally and physically is collective. Youth are considered system impacted when any system, such as carceral, foster care, school, or hospital, has affected their mental health, either directly through personal experiences or indirectly through the experiences of others. Through Penpal POC, participants share stories, build connections, and amplify their voices to advocate for systemic reform and increased opportunities for change.



PENPAL POC QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Cultural Stigmas	100%	Participants addressed biases and cultural stigmas within the latinx community. Those who seek mental health support anticipate being labeled as crazy. They can potentially receive social consequences because of these stigmas.	Eye Opening	100%	Participants spoke about how they learned more about themselves. They attested about how insightful the experience was and how it opened them to alternative perspectives.
Safe Space	100%	Participants shared that the intervention environment was a comfortable space for them to be vulnerable. They also appreciated the greater cultural understanding they had with the Black and Latinx facilitators.	Safe Space	100%	Participants shared that the intervention environment was a comfortable space for them to be vulnerable. They also appreciated the greater cultural understanding they had with the Black and Latinx facilitators.
Mindfulness	100%	In order to be more in tune with their bodies, participants would improve their self monitoring. They used journaling in order to be more aware of their own triggers. Participants emphasized the significance of the mind-body connection and how it relates to healing.	Open to Mental Health Support	100%	Participants were all open to seeking support from a psychologist or mental health professional.
Social Justice Advocate	100%	Participants expressed motivation to further their own education on how to act as a change agent and mental health advocate for their communities.	More Content	100%	Participants expressed their desire for the intervention to be longer so they could learn more in-depth information about the topic. They were motivated to learn more background information about the workshop topics

Subjective Units of Distress (SUDS) Average Data



RESEARCH LAB

RESEARCH LAB

The POC Research Lab applies strengths-based and culturally responsive principles to its research, with the goal of fostering radical healing in Black and Latinx adolescents and young adults through community-based participatory research. Established in Spring 2022, the Lab operates in alignment with the mission and values of Psyches of Color, Inc., which seeks to destigmatize mental health in Black and Latinx communities and promote holistic well-being. The Lab is committed to bridging the gap between academia and the community, ensuring that research is collaborative, relevant, and grounded in the experiences and needs of those it serves.



BLACK AND BROWN MINDS M.A.T.T.E.R.

BLACK AND BROWN MINDS M.A.T.T.E.R (BBMM)

Black and Brown Minds M.A.T.T.E.R is a trauma-informed, culturally relevant positive youth development (PYD) group created by Psyches of Color, Inc. founder Dr. Tierra Therese Ellis. The program aims to reduce mental health stigma by providing a safe, brave, and affirming space for youth. Participants learn to recognize mental health signs and symptoms and develop adaptive coping strategies. Through interactive group activities, the program normalizes their experiences while fostering advocacy, self-empowerment, and leadership skills. The group integrates mental health education with hip-hop culture and Black and Latinx cultural experiences, creating a space that is both relatable and transformative.



BLACK & BROWN MINDS M.A.T.T.E.R EVOLVED THEMES

<p>Black Community Support</p>	<p>The “healthy conversations” and overall communal component were endorsed as something participants liked most about the group through their engagement with Black peers and group facilitators. Participants further endorsed Black support groups as an outlet when faced</p>	<p>100%</p>
<p>Cultural Relatability</p>	<p>The “healthy conversations” and overall communal component were endorsed as something participants liked most about the group through their engagement with Black peers and group facilitators. Participants further endorsed Black support groups as an outlet when faced with cultural barriers.</p>	<p>100%</p>
<p>Mentoring</p>	<p>The “healthy conversations” and overall communal component were endorsed as something participants liked most about the group through their engagement with Black peers and group facilitators. Participants further endorsed Black support groups as an outlet when faced with cultural barriers.</p>	<p>100%</p>
<p>Black Representation & Authenticity</p>	<p>The “healthy conversations” and overall communal component were endorsed as something participants liked most about the group through their engagement with Black peers and group facilitators. Participants further endorsed Black support groups as an outlet when faced</p>	<p>100%</p>
<p>Healthy Learning Experience</p>	<p>The “healthy conversations” and overall communal component were endorsed as something participants liked most about the group through their engagement with Black peers and group facilitators. Participants further endorsed Black support groups as an outlet when faced with cultural barriers.</p>	<p>100%</p>
<p>Exert Your Voice</p>	<p>The “healthy conversations” and overall communal component were endorsed as something participants liked most about the group through their engagement with Black peers and group facilitators. Participants further endorsed Black support groups as an outlet when faced with cultural barriers.</p>	<p>100%</p>
<p>Grounding</p>	<p>Participants described their journaling experience as one that allowed them to freely “Exert Your Voice”</p>	<p>100%</p>
<p>Empathy</p>	<p>Participants described their journaling experience as one that allowed them to freely “Exert Your Voice”</p>	<p>100%</p>

MENTORING PSYCHES OF COLOR HEALING ARTS (MPOCHA)

MENTORING PSYCHES OF COLOR HEALING ARTS

Mentoring POC Healing Arts (MPOCHA) connects adolescents and young adults with community mentors who provide guidance on personal and career-related goals. The program integrates art, mentoring, mental health, and culture to create a holistic learning experience. MPOCHA introduces Black and Latinx youth to mental health tools through interactive art education workshops inspired by local artists, alongside mental health workshops facilitated by professionals and trainees. These group experiences are complemented by individualized one-on-one mentoring sessions that center on each youth's personal, mental health, and career goals, fostering growth, skill development, and empowerment.



MPOCHA GRADUATES – COHORT 2

mentors

Daniela aguilar
SKI MONTIJO
Kaylen BARRON
CHRISTOPHER MONTIJO
Jacqueline Sanchez
TAYLOR Page
JOHanna S. MELendez
Kaiya sanABRIA

mentees

SOFia mares
PRISCILLA CUELLAR
Kieana HAMILTON
BRADLEY PIERCE
BERNICE BRÛLÉE
Kenya CEDILLO
Kennedy JENNINGS
emily



MPOCHA GRADUATES - COHORT 3



MALAKAI VENEGAS



DARRYL SIMMONS



JAKE VIRAMONTES



VAUGHN WALKER



ELIZABETH HERNANDEZ



MARTHA TOLENTINO



AR'MANI DUNGEY



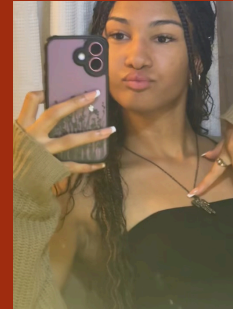
TSASIA MERCADO



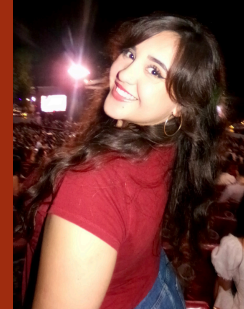
**ASHLEY MALDONADO
NEYRA**



DANIELA AGUILAR



KILAYA BEVANS



NIRVANA HARO



LARISA RUBIO



SAMANTHA CALDERON



LYLAH FRANCO



KENYA METOYER



SHAKARA GRIMES



GISELE GENOVEZ

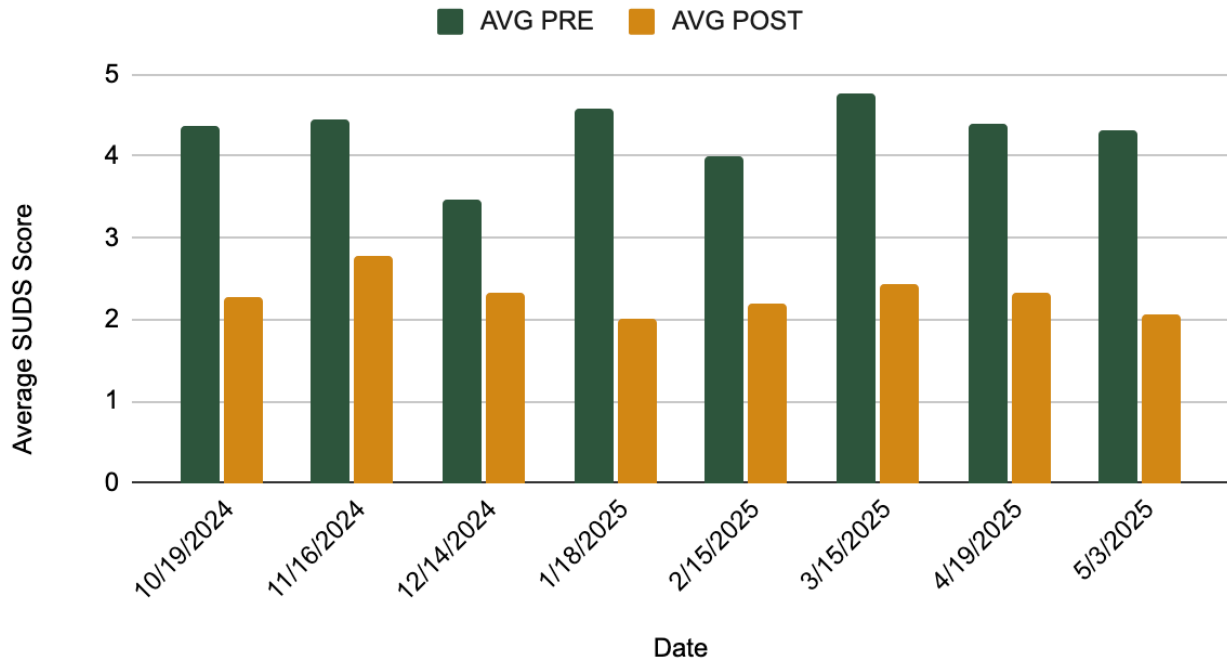
MPOCHA GRAMMMY MUSUEM FIELD TRIP

The Mentoring POC Healing Arts (MPOCHA) program took interns, fellows, mentors, and mentees on an inspiring field trip to the Grammy Museum, where they explored the history, creativity, and cultural impact of music across generations. Together, they engaged with interactive exhibits, learned about legendary artists, and reflected on how art and storytelling shape community healing. The visit offered a meaningful blend of education, creativity, and connection that gave participants a chance to experience the power of the arts in a new and energizing way.



MPOCHA SUBJECTIVE UNIT OF DISTRESS SCALE (SUDS)

MPOCHA AVG SUDS PRE AND POST Cohort 2



MPOCHA TOTAL AVERAGE SUDS COHORT 2



FAMILY SUPPORT

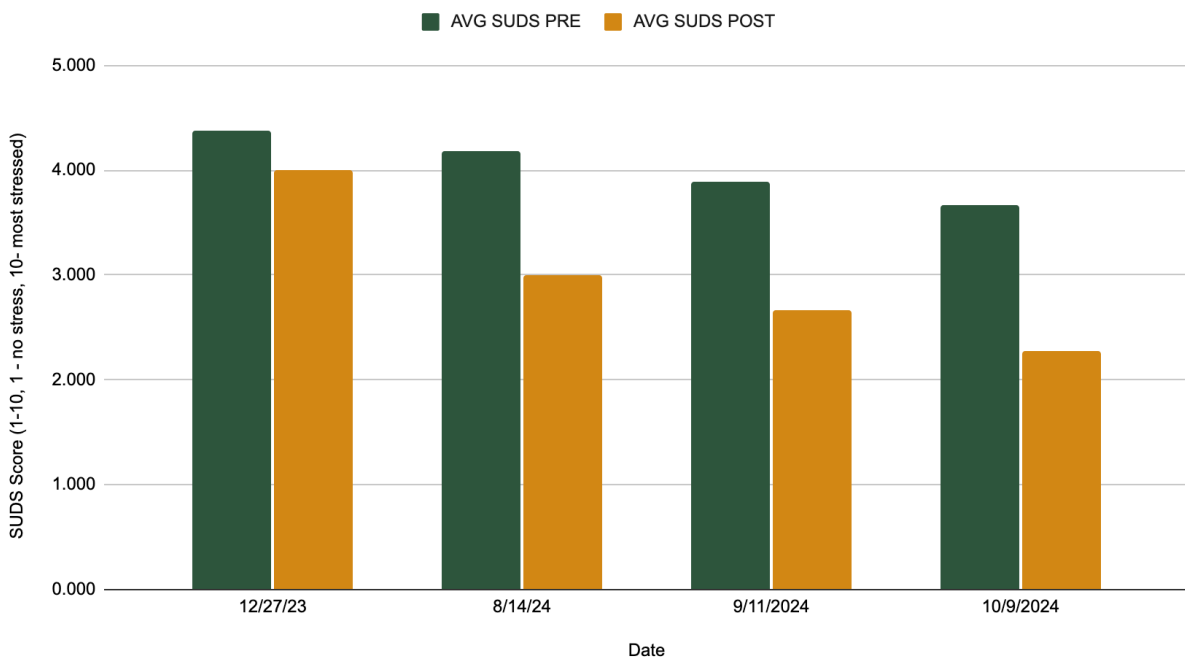
FAMILY SUPPORT

The Family Support Program provides group-based support for the loved ones of the youth we serve. We recognize that supporting youth holistically requires attending to the well-being of the family unit as well. These groups are designed to support family members of Black and Latinx adolescents and young adults, ages 13–25, while providing mental health education and resources to enhance understanding and coping skills. Family members of any age are welcome to participate. Additionally, the program periodically engages in fundraising initiatives to address the tangible needs of participating families, further strengthening community support.



FAMILY SUPPORT SUBJECTIVE UNIT OF DISTRESS SCALE (SUDS)

FAMILY SUPPORT - SUDS (FAITH FOSTER FAMILIES)



INAUGURAL MENTAL WELLNESS DAY

The Psyches of Color Inaugural Wellness Day brought a day of self-love, care, and mental health conversations to the Compton, CA community. Attendees enjoyed free haircuts, braiding, makeup sessions, a comedy show, educational artist workshops, and a DJ, alongside panels and discussions addressing key mental health topics in Black and Latinx communities. The event also featured a powerful keynote speech and free food from local Black- and Latinx-owned restaurants, creating a vibrant space for connection, celebration, and wellness.



MEET OUR TEAM

Dr. Tierra T. Ellis



Dr. Tierra is the Founder and Executive Director at Psyches of Color. She is from Phoenix, AZ and lives in Los Angeles, CA. Dr. Tierra earned a Ph.D. in School Psychology from Howard University, two Bachelor Degrees in Psychology and African & African American Studies, and a minor in Dance at Arizona State University. Dr. Tierra is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Licensed School Psychologist, and Community Psychologist. She created Psyches of Color, Inc. after facilitating the Black Minds M.A.T.T.E.R program where she conducted rigorous research in South Central LA with youth enrolled at a continuation school who had all been arrested at some point in their lives. She created the Black Minds M.A.T.T.E.R program pulling from her experiences while working at the DC Superior Courts where she conducted psychological evaluations on court involved youth and after working at the schools in the prisons in East Baltimore and Jessup, MD, where she supported the mental health of youth charged as adults who were in special education. She further pulled from her own personal marginalized youth experiences that assisted her with creatively creating the intervention. She stands strongly by the phrase, "Be who you needed when you were younger." The qualitative results/needs - as indicated from the youth's voices - are what created the Psyches of Color nonprofit organization.

Dr. Sahran Hamit



Dr. Sahran is the Program Manager at Psyches of Color. She is from and resides in Inglewood, CA. Dr. Sahran earned a PhD in Counseling Psychology from Howard University, Masters of Arts Degree in Mental Health Counseling at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, C.U.N.Y, and a Bachelors Degree in Psychology; she is a registered psychologist in the state of California. She joined Psyches of Color to utilize her expertise and training to support Black and Brown communities.

Grant Wamack



Grant is the Psyches of Color Community Outreach and Volunteer Services Coordinator. He is from Chicago, IL. and lives in Los Angeles, CA. He has an Associate's Degree in the Liberal Art from Waubensee Community College. Grant is a Navy Veteran and is currently a published author of seven books who frequents the horror genre. He joined Psyches of Color to give back to Black and Brown communities and help the youth improve their mental health.

WHAT WE PLAN TO DO IN THE NEXT YEAR

- Cohort 2 of Workforce Development Psychology Interns and Fellows
- 6th annual Retreat in January 2026
- Research Lab conducts Program Eval #3
- 2nd Annual Mental Wellness Day 2026 on Saturday, May 30, 2026
- Community Trainings!



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STAY CONNECTED WITH US



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