

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Circular

APRIL 2023- JUNE 2023



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT
slobehavioralhealth.org

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What Does it Take?

Introduction

Content by Nancy-Ann Keonaona Jambor, MA, LMFT

“If we spent half the time not talking about the differences but the similarities between us, the entire planet would have a shift in the way we deal with each other.” - Idris Elba quoted in an article by Mahadevan, T., Complex, February 10, 2023.

What does it take to make such a shift, especially when we anticipate dealing with someone whose differences appear to us more evident than any similarities? As we work with colleagues and community partners to advance our work, finding ways to make this shift may enrich our communication, our connections, and our communities.

A recent personal example may serve to highlight some possibilities in making this shift. I hired a handyman who, upon arriving to complete the task, announced that he was raised with fundamentalist Christian religious beliefs. He shared this information openly. However, he went on to explain, without prompting, that he had moved seven years prior to his current residence, a remote home deep in the Oregon woods, as a result of deciding to follow personal astrological guidance to live in his “house of service.” He explained that this was a significant shift in the way he made life choices, and was at odds with his religious upbringing. He went on to express how deeply connected he believed he was to his life purpose by following this guidance. I felt an easy “crosswalk” connection with the service orientation he expressed, as that guides my own professional and personal life. Religion, astrology, and personal life choices can be ticklish topics in conversation with either a new or familiar acquaintance. The handyman’s openness to sharing his point of view, and my willingness to engage from my own standpoint, made for a wonderful if brief connection. Perhaps this kind of shift is the kind that can highlight similarities among us, without ignoring differences, but emphasizing our human connectedness.

Begin curious. Intercultural communication research has identified curiosity as an essential attitude for engaging with other people, all of whom can be expected to demonstrate differences as well as similarities to our own self-perception and perspective. Curiosity can help illuminate moments of interaction with intriguing possibilities for learning more about us and others. Curiosity can also help each of us practice getting more comfortable with liminality – sitting with the ambiguities of our human lives.

What Does it Take? (Continued)

Introduction

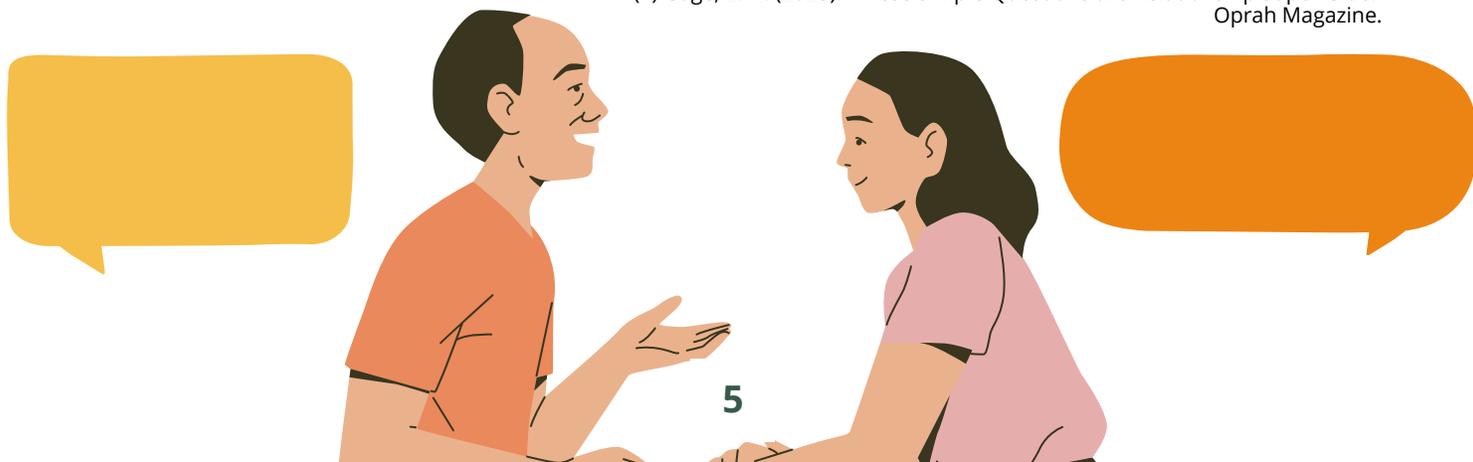
Content by Nancy-Ann Keonaona Jambor, MA, LMFT

In Behavioral Health contexts, some key questions and responses that may help to open the way for curiosity to create connections are suggested by Gage (2023) (1) in an article highlighting interactional approaches that she calls “relationship super glue.”

1. Turn towards the other person. Gottmans’ concept of “turning towards” another person rather than turning away sets the stage for engaged communication. This emotional posture is fueled by curiosity. Providing full and present attention to another human being is a cornerstone for connection.
2. “Are you available to talk?” This question provides an option for both communication partners to choose a good or better time to engage. A yes to this question hopefully means the person is willing and able to be curious about what comes next.
3. “Have we had any misses lately?” Leading with curiosity and allowing for the sense of liminality – simply not knowing all that might be knowable – gives this question potency. It invites honest feedback about anything “sticky” that can then “be brought to the surface, acknowledged, and as needs be, processed and actioned” (Gage, 2023). This process can help train our hearts, minds and skillset to better read other people’s cues, and step into conversation with them in a way that builds rapport and connection.
4. “What’s helped you feel seen and heard lately?” This question, again asked with curiosity, can provide important lessons to each of us in how another person identifies a respectful interaction, or reacts to a situation they find diminishing to them. Respect may be a universal value; the ways in which it is recognized in actual practice may vary considerably.

Most behavioral health practitioners have been trained not to disclose personal information during interactions. The suggestion to actively explore similarities in a reciprocal manner counters that training, asking instead that each of us contributes to connection by sharing personal perspectives with colleagues, co-workers, and community partners. In this context, each person is an equal contributor. There was such an opportunity in my conversation with the handyman. Unasked, I offered a brief, pungent, and resonant explanation of my own professional orientation: “In my work, I help others to hold onto hope.” This seemingly led him to say more, share more, and connect more. Delightful.

(1) Gage, E. N. (2023). These Simple Questions are Relationship Super Glue. Oprah Magazine.



Mental Health Awareness Month

May 2023

During this month, we focus on bringing support to our communities and fostering engagement on the subject of mental health. Mental health is undeniably a topic of great importance in the County of San Luis Obispo community. The [2018 County of San Luis Obispo needs assessment](#) revealed that 16.2% of adults in the county reported needing professional help with an emotional-mental and/or alcohol-drug issue in the past year.

Check out SLO Behavioral Health's [website](#) and the [Take Action for Mental Health Toolkit](#) online for more ways to get involved.



International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia

May 17th, 2023

Content by Katherine Soule, Ph.D.

This date memorializes the World Health Organization's declassification of homosexuality as a mental disorder in 1990. Yet, thirty-three years later LGBTQ+ individuals continue to face systemic barriers that impact health and well-being. A 2020 study in California, including SLO County, found that systemic gaps and discriminatory practices prevent LGBTQ+ individuals from accessing affirming care (Soule, Pacheco, & Baldwin, 2020). Researchers found that:

- Discriminatory actions and microaggressions in care settings discourage LGBTQ+ individuals from seeking care. For example, care providers often assume patients' gender and sexuality and 38% of care providers reported that they do not ask about or address health concerns specific to patients' LGBTQ+ identities. (Learn how to [assess gender and sexual history](#).)
- 100% of providers responded that they demonstrate an effort to display affirming practices. However, only 35% LGBTQ+ individuals felt their provider was affirming. (Learn how to [provide a welcoming environment](#).)
- There is a general apathy towards providing affirming care as 63% of providers reported that additional education was unnecessary to treat LGBTQ+ patients. (Sign up for [UC Cooperative Extension's Providing Affirming Care Workshop](#).)

This May, we invite you to commit to learning more ways to prevent discrimination and violence towards LGBTQ+ individuals in our communities.

Pride Month

June 2023

Pride Month is celebrated in June to honor the 1969 Stonewall Riots in Manhattan. This month-long event is intended to celebrate the LGBTQIA+ community and honor their current and historic impact on our country. Pride Month events typically consist of parades, parties, workshops, concerts, and other events centered on learning and celebration of the LGBTQIA+ community.



Juneteenth

June 19th, 2023

What is Juneteenth? On June 19th, 1865, word reached slaves in Texas about President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which had been presented two years prior. Black communities in Texas and beyond celebrate this day on which the slaves learned of their freedom. Furthermore, in 2021, Juneteenth became a national holiday ([NAACP](#)).

How can I celebrate Juneteenth? The San Luis Obispo County NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) branch hosts a Juneteenth celebration every year. Their 2023 event is in the process of being planned, so check back at their [website](#) for more information as June approaches.

How can I learn more about Juneteenth?

There are many resources available with comprehensive history about Juneteenth. The [NAACP](#) has information on the importance of the holiday and ideas for taking action. The [Black Lives Matter](#) website also contains valuable information on the history of Juneteenth and the continued pursuit of Black freedom. Furthermore, the [National Museum of African American History & Culture](#) has in-depth information about the history of Juneteenth.



Upcoming Events

SLO Film Festival's Showing of "Mama Bears"

April 30th, 2023 @ 4:00pm at Downtown Center Cinemas 4

The showing of this documentary is sponsored by Tranz Central Coast and Growing Together Initiative: An LGBTQ+ Fund.

Spread across the country but connected through private Facebook groups, over 30,000 mothers in America—many from conservative, Christian backgrounds—fully accept their LGBTQ+ children. And they call themselves “mama bears” because while their love is warm and fuzzy, they fight ferociously to make the world kinder and safer for all LGBTQ+ people. MAMA BEARS explores the journeys of two mama bears and a young lesbian whose struggle for self-acceptance exemplifies why the mama bears movement is vitally important.



More Information:

<https://slofilmfest.org/events/mamabears/>

Tickets:

\$15 General

\$12 Student/Film Society

Journey of Hope

May 1, 2023 @ 5:00pm, New Life Community Church Pismo Beach

JOURNEY OF
H O P E

Presented by Transitions-Mental Health Association

An exploration of teen mental health through personal stories, education, and community connection

featuring
Amanda Lipp



Amanda Lipp is a documentary filmmaker, consultant, and social entrepreneur working at the intersection of mental health care, storytelling, and technology.

Amanda has produced over 80 short documentary films about mental health and social impact. Drawing on her own personal experience with mental health challenges, she is focused on elevating complex topics like youth psychosis, mass trauma, LGBTQ advocacy, and recreation therapy. Since age 18, she has given over 150 talks and workshops around the globe sharing mental health resources, films, and her own personal story.

Please join us on May 1st to hear about Amanda's inspirational journey, along with local presenters sharing their stories and celebrations of resilience!

Sponsored by:



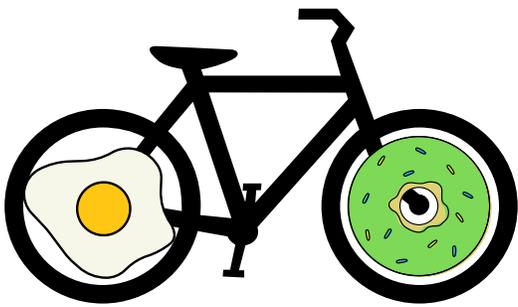
More Information:

www.t-mha.org

Upcoming Events Cont.

May Mental Health Month Bike Breakfast

May 18, 2023 @ 7am-9am, SLO Behavioral Health Prevention and Outreach office in San Luis Obispo



More Information:

www.slocounty.ca.gov/MayMH

All are welcome to attend this inclusive community event to celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month. Community members are encouraged to bike (or walk) to support Bike to Work Week; physical exercise is a great way to take care of your mental health! Stop by the free event for breakfast, music, games, mental health resources, more. Take your breakfast burrito to-go or stick around for activities and friendly conversation. Stay tuned for more details available on SLO Behavioral Health's [May Mental Health Awareness page online](#).

SLO Pridefest

June 2-4, 2023 in San Luis Obispo

Pridefest in San Luis Obispo will be held in 2023 from Friday, June 2nd through Sunday, June 4th. Events on Saturday, June 3rd will be held at Laguna Lake and will include performances, food vendors, and family-friendly activities. Furthermore, there will be a Pride Parade in downtown San Luis Obispo on Sunday, June 4th. Stay tuned for more details available from the [GALA Pride & Diversity Center](#) and from the [SLO PRIDEfest website](#).



More Information:

www.slopride.com

RESOURCES



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RESOURCES
[CLICK HERE](#)



LGBTQIA+ AFFIRMING
RESOURCES
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