

October 23, 2023

CREATING AN ALEXANDRIA AFRICAN AMERICAN WELLNESS HUB

The Northern Virginia Health Foundation June 2023 Report Dying Too Soon found **Black/African Alexandrians are 117% more likely to die before age 75 than their white neighbors.** It also maps Fifteen "Islands of Disadvantage" across Northern Virginia. Seven of these "Islands" are in Alexandria City and the Richmond Highway area of Fairfax County. Woodbridge, one community where native Black Alexandrians settled after being displaced, sits in another "Island." The NVHF report recommendations are structural but general. <https://novahealthfdn.org/resources/dying-too-soon-report>

On April 6, 2022 the Alexandria Council of Human Services Organizations (ACHSO) meeting agenda included the 2020 Census with the Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning. Twice during this meeting, PLTI brought up the need to address the unique, historic, and ongoing experiences for Black residents, and particularly African American residents in Alexandria. PLTI suggested the exploration of a citywide "Small Area Plan" for African Americans, functioning similarly to the targeted policy concern in the Arlandria-Chirilagua Plan, that would allow the City to mitigate the structural policies that, whether intentionally and unintentionally, targeted and displaced the African American community.

The ongoing work of the PLTI Alexandria People's Assembly is a specific, local, Black-led, community-based solution. Our focus on structural racial justice and mental health support is grounded in an Optimal Conceptual Worldview as defined by Distinguished Psychologists and founder of Optimal Psychology, Dr. Linda James Myers. Optimal Psychology, and associated African psychological cultural wellness methodologies, are directly aligned with NVHF report recommendations. Any reasonable response must be in partnership, and under the direction of, a self-determining, African-centered, Optimal Psychological approach from knowledgeable, competent Black Alexandrian leadership, using culturally congruent, holistic techniques. We refer you to the resources listed on page two.

The PLTI Alexandria People's Assembly is calling for an African American Wellness Hub in Alexandria to recognize and effectively achieve the desired goal of addressing systemic racism, and the immediate health needs of people of Black/African Ancestry in Alexandria City. This call is inspired by the Oakland City and Alameda County, CA partnership with The Association of Black Psychologists, under the direction of Dr. Wade Nobles. <https://www.postnewsgroup.com/oakland-city-council-approves-funding-for-african-american-healing-hubs/>

The singular vision and sole purpose of the California initiative is to create, design and develop an African American Wellness Hub. The Hub will, in turn, serve and guide the improvement of current services and expand the creation of needed services for the Black/African American community. The Hub will be grounded in the direct application and implementation of the science of Black psychology, the cultural wellness methodologies found in African American traditions and the best of other culturally congruent therapies and practices in behavioral health care. This is also Alexandria's charge.

Here's to Your Clean Hands, Calm Mind, and Unspeakable Joy,



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RESOURCES TO UNDERSTAND BLACK/AFRICAN PSYCHOLOGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ALEXANDRIA AFRICAN AMERICAN WELLNESS HUB

Association of Black Psychologists ABPsi.org.

An Interview with Dr. Linda James Myers <https://youtu.be/IhoUEhZ1IJk>

An Interview with Dr. Wade Nobles <https://youtu.be/kxVC-h4vlio>

A Black Education Network (ABEN) <https://www.aben4ace.org/>

Myers, L. J. (1993). Understanding an Afrocentric world view: Introduction to an optimal psychology. Kendall/Hunt. (Original work published 1988).

Nobels, W. W. (2023). Skh From Black Psychology to The Science of Being. Universal Write Publications, LLC.

A Black Education Network (2023). A Soul-Centered Approach to Educating Teachers

Community Healing Network Resources developed in partnership with ABPsi

Community Healing Network CommunityHealingNet.org.

Northern Virginia and Alexandria Based Resources

Dying Too Soon: In Northern Virginia, The Risk of Dying Before Age 75 Depends on Race, Ethnicity, & Address <https://novahealthfdn.org/resources/dying-too-soon-report>

14 May 1968 Concerned Citizens Document Systemic Racism for City Council
<https://bit.ly/14May1968>

Equity Can't Share The Same Space as Fear. Racial Justice Alexandria
<https://medium.com/@racialjusticealexandria/equity-cant-share-the-same-space-as-fear-d33dfe6c0424>

PLTI Alexandria People's Assembly 2023-2024 Community Education & Healing Alexandria Film Festival

On **Sunday November 12, 2023 from 2:30-5:30p** the PLTI Alexandria People's Assembly is curating an Alexandria Film Festival Showcase on the theme **Affordable Housing Advocacy: Stories of Structural Oppression, Black Resilience, and People Power**. A panel discussion about the generational impact of racial injustice and affordable housing on African American mental health will follow the screening.

<https://www.plti-alex.org/affordable-housing-advocacy-film-showcase.html>

Alexandria People's Assembly Hosted Family-Centered Sound Baths

Our Juneteenth Symposium Community Partner Lazarus Ministries is returning to host 4 Family and Community Sound Baths (December/Kwanzaa-Nguzo Saba, February/Black History, May/Mental Health Awareness, October/Indigenous People's)

PLTI Alexandria People's Assembly Nov 2022 Recap https://youtu.be/kmyLhDIqv_Y

PLTI & CLTI Alumni Testimonials <https://www.plti-alex.org/testimonials.html>



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