

STEPHANIE LEWIS



Stephanie Lewis-LMFT is the Acting System of Care Director, Crisis Services, Alameda County Behavioral Health (ACBH) and responsible for the oversight, direction, planning, and development of the full spectrum of crisis services and multidisciplinary teams throughout Alameda County. Stephanie received her BA in Psychology from UC Santa Cruz and her MA in Clinical Psychology from San Francisco State University. With nearly 25 years of experience collaborating with direct service providers, including mental and physical health clinics, emergency medical services and law enforcement, Stephanie also provides various trainings to students, consumers, clinicians, community partners, and professionals in the criminal justice system. Topics include mental health, crisis evaluation, de-escalation, risk assessment, effective crisis interventions, and cultural responsiveness.

Stephanie is always striving to balance mind, body, and spirit through healthy relationships, meditation, yoga, and giving back to many communities. Her life motto is “I can do anything for at least 365 days straight”. She hopes to retire one day, leaving a legacy of authenticity and hope.

We honor you, Stephanie as a phenomenal woman in Behavioral Health!



Stephanie Lewis

What motivated you to pursue a career in behavioral health? I became motivated to pursue a career in behavioral health?

After a few very difficult teen years during which I experienced severe anxiety / depression and hospitalization subsequent to a suicide attempt. The care I received was excellent but there were not any providers of color available to me. So I became what I needed as a youth and haven't regretted the decision. Representation matters. Affinity groups matter. Being really seen and heard is everything!

How has the behavioral health culture changed for women in the field during your time in the profession?

There is more diversity now than when I first began. I am happy to see women of color who belong to many other groups whether it be discipline, sexual orientation, and lived experience leading the charge as we further develop services that meet the needs of the many communities we serve.

Was there another woman/mentor/figure that inspired you in your work? If so, who was it and why did she inspire you?

I was reared by a very strong grandmother who was born during the Great Depression and thus was not afforded the same opportunities to pursue a college education as I was. Yet, my grandmother was wise from an early age and seemed to be the informal therapist in her small community in a rural Texas town. As a child, I witnessed her use some of the same techniques of de-escalation, crisis management, and developing rapport with very troubled individuals, that I was later taught in college. So, behavioral health is part of my DNA. My grandmother is now 92 and was recently diagnosed with dementia. I am now able to pour into her what she so freely poured into me and others in our community. She is and will always be my inspiration to help others.

What impact have women had on behavioral health in the way we provide service?

I truly believe that women are the heart and soul of behavioral health services. We are the way makers, and the light bearers in the darkest of times. This is evident in societies where women lead. This is true for behavioral health departments, as well.

What changes have you seen in behavioral health because of women “shaking the table”?

I believe women have been at the forefront of advocacy for the inclusion of people with lived experience in the work. Additionally, it’s been my experience that women do a better job prioritizing and encouraging the inclusion of self-care practices to prevent burnout and vicarious trauma. I might be wrong, but I believe a woman was the first to utter the words, “ I need a mental health day” and did just that unapologetically.

The year is 2124. ACBH leadership is opening a time capsule that was created and filled in 2024. What did you place in it?

I placed a Phoenix bird into the time capsule. The Phoenix symbolizes immortality, resurrection, and life after death. I truly feel that a person lives forever when their name is spoken, or their legacy felt long after death. I am very intentional about planting seeds of hope, peace and protection on those I meet. Changing one person’s life for the better can effect generations long after I am gone.