



CONNECT

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CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

BY CEDALIA ELLIS

Celebrating Diversity gives us a chance to learn and to celebrate the things that make us unique. It helps us see the humanity in all people regardless of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or spiritual beliefs. Individual experiences shape our view of the world, and it is essential to acknowledge the different lenses we see out of. Acknowledgment of these various lenses will open opportunities to learn, grow and see beyond ourselves. That is the start of building genuine connections. Welcome to Connect!

**DIVERSITY EQUITY &
ENGAGEMENT
NEWSLETTER**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CEO's Message • P. 2

D.E.E Committee • P. 3

Autism Awareness • P. 4

Day of Silence • P. 5

Deaf Awareness • P. 6

Upcoming Activities • P. 7



Position Statement: Diversity, Equity, and Engagement

At Southwestern, our mission is to create an inclusive diverse culture where we respect, celebrate, and embrace our differences. We stand against biases and all injustices. We are committed to creating an environment of cultural acceptance and cultural humility for all staff, patients, and the community we serve. We are wholly committed to providing culturally responsive services by providing continuous training and support for all individuals within Southwestern's organization. At Southwestern we believe in the equal, fair and just treatment of our employees and the patients we serve.

Message from Katy Adams, CEO

In a time of exponential change, Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare, Inc. is committed to shaping that change in a manner that honors diversity, equity, and inclusion of our staff and the clients and community we serve. It is more than just inclusion, it is engagement. More than making sure everyone is invited to the table to discuss our challenges and efforts toward equity and diversity. More than just hearing voices, but engaging staff and clients, learning from them, and making changes as a team that honors the input and expertise of all our valued staff and guests.

I'm excited to support the efforts of the Diversity, Equity, and Engagement (DEE) committee and thankful for the volunteers that are using their experience and gifts to help Southwestern be an employer that truly honors and engages every staff, every client, and every community member.

Thank you to CeCe and this Committee for being brave and being this light. Thank you for your voice.

“There is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it”—Amanda Gorman.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS



April is Celebration of Diversity Month, and what better way to celebrate it then to meet the Diversity, Equity, & Engagement (D.E.E) Committee!

Cedalia Ellis, Terry Gish, Bhumika Modi, Jessica Moore, Jessica Thomas, Tyler Plogher, Linda Taylor, Lynn Falcony, Shelby Mangold, Murphy Jones, Amy Rickard, Brittany Bailey, Kelsey Hawkins, Jennifer DeBose, Leveda Jansik, Kristine Beauchamp, Susan Stone, Shelia Rollins



Facts

Ribbon Color: Blue

Slogan: "Light it up Blue"- an international effort to light iconic buildings in blue to raise awareness of autism

Three types of autism spectrum disorders:

1. Autistic Disorder: sometimes called "classic" autism.
2. Asperger Syndrome: milder symptoms of autistic disorder.
3. Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified.

Autism Acceptance Month

The month of April is known as National Autism Acceptance Month. This time was set aside to #CelebrateOurDifferences by focusing on awareness and sharing positive and accurate information about autism and autistic people. Autism is more prevalent than we think. It is one of the leading developmental disabilities in the world. According to the Centers of Disease and Prevention, 1 in 59 children in the United States has Autism or is affected by an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Autism is often misunderstood and feared due to false information and stereotypes. Autism is a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social, repetitive behaviors, speech, and nonverbal communication (autismspeaks.org), and it looks different for every person. It is important to acknowledge those differences. During this month, the Diversity, Equity, and Engagement committee would like to celebrate our co-workers, friends, family, and community members who are autistic for your strength, courage, skills, and talents you bring to the world!



“Empathy is seeing with the eyes of another, listening with the ears of another and feeling with the heart of another.” — Alfred Adler

Day of Silence

April 23, 2021



By: Tyler Plogher

As a mental health professional and a member of the queer community, client rights, advocacy, and person-centered treatment are particularly salient issues, because just over forty years ago, homosexuality was a diagnosable mental illness, and the consequences of being identified as a homosexual were often quite severe. In much of the industrialized world, sexual and gender minorities were subject to involuntary psychiatric hospitalization, imprisonment, and in some cases chemical castration. Unfortunately, no matter how noble or merely misguided their intentions were at the time, mental health providers contributed to the persecution and irreparable harm of queer individuals. Although it can be uncomfortable to reflect on our history of wrongdoing, it is essential that we do so if we are to prevent future mistakes. After all, as Mark Twain put it, “History doesn’t repeat itself, but it often rhymes.”

What can we do to make meaningful progress toward earning the trust of the queer community? How do we develop a workplace culture that fosters the conscientious, reparative treatment of queer clients and staff alike? A question this important is too complex to do it justice here, but decades of social science research support the idea that, by developing relationships with people who are different from us, we can overcome our biases and prejudice. Once we realize from firsthand experience that our neighbors are just like us, it becomes easier to drop any pretense of there being an “us” and a “them.”

When the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network established the Day of Silence twenty-five years ago, they did so with this in mind. What started as a national, student-led demonstration in schools has since bled into other settings, but the basic principles of the Day of Silence remain unchanged. On what is usually the second or third Friday of April, those who are able to remain silent do so for the entire school or work day, and those whose obligations prevent a day of silence show their solidarity through either wearing a black shirt, supportive buttons, or by writing “silence” on the back of their hand.

Why silence? A day of silence poetically comments on a number of commonplace tragedies affecting queer communities, while echoing the peaceful protests of other great and historic civil rights movements. Silence is a commentary on the forced silence of queer people throughout history, on their erasure from history, and on their rejection and alienation from society. A silent student might symbolize the countless queer children who have been forever silenced by suicide, due to bullying, harassment, and discrimination, given that queer children are five times more likely than straight children to attempt to die by suicide. Another participant might symbolize the thousands of homeless queer young people who are disowned by their families, as though they never existed at all; almost half of all homeless youth identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or as being part of the broader queer community. A silent coworker might represent everyone throughout history who hid their true selves “in the closet” for fear of losing their jobs, their loved ones, or, in some parts of the world, their lives.

So, on April 23rd, we invite those who are comfortable to show their solidarity with the queer community, to the extent that your duties allow, because demonstrations of this kind create a ripple effect of changed attitudes and greater inclusivity that, quite literally, has the potential to save lives.



National Deaf History Month

The month time period of March 13th through April 15th is recognized as Deaf History Month (DHM). Accomplishments and contributions of the deaf community are observed and celebrated. Deaf History Month began when two employees at the Martin Luther King Memorial Library began to teach each other sign language (diversity.fsu.edu). The reason for the month-long observance is in recognition of the three turning points in the deaf community dating back to the early 1800's. Those turning points are

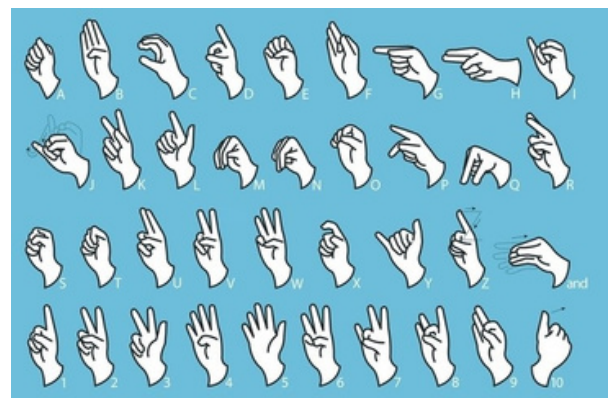
1. April 15, 1817 the first public school for the deaf opened in Hartford, Conn.
2. April 8, 1864 Gallaudet University opened (the first institution dedicated to higher education for the deaf and hard of hearing).
3. On March 13, 1988 the first deaf president of Gallaudet was hired in answer to the Deaf President Now Movement.

In the United States there are approximately 600,000 individuals (22%) of our population are deaf with over half being age 65 (gallaudet.edu).

Dos & Don'ts

- During introductions, always introduce yourself first and use the sign language alphabet to fingerspell your name.
- When fingerspelling or signing, keep a steady hand. Your signs are easier to read when your hand is not shaking.
- For many, the words “deaf” and “hard of hearing” are not negative. Instead, the term “hearing-impaired” is viewed as negative. The term focuses on what people can't do.
- There are different degrees of hearing loss and types of loss: outer ear, middle ear, inner ear, age of becoming deaf is a big factor too, etc.
- Speak directly and clearly so they may read your lips.
- Don't yell or exaggerate mouthing or mock sign language or make obscene gestures which is offensive.
- Use notes to communicate.
- When you see two people are signing secretly, don't stare. They might be having a private conversation.

(cudoo.com)



“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” - Helen Keller

Celebration of Diversity Activities



APRIL 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4 Easter	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12  Southwestern's Deaf Awareness Day	13	14	15 All Wears Day	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 Earth Day	23 A Day of Silence	24
25	26	27	28	29 Southwestern's Autism Acceptance Day	30	

- **Deaf Awareness Day:** In support of this day, take a picture of your self signing "I love you" in sign language.
- **All Wears Day:** wear clothing that best represents your culture. (Irish, Native American, African Decent, Vietnamese, Indian, and etc.).
- **A Day of Silence:** In support of this day, take a picture of yourself with your hand over your mouth with world "silent" written on your hand.
- **Southwestern's Autism Acceptance Day:** In support of Autism Acceptance, take a picture of yourself wearing blue.

Send all photos to the D.E.E Committee at dee@southwestern.org. All photos will be posted on Southwestern's social media page.