



# PRO BONO COUNSELING

Your Mental Health Connection

## THE CONNECTION | MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | DECEMBER 2022

### Staff Member Milestone

Pro Bono Counseling (PBC) was established more than 30 years ago, and for more than one-third of that time, Ana Carrera has been a vital part of the organization. This month Ana will celebrate 13 years as a staff member with PBC.

"We are very fortunate to have Ana as a part of the PBC team," explained PBC Clinical Director Sherri Bloom. "She is passionate about our mission and contributes in many invaluable ways, from offering innovative ideas to providing essential clinical support."



Ana Carrera

Ana celebrates her milestone anniversary by assuming a new role with PBC as the Terapias Program Manager. In this position, Ana is responsible for developing community outreach within Latino and immigrant communities. She provides mental health education to underserved communities by connecting those seeking counseling to free licensed volunteer therapists and other supportive services. Ana provides intakes in Spanish and coordinates access to free trained interpreters for clients and clinicians.

"I am excited to further expand Pro Bono Counseling's outreach to connect Latino community members with quality mental health resources in Maryland," Ana stated.

Ana's outreach efforts also go beyond PBC. She was recently appointed to the steering committee of Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU). MLU is a statewide network of organizations, businesses, and individuals who support Latino and immigrant communities. MLU works within and with the Latino/Hispanic community in Maryland by supporting Latino-serving nonprofits, convening around public policy priorities, and working together in common cause.

### Providing Access to Mental Health Resources

Pro Bono Counseling (PBC) is committed to ensuring that all Marylanders have access to the mental health care services and resources they need. Whether you can identify that you are feeling anxious or depressed, or know you are experiencing grief or a life transition, PBC is here to help.

But sometimes you can't pinpoint exactly what is going on, you just know that something is "off." That was the case recently for a woman in her 30's who contacted PBC because, as she described, she just did not feel like herself. The clinical team listened to her concerns and she was connected with a

PBC volunteer therapist for anxiety and depression.

Once she was enrolled in counseling, a PBC clinical team member followed up on the progress she was making.

"[I meet with my therapist] every week," she explained. "The process is slow and gradual, but my therapist is really great, and I feel like I can get to where I need to be with her."

She has already recommended PBC's services to others that she knows. For more information about PBC or to request counseling for yourself or someone you know, call 410.825.1001.

### Meet Pro Bono Counseling's Newest Team Members

Pro Bono Counseling's staff has increased with the addition of two new staff members. Yolonda Nelson-Swain is the new Outreach Coordinator and Jacob Kosi-Huber is the new Clinical and Grants Associate.

Yolonda takes over as Outreach Coordinator for Alexa Biddle, who is now working part-time as PBC's Case Matching Associate as she completes her graduate degree. Yolonda's background is in Human Services and she has a Master's Degree in Human Services Counseling and Criminal Justice from Liberty University.

Yolonda has years of experience in the nonprofit sector, which includes serving for five years at Roberta's House Grief Support Center as the Prince George's County Program Manager.

"I was reared by parents who unconditionally give and so it has been ingrained in me to avail myself and assist others, no matter who they are, whenever possible," Yolonda explained.

She has also worked with various Maryland organizations bringing awareness about homicide and its impact on the entire family and has presented work-

shops on grief, loss, and trauma, especially its effect on children.

Yolonda wanted to work for PBC because the mission, values, and equity statement align with her values and beliefs and the contributions that she wants to give to her local community and beyond. Yolonda describes herself as a wife, mother of four, and soon to be grandmother, who enjoys traveling, singing, reading, and spending time with family. She is a published author and in her spare time, volunteers with the Red Cross as a Blood Donor Ambassador.

Jacob received his Masters in Social Work from University of Maryland, Baltimore last year, and became a Licensed Masters-level Social Worker (LMSW). Before that, he received his B.A. in Psychology from University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Prior to coming to PBC, he worked at an FQHC and at nonprofits serving survivors of intimate partner/domestic or sexual violence.

Jacob's mother, Razia Kosi, is the founder of CHAI, a non-profit dedicated to lessening the stigma of mental health issues in South Asian communities, which is now a program of PBC.

"My mom actually sent me the PBC job listing," explained Jacob. "After looking into the work PBC does, the vision, and the values, I thought PBC seemed like a really good fit for me. And it seems like I was right!"

In addition to having Jacob on PBC's staff, his two cats, Myka and Lila, make frequent appearances during PBC Zoom meetings.

"Sometimes they try to abscond with my earbuds or pens (occasionally successfully), or type a message into the chat (unsuccessful thus far)."

Please join PBC in welcoming Yolonda and Jacob!



Yolonda Nelson-Swain, MAHS, VASIII

### PBC Resource Corner: Garnering Change Psychotherapy

Garnering Change Psychotherapy is an inclusive, sex-positive practice dedicated to providing mental health, sex therapy, perinatal mental health, and relationship therapy to adults and persons in partnerships. Their primary aim is to assist each person in becoming their authentic self, in order to experience pleasure in all aspects of their lives. They offer virtual or in-person therapy services in Towson, MD.

[Garnering Change Psychotherapy](#) has a licensed graduate professional counselor

(LGPC) and a licensed master social worker (LMSW) who are available to accept new clients and offer therapy services on a sliding scale, from \$10-50 for individual therapy or \$100 for partnership therapy.

They can support clients with a range of needs, including anxiety, depression, trauma, chronic illness, perinatal and parenting challenges, relationship issues, LGBTQ specific concerns, and more.

To connect with this sliding scale program, call 410.616.1834.



Jacob Kosi-Huber, LMSW