

SEPT 2021

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HARLEM UNITED ISSUE 13 - TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE



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Dear Harlem United Family,

Welcome to the Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) Edition of the Harlem United Staff Newsletter! Throughout this issue, we'll discuss trauma, present an [interview with our new TIC Peers](#), and [provide information from the clinical team](#) about our TIC initiative. As many of you are aware, Harlem United is partnering with the [New York Trauma Informed Care Initiative](#) to implement the person-centered approach throughout the agency. In July, staff members attended a town-hall meeting, where [Orlando Serrano](#), Clinical Director of Prevention Services, and [Laura Grund](#), Senior Vice President, presented a TIC training. A recording of that presentation can be found on the [Harlem United website](#).

What is trauma?

Trauma is the result of harmful or life threatening experiences and has lasting effects on an individual's mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. Trauma can alter a person's behaviors, emotions, and self-perception. Often, trauma can make a person sensitive to any arising feelings of stress or threat. People who have experienced trauma can be very reactive, getting upset to the point where they feel out of control of their behavior or where they completely shut down and withdraw.

People that we serve at Harlem United, such as those who have experienced homelessness, chronic conditions, or poverty, have increased levels of trauma exposure. Trauma from these experiences can be measured by a series of screening questions.

- » [According to a 2020 meta-analysis](#), more than 27% of people experiencing homelessness have PTSD;
- » [The NIH reports](#) that as many as 95% of PLWHA report at least one severe traumatic experience, with up to 54% meeting the criteria for a PTSD diagnosis; and
- » [One NIH study](#) found that rates of PTSD symptoms were more than 60% higher for people living in poverty than those with higher incomes

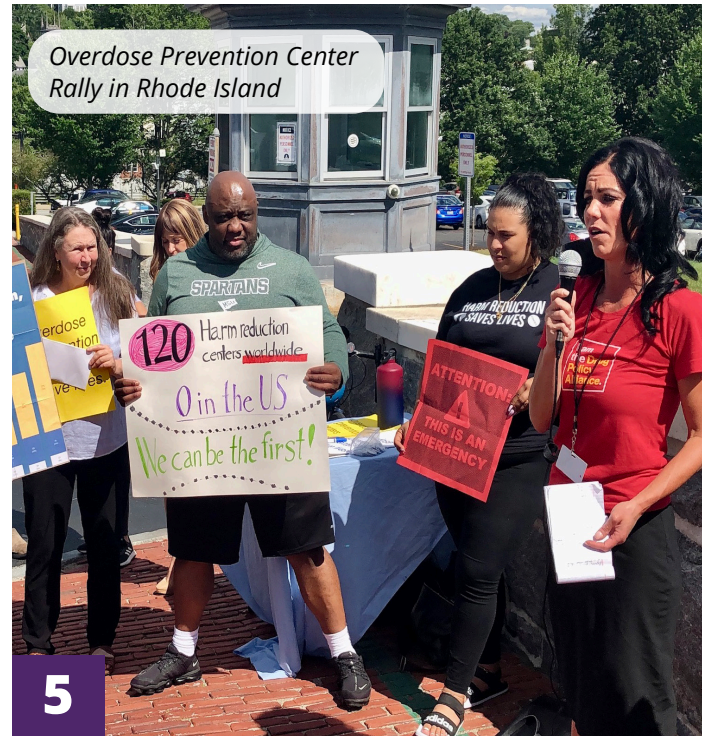
Many of Harlem United's clients, staff, and community members have experienced trauma in their lives. In recognition of the need, we will include TIC in our approach so that we are able to provide our clients with the best care possible. Under the new program, specifically trained Peers and frontline staff will conduct outreach to clients, providing a simple trauma screening and brief trauma education session. Interested clients who are identified as having undergone trauma will work with designated providers in the Wellness Center and Prevention program for ongoing education and skill-building. Staff is also encouraged to address their own trauma through wellness trainings and the [Employee Assistance Program](#) (EAP).

For additional information about our TIC initiative, email [Orlando Serrano](#), Clinical Director of Prevention Services. If you are a staff member experiencing trauma, please consider anonymous counseling through our [EAP](#).



Jacqui
Jacqui Kilmer, CEO





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Employee Assistance Program

Licensed counselors are prepared to take calls from employees or household members who are experiencing fears or anxieties related to COVID-19 and other life stressors.

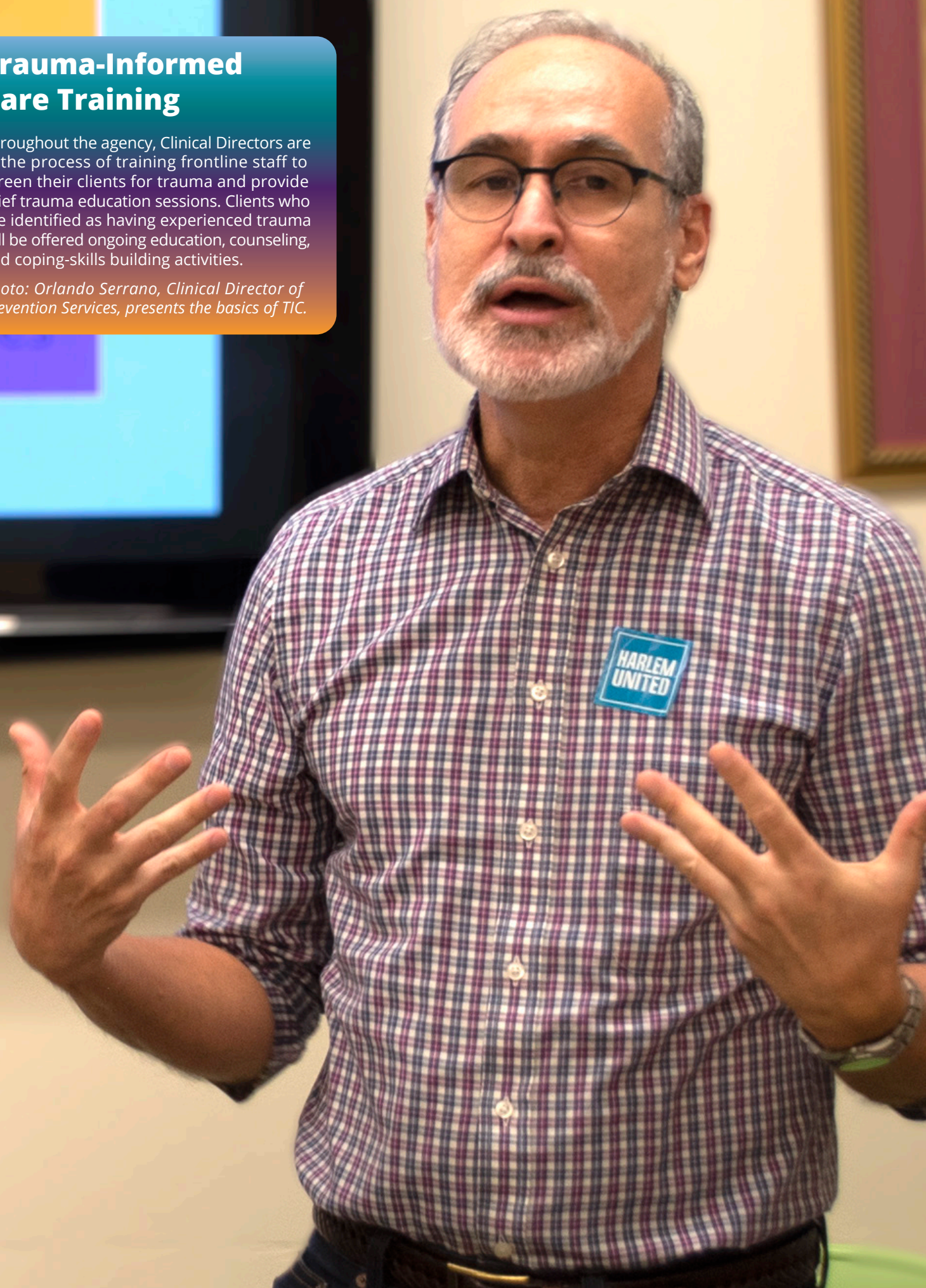
Call: 800-386-7055 Visit: www.ibhworklife.com



Trauma-Informed Care Training

Throughout the agency, Clinical Directors are in the process of training frontline staff to screen their clients for trauma and provide brief trauma education sessions. Clients who are identified as having experienced trauma will be offered ongoing education, counseling, and coping-skills building activities.

Photo: Orlando Serrano, Clinical Director of Prevention Services, presents the basics of TIC.



Overdose Prevention Centers

For years, Harlem United and other harm reduction advocates have urged elected officials in New York City and State to lead the country in establishing Overdose Prevention Centers (OPC), often called safe consumption sites or supervised injection services, to promote the health and safety of people who use drugs.

While NYS statistics are not yet available, [in 2020, drug overdose deaths in the US rose by nearly 30%](#) to a record 93,000 lives lost to the overdose epidemic. Additionally, [32% of people who use injection drugs have shared syringes](#), which carries a high risk for transmitting HIV, Hepatitis C, and other infections. Overdose prevention centers are a harm reduction solution that has been proven to decrease both fatal overdoses and injection-related infection.

OPCs are designated facilities where people can use drugs under the safe supervision of trained personnel. The facility staff do not provide or directly handle any drugs, as opponents often claim, but are present to provide safer use supplies like sterile syringes; monitor for overdose; answer questions and provide education; and connect clients to services like healthcare, housing, and other harm reduction services, such as detoxification. This is one more way to connect with clients who use substances on their own terms, meeting them where they are in their journey to a healthier future.

[OPCs are not a new idea](#)- more than 100 sites operate in ten countries around the world. After 30 years of operation and [over 100 evidence-based, peer-reviewed studies](#), OPCs have been demonstrated to prevent fatal overdose; reduce HIV and hepatitis C transmission and injection-related infection; and reduce public drug use and public disposal of syringes. Contrary to popular belief, OPCs do not increase drug use, crime, or bring drug use into communities. In fact, OPCs reduce the amount and frequency that clients use drugs and increase entry into substance use disorder treatment.

This July, [Rhode Island became the first state in the US to authorize OPCs](#), creating a two-year pilot program to establish “harm reduction centers” where people can consume pre-obtained substances under the supervision of trained staff. [In 2018, New York State seemed on the verge of establishing a similar pilot program](#) through the Department of Health, however the plan has stalled and no OPCs have opened.

At Harlem United, we have always advocated for common sense harm reduction services that prioritize the health, safety, and dignity of people who use drugs. [Harlem United and other harm reduction service providers sent a letter to Governor Hochul](#) to encourage her to authorize a pilot program for Overdose Prevention Centers in NYS. We need OPCs in New York and in the US at large and we will continue to work with legislators until OPCs are widely available to communities in need.

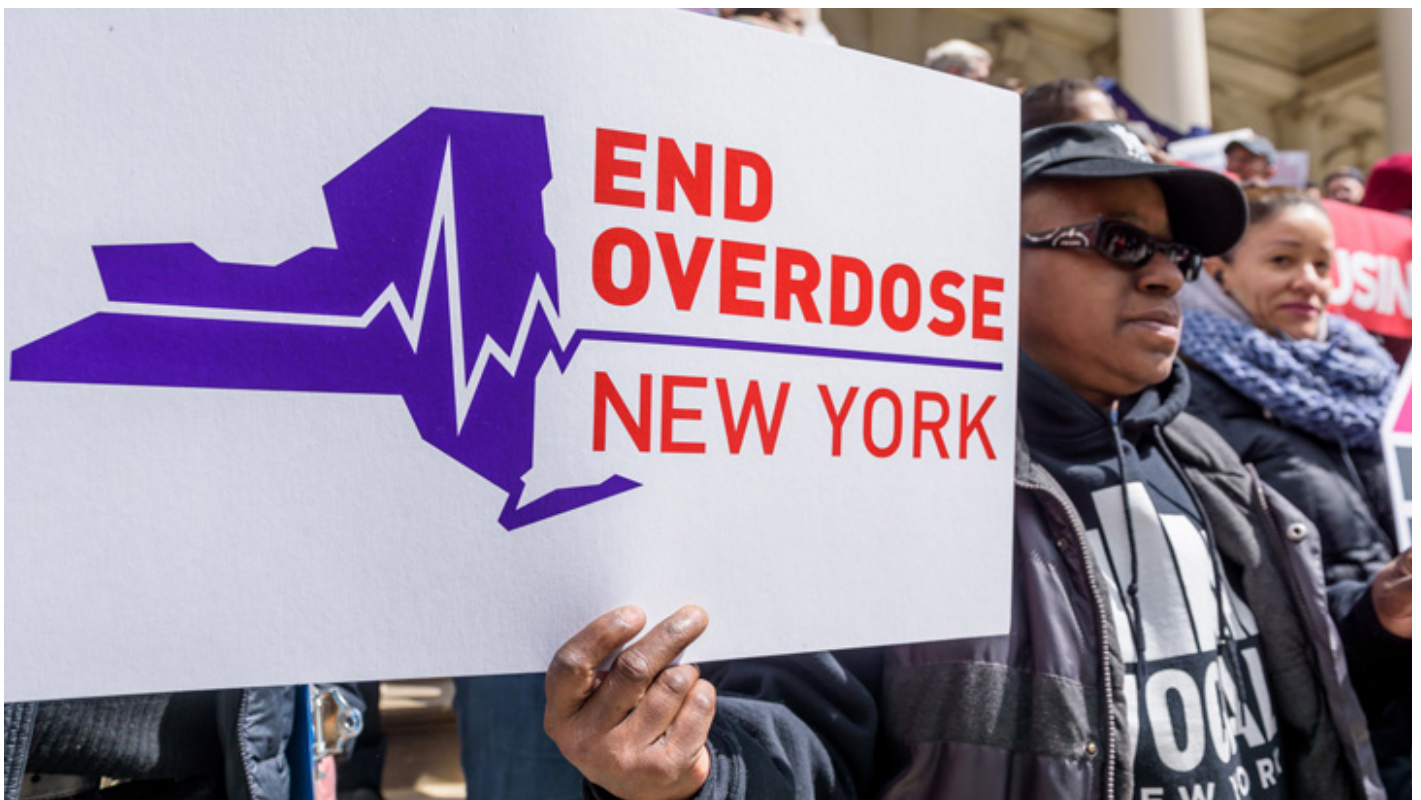


Photo by Erik McGregor

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Survey

At Harlem United, we are constantly looking to learn and improve. To that end, we ask all staff to complete our 2021 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Survey. The information you provide in this [5-minute survey](#) will help us to accurately represent Harlem United at an aggregate level to prospective funders, community members, stakeholders, and clients. Survey results will also increase our awareness of

different groups and experiences in the workplace.

[The survey](#) should be completed in one sitting and is entirely voluntary and confidential. You can skip any question that you do not feel comfortable answering. The survey deadline has been **extended to Friday, Sept. 10th.**

LGBTQ+ Community Survey

The New York State LGBT Health & Human Services Network invites you to participate in the 2021 LGBTQ+ Community Survey for New York State. This needs assessment happens once every 5 years and is the most important way to inform government officials and providers throughout the state about community needs. Anyone in the LGBTQ community aged 13+ is eligible to complete the survey. The survey is fully anonymous and no personal identifying information will be collected/asked. [Please complete and share the survey](#) by Sept. 30.

Strategic Advancement Updates

Program Development

We hit the ground running in FY22! In July and August, we submitted eight applications, including applications for funds for Health Services, Prevention, Supportive Services, Strategic Advancement, and general operating support. In total, the applications amount to \$8,229,134.

Also, we are proud to report that in July, we were awarded four applications that were submitted in FY21. Health Services received \$43,398 from Community Health Care Association (CHCANY), \$120,565 from Primary Care Development Corp (PCDC), and \$5,000 from City Council Member Perkins for our COVID-19 vaccination efforts and response.

In addition, Housing received \$3,462,500 from NYC HRA for continued permanent supportive housing at Foundation House West. We are eagerly awaiting decisions on other pending applications while continuing to craft new applications.



Harlem United Runners will be participating the prestigious New York City Marathon to help improve community health. Email giving@harlemunited.org to join our team!

Individual Giving

We are excitedly building our team for the 2021 TCS NYC Marathon! Currently, we have eight runners on our team, each of whom has committed to raising \$3,000 for Harlem United.

We are continuing to build our Individual Giving, year-over-year: this July, raised 64% more than July 2020! During that time, we received a \$1,000 gift from the Starbucks Foundation – thank you to all our foundation and corporate partners, as well as all individual donors, for your generosity in supporting Harlem United's mission.

Communications

In July and August, we continued our beautification project decorating Harlem United facilities with storyboards depicting our work across our many service areas. Stop by The Nest, Willis Green Jr., and our offices at 290 and 306 Malcolm X Blvd to check it out. Special thanks to the staff of Property Management and Procurement for getting these together!

We have also been in the news, with The Balancing Act Local Edition NY, hosted by Montel Williams, airing a segment about Harlem United in July to **over two million households** in and around the New York City area.

Continuing our advocacy efforts, Harlem United signed on to letter opposing Chick-Fil-A presence in NYS Thruway rest stops, because the CEO of Chick-Fil-A actively contributes to anti-LGBTQ organizations.

Mari Eva Mendes, Associate Vice President of Strategic Advancement, has been invited to join the Session Advisory and Community Equity Committees for the annual Nonprofit Techology Conference.

Top Social Posts



Facebook: We regularly share features of Peers on our social media accounts, and in July, our feature on Alicia Mays, Harlem United Peer at Foundation House West, was the top performing post with 32 engagements.



Twitter: We shared images of a tweet arguing for reinvestment in social services instead of increased funding for the police and got an incredibly positive response, with **1,511 people engaging with the post**.



Instagram: When we shared this image of a Twitter thread about homelessness on our Instagram account, 118 people engaged with the post.

Trauma-Informed Care Peers

Harlem United's Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) initiative will focus on identifying clients impacted by trauma and connecting them to psychoeducation and skill-building. Divian, Dirk, and Ruth, long-time Peers who work in the Business Development department, will spearhead the new trauma screenings for patients at The Nest Community Health Center. The Peers are attending ongoing training through the [New York Trauma Informed Care Initiative](#).

What have you learned so far that you're excited to share with clients?

Dirk: We've learned that a lot of people don't realize that they're living with trauma. This new program is giving us the opportunity to make a difference. Harlem United has always been a place that a lot of people go for support, and this is just one more branch of support that we'll be offering.

What do you think the impact will be?

Divian: It's a way of letting patients know that the negative can be turned into a positive, there's a better way, and there are tools to support that better way of living. I'm excited because I've been there and I can connect to what they're going through. So to me, it's exciting, because it's like planting a seed and watching it grow.



Left to right: Divian, Dirk, and Ruth

Microsoft 365 is Coming to Harlem United

Our IT team has been working hard to bring us up-to-date, industry-standard technology. In the coming months, they will be moving our agency to use the seamless, cloud-based Microsoft 365 software. Here's what you need to know:

What is Microsoft 365, exactly?

Currently, the agency uses the Office 2016 version of Word, Excel, Outlook, and PowerPoint. When we update to Microsoft 365, we will get the latest versions of those applications, plus new applications like Microsoft Teams, SharePoint, OneDrive, Forms, and more. The biggest change is that Microsoft 365 is cloud-based, which means everyone can access their files anywhere – no more hassle with LogMeIn to access your desktop remotely!

Who will have access to the latest technology?

Everyone! All staff members will have licenses once the rollout is complete. IT and New Broadway Family Shelter staff are already using Microsoft 365 for email and for video conferencing. In the coming months, our other departments will transition to Microsoft 365 Teams, Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, Access, and OneNote, completing Phase One of our Microsoft 365 transition project.

In Phase Two, all shared drive data will be moved onto SharePoint and OneDrive, giving all staff access to their shared drive files from any computer, tablet, or smartphone.

What's in it for our teams and departments?



Ease of Use: Since we are all familiar with the Microsoft Office Suite, Microsoft 365 is easy to adopt with little-to-no learning curve. All the new applications offer a Microsoft Office-like experience which makes them very intuitive to use.



Access Anywhere: No more using LogMeIn to access your files, no more keeping track of many different accounts and software. Everything you need will be all in one place, right there in Microsoft 365, accessible from anywhere.



Cost Efficiency: IT will eliminate redundant systems (for example drive servers and special encryption software) that are included in Microsoft 365, so that the agency can reallocate those funds where they're needed most.



Collaboration: It'll be even easier to work on projects within and across teams, with applications like SharePoint and Teams that facilitate collaboration.



Seamless Backend Support: Microsoft 365 updates automatically, so you won't need to worry about closing all your files before IT manually updates software. Moreover, Microsoft 365 integration will automate time consuming processes, allowing the IT Team to focus on other tech projects that support staff in delivering quality of care services.



Mohammad Karim,
Senior Vice President of IT

Welcome to All New Staff



Left to right: Fatim Dierro, Kasheann Henry-Kerr, Tonique Bynoe, Phyllis Chin, and Anthony Privott Watts



Top left to right: Carol Lee, Simbiat Akiolu, Dr. Jamie Carter
Bottom left to right: Jeanine Williams, Danielle Lemon

Anniversaries

Congratulations to everyone who celebrated anniversaries at Harlem United in the past two months! We are thankful for all of our staff's long-standing commitment to bring healing and support to our community.

3+ Years

Joyce Abioye - Data Entry Specialist

Mary Brewster - Managing Director, Integrated Harm Reduction Program

Frances Byers - Senior Case Manager, Housing

Shaquana Daniels - Billing Specialist

Robin Garriss - Janitorial Worker

Brianna Grant - Sr. Retention/Adherence Specialist

Julissa Jose - Director of HR Operations

Don Mosley - Maintenance Worker/Driver

Emily Riveles - Senior Social Worker

Nomsa Taremba - Coordinator of Strategic Advancement

Shonte Williams - Practice Administrator

5+ Years

Peggy Chen - Nutritionist/Dietician

Cristina Martinez - Senior Janitor

Patrick Mora - Patient Office Assistant

Oliver Petty - Program Coordinator, Prevention

Sheneska Santiago - Field Coordinator, Prevention

Aubrey St. Kitt - Senior Maintenance Supervisor

Joy Wilson - Wellness Center Coordinator

10+ Years

Selena Caldwell - Senior Director, Housing

Susan Collins - Senior Mental Health Specialist

Yekis Fortunato - Managed Care Coordinator

Jacquelyn Kilmer - Chief Executive Officer

Leonard McLeod - Coordinator of Facilities, Veterans Housing

Michael Rustin - Vice President, ADHC

Jose Sanchez - Care Manager

Jose Santiago - Senior Director, Property Management

And a very special congratulations to **Arleen Gonzalez**, Special Projects Coordinator, for 15 years, and **Earl Cox**, Vice President of Housing, for 18 years! Thank you all for your many years of dedicated service!

Preston Wholley, Managing Clinical Director of Behavioral Health, **thinks the entire Behavioral Health team collectively** for coming into the clinic since the onset of the pandemic. Your hard work and dedication mean so much to Harlem United and our patients. Thank you!

Upcoming Events - September/October 2021



Upcoming Events

September is... African Heritage Month

September 6th

[Rosh Hashana](#)

[Labor Day](#)

(Harlem United Closed)

September 9th

[New York State Overdose](#)

[Awareness Day](#)

September 15th

[Yom Kippur](#)

September 15th – October 15th

[Hispanic Heritage Month](#)

September 18th

[National HIV/AIDS and Aging](#)

[Awareness Day](#)

September 23rd

[Bisexual Visibility Day](#)

September 25th

[African Heritage Month Parade and Festival](#)

[National Family Day](#)

September 27th

[National Gay Men's HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#)

October is...LGBTQ History Month

October 4th – 8th

[National Primary Care Week](#)

October 10th – 16th

[National Case Management Week](#)

October 18th – 22nd

[National Health Education Week](#)

October 25th – 31st

[PrEP Aware Week](#)

October 12th

[Indigenous Peoples' Day](#)

October 15th

[National Latinx AIDS Awareness Day](#)

October 28th

[Milad un Nabi – Prophet's Birthday](#)

October 31

[Halloween](#)

Training Corner

Please join our upcoming trainings. For more information, contact [Jamila Taylor](#), Director of Administrative Operations.

October 21st

Suicide Prevention, 1:00pm -2:00pm



African Heritage Month Parade and Festival

Harlem United is a proud sponsor of this year's African Heritage Month Parade and Festival! Our Business Development team will attend the event to provide information and outreach to connect community members to Harlem United programs.

If you are interested in attending the event with other Harlem United staff and community members, please email communications@harlemunited.org