

***Webinar: Healing through Community Building and Birth Equity
Advocacy***

May 11, 2023

10-11am Pacific / 1-2pm Eastern

Featured Speaker Biography

Omari Maynard

Founder, The ARIAH Foundation

Omari Maynard is an artist, activist, and educator. He has received his bachelor degree in Marketing from Hampton University, an MBA and a Masters in Sport Business Management from the University of Central Florida, and a Masters degree in Special Education from Long Island University. Before becoming a full time creative he worked in the field of sports and education for twenty plus years.



In 2016 Omari and his life partner, Shamony Gibson, started their own business. Art- fulliving is a lifestyle and event planning business with an emphasis on artistic expression. Unfortunately, Shamony transitioned on October 6th, 2019, due to medical malpractice after giving birth to their second child. After the tragic and preventable death of his beloved partner, Shamony Gibson, Omari and his mother-in-law, Shawnee Gibson founded the ARIAH Foundation. The foundation seeks to support individuals, families and communities who experience the devastating Aftershock associated with maternal/infant morbidity and mortality. ARIAH provides mental, physical, emotional and/or spiritual assistance to support the affected families as they navigate the impact of these traumatic experiences.

Since the passing of his life partner and creation of The ARIAH Foundation Omari has been featured in the award winning documentary, Aftershock, streaming on Hulu now and other platforms such as Good Morning America, ABC Nightline, The Breakfast Club on Power 105, The New York Times, and The Wall Street Journal, raising awareness on this tragic epidemic.



Andre Nelson

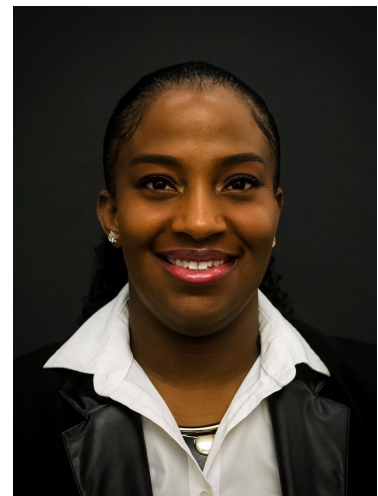
Healthcare Analyst and Advocate

Andre Nelson is a healthcare analyst and advocate for Black, Indigenous and People of Color in the US. He holds a Bachelor's degree in International Business from Drexel University and a Masters in Public Administration with a focus on Healthcare Administration from Pace University. After spending years researching the data behind maternal health disparities, Andre has focused his attention on finding solutions to prevent negative birthing outcomes.

Tiffany Vassell

RN, Founder, Nurses for Black Maternal Health and Equity and Board Member, Bay State Birth Coalition

Tiffany Vassell is a registered nurse who has worked as a labor and delivery nurse for several years. She has also served as a substance use nurse assisting patients with their recovery at clinics in Boston. She is a Black maternal health advocate who supports midwifery care, equity, reproductive justice, autonomy, and access to home births and birth centers.



She is a board member of the Bay State Birth Coalition. She founded the Nurses for Black Maternal Health and Equity Organization to diversify the perinatal workforce. She also recently served as Chair at the 5th and 6th Annual Black Maternal Health Conference at Tuft's University, the country's largest Black maternal health conference.

She co-authors the book 'Preparation for a Hospital Birth.' In the book, she seeks to demystify birthing in the hospital in ways only a nurse can explain. She aims to educate birthing people about the many available options during labor, delivery, and the immediate postpartum periods to create a safer and more autonomous experience.

She serves as a member of the steering committee for Mind the Gap. She is also a Harvard Catalyst Community Coalition for Equity in Research member, which gives high-quality input on research proposals and protocols.

She has sat on several panels to discuss her work and advocacy in the maternal health space and has written several articles. She is a member of the Sigma Theta Tau Nursing Honor Society for Leadership. She is the awardee of the 2022 Image of the Professional Nurse awarded by the Massachusetts Nursing Association. She is also one of the 2022 Ten Outstanding Young Leaders awarded by the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce.



Ronda Alexander (Moderator)

Director of National Partnerships

Vital Village Networks at Boston Medical Center

Ronda Alexander is a native Detroit native dedicated to working with communities to reach their desired goals by aligning and leveraging their resources. Ronda joins us from the United Way for Southeastern Michigan where she served as the Director of Corporate and Community Alignment on the organization's College and Career Pathways team. In her role at United Way Ronda worked to help external corporate partners find meaningful ways to engage with both students and educators;

as well as worked across teams within the organization to align and leverage resources. Prior to joining United Way Ronda worked on the premier education initiative of Ford Motor Company Fund – Ford Next Generation (Ford NGL) for nine years. While at Ford Fund Ronda served a variety of roles including Professional Development/Technical Assistance Specialist and Program Manager for STEM initiatives. In all of her roles with Ford Fund Ronda worked with and supported multiple communities across the country as they worked to transform their communities through education.