

EDUCATION AND CONSULTATIVE SERVICES

of UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital

PRESENTATION FORM

Black TLGBQIA Housing Crisis In Allegheny County-6/14/2022

Presenter Bio

Ciora Thomas (she/they)

Executive Director
SisTers PGH
Pittsburgh, PA

Ciora Thomas, a black trans woman is a Pittsburgh native, founder, and Director of Sisters PGH, developed in 2013. Her organization advocates for social and economic transgender rights to continue the demarginalization and equality of the trans community of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County.

Ciora, like many of her peers, was a homeless adolescent that suffered through many intersectional challenges black trans women face within society. She went on to travel the country to tune her vision of a TransLED organization and eventually opened Pittsburgh's only trans owned and operated community center, where trans and nonbinary people can obtain tangible resources, medical/mental health referrals, self-affirming groups, and/or a chance to enroll in the many programs SisTers PGH has to offer. These programs include BroThers PGH, which centers the lived experiences of our Trans Masculine Community; Grow to Succeed, which centers Drug & Alcohol sobriety for trans and nonbinary people; and Project T, a brave temporary housing initiative for trans and nonbinary people experiencing homelessness.

Ciora is the founder and lead organizer of People's Pride PGH. Through this Ciora has garnered relationships with hundreds of organizations city, state, and countrywide that are beneficial to the relations of the TLGBQ community of Pittsburgh while also giving back annual grants in support of TLGBQ focused initiatives in Pittsburgh.

Ciora sits in several seats locally and statewide becoming the first black transwoman to become Chair of the LGBTQIA Advisory council of Pittsburgh and a Commissioner of the Commission of LGBT Affairs out of Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolfe's office. In 2020, she was reappointed as the Co-Vice Chair of the Pennsylvania Commission on LGBT Affairs.

Ciora is a prime example of how perseverance against all odds can shape the movement of trans liberation.

Name and Narrative Description of your Presentation

"Black TLGBQIA Housing Crisis In Allegheny County" (Intermediate)

This presentation will involve discussing the mission of SisTers PGH, and the various support it offers to the Queer Trans Black Indigenous People of Color (QTBIPOC) in Southwestern PA. The presentation will include a review of the terminology used when supporting QTBIPOC. Finally, we will look at the problem and implications of homelessness and legal entanglements in the TLGBQ+ community, as well as the advocacy and action needed to mitigate these challenges for this vulnerable population.

Three (3) learning objectives

By the completion of this session, participants should be able to:

1. Identify the mission, function, and services of SisTers PGH
2. Recognize the various terminology used around TLGBQ+ identity and experience
3. Discuss the Trans/queer housing crisis

Three (3) current (within the past 10 years) peer-reviewed publications that support the evidence-base for the content of your presentation.

1. Choi, S.K., Wilson, B.D.M., Shelton, J., & Gates, G. (2015). Serving Our Youth 2015: The Needs and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Experiencing Homelessness. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund.
2. Rosario, M. Schrimshaw, E.W., & Hunter, J. (2012). Homelessness Among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth: Implications for Subsequent Internalizing and Externalizing Symptoms. Journal of Youth Adolescence, 41. 544-560.
3. Wilson, B. D. M., Choi, S. K., Harper, G. W., Lightfoot, M., Russell, S., & Meyer, I.H. (2020). Homelessness among LGBT adults in the U.S. Los Angeles, CA: Williams Institute.