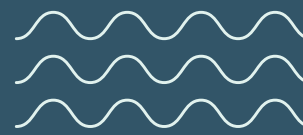


19-20
AUGUST



*Hands
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CLINICAL LACTATION SKILLS
& CAREER GROWTH
FOR PERINATAL PROFESSIONALS

DAY 1 CAREER ADVANCEMENT IN LACTATION & BIRTHWORK



Brandi Jordan

Keynote Speaker



Jennifer Duran-West

Speaker



Stevie Merino

Speaker



Wednesday
19 August, 2026

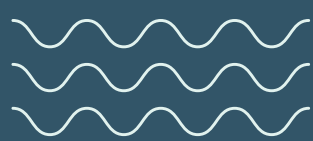


Time
8:15 AM - 3 PM



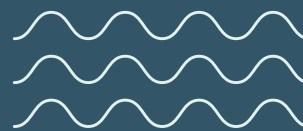
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DAY 1

CAREER ADVANCEMENT IN LACTATION & BIRTHWORK



Genevieve Thomas

Speaker



Jennifer Roberson

Speaker



Lydia O. Boyd

Speaker



Wednesday
19 August, 2026



Time
8:15 AM - 3 PM



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**Ashley Skiffer-
Thompson**
Moderator



Miriam Torres
Panelist



Dr. Kacie Blackman
Panelist



Alison Wolf
Panelist



Wendy De Leon
Panelist

FROM PASSION TO PROFESSION: CAREERS IN LACTATION

The field of lactation offers a wide range of meaningful career paths—but understanding the possibilities, requirements, and day-to-day realities can feel overwhelming. This engaging panel session brings together a diverse group of lactation and birthing professionals to share their unique career journeys, insights, and practical advice for entering and growing within the field. Panelists will represent a variety of roles, such as hospital-based lactation consultants, midwives, researchers, and nurses. Through guided discussion and audience Q&A, participants will gain a clearer understanding of different career options, educational pathways, certification processes, and work environments within lactation care. Whether you are just beginning your journey or considering expanding your role, this session will provide valuable perspective on how to align your passion for supporting families with a sustainable and fulfilling career.

Hands To Heart

CLINICAL LACTATION SKILLS
& CAREER GROWTH
FOR PERINATAL PROFESSIONALS

BRANDI JORDAN

Brandi Jordan, MSW, IBCLC, is a maternal-child health expert, IBCLC, business educator, and founder of The Cradle Company, a national newborn care and postpartum support agency serving families across the United States. With over 25 years of experience supporting infants and families, Brandi has worked with high-profile clients including actors, executives, and professional athletes.

Brandi completed her lactation educator training in 2010 and became an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant in 2012. She holds a Master's degree in Social Work with a focus on child development and family systems. Today Brandi also trains birthworkers, doulas, lactation professionals, and infant care specialists to build sustainable careers in maternal and infant support. Her work focuses on professional development, career advancement, and helping caregivers position themselves as highly skilled specialists in the growing family care industry.



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FROM PASSION TO PROFESSION: HOW TO POSITION
YOURSELF FOR YOUR DREAM CAREER - RESUME,
INTERVIEW, AND PERSONAL BRANDING STRATEGIES FOR
CAREERS IN MATERNAL AND INFANT CARE

19 August 2026 | 9 AM

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JENNIFER DURAN-WEST

A proud Salvadoran, multilingual Latina, Jennifer embodies her identities as a woman, mother, wife, caregiver, protector, and visionary. She leads with quiet strength—often working behind the scenes—yet her influence is deeply felt. Jennifer studied at UCLA, earning a bachelor's degree in french/linguistics and NY University, earning her master's degree in educational administration. Beyond her longstanding Women Infant and Children (WIC) Program service, Jennifer serves as a board member of BreastfeedLA. Her multicultural lens fuels her work in lactation legislation and policy, where she advocates for equitable systems that honor women, infants, and families. Through her daily work, she calls women to reclaim trust in their bodies and restore the power that systems have long diminished. Program service, Jennifer serves as a board member of BreastfeedLA,



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FROM RESISTANCE TO READINESS:
COUNSELING SKILLS AT WORK THROUGH THE
LENS OF AMBIVALENCE

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ASHLEY SKIFFER- THOMPSON



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Ashley Skiffer-Thompson is the Director of Home Visiting Systems in Los Angeles County, where she works to advance equitable, community-driven support for pregnant and parenting families. With a career rooted in community-based programs serving families with young children, she brings both professional expertise and lived experience to her work.

Ashley is passionate about strengthening systems of care that are culturally affirming, responsive, and grounded in the voices of the communities they serve. Her background includes breastfeeding support, bonding and attachment, and early childhood development, with a focus on empowering families to advocate for themselves within healthcare and social service systems. Committed to advancing racial and health equity, Ashley leads with empathy and purpose to ensure families feel seen, valued, and supported.



FROM PASSION TO PROFESSION:
CAREERS IN LACTATION

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DR KACIE BLACKMAN

Dr. Kacie C.A. Blackman works as an Associate Professor in the HERE (Health Equity Research and Education) Center, Autonomy Research Center for STEAHM (Sciences, Technology & Engineering, Entrepreneurship & Business, Arts, Humanities, and Mathematics) and the Department of Health Sciences at CSUN. Further, she is a community health advocate and evaluator for i.D.R.E.A.M. for Racial Health Equity. She graduated from Howard University (BS Human Performance) and PhD in Human Nutrition, Foods, & Exercise from Virginia Tech. Dr. Blackman completed a postdoctoral fellowship (Cancer Prevention & Control) at the Keck School of Medicine of University of Southern California and worked as a Research Analyst at the LA County Department of Public Health, Division of HIV & STDs, Research and Innovation Sector. Dr. Blackman is the Principal Investigator of the HOMME lab (Health.Opportunities.Mamas.Movement.Excellence) where they focus on community partnered participatory research approaches to support birthing persons and their families (e.g., culturally-affirming, systems change, technology). Dr. Blackman is a southern California native, daughter, sister, wife, aunt, cousin, mother of two brilliant and brave daughters and son.



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MARIAM TORRES

Miriam Torres is a Chicana-Indigenous mother of five and grandmother of two, midwifery graduate, childbirth educator, and Reiki practitioner based on Tongva land in Los Angeles, California. She brings together lived experience, academic training, and traditional ways of knowing in service to community-centered care. Her work centers the understanding that reproductive health is deeply connected to how the land is treated and sustained. She is committed to supporting Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities—particularly bilingual families—through culturally rooted, trauma-aware, and relational care. Miriam is also a certified California naturalist and, in her free time, participates in native habitat restoration, tends a home garden, and finds grounding through birding and hiking with family and friends



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WENDY DE LEON

Wendy is an IBCLC with more than a decade of clinical experience across hospital, outpatient, and public health settings. As Lead Lactation Consultant at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, she oversees a diverse lactation team, coordinating services across units, developing education and training and driving quality improvement initiatives to enhance lactation support access. Wendy's career spans pivotal roles at different LA based hospitals, and different community-based programs, like WIC. She has delivered bedside care in L&D, Postpartum, and NICU, facilitates Baby Café support groups, operated community clinics and home-visit programs, and mentored nurses, medical residents, and lactation students. Known for her client-centered counseling, bilingual (English/Spanish) communication, and expertise with various lactation support modalities, Wendy bridges hospital and community care to improve outcomes and access reflecting a career dedicated to advancing breastfeeding education, equity, and evidence-based practice.



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ALISON WOLF

Alison Wolf is a pediatric nurse practitioner and internationally board-certified lactation consultant with almost three decades of experience in newborn medicine. She earned both her undergraduate and graduate degrees from UCLA, launching her career in neonatal intensive care and pediatric transport. Since 2023, Alison has served as Executive Director of the University of California Health Milk Bank, where she has led transformative efforts to elevate standards in newborn nutrition and expand equitable access to donor human milk across California and beyond. Her leadership reflects a deep commitment to health equity and innovation in neonatal care. Her work continues to shape the future of neonatal health through advocacy, education, and system-level change.



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STEVIE MERINO

Stevie Merino (she/her) is a diasporic islander born, a mom, medical anthropologist, IBCLC, birthworker, trainer, speaker, and cultural practitioner. Stevie is also the CEO/president and founder of the Birthworkers of Color Collective and facilitator of their doula of Color training. She has been featured in anthologies, articles, academic journals & books on doing frontline birthwork during the height of covid-19, LGBTQIA+ birth & lactation, & more. Stevie presents and trains around the globe on perinatal health disparities, lactation equity, birth and postpartum traditions of communities of Color, and on medi-cal and medi-caid doula benefits. As a living arts practitioner, she has curated exhibits highlighting pregnancy, healing, and traditions. Stevie sits on various leadership positions in the community, lactation/perinatal/infant health, and academia.



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SUSTAINING YOUR LACTATION
PRACTICE THROUGH BILLING

19 August 2026 | 1 PM

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& CAREER GROWTH
FOR PERINATAL PROFESSIONALS

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GENEVIEVE THOMAS- COLVIN

Genevieve is an IBCLC and Clinical Specialist for UCLA Health. In addition to seeing patients in the outpatient setting, Genevieve supports inpatient lactation services and the implementation and ongoing quality improvement activities associated with being Baby-Friendly designated hospitals. Prior to joining UCLA Health, she was the Regional Breastfeeding Liaison for the Northeast Valley Health Corporation-WIC Program and a Program Manager at BreastfeedLA. Genevieve has produced a feature length documentary, which focuses on America's cultural obsession with breasts. She also has extensive volunteer experience and was also the Advocacy Chair for the California Breastfeeding Coalition. Genevieve holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music, Breadth Studies with an emphasis on Music Therapy from California State University, Northridge. Her area of study was the therapeutic uses of music in the NICU and attachment theory. Genevieve is the mother of three breastfed children.



LESS TIME CHARTING, MORE TIME
CARING: EFFICIENT LACTATION
DOCUMENTATION
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JENNIFER ROBERSON

Jennifer D. Roberson is a Certificated Lactation Education Specialist and Program Manager for BreastfeedLA, LA County's breast/chestfeeding coalition. She led BreastfeedLA's first direct-service initiative serving Black families in L.A. County, launching the Liberation Lactation Lounge –a free clinic created in partnership with Humbled By Motherhood that provides culturally affirming, no-cost lactation support while centering Black lactation professionals. Jennifer also created Titties 'N Tea Baby Café, a weekly drop-in space for Black lactating folks. Her most recent work includes partnering with First 5 OC to establish Orange County's first Black Infant Health site in the program's 37-year history. She is currently the primary investigator on an advocacy research project to increase equity for organizations serving Black families in California.

An aspiring IBCLC, doula, and childbirth educator, Jennifer is deeply committed to offering the care, dignity, and advocacy she long wished for as a Black woman navigating the healthcare system.



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ROOTED IN COMMUNITY: THE
TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF PEER
LACTATION SUPPORT

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LYDIA O. BOYD

Lydia O. Boyd, IBCLC, CLE, Doula is an International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant and co-founder of The B.L.A.C.K. Course, a culturally grounded professional lactation training program centering Black communities. She began supporting families in 2007 through Black Infant Health and has since worked across public health, WIC, and private practice. Ms. Boyd currently serves as the Lactation Consultant and Perinatal Educator at the MLK Community Healthcare Community Lactation Clinic in Compton, California, while maintaining an active private practice. Her work centers cultural reclamation, equitable access to lactation care, and community-led education. She has been featured in *Chocolate Milk: The Documentary Series* and has held leadership roles with *Soul Food for Your Baby*. Ms. Boyd has received multiple grants to expand lactation access, including support from the Village Fund. In August 2025, she received the California Lactation Justice Award from the California Breastfeeding Coalition in recognition of her leadership and community impact.



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WHO GETS TO BECOME A
LACTATION PROFESSIONAL?
BARRIERS, ACCESS AND EQUITY
19 August 2026 | 1 PM