



## HEALTH FORUM

### SUICIDE PREVENTION: UNDERSTANDING THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF OLDER ADULTS AND PEOPLE OF COLOR

**THURSDAY, APRIL 29  
7:00 PM – 8:30 PM BY Zoom**

This forum will help family and friends, community members and health professionals recognize the mental health needs of older adults and people of color whose issues may present differently from other populations. Topics covered include:

- Recognizing the needs of older adults and program services for suicide prevention.
- Understanding the impact of bias and internalized racism on mental health and discussion of wellness for people of color.
- An overview of the new National Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Designation Act forecasting the creation of a new 988 lifeline number.

The panelists will present perspectives from their experiences and professional work. There will be time for questions through the chat.

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#### **Moderator:**

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<b>Eileen Elias</b>	Former Massachusetts Commissioner of Mental Health and current Chair of the Barnstable No Place for Hate
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#### **Panelists:**

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<b>Karen Ellery Jones</b>	Assistant Director of the Samaritans on Cape Cod and the Islands
<b>Ayanna Parrent</b>	Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker and CEO and Founder of B Free Wellness, Inc.
<b>Heather White</b>	Member of the executive Committee for the Massachusetts Coalition for Suicide Prevention, and Chair of the MCSP Advocacy Committee

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**REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED: Please register via this link:**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_5S-sjqqVSuCxMmN6MlzNzA](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5S-sjqqVSuCxMmN6MlzNzA)

Once you have registered, you will see a confirmation message with the link for joining the webinar: you can copy and save this link. You will also be sent an email with the necessary information to join the webinar. The link is intended only for the registrant: don't share it. Anyone else who wants to join should register separately, using their own email.

This forum will be recorded, and will be available on our YouTube channel.



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PEOPLE OF COLOR  
Biographical Statements For Panelists**

**Ms. Eileen Elias** through EElias & Company, provides consultation to disability-based organizations in the use of evidence-based practices to enhance rehabilitation for persons with a disability including traumatic brain and those with intellectual/developmental and co-occurring mental disabilities. She has more than 40 years of experience in addressing bigotry and stigma as a policy leader, educator, and volunteer. As the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Deputy Director of the Office on Disability, Ms. Elias expanded and stewarded this first Federal Office on Disability, now the Administration on Community Living. As Massachusetts Commissioner of Mental Health, she transitioned the Commonwealth to community-based systems of care in which employment, education and independent living became a national model. She is Chair of the Barnstable No Place for Hate.

**Karen Ellery Jones** is the Assistant Director of the Samaritans on Cape Cod and the Islands where she oversees volunteer recruitment and training, the Senior Outreach program which pairs Samaritan trained volunteers with members of the community who would benefit from a weekly telephone connection, and Safe Place, a support group for people who have lost family members or loved ones to suicide. She is also a co-trainer for their Elder Suicide Prevention Training.

**Ayanna Parrent** is the CEO and Founder of B FREE Wellness, Inc. B FREE is a Non-Profit Organization and community that transforms lives by providing free or affordable services including movement, mindfulness and coaching programs to those lives who have been interrupted by hardship. Ayanna is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker and 500hr. Registered Yoga Teacher. She is trained in restorative yoga, Yoga of 12 Step Recovery, and multiple trauma sensitive yoga informed programs. She has developed her own business model that gives people an opportunity to release complex trauma out of the body using movement, holistic and mindful techniques. She is the New Author of *Becoming Free*, A Memoir that talks about her journey from addiction to recovery. She is the co-host of the Podcast *Fit Phat Chat* about body positivity and accessible movement. Ayanna is also a leader and organizer in the Social Justice movement, the founder of *Love & Revolution*, an action based anti-racist social media group based on Cape Cod and beyond with over 3000 members.

**Heather White** is a member of the Executive Committee for the Massachusetts Coalition for Suicide Prevention, Chair of the MCSP Advocacy Committee, and served on the statewide 988 Task Force in Vermont. After nearly losing her life to post-partum depression and suicide, Heather White dedicated her personal and professional life to mental health advocacy and suicide prevention efforts. She is currently the Area Director for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention chapters in Massachusetts and Vermont, an ASIST trained suicide intervention caregiver, and suicide prevention trainer. Heather lives in Western Massachusetts with her husband and two children and credits the work of AFSP with saving her family and giving her, her life back.