



## ***Town of Lexington Human Rights Committee***

Meeting Minutes for Friday, July 12, 2024  
Conducted in remotely on Zoom

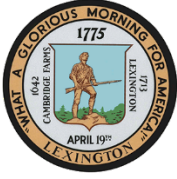
### LHRC MEMBERS PRESENT

Christina Lin, Chair (CL); Stephanie Hsu, Vice-Chair (SH); Rachel Levy (RL); Stephanie Ryan (SR); Lieutenant Colleen Dunbar - Town of Lexington Police (CD); Dana Bickelman- Town of Lexington, Human Services (DB)

The minutes recorded by Christina Lin, LHRC Chair

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1. Welcome/Call to order – Meeting called to order at 9:38am
2. Review and edit draft of “Minority Mental Health Awareness Month”
  - a. It was clarified that, if passed by the Select Board, this proclamation is intended to acknowledge July as Minority Mental Health Awareness Month in perpetuity from the date it is passed.
  - b. A discussion around the use of the term ‘minority’ and if it referred to BIPOC or all marginalized identities. The group settled on honoring the original stated by Bebe Moore Campbell as “National Minority Mental Awareness Month” and recognizing it refers to the BIPOC community.
  - c. Language was added to the draft to emphasize the Town and community’s responsibility to dismantle systemic barriers that create (1) conditions that increase risk for mental unwellness and (2) barriers that create inequitable access to mental health services
3. A vote was taken on a motion to pass this version of the draft of the Proclamation on Minority Mental Health Awareness withstanding small and grammatical edits that do not create substantive change. Committee voted ‘yes’ by a vote of 6-0-0. This version of the draft is shared below.
4. Meeting adjourned at 10:06am.



# Draft version of the proclamation on Minority Mental Health Awareness -

voted by LHRC on July 12, 2024 in support by a vote of 6-0-0

## Town of Lexington, Massachusetts

SELECT BOARD OFFICE

### PROCLAMATION

- Whereas:** July is Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, a time to focus on the unique strengths and challenges that Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) face regarding mental health; and
- Whereas:** Several systemic barriers are preventing BIPOC individuals from receiving adequate mental health care, including insufficient resources that meet cultural and language differences, racialization of BIPOC individuals, socioeconomic disparities, stigma, immigration status, access to resources, and providers' cultural incompetency or bias; and
- Whereas:** It is crucial to connect individuals to available resources for healing, self-care, community support, and proper coping with mental illness; and
- Whereas:** It is crucial to recognize that availability of culturally competent resources are vital to proper support and healing for individuals in need of mental health care in order to effectively address barriers preventing BIPOC individuals from equitable care; and
- Whereas:** It is the responsibility of communities and Towns to invest and sustain systems that foster a culturally inclusive and competent mental health system that is centered on an individual's identity and culture; and
- Whereas:** Belonging and inclusion in communities is vital for the well-being and mental health of BIPOC individuals as it is for all people; and
- Whereas:** Community-led spaces such as cultural hubs and affinity spaces, areas in which people of a specific cultural background have come together to live, provide services, or connect with one another, are vital sources of belonging that promote overall mental health and wellness; and

**Whereas:** Connection with one’s culture and community is critical to supporting overall mental health. Individuals who have strong connections to their communities have better mental health outcomes, including lower rates of suicide, violence, and feelings of isolation; and

**Whereas:** No one knows a community better than those with a shared identity and shared lived experiences. In order to move toward a future with improved mental health baseline and outcomes, community-led action must be prioritized and sustained; and

**Whereas:** Advocating for mentally healthy environments must prioritize access and belonging for all. Strong community support requires an overall understanding that every person deserves a healthy environment and has a role in the wellness of those around them; and

**Whereas:** We call upon the citizens, government agencies, public and private institutions, businesses, and schools in Lexington to recommit our community and institutions to increasing awareness and understanding of BIPOC mental health, the steps our citizens can take to protect their mental health through community-led action and organizing, and the need for appropriate and accessible services for all BIPOC people with mental health conditions.

*NOW, THEREFORE, WE, THE SELECT BOARD* of the Town of Lexington, Massachusetts, do hereby proclaim the month of July to be annually recognized as ***NATIONAL MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH*** in the Town of Lexington as we work together to save lives in our community.

*IN WITNESS WHEREOF*, we have set our hands and caused the seal of Lexington to be affixed herewith on the **XX** of **July** 2024.