



Campaign for
Black Male
Achievement

JOURNEY TO RADIANCE: **HEALTH AND HEALING** **STRATEGIES**

POWERED
BY



THE
CALIFORNIA
ENDOWMENT

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LOVE

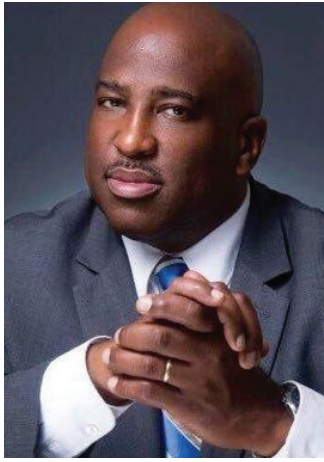


LEARN



LEAD

**CBMA: BUILDING A
BELOVED COMMUNITY FOR
BLACK MEN AND BOYS**



LOVE. LEARN. LEAD: A COLLECTIVE JOURNEY TO RADIANCE Message from the CEO, Shawn Dove

As I write this message, I am sitting on a Colorado mountainside participating in the second annual Restoration Retreat hosted by the Campaign for Black Male Achievement (CBMA) and our partner the Fund II Foundation. Thirty-four high school-aged young men from seven cities have just finished morning sessions of yoga and Qi Gong, led by Black Male Yoga Initiative Founder, Changa Bell and CBMA's Senior Director of Health and Healing Strategies, Dr. Phyllis Hubbard.

Since launching at the Open Society Foundations in 2008, CBMA has supported a cross-section of individuals and organizations working on behalf of Black men and boys in a multitude of ways. The first health and healing seed was sown in December 2009 during a presentation given by Dr. Hubbard at a grantee retreat. It was there that we began to talk with the men and women in attendance about the importance of their own well-being, and how maintaining healthy lifestyles is essential to their effectiveness as racial and social justice leaders. Yet, the seminal moment in CBMA's journey and commitment to radiance occurred six years later at our annual *Rumble Young Man, Rumble!* gathering in Louisville, Kentucky. During a closing intergenerational session, we explored issues of depression and asked the gathering of more than 200 men and women how they dealt with it in their own lives. To my alarm, a significant number of vulnerable hands were raised to share that they were grappling with depression, and even suicide.

Instinctively, I knew that the call for support and demand for healing strategies could not go unanswered. It was then that CBMA declared our commitment to addressing this issue as a core part of our work and began laying the blueprint for what would soon become BMA Health and Healing Strategies. Since that tide-changing moment at Rumble, we have woven an ethos of health and healing into everything we do at CBMA. Health and Healing salons have become staples at many of our events. Menu selections at CBMA gatherings and team meetings have become more healthful. With Dr. Hubbard's guidance and support, I have personally turned a corner by committing to sustaining a healthier lifestyle for myself and my family.

Most importantly, CBMA has seeded systemic change that will ensure health and healing is a priority within organizations and institutions that are directly impacting and influencing the lives of Black males and Black communities as a whole. CBMA remains grateful for the interest and investment of The California Endowment, which provided our first funding opportunity to fuel this work and facilitate partnerships with the Oakland and Sacramento City Unified School Districts that continue to this day.

CBMA is grateful to the many heads, hands and hearts that have contributed to this report, which reflects the early findings and learnings of CBMA's Health and Healing Strategies. As you read and reflect on your own Journey to Radiance, be encouraged to utilize the mentors, executive coaches AND therapists in your life who can support you in effectively responding to the many challenges that come with deep-end leadership.

It has been—and will continue to be—a long road ahead to shift the consciousness of the BMA field and our communities around health and healing. There is no way that we can authentically emanate the CBMA mission mantra of #LoveLearnLead without taking the first and lasting steps of radical self-care.

I hope you will join us.

Onward.

Shawn Dove

Chief Executive Officer, Campaign for Black Male Achievement





MESSAGE FROM THE BMA HEALTH AND HEALING STRATEGIES SENIOR DIRECTOR

My collaboration with the Campaign for Black Male Achievement (CBMA) began 10 years ago, when CEO Shawn Dove invited me to share strategies for health and healing during CBMA's first Transformational Leadership retreat. I created an interactive experience for the retreat called Transformational Leadership from the Inside Out, which focused on strategies for healing the mind, body, spirit, emotions, and how each can be used to improve one's home and work life.

Though initially asked to focus my presentation on nutrition, I asserted that unhealthy eating habits and lifestyles found in many communities of color stem far beyond food deserts and other social economic issues. I wanted to directly address unresolved emotional trauma and present it as a deep underlying root cause that, unless properly processed, can jeopardize our success and prevent us from thriving. I know this from personal experience.

At seven years old, I witnessed a traumatic event involving another child. At the time, there was no one to help me process what I experienced. Later that same year, I was diagnosed with a respiratory illness known as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). After 27 years of "living" with the disease and the negative side effects of doctor-prescribed medication, I came to realize that my own healing power lies in how I took care of myself between doctor visits. This motivated me to explore alternative wellness techniques, including an ancient indigenous form of medicine called Ayurveda, which when translated into English means "The Science of Living." Within three months, my decades-long battle with COPD came to an end.

It was only after diligently working to release the emotional burdens on my heart, while nourishing my body with therapeutic foods and movement, that I finally began to heal from the inside out. This journey is also what inspired me to study holistic health and teach others what I learned. As a result, in 2016, seven years after that first retreat, CBMA's Health and Healing Strategies (HHS) was born.

The Health and Healing Strategies were created from our belief and learning that Black males need a healthy ecosystem to thrive and grow. We have learned that health is much more than something that we do when we have the time. Health is how we live, work, and play. It is how we speak to each other and how we navigate difficult conversations.

HHS improves the health outcomes of Black males by promoting self-empowerment and wellness education among Black Male Achievement (BMA) leaders. Through this report, you will learn about the origins of CBMA's focus on health and wellness, our vision for what healing our communities can look like, as well as some of the challenges and opportunities we have encountered along the way. We will introduce the first 10 of over 50 recommended health and healing strategies, selected based on our experience from the field. Additionally, through the voices of our innovative community leaders, participants, and evaluators, we will share observations, impact, and key findings from the BMA Health and Healing Strategies, as well as recommendations to help you get started on your own Journey to Radiance.

We invite you to join us on this journey by pledging to incorporate health and healing strategies into your daily life, actively engage in your own self-care, and take steps to create healthier environments for Black men and boys, families, colleagues, and communities.

See You On the Journey!

Dr. Phyllis Hubbard

Senior Director, BMA Health and Healing Strategies

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Information provided in this report includes holistic and healthy lifestyle recommendations to support health, healing, self-empowerment and efficacy development. This holistic information has not been evaluated or approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and in the case of ill health, pregnancy, and other serious health conditions, a licensed medical practitioner should always be consulted before engaging in any of the recommendations or practices. The purpose of this report is to communicate the impact of the Black Male Achievement (BMA) Health and Healing Strategies (HHS) work on the lives of Black males and BMA leaders. Information on any and all forms of holistic healing practices are in no way intended as a medical claim to prescribe, diagnose, treat or cure any situation or disease. Strategies shared are not intended to take the place of advice provided by your licensed medical doctor or other health care provider.

LOVE. LEARN. LEAD.

Building a Beloved Community for Black Men and Boys

BACKGROUND

Founded in 2008, the Campaign for Black Male Achievement (CBMA) is a national membership organization dedicated to ensuring growth, sustainability, and impact among leaders and organizations committed to improving the life outcomes of Black men and boys.¹ CBMA's current national membership includes more than 7,868 individual partners and 4,384 organizations, rooted in the following core tenants:

LOVE: CBMA supports and uplifts men and women striving to build a future that enables Black men and boys to achieve their fullest potential.

LEARN: CBMA deploys a place-based strategy (Promise of Place) that emphasizes learning through data and evidence.

LEAD: CBMA is a nationwide movement that lifts up leaders and organizations who are moving the field of Black Male Achievement forward.

CBMA is focused on building a movement to improve outcomes for Black men and boys. Its fundamental implementation strategies include serving as a **Leadership Developer**, a **What Works Engine** and a **Catalytic Investor** in this critical work.

BMA Health and Healing Strategies (BMA HHS) aims to improve the health outcomes of Black males by promoting self-empowerment and wellness education among leaders. The goal is to ensure *"leaders in the Black Male Achievement field have the tools and resources to facilitate and sustain their health and healing, as well as that of the Black males and broader communities that they serve."*² Toward that goal, BMA HHS was established in 2016 in the cities of Oakland and Sacramento, California, through partnerships with local school districts, community-based organizations, and thought leaders from across the country, and supported through seed funding from The California Endowment. Under the leadership of Senior Director Dr. Phyllis Hubbard, BMA HHS expands CBMA efforts to incorporate an explicitly culturally responsive, healing-centered focus to improving overall health and wellness for Black male youth and the practitioners who serve them.

¹ <https://www.blackmaleachievement.org/about/cbma>

² <https://www.blackmaleachievement.org/our-impact/initiatives/cbma-health-and-healing-strategies>



Health and Healing Strategies: A Beloved Community Approach

CBMA's Health and Healing Strategies builds strategic engagement of educators, parents/families, and community members who have various levels of direct engagement with African American male youth - those who make up the "village" or what Dr. Martin Luther King referred to as the "beloved community" who guide and shape the lives of Black boys. Recognizing that these individuals have an impactful role in the lives of youth, BMA HHS focuses on increasing knowledge and skillsets around strategies for improved physical and emotional health and overall wellness for this "beloved community." By building the capacity of those with daily direct interaction with Black men and boys, BMA HHS increases the likeliness that positive and healthy behaviors will be modeled with the young men, providing opportunities for them to build knowledge and tools toward health and healing as well.

The approach toward this engagement of the "beloved community" is centered around four targeted areas:

BMA Health and Healing Strategies 4 Focus Areas

1. Provide caregivers of children with healing-centered engagement strategies.
2. Recruit and train Black males to facilitate Wellness Mentoring Circles aimed at improving schooling and youth development outcomes of Black boys and young men of color.
3. Implement culturally responsive teacher training and professional development designed to improve classroom management and reduce stress for school personnel and caregivers.
4. Provide resources for strategic communication toward asset-based narrative change to guide members on how to increase healthy and healing lifestyles for themselves and the young men they serve.



I-80 CONNECTION: FROM NEW YORK TO CALIFORNIA

CBMA's national expansion has taken root on the West Coast, with 17% of its membership in California—the second largest nationally.³ It has been noted that Interstate 80 runs directly from New York to Sacramento and Oakland, offering a direct path from the east to the west coast. Many of the challenges experienced by Black men and boys in CBMA's home base of New York are similarly aligned with those experienced by Black men and boys in the larger urban communities of Northern California, creating a direct path for collaboration across the I-80 connection.

Initial implementation within Northern California districts began in partnership with Radiant Health Strategies, through the design of a health and wellness series titled “Transformational Leadership from the Inside Out.” These rejuvenating, interactive, and engaging workshops guided participants in the practice of transformational leadership through a fusion of health strategies, fundamental leadership skills, therapeutic movement, and self-empowerment exercises. The real-world applicable techniques for health, wellness, and stress management blended ancient holistic medicine with innovations in research in a way that was easy to grasp and fun. Building on this initial series, BMA HHS expanded to include the core implementation partners. This strategic expansion allowed for deeper and more intentional engagement of community members, families, and educators. Much of the access to build capacity and skill sets for Health and Healing Strategies among youth, educators and families came through strong partnership with the largest K-12 school districts for each targeted city—Oakland Unified School District and Sacramento City Unified School District.

Regional Background: OAKLAND, CA

Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) serves 36,900 students across 87 school sites (not inclusive of dependent or independent charter schools). Approximately 75% of OUSD students live within low socio-economic households, as evidenced by Free and Reduced Price lunch eligibility for the 2017-18 school year. African American students make up approximately 24% of the overall districtwide enrollment; however, in select communities and schools within OUSD, this percentage is much higher.⁴ According to the California Department of Education's California School Dashboard Additional Reports and Data, OUSD's African American students are disproportionately assessed as failing to meet grade-level standards in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math, and are among those with the highest in rates of suspension and chronic absenteeism (CDE School Dashboard Additional Reports and Data: Student Group Reports 2018). While there is clearly a tremendous need for systems change and interventions to reverse these disparities, there has also been promising progress. OUSD's Office of Equity employs a targeted-universal approach to reversing disproportionality for Black boys. Through interventions like the African American Male Achievement Initiative and the Manhood Development Program, OUSD's efforts have resulted in increased grade point average and increased rates of students reading at or above grade level for African American male student program participants.⁵

The Office of Equity, under the leadership of former Deputy Chief Chris Chatmon, has been a vital partner in the implementation of BMA Health and Healing Strategies in the city of Oakland.

³ CBMA Promise of Place Report 2017-18

⁴ <http://www.ousddata.org/>

⁵ Watson, V. (December 2014). The Black Sunrise: Oakland Unified School District's Commitment to Address and Eliminate Institutionalized Racism

Regional Background: SACRAMENTO, CA

Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) serves 46,737 students across 77 schools; roughly 16% of SCUSD students are Black/African American.⁶ The majority of SCUSD families are experiencing poverty, with 70% meeting the income eligibility guidelines for federal Free and Reduced Price lunch (SCUSD Dashboard, 2016-17). Similarly to OUSD, African American students in SCUSD schools are more likely to be suspended and/or expelled than non-African American students and are disproportionately assessed as failing to meet California Common Core State Standards in ELA and Math (CDE School Dashboard Additional Reports and Data: Student Group Reports 2018). Targeted academic and social-emotional interventions offered through SCUSD's Youth Development Support Services (YDSS), including programs such as the Men's Leadership Academy and site-based out-of-school-time opportunities (afterschool and summer programs) have been impactful in increasing school connectedness, increasing attendance and increasing high school graduation rates. Explicit in their goal to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline and create systems to support the whole needs of the child and family, staff members of SCUSD's YDSS department were ideal partners in the implementation of BMA HHS in Sacramento.

Trusted Partners

The team of trusted CBMA partners leading implementation of BMA HHS in Oakland and Sacramento include K-12 school districts, community-based organizations, and thought leaders from across the country.

CBMA National Partners

National CARES Mentoring Movement
Radiant Health Strategies
Strategic Destiny, LLC

K-12 School District Partners

Oakland Unified School District, Office of Equity
Sacramento City Unified School District, Youth Development Support Services

Local Community-Based Organizations and Service Providers

393Films
A Touch of Life Leadership and Wellness Institute
Flourish Agenda
Spearitwux

Additional information on the role and impact of each of the BMA Health and Healing Strategies Lead Partner organizations is provided in the **Partner Profiles** section of this report.

⁶ www.scusd.edu/ourdistrict





OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Community Schools, Thriving Students



Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) focuses on high academic achievement while serving the whole child, eliminating inequity, and providing each child with excellent teachers, every day. OUSD is committed to providing every student with access to a high-quality school, ensuring each student is prepared for college, career, and community success, staffing every school with talented individuals committed to working in service of children, creating a school district that holds itself and its partners accountable for superior outcomes, and guarantees rigorous instruction in every classroom. For more information, visit www.ousd.org.

BMA Health and Healing Strategies focus:

Under the direction of their Office of Equity, Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) creates systems change based on making human connections, leveraging relationships, and empowering people to challenge and radically disrupt the system. The goal is to provide schools where students feel safe to develop the necessary skills to prepare them for college, careers, and community success.

“MDP facilitators are beginning to remember/use concepts; very positive reception to the info cards for home and classroom... [we need] more resources like this.”

—AAMA Administrator

BMA HHS integration within OUSD includes:

- Integrating CARES Mentoring Circles into the Manhood Development Program
- Integrating Health and Healing Strategies into the OUSD Fall Forum and Spring Symposium
- Supporting the Black Teacher Learning Support Institute
- Providing Parent/Family and Community Engagement events



The mission of Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) is to “graduate students who are globally competitive, life-long learners, prepared to succeed in a career and higher education institution of their choice to secure gainful employment and contribute to society.” Toward that effort, SCUSD focuses on proven strategies to impact access to high quality instruction and supports to ensure college and career readiness. The district’s core values, as identified in the SCUSD 2016-2021 Strategic Plan, include the following: Equity, Achievement, Integrity, and Accountability. For more information on SCUSD’s Youth Development Support Services, visit: www.youthdevelopmentscusd.org.

BMA Health and Healing Strategies focus:

Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD)’s Youth Development Support Services department employs a social justice youth development framework toward empowering young men and women to be scholars of advocacy for self, culture and community. Services aligned with BMA Health and Healing Strategies include:

- Integrating CARES Mentoring Circles into the Men’s Leadership Academy Programs at Sam Brannan Middle School and Will C. Wood Middle School
- Offering Transformational Leadership and Health and Wellness workshops and training opportunities to district staff, community partners, and service providers
- Implementing Flourish Agenda’s Health and Healing workshop series (Radical Healing) with SCUSD school personnel
- Providing access and coordination for Strategic Destiny workshops (Triumph Over Trauma) with SCUSD staff, parents/families, and community
- Implementing a series of health and wellness challenges with district staff, including fitness competitions, creation of healthy work environments, and offering healing-centered retreats

A Touch of Life Leadership and Wellness Institute



A Touch of Life is a health and wellness institute that specializes in the facilitation of Transformational Teambuilding and Employee Wellness trainings for nonprofit organizations, corporations and county/state institutions. Founder Asara Tsehai brings more than 35 years of experience in the health and wellness industry to her trainings and workshops. She is the author of *The Ancient Principles of Radiant Health* and has produced the unique *9-Breath Meditation* two-disc CD set, which combines voice, music, and breath to release stress. Ms. Tsehai's work has been featured in several national publications, including *Essence*, *Sister to Sister* and *Heart & Soul* magazines. For more information, visit www.myancienttreasure.com.

BMA Health and Healing Strategies focus:

A Touch of Life provided BMA HHS health and wellness sessions to Oakland Unified School District personnel and teachers. Session topics included, but were not limited to: overall health and well-being, nutrition, reflexology, yoga, and guided development of individualized personal wellness plans.

“[Sister Asara’s session] creates space to recharge/re-energize and ground one-self.”

-Wellness session participant

BY THE NUMBERS:

20 TOTAL WORKSHOP SESSIONS
25 TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

“[I’m] shifting patterns of behavior (workaholic mode, over exertion), toward a more meditative state.”

-Wellness session participant



Flourish Agenda is a national nonprofit consulting firm that works with youth of color, schools, youth-serving organizations, foundations, and local governments to build and implement strategies that allow young people to **flourish**. The mission of Flourish Agenda is to design strategies that unlock the power of healing and engage youth of color and adults in transforming their schools and communities. Their approach incorporates Radical Healing practices and principles to restore hope, power, and possibilities in schools and youth-serving organizations. Radical Healing builds relationships that improve organizational climate and support the well-being of youth and educators. For more information, visit: www.flourishagenda.com.

BMA Health and Healing Strategies focus:

As partners in BMA Health and Healing Strategies, Flourish Agenda conducted seminars, workshops and trainings with K-12 teachers, non-traditional educators and district staff in each of the two targeted communities of Oakland and Sacramento. Workshops centered around Radical Healing in schools and communities, including strategies to support personal self-care and healing, and tools toward integration of a healing-centered approach in educational practices. Additional BMA HHS efforts include:

- Keynote addresses by founder, author, and CEO Dr. Shawn Ginwright
- *Radical Healing* workshops and retreats that provide breakthrough experiences to educational practitioners and caregivers
- Customized services to support institutions and evaluate program impact and effectiveness
- Application of research findings on youth of color, racial trauma, and well-being to improve practices and inform the field

BY THE NUMBERS:**TOTAL SESSIONS CONDUCTED:**

13 **309***

SESSIONS **PARTICIPANTS**

*Total may include duplicated participants (those who attended more than one session)

More than 80% of participants reported being willing to use the Radical Healing model for their youth and for their personal enrichment.



NATIONAL CARES MENTORING MOVEMENT



National CARES Mentoring Movement is a pioneering, community-galvanizing movement, dedicated to alleviating intergenerational poverty among African Americans. It offers Black children in low-income families and underserved communities the social, emotional and academic support needed to unleash their potential and graduate from high school prepared to succeed in college or vocational-training programs and 21st-century careers. More than 140,000 mentors and local CARES Affiliate Leaders across 58 U.S. cities are devoted to advancing young people who are often isolated and mostly written off by society. For more information, visit: www.caresmentoring.org.

BMA Health and Healing Strategies focus:

The CARES Mentoring Movement approach to health and healing includes elevating education, expectation, and self-esteem in youth and engaging in community wellness circles to provide a safe place for reflection and connection. For BMA HHS, these approaches have been implemented across five middle school sites through partnership with Oakland Unified School District's Office of Equity and Sacramento City Unified School District's Men's Leadership Academy, as well as partnerships with local mentors and service providers in both cities.

“I used to get into trouble with my teachers, now my grades are up.”

—Mentee at Sam Brannan Middle School in Sacramento, CA

BY THE NUMBERS:

71

**TOTAL WELLNESS
CIRCLE/MENTORING
SESSIONS
(ACROSS BOTH
CITIES)**

440

**TOTAL YOUTH
PARTICIPANTS**

240

**TOTAL ADULT
MENTORS RECRUITED
AND TRAINED**

“[Participating in mentoring circles] made me feel more responsible and think about life choices.”

—Mentee at Sam Brannan Middle School in Sacramento, CA



Founded by Reverend Dr. Alfonso Wyatt, Strategic Destiny: Designing Futures Through Faith & Facts, seeks to find common language and collaborative opportunities with socially engaged practitioners who are motivated by faith, as well as secular practitioners motivated by evidence-based learning. Through workshops, trainings and healing circle facilitation, Strategic Destiny empowers caregivers with trauma-related response strategies to support their own healing, and to influence the health and wellness of the youth they serve. Reverend Dr. Wyatt is a renowned national speaker on issues affecting men, children, youth, young adults, adults, families, as well as community mental and physical health. In his role as a national public theologian, he offers a message of hope in and out of the faith community. Dr. Wyatt is a consultant to government institutions, universities, foundations, public/charter schools, nonprofits and civic groups. For more information, email: alfonsow Wyatt09@gmail.com.

BMA Health and Healing Strategies focus:

Under the leadership of the Reverend Dr. Alfonso Wyatt, Strategic Destiny serves in an advisory and consultant role to the national CBMA movement. Additionally, in alignment with BMA HHS, Strategic Destiny provides healing-centered workshops and training to community-based organizations, educators, and families in Sacramento. Reverend Dr. Wyatt also served as keynote speaker for the BMA HHS Planning Retreat for Oakland and Sacramento leaders. Dr. Wyatt has been instrumental in providing crisis-response support and community healing to Sacramento families, district staff and community members after the tragic loss of Stephon Clark, a Black young man killed by police in March 2018.

“...These sessions provided the ability to identify trauma personally and professionally...”

- Strategic Destiny workshop participant

BY THE NUMBERS:

TOTAL SESSIONS CONDUCTED:

11

SESSIONS

328*

PARTICIPANTS

*Total may include duplicated participants who attended more than one session

“[I learned] tools for reframing and redirecting student behavior and using strength based language. This has been useful for families as well.”

- Strategic Destiny workshop participant



Spearitwux provides innovative consulting and training for parents and youth development professionals on topics such as powerful parenting, staff wellness and sustainability, crisis intervention, intergenerational and vicarious trauma, classroom management, restorative justice, effective team building, and more. The Spearitwux organizational goal is to develop young people's ability to actively contribute to the transformation of their families, and to create a healthy and sustainable community in which they live. They achieve this goal through equipping youth development professionals with the right tools to engage, motivate, and empower youth toward health and wellness. Additionally, Spearitwux focuses on building support within families to provide a safe space for parents and youth to share strategies on how to build safety, sustainability, and solidarity. For more information, visit: www.spearitwux.com.

BMA Health and Healing Strategies focus:

In alignment with Health and Healing Strategies, Spearitwux provided monthly healing-centered workshops for parents, families, and community members within the Oakland Unified School District. Most notably, at West Oakland Middle School, Spearitwux was instrumental in bridging the cultural gap between the school community's African American and Yemeni families through engagement in shared health and healing learning opportunities for parents/guardians.



BY THE NUMBERS:

10 **362***
TOTAL SESSIONS **TOTAL PARTICIPANTS**

*Total may include duplicated participants who attended more than one session

From workshop survey responses to the prompt "One thing I learned..."

"If the parents felt welcomed and loved in schools, we would be able to do so much more for the children."

—Family workshop participant

"There's still hope, change any kind of way you can."

—Family workshop participant

393 FILMS



BMA Health and Healing Strategies Focus:

In partnership with CBMA and Health and Healing Strategies, 393Films co-hosts and produces Journey to Radiance podcasts, aimed to promote healthy lifestyles, and to shift the narrative around Black men and boys, specifically as it relates to health and healing. Bigger than merely increasing communication, the overarching goal for this collaboration is to elevate more accurate, positive and healthy depictions of Black men and boys.

393Films creates multimedia projects aimed at transforming our perceptions to a higher level of thought. Its mission is to transform thoughts to actions through creating media that inspires action. A Bay Area-based full production house, 393Films' services include: screenwriting, directing, and editing with state-of-the-art equipment and innovative digital media software. Founder Adimu Madyun has an extensive history of production and service. An educator, filmmaker and musician, Adimu, a.k.a. WolfHawkJaguar, has produced films and music in both the United States and various countries in Africa. Additionally, he facilitates the DetermiNation Black Men's Group, a men of color achievement circle (through partnership with United Roots and Urban Peace Movement), and trains youth in media and music production. For more information, visit: www.393films.com.

BY THE NUMBERS:

13

JOURNEY TO
RADIANCE PODCAST
SESSIONS



RADIANT HEALTH STRATEGIES

Radiant Health Strategies (RHS), is a holistic health educational business founded by Dr. Phyllis Hubbard. Dr. Hubbard develops health prevention and intervention programs that help correct and restore imbalances in the mind and body through the use of a synergistic blend of holistic healing modalities. Radiant Health Strategies specializes in therapeutic nutrition and movement (including Qigong and Kemeti Yoga), clinical aromatherapy, herbology, and self-empowerment. RHS has provided customized wellness education and training for CBMA since 2009 beginning with its "Transformational Leadership from the Inside Out" series of seminars. For more information, visit: www.radianthealthstrategies.com.

BMA Health and Healing Strategies Focus:

Prior to serving as Senior Director of the BMA HHS Initiative, Dr. Phyllis Hubbard founded Radiant Health Strategies (RHS). RHS launched CBMA's wellness strategic communication endeavors, including producing numerous blogs, instructional videos, empowering images and recruiting 393Films to co-host the "Journey to Radiance" podcasts and webisodes. RHS has been instrumental in highlighting practices that improve health and wellness and affirm Black men and boys as assets to their communities.

BY THE NUMBERS:

27
10

BLOGS AND
EDUCATIONAL
POSTS

HEALTH AND
HEALING INITIATIVE
WEBISODES

TRANSFORMATIONAL
LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS

YOUTUBE VIDEOS
(INCLUDING A JOURNEY
TO RADIANCE SONG)

2

3

METHODOLOGY

CBMA is committed to assessing the impact of the BMA Health and Healing Strategies work. During year two of the initiative, CBMA engaged local evaluation partner, Innovation Bridge, to capture, document and analyze impact. The following sections detail the methodology and key findings of that assessment.

Impact Assessment Methodology

Historically, the Black community has often found itself the subject of research that pathologized negative narratives, yielding more harm than benefits for the community. Repeated research-related atrocities have harmed, silenced, and exploited Blacks, leading to significant distrust between researchers and the Black community. Understanding this context, this methodology “seeks to illuminate the complex dimensions of goodness” (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997, p. xvi), as a counterpoint to the dominant culture and tradition of documenting failure in communities of color. The overall goal is to capture the wholeness and complexity of BMA HHS as it relates to structures, people, relationships, goals, education, and voice. This section details how data was collected and evaluated (See Figure 1 on page 15).

Preliminary Data

The evaluation of BMA Health and Healing Strategies commenced at the start of the second year. In order to capture impact during the first year of implementation, data was collected around workshop attendance, post-workshop provider surveys and informal interviews with stakeholders. Attendance provided a preliminary quantitative outlook on engagement and participation in the various programs and workshops, while post-workshop surveys and stakeholder interviews provided some preliminary qualitative data.

Primary Data

The evaluation team began primary data collection during the second year of implementation. This data centered on participant evaluation surveys and field observations. The objective was to ascertain the impact and sustainability of health and healing strategies within participants’ everyday lifestyle and practices. Were the strategies learned being implemented, and if so, which were most effective in improving the health and wellness of adults and the youth they serve? Field observations were conducted in order to gain a better understanding of participant level impact. The assessment team conducted field observations from the vantage point of participant observers, participating in the full breadth of programming while on site, and taking intermittent notes while in the space. Notes were then debriefed and expounded.

Targeted Data

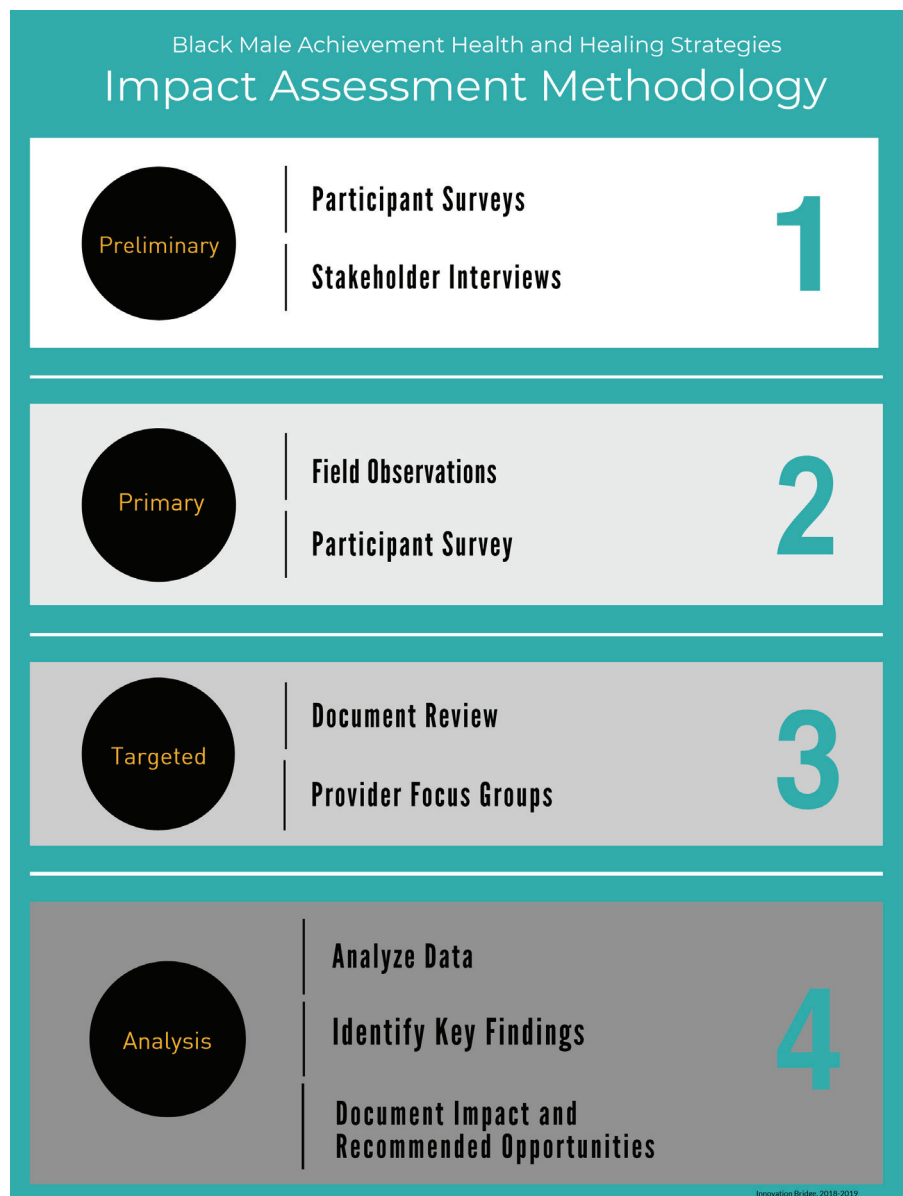
The evaluation team employed targeted data to verify and support initial findings from the preliminary data review. Analysis of provider focus groups and document review data, in conjunction with the analysis of the primary data, provided additional clarity on the

impact of BMA Health and Healing Strategies. The evaluation team and strategic partner organizations facilitated participant focus groups to further inform impact of strategies on youth, practitioners, and families.

Analysis

Data was analyzed for impact themes and was triangulated through the three data profiles. As themes were identified, they were cross-referenced with identified health and healing strategies for relevance. A preliminary write-up of the findings were then shared with BMA partners, who provided additional clarity and feedback. Partners' feedback was used as an additional analytical tool to determine the overall impact, giving voice to the community in order to capture the “complex dimensions of goodness” associated with BMA HHS. Findings were organized based on highlighting effective BMA HHS strategies, key opportunities, and recommendations moving forward.

Figure 1. BMA HHS Impact Assessment Methodology



IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

Since its official launch in Spring 2016, CBMA Health and Healing Strategies has engaged **2,436** youth, educators, school district personnel, parents/guardians, youth practitioners and community members in various opportunities designed to build transformative leadership and **PROMOTE HEALTH, HEALING AND OVERALL WELLNESS** for Black men and boys, including, but not limited to, the following:

Facilitation of more than 135 Health and Healing workshops, seminars and retreats

Recruitment and training of 240 mentors

Engagement of 440 middle school boys in Wellness Mentoring Circles

Facilitation of informational workshops and caregiver retreats with 354 parents, grandparents and or guardians

Production of 13 BMA HHS podcasts and 2 webisodes containing Health and Healing demonstrations

Development of 27 BMA Health and Healing Strategies blogs and educational posts

HHS Workshop participant overall post-assessment findings:



91%

MOTIVATED TO
INCREASE PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY



82%

LEARNED SKILLS TO
HELP REDUCE THE
NEGATIVE EFFECTS
OF STRESS AND
TRAUMA

KEY FINDINGS

BMA HHS participants included youth, parents/grandparents, educators, and community youth practitioners. Key qualitative findings were based on assessing the overall impact of Black Male Achievement Health and Healing Strategies (BMA HHS) on participants, and impact toward positive outcomes for young Black males. Across participant groups, the health and healing strategies offered through workshops, wellness seminars, retreats, and discussions led by BMA HHS partner organizations resulted in positive impact on young Black male achievement at home, in the community, and in school settings. This section provides insight on the emergent themes that developed as a result of the evaluation of the initiative's impact.

Impact 1: Language – The First Step on the Path

*“You can’t change what you don’t know...
It is impossible to change ‘I don’t know.’ If this is
the only response you have, then it’s very difficult
to deal with or find healing solutions.”*

**-Reverend Dr. Alfonso Wyatt,
Founder, Strategic Destiny**

The first key finding from BMA HHS is the power of healing language in the healing process. This includes both acquisition and understanding of healing language. One of the barriers to healing is the inability to name what is wrong and to address the need for healing. Learning the “language of self-care” enabled participants to identify and name the trauma in their own lives,



as well as in the lives of young Black males. Additionally, it allowed participants to better identify their emotions and facilitate better communication, youth-to-youth, youth-to-adult and adult-to-adult, in the process of securing empowering and authentic relationships.

For the **CARES Mentoring Circles**, acquiring the language of the program was connected to students feeling more confident in their ability to communicate. One example is the expression *Saying it Out*. This phrase was adopted by the student participants as a way of encouraging open dialogue. *Saying it Out* empowered students to articulate what they were feeling and taught them how to receive and respond to communication that they felt was negative. Instead of responding in anger or losing control emotionally, *Saying it Out* helped students learn how to ask questions for improved clarity, or how to provide counter statements as an effective strategy to addressing negativity. The improved communication skills carried influence in the emotional control of the students, their engagement in their school work, and the overall narratives they portrayed.

Flourish Agenda provided participants with the language of CARMA – Culture, Agency, Relationships, Meaning and Aspirations (Ginwright, 2016). Though participants were familiar with the individual words associated with the acronym, understanding them within the context of health and healing and self-care was new. As one of the Flourish Agenda session participants stated, “Through CARMA, I have been able to attune and refine the abstract attitudes and behaviors that no longer serve me.” For this participant, acquiring the language has not only led to an evaluation of the behaviors that serve her, but has supported her in building healthy relationships as she engages in therapy and liberation work in her

community. Another participant spoke of agency, and how acquiring that word as part of her self-care language led to her taking reign on her life in the area of mental health and toxic relationships. It has provided clarity around her purpose and improved her sense of confidence and personal power.

Impact 2: Safety and Care

Safety and the intentionality behind cultivating safe healing spaces is another health and healing strategy that showed evidence of impact across BMA HHS partners and participants. Abraham Maslow (1943) identified safety as the most important psychological need behind the physiological needs of food, shelter, and rest. Safety—physical, economic, emotional, health/well-being—is a launching point for individuals to develop intimacy and strong social relationships, in addition to high self-esteem. The cultivation of safety allowed BMA HHS participants to experience the vulnerability required to enter the mental and spiritual space of healing. Many adult participants identified a lack of acknowledgement around their own needs for healing, indicating that it was a product of working in high stress and often emotionally unsupportive environments.

Safety was also found in the commandeering of space within places that were viewed as hostile towards people of color, particularly Black men. Adult participants described their experiences of working within the systems as “high stress, non-affirming and littered with microaggressions.” Youth participants spoke of school as a place that constantly threatened their physical and social-emotional safety. They described school as a place where they are confronted with fights, discipline, low achievement and a lack of confidence. The cultivated safe spaces were valued as places of refuge and healing for people of color. Though the initiative was not exclusive to Black people, the explicit pursuit of Black male achievement and Black male narrative

modification resulted in participants who were primarily people of color. Participants acknowledged that despite wanting to have more diversity present in the space, the lack of diversity provided the comfort of being “around your own.” Working on health and healing alongside other people of color allowed participants to let down their guard and be vulnerable.

Outside of creating safe spaces within school settings, some partners also provided programming in the community. Dr. Alfonso Wyatt of **Strategic Destiny** spoke of the importance of knowing who his participants were and recognizing that in addition to parents, there were a number of grandparents raising

their grandchildren who participated in his workshops. Thus, he worked to find spaces within the community to meet, as a convenience for his participants and to create an increased sense of safety for community members, which is not always associated with the schools.

Impact 3: Remix The Approach

Many of the strategies provided by the BMA HHS partners had a carryover impact on the relationships between participants and young Black males. By focusing on self-care, participants were then able to remix their approach to building relationships with Black males from a healthier place. This healthier place was often described by participants as less aggressive or “softer,” and more compassionate, which



defined an important shift in their relationship with young Black males. Claudette Lee and Ethel Williams (2001) state that “survival... racism, discrimination, and oppression define the childhood of an African American male” (p. 56). This can often be interpreted through the lens of fear for the survival of Black boys, leading caring adults to inadvertently approach relationship building through the vehicle of toughness, aggression, or hypermasculinity.

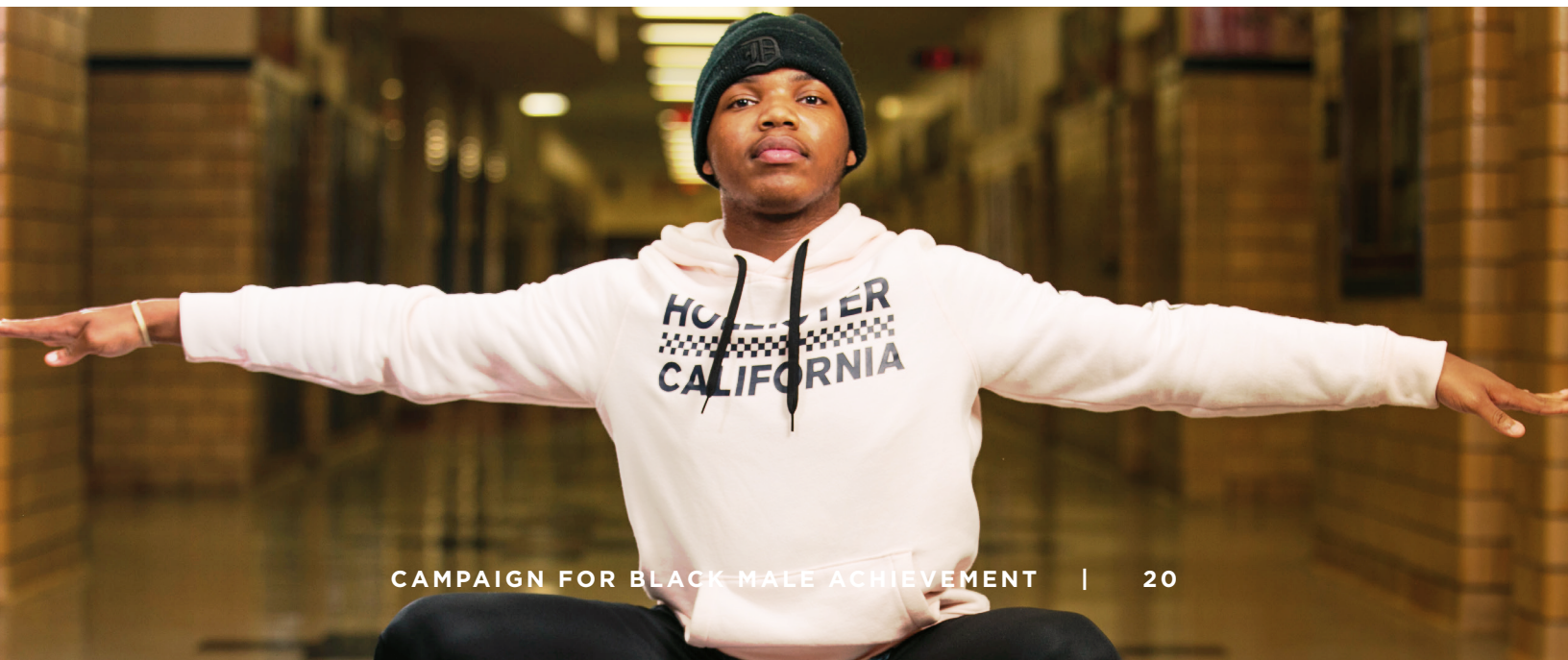
The mothers and grandmothers who participated in the BMA HHS workshop sessions led by **Spearitwurx** spoke about the fear that comes from the challenge of raising young Black males in Oakland, CA. Yet, as part of their BMA HHS efforts, Spearitwurx emphasized the importance of self-care as a process of dealing with the increasing stressors of raising their sons and grandsons. They recommend strategies such as “connecting before you correct,” and “taking a breath before you engage in the correction process to make it more meaningful and less punitive.” These more thoughtful approaches to correction has impacted how the participants of Spearitwurx sessions see their sons. As one participant stated, the strategies she’s learned have helped her to “not be so aggressive” and to “calm myself down” when dealing with her

grandchildren. Other participants noted that, despite the view that you can’t “slack on your mack with town teenagers,” the strategies of “more love and hugs,” “reciprocity with positivity,” and being more open to learning how to communicate with their children/grandchildren, has led to positive change.

Impact 4: Rewriting the Narrative

One of the most prominent areas of impact was the effect BMA HHS had on shifting the narrative and perception of Black males. Across all of the BMA HHS partner organizations, participants noted how focusing on their own health and healing created capacity for working with and seeing Black males in a different light. But the greater impact came when young Black males took ownership in rewriting those narratives themselves.

CARES Mentoring saw the students who participated in their wellness circles at both the Oakland and Sacramento sites experience improved grades, confidence, behavior and communication skills. Student focus group participants noted how the wellness circle discussions helped them tap into their emotions, while also gaining improved mastery over how to express their emotions in healthy ways. They spoke to their increased awareness and personal responsibility to self and community, including their responsibility for modeling respectful and positive male-female relationships.



The intentionality behind teaching youth the power of messaging and providing those counter-narratives has resulted in positive results at school. One principle noted, “The boys have learned how to forgive each other.” The act of forgiveness among the CARES Mentoring students exhibits how messaging and counter-narratives are impacting the way they view each other, and as a result, students reported seeing each other in an increasingly positive light.

Another way that the narrative about Black boys is being rewritten is through the titles given to young Black males. Spearitwurx presented young Black males as entrepreneurs, providing place and space for Black males to be seen as resources to their

community through their pop-up resource village. Spearitwurx also employed a catering company founded by a 13 year-old African American male to provide healthy food for their workshops. **Flourish Agenda** positioned the youth they work with as “wellness contributors” and community “change agents.” This reframing shifted limiting beliefs about Black males, as they developed spiritual practices, growth mindsets and healthy ways of living, which make a positive impression on adults, particularly as the youth become more involved in arts and discovering their identity and purpose.



WHAT WORKS ENGINE

The following summarizes the Health and Healing Strategies found to be most impactful within the implementation and evaluation of this initiative. The practices highlighted may be applicable for individuals looking to begin or enhance their personal Journey to Radiance, as well as those supporting others on their paths to health and healing.

CONFIRM SPECIFIC LANGUAGE

Wellness and narrative change begin with the introduction of acronyms, phrases, slogans, etc. that speak to health and healing.

CREATE SAFE SPACE

Cultivating safe spaces is essential for the facilitation of meaningful healing.

ALLOW PERMISSION FOR SELF-CARE

Self-awareness, and healing are cultivated through an assent in prioritization of overall wellness of self.

CONNECT TO BODY

Whether it be through movement, breathing, or nutrition, programming that teaches participants how to listen and connect to their bodies is essential for emotional and mental balance.*

BUILD COMMUNITY

Healing is not done in isolation, but as part of a collective. Explicit connections with the community promote health and healing in the places that young Black males live.

ENGAGE ROLE MODELS

Incorporating intergenerational role models—youth, adults, and elders—is important toward re-imagining and affirming the greatness in Black males.

* Check out the Journey to Radiance Top 10 Health and Healing Strategies (page 25) for guidance on developing your own path to Radiance!



CONSIDERATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

The following recommendations are focused more specifically on challenges and opportunities to increase Health and Healing for Black boys and men within educational systems and city/community-based systems of support.

1

Navigation Several Health and Healing Strategies partners noted the complexity and challenges of navigating within the various school systems. This impacted their access to a diversity of potential participants who could benefit from their programming. School-wide and district-wide buy-in from institutional partners, as well as an emphasis on streamlining access to space and potential participants, is needed for effective implementation.

2

Diversity While participants from educational systems spoke to the value and safety of having spaces that were primarily for Black and/or people of color, there was also an acknowledgment that it was important to have their White peers in the space as well. Ensuring that White staff and educational leaders are not excluded from learning opportunities and the BMA HHS work is important for changing the narrative around Black males.

3

Background Checks Recognizing the importance of background checks to the overall safety of schools, they can also serve as a barrier to the inclusion and participation of Black male adults. The culture of mass incarceration and the prison industrial complex disproportionately impacts Black men, and this fact is not addressed in the current policies around background checks, specifically within schools and/or youth-serving organizations. The consequence is the exclusion of Black males in program leadership. Unfortunately, in this situation, access to health and healing strategies that can assist Black males in recovering from trauma experienced within the justice system (through direct and/or indirect involvement) is being denied due to their association with those justice systems. Health and Healing Strategies partners and participants noted how the work is incomplete and, in some ways, self-defeating if opportunities for participation continued to be elusive for Black men.

4

Building On What Works Recognizing the specific health and healing needs for Black men and boys in each city, school district and community are unique, how can we build on impactful strategies from Northern California to expand the work of this initiative to other communities within the CBMA network? What online or web-based opportunities exist for learning exchange between Oakland or Sacramento and cities like Detroit, Michigan, where BMA HHS Strategies work has already begun? Furthermore, how do we expand deeper to address the critical needs of sub-groups of Black males more explicitly, such as the dietary and health needs of Black males at various stages of life, or health and healing support for Black boys and men who are gender non-conforming, non-binary or transgender?

If you are interested in incorporating health and healing strategies in your efforts to support Black male achievement, consider the following initial steps:

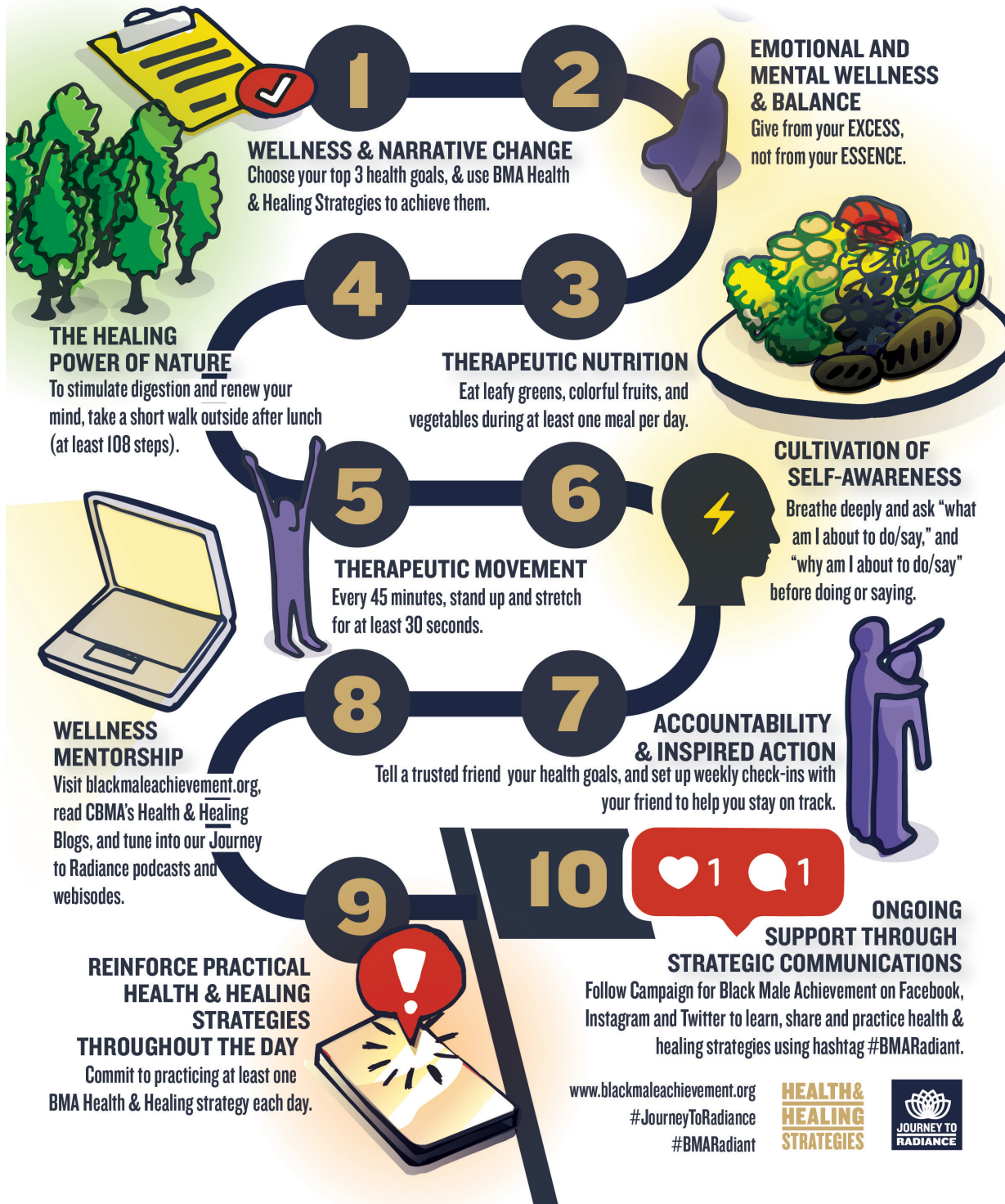
- Join the Campaign for Black Male Achievement: www.cbma.org/join.
- Share this report within your organization to begin dialog on health and healing.
- Pledge to actively engage in your own self-care, beginning with the *10 Health and Healing Strategies* on page 25. Promote those strategies among the young men you serve.
- Share your successes on social media: #BMARadiant, #LoveLearnLead, #JourneytoRadiance.

For additional information, resources and tools for supporting Black male achievement in your community, visit www.blackmaleachievement.org.

The Top 10 Health & Healing Strategies for Black Achievement

JOURNEY TO

RADIANCE



www.blackmaleachievement.org
#JourneyToRadiance
#BMARadiant

**HEALTH &
HEALING
STRATEGIES**



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- Oakland Unified School District - www.ousd.org
- Sacramento City Unified School District - www.scusd.edu

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT TEAM

bel Reyes, Executive Director, Innovation Bridge

Ms. Reyes has well over a decade of experience working in close partnership with multidisciplinary sectors, particularly with community and youth. She brings a host of leadership skills in designing, developing, and facilitating community-school partnerships, numerous quantitative and qualitative research projects, and various system building initiatives regionally, statewide, and nationally. Born to immigrant parents from Guanajuato, México, and a mother herself, bel values the contributions that culture, language, and identity have on education and community.

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Dr. Ononuju holds a Ph.D. in Education with an emphasis in Language, Literacy, and Culture. A 2010-2011 McNair cohort scholar, Dr. Ononuju has a devotion to youth, families, and community. Born and raised in Vallejo, California, Dr. Ononuju continues to positively impact and inform educational experiences of young people through his research and service. Dr. Ononuju is currently an Associate Professor of Education Leadership at the University of Arizona.

Brit Irby, Associate Director, Innovation Bridge

Ms. Irby has been instrumental in leading nationally recognized youth programs, with extensive experience in expanded learning and youth leadership. She has served the needs of youth, families, and communities for more than 15 years in various capacities, including serving as Coordinator of Youth Development Support Services for Sacramento City Unified School District and Resource Coordinator for the City of Sacramento's Office of Youth Development. Her career experience also includes improving access and supports in post-secondary education systems and community engagement.

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Ms. Castro is a graduating senior at California State University, Sacramento, where she will be receiving her BA in Ethnic Studies with a concentration in Chicano/Latino Studies. She will continue her journey in education to obtain her Masters in Sociology. She hopes to apply her knowledge of Ethnicity and Culture to cultivate and empower young minds. Isela hopes to inspire youth and their families who struggle with poverty, drug abuse, gang violence, and other social injustices to break through barriers and change the trajectory of their paths.

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Mr. Galicia-Cervantes currently attends the University of California, Davis, where he studies Political Science and English Literature. Previously, Alejandro interned with Hernandez Strategy Group, where he contributed toward lobbying for state bills focused on protecting youth and consumer rights. Alejandro served in the inaugural cohort of the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Sacramento Youth Fellowship, where he conducted research on boys and men of color and, along with his Fellowship brothers, co-authored a policy brief on mental health.

Gregory Berger, Owner, Pomegranate Design

Pomegranate Design is a full service design studio located in Sacramento, specializing in design for small businesses and nonprofit organizations. Pomegranate Design works with some of Sacramento's best known companies and organizations, such as Sierra Health Foundation and The Center, the Food Literacy Center, BloodSource, Fairytale Town, Sacramento Zoo and the Sacramento Children's Museum.

CALL TO ACTION

If you are interested in incorporating Health and Healing Strategies in your efforts to support Black male achievement, consider the following first steps:

- ➔ **JOIN** the Campaign for Black Male Achievement.
Visit www.cbma.org/join to become a member.
- ➔ **SHARE** this report to begin a dialogue on health and healing.
- ➔ **PLEDGE** to actively engage in your own self care, beginning with the 10 Health and Healing Strategies on page 25 and promote those strategies among the young men you serve.
- ➔ **CELEBRATE** your successes on social media.
#BMARadiant #LoveLearnLead #JourneytoRadiance

For additional information, resources and tools for supporting Black male achievement in your community, visit www.cbma.org.

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