

## Day 1: Climate Change and Mental Health & Continuing the Conversation

The discussion, moderated by Lirio Hittle, focused on the intersection of climate change and mental health, particularly in Hawaii. Dr. Anthony Guerrero highlighted the impact of climate change on mental health, emphasizing the need for preventive measures and community resilience. Troy Freitas stressed the importance of cultural awareness and community engagement in mental health services. Key points included the role of social media in spreading both positive and negative information, the need for trusted messengers, and the importance of addressing eco-grief and cultural trauma. The panelists emphasized the urgency of integrating mental health into public health initiatives and education to better prepare for and respond to climate change impacts.

Part 2's "Continuing the Conversation" was moderated by James McCallen, with Troy Freitas and audience questions.

### Action Items

- [ ] Incorporate climate change and its mental health impacts into healthcare provider education and training.
- [ ] Promote the use of motivational interviewing techniques and psychological first aid skills to support individuals affected by climate change.
- [ ] Explore ways to reduce the carbon footprint of healthcare operations and promote environmentally sustainable practices.
- [ ] Conduct research to better understand the mental health impacts of climate change and develop effective interventions.
- [ ] Foster collaboration between academia, government, and community organizations to address the mental health challenges posed by climate change.

### Outline

#### Introduction and Background of the Panelists

- James McCallen introduces the moderator, Lirio Hittle, highlighting her extensive background in climate change coordination and research.
- Lirio Hittle expresses delight in discussing climate change and mental health, noting the rarity of such conversations.
- Lirio Hittle introduces the two panelists: Dr. Anthony Guerrero and Troy Freitas, detailing their respective roles and expertise.
- Dr. Anthony Guerrero's presentation focuses on identifying climate change-affected individuals and preparing for climate-related displacement.

- Troy Freitas' presentation will address bridging the gap between academia and practical mental health services, emphasizing the challenges of incorporating climate change into mental health services.

## **Dr. Anthony Guerrero's Presentation on Climate Change and Mental Health**

- Dr. Guerrero emphasizes the importance of addressing climate change and its mental health impacts, particularly in Hawaii.
- He highlights the need for concrete actions by mental health professionals to address climate change.
- Dr. Guerrero discusses the regional urgency of climate change and its disproportionate impact on certain groups, such as the homeless and those with mental health disorders.
- He stresses the importance of cultural trauma and the loss of land for Native Hawaiians due to climate change.
- Dr. Guerrero calls for more resilience systems and resources to support mental health in the face of climate change.

## **Troy Freitas' Presentation on Bridging Academia and Practical Mental Health Services**

- Troy Freitas discusses the importance of listening and connecting with people to improve their health and mental health.
- He emphasizes the power of purpose, connection, and culture in mental health care.
- Freitas highlights the knowledge-action gap and the need for authentic and compassionate care.
- He discusses the role of self-care and the importance of boundaries for healthcare providers.
- Freitas shares his experience with the Hawaii Resiliency Project and the importance of cultural awareness in mental health care.

## **Discussion on Mental Health Resources and Prevention**

- Audience speaker asks about the shortage of mental health care in Hawaii and what can be done to address it.
- Dr. Guerrero suggests expanding the skills of frontline workers to address mental health crises and promoting preventive mental health.
- Freitas emphasizes the importance of integrating mental health education into school curriculums and community programs.
- The panelists discuss the role of government and community organizations in providing mental health resources and support.
- They highlight the need for a comprehensive plan to address mental health prevention and care, including education and public awareness.

## Audience Questions and Panelist Responses

- Dr. Berreman from the Department of Health comments on the importance of preventive mental health and the role of social media in spreading information.
- Dr. Guerrero and Freitas discuss the impact of social media on mental health and the need for balanced consumption.
- The panelists emphasize the importance of authentic communication and connecting with people on a personal level.
- They discuss the role of trusted messengers in promoting mental health awareness and the importance of community involvement.
- The panelists share their personal strategies for coping with the challenges of climate change and maintaining hope.

## Final Thoughts and Next Steps

- The panelists discuss the importance of community input and collaboration in addressing climate change and mental health.
- They emphasize the need for a comprehensive plan that includes education, prevention, and support for mental health.
- The panelists highlight the role of trusted messengers and community leaders in promoting mental health awareness.
- They call for continued collaboration and action to address the mental health impacts of climate change.
- The session concludes with a focus on hope and the importance of working together to create a better future.