

SYMPOSIUM

WISDOM FROM THE FIELD

On November 8, 2023, ACW held a symposium in person and via zoom with prominent Los Angeles Psychiatrists to discuss the best practices for helping women recover from drug/alcohol addiction and mental illness. We had an outstanding moderator and fantastic panelists. Each of them is so impressive that we could have had an event just for each one of them. The symposium format allowed the panelists to share their different perspectives and deepen the conversation. What was also so special about these professionals was that as soon as we explained that we wanted to hold a symposium on this topic, they all immediately said “yes” and adjusted their schedules to participate.

Who are they?!

Moderator



Nicholas Athanasiou, MD, MBA, DFASAM

Dr. Athanasiou is an addiction psychiatrist with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health and Health Sciences Associate Clinical Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at UCLA. His academic focus is to enhance education in the field of addiction medicine for psychiatric residents and trainees. His clinical focus is on treating individuals with co-occurring psychiatric and substance use disorders in an outpatient setting. Dr. Athanasiou is also the current Editor-in-Chief of the ASAM Weekly, Chair of the ASAM Publications Council, and member of the ASAM Board of Directors. In addition, he serves on the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology's Addiction Psychiatry Examination Writing Committee.

Panelists



Gary Tsai, MD, FAPA, FASAM

Dr. Tsai is the Bureau Director of LA County's Department of Public Health Substance Abuse Prevention and Control. He is double boarded in general psychiatry and addiction medicine. As Bureau Director, he oversees a budget of over \$350 million, 400 staff, and a full spectrum of substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery support services for the 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Dr. Tsai is a passionate advocate for improving our behavioral health systems. In his pursuit of meaningful change, he founded Forgotten Films, a film production company focusing on social issue projects, specializing in behavioral health. Its first film, Voices, premiered on public television in May 2015 for Mental Health Awareness Month and was awarded a 2016 SAMHSA Voice Award, Honorable Mention. He is also the CEO of SimpliCare Technology (www.FindSimpli.com), a technology company focused on improving health and social service systems through the development of intuitive technological solutions that simplify service delivery.



Isabella Morton, MD, MPH

Dr. Morton is double board certified in general and addiction psychiatry. She works at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center where she sees patients and supervises residents and fellows. She is passionate about improving access to mental health care in LA County. Her background includes being an APA Public Psychiatry fellow on the Council on Addiction Psychiatry, moonlighting at Project 180 working with individuals who have recently been incarcerated and were experiencing homelessness and mental illness, and working with The People Concern on their Downtown FSP. She did her addiction fellowship at UC San Francisco working with residential treatment programs, the San Francisco County jail, and a reintegration program for formerly incarcerated individuals.



Jeremy Martinez, MD

Dr. Jeremy Martinez is board certified in Psychiatry, Addiction Psychiatry, and Addiction Medicine. He is the Associate Medical Director for Co-occurring Disorders at Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) and provides administrative, clinical and forensic consulting. His interests include Street Psychiatry, using Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) for mental health and substance use disorders, and the use of technology for behavioral health treatment. He also has a keen interest in how Architecture and the Built Environment impact mental health. In his free time, he has developed products for behavioral health treatment including a [Meditation CD for Anxiety and Stress](#) that uses guided imagery, mindfulness, and meditation.



Sarah Oreck, MD, MS

Sarah Oreck, MD, MS, is a trained psychiatrist focusing on Women's Mental Wellness. In addition to her expertise in general and addiction psychiatry, Dr. Sarah Oreck is one of a handful of doctors with specialized training in reproductive psychiatry. She runs a private practice in which she combines the most up-to-date medical treatments with talk therapy, meditation, and a whole-body complementary approach. Dr. Oreck is passionate about teaching and regularly lectures at Cedars Sinai Hospital, UCLA, and the Providence Hospital system in addition to her media work. She is actively involved in advocacy work and is a board member of Maternal Mental Health Now. She is also a medical board member @itsaugust, a company reimagining period care, and expert advisor to Perelel Health, clean and research-backed vitamins for every stage of motherhood.

The symposium took place at Playas Las Tunas, just up the block from ACW. Playas Las Tunas has been a long term ACW supporter and is a delicious Salvadorian Restaurant. Over 180 people registered for the event: 40 onsite and 140 for zoom. The topics discussed ranged from:

- The importance of connecting with your patient/client and developing trust.
- The impact addiction has on an individual's family members.
- Why trauma is a key component that needs to be addressed for healing to occur.
- Different treatment modalities.
- Improving systems of care and access to care.
- Addressing female mental health issues that arise before, during, and after pregnancy.
- The impact continued substance use has for those who have a mental health diagnosis or challenge.



Dr. Sarah Oreck, Dr. Jeremy Martinez, Dr. Gary Tsai, and Dr. Isabella Morton



Attendees listening to Symposium Panelists.

When asked what about their job they enjoyed the most, the panelists stated helping clients and participating in the symposium. Attendees stated that they learned a lot and felt supported that the psychiatrists understood and validated their challenges. Those present appreciated Playas Las Tunas coffee and pastry and the disco ball revolving over the panelists' heads!



Attendees listening to Symposium panelists.



Dr. Nicholas Athanasiou, Dr. Sarah Oreck, Dr. Jeremy Martinez, Dr. Gary Tsai, and Dr. Isabella Morton

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After the symposium, attendees walked to ACW for a tour. Discussions continued and many thanked ACW for a worthwhile impactful event.

We can't thank Drs. Athanasiou, Tsai, Morton, Martinez, Oreck enough for their participation in the symposium. We are truly grateful. ❤️



Dr. Nicholas Athanasiou, Dr. Gary Tsai, Dr. Jeremy Martinez, and Dr. Isabella Morton

WE ARE THANKFUL FOR...

ART PROJECT

Clients and staff participated in an activity created by the ECM program during the month of November 2023. Each person wrote on a feather why they were thankful.

I am thankful for God, my life, sobriety, family, multiple chances, freedom, being able bodied, choices, food and water, motherhood, AA, the 12 steps, sponsors, ACW, a brain that works, faith, freedom of choice, the sun, freedom from bondage, the moon, the universe, the stars, exercise, trudging buddies, mother earth, therapy kindness, trees, flowers, organs that work, activity, optimism, love, honesty, communication, sight, sound, taste, touch, smell, Jesus -
Ashley



I am thankful for my life. I am thankful for my recovery. I am thankful for having a roof over my head, food to eat and a bed to lay on, clothes to wear. I'm thankful I have clarity. I am thankful I have 2 beautiful children and a gorgeous grandchild. I'm thankful I found higher power. I'm thankful I found this program and sobriety.
- Marivel



I am thankful for my life. My baby. My sobriety. My second chance at life. Those who support and love me. I am thankful for all my experiences good and bad. I have learned from everything, even from other people's issues. If you pay attention everyday you can always learn and be thankful. - Lauderdale

I am thankful for my family forgiving me for all my wrong I have done. Also I'm thankful God for waking me up for another day. I'm also thankful for my sobriety. I'm thankful for my counselor Mrs. Charlene. Also ACW for allowing me to start over my life. - Sarah

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

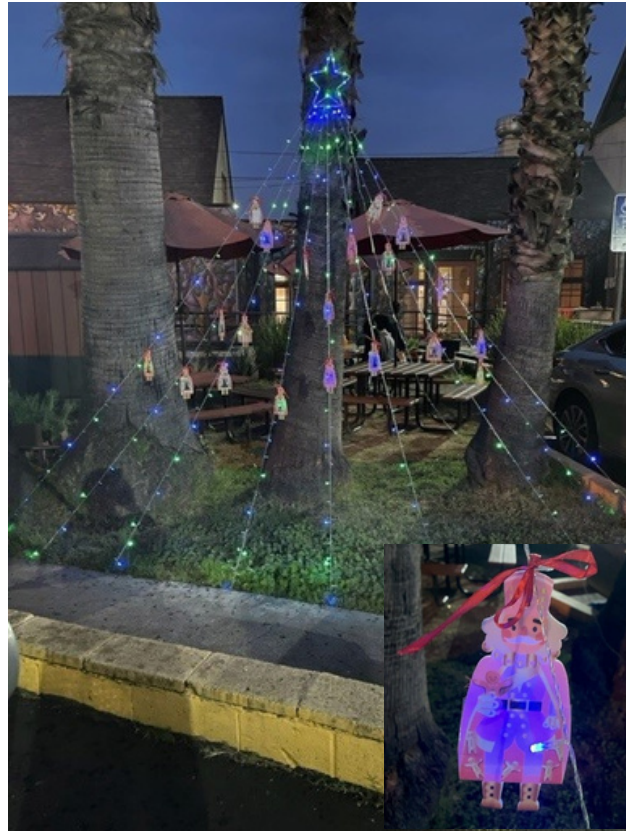
Best wishes from ACW for a wonderful holiday season and Happy New Year!



Outpatient Counselor Gina



Enhanced Care Management (ECM) Team: Lead Care Manager Carla, ECM Program Director Danielle, Lead Care Manager Wendell



Support ACW!

WAYS TO SUPPORT ACW

PAYPAL:

- www.acwla.com/support/

LEAVE YOUR MARK, BUY A BRICK:

- www.bricksrus.com/donorsite/acw/

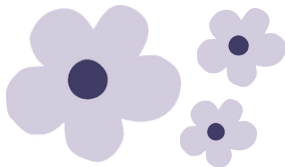
VENMO A DONATION:

- venmo.com/ACWLA

MAIL A CHECK:

ACW Donations
1147 S. Alvarado Street
Los Angeles, CA 90006

We are still accepting tax deductions for the month of December for the year 2023!

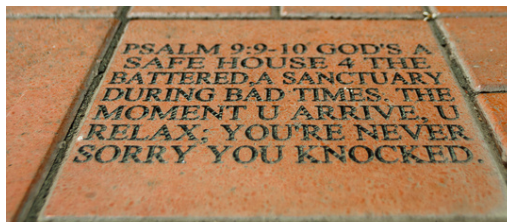


Donation Request

- Inspirational Word Searches
- Games
- Art supplies
- Personal care items
- Exercise equipment
- Backpacks or large bags
- Flip-flops/shower shoes, or slippers

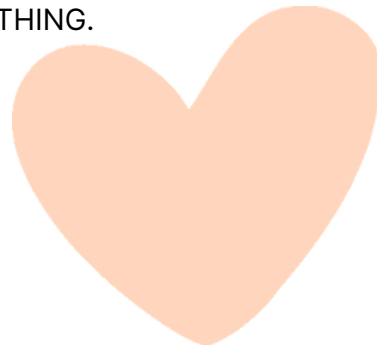


DONATE



What does your support mean to us?

EVERYTHING.



Our mission at ACW is to help empower women to make new choices for positive futures.



NEED HELP?

For Alcohol/Drug Assistance

- Call ACW 213.381.8500
- Email: info@acwla.org



988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

- Call or Text: 988
- Go to 988lifeline.org for a chat option online.



National Domestic Violence Hotline

- Call 1.800.799.SAFE (7233)
- Text "START" to 88788
- Go to thehotline.org for a chat option online.

Los Angeles Housing Services Authority

- 24/7 Hotline - 888.539.2373 / (811) KEY-2-FREE
- lahsa.org

Other News

CALLING ALL ALUMNI! We need you and your stories from when you were participating in either ACW's residential or outpatient programs for our upcoming Golden 50th Anniversary. We are seeking ACW alumni from the 1970's, '80s, '90s, etc. If you would like to share your story via zoom or email, please contact Adriana at Ajimenez@ACWLA.org.



"You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.' You must do the thing you think you cannot do." - Eleanor Roosevelt

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