

UPLIFT

The Official Newsletter of CRESTSprogram, LLC
Volume 6, No. 3 - Summer 2025



Summer 2025: Time to Reflect, Rejoice, & Revamp with CRESTSprogram, LLC!

CRESTSprogram has identified Summer 2025 as a time to reflect, rejoice, and revamp! As we celebrate CRESTSprogram's 5th anniversary, we're engaging in these three actions. More specifically, we're **REFLECTING** on our mission, goals, programs, and activities. As we reflect on our first 5 years, we are **REJOICING** that CRESTSprogram is still in operation (especially considering that we survived the height of the COVID-19 pandemic while encountering a host of other formidable challenges). At CRESTSprogram, we are rejoicing in the accomplishments and successes that we have achieved since June 29, 2025 (our inception date). We are rejoicing at the dedication, commitment, and hard work demonstrated by CRESTSprogram team members (past and present). In addition, we rejoice about every member of the CRESTSprogram community! More specifically, **WE THANK YOU** for the support, input, and feedback that you have provided to CRESTSprogram over the past 5 years! In addition, we also thank you for demonstrating your commitment to promoting academic excellence and emotional wellbeing in Black youth (and other youth of color)! Lastly, CRESTSprogram is in the process of **REVAMPING** our services, products, marketing strategies, and personnel-related approaches in order to maximize our reach, engagement, and outcomes. We encourage you to use Summer 2025 as **YOUR TIME** to reflect on, rejoice about, and revamp your efforts to promote academic excellence and wellbeing in Black youth (and other youth of color). Let CRESTSprogram be a resource to you as you engage in these

activities. We are here to help you to revamp and improve your approaches to teaching, parenting, and/or providing mental health services to Black youth (and other youth of color).

In this issue of *UPLIFT* (the official newsletter of CRESTSprogram, LLC), you will find articles that provide you with important updates regarding CRESTSprogram's training events, other activities, staff, resources, etc. We have been very active over the past three months, and have exciting events planned for Summer 2025! Read the current issue of *UPLIFT* so that you are "in the know" about CRESTSprogram's activities that are designed to benefit you both personally and professionally! **Use Summer 2025 to reflect, rejoice, and revamp with CRESTSprogram in your training and development corner!**

NEW INITIATIVE

Schedule a FREE 30-minute Meeting With Dr. West-Olatunji!



Do you have training funds that need to be expended prior to the end of the current funding cycle? Are you in the process of generating your training budget for the upcoming funding period, and looking for training options?

YOU CAN RELAX because CRESTSprogram is here and poised to meet with you to do the impossible - design and implement a training program for you and your school district, organization, company, school, clinical, or research team. If you can pull your team together, we will provide the training!

Schedule Day/Time to Meet with Dr. West-Olatunji

Help Us Send You More Relevant Email

We are working hard to ensure you receive the most relevant email from CRESTSprogram to support you in your work and caregiving with Black and Brown youth. To accomplish this, we have created a quick survey for you to complete. You will be able to select as many from the following list as you would like to opt into so that you receive the communications that best serve your needs.

- Student
- Clinician
- Educator
- Parent/Guardian
- Supporter
- Community-Based Organizer

Please click the Opt In! button below to complete the survey if you have

not yet done so. Thank you to those who have already completed it!

Opt In!

Upcoming Events



2025 Emancipatory Research Symposium

We are gearing up for our 3rd annual Emancipatory Research Symposium, which will be held in New Orleans, LA, on July 6th and 7th. Our keynote speaker will be the eminent historian **Dr. V.P. Franklin** this year. As in previous years, attendees are personally invited to attend once they complete the [CRESTS-Liberate](https://crestsprograms.thinkific.com/pages/crests-liberate) credential program. In addition, individuals currently engaging in emancipatory research projects are invited to present and share their work. For more information about our emancipatory credential program, CRESTS-Liberate, visit our training site:

<https://crestsprograms.thinkific.com/pages/crests-liberate>.

Summer Break in July and August: Engross Yourself in CRESTSprogram's Training Site and Blog!



The CRESTSprogram team is ready for their usual summer break. Just as we encourage you all to engage in radical self-care, we practice what we preach. We will see you back in September with our usual amazing monthly trainings.

We did not leave you empty-handed during our break. Our training site is always available for you to continue your decolonization journey. [Click here to access the training site.](#)

Additionally, we have a [CRESTSprogram blog](#) that we continue to add to weekly. We have blog posts written by the CRESTSprogram team as well as guest bloggers. These are posts that you can enjoy and utilize whether you are an educator, parent/caregiver, student, counselor, or juvenile justice professional. These blog posts are meant to provide you with resources and tools to begin implementing in your life and the lives of the youth you serve.

Here are some of the more recent posts for you to check out!

[Confronting the Silent Crisis: Adolescent Suicide Through a Culturally Responsive Lens](#)

[Mind-Body Connection](#)

[The Experiences of Black Youth in Predominately White K-12 Schools](#)

Upcoming Guest Appearance: Live Recording of Show on Trauma & Resilience in the Black Community!

Dr. Constance West
Licensed Clinical
Psychologist
Co-Founder of
CRESTS program, LLC

Around the Table with Rabbit
Mental Health Specialist Panel

Jazzy J's
5134 Old Natl Hwy
Suite 1 College Park, GA

June 27, 2025
6pm - Midnight
Tickets on Eventbrite

Nita Green
Psychiatric Mental Health
Nurse Practitioner
Founder & Owner of Core
Horizons Telepsychiatry, LLC

CORE HORIZONS
TELEPSYCHIATRY

On 06/27/2025, CRESTSprogram is partnering with "In Da House Media" to provide

mental health information at an event aimed at educating the Black community about trauma and resilience, while celebrating life after trauma. This event, "Around the Table with Rabbit" will feature the live recording of two episodes of a TV show focused on healing from trauma in the Black American community. Each episode will feature 2 individuals who will share their personal histories of experiencing and recovering from trauma, with mental health experts providing professional input and feedback. Dr. Constance West (Co-Founder) will represent CRESTSprogram at this event, where she will serve as a member of the "Mental Health Specialist Panel".

RECENT EVENTS, UPDATES & RELEASES

Reflections on the March 2025 Webinar: Collateral Damage: Loss, Grief, & Incarceration



This webinar explored the unique grief experiences of parents of incarcerated Black youth, including anticipatory and ambiguous loss. It addressed the impact of systemic oppression, racial disparities, and cultural values on emotional journeys while examining stigma, isolation, and relational strain. Participants gained advocacy skills to apply culturally relevant strategies such as collective healing, spirituality, and storytelling, empowering them to support parents in processing grief and fostering community-based solutions. To register for the recorded video training:

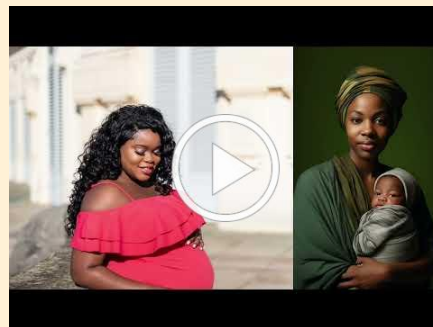
<https://crestsprograms.thinkific.com/courses/collateraldamage>

Reflections on the April 2025 Webinar: Being Unapologetically Black



In April, we had one of our most engaging webinars in a long time. Over 400 people registered for this event, and 123 actually attended. During the event, we asked, “*What does it mean to be Unapologetically Black?*” The responses were excellent! We plan to create a pack of Unapologetically Black Affirmation Cards. Be on the lookout for this resource to be added to our website shop! In the meantime, you can access this training video on our training site: <https://crestsprograms.thinkific.com/courses/beingunapologeticallyblack>.

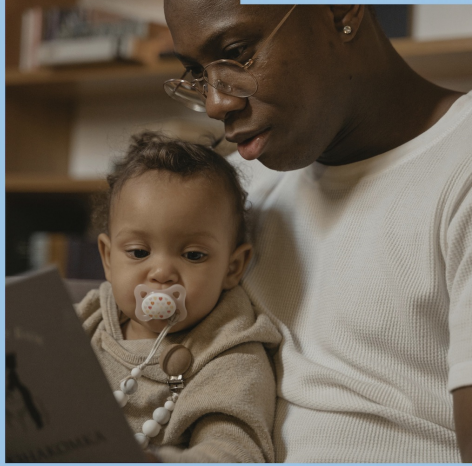
Reflections on the May 2025 Webinar: Black Mommas & Their Babies: Promoting Infant & Maternal Emotional Health



In May, as in previous years, we focused on Black mothers. In particular, this essential training focused on perinatal Black mothers' and their newborns' emotional and psychological health. With the assistance of the CRESTSprogram team, Dr. Cirecie West-Olatunji and Dr. Constance West explored the impact of race-based stress and offered trauma-informed, culturally centered interventions that support bonding, mental wellness, and healing. To register for the recorded video training: <https://crestsprograms.thinkific.com/courses/blackmommas>

**Pediatric Counseling Workbook:
NOW AVAILABLE!!**

PEDIATRIC COUNSELING WORKBOOK



*Companion for Use of Pediatric Counseling in Infants and Young Children:
A culture-centered, trauma-informed approach by
Cirecie West-Olatunji and Jeff Wolfgang*

Our CEO, Dr. Cirecie West-Olatunji, has partnered with a colleague, Dr. Jeff Wolfgang (N.Carolina A & T State University) to offer the Pediatric Counseling Workbook. This resource is an excellent tool for any mental health professionals working with young children (0-5 years), especially when they have experienced some form of trauma. The workbook overviews pediatric counseling as a unique approach to working with pre-verbal children and includes in-depth examples of pediatric counseling interventions. A special focus is on working with children of color who experience race-based stress, even in their early years. The workbook is a companion to the [“10 Intervention” training videos available on YouTube](#) with more comprehensive explanations of the interventions. The Pediatric Counseling Workbook is available for purchase in electronic form on Amazon.com.



Order the Pediatric Counseling Workook

Welcome Our New Southern Education Foundation Fellow!



We welcome our Southern Education Leadership Institute (SELI) Fellow, Ms. Dehjah Vaughn. Dehjah is a doctoral student at Clark Atlanta University and will be with us for 8 weeks over the summer months. As a fellow with us, she will be engaging in research, participating in professional development activities, coordinating community-based projects, and helping us to launch our podcast series.

Opportunity for In-Person Meet-Ups



Rochester, NY: In May, our CEO, Dr. Cirecie West-Olatunji traveled to Rochester as a critical friend to the Rochester Teacher Center (directed by Dr. Susan Goodwin) during their annual week-long education institute. While in Rochester, Dr. West-Olatunji organized a Meet-Up with CRESTSprogram subscribers at a local coffee shop. This was a great opportunity to talk with an educator about returning to Rochester as part of a parent educational expo. We look forward to reconnecting with the Rochester educators, parents, and community leaders!



Atlanta, GA: CRESTSprogram hosted its 2nd official meetup event on 06/16/2025 at Café Bartique, a coffee shop in the Cascade Heights neighborhood of Atlanta, GA. During this event, Dr. Cirecie West-Olatunji and Dr. Constance West (CRESTSprogram Co-Founders) met with 4 key members of the CRESTSprogram community, including: Dr. Georgene Bess Montgomery (Associate Professor, History Department; Clark Atlanta University), Dr. Al-Yasha Williams, (Associate Professor, Associate Professor, Philosophy & Religious Studies; Spelman College), The Honorable Judge Renata Turner (Chief Presiding Judge, Fulton County Juvenile Court), and Eric Lewis (C.E.O., Politicked). Overall, this meetup event featured the perfect venue and combination of individuals/professionals! We networked while enjoying delicious coffee, tea, and/or snacks. As a special unexpected treat, Café Bartique's owners greeted us, shared family stories related to the foundation of their business, and provided samples of one of their menu items (i.e., creamy grits). We look forward to hosting future meetup events in Atlanta and other cities! Be on the lookout – CRESTSprogram could be hosting a meetup event in your city soon!

Our Partnership with Global Health Action (GHA): Deepening Connections!

The CRESTSprogram/GHA Partnership has transitioned into a new phase, and continues to deepen its connections! On June 11th, representatives from GHA presented on our partnership-related activities at the Christian Connections for International Health (CCIH) conference in Washington, DC. In addition, CRESTSprogram and GHA had a special in-person "Meet & Greet" in Atlanta, GA on June 16th. The main purpose was to allow CRESTSprogram staff to meet GHA staff member, Mr. Bwalya Mubanga, while he was visiting the United States from Zambia. This "meet and greet" event included representatives from CRESTSprogram, LLC (Dr. Cirecie West-Olatunji & Dr. Constance West) and Global Health Action (Ms. Wendy Jolley-Kabi, Dr. Charsey Cherry, & Mr. Bwalya Mubanga).

Many of you attended our [January webinar on "Unlocking the Power of Partnerships,"](https://crestsprograms.thinkific.com/pages/free-videos) which we co-hosted with our partner organization, [Global Health Action](https://crestsprograms.thinkific.com/pages/free-videos). This video is available at no cost on our training site: <https://crestsprograms.thinkific.com/pages/free-videos>.

Unlocking the Power of Partnerships:
The CRESTSprogram/GHA Partnership



Partnership with Be Strong Families Continues to Blossom



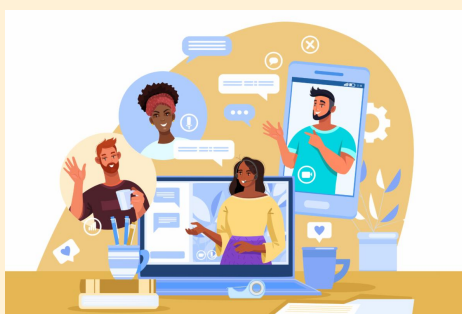
Our partnership with Be Strong Families continues to blossom and grow. Our research fellow, Dr. Kimberlee Bow, had the honor of interviewing Ms. Sarita Sashington to discuss how CRESTSprogram has impacted Be Strong Families. They had a blast in their discussion, and you will be smiling by the end of it. On May 22, Dr. Cirecie Olatunji joined Be Strong Families for a community discussion and presentation with caregivers and parents about the ***Impact of Climate Change on Adolescents and Young Children***. The presentation was a success and a great opportunity for community bonding.

New Partnership with Politicked: Starting Out Strong!

In May, CRESTSprogram and Politicked began a new partnership. Mr. Eric Lewis (C.E.O., Politicked) initially approached Dr. Cirecie West-Olatunji (C.E.O., CRESTSprogram) with ideas about how Politicked could lend their expertise to CRESTSprogram. More specifically, Politicked proposed ways in which their work could help CRESTSprogram to improve its marketing and communication strategies and streamline its operations. From there, discussions lead to the formation of an official CRESTSprogram/Politicked partnership aimed at achieving the proposed goals and mutual promotion.

For more information about Politicked and its services for businesses, non-profit organizations, and political campaigns, please click the button below:

[Politicked Website](#)



OUR SERVICES

CRESTSprogram provides services at a variety of levels, including:

- **INDIVIDUAL LEVEL LEARNING: VIDEOS ON DEMAND**
- **ORGANIZATION LEVEL:** Training, consultation, assessments, technical assistance, and coaching to help build skills and support system-level change
- **MERCHANDISE** and products to encourage, inspire, and remind you of your devotion to supporting black youth
- Quarterly **NEWSLETTER:** Stay up to date with CREST happenings
- Free **RESOURCES** (concept papers, videos, podcasts, and factsheets) to keep you inspired and learning

Dive into the CRESTSprogram Communiversality!

CRESTS-Liberate Credential Course



CRESTS-Liberate is an emancipatory research credentialing program designed to inform anyone engaged in research about culturally marginalized communities on how to address the inherent Eurocentrism and bias in conventional research methodologies.

[Enroll Now to Decolonize Your Approach to Research!](#)

Build Your Knowledge and Skills Courses



CLICK on a topic or topics to learn more.

- [Putting the \(R\)ace in ACES \(Parts I & II\)](#)
- [Addressing the Mental Health Needs of Black Mothers: Even the Strong Get Weary](#)
- [5 Africentric Parenting Skills That Correlate to High Academic Achievement](#)
- [Unseen & Unheard: Rising Suicide Rates Among Black Children](#)
- [Decolonizing Mental Health Training to Effectively Work with Black Youth](#)
- [Being Unapologetically Black](#)
- [No Mountain High Enough: The History of Black Love](#)
- [Truly Getting on Their Nerves: The Neuroscience of Trauma in Black Youth](#)
- [Culture-Centered Mondays](#)
- [African-Centered Counseling Theories](#)
- [Resiliency in the Midst of Uncertainty](#)
- [Black Mothers: Intergenerational Trauma, Mental Health, & Resilience \(Parts I, II, & III\)](#)
- [Promoting Academic Success in Black Children: Pre-K to H.S. Graduation](#)
- [Locs, Weaves, and Everything in Between: Black Women/Girls & Emotional Wellness](#)
- [Your Grief Ain't Like Mine: Addressing the Unique Needs of Black Children \(Parts I & II\)](#)
- [Dispelling the Myth of the Sassy Black Girl: Promoting Healthy Identity Development Among Black Girl](#)
- [Historical Resilience in the Black Community: Back to our Roots](#)
- [No Mountain High Enough: The History of Black Love](#)
- [Loss, Grief, and Incarceration: Supporting Parents of Incarcerated Youth in the Black Community](#)

The CRESTS-Achieve Credential Course



Whether you are mental health professional, parent, or educator you can be among the first to immerse yourself in a culture-centered, trauma-informed care professional development program. CRESTS-Achieve is designed to better equip educators, parents, and mental health professionals to promote academic excellence and emotional well-being in Black youth and other children of color.

Our most unique feature is that CRESTS-Achieve *places culture at the center of trauma-informed care*. It is specifically designed to decrease intergenerational trauma and enhance resilience, including healing from race-based trauma and other types of trauma unique to Black youth (and other children of color).

[CRESTS-Achieve: For Individual Mental Health Professionals](#)

[CRESTS-Achieve: For Individual Educators/Parents](#)

Donations Welcome!



We welcome your financial support to encourage the growth of our mission and activities to promote academic excellence and emotional well-being in Black children and adolescents.

**Donate
Now!**

Coming Soon!

Dictionary of Emancipatory Research



As we continue to offer our emancipatory research training, CRESTS-Liberate, to new groups, there has been a call for a dictionary that would assist trainees to acquire new words that reflect a decolonized approach. So, in response, we are developing the CRESTSprogram "Dictionary of Emancipatory Research". We hope to have the book complete and ready for distribution by Summer 2025 (just prior to the annual Emancipatory Research Symposium). We are taking a very creative and artistic approach to developing this dictionary. It will reflect our thoughts, feelings, and attitudes; engaging more than our minds, but also our senses. Be on the lookout for updates on this ongoing project!

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