

Redefining Crazy: *Rewriting the Rules*



MAY 14-16, 2025

**The Grand Hyatt Hotel
345 Stockton St,
San Francisco, CA 94108**

HOSTED BY

MHA  **SF**
MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF SAN FRANCISCO



A LETTER FROM OUR CEO

Welcome to the fifth annual Redefining Crazy Conference (RCC)
—“2025 Redefining Crazy: Rewriting the Rules.”

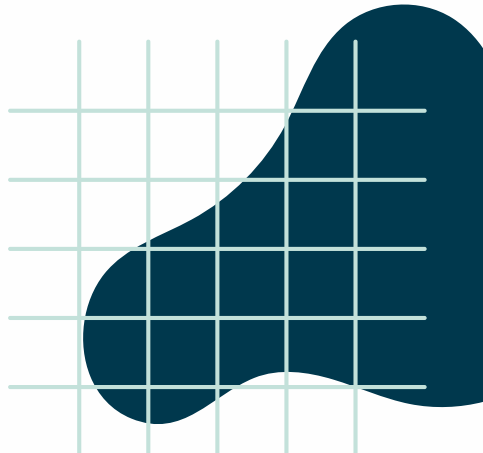
Over three transformative days—May 14-16, 2025, at the Grand Hyatt San Francisco—we gather peers with lived experience, clinicians, advocates, researchers, and policymakers to question the labels that confine us and envision mental-health systems rooted in dignity, equity, and collective care. Together we will move beyond stigma toward bold, community-driven solutions that honor every voice.

This year’s program amplifies that spirit of liberation: legendary activist Angela Davis and trailblazing comedian Jenny Yang headline a roster of sessions spanning peer-led justice reforms, digital-equity initiatives, housing rights, hoarding-disorder self-management, and more. Whether you are here to share research, refine practice, or reclaim language, RCC invites you to challenge assumptions, forge unlikely alliances, and help us rewrite the rules of mental health—together.

Sincerely,



Mark Salazar
President and CEO



WELCOME TO RCC 2025

Wifi: RCC2025
Pass: MHASF25



Thank You to Our Sponsor: The California Peer Run Warm Line

Redefining Crazy is sponsored by the California Peer Run Warm Line. Every day, thousands of Californians reach out before experiencing crisis. The California Peer Run Warm Line answers—providing compassionate, peer-led support that prevents emergencies and transforms lives.

We respond to 100,000+ calls, texts, and chats annually from people seeking help. The Warm Line isn't just answering calls—it's a 24/7 support system dedicated to California's mental health needs 365 days a year.

Thank you for attending RCC and supporting MHASF to ensure we remain responsive, responsible, and reliable for every Californian facing mental health challenges.



**CALL OR TEXT 855-600-WARM (9276)
TO SPEAK WITH A COUNSELOR 24/7**

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



ANGELA DAVIS

Through her activism and scholarship over many decades, legendary Angela Davis has been deeply involved in movements for social justice around the world. Her work as an educator – both at the university level and in the larger public sphere – has always emphasized the importance of building communities of struggle for economic, racial, and gender justice. Professor Davis' teaching career has taken her to San Francisco State University, Mills College, and UC Berkeley. She also has taught at UCLA, Vassar, Syracuse University the Claremont Colleges, and Stanford University.

JENNY YANG

Named one of Variety's Top Ten Comics to Watch and *New York Magazine's Vulture Comedians You Should Know*, comedian **Jenny Yang** tours her unique blend of personal storytelling and social commentary through her standup comedy and hit monthly stage show **SELF HELP ME**, a competitive self-care comedy show. She has been featured at *Just For Laughs Montreal*, headlined at *San Francisco Sketchfest*, and has shared the stage with such legendary comedians as Maria Bamford and Margaret Cho.



DAY 1 AGENDA | WEDS, 5/14/25

Time	Event or Activity	Location
10:30am - 5:00pm	General Registration	Cypress A
8:00am - 12:00pm	Warm Line Summit (Invite Only)	Sequoia
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Lunch	Ballroom
1:00pm - 1:15pm	Welcome Remarks	Ballroom
1:15pm - 2:15pm	Keynote 1 - Angela Davis	Ballroom
2:15pm - 2:30pm	Break	
2:30pm - 3:30pm	Breakout 1: Mastering the Daunting Life with a Catastrophic Medical Diagnosis	Ballroom
2:30pm - 3:15pm	Breakout 1: Angela Davis Meet & Greet	Sequoia
2:30pm - 3:30pm	Breakout 1: Peer Support: Embracing the Power of Your Story	Cypress B
3:30pm - 3:45pm	Break	
3:45pm - 4:45pm	Breakout 2: The Peer Support Perspective: Post Incarceration Peer Services & Care Court	Ballroom
3:45pm - 4:45pm	Breakout 2: Tech@Hand: Bridging the Digital Divide in San Francisco with Compassion	Sequoia
3:45pm - 4:45pm	Breakout 2: Advocating for an Inclusive Community Program Planning (CPP) Process	Cypress B
5:00pm - 5:30pm	End of Day	

DAY 2 AGENDA | THURS, 5/15/25

Time	Event or Activity	Location
8:00am - 9:30am	General Registration/Breakfast	
9:30am - 10:30am	Main Plenary	Ballroom
10:30am - 10:45am	Break	
10:45am - 11:45am	Breakout 3: The Paradox of Exceptional: Crazy, Gifted, or Both?	Ballroom
10:45am - 11:45am	Breakout 3: MHASF's California Peer Run Warm Line 101	Sequoia
10:45am - 11:45am	Breakout 3: Reentry Works in Community	Cypress B
11:45am - 1:15pm	Lunch	
1:15pm - 2:15pm	Breakout 4: Recovery: Is Sharing Our Lives, Voices, and Experiences	Ballroom
1:15pm - 2:15pm	Breakout 4: The California Warm Line's Unique Peer Staffing Model	Sequoia
1:15pm - 2:15pm	Breakout 4: Housing Law and Eviction Prevention	Cypress B
2:15pm - 2:30pm	Break	
2:30pm - 3:30pm	Breakout 5: Hip Hop for Change	Ballroom
2:30pm - 3:30pm	Breakout 5: Intergenerational Trauma, Resilience, and Collective Healing	Sequoia
2:30pm - 3:30pm	Breakout 5: Organizing from Within: Empowering Individuals with Hoarding Disorder through Self-Management Tools	Cypress B
3:30pm - 3:45pm	Break	
3:45pm - 4:45pm	Breakout 6: Culturally and Linguistically Specific Warm Line Services	Ballroom
3:45pm - 4:45pm	Breakout 6: The Role of Scarcity and Frugality in Hoarding Behaviors	Sequoia
3:45pm - 4:45pm	Breakout 6: Access Granted: Best Practices for Virtual Training	Cypress B
4:45pm - 5:15pm	Break	
5:15pm - 7:15pm	Reception	32 nd Floor

DAY 3 AGENDA | FRI, 5/16/25

Time	Event or Activity	Location
8:00am - 9:30am	General Registration/Breakfast	
9:30am - 9:45am	Break	
9:45am - 10:45am	Breakout 7: You Might Be Wrong About Warm Lines: Demystifying the Crisis Continuum	Ballroom
9:45am - 10:45am	Breakout 7: San Francisco's Mental Health System: The Good, The Bad, The Fixable	Sequoia
9:45am - 10:45am	Breakout 7: Navigating the Workforce as a Peer: Realities of the Job Market and Best Practices	Cypress B
10:45am - 11:00am	Break	
11:00am - 12:00pm	Keynote 2 - Jenny Yang	Ballroom
12:00pm - 12:15pm	Closing Remarks	Ballroom



Support the Peer Movement at MHASF and Donate Today!

Every day, our organization makes thousands of life-changing connections that would not happen without your support. The Mental Health Association of San Francisco connects peers with Californians through support groups, trainings, and supportive conversations to make mental health services accessible to our community. Giving a gift acts as a direct lifeline to strengthening our commitment of breaking down stigma and uplifting well-being. Your donation will make a life-changing difference.



SESSION 1 BREAKOUTS

Mastering the Daunting Life with a Catastrophic Medical Diagnosis

Speakers: Julie Browne, LCSW

Location: Ballroom

Tailored for those with a family member experiencing severe mental illness, Julie presents a framework to help families suffer less and thrive more despite their circumstances. You'll learn about identity loss after life's rug gets pulled out from under you, how to navigate new roles while supporting a loved one, and how to make peace with the profound grief and disorientation that comes with these life-altering changes.

Angela Davis Meet & Greet

Location: Sequoia

Join us for an inspiring Meet and Greet with Angela Davis, renowned activist, scholar, and author. This intimate gathering offers a rare opportunity to engage with Dr. Davis as she shares insights from her decades of work in social justice, prison abolition, and civil rights. Don't miss this chance to connect, ask questions, and be part of a powerful conversation on justice and change.

Peer Support: Embracing the Power of Your Story

Speaker: Jaelen Valdez, MHASF

Location: Cypress B

As a peer-run agency, our diverse lived experiences shape both our roles and the programs we offer to support a wide range of communities. In this session, we will highlight key elements of our program that create a safe and empowering environment for individuals to share their stories. We will also discuss how providers can apply these takeaways to cultivate more inclusive and supportive online storytelling spaces.

This presentation explores how APPT has developed Share Your Story into the impactful process it is today. We will review the specific aspects of the classroom environment that were designed to foster community and connection from student feedback, best practices in online learning, and research from peer support group models. Our ultimate goal is to equip cohort participants with the confidence and skills needed for their roles as peer support specialists. By the end of the presentation, attendees will gain a deeper understanding of how Share Your Story unfolds in a classroom setting and why APPT prioritizes storytelling as a tool for personal growth and connection.

SESSION 2 BREAKOUTS

The Peer Support Perspective: Post Incarceration Peer Services & Care Court

Speakers: Sergio Alexander Alas, MHASF, Alessandra Mowry, MHASF, Shaween Sullivan, MHASF

Location: Ballroom

At the Mental Health Association of San Francisco (MHASF), peers play a central role in supporting individuals involved in the justice system through two impactful programs: Post-Incarceration Peer Services (PIPS) and Care Court. In the PIPS program, Peer Support Specialists work directly with individuals exiting jail or prison, providing reentry support, mental health guidance, mentoring, and resource navigation. Their lived experience fosters trust and helps reduce the stigma of incarceration. Through the Care Court initiative, peers assist individuals with severe mental illness in navigating court processes and connecting to critical services, aiming to divert them from incarceration into treatment and community-based care. Their involvement ensures a more dignified, empowering, and culturally responsive approach to justice. MHASF works in close partnership with the District Attorney's Office, Public Defender, SF County Jail, Courts, and various community organizations to make these efforts possible.

Tech@Hand: Bridging the Digital Divide in San Francisco with Compassion

Speakers: Stephanie Milius, MHASF, Nathan Toronto, MHASF

Location: Sequoia

Tech@Hand creates connections to devices, internet, resource navigation, and digital mental health support through compassionate, participant-centered, peer learning experiences. We provide support for socially isolated trans and queer older adults and transitional-aged youth in San Francisco.

A lack of tech education and technical skills training due to the digital divide is a major barrier for our most vulnerable community members to access necessary public services and make progress towards their life goals.

Tech@Hand aims to teach essential digital literacy skills to community members while providing peer-led emotional support.

Advocating for an inclusive Community Program Planning (CPP) process

Speaker: Jerry Hall, Civic Mapping

Location: Cypress B

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) mandates a Community Program Planning (CPP) process to ensure consumers and other stakeholders are meaningfully engaged in the planning process of how their county's Behavioral Health System intends to spend Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) funds each year. Beginning Fiscal Year 2025-25, that cycle will change to a tri-annual CPP process.

There are concerns that stakeholders are not authentically engaged in the CPP, and as a result, counties are not adequately addressing the concerns and issues that consumers and stakeholders prioritize.

We will discuss a recent survey of all counties, at least one county's CPP approach, and contrast that with what an ideal CPP process looks like from a consumer and advocate's perspective.

SESSION 3 BREAKOUTS

The Paradox of Exceptional: Crazy, Gifted, or Both?

Speaker: Dr. Ryan Kelly,
Revery Labs

Location: Ballroom

What does it mean to be exceptional—and at what cost? This presentation delves into the paradoxical territory where brilliance and struggle often intersect. Individuals who are neurodivergent—those whose brains function in ways that diverge from typical cognitive and behavioral norms—are frequently labeled as “crazy,” “difficult,” or “disordered.” Yet many of these same individuals exhibit extraordinary talents, creativity, insight, and resilience. Through a psychological lens, this talk explores the nuanced relationships between neurodivergence, giftedness, and mental health. We'll challenge pathologizing frameworks and outdated diagnostic models, advocating instead for a more inclusive, strengths-based approach rooted in both clinical understanding and positive psychology.

The presentation draws on case studies, lived experience, and emerging research to offer a deeper understanding of the complex experiences of neurodivergent individuals. We aim to equip mental health professionals, educators, and allies with the tools to better recognize, support, and empower those who are neurodivergent.

MHASF's California Peer Run Warm Line 101

Speakers: Brittany Schroeder, MHASF,
Bianca Vann, MHASF,
Kayla Nguyen, MHASF

Location: Sequoia

People trust the CA Warm Line because they feel understood and validated by trained counselors who have lived experience with mental health challenges, creating connection through empathy, mutuality, active listening, and reflecting that their stories and feelings matter. Individuals who contact the CA Warm Line seek support for a wide variety of issues, including anxiety, panic, depression, hearing voices, and other mental health experiences; feelings of isolation and loneliness, challenges in interpersonal relationships, substance use, and the impacts of current events including the pandemic.

Audience members will feel prepared to use our service for themselves, to share the resource with others, and integrate our values into how they understand mental health resources. We hope this presentation will be valuable in discussions with family, friends, classmates, coworkers, and larger communities for years to come!

Reentry Works in Community

Speaker: Nikki Roberts,
MHASF

Location: Cypress B

Reentry is a community effort, not just an individual journey. This workshop highlights how arts-based engagement, peer support, and vocational development create sustainable pathways for justice-involved individuals. As a Black queer, justice-involved employment specialist, national reentry advocate, and writer, I'll share proven strategies for building support systems that reduce recidivism and empower returning citizens. Attendees will explore the role of creative expression, soft skills training, and career/college peer mentorship in developing long-term success and social belonging.

SESSION 4 BREAKOUTS

Recovery: Is Sharing Our Lives, Voices, and Experiences

Speaker: Avonelle Hanley-Mills, MHASF

Location: Ballroom

MHASF SOLVE (Sharing Our Lives, Voices, and Experiences) is a peer-led education campaign and speaker bureau, SOLVE Peer Educators share their powerful mental health journeys, challenging societal stigmas including public, structural, and self-stigma. SOLVE Peer Educators share their personal stories of resilience and recovery, fostering understanding, promoting mental health as an essential part of one's overall well-being. The stories shared will affirm mental health challenges do not define a person's worth, and recovery is possible

The California Peer Run Warm Line's Unique Peer Staffing Model

Speakers: Brittany Schroeder, MHASF, Felipe Granados, MHASF, Sherrel Cross, MHASF

Location: Sequoia

This presentation will provide an in-depth exploration of the staffing model utilized by the California Peer Run Warm Line. We will examine our peer values-centered approach to supervision, which fosters a positive work environment that enhances staff retention. We will also provide perspective on the roles of paid versus volunteer peer staff and explore our comprehensive model for peer professional development, highlighting the ongoing training and support provided to our staff, all designed to equip our peers with the skills they need to excel in their roles.

Finally, we will discuss our approach to utilizing feedback from staff and community members when developing new policies for the program. By creating a culture of open communication, feedback, and continuous improvement, we aim to adapt our practices to meet the evolving needs of those we serve, ensuring that our warmline remains responsive and effective.

Housing Law and Eviction Prevention

Speakers: Ora Prochovnick, Eviction Defense Collaborative, Tom Drohan, Legal Assistance to the Elderly

Location: Cypress B

This workshop will look how hoarding disorders intersect with housing law and options to avoid terminations of tenancies and displacement.

SESSION 5 BREAKOUTS

Remixing Your Mind: An Intro to Hip Hop based Mental Health Practices

Speaker: Hip Hop for
Change

Location: Ballroom

Educators UnLearn The World and Lil MC guide you through the history of Hip Hop and its impact on mental health and wellness for young people in underserved communities. In this engaging presentation and workshop, we view Hip Hop culture as an alternative wellness movement that encourages community building and individual empowerment all the while developing resilience and opportunities to redefine personal narratives.

Intergenerational Trauma, Resilience, and Collective Healing

Speaker: Kini Chang,
California Institute of
Integral Studies

Location: Sequoia

This workshop provides a comprehensive exploration of intergenerational trauma, focusing on its origins, impacts, and pathways to healing and resilience building. Through a combination of education, research, and practice, participants will gain an understanding of the mechanisms underlying the multigenerational transmission of trauma, including cultural, familial, historical, and racialized dimensions.

Organizing from Within: Empowering Individuals with Hoarding Disorder through Self- Management Tools

Speakers: Nicole Malik,
On Lok, Carla Thomas,
On Lok, Genny Pinzon,
On Lok

Location: Cypress B

Our educational presentation is a preview and demonstration of our six-week, evidence-based Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) with emphasis on the tools that are especially relevant to people who deal with hoarding disorder. CDSMP was developed by the Self Management Resource Center out of Stanford University. The educational philosophy is based on self-efficacy, to instill in the participant they are capable of helping themselves and finding solutions. Our presentation will include a history of the program, an overview of the workshop structure, testimonials, and demonstrations of activities from the workshop that can provide possible solutions for those who have hoarding tendencies. The demo will include a scenario/roleplaying by volunteer workshop facilitators. We will use a combination of the following activities useful to participants: brainstorming, problem solving, decision making, and setting goals.

SESSION 6 BREAKOUTS

Culturally and Linguistically Specific Warm Line Services

Speaker: Felipe Granados, MHASF

Location: Ballroom

California is home to various populations, cultures, and needs. Consequently, warmlines are increasing across the state. However, how many of these warmlines are operated by and for our diverse communities?

This panel will provide insights into some of the culturally and linguistically specific warmline services available in California, highlighting their significance in the overall continuum of care. What does it mean for a service to be culturally or linguistically specific? Why is this distinction important? How does support from a culturally specific warmline differ from a general warmline service?

The role of Scarcity and Frugality in Hoarding Behaviors

Speaker: Susie DuBois, LMFT

Location: Sequoia

When there is uncertainty about the stability of life, the future, or concerns about scarcity, we tend to hold onto our possessions tighter, and struggle to let go. The thought I often hear when working with people with hoarding behaviors is, "I might need it", when considering discarding an object. This thought or belief is often associated with a scarcity mindset.

This presentation will define problematic scarcity and frugality, the causes, and how they relate to hoarding behavior. We will also review several approaches to reduce problematic scarcity and frugality in order to make good discarding decisions, decrease your clutter, and let things go.

Access Granted: Best Practices for Virtual Training

Speaker: Rafi Tarantino, MHASF

Location: Cypress B

(This is a 50 minute presentation with a 10 minute Q&A.)

As online and virtual learning become the norm, ensuring digital equity is more important than ever. Virtual training offers flexibility and accessibility, but it also presents challenges—digital literacy barriers, digital access inequities, and engagement gaps. This presentation will explore best practices for creating an inclusive, interactive, and effective virtual peer support training program.

We'll look at how our increasingly digital world expands peer support training opportunities but also creates new challenges. We'll discuss how APPT leverages technology to enhance learning while also addressing barriers to access. Finally, we'll tackle common challenges in synchronous virtual training, including Zoom fatigue, accessibility, and ensuring all learners feel included and supported. Attendees will leave with practical strategies to make virtual training more equitable and engaging, ensuring that no peer is left behind in the digital learning landscape.

SESSION 7 BREAKOUTS

You Might Be Wrong About Warm Lines: Demystifying the Crisis Continuum

Speakers: Sarah Jean Flynn, MHASF, Felipe Granados, MHASF, Sherrel Cross, MHASF

Location: Ballroom

“We’re not a Crisis Line but we are available to callers in crisis”
“We’re a warmline, not a hotline...and we’re available 24/7”
“We have a “no nonconsensual active rescue” policy”

These oppositional phrases are ones that many Warm Line Leaders agree upon, but are they clarifying or confusing? This panel of experienced professionals deeply understand crisis services from the consumer perspective and the impactful role of Warm Lines. Join us to explore the shared values of Warm Lines, our common practices, and our foundations in the Peer and Psychiatric Survivors Movement. We will seek to illustrate the unique approaches of the Peer Support model which honors the dignity and self-determination of our callers above all other motives. We will build upon many questions our members received during CrisisCon 2023, our SAMHSA Technical Experts Panel, and as guests at AAS 2024.

San Francisco's Mental Health System: The Good, The Bad, The Fixable

Speakers: David Elliott Lewis, MHASF, Kara Ka Wah Chien, JD, Sara Shortt

Location: Sequoia

San Francisco's behavioral health system faces a complex web of challenges. This expert panel will delve into the current state of care, examining both mental health and substance use disorder treatment. Key issues include:

- **Serving the Unhoused:** Discover the unique obstacles our unhoused residents face when seeking behavioral health services.
- **The Crisis Response Gap:** Learn about crisis response systems – who provides them, how they operate, and their hurdles.
- **Law Enforcement's Role:** Explore the complex intersection between police (SFPD and SF Sheriff's Deputies) and the mental health crisis response system.
- **Low-Barrier Access – A Distant Goal?** Understand why. easy-to-access services remain elusive, and what can be done to address this.
- The first 60% of the time would be used for presentation. The remainder would be used for Q&A.

Navigating the Workforce as a Peer: Realities of the Job Market and Best Practices

Speakers: Ed Woo, MHASF, Mae Cusack, MHASF

Location: Cypress B

This workshop will provide attendees with practical insights and strategies for navigating the workforce as a peer professional in the mental health field. Drawing on real-world experiences, the session will cover the realities of the job market, best practices for working with peers, and how to thrive in peer support roles. Attendees will leave with actionable tools to enhance their career development and build meaningful connections in the workplace.

CONFERENCE MAP



EXHIBITORS



Bay Area
Hearing Voices Network

The Behavioral
Health Services
Client Council

CALIFORNIA PEER RUN
WARMLINE
MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF SAN FRANCISCO



California Institute
of Integral Studies



Courage-Ignite
BREAKTHROUGH INSTITUTE



Curry Senior Center



Goodwill
JOB CENTER



HOARDING BEHAVIOR PROGRAM
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 Institute
on Aging



美國華裔精神健康聯盟
MHACC
Mental Health
Association for Chinese
Communities

rams

 SENIOR & DISABILITY
ACTION

SOLVE
YOU ARE NOT ALONE - 855-600-WARM (9276)

DON'T MISS OUR RCC RAFFLE!

Visit each table in the exhibit hall and have someone from each table sign the "Exhibitors" page of this program. Once you have each exhibitor sign off on your program, stop by the raffle table to get your raffle ticket and check out the amazing prizes! Winners will be announced on Friday, May 16th.



LOVE MHASF?

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Learn How to Sleep Again



**Pocket Kado: Sleep
and Relax Pet**



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OUR NEWSLETTER**



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AT MHA SF**



THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING RCC 2025

Share your feedback by
completing our survey - we'd
love to hear your thoughts!

