

A special thank you to our courageous panelists!

John Autry, NC Legislator (he, him)

State Representative John Autry (NC-100) represents Charlotte and Mecklenburg counties. His motivation to improve his community through neighborhood organizing against zoning laws ultimately led him to a position in elected office. Since being a legislator, he has learned the values of humility and collaboration. Autry's top legislative priority right now is authorizing research for alternative therapies using psychedelics to treat PTSD, depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses. Overall, his major focus is leaving behind a better world for his grandchildren.

Ray McKinnon, Executive Director PFLAG (he, him) is a dedicated and passionate individual with a diverse background of faith, progressive policy, and housing. With over two decades of experience, he's worked at the intersection of these areas in urban, rural, and suburban communities.

As a recently out Black gay man and the new Executive Director of PFLAG Charlotte, Ray found that caring, just, and affirming spaces were essential to his personal growth, safety, and journey to self-acceptance. The work at PFLAG Charlotte helps families and friends learn how to love authentically. Now, more than ever, we need spaces where all people can learn to become better allies and accomplices in the struggle for equality, inclusion, safety, celebration, and empowerment.

Sharon Galusky, MSW, CPSS, Lead Educator, Promise Resource Network

Sharon (she/her) has been with PRN for over 16 years, almost since its inception 18 years ago. She was 15 years sober when she met founder, Cherene Caraco. Cherene told her that recovery from mental illness was possible. Having multiple diagnoses, this changed her life. She didn't know what her true calling was until Cherene hired her to live her purpose as a teacher and facilitator for PRN. Sharon doesn't want anyone else to have to go through and feel the things she went through in the past. She believes if they can know the truth about recovery, it eases their pain. She could talk about recovery all day long and be just as enthusiastic about it at the end as she was at the beginning.

Paxton Sutton (he, him) is a 16-year-old early college sophomore. His interests include anthropology, politics, music, and anything to do with food. He hopes one day to work in political activism to help change the narrative around the mental health of transgender individuals, especially teens.



CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

From Hollywood to DC:

How one story can affect lasting change.

This series is a platform for us to share the other side of the story, and is a dynamic exploration of the intersectionality between mental illness and wellness, emphasizing the profound impact storytelling has for empowering ourselves and others.

Each week, we embrace vulnerability and bridge the gap between our stories and our labels as we lead the audience through their own transformational journey. These topics and panels are designed to inspire, inform, and ignite the storyteller in all of us.

Evening Agenda

Suicide PSA- 6:00

Introduction - 6:05

Introduction of the Panel - 6:15

Hollywood Game Show

Segment- 6:20

Interactive Panel Discussion - 6:30

Q&A with the Audience: 7:00

Closing Remarks: 7:15