



Birth of Brilliance 2024

The [Birth of Brilliance 2024 conference](#), themed "Don't Just Think...Feel," occurred on February 29, 2024, marking its fourth year. This event aimed to celebrate and cultivate the innate brilliance in every child while **addressing racial inequities** and **dismantling barriers hindering their potential**. Focused on raising awareness about racial disparities and implicit biases in sectors like mental health and healthcare, the conference emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic, driven by the need to combat anxiety and unrest surrounding violence against black lives.

Simone Hidds-Monroe, Lived Expert and Advocate for Systems Change, opened the conference with a poignant message on supporting youth in the foster care system. Naming friends who passed away before 35, she emphasized the urgency for change, highlighting the challenges faced by youth transitioning from foster care, who often grapple with homelessness and substance use despite their inherent brilliance and capacity for success.

Dr. Thema Bryant's opening keynote delved into "Liberation Psychology," urging participants to break the silence and shame surrounding their experiences. Emphasizing that every individual is inherently brilliant, Dr. Bryant challenged narratives that diminish one's worthiness. She introduced a Liberation Psychology Framework, advocating for mindfulness and justice over individual-focused systems. Dr. Bryant stressed the importance of fostering a community where all emotions are valid, promoting compassionate care for birthing brilliance and advocating for a holistic approach to personal growth.

Available workshops covered many topics, but some invited attendees to connect with their inner selves.

- **"Embodied Healing for Racialized Trauma: A Journey to Self-Discovery and Resilience"** by Carly Tolber, LCSW provided participants with space to journal and practice healing practices.
- **"From Self-Doubt to Collective Strength: Leveraging Emotional Intelligence to Unmask and Overcome Imposter Syndrome"** by Nisa K. Williams, M.Ed, MBA, explored imposter syndrome within diverse communities, offering tools to silence the inner critic and embrace one's true potential through emotional intelligence.

Dr. Jeff Duncan-Andrade closed the conference with a session titled **"Equality or Equity: Discussing Community-Responsive Education and Youth Wellness,"** underscoring the need for creating conditions that enhance the well-being of young people. He highlighted the alarming absence of conversations on youth wellness and stressed that without addressing this void, efforts become reactive. Duncan-Andrade discussed the persistent racial segregation in U.S. public schools, criticizing the failure to translate policies into practice and emphasizing the importance of proximity to the pain being addressed. He concluded by advocating for solutions focused on Black and Indigenous children, referencing Maslow's hierarchy of needs and promoting ongoing efforts in building hope and disrupting stereotypes through relationships, relevance, and responsibility.