



# *UPLIFT*

The Official Newsletter of CRESTSprogram, LLC  
Volume 6, No. 2 - Spring 2025



Ready or Not,  
Spring 2025 is **HERE!**

**The spring season serves as a free reminder to everyone about the profound power of preparation! As humans, we would benefit**

from taking cues from plants, birds, and other animals about the importance of preparing ourselves to endure the unfavorable seasons of life and to thrive when favorable seasons arrive. Unfavorable seasons of life may occur when we encounter harsh economic, political, social, and/or personal conditions. Unfavorable seasons of life can also include setbacks, disappointments, failures, and/or the experience of traumatic life events (and their aftermath).

**While we are engulfed in unfavorable seasons (literally and figuratively), we can sometimes feel as though we'll never again experience warmth, sunshine, happiness, success, and/or prosperity ever again.** When experiencing these emotions, it is important that we challenge them with the knowledge that nothing endures forever. It is imperative that we prepare ourselves for (and arm ourselves against) the unfavorable seasons of life. In order to effectively engage in the preparation process, we must have faith that more favorable seasons of life will surely come. Through this faith, we can prepare ourselves survive harsh conditions and to thrive when we're once again basking in the sunshine of the more favorable seasons of life. Ultimately, **the spring season symbolizes preparation, faith, and resilience!**

**CRESTSprogram is your partner in your quest to better prepare yourself and the Black youth (and other youth of color) that you teach, raise, mentor, supervise, coach, and/or counsel.** In this quarter's issue of ***UPLIFT***, the official newsletter of CRESTSprogram, you will find information about our new initiatives, recent and upcoming training events, new resources (i.e., books, concept papers, blog posts, podcasts, etc.), and recently added merchandise.

**CRESTSprogram is here to support you. We are ready to provide you with the training that you need in order to achieve the outcomes that our youth deserve!**

**“One cannot be prepared for something while secretly believing it will not happen.” - Nelson Mandela**

**"If you stay ready, you ain't got to get ready." - Suga Free**

## ***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 ASAP 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

## **Upcoming Events**



## April 22: Being Unapologetically Black

This April we will celebrate and embrace Black culture! Join us for a program filled with empowering discussions, inspiring stories, and a sense of community like no other. Let's unite to uplift and support each other in our journey of supporting Black children in being Unapologetically Black. Dr. Cirecie West-Olatunji, Dr. Constance West, and the CRESTSprogram team will illuminate how Black people have demonstrated resilience and coping despite centuries of cultural marginalization and oppression. The presenters will share narratives of self-love, communal joy, and collective coping throughout generations and across the diaspora. Using evidence from research, Dr. West-Olatunji and Dr. West will share scholarship on what contributes to mental health and overall well-being for Black children and their families.

**Date & Time: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 · 12pm CST**

[Register Here](#) for this FREE Webinar!

## ***RECENT EVENTS & RELEASES***

**Reflections on the February 2025 webinar:  
"No Mountain High Enough:  
The History of Black Love"**





We were so happy to see so many attendees at the February 2025 webinar to learn about the history of Black love in its myriad of forms, including romantic, familial, and platonic. In contrast to the anti-Black depictions of Black relationships typically portrayed in the media, we provided examples of the enduring nature of Black love as demonstrated throughout history. This training session was a celebration of love, unity, and strength within the Black community. In short, we arrived hungry for uplifting words about Black love and left with our hearts filled with joy and inspiration. Here's what attendees had to say:

**“BLACK LOVE IS FOR EVERY SINGLE DAY. I'M HERE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLE'S LIVES.”**

**“Black Love plays an important role in self-love and self-worth.”**

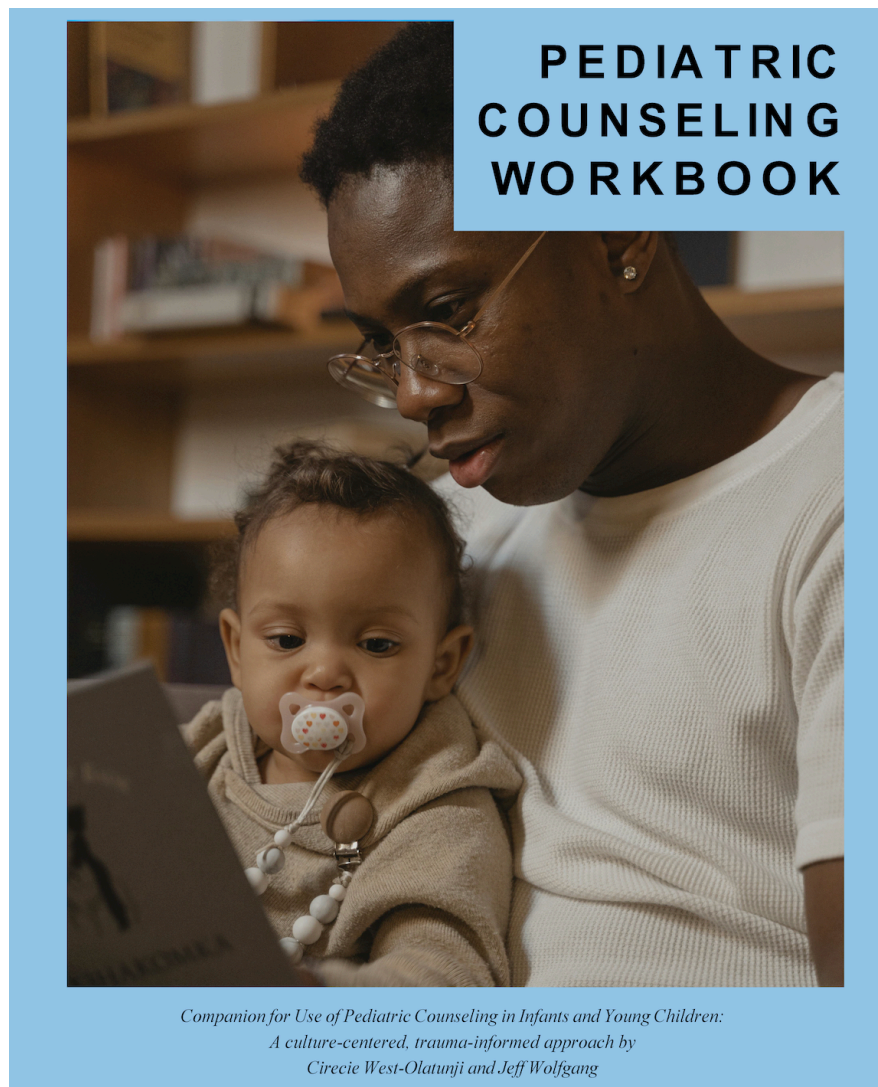
**“Black Love is real and to be celebrated!”**

**“Black Love is active and intentional.”**

Based on your responses, we're considering making the "Black Love" webinar an annual event. If you missed this year's session, feel free to access the video on our virtual training platform.

"Black Love" Webinar

## Pediatric Counseling Workbook: NOW AVAILABLE!!



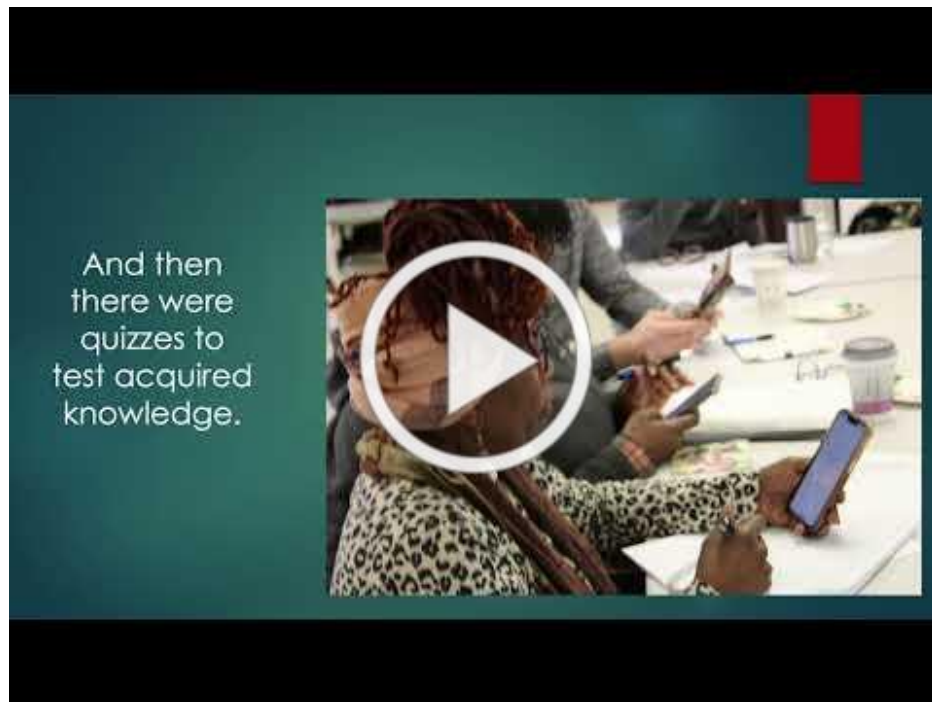
Our CEO, Dr. Cirecie West-Olatunji, has partnered with a colleague, Dr. Jeff Wolfgang (N.Carolina A & T State University) to offer the Pediatric Counseling Workbook. This resource is an excellent tool for any mental health professionals working with young children (0-5 years), especially when they have 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 Workbook*

## Emancipatory Research Training (CRESTS-Liberate) for Grassroots Organizers



With the help of a generous grant from the National Council of Black Studies (NCBS), we were able to provide an in-person emancipatory research training (CRESTS-Liberate) to 12 grassroots organizers who otherwise could not afford the credential program. The training was held in New Orleans, LA over a 2-day period. The participants ranged from seasoned community organizers to newly graduated practitioners and some attendees came from as far away as St. Louis, MO and Atlanta, GA. We look forward to hearing their research projects in the future!

## Interview With Dr. Ebony White



One of our most recent concept papers, "Authentic Expression as a Protective Factor for African American Student Wellbeing", was written by Dr. Ebony White (Research Fellow, CRESTSprogram). This paper and the accompanying interview with Dr. Ebony White provide a culture-centered perspective on working with Black youth and other children of color. Dr. White emphasizes the strengths of Black youth and identifies what adults can do to promote academic excellence and socio-emotional wellbeing in these youth.

[Click to Access Dr. White's Paper & Interview](#)

## Another ESEA Conference in the Books!





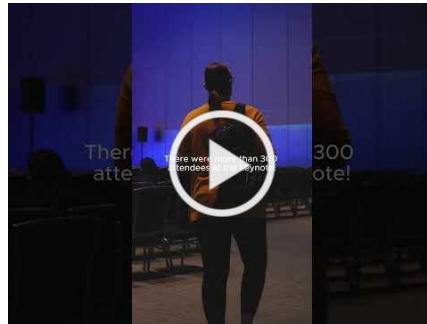
February 19-21, 2025 | Austin, Texas & Online

This year marked CRESTSprogram's fourth year at the national ESEA conference. As in previous years, Dr. Cirecie West-Olatunji (CRESTSprogram C.E.O.) brought several CRESTSprogram team members with her to this annual event. The CRESTSprogram team hosted a booth in the exhibit hall (Exhibit #415), where we met with conference attendees, shared resources, held giveaways and contests, and answered questions.

**For the second consecutive year, Dr. West-Olatunji delivered an invited lecture at the ESEA national conference. This year's lecture, "From Trauma to Resilience: Deepening our Understanding of Socio-Emotional Well-Being", was well attended and highly rated.** More specifically, there was "standing room only" at Dr. West-Olatunji's address (with approximately 300 attendees for the in-person session, and another 100 virtual attendees). To date, 120+ attendees have completed the post-session evaluation form, indicating a very high level of satisfaction with the session (4.5+ ratings on a 5-point scale). Immediately after her invited address, Dr. West-Olatunji hosted a "Meet the Author" session.

Overall, the CRESTSprogram team's participation at the 2025 ESEA conference was highly productive and very successful. We have already started the process of partnering with several groups that we met at this year's conference, and are continuing to follow up with the many of the connections that we made at this event.

Thank you, NAESPA, for offering Dr. West-Olatunji an invited address again this year! Thank you, ESEA 2025 conference attendees, for attending Dr. West-Olatunji's invited address, visiting the CRESTSprogram exhibit booth, sharing your questions and comments, attending post-conference virtual meetings with our team, and/or choosing to partner with us in order to address your training needs!



## January Training Event Recap

# WEBINAR

## Unlocking the Power of Partnerships: The CRESTSprogram/GHA Partnership



This training event was co-hosted by **CRESTSprogram, LLC** and **Global Health Action (GHA)**. It featured a panel discussion that highlighted the purpose, activities, and outcomes of the ongoing CRESTSprogram/GHA partnership. Panelists for this webinar included representatives from CRESTSprogram, LLC (Dr. Cirecie West-Olatunji,



Dr. Constance West, & Dr. Ebony White) and from Global Health Action (Ms. Wendy Jolley-Kabi, Dr. Charsey Cherry, & Mr. Bwalya Mubanga). The panel discussion included the lessons learned about the characteristics of successful partnerships, the pitfalls to be avoided, and valuable resources useful to the development and maintenance of effective partnerships.

The CRESTSprogram/GHA partnership is in the process of expansion. Stay tuned for future updates about future activities resulting from this powerful partnership, including: joint conference presentations, interviews, proposed grant-funded programming, podcasts, and/or cross-training activities. Thank you, Global Health Action, for being such a fantastic partner of CRESTSprogram, LLC!

[View the Video Recording of This Webinar](#)



## 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](#)
- [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](#)

## Pre-Order CRESTS-Achieve Credential Courses



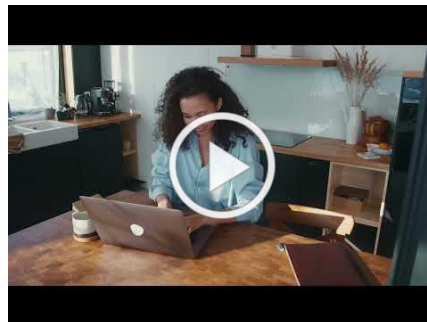
Whether you are mental health professional, parent, or educator you can be among the first to immerse yourself in a culture-centered, trauma-informed care professional development program. CRESTS-Achieve is designed to better equip educators, parents, and mental health professionals to promote academic 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**

## EXPERIENCE THE CRESTSPROGRAM BLOG



The CRESTSprogram team members continue to devote their time and talent to writing instructive and valuable blog posts that you can access at any time. 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 that you can begin implementing in your life and in the lives of the youth that you serve. Below are some examples of what you will find on our blog, but we encourage to explore the [entire blog](#)!

For Educators:

[Addressing the Unique Challenges Girls of Color Face in Education](#)

For Parents/Caregivers:

## [Afrocentric Parenting: Setting Intentions for 2025](#)

For Students:

[Lifelong Learning: Journey to Decolonize Deepening the Experience: The Power of Language](#)

## 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!

## Emancipatory Research (ER) Dictionary



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!

## Save the Date For Our Upcoming Trainings

*Save the Date* *Winter/Spring 2025*

<b>JANUARY 21</b>	THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS
<b>FEBRUARY 11</b>	THE HISTORY OF BLACK LOVE
<b>MARCH 18</b>	LOSS, GRIEF, & INCARCERATION
<b>APRIL 22</b>	BEING UNAPOLOGETICALLY BLACK
<b>MAY 20</b>	BLACK INFANT & MATERNAL HEALTH
<b>JUNE 17</b>	DISPELLING THE MYTHS ABOUT BLACK FATHERS

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