



Flow and Movement in The Heights: Interdisciplinary Healing for Immigrant and BIPOC Youth in NYC.

Flow y Movimiento In The Heights: Métodos Interdisciplinarios Para Jóvenes Inmigrantes en Nueva York.

Susan Natacha González & Beatriz Oliva

This interactive workshop explores the development of an interdisciplinary clinical model that bridges counseling, art therapy, dance/movement therapy, and social work to meet the mental health needs of immigrant and BIPOC youth in New York City. Drawing from a decade of clinical practice at Fresh Youth Initiatives, presenters will demonstrate how collaborative, community-based teams can deliver culturally responsive, trauma-informed care that honors creativity, culture, and collective healing.

Through poetry writing and collaborative art-making, participants will explore migration processes and the concept of home in transition. Participants will gain practical tools for understanding the evolving needs of communities, building interdisciplinary teams, integrating creative and clinical interventions, and reimagining supervision as a process of mutual learning and collective care. The workshop will also examine how interdisciplinary collaboration functions as a decolonizing framework—challenging Eurocentric hierarchies, redistributing expertise, and affirming ancestral, embodied, and communal forms of knowledge.

Through collaborative media of weaving, reflection, discussion, and real-world examples, attendees will leave with strategies to cultivate integrated models of healing that sustain practitioners, empower youth, and transform community-based mental health practice.



Biography

Susan Natacha González, MA, ATR, MS Ed, brings 30 years of experience integrating studio art, art therapy, and inclusive education across hospitals, transitional housing, schools, colleges, and community organizations. In 2016, she launched an informal mental health program in Washington Heights, later co-developing school-based initiatives focused

on holistic student support. She holds Master's degrees in Art Therapy (Hofstra University) and Early Childhood Special Education (University of Miami), with additional studies in Spain and Italy. As a Puerto Rican immigrant, Susan centers culturally responsive mental health care for immigrant communities, challenging traditional practices and exploring the diverse Latinx experience.

Beatriz Oliva Drawing from personal and professional experience, Beatriz transforms mental health care through equitable, healing-centered systems supporting marginalized communities, centering on survivors of interpersonal violence, institutional trauma, and systemic oppression within Latinx, BIPOC, and LGBTQIA populations. At Fresh Youth Initiatives (FYI), she provides trauma-informed counseling, crisis support, and family engagement programming, while integrating arts and culture into healing practices. Oliva expanded FYI mental health access through neuroaffirming, holistic internship and training program. She holds a masters and license in Mental Health Counseling and is currently pursuing a doctorate in Clinical Social Work, focusing on community well-being, afro-diasporic spirituality, counter-transference, and clinical supervision.