

COACHING ROSTER

Blooming Willow Coaching Presents
2022-2023 Coaching Roster



About Blooming Willow Coaching

Blooming Willow Coaching was formed in 2013 after noticing a gap in culturally relevant coaching for communities. To address this need, Blooming Willow began offering one-on-one coaching and training that took a more holistic approach, providing supports for Change Makers to look at the multiple layers of their lives. This is because our core belief is that every person has something special to offer, and when they are in true alignment they can fully contribute to society.

Therefore, our goal is simple: to support as many people as possible to discover authentic voice and genuine choice, by being partners in their liberation. The way that we achieve this is through our signature Healing Centered Coaching

BLOOMING WILLOW FULL COACHING ROSTER

Leslie Avant-Brown, MPA, MCC

Nix Avant-Brown, PCC

Moneek Bhanot, Ed.M, CPC

Toni Dunton-Butler, CPC

Anisha Desai, ACC

Kim Fowler, PCC

Nyla Wilkins Hassell, CPC

Shelley Henderson, M.S.Ed

George Hsieh, CPC

Oseloka Idigbe, CPC

Trisha Ingalls, CPC

Charmaine Lang, Ph.D, CPC

Sherazade Langlade, CPC

Marcia Lee, MA, ACC

Stephanie Liu, CPC

Megan Mubaraki, CPC

spring opera, CPC

Yvonne Rodriguez, Ph.D., CPC

Brigette Rouson, J.D., M.A.

Shor Salkas, MPH, CPC

Laura Shmishkiss, CPC

Tamekka Swift, CPC

DeShauna West-Anderson, MA, PCC

Jamari White, PCC

Michael Wise, PCC



Leslie Avant-Brown, MPA, MCC

CEO - Principal Owner of Blooming Willow Coaching

Leslie Avant-Brown is an innovator, facilitator, coach and thought leader within movement work. Her relentless desire to fuel systems change in support of vulnerable communities has changed the fabric of this work. With her down to earth demeanor, she brings a unique mix of laughter, curiosity, healing, creativity and strategy to support conductors of change – those who are designing innovative strategies that benefit future generations. She believes that moving beyond traditional leadership approaches will revolutionize the way that people work and thrive. "I have dedicated my life to supporting communities to build trust, identify new leadership, increase diversity of voice and choice, incorporate growth and healing strategies and build sustainably. I do this because I know, what we plant today will bloom tomorrow."

Through a partnership with Beyond Emancipation, her CCRW Coaching Model (focused on foster and probation youth) received the notorious International Coaching Federation Prism Award Honorable Mention (Coming 2nd only to Coca-Cola Russia) for its innovative design supporting culture change. She went on to support the development of an ICF Accredited, Community Coaching Certification Program at Leadership that Works, the first of its kind. Through this pioneering effort, she certified over 100 coaches in this new community accreditation, radically shifting how communities are supported through coaching. At Leadership that Works she also served as the International Program Director, where she supported the development, implementation and facilitation of cutting-edge coaching programs that supported value-driven transformation in India, Europe and the United States.

Leslie now serves as CEO at her firm Blooming Willow Coaching, a culturally relevant Healing Centered Coaching practice that allows her to partner with thousands of individuals, organizations and businesses. Her specialization areas include "all things" coaching

including: one-on-one and group coaching, coach training, and designing sustainable coaching models that support growth and healing in communities. Through her firm, she also runs an International Coaching Federation Accredited ACSTH Healing Centered Coaching Training Program called Conductors, and has the privilege to employ a dozen Healing Centered Coaches that support her to serve the community.

Prior to earning her coaching certification Leslie worked in the nonprofit capacity building sector, supporting work that promoted social justice -- she has a background in leadership development and evaluation. "What brought me to the field of coaching was the idea of supporting deep change while aligning my strengths to support conductors of change."

Leslie received her professional coaching certification through Leadership that Works in 2007 and holds a Master of Public Administration from the University of Michigan. In 2020, she earned her MCC (Master Certified Coach) credential, earning her entry into an elite group of coaches around the world that demonstrate mastery in both coaching ethics and standards for the field. In her free time, Leslie enjoys finding new adventures, spending time with her wife, belly laughing, eating delicious food and of course creating!



Nix Avant-Brown, PCC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Like a rocket, Nix's coaching is the vessel that clients access when a much broader perspective is required. From a more spacious point of view, clients get to see their full operating systems--the world and themselves in it. By observing from different angles clients are better positioned to see options, opportunities, limiting beliefs and the way forward.

For over 21 years, Nix has been exploring the impact of our systems- and rule-based society on individuals. As a workshop facilitator, coaching trainer, department supervisor and program manager, she has designed empowerment curricula centered on internal capacity building, culture change, leadership and healing for organizations.

As a Professional Certified Coach (trained in Transformational Life Coaching and Healing Centered Community Coaching), Nix considers herself to be an intuitive partner, a wise ally and a reflector of the space between what you didn't know then and what you do know now. She brings a sense of wonder and curiosity to every session.

Nix's coaching opens space for traditional and non-traditional leaders to slow down and catch up to themselves, to explore needs, to envision success and to create fresh boundaries and agreements before taking brave steps forward.



Moneek Bhanot, Ed.M, CPC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Moneek Bhanot (she/her) is a strategist, coach, and facilitator, grounded in and fueled by our need for collective healing and the dismantling of white supremacy. Being a Punjabi Sikh woman has taught her the importance of honoring the humanity in ourselves and others, showing up in service to her community, and truth-telling. She has come to understand systems of oppression largely from her own lived experience and the various ways in which she has been granted or denied power. These experiences have shaped her pursuit of healing and justice for all people.

She practices these values daily as the Co-Founder of Reflecting Justice, a firm that supports organizations in building racially equitable systems, and supports individuals in transforming culture through relational and embodied practices. She holds space for leaders to turn inward and reflect to more deeply understand themselves, so they can ultimately create change for themselves and others with purpose and intention. She thrives when supporting organizations in strategizing how to shift processes and practices to being more equitable and people-centered. She has an approach that balances accountability with deep love and care. Moneek's background is in education, having worked with first-generation college students of color, and as a K-12 teacher. She has also previously held roles at education non-profits such as OneGoal and Summer Search.

Moneek received her undergraduate degree from UC San Diego and a master's degree in Higher Education Administration from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She serves on the board of South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT). She is a mother to two wonderful children with bold and beautiful energy, and finds joy in spending time with her family, listening to 90s R&B, and cooking delicious food.



Toni Dunton-Butler, CPC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Toni is clear that as a little girl, she was raised to be a “race woman,” because her family swam in the waters of segregation and she lived the struggles and triumphs her family and all “Negroes” experienced as a result of the legacy of being the descendants of free Africans who were shipped across the ocean and enslaved in this and other countries. As she continued her journey in this life, she discovered when she “showed up” in her body she was seen not only as black, but also presented as female and she became conscious of what it was like to swim in that water, too. Her consciousness continued to evolve as she lived in the intersecting waters of being southern, working/middleclass, heterosexual, cis-gender, etc., etc. Today, she has integrated/continues to integrate seemingly separate bodies of water into the ocean of complexity that is Toni.

After a series of careers, comprising guidance counselor, buyer/manager for an African/African American Museum shop and faculty/administrator at an urban community college, Toni became an organizational development consultant that brought diversity to decision-making tables. Twenty years ago, she began her consulting firm, A Silver Thread, Inc. and partnered with leaders to make conscious, creative and practical decisions to create equitable, inclusive, highly productive, transformed workplaces worldwide. She has created and held several retreats for women of color. She continued to deepen her personal development and certifications, including becoming a certified healing coach. Toni’s conscious intention is to be a deeply present partner with her clients to nurture, challenge, guide and hold them as they become more curious and re-discover the depth and breadth of the wisdom they already hold in their minds-bodies-spirits and re-member how to BE in the world as whole, powerful beautiful people they have always been. Toni loves movies, theatre and has recently become involved in tracing her ancestry as a way of again remembering the legacy of wisdom that surrounds us all. She is now weaving the practice of yoga into her life and the connection to A Silver Thread is becoming name apparent. In metaphysical studies, a silver cord refers to “a life-giving linkage from the higher self (atma) down to the physical body.



Anisha Desai, ACC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Anisha has worked in organizations dedicated to movement support, educational equity and leadership development for two decades. She is a Facilitator, Strategist, Coach, and Worker-Owner at AORTA (Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance). Prior to AORTA, she served as Director of the New Leaders Initiative and Brower Youth Awards at Earth Island Institute in Berkeley, where she identified, honored and coached emerging youth environmental movement leaders. She shaped a long-standing program into one that was relevant, accessible and responsive to a new generation of activists committed to advancing creative and inclusive organizational models.

Anisha previously held director roles at Women of Color Resource Center in Oakland and at United for a Fair Economy in Boston. In addition to organizational management, she designed programs and curriculum and conducted popular education workshops. She approaches her work with a tenderness that comes from experiencing the often-rough edges of hierarchical nonprofit leadership structures and knows the gifts of pain, insight and metamorphosis that come with failing fabulously. She brings to AORTA a passion for supporting organizations to create cultures that value democratic participation, mentorship, healing, equity and justice.

Anisha is of Sri Lankan and Indian descent, raised with class privilege by two loving-hearted psychiatrist parents and a devoutly religious grandmother in a smallish town in Florida. Through lived experience with depression and anxiety, she holds those with mental illness in deep care and understanding. She is also a Life-Cycle Celebrant and founder of Radical Ceremony, crafting and officiating end of life ceremonies, weddings and other rites of passage. Anisha enjoys performing with her soul-line dancing team and is an occasional writer of stories on family, culture, and nostalgia.



Kim Fowler, PCC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

“I’ve always hated cruelty in any form. When I was a kid I hated it in cartoons and in the 3 Stooges when characters were slapped or had pianos dropped on them, or were set up for a terrible fall. I hated bullying. In 5th grade when the teacher was away, my best friend, who had always been rail thin, started walking between two rows of desks to get to her seat. All the kids pushed their desks together to see how narrow a gap she could fit through. I pulled my desk back to give her room and the person across from me just moved theirs closer to narrow the space again. I was angry and frustrated and helpless and a little frightened for my friend, who quietly and gamely made it through this child’s gauntlet to her seat. Somewhere my young psyche decided that when I grew up I had to do something that would counter such behavior. I found coaching and the capacity to work with mean inner critics. Specifically, I found Leadership that Works which gave me a frame for how to work with the cruelty within power, privilege and racism and engage with it from compassion and ferocity.”

Kim’s past experiences as a government funder, nonprofit executive director, program manager at Stanford University, and management consultant infuse her role as a coach in the nonprofit sector. “I came to coaching because it matched my belief that we are all fully resourceful individuals with the power to shift our lives and do whatever is needed to be the fully creative, impactful, deeply loving people we inherently are.”

As a professional certified coach, Kim works with individuals, partnerships and teams who are ready to remove limiting beliefs and behaviors and move through their professional and personal lives with mindfulness, effectiveness, spirit and action. Kim’s passion is helping organizational and personal systems reveal their true nature to themselves so that the individuals who make up the system can make new choices about how to keep it operating at its optimum level. In her free time, Kim enjoys the adventure of a hike, the solitude of creative writing, and the joy of singing.



Nyla Hassell, CPC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

As a personal development and mindset coach, Nyla supports her clients in gaining tools and insights to successfully navigate life and career changes, while prioritizing wellbeing.

She works with highly motivated women and creatives to develop clarity and confidence—focusing on unlocking the barriers and beliefs holding them back—and developing strategies and tools to achieve fulfillment on their own terms.

Nyla has supported clients through burnout prevention and recovery, managing perfectionism and imposter syndrome, cultivating whole life balance, and navigating career and life transitions. She is a certified Healing Centered™ coach and Reiki practitioner; and has extensive experience building brands and collaborating with artists, athletes, and internal teams to clarify their values, align their narratives, and deliver purpose-driven work.

Nyla brings a love of music, art, and creativity into her coaching practice and provides clients with a variety of different modalities to help them get unstuck.



Shelley Henderson, M.S.Ed

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Shelley Henderson is a Healing Centered leader coach and Founder of READY Nationwide, a racial and gender equity focused consulting and facilitations firm. Her clients wield the power of ungentrified minds to create systemic change. While she is a warm one-on-one coach and Jegna to social justice leaders, DEI leaders, and education/youth development leaders, Shelley is also a skillful group coach and facilitator. One of her favorite ways to show up for Black people and create community is serving as certified facilitator and trainer of facilitators for Emotional Emancipation Circles: community-defined self-help support groups designed to help heal, and end, the trauma caused by the root cause of anti-Black racism. Shelley recently delivered a TEDx Talk called “Is Schooling a Mechanism for Racial Control?”—the story of one minoritized girl educated in the Midwest in the 1970s, the story of a teacher, the story of a mommy, and the story of a social impact leader.

Equipping adults to address racial inequity and advance social justice has always been a priority throughout her professional journey. Shelley has spent a quarter of a decade as a youth development specialist, certified teacher, nonprofit executive, university program coordinator, community organizer, public policy advocate, coach and volunteer for a number of organizations and initiatives locally and nationally. Because of her commitment to empowering a critical mass of equity-focused change agents, any given semester she is teaching adjunct courses at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and Nebraska Methodist College.

Shelley earned her Bachelor’s Degree in Secondary Education and her Master’s Degree in Educational Administration and Supervision of Secondary Schools from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She is working on a PhD in Leadership and Change at the Antioch University and a certificate in Diversity & Equity in Education with an emphasis in Human Resource Development at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She lives in Omaha, Nebraska with her five children and three grandchildren. Ask her what she’s reading if you come in contact with Shelley as she is an avid reader.



George Hsieh, CPC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

George Hsieh is an organizational strategist and leadership coach who is passionate about community-centered approaches to problem solving, managing change and creating impact. As a Certified Professional Coach trained in Healing Centered Community Coaching, George brings curiosity, grace, and support to clients open to exploring the unprocessed, messy, and at times risky parts of their organizational and personal lives.

In his current role at Community Resource Exchange, he oversees the consulting firm's leadership and professional development services and leads engagements focused on strategic planning, change management, team effectiveness, and equity for nonprofits, foundations, and government agencies. Prior to CRE, George managed several human rights grantmaking portfolios in the Africa Regional Office and President's Office of the Open Society Foundations. During his time at OSF, he also launched an initiative to provide strategic funding to nonprofit executives navigating leadership transitions.

George studied economics and urban studies at New York University and is pursuing a executive masters degree in change leadership and organizational psychology at Columbia University. He holds Facilitative Leadership for Social Change accreditation and is certified in administering 360° Feedback Surveys.

Aside from his first year of life and a 6-month study abroad, George has always lived in New York and loves everything about the city, though he has confessed having never been to the Statue of Liberty or Yankee Stadium. He enjoys hiking, traveling, and coffee during all hours of the day.



Oseloka Idigbe, CPC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

As a facilitator, organizational development consultant and coach, Ose is passionate about developing leaders and bringing people together to connect, exchange ideas, and collaborate. During his career, he has supported strategy and leadership development at government agencies, organizations, and foundations in over 100 engagements across issue areas including health, education, housing, immigration and youth development.

As a consultant and facilitator, Oseloka works with nonprofit organizations in board development, planning, and risk management.

Before coming to Blooming Willow Coaching, Ose was part of The Rockefeller Foundation's Digital Jobs Africa initiative, where he helped to develop strategies for private sector engagement.

Prior to his transition to the nonprofit sector, Ose worked as an analyst at Standard Bank of South Africa in Commercial Property Finance. He holds Flawless Consulting certification and Facilitative Leadership for Social Change accreditation, and is an International Coaching Federation certified coach.

Oseloka received his M.P.A. from New York University, as well as a B.A. in Philosophy from University College London and a L.L.P. from BPP Law School.

He enjoys exercise, especially playing and watching soccer, and has had fewer than five cups of coffee his entire life.



Trisha Ingalls, CPC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Trisha Ingalls is an executive level management professional and Certified Professional Coach highly effective at incorporating coaching techniques and creative leadership skills to achieve business objectives. Trisha had an opportunity early on to engage with the world of community development: affordable housing, financial literacy, nonprofit partnerships, over-extended boards... and being vulnerable with other leaders, building trust, and hoping it would be enough to move collective impact projects forward to the benefit of her neighbors. There is so very much at stake in rural communities where each type of nonprofit is literally the only game in town.

Trisha also had the opportunity to become the Chief Executive of her organization at a comparatively young age, while her children were still babies. "The stress and challenges of being a mother and a female leader were deep, held so tightly in my body that many years later I'm still occasionally recognizing them and letting them go."

It was during that time, however, that she participated in the Achieving Excellence in Community Development Program, an 18-month joint venture leadership training between NeighborWorks America and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and she was assigned a coach. The transformational power of coaching right from day one was enough for Trisha to eventually pursue coaching certification herself through Blooming Willow, and she is eager to leverage her own commitment to rural communities and experiences in nonprofit leadership with the power of healing centered coaching.



Charmaine Lang, Ph.D, CPC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Charmaine Lang (she/they/Sista Docta), Conductor #54, is a Black queer certified coach and full-spectrum doula who supports clients in accessing the pleasure and intimacy they desire. Her experiences with Vipassana Meditation, generative somatics, and bodywork have played an essential role in her transformative work. Personally, somatic tools have been incredibly healing for Charmaine, and she incorporates them into her coaching practice, often inviting clients to tap into their bodies for connection and guidance.

All of Charmaine's work is grounded in Black Feminist Praxis. Charmaine has been part of the reproductive and racial justice movement for over a decade as an organizer, trainer, and leader. As a scholar, Charmaine has presented on Black women's well-being. Her scholarship contributes new perspectives on Black women's history and the connections between gender, health, and race, using Black Feminism to explore wellness, intimacy, and activism.

Her dissertation, *"Learning to Take the Excess Baggage Off": An Ethnographic Study of Black Women Activists' Self-Care Practices*, examined how contemporary Black women activists in Milwaukee, Wisconsin use community support and pausing as care strategies. The dissertation centered self-care and the health of Black women as an integral part of the history and future of social activism and liberation work.

A Forever Echoing Ida, Charmaine is from South Central, Los Angeles, and lives in North Carolina. Find her on the dance floor, traveling, or writing about queer and pleasurable things.



Sherazade Langlade, CPC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Sherazade Langlade is a bi-racial, white presenting, first generation immigrant, 20+ year nonprofit professional and leader. She currently supports clients, organizations and communities as a coach, consultant, facilitator and trainer; and specializes in change management and Blooming Willow's Healing Centered coaching approach and principles.

She uses levity, connection and play to build authentic partnerships with a focus on centering the wisdom, intuition, and lived experiences of clients to create opportunities for transformation and breakthroughs.

She appreciates, and has come to understand, the beauty of becoming who we each can be, and that the journey can be fluid, delicate, energizing, uncomfortable and freeing.

Her only hope in working with clients as a coach and consultant is that there will be expansion of love, ideas, hopes, potential and most of all, change.



Marica Lee, MA, ACC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Marcia Lee (she/her) is committed to finding joy in small things; to listening with her heart, body, spirit, mind and community; and ending oppression, racism, and injustice. Marcia lives in Waawiyatanong, currently known as Detroit, MI.

Marcia begins by listening. Her hope is that we co-create a safe(r) and brave(r) space for you to listen to your own inner voice and for what you deeply care about to be your guide. Marcia invites you to explore and connect with all of your SPICEE (spiritual, physical, intellectual, community, emotion, and environment) self. She is a tunnel builder and weaver that works with you to connect your strengths and values with your vision, goals, and current reality to create a life that you want for yourself and future generations to come. Marcia does this through powerful questions, guided imagery, laughter, nature, metaphors, written reflection, and invitations to pause. Marcia welcomes your feedback and guidance in creating a coaching space that meets your needs.

Marcia holds a certification in Healing Centered Coaching through Blooming Willow and is completing her International Coaching Federation certification. She holds a master degree in dispute resolution and has been a restorative justice practitioner for over a decade. Marcia is a popular education facilitator, tai chi instructor, a Courage and Renewal retreat facilitator, and end of life doula. Marcia is the co-director of Healing by Choice!, a circle of women and gender non-conforming people of color health and healing practitioners. Healing by Choice! works with organizations and groups to integrate healing justice into their culture and holds healing spaces for our community. She co-founded, Taproot Sanctuary, an urban retreat center and intentional community that works to live in 'right relationship with ourselves, the earth, and our neighbors.' She trains and coaches people to move their facilitation and teaching from in person to online with, PeoplesHub, an online movement school. Marcia loves learning, asking questions that open us to a different, visionary way of being, approaching life with curiosity and wonder, being a mama, and thinking that she tells good jokes.



Stephanie Lowe (Liu), CPC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Stephanie is a passionate leadership development practitioner, looking to spark personal and collective change from the inside out.

She has designed and facilitated learning and development for over 15 years with a range of audiences from K-12 students to frontline program staff and coaches, to executive leaders in the public education and nonprofit sector.

She has spent the majority of her career leading program innovations and new possibilities at a large national nonprofit as a strategist, program designer, trainer, team leader, and internal coach and consultant to senior program leaders across the country.

She also enjoys cultivating the voice and leadership of young people and young professionals through coaching and volunteer opportunities.

She lives in Chicago with her husband Greg and two young children, Amina and Felix, and enjoys exploring all corners of the city with her family.



Megan Mubaraki, CPC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Megan is a healing-centered coach, anti-oppression facilitator, and capacity-building trainer. She is the founder of Restorative Cypress Coaching, where she collaborates with individuals and organizations to navigate times of transition and uncertainty. Megan works to advance liberatory movements by supporting BIPOC leaders and allies in their personal growth, healing, and development. Her coaching is deeply informed by her experience working with individuals in the nonprofit sector navigating sustained burnout. During her career, she has seen everyone from passionate volunteers to seasoned executive directors suffer from burnout as a result of working under oppressive systems. Her coaching practice is a direct response to the collective fatigue that many of us experience from working within a capitalist system, and her coaching supports individuals and teams to re-imagine a sustainable path to achieving both personal and professional goals.

Most recently, Megan is working as the Director of Operations for Environmental/Justice Solutions, a consulting collective that enables the creation and implementation of environmentally just, sustainable, and socially equitable policies. Megan's work with E/J Solutions draws on her skills of building capacity for organizations that align with a team's core values. She partners with staff to create robust internal systems of operation, including consensus-based decision making, collaborative management, and sustainable planning.

The core of Megan's work aligns with the values she has developed as a South Asian woman living in the Bay Area for the last 10+ years. No matter what role she is in, she is committed to inviting clients to re-examine, re-frame, and reclaim limiting beliefs caused by systems of oppression.



spring opara, CPC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

spring opara completed her second coaching certification via Blooming Willow Healing Centered Coaching in July of 2022. Her first coaching certification via Leadership That Works - Transformation Coaching certification program, was completed in February of 2017. Her intuitive, grounding and accepting nature makes spring easy to talk with and her ability to stay focused in the now, to see the beauty in the chaos, to reflect and remind others of their own divinity is all part of her coaching approach. One of her favorite sayings is, “I can give you a fish and you will eat for a day, I can teach you to fish and you will eat for a lifetime”. spring is all about lifetime, self-sufficiency. By coaching from an intuitive and lived-wisdom stance, spring seeks to assist individuals in finding alignment in all activities of their life – both personal and professional.

Her enthusiasm for helping people, Black women in particular, to recognize and embrace their divine selves and to understand their true, authentic power, led her to pursue coaching certification. spring truly enjoys working with established and emerging leaders who are navigating oppressive systems, to step into their power in order to complete the radical work necessary to create an equitable world for everyone.

In her time at CompassPoint, spring has pursued her life’s purpose—deconstructing and dismantling white supremacy through a self-care lens and centering self-care as a radical act of liberation for our most marginalized communities. She designed and co-facilitates the Self-Care for Black Women in Leadership program, a leading edge, health, wellness, and self-care program for Black women in leadership, which she delivers for CompassPoint through their public workshops and cohort leadership programming. She’s also a certified Witch and a Reiki Level 1 and 2 practitioner (practices she learned through her graduation from The Black Witch University in New Orleans, LA). She is a Taurus (based on astrology), an INFJA (based on Meyers-Briggs), and an anime enthusiast based on the LOVE of the genre!.



Yvonne Rodriguez, Ph.D., CPC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Leveraging her 20+ years of experience as a scientist and nonprofit leader, Yvonne is a STEM Equity Coach and the Founder/CEO of Y.W. Associates.

Yvonne started her education as a first generation, re-entry student with three children. Back then, she had dreams of becoming a world-famous Chicana poet. Instead, she ended up with a doctorate degree in physics.

Although trained as a physicist, Yvonne chose to leave the lab as she was compelled to advance the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields through a much broader approach. That is, by working diligently to maximize the contributions of people who have been underrepresented in STEM by removing obstacles, providing support and working to influence public policy.

Yvonne has extensive experience in nonprofit leadership and program design. She has served as the Deputy Director and Director of Programs at the Society for the Advancement of Hispanics/Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS). She has also served as a Public Policy Fellow for the Association for Women in Science (AWIS) and the Government Relations and Public Policy Associate for the Society of Women Engineers (SWE).

Recently, Yvonne has been working with The Surge Institute in Oakland. Yvonne chose to join Surge in its commitment to strengthening the educational leadership landscape by supporting Leaders of Color from the community as they navigate the complexity of the current systems and work to change them.



Brigette Rouson, J.D., M.A.

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Brigette Rouson, J.D., M.A. (she/li/ella), Conductor #63 and principal of Rouson Associates, brings more than 30 years' experience building capacity to create a just society. Brigette's central focus is on challenging ourselves to create sustainable change in our personal lives, organizations, communities and broader systems. A graduate of Blooming Willow's Black Conductors program, and certified by International Coaching Federation, she supports changemakers to grow and heal toward collective liberation.

As national program director of Alliance for Nonprofit Management, Brigette co-founded a capacity builders of color network that sparked field-wide equity initiatives. And previously at Ms. Foundation for Women, she directed grantmaking for gender justice, racial equity and intergenerational power-sharing through a \$4 million collaborative that supported girls' and young women's grassroots leadership.

Brigette is a co-founder and board member of Diverse City Fund, which makes grants for social justice work by BIPOC/global majority people in the nation's capital, and served as co-convenor of a regional funders' group, Resourcing Radical Justice.

She is involved in local organizing and activism, including faith-based and woman-centered initiatives. A graduate of Howard University (B.A.), Georgetown University (J.D.), and University of Pennsylvania (M.A.) she also completed all classes toward a Ph.D. in communications and culture.



Shor Salkas, MPH, CPC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Shor Salkas (they/them) is a public health professional and healing-centered coach who is deeply committed to health equity and health justice as ways to create more healed and thriving communities. Through activism, organizing, coaching, training, consultation, and facilitation Shor works with groups and individuals to realize their strengths and fullest potential to create change in their lives, communities, and workplaces.

Shor has been working to promote social, racial, and gender justice through many projects and organizations like the Minnesota Transgender Health Coalition, Out in the Backyard, SHIFT Minnesota, the City of Minneapolis Transgender Equity Council, the Wisconsin Transgender Health Coalition, the Healthy Wisconsin Leadership Institute, and through public health and health equity coalition building across Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Shor is a first generation, white-assimilated Jewish, queer, trans non-binary, fat person who has called the occupied Dakota and Anishanabe land known as Minneapolis home for most of their adult life. Shor is a parent, partner, neighbor, community member, and artist. They love nature and being outside, growing gardens and plant friends, and their pets. All of their identities and experiences in life shape who they are and how they approach their work as coach and healer.

Shor's is a trained public health professional and healing centered coach who earned a Master's of Public Health at the University of Minnesota and became a Certified Professional Coach through The All Aboard Conductors Program at Blooming Willow Coaching and Consulting.



Laura Shmishkiss, CPC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Laura Shmishkiss (she/her) is a white, Jewish woman who has a vested interest in dismantling racism and all other interconnected forms of oppression that live within ourselves and the world. She brings 25 years of experience as an executive leader, facilitator, coach, educator and activist in both nonprofit organizations and schools. As the founder of Regeneration Consulting, she supports change agents to cultivate a world grounded in social justice, interdependence and collective liberation.

In her coaching practice, Laura supports individuals to access their power, wisdom and purpose in order to build equitable communities where all people thrive. She specializes in working with individuals engaged in social change work, whether that is within their homes, communities, relationships or professional life. She also works with white-identified people who are seeking to deepen their skill and resilience to engage in antiracism practice for the long haul. As a healing-centered practitioner and herbalist, she explores with clients how to reconnect to their whole, authentic selves through an integrated relationship with their bodies, minds, spirits and the natural world. She loves supporting clients to pause, slow down and create space to align their actions with a bold vision for themselves, their communities and the world.

Throughout her career, Laura has held many leadership roles within the nonprofit and education sectors. Laura served as Executive Director at Center for Racial Justice in Education. Laura's past roles include Director at Bronx Community High School, Senior Director of Programs at Coro New York Leadership Center, and founder of Coro's "Exploring Leadership Program." Laura earned a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Columbia University, a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology from Colby College, and a teaching certification from San Francisco State University. Laura lives in Brooklyn, New York, and nurtures her own vitality through dancing, running, cooking, gardening, making plant medicine and practicing yoga.



Tamekka Swift, CPC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Tamekka Swift is passionate about discovering her why and is naturally inquisitive. She believes we all have a purpose and a destiny. So many people wonder why I am here on this earth. Her favorite book by Caroline Myss describes our purpose as a sacred contract, which is "your overall relationship to your personal power and spiritual power."

Coach Tamekka will invite you on a journey to discover your why. Her intuitive ability to ask powerful questions will help you navigate a challenging season, a shift on the horizon, or you dare to ask what is my assignment on the earth. Together you will discover the roadblocks keeping you from the clarity you desire. Like the rose that grew from concrete, you will become the flower you endeavor to be.

Tamekka's career journey began after receiving a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Physiology, where she chose a focus on Cardiac Rehab. She quickly transitioned to the Cardiac Catheterization and Electrophysiology labs at Henry Ford Hospital. After this eight-year career, she had a fantastic opportunity to work in the Medical Device Sales industry for the past 12yrs. Also, she currently volunteers with the DEI sector under her current employer by leading an Employee Resource Group, African Ancestry Leadership Council. Together they focus on talent recruitment, programming to aid in the culture of inclusivity and talent development for their membership.

Her depth of knowledge in the Cardiology field has aided her in impacting many lives in the community. Helping others is her passion. Her mom kept her in church as a child. As an adult, she has continued her legacy of volunteering wherever needed. She has created, developed, and led several mentoring programs for youth and adults. In addition, she is assisting with a local church launch and leading 100-plus volunteers. She enjoys hiking, yoga, drinks with friends, or Netflix chilling with her dog Snickers.



DeShauna West-Anderson, MA, PCC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Based out of the Bay Area, California, DeShauna received her Master's degree in Counseling Psychology, with additional coursework in Forensic Psychology. During this time, DeShauna also began working for a non-profit agency that contracts with Alameda County Social Services supporting foster youth with navigating self-sufficiency. After working in this field, she realized that the core of our problems and stress often correlate with symptoms in our bodies. Starting with self, she decided to challenge her mind, body and spiritual alignment by beginning an Ashtanga yoga practice. Also, she discovered life coaching, which quickly became an important tool in all client-centered and leadership work. This allowed her connections with others to become more than just a mentorship, but a partnership in their goals.

Through self-discoveries in yoga and coaching, DeShauna resolved to deepen the mind/body connection and received her 250-hour Teacher Training Certification (Power Vinyasa & Yoga Sculpt). DeShauna also realizes that mastering the "self" is a lifelong path, yet the journey there is where meaningful experience happens. In June 2018, she became a certified transformational coach through Leadership that Works and uses somatic tools to support individuals with bringing their authentic selves to the surface. DeShauna will also earn her 300-hour Teacher Training (continued yoga education) in December 2021. Her ultimate goal is to create a connection with individuals throughout their personal journey, with the hopes of helping to empower them to reach their desired destinations. DeShauna believes "Health is a state of body and wellness is a state existence."

During DeShauna's spare time she enjoys spending time with her husband, daughter, animals (she has a dog, cat, gecko, fishes) and different species of plants as well as geodes.



Jamari White, PCC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Jamari Michael White is an internationally known psychic medium, spiritual healer, and certified coach.

He is the founder of Blackbird Institute for Heart Healing where he provides divination and spiritual medicine to support Black men in healing their hearts and experiencing greater love and abundance.

Jamari also guides people in connecting with their ancestors, healing ancestral trauma, and embodying lost wisdom and blessing, through his practice Black Ancestral Healing LLC.

A Black queer trans man from the mid-west, his current contributions to the world are deeply embodied and informed by over 10 years of experience in community healing work.

At his core, he is a lover, child of God, and a transcendent pathfinder, relentlessly seeking, finding, and provoking sacred opportunities to create and experience unseen models of remembering who we are, claiming our power and honoring our truth and connectedness.

His people are from Ohio, Virginia, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, and Western Africa.



Michael Wise, PCC

Blooming Willow Coaching Team

Michael draws on his experiences as a queer man and cancer survivor to support clients to step into their bravery, authenticity and resilience. He brings an authentic, grounded and collaborative approach to his coaching, mentoring and training. That means being direct and speaking hard truths while also holding a warm, loving and playful energy. He's passionate about social justice and fighting to make this world better for every one of us. Michael believes that starts with each one of us working on our own healing, development and growth and that then ripples out to the people in our lives and communities. He looks forward to learning about what you love and supporting you to have more of all of it.

Michael has partnered with individuals and communities to identify and creatively address their needs for over 25 years in the nonprofit sector. He's been a counselor for LGBTQ teens, a community health educator, a youth program director at a large nonprofit, a professional coach, coach mentor and a coach trainer. He is a Certified Professional Coach (CPC), and received his training from the Leadership That Works Coaching for Transformation program, an International Coaching Federation (ICF) accredited program. Michael eventually became a faculty member there, and has taught coaching since 2017. He is credentialed as a Professional Certified Coach (PCC) by the ICF, and also holds a Masters of Public Health (MPH) in Community Health Education from Hunter College.

When he's not coaching, he loves game nights with his partner Jerome and their close friends, good coffee, reading fantasy and sci-fi books and watching horror movies. He's also an unapologetic tennis fanatic!