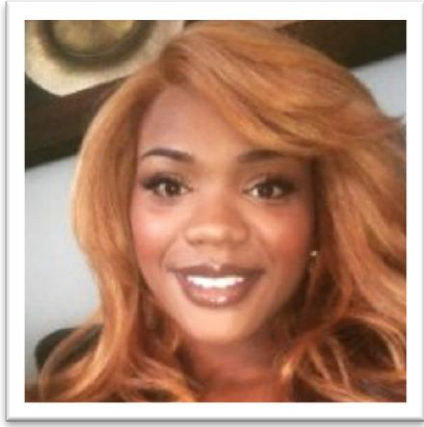


Kitara Johnson-BIO



Kitara Johnson is originally from the inner city of Chicago. Her name in Swahili “Proud Sword” was an influence on Kitara as evidenced by her accomplishments. Early in life, Kitara recognized the impacts of injustice and privilege. She received a scholarship to a private high school, but could not attend because it did not cover bus fare from her home in a low-income neighborhood. Faced with life in the inner city, she was forced to join a gang and was stabbed and beaten when she left. A single mother at age 16, Kitara sought a better life for herself and her son. She joined the military and earned the rank of sergeant in a short 2 ½ years and is an honorably discharged service connected veteran.

Kitara currently works at Excelsior the second largest Behavioral Health Organization in the Inland Northwest as the Chief Development Officer, where she manages and supports strategic organizational development and partnerships. Kitara earned her Master’s in Leadership and Management at Webster University, a Bachelors of Applied Science degree in Workforce Education and Development, and her Associates of Applied Science degree in Early Childhood Education and Development. Kitara is a 2008 graduate of Leadership Spokane and ALUMI of JustLead Washington a yearlong program social justice and leadership development program.

Kitara is currently serving in year two of five year appointment to the Washington State Supreme Court’s Minority and Justice Commission. Duly, Kitara is a highly sought after speaker and trainer competitively selected to be a TEDx Talk presenter, a Master Trainer for the Washington State University School of Nursing, Vancouver Behavioral Health Workforce Collaborative, a Certified Department of Behavioral Health and Recovery Peer Counselor, a contract trainer and curriculum developer for the Washington State Department of Early Learning and other state agencies. After a very competitive selection process in 2017, Kitara became a member of the State Wide Capacity Collaborative’s Leadership and Design Team assisting with the prioritizing of pooled investments of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Seattle Foundation, Sherwood foundation and others to support advocacy and capacity building tools and resources to build a healthy nonprofit ecosystem across the state.

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