



United Resilience Coalition

Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, September 23, 2025

Time: 12:02 PM – 1:08 PM CST

Location: Zoom

Attendees

- **Dr. Tolulope Ola** – Founder, Restoration for All (REFA)
- **Tomi Ola** – Senior Program Manager, Restoration for All (REFA)
- **Victor Obisakin** – Coalition Coordinator
- **Dr. Richard Oni** – Chair, Progressive Individual Resources
- **Dr. Kingsley** – Community Evaluator & Needs Assessment Specialist
- **Elder Joshua Isabo** – Vice Chair, Mortgage Banker & Certified Financial Planner
- **Cody Osborne** – Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Coordinator
- **Siji Oluwaniyi** – Documentation & Administrative Assistant (REFA)
- **Henry Momanyi** – Community Leader
- **Roselidah Nyabo** – President, Monigetting Organization
- **Harriet Kerubo** – Community Outreach Liaison, REFA / Director of Organizational Development, Core Minnesota
- **Jetta** – Oromo Ethiopian Community, Community Organizer
- **Heritage Aluko** – Member; candidate for Secretary position
- **Helen Ghebre** – Staff, Department of Human Services; attending as community member

Absent: Joshua Negussie

2. Meeting Overview

The meeting convened to further the mission of the United Resilience Coalition, focusing on suicide prevention, community resilience, and coalition-building among African immigrant and refugee communities. The session included introductions, discussion of coalition structure, work plan development, capacity building, and strategies for broader community engagement.

3. Detailed Topic Discussions

A. Introductions & Opening Remarks

- Each participant introduced themselves, their background, and their role in the coalition or community.
- Dr. Oni emphasized the coalition's purpose: "We are all co-creators of whatever we develop here. It's not a one-person show."
- Helen Ghebre shared her lived experience as an immigrant and highlighted the importance of culturally centered prevention strategies.



United Resilience Coalition

- Cody Osborne, new to the coalition, expressed eagerness to learn and contribute, noting the unique approach to mental health and suicide prevention.

B. Meeting Logistics & Duration

- Tomi proposed extending meetings from 1 hour to 1 hour 45 minutes to allow for deeper discussion and planning.
 - Members discussed balancing meeting length with participants' work commitments. Suggestions included:
 - Keeping meetings to 1 - 1.5 hours during workdays.
 - Considering later meeting times for those with daytime conflicts.
 - Occasional in-person strategic planning sessions (e.g., on a Saturday), though some members (e.g., Joshua) noted religious or personal constraints.

C. Coalition Structure, Roles, and Committees

- Tomi outlined current and proposed roles:
 - Siji as Secretary, Heritage as Youth Work Group Lead, Harriet as Outreach & Engagement Lead.
 - Members are encouraged to join the following committees: Advocacy, Outreach, Youth, Events & Programs, and Research & Policy.
 - Members were asked to indicate their preferred committee in the chat.
 - WORK GROUPS:
 - Advocacy and Outreach
 - Henry Momanyi
 - Harriet Kerubo
 - Events
 - Research & Policy
 - Cody Osborne
 - Youth
 - Heritage Aluko
 - Cody Osborne
 - Discussion on the importance of matching roles to members' strengths and expertise.

D. Work Plan Development

- Tomi shared a template for the coalition's work plan and clarified the need for a distinct plan separate from REFA's.
- Dr. Ola explained the difference between "capacity building" and "capacity development," emphasizing that members already have capacity but need targeted training and development.
- The coalition's work plan will address:



United Resilience Coalition

- Capacity development (training, language, destigmatization)
- Community-specific risk factors (e.g., cultural identity among youth)
- Strategies for advocacy, outreach, and program implementation

E. Capacity Development & Training

- Dr. Ola and Oni discussed the importance of training coalition members in non-stigmatizing language and effective intervention strategies.
- Henry Momanyi stressed the need for standardized training to ensure consistent reporting and communication.
- Cody Osborne highlighted the challenge of normalizing conversations about suicide and mental health across diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.

F. Community Engagement & Expansion

- Members discussed the need to broaden coalition membership to include more African immigrant communities (e.g., Ghana, Sierra Leone).
- Joshua and Henry suggested each member invite 2–3 new community leaders to future meetings.
- The coalition aims to be inclusive and representative, with a long-term vision of engaging 20+ African countries.

G. Vision, Resilience, and Youth Leadership

- Harriet emphasized the importance of redefining resilience: “Resilience is not just about surviving. It is about the ability to connect and share that strength.”
- The coalition aims to empower youth, reduce stigma, and build a legacy for future generations.
- Members reflected on the need for clear vision, unity, and strategic growth.

H. Action Items & Next Steps

- Tomi to lead development of the coalition work plan, with input from all members.
- Dr. Kingsley is to be invited to future meetings as a key evaluator and specialist.
- Members to review the work plan template and provide feedback.
- All members were encouraged to attend the community conversation event (5–8pm).
- Ongoing outreach to expand coalition membership and representation.

I. Closing Remarks & Reflections

- Members expressed gratitude for the collaborative spirit and diversity of expertise.
- Final prayer led by Harriet, focusing on unity, resilience, and purpose.
- Victor reminded members of the community event and the importance of continued engagement.



United Resilience Coalition

5. Key Themes & Takeaways

- The coalition is committed to co-creation, inclusivity, and strategic growth.
- Capacity development and destigmatization are central to the coalition's mission.
- Broadening representation and engaging youth are ongoing priorities.
- The coalition values both immediate action and long-term sustainability.