

Continuing NAADAC's Legacy and Building New Bridges

By Mita M. Johnson, EdD, LPC, MAC, SAP, CTHP-II, NAADAC President

As I begin my presidency, I am both excited and terrified! I have had the privilege of serving under several amazing NAADAC Presidents, including Don Osborn, Kirk Bowden, Bob Richards, Gerry Schmidt, and Diane Sevinger. Diane is a truly gifted leader – she brought wisdom, clarity, passion, and humility to the position. She has such a compassionate heart, and she genuinely cares about everything she puts her name and energy to. I will not succeed in this position without her guidance and support. Gerry, Kirk, and Don have been mentors to so many of us, sharing their unique knowledge, skill, and humor. I would also like to recognize Angela Maxwell, our President-Elect. Angela has incredible organizational expertise and she reminds me that the best of the best lead and serve NAADAC, and that all of us willingly offer our time, energy, and expertise to our profession because we care about our clients first and foremost.

I am surrounded by so many people who work so hard to support our profession because they care about our profession and those we serve, rather than because they are just trying to fill their resume and vita. That is not true of other boards and associations that I have been a part of. As I think of each of our esteemed NAADAC Regional Vice Presidents (RVPs), I am reminded of how difficult yet rewarding that position is. I remember how important it was to understand the hurdles and opportunities that each state presented. The work of our RVPs is noticed and appreciated – they are my superheroes. I also remember being a state president, and all the plates that must be kept in the air at the same time. I have often said that organizations will cease to exist if they do not have dedicated frontline professionals serving their clients; NAADAC would not exist without dedicated Presidents, RVPs, Executive Committee members, directors and staff serving its members.

I would be remiss to not mention Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, NAADAC's Executive Director, and her dedicated staff. I am sure everyone

agrees that Cynthia is unforgettable and invaluable. Cynthia's energy, dedication, humor, and expertise makes the rest of us look like we are taking a nap. She reminds me of the roadrunner; only she can be in nine places in nine seconds – if only we could bottle and sell that! NAADAC, under her leadership, has grown into a premier membership organization and advocate prepared for all that the 21st century has to offer, and will continue to position itself as the expert resource for all things addiction-related. Her staff has worked tirelessly to operationalize the needs of Cynthia, the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, and the individual members. I would especially like to give a heartfelt thank you to Jessica, David, Kristin, Donna, Samson, Yao, Dino and others, as we would not be where we are and able to give as much as we do without them. As I have mentioned, no other professional organization works with such pride, ethics, and care.

The next two years will be an exciting time for NAADAC, on the heels of turning 50! There are many initiatives and ideas on the table that I am excited to pursue during my time serving as President of NAADAC. I truly believe that the next two years will be about increasing **recognition of our workforce** and **building bridges of collaboration** – nationally and internationally. We are an **internationally-recognized** non-profit certification and membership organization; the influence of NAADAC on the delivery of services nationally and internationally will only continue to grow. NAADAC is involved with the **Colombo Plan**, offering education and testing abroad, and will continue in this line of work. NAADAC will continue to **advocate for excellence** in the delivery of services. This is



the time to use dynamite to dig tunnels, circumvent nonsense, and forge new roads. Our **service providers need recognition**, in terms of employment, insurance coverage, and pay. The addictions workforce needs consistent and ongoing recognition by all insurance carriers and Medicaid. NAADAC will continue its work to **create portable credentials** that can cross state lines by procuring recognition of the Master Addiction Counselor (MAC) credential and exam across all states and territories. There needs to be **employment opportunities** for anyone who wants to work with clients struggling with a substance use and/or addictive behavior disorder. We need to increase our standing with members of the **medical profession** by continuing to develop principles of practice, standards, and outcome measures.

Students are the next generation of service providers; we need to invest in addictions education across the nation. NAADAC will be putting together a **training academy** as a way of investing in our members. Cynthia and I will be looking for **promising young leaders** to mentor and coach, using leadership meetings as a way to forge life-long connections that build up the next generation. Other behavioral health and mental health professionals cannot do what we do without education, skills training, and clinical supervision. We are **essential specialists** – we are the cardiologists of the behavioral health professions; we treat the heart, mind and soul of our clients!

On that note, I want to be a president who is accessible and available wherever you need me to be. I am here to serve every NAADAC member, staff member, board member, RVP, affiliate, and allied non-member. My ear is always available; engage me in conversation, tell me what you need and put me to work – let’s address your concerns. I love to travel virtually, I love to teach, train, talk, and think, and I am here to serve you and NAADAC. Working together we are much stronger – and we have many tunnels to dig and bridges to build. Join me in making our journey to our 50th birthday in 2022 memorable! Thank you.



Mita M. Johnson, EdD, LPC, MAC, SAP, CTHP-II, has been practicing in the world of mental health, marriage and family, and addictions counseling for the past 30 years. She earned her Doctorate in Counselor Education and Supervision and is a core faculty member in the School of Counseling program at Walden University. In addition, she has a thriving private practice where she provides clinical supervision, counseling services to our military, and addiction-specific training and education. She has been providing telebehavioral health services to individuals and groups for several years and is a board certified telehealth practitioner. She is involved in regulatory and credentialing activities in Colorado and regional workforce recruitment and retention activities. Her areas of specialization include pharmacology, co-occurring disorders, ethics, culturally-responsive care, and clinical supervision. She has been an active member of NAADAC for the last 15 years, has served as the Ethics Chair, and began her term as NAADAC's President in October 2020.

Not everyone out there has their best interests at heart.

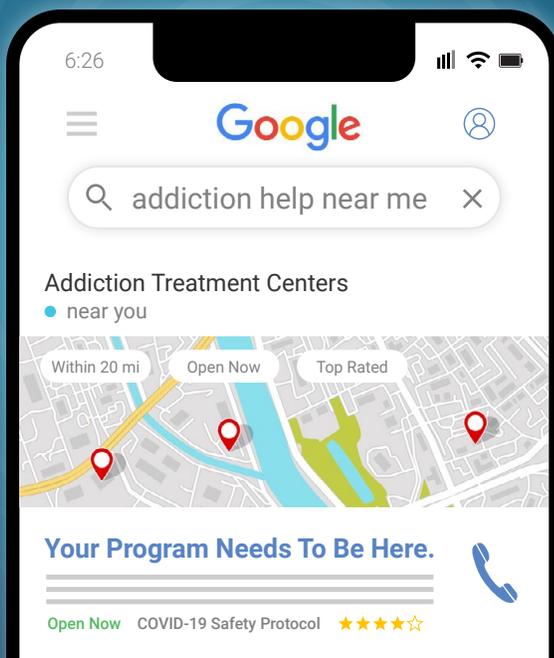
Make Sure They Are Safe ~ Make Sure They Cared For ~ Make Sure They Find You

Be a Beacon.

Connecting Patients +
Providers since 2005

Ethical Digital Marketing
for Behavioral Health

- Mobile Websites
- Local SEO
- Google My Business
- Paid Search



dreamscapemarketing.com
800-571-8553



a Google Premiere Partner