



Vibrant Emotional Health

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Vibrant Emotional Health Names Lesleigh Irish-Underwood as Chief External Affairs Officer & Head of Brand

***The first-ever CXO will lead and establish a robust national and integrated best-in-class
External Affairs department.***



Image credit: Regina Fleming Photography

New York, NY (February 7, 2023) – [Vibrant Emotional Health](#) (Vibrant), the nonprofit administrator of the national 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988 Lifeline), today announced Lesleigh “LIU” Irish-Underwood as its first-ever Chief External Affairs Officer (CXO) & Head of Brand, reporting to President & CEO, Kimberly Williams. In this newly created role, Ms. Irish-Underwood will help advance all elements of the nonprofit’s external-facing strategy, and establish a best-in-class business unit that will encompass integrated marketing & communications, stakeholder engagement, national and state policy, fundraising & development, strategic partnerships, and social impact. The announcement is Ms. Williams’ second high-profile hire in the past few weeks, as Vibrant [announced](#) Dr. Tia Dole as Chief 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Officer on January 27. Vibrant was the lead partner in the transition to 988 last year and is seeing an historic increase in the number of Americans accessing the system. Vibrant also administers other

noteworthy crisis hotlines, including the National Disaster Distress Hotline, the Veterans Crisis Line, the NFL Life Line, and NYC Well, as well as community-based mental health programs across the country.

“Ms. Irish-Underwood is a visionary leader who brings about change, and we are excited to have her join the Vibrant team as we continue to strengthen the mental health care continuum in the United States,” said Kimberly Williams, President & CEO of Vibrant Emotional Health. “It is essential that all of us in the mental health community have a unity of purpose and collaboration as we work together to ensure that specialized support is available to all who need it, when and how they need it, especially in historically harmed and excluded communities. Ms. Irish-Underwood’s experience, knowledge, and passion will ensure that the next phase of our work is inclusive and equitable.”

"Our mental and emotional health is important for living and leading a happy life. This is even more important as we enter a new normal after the pandemic, and for communities that have not been centered in conversations about affirming mental health care in the past," said Ms. Irish-Underwood. "It is not lost on me that I am joining Vibrant at a time when we celebrate and uplift Black History Month. As a Black woman, I know that we need to prioritize mental and emotional health now more than ever in our daily actions and conversations, and within our communities. I am truly grateful for this opportunity to work with Kimberly Williams, the leadership team, key partners and the Vibrant team."

Before this position, Ms. Irish-Underwood was the Chief Brand & External Relations Officer at MetroPlusHealth, New York City’s health plan for over 700,000 members. She was the first-ever leader in that role, established an entirely new business function, and led the health plan’s award-winning rebranding efforts. Prior to that she was the first Senior Vice President & Chief Marketing Officer at United Way of New York City (UWNYC) where she oversaw B2B and B2C brand awareness initiatives, strengthened UWNYC’s internal business plan, and increased annual revenue. Ms. Irish-Underwood started her career at the Random House publishing imprint Alfred A. Knopf, and then went on to several other world-class publishing brands, including Kensington Publishing, Pearson, Golden Books, and DK Publishing.

Last week Ms. Irish-Underwood was named to Diversity Woman Magazine’s “2023 Elite 100” issue, a tribute to extraordinary Black women leaders changing the face of Corporate America. She is a member of the Black Executive CMO Alliance (BECA), the Wall Street Journal CMO Network, The CMO Club, and CHIEF. Ms. Irish-Underwood is an alumna of the American Express Leadership Academy/Center for Creative Leadership, serves on the Brooklyn Community Foundation Board, the Brooklyn Tech Alumni Foundation Board, and is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., where she served on the National Strategic Planning Committee.

Ms. Irish-Underwood holds a bachelor’s degree in English language and literature from Stony Brook University and was named to Crain’s New York Business’ “Notable Leaders in Advertising, Marketing and PR” list and the publication’s “Notable Black Leaders and Executives” list in 2022.

About Vibrant Emotional Health

For 50 years, Vibrant Emotional Health has been at the forefront of promoting emotional well-being for all people. As leaders, advocates, educators, and innovators in mental health, we have been raising awareness and offering support to everyone who is struggling. We work every single day to help save lives and assist people to get care anytime, anywhere and in any way that works for them. We are unwavering in our belief that everyone can achieve emotional wellness with the right care and support. As part of our work, we administer the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, funded by SAMHSA, which provides 24/7, free, and confidential support for people in emotional distress across the United States. For more information, please visit www.vibrant.org. Follow Vibrant on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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