

L&J

EMPOWERMENT



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Goal 1 Detailed Breakdown

GOAL 1: To train 5,000 barbers as mental health advocates, and network them with one another to create a community of practice and support. These barbers will reach upwards of 5 million Black male clients, facilitating open dialogue around mental health and encouraging them and their families to seek help when needed.

Organization: The Confess Project (TCP)

Why This Goal: Our barbershop training is our flagship program. We believe that barbers have a critical role to play in destigmatizing conversations around mental health, which is why we created America's first mental health barbershop movement. Our ultimate goal is that every Black man or boy who sits in a barber's chair has the opportunity to talk about how they're feeling, learn that it's ok not to be ok, and be given resources to receive mental health support when needed. The core audience we're working to serve is African Americans who are descendants of slavery, ages 6 - 35. We know that in working with this audience, we also have an opportunity to positively impact the mental health of their families as well.

Timeline:

- 2022: Train 1,000 new barbers via all the strategies referenced above. Begin developing the TCP app for the Barber Coalition. Host a minimum of 1-2 community events.
- 2023: Train 1,500 new barbers via all the strategies referenced above. Launch the TCP app for the Barber Coalition. Host a minimum of 1-2 community events.
- 2024: Train 1,500 new barbers via all the strategies referenced above to reach target of 5,000 barbers. Host a minimum of 1-2 community events.

How We'll Achieve Goal 1

- **Barbershop Trainings:** Trainings inside barbershops have been the key to our success so far. The TCP team travels to barbershops nationwide, conducting in-person workshops in which we train barbers to serve as mental health advocates. By bringing this training to their place of work, we make it easy for barbers to participate, and help shift the culture of each shop we visit.
- **Trainings at Barber Schools:** In person and virtual trainings at barber schools are a powerful way for TCP to maximize reach and impact, influencing the next generation of barbers as they're learning their trade.
- **Celebrity Barbers:** Increasingly TCP is working with celebrity barbers, educating them so they can educate their large followings. This influencer strategy helps to exponentially expand our reach.
- **Barber Battles & Expos:** These large events, some with 200 or more attendees, are another powerful way to train large numbers of barbers at once as we work to reach 5,000 barbers by 2024.
- **Self-Guided Barber Trainings:** For barbers that want to be trained as mental health advocates but don't have access to an upcoming training in their community, we've created a free online self-guided course. That means any barber, anywhere, can become a mental health advocate.
- **Barber Ambassadors:** TCP is also training select barbers to conduct our core training as paid contractors. This not only increases our training capacity as we expand our reach in the coming years, but also allows us to offer skill building and additional income to these barbers.
- **Barber Coalition:** Once barbers have received TCP training, they automatically become part of the Barber Coalition. This is a network and community in which barbers can deepen their skills as mental health advocates, share ideas, ask questions, and receive support. We host regular virtual events for the Barber Coalition and leverage text messaging and social media to keep in touch with them.
- **The TCP App:** Ultimately, our goal is to have an app that serves as a virtual hub for the Barber Coalition. Because our barbers are spread out nationwide and not all barbers use any one social platform, it's important to create a virtual space for them all to be in touch with us and one another. This app will offer additional trainings for barbers to deepen their skills, allow TCP to easily share upcoming opportunities and events, and provide barbers with a space to ask questions, share challenges, and more.
- **Support for ALL Who Identify as Black Men:** At TCP, the audience we serve is Black men and boys. By this, we mean ALL who identify as men and boys, regardless of their gender assignment at birth or sexual orientation. We are working to hire more LGBTQIA+ staff and community organizers, and train more barbers that identify within and/or serve this community. We are both working to build our competency as an organization, and are forging partnerships with organizations such as Arkansas Black Pride to ensure we can do this work with integrity, respect, and authenticity.
- **Community Events & Engagement:** Once our barbers receive their training, that's just the beginning of the benefits to their community. We encourage and empower the shops we work with to host events and conversations, like our recent Back to School Event in Atlanta, where we and Privado Grooming provided free school supplies, free haircuts, hair accessories, and mental health resources for parents and students. We've hired multiple full and part time community organizers to--among other responsibilities--support our barbers and their shops in making more events like these possible, as we believe that this creates real value and sustained change for communities.

Goal 2 Detailed Breakdown

GOAL 2: To conduct the pilot study and begin the clinical trial to make our barber training evidence based.

Organization: The Confess Project (TCP)

Why This Goal: We've seen firsthand how our barbers change as a result of working with us, and we know those changes impact their clients. What we don't have, however, is dependable scientific research on the impact of our barber training program. We want this research, because we believe it will help us learn how to do our work even better, and our goal is to make our programs as effective and impactful as possible in destigmatizing and supporting Black male mental health. The rigorous process of making our barber training evidence based will likely take 3-5 years. We will continue to run our current trainings in the interim, as we know they are already impactful and we are building a network of barbers that we can come back to with new trainings as we learn how to improve upon our work. We also plan to evolve our trainings in real time as we embark on the pilot study and clinical trials described below. Once our trainings become fully evidence based, we will be able to greatly increase our impact by licensing it out to third parties, e.g. state and local governments, barber schools, and other nonprofit organizations both domestically and internationally as well.

Timeline:

- 2022: Secure additional funding. Begin work on pilot study.
- 2023: Complete pilot study. Begin preparations for clinical trial.
- 2024: Continue preparations for and launch clinical trial.

How We'll Achieve Goal 2

- **Secure Additional Funding:** To conduct the research described below, we must first secure additional grant funding to ensure we can cover all costs associated with the pilot study and clinical trial.
- **Pilot Study:** The pilot study is currently in its design phase led by Dr. Natasha De Veauuse Brown. It will likely consist of a cohort study comprised of 50 barbers, and address core questions around how TCP trainings impact barbers. There will also likely be a simultaneous cross-sectional study with Black men on attitudes and behaviors around mental health to establish a baseline. Only once a baseline is established can studies be done on the impact of TCP on clients, e.g. sought out therapists, joined support groups, etc.
- **Clinical Trial:** Building off of the pilot study, the clinical trial will evaluate the impact of TCP barber trainings on clients, looking at how their attitudes and behaviors have shifted as a result of having their hair cut by TCP barbers.

Goal 3 Detailed Breakdown

GOAL 3: To increase access to mental health services for Black men, boys, and their families by connecting them to vetted mental health professionals and free and affordable therapy options.

Organization: The Confess Project (TCP)

Why This Goal: TCP's primary goal is to destigmatize mental health for Black men and boys. As we achieve this goal, it's critical to ensure that every person we reach has access to the mental health services they need and deserve, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay. Currently, there is no metric associated with this goal, as the methods for evaluating TCP's impact in this area will be established as part of the work to become evidence based (as outlined previously in Goal 2).

Timeline:

- 2022: Expand Therapist Directory to 100 members to accommodate TCP's growing audience. Continue to identify and build relationships with partner organizations, including potential collaborators on the Therapist Directory. Create printable assets and a QR code for barbers to give to clients listing local therapists and other resources for free and low cost mental health support.
- 2023: Expand Therapist Directory to 250 members, OR begin referring out to a vetted third party directory if one has been identified. Continue building and strengthening relationships with partners. Update barber assets annually.
- 2024: Expand Therapist Directory to 500 members, OR continue referring out to a vetted third party directory if one has been identified. Continue building and strengthening relationships with partners. Update barber assets annually.

How We'll Achieve Goal 3

- **The Therapist Directory:** Research indicates that Black people have difficulty identifying with therapists that do not look like us. Having a provider that deeply understands our culture, fears, and experiences makes a significant difference for Black clients. That's why TCP is cultivating a Therapist Directory of vetted Black therapists that we can feel comfortable recommending to the Black men and boys we serve, as well as their families. Some of the providers in our directory are willing to offer free and/or discounted sessions to those who can't afford their services. We also recognize that there's a growing number of organizations working to create directories of Black therapists, and while ours is different in that we vet everyone we add to it, we don't want to duplicate efforts and are looking to collaborate with and support others in the space.
- **Organizational Partnerships:** There are a number of national organizations that are working to increase access to mental health services for the people we serve (e.g. Black Men Heal, and Free Black Therapy). Each city often has local resources and organizations as well. Our goal is to learn about and collaborate with these organizations in ways that serve our shared goals.
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Goal 4 Detailed Breakdown

GOAL 4: To offer both free and paid educational opportunities, networks, and resources to over 450 people in positions to help influence policies and practices around the mental health of Black men and their families. These include: educators, law enforcement, mental health professionals, and direct support providers (e.g. caregivers, case workers, and job coaches).

Organization: The Confess Project (TCP)

Why This Goal: To create an ecosystem that supports Black male mental health, TCP believes we need to reach the people that teach and care for Black boys, and the people that serve, treat, and all too often criminalize Black boys and men. We offer some programming for these audiences free of charge as part of our mission, and we also believe that people should have to pay for access to our quality content.

Timeline:

- 2022: Secure 50 participants in TCP U's online courses and grow the Membership Network to 50 participants, which will generate approximately \$7,500 in revenue. Solicit input from participants to evolve programs to meet their wants and needs
- 2023: Refine content and programming based on participant feedback. Consider adding new TCP U courses if/as needed. Secure 100 more participants in TCP U's online courses, and grow the Membership Network to 125 total participants.
- 2024: Secure 150 more participants in TCP U's online courses, and grow Membership Network to 175 total participants.

How We'll Achieve Goal 4

- **TCP University:** We have created a number of self-paced online programs and real time trainings to achieve the goals above. Sample courses include: ACEs & Trauma in Educating, Trauma-Informed Care & Resiliency, QPR-Suicide Prevention Training, and Your Mental Health First Aid. Most online courses cost approximately \$30.
- **Membership Network:** We are also building a Membership Network, which people can join for a monthly fee of \$7.99. Membership includes regular educational content, networking opportunities, discounts on trainings and merchandise, and discounts on space rentals for those located in Little Rock.
- **Organizational Trainings:** We are often invited to speak at and run our various trainings for organizations, for example: universities, and Boys and Girls Clubs. While this isn't a core component of our strategy that we promote or track, it is something we often do when asked, either as a paid or unpaid engagement

Goal 5 Detailed Breakdown

GOAL 5: To leverage media as a tool to facilitate awareness and meaningful dialogue around the mental health of Black men and their families.

Organization: The Confess Project (TCP)

Why This Goal: There is a strong link in the Black male community between barbershops, music, and entertainment. TCP's primary focus is on barbershops, but it would be a missed opportunity not to leverage this link.

Timeline:

- 2022: Continue content creation at current pace. Explore a potential DJ Coalition spinoff organization.
- 2023: Hire Creative Director to lead these efforts, and develop a strategy for this work. Begin implementing strategy.
- 2024: Continue implementing strategy, and evaluate progress so far to determine a path forward.

How We'll Achieve Goal 5

- **DJ Coalition:** Many of TCP's barbers and community members are also DJs. We want to empower these DJs as advocates for mental health, and have them integrate TCP into their events. We are currently operating an informal DJ Coalition, and are exploring the possibility of spinning this coalition off into its own organization.
- **Film & Entertainment:** As a media savvy organization that's constantly producing video content and has gotten high volumes of press coverage, we've learned that sharing this content plays an important role in normalizing conversations around mental health in the Black male community. As such, we regularly produce and share such content to further our mission. We recognize that to do this more strategically over time, we will need to hire a Creative Director to lead these efforts.

Goal 6 Detailed Breakdown

GOAL 6: To make the Atlanta and Los Angeles offices of The Confess Project fully functional and independent satellites, each with their own executive directors, staff, boards of directors, and 501(c)(3) status.

Organization: The Confess Project (TCP)

Why This Goal: Every U.S. city has its own cultural landscape. Rather than dictate programs and policies from Little Rock to our out-of-state offices, they will become independent organizations operating under The Confess Project name such that they can function autonomously to best serve their own communities. These satellite offices will conduct local barber trainings and leverage their city's network of barbershops as platforms and event spaces to deepen dialogue about the mental health of Black men and their families. Furthermore, they will have agency to innovate in their own communities, looking for new ways to further TCP's organizational goals. We will spend the next 3 years developing, launching, and refining this model, and once it's successful, our goal will be to replicate it in other cities nationwide.

Timeline:

- 2022: Focus on legal structure, requirements, and guidelines. Begin work on the Leadership Academy so it's ready to go when new executive directors are hired.
- 2023: Offer technical support, working with each office to find executive directors, build their boards, etc. Enroll executive directors in the Leadership Academy.
- 2024: Launch TCP's first two independent satellites in Los Angeles and Atlanta

How We'll Achieve Goal 6

- **Establish a Legal Structure:** We'll study the legal structures of other organizations that leverage this model and work with our legal team to build out a structure that works for us.
- **Create Requirements & Guidelines:** Again, studying similar organizations, we'll create a set of requirements and guidelines that clearly define what it means to be a TCP satellite and set all parties up for success.
- **Provide Technical Support for the Transition:** The Atlanta and Los Angeles offices will need support in making this transition, and TCP will work with them to ensure they have what they need. The local councils will transition into boards of directors that will help in the work as well.
- **Create a Leadership Academy:** This program will be built by an L&J consultant to train, support, and empower the new executive directors as they build their independent organizations. In the short term, the Leadership Academy will train and support the new executives in Atlanta and LA (and for the Joy & Wellness Hub, referenced below in Goal 7). In the long term, the Leadership Academy will set the groundwork for more expansion, creating the capacity to launch new satellites of The Confess Project (and the Joy & Wellness Hub) in 2025 and beyond.

Goal 7 Detailed Breakdown

GOAL 7: To turn the Little Rock Joy & Wellness Hub pilot into its own independent organization with an executive, board, and 501(c)(3) status.

Organization: L&J Empowerment/The Joy & Wellness Hub

Why This Goal: As with our other programs, The Joy & Wellness Hub in Little Rock is meant to serve as a pilot for a model that will be replicated. Our ultimate goal with these hubs is to reimagine community health centers with a focus on serving the Black community. The Hub offers health and wellness services, job search support, educational programming, and a space for community members to be vulnerable and heal. While major metropolitan areas often have resources like these, smaller urban centers and rural cities/towns rarely do. Though we launched the pilot in our organizational home in Arkansas, our vision is to bring the Hub to these smaller cities and more rural areas, with each Hub having its own independent leadership just as each satellite office of The Confess Project will. That's why we've decided to turn the Hub into its own organization, and hire an executive to lead the growth and development of the pilot, and to create a plan for expansion.

Timeline:

- 2022: Assemble board, establish legal structure, and begin search for executive. Begin work on the Leadership Academy so it's ready to go when the new executive director is hired.
- 2023: Hire executive and enroll them in the Leadership Academy. Transition to autonomous organization. EContinue focus on serving the Little Rock community, while beginning to think about expansion plans.
- 2024: Evaluate the success of the pilot so far, and determine expansion plans.

How We'll Achieve Goal 7

- **Assemble Board:** We'll begin by putting together a board of directors to help guide the process.
- **Establish Legal Structure:** We'll work with our legal team to create an independent 501(c)(3)
- **Create a Leadership Academy:** As described in Goal 8, this program will be built by an L&J consultant to train, support, and empower the new executive directors as they build their independent organizations. The Leadership Academy will be tailored to executives of both The Confess Project satellite offices and the Joy & Wellness Hubs.
- **Hire Executive:** We'll collaborate with the board to hire an executive. This executive and the board will then be responsible for running the organization and creating a plan for growth.

Goal 8 Detailed Breakdown

GOAL 8: To support 75 Black, Brown, and otherwise underserved Arkansans with disabilities to find and retain employment.

Organization: The Lewis Group (TLG)

Why This Goal: According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 17.9% of people with disabilities were employed in 2020. That means over 80% of this population are unemployed. The Lewis Group has been contracted by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) to help by supporting people with disabilities find and keep employment. This work not only provides our clients with critical financial independence, but also often leads to improvements in self esteem and mental health as well.

Timeline:

- 2022: Refine job coach training with initial job coaches and serve those clients that continue to learn about the program through word of mouth. Make a plan for community outreach in 2023. Hire new part-time job coaches as necessary to serve current client load.
- 2023: Begin community outreach and serve 25-30 clients. Hire and train 2-5 new part-time job coaches to serve these clients.
- 2024: Hire and train new coaches (part-time and/or full-time) as needed to reach the three year goal of serving 75 people.

How We'll Achieve Goal 8

- **Job Placement Services:** We have worked with ARS to develop a clear protocol to support people with disabilities in finding and retaining work. This starts with home and community visits, resume assistance, and job application support. Once a job is secured, we also provide transportation to work and/or on-site support for our clients to ensure they are set up for success. ARS pays us per client we serve, meaning the more people we support, the more revenue we generate to cover our costs.
- **Job Coach Training:** The key to our job placement services is a team of talented and well trained job coaches. As a new program, we are building out a job coach training program to ensure that our team has the skills necessary to help our target population find and retain work.
- **Community Outreach:** Once we've built a team of trained job coaches, we'll engage in a community outreach campaign to ensure that Black, Brown, and otherwise underserved people with disabilities living in Arkansas know about and can leverage our services. We'll build and strengthen relationships with local health agencies, and continue to be in regular communication with ARS to ensure we're top of mind as a provider.

Goal 9 Detailed Breakdown

GOAL 9: To provide non-emergency medical and other transportation to over 1,000 Black, Brown, and otherwise underserved Arkansans with disabilities and seniors.

Organization: TLG Transit

Why This Goal: When people with disabilities and seniors are unable to travel to their medical appointments, their health suffers, and they become substantially more at risk than their peers with access to transportation. The goal of TLG Transit is to ensure that this population is able to receive the medical care they need and deserve. And because we are building a fleet of trained drivers and vehicles, we are also able to provide non-medical transit as well, which is also an essential service that has countless economic, social, and emotional benefits.

Timeline:

- 2022: Hire and train 2-3 new drivers, and acquire 2 new vehicles by end of year. Secure additional Medicare/Medicaid contracts to leverage the growing fleet.
- 2023: Hire and train 2-3 new drivers, and acquire 2 new vehicles. Secure additional Medicare/Medicaid contracts to leverage the growing fleet.
- 2024: Hire and train 2-3 new drivers, and acquire 1 new vehicle. Secure additional Medicare/Medicaid contracts to leverage the growing fleet.

How We'll Achieve Goal 9

- **Secure Contracts:** Most of our clients are covered by Medicare & Medicaid. It is our primary business model to work directly with these providers to secure transportation contracts. Doing so means that insurance companies pay us to serve the people we most want to reach. This results in large numbers of clients served, and income to cover all associated costs. We also accept private contracts with individuals as well.
- **Driver Recruitment & Training:** As a new program and with minimal marketing and outreach, the demand for TLG Transit's services has already surpassed the bandwidth of the organization's one driver. As such, over the next three years we plan to build a fleet of 8-10 drivers, and train them to meet the needs of the populations we serve: picking people up at their own doors, helping them into the vehicle, walking them into their medical appointments, etc.
- **Vehicle Acquisition:** It's imperative that we have enough accessible vehicles to accommodate our clients and keep our drivers moving. Because our drivers work in shifts, we anticipate needing 5 new vehicles, with 8-10 drivers to meet our client's needs.

Goal 10 Detailed Breakdown

GOAL 10: To create strong organizational structure, process, and policies to support all of this organizational growth.

Organization: L&J Empowerment

Why This Goal: As a quickly growing organization, L&J Empowerment is regularly innovating and hiring new people. We recognize that to thrive as an organization, our team needs structure, process, and policies in place to support them in their work.

Timeline:

- 2022: Complete SOPs for all current programs and an SOP for adding new programs. Implement systems protocols and hire initial HR personnel. Recruit and onboard two new board members.
- 2023: Recruit and onboard two new board members. Update SOPs as needed. Evaluate systems protocols to determine effectiveness and adapt as needed.
- 2024: Recruit and onboard two new board members. Update SOPs as needed. Evaluate systems protocols to determine effectiveness and adapt as needed. Hire additional HR personnel if needed.

How We'll Achieve Goal 10

- **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):** We're creating SOPs for all our programs (and for adding new programs) such that we can follow consistent protocols across the board and easily integrate and onboard new team members.
- **Systems Protocols:** We are working to adopt a set of standard systems across all L&J Empowerment organizations encompassing our teams in Little Rock, Atlanta, and Los Angeles. These include systems for filing, scheduling, task management, and communication to help the team stay streamlined and organized.
- **HR Policies & Staff:** We are hiring HR professionals to help us continue to improve our hiring and onboarding processes.
- **Board Development:** We will be bringing on two new board members per year for each year of our strategic plan to help build our organizational capacity.

Goal 11 Detailed Breakdown

GOAL 11: To facilitate a leadership transition, promoting from within and hiring new senior management that will run L&J Empowerment on an operational level, allowing Founder Lorenzo Lewis to transition into a more visionary and advisory role..

Organization: L&J Empowerment

Why This Goal: After spending years building TCP from the ground up, launching The Lewis Group, TLG Transit, and the Joy & Wellness Hub, Lorenzo is looking to move away from the day-to-day operations of the organization. As such, we will be both promoting the staff that have been with us for years and will hire new senior team members as needed to lead all managerial and operational aspects of the organization moving forward. Lorenzo's new role will focus on vision, strategy, public speaking, and fundraising. This timing is particularly fitting, as over the next three years, L&J Empowerment is putting in place an entirely new operational model. As evidenced by a number of the goals in this plan, we are slowly shifting from one organization running multiple programs, to a national parent entity that will oversee and support a growing number of independent organizations. It is only logical that this shift would be accompanied by shifts in staffing and leadership structure.

Timeline:

- 2022: Mimi promoted to COO. Reevaluate staffing structure. Assemble and launch Executive Search Committee
- 2023: Search Committee to hire new executive. Joy & Wellness Hub to become the first L&J Empowerment project to become its own independent organization, starting the organization's structural shift.
- 2024: Conduct performance review for new executive. TCP LA & Atlanta become second and third independent organizations, furthering the structural shift.

How We'll Achieve Goal 11

- **Promote Dimika Nelson to COO:** Having been with the organization for years, Dimika (Mimi) knows our team and the ins and outs of all L&J Empowerment programs better than anyone. She will take over all operational elements of the organization moving forward.
- **Reevaluate Staffing Structure:** It's important that as we think about leadership for L&J Empowerment, we first look inside the organization. We'll work with our core team to determine who might grow into new leadership roles, who's excelling where they are, and what holes we need to fill as a result. Only once we do this will we make new hires externally.
- **Executive Search Committee:** A special committee will be formed to lead the search for a new chief executive of L&J Empowerment. This committee will likely be composed of board and/or council members, HR professionals, and funders (no organizational staff or executives will participate, though current staff are welcome to apply for the role). This committee will be responsible for defining the scope of the role, prospecting candidates, interviewing, and hiring. They may or may not choose to hire an executive search firm for support.
 - For best practices in building and running an executive search committee, please see [this article from the Bridgespan Group](#)

Goal 12 Detailed Breakdown

GOAL 12: To launch our National Headquarters in Little Rock, which will contain both executive offices for the organization and mission-aligned resources for the community that will generate income for the nonprofit.

Organization: L&J Empowerment

Why This Goal: As our organization grows, we need a home for our executive team, and we also want to give back to the community by creating new jobs, resources, and a gathering space unlike any other in Arkansas. Through personal connections, we've been able to acquire a historic building in the 12 Street Corridor in Little Rock that allows us to do all of the above at the same time. Our plans are to have our own executive offices in the building with a media room to manage our own marketing production in-house, create a flagship barbershop to serve the community and for training purposes, build a rentable theater for events and performances, open a cafe as a space for gathering and connection, and offer rental office and film studio space. As a Black led organization, we're incredibly excited to be able to create this first of its kind space in a historically Black community, and know this will generate new opportunities for people to learn, gather, work, celebrate, perform, and so much more.

Timeline:

- 2022: Launch capital campaign. Collaborate with TCP Ventures to finalize architectural plans.
- 2023: Complete capital campaign. Begin construction.
- 2024: Move into new offices. Launch the barbershop, cafe, and rental spaces.

How We'll Achieve Goal 12

- **Partnership with TCP Ventures LLC:** Because of the nature of this undertaking, L&J Empowerment's for-profit partner, TCP Ventures, will be managing many core elements of the project, including working with the architects, managing construction, and launching the barbershop, rental spaces, and cafe. L&J Empowerment will advise on and supervise the work. While TCP Ventures will run the businesses, the income from them will be donated back to the nonprofit to support our work.
- **\$7M Capital Campaign:** L&J Empowerment will support this project by leading a \$7M capital campaign that will consist of both philanthropic funds and financing.