



Iya Rev. DeShannon Barnes-Bowens, M.S. (*Iyanifa Iwalewa Ifasalewa Fasina*), is the founder of ILERA Counseling & Education Services, and works as a psychotherapist, professional development trainer, and spiritual counselor. Through ILERA, she offers workshops, programs and written content focusing on: sexuality & spirituality, healing from sexual abuse, vicarious trauma & wellbeing. Iya DeShannon received a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Missouri - St. Louis, and a master's degree in counseling from Pace University. She has practiced Ifa-Orisa spirituality since 2001 and is an initiated priestess. Iya DeShannon was also ordained as an Interfaith Minister through One Spirit Interfaith Seminary in 2010. She served as a first-year dean, Assistant Director and Co-Director of the seminary program and remains a part of the teaching faculty.

Iya DeShannon is the author of *Hush Hush: An African American Family Breaks their Silence on Sexuality and Sexual Abuse* (2007, 2015). The second edition of her book inspired a full length play of the same title, as well as an arts education program called *Hush Hush the Healing Project*. She was a member of CONNECT Faith's Ending Child Sexual Abuse Collaborative and coordinated their Safe Faith Community Project to help religious communities in New York City prevent sexual abuse.

Iya DeShannon was the first recipient of the Bill T. Jones Award from the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists (AASECT), an Emeritus Scholar for State of Formation and was published in the Journal of Interreligious Studies 23rd issue, *The Color of God*. She has taught classes or been a guest lecturer at Adelphi University, Union Theological Seminary, Blanton Peale Institute, and University of Connecticut. Some international and national presentations of her work have taken place in South Africa, United Kingdom, Portugal, the Parliament of World's Religions, American Academy of Religion, LGBT Center in New York City, Religious Coalition of Reproductive Choice, African Diasporic Religious Studies Association, Interfaith Center of New York, Children's Aid Society, New York Theological Seminary, and the Values Caucus of the United Nations. For more information about Iya DeShannon and her work visit www.ilera.com.