



ILERA[™]

Counseling and Education Services

"INCREASING AWARENESS, CHANGING LIVES"



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 and programs focusing on: sexuality and spirituality, sexual abuse, vicarious trauma and wellness. 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 the Orisa-Ifa spiritual tradition since 2001 and is an initiated priestess. Iya DeShannon was ordained as an Interfaith Minister through One Spirit Interfaith Seminary in 2010 where she now serves as Co-Director.

She 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 is 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 is 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* in 2018. Some classes and presentations of her work have taken place at the national and eastern regional conferences of the American Academy of Religion, Harvard University, The Children's Aid Society, Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power & Potential (GCAPP), Washington University, New York Theological Seminary, University of Connecticut, Union Theological Seminary, Interfaith Center of New York and the Values Caucus of the United Nations. For more information about Iya DeShannon and her work visit www.ilera.com.

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