

## **Jae Canas**

Jae Canas is currently a Senior Administrative Analyst with the Los Angeles County (LAC) Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the UCLA Public Partnership for Wellbeing (PPFW), and a member of the DMH Strike Team led by Gita Murthy Consulting. In that capacity, he brings an academic, direct service, and lived experience lens to initiatives designed to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized people in Los Angeles County.

As a former youth under the supervision of the LAC Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and prior resident at MacLaren Hall, Jae is inspired by his lived experience to transform systems of care and cocreate innovative strategies that improve the wellbeing of children and youth.

Jae began his research as an undergrad at the UCLA Center for American Politics and Public Policy (CAPPP) in Washington D.C., where he explored the negative correlation between emancipation from the U.S. foster care system, homelessness, and LGBTQ youth outcomes. As a Disability Studies Minor, Jae continued research in the Disability Studies Department and explored youth in the U.S. foster care system and Disability. After graduating from UCLA in 2016, Jae worked with unsheltered youth and foster youth in schools and colleges throughout LAC. In 2017, Jae was recruited by Gita Murthy Consulting to be the lead researcher on a countywide landscape analysis exploring public and private efforts to recruit foster parents for children ages 0-5. Jae simultaneously began working with another consulting firm on a recently released graphic novel, "Hero Within," about foster children, for foster children to be used as a resiliency tool for those entering the system.

Jae is a current subcommittee member at the newly established Los Angeles County Office of Equity LGBTQ+ Learning Network in partnership with DCFS. The pandemic crises in 2020, ultimately led to the very personal creation of The Virtual Nest. As the founder, Jae is in the early stages of turning long-time visions into realities by combining his lived experience expertise and passion for systems change into his own consulting firm in collaboration with thought leaders and partners.

Jae is a proud AmeriCorps VISTA alum, Long Beacher, and parent of a healthy 20 lb. Orange Tabby named Gordi. Jae holds a bachelor's degree in Anthropology and Minor in Disability Studies from UCLA.