

VISIONARY AWARDEE

David Lee White



On November 18, 2023, David Lee White will become NAMI Mercer's Visionary Awardee for using his position of leadership as an example for increasing awareness, promoting understanding, and improving the lives of people affected by mental illness.

David, award-winning playwright/performer/educator, interviewed actor Maurice Benard at **Night IN with NAMI** in 2020. A lifelong devotee of using the arts to build and celebrate community, David has collaborated with local theaters and educational institutions to stage comedies, musicals, and verbatim theater.

Throughout his career, David has been a vocal advocate for mental health. As one of the inaugural group of playwrights to receive commissions from the New Jersey Performing Arts Centers' Stage Exchange Program, he wrote *Fixed*, a play about navigating the mental healthcare system. His mental health awareness work continued with *Panther Hollow*, a solo show about his battle with clinical depression in his youth.

For 14 years, David was the associate artistic director at Passage Theatre in Trenton, NJ, which specialized in community-based works. While there, he produced the farces *Blood: A Comedy* and *Slippery as Sin* as well as oral histories *Trenton Lights* and *Profiles*, co-created with Artistic Director June Ballinger. He continues to work with Passage as an artist.

David performs comedic work at Vivid Stage as a member of the comedy troupe "The Flip Side." He also teaches advanced improvisation, theater history, and dramatic analysis at Drexel University in Philadelphia, where he co-created the web-series *Essential* with director Bill Fennelly.

David's work with Kate Brennan on *The Infinity Trilogy* was the recipient of a MAP Fund award. *ALIEN8*, the first musical in the trilogy, was performed at the Bucks County Playhouse this August and is now available through *YouthPLAYS*. David's *Rocket Sex Magic* was read at the Bristol Riverside Theater in April, and *The OK Trenton Project* at the Passage Theater in

February. Two more of his musicals — *Clean Slate* and *The Angry Grammarian* —are slated for production in 2023.