



apsac

33rd Colloquium Agenda

June 14 - 18, 2026 | New Orleans, LA

Event Agenda

APSAC 33rd Annual Colloquium

Sunday, June 14, 2026

Registration/Check-in

7:30 AM – 5:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

Continental Breakfast

8:00 AM – 8:30 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

Do No Harm: Interviewing Skills Needed When There's a Concern of Child Abuse - Module 2

8:30 AM – 4:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom B

Speakers

- **Laura Merchant**
Presenter | Independent Consultant
- **Viola Vaughan-Eden**
APSAC President Emerita | The UP Institute / UP for Champions
- **Stacie Leblanc**
Co-founder | Up Institute
- **Kelly Champion**
Clinical and Forensic Psychologist | Cadeus Behavioral Health LLC
- **Luanne McKenna**
Child Justice, Inc.
- **Patti Toth**
APSAC CFI Clinic Director | APSAC
- **Julie Kenniston, MSW, LISW, FAPSAC**
Deputy Administrator | FVTC/National Criminal Justice Training Center

Components for Enhancing Career Experience and Reducing Trauma: Practical Skills for Thriving in the Work

8:30 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom E

ADMINISTRATION, LEADERSHIP, AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT INTERDISCIPLINARY

CE-CERT offers practical, evidence-informed skills to address burnout and secondary traumatic stress, and supports daily well-being and sustainable resilience for professionals in child maltreatment.

Speakers

- **Jimmy Widdifield Jr**
Project Director | National Children's Advocacy Center
- **Karen Hangartner**
NCAC

Advancing Child Maltreatment Intervention Through Case-Based Training and Virtual Reality

1:00 PM – 4:15 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom E

ADMINISTRATION, LEADERSHIP, AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS INTERDISCIPLINARY

Presenters will demonstrate case-based child maltreatment interventions using a case study, video, augmented reality, and virtual reality simulations to enhance therapeutic skills, advance integrated problem-solving, and strengthen intervention practice with children.

Speakers

- **Machelle Madsen Thompson**
Florida State University Research & Teaching Faculty | Florida State University
- **Malaika Samples**
Assistant Director for Academic Innovation Program | Florida Institute for Child Welfare
- **Savannah Collier**
Assistant Director | FSU Stoops Center for Communities, Families, and Children
- **Tenille Taylor, BSW, CWCM**
MyALIGN Immersive Learning Facilitator | Florida Institute for Child Welfare
- **Rachael Thompson, LCSW**



Tyana Ruiz, PsyD

Monday, June 15, 2026

Registration/Check-in

7:30 AM – 5:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

Continental Breakfast

8:00 AM – 8:30 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

Productive Parent Coaching: Enhancing the NHZ Program through Program Expansion and Community Partnerships

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom E

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Productive Parent Coaching has been a powerful enhancement to the NHZ program. The PPC component of the NHZ program facilitated meaningful engagement with caregivers and strong community partnerships.

Speakers



Brett Biller

Mental Health Director | Audrey Hepburn Children's House, Hackensack University Medical Center



Maria Juliana David

No Hit Zone Coordinator | Audrey Hepburn Children's House, at Hackensack University Medical Center



Julia DeBellis

Medical Director | Hackensack Meridian Health

Hidden In Plain Sight: Grooming

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom D

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Perpetrators of child sexual abuse utilize grooming to gain access and opportunity to victimize. Victims and families at risk may have vulnerabilities that may increase the possibility of this abuse.

Speaker



Lindsey Dula, MSW

Founder | NFIN

'It Hurts My Head to Remember': Supporting Children's Recall Tasks During Multiple Incident Forensic Interviews

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom B

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

This presentation will examine children's memory recall language, review relevant research, and present strategies for providing cognitive/ emotional support when questioning children about multiple events.

Speaker



Kim Madden

NCAC

Applying Current Science to Child-Protection Investigations

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM | Location: Grand Chenier

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

A review of the science related to child-sexual abuse, including children's disclosures and the importance of proper forensic interviews, with a view towards preventing incorrect abuse "rule outs."

Speaker



Luanne McKenna

Child Justice, Inc.

Virginity, the Myth and the Magic: Implications for Child Sexual Abuse and Psychological Well-Being

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom A

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HEALTHCARE

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

Virginity is a social construct, created and defined by society rather than a biological reality. This concurrent session will discuss virginity in terms of impact on victims of sexual abuse.

Speakers



Gail Hornor

forensic nurse | childrens hospital of Colorado



Ellen Chiocca

Associate Professor | University of Missouri School of Nursing

Break

10:00 AM – 10:15 AM

Developing Spiritual Care for Child Victims in Children's Advocacy Centers

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Chenier

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This seminar reports on knowledge gained and progress made in a federally-funded project to help CACs provide spiritual care for children experiencing spiritual trauma from abuse.

Speakers



Theodore Cross

Research Full Professor | Univ. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, School of Social Work



Victor Vieth

Director Center for Faith and Child Protection | Zero Abuse Project

Before You Take 'No' for an Answer: Field-Test Findings for the RADAR Child Forensic Interview

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom D

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING ADVANCED

False denials of abuse are common among child maltreatment victims. The RADAR Forensic Interview was developed to address this issue. Field-test findings for the RADAR protocol are presented.

Speakers



Mark Everson

Professor Emeritus | UNC CH Department of Psychiatry



Kate Homan

Senior Consultant | Modell Consulting Group, LLC



Stacie Leblanc

Co-founder | Up Institute

Trauma-informed Strategies for Meeting the Needs of Childhood Sexual Abuse Survivors with Complex Presentations

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom B

HEALTHCARE

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Childhood sexual abuse has significant sequelae, including severe psychopathology and health outcomes. This seminar will provide training in evidence-based, trauma-informed strategies for adolescent CSA survivors with complex presentations.

Speaker



Maggie Gigler

Licensed Clinical Psychologist | UCLA Health

Drug Endangered Children: Often the Forgotten Ones

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom E

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE

INTERDISCIPLINARY

The session explores who drug endangered children are, risks & impacts of caregiver substance misuse, and the importance of early identification, intervention, and multidisciplinary collaboration to change lives and break cycles.

Speakers



Nikki Romer

Director of Training and Alliance Development | National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children



Carrie Jensen

Director of Operations | National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children

Infusing History, Culture, and Research into Child Maltreatment Training: A Framework for Connecting, Solving, and Bridging

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Couteau

ADMINISTRATION, LEADERSHIP, AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This session demonstrates how educators and practitioners can integrate history and research into child maltreatment training, fostering cultural humility, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary solutions through interactive, research-informed teaching strategies.

Speakers



Aileen Torres

Associate Professor | William Paterson University



Karyn Smarz

Clinical Director | Metro RDTC at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center



Nicole Guevara

Doctoral extern and RDTC clinician | Metropolitan Regional Treatment Diagnostic Center

Intrafamilial Child Torture: Into the Depths

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom A

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HEALTHCARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Through an illustrative case and didactic components, this multidisciplinary training aims to discuss intrafamilial child torture from a medical, criminal investigation, and statutory standpoint.

Speakers



Katherine Snyder, MD, MPH, FAAP

Division Chief-Child Abuse Pediatrics | Dell Medical School at The University of Texas at Austin/Dell Children's Medical Center



Valentin De Los Santos

Master Chief | US Navy

Break

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM

Combating Child Abuse in the US Navy and Marine Corps Community: the 'Real' NCIS!

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Grand Couteau

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

Investigators conducting any Child Abuse investigation that involves US Navy or Marine Corps members or their dependents will learn the myriad benefits of liaison with the Special Agents of the US Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS).

Speaker



Paul Graf

Chair, Membership Committee, Partnership, Retired Committees | APSAC BOARD

Discrimination and Disbelief of Children in Investigations: A Dangerous Mistake

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom D

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Child abuse victims are often not heard or believed after making their disclosures. There are dangerous consequences when this happens, therefore we need to acknowledge these dangers and create change.

Speakers



Jen Hillgoth, M.J.

Police Detective | Aurora Illinois Police Department



Stacie Leblanc

Co-founder | Up Institute

When Forensic Interviewers Are Asked to Conduct Screening Interviews

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom A

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

At risk, screening, or precautionary, whatever you call it, they are difficult to do because there are no models. This presentation will offer some strategies for conducting screening interviews.

Speaker



Julie Kenniston, MSW, LISW, FAPSAC

Deputy Administrator | FVTC/National Criminal Justice Training Center

Child Torture as a Form of Child Abuse: A guide for recognition and response for front line professionals

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom B

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

This lesson focuses on the investigation of child torture. Using case examples, common characteristics will be discussed emphasizing the benefits of a multi-disciplinary, specialized approach.

Speakers



James Hardie

Supervisory Special Agent | Federal Bureau of Investigation



Wendy Bowersox

Supervisory Special Agent | FBI

Strengthening Organizational Policies and Procedures to Protect Children: Preventing Abuse, Recognizing Grooming and Responding Appropriately

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom E

ADMINISTRATION, LEADERSHIP, AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This seminar equips professionals with skills to strengthen child-serving organizations' policies, disrupt grooming, and implement effective reporting procedures, advancing resilient systems that prevent abuse and safeguard children.

Speaker



Patricia Dailey Lewis, Esq

Chief Executive Officer | Beau Biden Foundation for the Protection of Children

Connecting APSAC Expertise to the Courts through Amicus Work: APSAC Amicus Committee, 2025-26 (CLE Professionalism Hours Eligible)

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Grand Chenier

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

The APSAC Amicus Committee will present its year of work for discussion, challenge, and expansion, while also inviting new members to join. We focus on bridging expertise to the courts.

Speakers



Mary Kelly Persyn

Founder and Principal Attorney | Persyn Law & Policy



Vincent Palusci, MD, MS, FAAP, FAPSAC

Professor of Pediatrics | New York University Grossman School of Medicine



David Corwin

University of Utah Pediatrics



Paul Griffin

Legal Director | Child Justice Inc.



Melissa Kelly

Assistant State Attorney in Charge | Broward State Attorney's Office



Jean Mercer

Professor Emerita of Psychology | Stockton University.



Dominic Prophete

Director, Business Development and Legal Research | LoPresti, PLLC

Break

2:30 PM – 3:00 PM

Welcome and Opening Plenary - New Landmark Report, Supported by World Childhood Foundation USA, Finds All 50 States Fail to Protect Children from Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation.

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

A groundbreaking national assessment reveals a devastating truth—every state is falling short in the fight against child sexual abuse and exploitation. The 2025 United States Out of the Shadows Index, developed by Economist Impact, delivers states a failing average score of 49.9 out of 100, exposing fractured systems, outdated laws, and inadequate survivor support. More than a report card, it is a critical tool for understanding—and transforming—America's response to this crisis. The mandate is urgent and unmistakable: America must do better.

Speakers



Mary Pulido

Executive Director | World Childhood USA Foundation



Jim Cole

Senior Advisor, Cyber Strategy & Child Protection | Our Rescue



Lauren Book

CEO | Lauren's Kids

Plenary - Spare the Dog and Love the Child: Removing hitting as a form of discipline with No Hit Zones

4:30 PM – 5:00 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

Speaker



Liz Gershoff

Professor | University of Texas at Austin

Welcome Reception, Poster Presentations and Awards (Poster Sessions are not eligible for CE Credit)

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM | Location: Rhythms Ballroom (2nd floor)

Poster - When Words Hurt: A Multivariate Analysis of Parental Psychological Aggression and Adolescent Behavioral Responses

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

This study examined parental psychological aggression in early childhood and adolescent emotional dysregulation. Findings show chronicity, not prevalence, predicts dysregulation, highlighting the importance of addressing repeated exposure in prevention efforts.

Speaker



Alexandra Chinn

PhD Student | Louisiana State University

Poster - Acceptability and Feasibility of a Virtual Reality Training Scenario for Child Welfare Preservice Training

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This presentation examines child welfare professionals' and allied service professionals' perspectives of a new virtual reality technology being implemented in preservice training for frontline child welfare professionals in Florida.

Speaker



Morgan Cooley

Associate Professor | Florida Atlantic University

Poster - Initiative to End Corporal Punishment: Tulane University Pilot Program

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The study evaluated a peer-led educational intervention on corporal punishment among college students, finding significant attitude shifts supporting prevention and policy change, demonstrating promise for scalable primary prevention strategies.

Speaker



Anna Fujisaki

Interventionist | New York Foundling

Poster - Strengthening Community Roles in Early Childhood Maltreatment Prevention: Protective and Punitive Informal Social Control

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This research examines community dynamics in early childhood maltreatment prevention, highlighting informal social control and protective capacity as drivers of child safety and well-being.

Speaker



Alexa Hartenstein

Ph.D. student | North Carolina A&T State University

Poster - Lasting Effects of Childhood Trauma on Body Mass Index

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

HEALTHCARE

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

We investigate how childhood trauma—physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and physical and emotional neglect—affect body weight in middle-aged adults, and whether these effects differ by gender.

Speaker



Jesse Helton

Associate Professor | St. Louis University

Poster - Examining Immigration and Adverse Experiences as Predictors of Psychological Symptoms in Youth from Immigrant Families

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Many of the families emigrating from Latin America since 2021 have been subjected to circumstances that predispose them to high levels of psychological distress and mental health problems (Haner & Lopez, 2023; Guarnaccia & Lopez, 1998). Data from these families is often limited due to language barriers. The poster

presentation will explore the experiences of youth who emigrated from Latin American countries in hopes of understanding how their experiences relate to psychological symptoms in their children. There are various characteristics of immigration that could have a connection to trauma and psychosocial functioning. Immigration status (naturalized citizen, refugee, asylum seeker, legal noncitizen resident, etc.) and reasons for immigrating) is likely to contribute to trauma symptoms in these children. Furthermore, it is hypothesized that adverse events experienced at any point before, during, and after the immigration journey will result in increased emotional and behavioral problems. Understanding the effects of the migration process can not only help tailor culturally sound interventions for these populations suffering psychological distress but also highlight the importance of meeting the needs of this vulnerable group of individuals

Speakers



Karla Lezameta

Doctoral Candidate | Kean University & Metro RDTC at Newark Beth Israel Medical C



Amanda Nunes, MA

Doctoral Graduate Student | Kean University, Metro RDTC at Newark Beth Israel MC



Adrienne Garro, Ph.D.

Professor, Supervising Psychologist | Kean University



Karyn Smarz

Clinical Director | Metro RDTC at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center

Poster - Grooming Behaviors in Peer-to-Peer and Sibling Sexual Abuse

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examines recognition of grooming behaviors in peer-to-peer and sibling sexual abuse, assessing perceptions and intervention imperatives to identify gaps that inform prevention strategies and policy development.

Speaker



Ajax Nguyen

Research Assistant | Sam Houston State University

Poster - Understanding Workforce Burnout and Turnover: Examining the Roles and Potential Impacts of Child Welfare Supervisors

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

ADMINISTRATION, LEADERSHIP, AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This multi-level mixed-method case study found that supervisor support improves job satisfaction, while inconsistent or punitive methods increase stress, highlighting the critical role of supervisors in workforce retention.

Speakers



Rebecca Phillips

Sociology Department Chair (Interim) | Western Oregon University



Oliver Beer

Associate Professor - School of Health Professions | University of Plymouth

Poster - Examining the Impact of Mandatory Reporting Reform Initiatives (2020-2025)

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Numerous states have undertaken mandatory reporting reform efforts in recent years. What concrete legislative and practice changes have emerged from these conversations?

This session summarizes the steps that states have taken to turn reports and task force meetings into new laws, training, and decision tools. It also presents what is known so far about the quantitative or qualitative impact of these changes.

The audience is encouraged to consider whether observed outcomes align with their expectations, whether mandated reporting reforms have impacted their practice, and what directions they hope these efforts will take moving forward.

Speaker



Alessandra Suuberg

Owner | Decency LLC

Poster - Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation for Reducing Expulsion: A Systematic Review

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This systematic review synthesizes evidence on Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) and highlights mechanisms, effectiveness, and equity implications for reducing expulsion in child care and preschool settings.

Speaker



Juan Wang

Phd Candidate | University of South Carolina

Poster - Exploring Expert Perspectives on Development, Trauma, and Pathways Toward Resilience in Trauma Exposed Youth

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Thematic analysis of interviews with multidisciplinary child trauma experts produced several themes on childhood trauma, development, and resilience. The themes inform nursing and other disciplines while underscoring the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration in improving outcomes.

Speaker



Peg Kennedy

Assistant Professor | Oakland University

Poster - SPAWNED BY EXAMPLE: How Pandemic Behavior Shaped Youth Online

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Modern youth screen habits have left a generation vulnerable to severe academic declines and dangerous, decentralized online exploitation networks like Spawnism. This presentation delivers a firsthand digital investigation into the ease of access to harmful online content, advocating for a collective solution through platform accountability, legislative action, and modernized digital literacy tools.

Speakers



Angelina Leon

Student | Fairfax County Public Schools



Olena Velez

Strategic Threats Watch Officer | US Army

Poster - The Impact of Sibling Sexual Abuse on Intrafamilial Relationships: A fractured group of related people

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

Sibling sexual abuse impacts the children involved as well as the whole family unit. The current study captures the impact on family relationships following the occurrence of sibling sexual abuse.

Speaker



Tova Lewin

Senior Research Assistant | The Trauma Group, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Poster - Data Collection Ethics for Expanding Inclusion and Perspectives of Childhood Maltreatment

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Little is known about how familial relationships evolve for young adults who experienced childhood violence and maltreatment. This session discusses data collection techniques about sensitive topics to explore these changes.

Speaker



Britni Adams

Asst. Professor | University of Nevada, Reno

Poster - Measuring Performance of Child Abuse Prevention Programs in Alabama: Documenting Program Benefits to Inform Evaluation

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study highlights performance measurement methods for assessing participants perceived program benefits from parenting programs using benefit checklist surveys. This method connects research-informed objectives and lived experiences from participants.

Speakers



Ami Landers, Ph.D., CFLE

Project Manager-ADCANP/CTF Evaluation Project | Auburn University



Sallye Longshore

Director | Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention (Children's Trust Fund)



Addison Braddock

Research Associate | Auburn University

Poster - From Research to Real Life: Building a Parent-Informed Training to Prevent Maltreatment

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

StaySafe is a parent-centered online training designed to prevent child maltreatment. Developed iteratively with parent input, it prioritizes practical strategies to support caregivers to reduce risk of maltreatment.

Speaker



Whitney Barnett

Assistant Professor | Meharry Medical College

Poster - Childhood sexual violence rises sharply in adolescence: Evidence from Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, and Namibia

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Childhood sexual violence (CSV) is a pervasive public health issue with extensive health and social consequences. While CSV prevalence is high in sub-Saharan Africa, regional epidemiologic data remain limited. We analyzed nationally representative Violence Against Children and Youth Survey data from youth aged 18-24 across Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, and Namibia (2018-2019). Using pooled data (n=22,904), we calculated weighted prevalence estimates for CSV characteristics by age band at first incident: 6-12, 13-14, and 15-17 years. In total, 16.0% of females and 8.0% of males experienced CSV, with the highest proportion occurring between ages 15-17 (12.4% females, 6.2% males). Perpetrators were typically peers—schoolmates, friends, or romantic partners—except for females who experienced CSV at ages 6-12, where community members were most common (51.0%). CSV occurred most often in the afternoon among youth 13-14 years versus evenings for those 15-17 years. Across all age bands and both sexes, homes were the most common location. Epidemiologic characteristics of CSV vary by victim age and sex, requiring targeted, age-specific prevention strategies in sub-Saharan Africa.

Speaker



Tenzin Lhaksampa

Doctoral Candidate | Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Poster - Connecting, Solving, and Bridging: Evaluating the Impact of a Three-Year Holistic Support Program for Former Foster Youth

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This poster presents a qualitative evaluation of The Village Project, a three-year support program designed to enhance the academic success, social integration, and emotional well-being of former foster youth at a four-year university. Using a case study approach, the study draws on in-depth interviews, focus groups, and document analysis to capture the lived experiences of participants and key stakeholders.

Findings highlight how intentional, relationship-centered programming connects students to critical resources, strengthens their sense of belonging, and supports emotional resilience. The evaluation also identifies key program strengths and areas for growth, offering practical insights for improving support systems for this population.

Aligned with the theme "Connecting. Solving. Bridging.," this presentation demonstrates how holistic, campus-based interventions can address systemic barriers and create more equitable pathways to persistence and success in higher education.

Speaker



Sharva Hampton-Campbell

Founder/CEO | For The Greater Good Multi-media Publishing Company LLC

Poster - Forensic Interviewer's Questions to Children about Grooming in Child Sexual Abuse Investigations

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

Across an analysis of forensic interviews, interviewers neglect to ask about subtle forms of grooming when questioning CSA victims. We provide suggestions for questioning children about grooming during forensic interviews.

Speaker



Emily Denne, PhD

Forensic Interviewer, Lead | Pinal County Family Advocacy Center

Poster - Childhood Resilience in the Face of Trauma: Integrating Holocaust Survivor Experiences to Support Contemporary Ukrainian Migrant Children in Israeli Schools

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Russia's military invasion of Ukraine has led to changes in Israel, approximately 44,000 Ukrainians arriving to date (40-45% children). These children are exposed to the severe cumulative effects of military action in Ukraine, martial law in Israel, and bullying in schools. According to UNICEF and the Mashabim Center, symptoms of prolonged trauma—nightmares, anxiety, and aggression—are widespread among this group. The Knesset noted that the education system is failing to address the problem of bullying among migrant children. We address this gap by combining the historical experience of Holocaust survivors with contemporary data. We conducted a thematic analysis of studies on the resilience of Holocaust survivors and a statistical analysis of empirical data, revealing age-specific patterns of trauma. These models support key principles of resilience, which are formed through fundamental mechanisms: a safe environment, support for innovative development, and the preservation of cultural identity. The key finding of the study is that age-related characteristics of traumatization can be overcome and operationalized. The study resulted in the development of a protocol for working with migrant children in Israeli schools. However, limitations related to insufficient bullying statistics are noted and should be addressed in future research.

Speaker



Lusy Balakshina

Student | Haifa University

Tuesday, June 16, 2026

Registration/Check-in

7:30 AM – 5:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

Continental Breakfast

7:45 AM – 8:30 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

The SAGE Charles T. Hendrix Keynote Address (CLE Professionalism Hours Eligible) A Campaign to Increase Disclosures

8:30 AM – 9:45 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

Speaker



Jon Conte, PhD

Professor Emeritus | University of Washington, Seattle

Break

9:45 AM – 10:15 AM

Tambourine & Umbrella Decorating Party

9:45 AM – 5:30 PM

Get ready to bring the spirit of New Orleans to life with your very own second line umbrella or tambourine! Let your creativity take the lead as you decorate it throughout the week — think feathers, sequins, fringe, and flair. Whether you go bold and flashy or stylishly subtle, your creation will be uniquely you.

You'll have the perfect chance to show off during the Second Line on Wednesday, June 17th. And when the dancing's done, your decorated umbrella or tambourine makes a one-of-a-kind souvenir to take home from Colloquium, a colorful reminder of your time in the Crescent City.

The decorating station will be open for you to decorate on Tuesday & Wednesday, June 16-17 during Colloquium hours.

Buy your tambourines and umbrellas here: <https://givebutter.com/2026APSACUmbrellaParty>

Families of Color at the Center: Transforming Mandated Reporting into Support

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom A

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

This workshop examines the history and bias of mandated reporting, its impact on families of color, and re-imagines reporting as support centering equity, cultural responsiveness, and family well-being .

Speaker



Kristina Coleman

Vp of children and mental health programs | Safe horizon

Past and Present Threats to Protecting Children from Abuse and Exploitation

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom D

ADMINISTRATION, LEADERSHIP, AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

HEALTHCARE

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Child abuse and exploitation is probably as old as our species. Within the past 200 years there have been repeated attempts to recognize, confront, and stop child abuse and exploitation.

Speakers



David Corwin

University of Utah Pediatrics



Desmond Runyon, MD, DPH, FAAP

Emeritus Professor of Pediatrics | University of Colorado



Randell Alexander MD, PhD, FAAP

Prof-Pediatrics; Chief, Child Protection Division | University of Florida - Jacksonville



Madelyn Milchman, PhD

Psychologist | Private Practice



Viola Vaughan-Eden

APSAC President Emerita | The UP Institute / UP for Champions

The Neurochemistry of Trauma: Translating Science into PTSD Treatment for Youth

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom B

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

In this intermediate-level workshop, Stacey Faulkner, Clinical Director of Children's Advocacy Center – Hope House, provides insight related to the maladaptive effects of trauma on the central nervous system as well as the exploration of evidence-based therapeutic modalities to facilitate recovery of the at-risk child. Provided in an entertaining format, participants will acquire a basic understanding of the sympathetic nervous system's responses to trauma. The audience will also acquire an appreciation for the role of respondent conditioning within the acquisition of PTSD. Lastly, the session will explore data-driven interventions utilized to restore healthy functioning and regulation of the at-risk child's neurochemistry. As practitioners within the CAC field, it's paramount to maintain the understanding that hope and healing is possible, and this session promotes the assurance that recovery from child abuse is probable given when the proper methodology is utilized. All content within the workshop has been derived from the latest research findings within the field of developmental psychology.

Speaker



Stacy Faulkner
Hope House

Frontline Evidence-Based Trauma Treatment for Children: Tools, Strategies, and Best Practices

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Oak Alley (4th floor)

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

Explore frontline evidence-based trauma therapies for children after abuse. Learn key approaches, their strengths and limitations, and strategies to implement them effectively, bridging research and real-world clinical practice.

Speakers



Hannah Griffis
Therapist | The Care Center



Chloe Byrd
Clinician | The Care Center

Child Murder by Parents: Understanding Motives to Aid in Prevention

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom E

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE

The motives for filicide (child murder by parents) include Fatal Maltreatment, Unwanted Child, Partner Revenge, Altruistic Filicide, and Acutely Psychotic Filicide. Neonaticides are often due to infants being unwanted.

Speakers



Susan Hatters Friedman
The Phillip Resnick Professor of Forensic Psychiatry, Professor of Pediatrics, Professor of Law (Adj) | Case Western Reserve Un...



Joshua Friedman
Pediatrician | Akron Children's

'Non-Verbal' What It Means and Why a Forensic Interview is Still Possible

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Chenier

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING ADVANCED

This workshop is intended for professionals who want to learn how to communicate with children who do not speak or who are considered "non-verbal."

Speaker



Kate Homan
Senior Consultant | Modell Consulting Group, LLC

Mapping the Story: Engaging Youth and Processing Trauma through Virtual Psychogeography

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Nottoway (4th floor)

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

Justice System Involved Youth face disproportionate adversity. Using Google Maps Street View, clinicians can enhance engagement, facilitate trauma disclosure, and empower youth through a culturally responsive, community-centered therapeutic lens.

Speakers



Akeem Marsh
Vice President, Vincent J. Fontana Center for Child Protection | The New York Foundling Hospital



Sasha Stok
Senior Supervising Psychologist | New York University Grossman School of Medicine

Challenges in Court Testimony: Insights and Tips from a Forensic Psychologist

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Couteau

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

We will review characteristics of effective testimony, how to prepare, and the difference between expert and fact witnesses. We will evaluate common plays by attorneys and how to respond effectively.

Speaker



Melissa Wright
Associate Professor | University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences / Arkansas Children's Hospital Family Treatment Program

Clicking for Answers: What Websites Teach Parents About Talking to their Kids about Sex

10:15 AM – 10:45 AM | Location: Gallier AB (4th floor)

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

Speaker



Amy Baker
New York Foundling

Parenting Appraisals, Trauma History and Regulation Capacities in Mothers with High-Risk Histories of Physical Abuse

10:45 AM – 11:15 AM | Location: Gallier AB (4th floor)

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

There is limited research addressing maternal-initiated physical abuse. This study examined contributions of maternal appraisals, mothers' trauma histories, and emotional/behavioral regulation to child physical abuse in mothers.

Speaker



Adrienne Whitt-Woosley
Associate Professor | University of Kentucky

Are We Helping Or Hurting? Finding The Sweet Spot Of Service Utilization For Those Impacted By Child Maltreatment

11:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Gallier AB (4th floor)

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Do the number of services received by families and youth exposed to child maltreatment affect their overall well-being?

Speakers



Jennifer McDonald
Lab Coordinator | Tulane University



Yo Jackson
Professor | Tulane University

Break and Roundtable Sessions (Roundtable Sessions are not eligible for CE Credit)

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM

Roundtable - Arte y ciencia en la entrevista forense: Lecciones desde la mentoría para principiantes

12:00 PM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

Este "roundtable" explora cómo equilibrar los protocolos de entrevista y la creatividad sin comprometer los estándares profesionales. Se destaca el valor de la mentoría en el modelaje de prácticas éticas, basadas en evidencia, pero adaptables, garantizando que futuras/os entrevistadoras/es desarrollen las destrezas necesarias para realizar esta compleja tarea. Será ofrecido en Español.

This roundtable explores how to balance interview protocols and creativity without compromising professional standards. It underscores the value of mentoring in modeling ethical, evidence-based, yet adaptable techniques, ensuring that future interviewers develop the skills necessary for this complex task. It will be conducted in Spanish.

Speakers



Amanda Colón-Dávila
Social Worker/Forensic Interviewer | Centro PITI Programa Biosicosocial



Zaiska Pacheco-Cruz
University of Puerto Rico

Roundtable - Protecting Young Minds: How to Teach Body Safety to Toddlers with Confidence

12:00 PM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

Every day, children carry secrets they should never have to hold. In my years as a middle school counselor, I sat with students who bravely shared stories of abuse that happened when they were toddlers—stories they had never told anyone. By the time they reached adolescence, the trauma often surfaced in risk-taking behaviors, anxiety, and deep emotional pain. Those experiences changed the course of my career and ignited a passion for prevention. In this powerful and practical session, I'll share what I've learned about reaching children *before* harm occurs—when prevention can make the greatest difference.

In this presentation, you'll discover how even two- and three-year-olds can understand body safety in ways that are empowering, not frightening. I'll walk you through simple, age-appropriate language, everyday teaching moments, and confidence-building strategies that help children understand that their bodies belong to them. You'll leave with clear tools to teach concepts like trusted adults, private body parts, and speaking up—without overwhelming or confusing young children.

Whether you're an educator, counselor, childcare provider, or parent advocate, this session will equip you with practical resources you can implement immediately. You'll gain insight, confidence, and a renewed sense of purpose in protecting young minds. If you believe prevention is possible—and that every child deserves to feel safe and heard—this presentation will give you the roadmap to make that belief a reality.

Julie Federico

www.juliefederico.cm

Speaker



Julie Federico

Author/Speaker/Advocate | Julie Federico Children's Service Autor

Roundtable - Below the Surface: How Medical and Mental Health Knowledge Provides Insight Into Legal Cases

12:00 PM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

ADMINISTRATION, LEADERSHIP, AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Physicians creating a collaborative educational curriculum for judges and legal professions on medical topics affecting legal cases may be beneficial for those serving children and families in the justice system.

Speaker



Karli Okeson

Pediatric Emergency Physician | Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

Roundtable - How Our Religious and Spiritual Values Support and Nourish Our Work and Our Self Care

12:00 PM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

INTERDISCIPLINARY

HEALTHCARE

FAITH

This is an opportunity to connect as colleagues as we share some of the ways our spiritual and religious values support and nourish our work and our self care and how these values help us as we bear witness to suffering and trauma and engage in problem solving in our work and in our lives.

Speakers



Pam Frydman

Chaplain, Author, Educator | Rabbi,



Victor Vieth

Director Center for Faith and Child Protection | Zero Abuse Project

Understanding Sadistic Online Exploitation (SOE): Behavioral Insights and Investigative Challenges

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom A

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

The FBI's BAU has seen a rise in Sadistic Online Exploitation (SOE). This presentation focuses on SOE offenders behaviors and characteristics and examines victimology and investigative considerations.

Speaker



Briana Grant, MA

Supervisory Special Agent | FBI

Understanding Family Dynamics in Child Welfare: The Evidence for a New Model of Family Trauma Assessment

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom E

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

This presentation details a best practice family trauma assessment model integrating the Adult Attachment Interview for adults in the family with a unique child trauma assessment protocol that has been implemented with 7,000 children.

Speakers



James Henry

Professor | Western Michigan University



Bryan Warner

Western Michigan University FASTER program



Evie Jefferies

Clinician | Western Michigan University

Interviewing Children with Autism (CLE Professionalism Hours Eligible)

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom B

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

This workshop will explore basic communication techniques that are reliable, legally defensible, effective, and accommodating for children with autism spectrum disorder who are alleged victims of abuse or neglect.

Speaker



Kate Homan

Senior Consultant | Modell Consulting Group, LLC

Providing Culturally Competent Care When Completing a Forensic Team Assessment and Recommending Therapeutic Intervention

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Grand Chenier

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

One's culture often determines parenting decisions, acceptable responses to risk and threats, behavioral norms and expectations, and methods of communication. Forensic professionals help identify parenting deficits and characterological difficulties.

Speaker



Cindy Melo

LPC | Center for Evaluation and Counseling, Inc.

When Adoption Isn't Enough: Recognizing and Preventing Harm in Adoptive Homes

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Nottoway (4th floor)

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

TRAFFICKING

Exploring child maltreatment in adoption, this session emphasizes systemic strategies, policy considerations, and advocacy approaches to protect adoptees, promote permanency, and ensure every child experiences safety and belonging.

Speaker



Dawn Post

Themis Youth Law & Advocacy

AHT Awareness and Prevention: Successful Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Oak Alley (4th floor)

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This presentation explores the prosecutor's role in preventing abusive head trauma, enhancing understanding of AHT, and highlighting effective prevention strategies to support families, strengthen communities, and protect vulnerable infants.

Speakers



Danielle Vazquez

Executive Director | National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome



Melissa Kelly

Assistant State Attorney in Charge | Broward State Attorney's Office

Balancing Safety and Connection: How APSAC's Guidelines on Visits in Child Welfare Enhance Resilience

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Grand Couteau

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This session presents APSAC Task Force visit guidelines, highlighting evidence-based, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive practices that balance risks and benefits while supporting children's safety, permanency, and connections.

Speakers



Karen Zilberstein

Clinical Director | A Home Within



Joe Nullet

Executive Director | Supervised Visitation Network

Bias and Cultural Intelligence in Child Maltreatment Investigations

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom D

INTERDISCIPLINARY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

Child protection professionals can support respond appropriately to and serve the unique needs of various populations by examining their own values and beliefs and understanding, valuing, and incorporating cultural differences.

Speaker



Amy Russell

Executive Director | Family Justice Center of Adams and Bloomfield Counties

Research Session (not eligible for ce credit) - Innovations in Child Maltreatment Science: Implications for Research and Practice

1:00 PM – 1:30 PM | Location: Gallier AB (4th floor)

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

The presentation will focus on current themes in research approaches on child maltreatment including; measurement innovations, conceptual improvements framing research questions, and next steps for applications of research to practice.

Speaker



Yo Jackson
Professor | Tulane University

Research Session (not eligible for ce credit) - The FAIR system for child maltreatment substantiation determinations: Consistency, validity, bias and prevention effects

1:30 PM – 2:00 PM | Location: Gallier AB (4th floor)

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this session, we will present the FAIR system, evidence supporting its impact on the consistency and validity of substantiation decisions, and its impact on preventing recurrence of child maltreatment.

Speakers



Amy Slep
Professor | New York University



Kimberly Rhoades
Research Scientist | New York University

Research Session (not eligible for ce credit) - A Scoping Review of Artificial Intelligence Research Within Child Welfare: Implications, Ethics, and Next Steps

2:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Gallier AB (4th floor)

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

The purpose of this research presentation is to discuss the results of a scoping review to understand how AI is being used within the context of child welfare.

Speaker



Morgan Cooley
Associate Professor | Florida Atlantic University

Break

2:30 PM – 2:45 PM

Building Bridges: Practical Approaches to Engaging Families in Trauma-Informed Care

2:45 PM – 4:15 PM | Location: Nottoway (4th floor)

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

This session explores practical, trauma-informed strategies to overcome barriers and strengthen engagement of youth and families in therapy services, emphasizing culturally responsive care, telehealth innovations, and family-centered approaches.

Speakers



Paula Condol
Director | Trauma Matters, PLLC



Nicola Herting
TCTY Director, Assistant Scientist | TCTY, Sanford Research



Eneida Vilella
Director of Mental Health Services | Dakota Children's Advocacy Center

The Clock, the Child, and the Case: Multidisciplinary Triage in CSA Medical Evaluations

2:45 PM – 4:15 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom E

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HEALTHCARE

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Explore how trauma-informed, evidence-based triage decisions are made regarding forensic medical exams in child sexual abuse cases and why understanding timing, disclosure, & cooperation is critical for MDT partners.

Speakers



Hollye Gallion
Clinic Director/Nurse Practitioner | Our Kids Center



Rebecca Bevans
Social Worker | Our Kids Center

Correcting Misconceptions: How Public and Professional Biases Shape Munchausen by Proxy Abuse Response (CLE Professionalism Hours Eligible)

2:45 PM – 4:15 PM | Location: Grand Couteau

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Munchausen by Proxy Abuse remains under-recognized due to biases around medicine, law, and child protection. This session highlights misinterpretations and provides evidence-based strategies to improve recognition and safety.

Speakers



Rebecca Gill

Pediatric Hospitalist | Nemours Children's Hospital



Vi Ngo

Medical Director | Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard



Melissa Kelly

Assistant State Attorney in Charge | Broward State Attorney's Office



Michael Weber

Munchausen Support

Anime & Youth: Understanding its Impact on Adolescent Perceptions of Sexual Behavior

2:45 PM – 4:15 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom D

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

This training explores the influence of anime on adolescent perceptions of sexual behaviors. It integrates cultural and media analysis to bridge the gap between popular media and youth mental health.

Speaker



Jermaine Wall

Clinical Therapist | Crescent Counseling Services

Mental Health Ethics Are Boring: Change My Mind!

2:45 PM – 4:15 PM | Location: Grand Chenier

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

Think ethics are boring? Think again! Join this lively session to explore principles, tackle dilemmas, and apply strategies together turning gray areas of child maltreatment ethics into colorful, engaging conversations.

Speaker



Jimmy Widdifield Jr

Project Director | National Children's Advocacy Center

Child Interviewing 2026: Update on Research and Practice

2:45 PM – 4:15 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom A

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

I will review the latest research on child interviewing and provide case studies of how the research can best be put to use in practice.

Speaker



Thomas Lyon

Professor | USC Gould School of Law

Child Sexual Abuse and its Cover-Up in Christian Communities

2:45 PM – 4:15 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom B

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

FAITH

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This presentation will address the cultural factors that contribute to child sexual abuse and its cover-up thriving in Christian communities and how to engage these communities in the fight.

Speaker



Matthew Belser

District Judge | 21st Judicial District Court

Research Session (not eligible for ce credit) - Nonconsensual sexual behavior among youth: Age dynamics and implications for prevention

2:45 PM – 3:15 PM | Location: Gallier AB (4th floor)

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

A recent study found that over 70% of self-reported experiences of sexual victimization during childhood are caused by other youth. This groundbreaking study confirmed the need to focus on youth to prevent the onset of harmful sexual behavior but left unanswered questions about the age dynamics of youth involved in these incidents. The goal of this study was to examine the age differentials between youth who initiated and youth who experienced nonconsensual sexual behavior. Data were drawn from the National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence (NatSCEV) comprising a nationally representative sample of 13,052 U.S. children and adolescents aged 0–17. Analyses focused on 513 unique, self-reported incidents of nonconsensual sexual behavior, and incidents were categorized by developmental stage and age differential of the person who initiated the behavior and the person who experienced the behavior. In 60.2% of all cases, the individual who initiated the nonconsensual sexual behavior was younger than 18 years old. Of these instances, most (66.6%) occurred between two adolescents (13–17 years) and least (15.1%) between an adolescent and a child. In 71% of instances, the youth who initiated nonconsensual sexual behavior was two or fewer years older than the youth who experienced the behavior. **Conclusion:** Most youth-caused nonconsensual sexual behavior occurs between peers of similar age, supporting the idea that prevention efforts should address peer dynamics and healthy relationships. Adults were often aware of the instances when children experienced or initiated the nonconsensual sexual behavior but unaware when adolescents experienced or initiated such behavior.

Speaker



Maggie Ingram

Assistant Scientist | Center for Violence Prevention Research

Research Session (not eligible for ce credit) - Unheard Voices: How Transition-Age Youth Make Meaning of Foster Care

3:15 PM – 3:45 PM | Location: Gallier AB (4th floor)

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This presentation aims to explore how transition-age youth make sense of their experiences in foster care placements.

Speaker



Morgan Cooley

Associate Professor | Florida Atlantic University

Research Session (not eligible for ce credit) - Does Parent Psychological Distress Mediate the Link Between Food Insecurity and Verbal Aggression

3:45 PM – 4:15 PM | Location: Gallier AB (4th floor)

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study investigates how household food insecurity affects parents' stress levels and their use of verbal aggression toward children, and whether these relationships differ based on family income levels.

Speaker



Jesse Helton

Associate Professor | St. Louis University

Break

4:15 PM – 4:30 PM

Caught in the Crossfire: Collateral Damage in Munchausen by Proxy Abuse

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM | Location: Grand Couteau

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

This session explores collateral damage and protective strategies in Munchausen by Proxy Abuse, featuring professionals and non-offending family members sharing experiences, insights, and practical tools for support and intervention.

Speakers



Rebecca Gill

Pediatric Hospitalist | Nemours Children's Hospital



Brian Fleming

President | Munchausen Support



Mishelle Roberts

Munchausen Support

Addressing Therapy Wait Times In Rural CACs: Implementing the Child and Family Traumatic Stress Intervention

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM | Location: Gallier AB (4th floor)

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This workshop demonstrates how rural CACs can implement CFTSI to reduce wait times, engage caregivers, and improve trauma outcomes using graduate interns, supervision, and culturally responsive, evidence-based early intervention.

This workshop will highlight how CACs, especially rural ones, can expand access to timely, evidence-based mental health services by implementing CFTSI and other considerations to improve service delivery. This session will explore the unique structure of CFTSI and examine real data to demonstrate the impact on caregiver engagement and early trauma outcomes. Participants will learn how leveraging graduate interns and contracted supervisors can help reduce wait times for accessing services while maintaining fidelity to a culturally responsive and trauma-focused model. This session will explore strategies to increase caregiver engagement and improve early intervention outcomes for children and families.

Rural communities often face significant barriers to timely mental health care, particularly for children and families navigating trauma. This session reminds participants how CACs can address these gaps by implementing the Child and Family Traumatic Stress Intervention (CFTSI) as an early, evidence-based model. Attendees will learn how one rural CAC utilized graduate-level interns, contacted therapists and clinicians, limited resources, and increasing barriers to reduce wait times and increase caregiver engagement while maintaining fidelity to the model. Participants will learn practical strategies, implementation considerations, and lessons learned that will be shared to support replication in similar settings.

Speakers



Allen Babcock

Executive Director | West Georgia Child Advocacy Center



Savanna Knowles

Mental Health Coordinator | West Georgia Child Advocacy Center

Reluctance and Recantation: How Trauma Impacts the Child's Statement

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom A

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

This training will discuss the impact that trauma on the child's ability to provide information during the forensic interview. Discussion on

overcoming reluctance and approaches for recantations.

Speaker



Cyndi Cantu

Chief Team Relations and Forensics Officer | Center for Child Protection

An Update on the Multidisciplinary Response to Child Sexual Abuse: From Outcry to Prosecution

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM | Location: Nottoway (4th floor)

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

This workshop presents an updated review of research and field experience on MDT practice for bolstering children's credibility, enhancing offender accountability and increasing guilty pleas

Speakers



Theodore Cross

Research Full Professor | Univ. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, School of Social Work



Michael Johnson

Detective (retired) | Plano, TX Police Department (retired)

Preventing and responding to child sexual abuse in youth-serving organizations

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom E

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

This training seminar will provide concrete strategies for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse and problematic or harmful sexual behavior among youth in youth-serving organizations. Topics include 1) protecting and supporting all youth; 2) strengthening your organizational foundation; 3) understanding and addressing youth sexual behavior; 4) building a staff that supports youth safety; 5) establishing expectations for behavior and monitoring interactions; 6) creating and maintaining safe physical and digital spaces; 7) educating and empowering staff, parents, and youth; and 8) responding effectively to abuse and policy and boundary violations.

Speakers



Maggie Ingram

Assistant Scientist | Center for Violence Prevention Research



Bart Klika

Chief Research Officer | Prevent Child Abuse America



Amber McKeen

Senior Risk Consultant | Praesidium

Understanding Extremes of Care: Medical Neglect and Medical Child Abuse

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom B

HEALTHCARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Too much or too little medical care neglect reflects the failure of parents or caretakers to provide recommended care and that results in harm or potential harm to the child.?

Speaker



Vincent Palusci, MD, MS, FAAP, FAPSAC

Professor of Pediatrics | New York University Grossman School of Medicine

Beyond the Victim: Assessing the Role of Sibling Relationships Using the Forensic Team Approach in Child Sexual Abuse Cases

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom D

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING ADVANCED

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This presentation examines sibling relationships in families impacted by child sexual abuse, secondary trauma, overlooked siblings, and the need for forensic team assessments to foster resiliency and make therapeutic recommendations.

Speakers



Allison Spranger

PsyD | Center for Evaluation and Counseling, Inc.



Michelle Goldberg

Clinician/Evaluator | Center for Evaluation and Counseling Inc.

Ethics of Working on a Multidisciplinary Team

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM | Location: Grand Chenier

INTERDISCIPLINARY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

Speaker



Amy Russell

Executive Director | Family Justice Center of Adams and Bloomfield Counties

'Helping US take Care of US'

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM | Location: Oak Alley (4th floor)

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This presentation entitled "Helping US take Care of US", is a continuation of the FOCUS group session established by this investigator in 2020. This Health and Wellness group initially made of Montgomery County Police Officers and civilian employees to address social/racial injustices as they relate to police officers, also worked to better educate, equip, understand, and implement social change among ourselves, our families, and the communities we serve. Since its inception in 2020 the group sessions have morphed to include the following critical topics that affect the Law Enforcement/Child Welfare community to include:

- Stress to Strength - (Identifying the issues that the LE/CW and CAC community face and how to address them)

- Peace Officer - (designed to look beyond the work of Police Officers and focus on the individual wearing the badge). This segment also focuses on the vicarious trauma faced by this group to include alcoholism, PTSD, and suicide among others

- COVID KIDS - (takes an in-depth at the changes, challenges, and obstacles those we serve had to face during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This also focuses on how we as Child Care professionals have had to adapt to this new environment. This course concludes by highlighting this unique collaborative model designed to develop, and address our "solvable issues", with the goal equipping us to take care of us.

Conversation topics will include:

- Who are we, and what are we doing
- Who takes care of Us
- WHO/WHAT? Are the dangers our kids are facing and how we can address.

Speaker



John Witherspoon

Human Trafficking Task Force | Montgomery County MD

APSAC Krew of Bites & Brews

5:45 PM – 9:30 PM | Location: Catch the (air-conditioned!) party bus from the Sheraton lobby

Early Bird Tickets (until June 13th) - \$45 each | June 14-16 - \$50 each

Buy Tickets Here: <https://givebutter.com/2026APSACKrewofBitesandBrews>

Wednesday, June 17, 2026

Registration/Check-in

7:30 AM – 5:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

Continental Breakfast

7:45 AM – 8:30 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

Plenary - Changemaking: How the Science of Hope Can Transform our Work

8:30 AM – 9:45 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

Changemaking: How the Science of Hope Can Transform our Work

Hope is often regarded as an emotion, but in fact Hope is a skill that can be learned. A growing body of science suggests that leaders and organizations that embed the Science of Hope into their organizational framework can influence culture and outcomes. This address will guide the audience in understanding the framework and science of Hope and provide practical examples of how to incorporate Hope in organizations.

A Campaign to Increase Disclosures

The presentation will review research on disclosure of sexual abuse by children and youth and outline the characteristics of successful campaigns. Finally, the presentation will outline the elements of a possible local and national campaign to increase the disclosure of sexual abuse by children and youth. The presentation will argue that supporting disclosure while trying various prevention ideas is an ethical issue which should frame all practice.

Speaker



Deborah Shropshire

Director - Child Welfare | Human Services Group

Break

9:45 AM – 10:15 AM

Tambourine & Umbrella Decorating Party

9:45 AM – 5:15 PM

Get ready to bring the spirit of New Orleans to life with your very own second line umbrella or tambourine! Let your creativity take the lead as you decorate it throughout the week — think feathers, sequins, fringe, and flair. Whether you go bold and flashy or stylishly subtle, your creation will be uniquely you.

You'll have the perfect chance to show off during the Second Line on Wednesday, June 17th. And when the dancing's done, your decorated umbrella or tambourine makes a one-of-a-kind souvenir to take home from Colloquium, a colorful reminder of your time in the Crescent City.

The decorating station will be open for you to decorate on Tuesday & Wednesday, June 16-17 during Colloquium hours.

Buy your tambourines and umbrellas here: <https://givebutter.com/2026APSACUmbrellaParty>

Hidden in Plain Sight: Lessons Learned from Wisconsin's Research on Pediatric Strangulation and Child Advocacy Centers

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom E

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING ADVANCED

HEALTHCARE

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This workshop will discuss the prevalence and severity of strangulation in the pediatric population as indicated by a recent study conducted among Wisconsin's 16 Child Advocacy Centers.

Speakers



Lynn Cook

Program and Policy Analyst | Wisconsin Department of Justice



Susan Kanack

Forensic Nursing Coordinator | Wisconsin Department of Justice



Sophia Hannauer

Senior Research Analyst | Wisconsin Department of Justice

Breaking the Intergenerational Cycle of Childhood Sexual Abuse

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom A

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Given high rates of reported childhood sexual abuse, awareness, effective treatment, and advocacy are imperative especially with victims of intrafamilial offenses who experience greater negative consequences.

Speakers



Amy Dickson

Clinical Psychologist/Assoc. Prof. | LSUHSC



Amy Clomburg

Assistant Professor of Psychiatry-Clinical | LSUHSC



Nathan Stewart

Doctoral Intern | LSU Health Sciences Center

When the Abuser is also the Coach: Understanding Abuse in the Coach-Athlete Relationship

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Chenier

INTERDISCIPLINARY

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

This session will provide participants with methods and recommendations for a trauma informed response to abuse in sports, with an emphasis on the work of U.S. Center for SafeSport.

Speaker



Catherine Johnson

Director of Investigations | US Center for SafeSport

Understanding Abusive Head Trauma ("Shaken Baby") for the Non-medical Professional

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Couteau

INTERDISCIPLINARY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

HEALTHCARE

In this session, a Child Abuse Pediatrician using case images/examples will help demystify the medical findings of Abusive Head Trauma and explain associated findings in plain English.

Speaker



Neha Mehta

Medical Director | CARE Center at Manning Family Children's (New Orleans)

It's the Same Kids: Breaking Down the Silos between Child Welfare, Domestic Violence, and Child Custody (CLE Professionalism Hours Eligible)

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom B

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

This panel will discuss how the siloing of child welfare, child custody and domestic violence legal systems hurts children, and propose concrete strategies for change.

Speakers



Joan Meier

NFVLC Professor of Clinical Law; Director, NFVLC | George Washington University



Suzanne Chester, Esq

Attorney and Founder, Child's Voice Law | Child's Voice Law



Viola Vaughan-Eden

APSAC President Emerita | The UP Institute / UP for Champions

Drawn to the Facts: Utilizing Drawings in Forensic Interviews

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom D

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING ADVANCED

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

Participants will learn to incorporate drawings into forensic interviews, using evidence-based practices and real examples, to improve accuracy, reduce anxiety, and support children's verbal disclosures.

Speaker



Megan Prouty

Senior Forensic Interviewer and Training & Outreach Specialist | First Witness Child Advocacy Center

Recognizing and Preventing Abuse and Neglect of Homeschooled Children

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Nottoway (4th floor)

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

INTERDISCIPLINARY

In this presentation, we present findings from a novel research project that identify risk factors, patterns in abuse, and interventions unique to abusive homeschooling environments.

Speaker



Jonah Stewart, Ph.D.

Coalition for Responsible Home Education

Research Session (not eligible for ce credit) - Evaluating Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Policies

10:15 AM – 10:45 AM | Location: Oak Alley (4th floor)

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Many states enact child sexual abuse prevention policies without evidence of their effectiveness. The current study presents findings from an evaluation of child sexual abuse prevention policies in the U.S.

Speakers



Bart Klika

Chief Research Officer | Prevent Child Abuse America



Eric Thibodeau, PhD

Research Scientist | Prevent Child Abuse America



Melissa Merrick, PhD

CEO | Prevent Child Abuse America

Research Session (not eligible for ce credit) - Our Voice Male Survivors: Experiences of Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

10:45 AM – 11:15 AM | Location: Oak Alley (4th floor)

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Present findings from 1,400 male survivors of child sexual abuse in the Global Our Voice Survey, highlighting disclosure barriers, unique impacts, and actionable recommendations for support and prevention.

Speakers



Steve Scheid

Director of Scouting Ministries | United Methodist Men Scouting Ministry



Katariina Leivo

Senior Specialist | Protect Children Finland



Nina Vaaranen-Valkonen

Co-founder, Executive Director, Psychotherapist | Protect Children

Research Session (not eligible for ce credit) - The Long-Term Impacts of Online CSA on Victims and Survivors: A Comparative Analysis of Online and Offline Abuse (GOVSS)

11:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Oak Alley (4th floor)

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Study examines long-term impacts of online CSA versus offline abuse using the Global Our Voice Survivor Survey, revealing intensified trauma, disclosure barriers, professional response gaps, and support recommendations.

Speakers



Steve Scheid

Director of Scouting Ministries | United Methodist Men Scouting Ministry



Katariina Leivo

Senior Specialist | Protect Children Finland



Nina Vaaranen-Valkonen

Co-founder, Executive Director, Psychotherapist | Protect Children

Break and Roundtable Sessions (Roundtable Sessions are not Eligible for CE Credit)

Roundtable - Bridging Evaluation and Practice: Exploring the Impact of Family-Focused Prevention Models

12:00 PM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This roundtable explores evaluation findings of family-focused prevention models, highlighting the impact on child permanency and safety outcomes, limitations, and actionable strategies to improve service continuity and outcomes for families.

Speaker



Cathy Sowell

Licensed Clinical Social Worker/Associate in Research | University of South Florida

Roundtable - How Is Resilience Passed Down? A Multimedia Teaching Model Using Webinars and Photovoice to Explore Recovery from Developmental Trauma

12:00 PM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

The roundtable will present a trauma-informed teaching project that integrates webinars from the *Center for Treatment of Developmental Trauma Disorders (CTDTD)*, <https://developmental-trauma.org/> with a photovoice assignment to explore a central question posed by student participants:

"How has resilience been passed down through generations, influenced recovery from developmental trauma, and impacted relationships and everyday life?"

Through the *Critical Moments* webinar series developed by CTDTD in which it is featured real in-session moments where therapists respond to emotional crises, ruptures in connection, or turning points in trauma recovery. These videos highlight not just theoretical knowledge, but *how clinicians apply it in the room*, making them a powerful tool for teaching clinical decision-making and relational attunement.

To investigate this question, participants first viewed a curated series of webinars introducing insights into how resiliency can emerge after trauma. Following the webinars, they took part in a photovoice project, capturing images from their communities that symbolized resilience across generations. Each participant then wrote a personal reflection connecting insights from the webinars to the photos they selected. These narratives explored how resilience is expressed within families, communities, and relationships.

This roundtable will highlight the structure of the project, showcase the participants images and narratives, and offer guidance for implementing similar approaches in educational, clinical, or training settings. The panel will reflect on how the integration of the Critical Moments webinars with the photos and narratives from the photovoice project enhanced the participants understanding of trauma recovery and resiliency across generations.

Speaker



Rocío Chang, PsyD

Assistant Professor of Psychiatry | UConn Health

Roundtable - Career Kickstart: Resume & Interview Tips for Emerging Professionals

12:00 PM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

This informal roundtable with professionals in the field will provide an opportunity to receive practical resume and interview tips for starting and navigating your career in the child maltreatment field. This session offers a chance to ask questions, receive guidance, and learn how to present your skills and experiences with confidence. Whether you're preparing for your first role or exploring new opportunities, join the conversation and gain insights to help you take your next step to help children and families.

Presented by YAPSAC (Young Association of Professionals Solving the Abuse of Children)

Speakers



Heather Denenea

Program Director | Hope House Children's Advocacy Center



Brittany Morris

Director | NY Foundling

Bridging Law and Mental Health: Trauma-Informed Skills for Supporting Immigrant and Trafficking Survivors (CLE Professionalism Hours Eligible)

1:15 PM – 2:45 PM | Location: Nottoway (4th floor)

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

TRAFFICKING

This seminar equips professionals with trauma-informed, evidence-based skills to support immigrant survivors of trafficking, integrating clinical, legal, and cross-disciplinary practices to strengthen safety and recovery outcomes.

Speaker



Jason Frey

Trainer | Immigration Diagnostic Evaluation Academy

Ethics and Decision-Making in Professional Practice

1:15 PM – 2:45 PM | Location: Grand Chenier

ADMINISTRATION, LEADERSHIP, AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This workshop will focus on ethical and legal issues that arise for professionals working in the field of child maltreatment. Case scenarios and audience participation will be encouraged.

Speakers



Ashley Galsky

Assistant Professor | OU Center on Child Abuse and Neglect



Tricia Gardner
Professor | OUHSC

Advancing Child Fatality and Abuse Investigations from a Prosecutor's Perspective

1:15 PM – 2:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom B

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Child fatality and abuse investigations are unique from both medical and legal perspectives. This presentation emphasizes the critical role the multidisciplinary investigation plays in successfully prosecuting these cases.

Speaker



Melissa Kelly
Assistant State Attorney in Charge | Broward State Attorney's Office

Rethinking Supervision to Combat Staff Burnout and Turnover

1:15 PM – 2:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom D

ADMINISTRATION, LEADERSHIP, AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Human services supervisors play a critical role in supporting staff well-being, fostering retention, and creating healthy workplace cultures. Yet many supervisors are expected to lead teams impacted by stress, secondary trauma, burnout, and critical incidents without practical guidance on how to respond. This interactive workshop explores how trauma-informed principles can be translated into everyday supervisory practices that strengthen staff resilience while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.

Participants in this 90-minute interactive session will learn concrete strategies to build psychological safety, promote trust and transparency, support staff following critical incidents, and address workplace stress without stepping into a therapeutic role. Through discussion, reflection, and peer learning, attendees will identify practical approaches for applying trauma-informed supervision within their own organizations. The session is designed for supervisors, managers, and organizational leaders seeking actionable tools to support staff well-being, improve retention, and foster a more resilient workforce.

Participants will be able to:

- Describe the impact of burnout, secondary trauma, and turnover on staff, teams, and organizations.
- Apply the core principles of trauma-informed supervision to promote psychological safety, trust, engagement, and resilience.
- Use practical supervisory strategies to support staff well-being, respond to critical incidents, and reduce burnout risk.
- Demonstrate cultural humility and self-awareness in supervisory relationships and decision-making.

Speaker



Mike Nowlin
Director of Advancement and Operations | Institute for Human Services

Sadistic Online Groups and AI: New Threats to Youth

1:15 PM – 2:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom E

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

Explore how evolving GAI technologies fuel new child exploitation risks and gain practical tools to refresh prevention messaging for youth, parents, and professionals.

Speaker



Cynthia Smith
Program Manager, Outreach | National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)

At the request of my mother: A teenage girl's years-long victimization through sex trafficking

1:15 PM – 2:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom A

INTERDISCIPLINARY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

HEALTHCARE

TRAFFICKING

Human Trafficking continues to be a hot topic but misinformation about victims and perpetrators continues to prevent professionals from recognizing those children held captive in this 'modern-day slavery'.

Speakers



Jennifer Dobey
Police Sergeant | Winston-Salem Police Department



Kayla Bruner
Corporal | Winston-Salem Police Department

Real Treatment With Real Kids

1:15 PM – 2:45 PM | Location: Grand Couteau

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

This upbeat presentation offers active and usable techniques for healing, focusing on creative ways to counteract maladaptive beliefs and engage the sexually abused child in cognitive reframing and resiliency building.

Speaker



Tamara Hillard

Owner/Clinician | True North Counseling and Consulting

Research Session (not eligible for ce credit) - Debriefing in Child Protection Simulation Training: Insights from Facilitator Experience

1:15 PM – 2:00 PM | Location: Oak Alley (4th floor)

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Through interviews with trainers, we studied debriefing trainees in simulations in child welfare training. Debriefing themes included reflection and feedback, responding to emotions, observing others, and dealing with challenging trainees.

Speakers



Yu-Ling Chiu

Senior Research Specialist | Children and Family Research Center - University of Illinois



Theodore Cross

Research Full Professor | Univ. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, School of Social Work



Yuerong Liu

Research Specialist | Children and Family Research Center - University of Illinois

Research Session (not eligible for ce credit) - Qualitative Analysis of School Corporal Punishment Policies in Arkansas

2:00 PM – 2:45 PM | Location: Oak Alley (4th floor)

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Despite its harmful effects, corporal punishment remains common in the U.S. This session will cover triggers for corporal punishment and teach culturally sensitive alternatives to spanking.

Speakers



Ellen Chiocca

Associate Professor | University of Missouri School of Nursing



Esaa Mohammad Samarah

UA Little Rock

Break

2:45 PM – 3:00 PM

The Science Behind the Suspicion: Medical Evaluation Essentials for Investigators.

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM | Location: Grand Couteau

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HEALTHCARE

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Discover why medical providers order specific labs and scans in child abuse cases. Learn how medical findings strengthen investigations and how collaboration ensures children receive both care and justice.

Speakers



Vi Ngo

Medical Director | Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard



Rebecca Gill

Pediatric Hospitalist | Nemours Children's Hospital

Strengthening Families, Protecting Children: Collaborative, Trauma-Informed Responses to Opioid Use and Child Safety

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom E

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

This session equips child welfare professionals with trauma-informed, family-centered strategies to navigate emerging drug trends, reduce stigma, and promote safety for children and families navigating substance use disorders.

Speaker



Sean Couch

Sr. Program Associate | National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare

Bridging the Gap: The Critical Role of Psychological Assessment in Child Advocacy Centers

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM | Location: Grand Chenier

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Psychological Assessment is an essential practice often overlooked by mental health providers and MDT's at CAC's. Our aim is to demonstrate how Assessment can enhance healing-and-practice.

Speakers



Linda Olszewski

Clinical Director | Stuart House



Michele Zaccario

Professor and Licensed Psychologist | Pace University



Maggie Gigler

Licensed Clinical Psychologist | UCLA Health

Therapeutic Family Reconnection Services: A Child-Centered Approach to Family Reunification

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM | Location: Nottoway (4th floor)

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

This presentation describes therapeutic family reconnection services as an alternative treatment approach for children and caregivers separated by placements outside the home, parent separation, divorce or never married.

Speakers



Robert Ortega

Associate Dean for Educational Programs | The University of Michigan



Mary Ortega

Clinic Administrator/Clinical Social Worker/Supervisor | Family Assessment Clinic

How can we prevent child maltreatment fatalities?

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom D

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HEALTHCARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This session will review what we know about child maltreatment fatalities and how we can implement strategies to prevent them.

Speaker



Vincent Palusci, MD, MS, FAAP, FAPSAC

Professor of Pediatrics | New York University Grossman School of Medicine

Understanding Fentanyl

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom A

INTERDISCIPLINARY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HEALTHCARE

SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE

Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that once started out as a tool for severe pain control and sedation, is now being illicitly manufactured and sold in the illegal drug market. Due to its inexpensiveness and the fact that it is easily attainable, fentanyl has been mixed with other substances like heroin and cocaine, increasing a drug's potency and risk for overdose and even death. Like other opioids, fentanyl can lead to addiction and withdrawal. Treatment for addiction is complex and is comparable to treating a chronic disease. Fentanyl also has profound impacts on caregiving leading to many adverse effects for children which can include neglect, abuse, accidental overdose, and death. Though it sounds bleak, there are harm reducing strategies that can be done to decrease the number of fatalities.

This presentation will explain what fentanyl is, dangers associated, and lethality. It will also cover the relationship between substance use disorders and how this can negatively affect children.

Speaker



Sarah Smith

Nurse Practitioner | Children's Center

Making the Case: Is Multidisciplinary Team Investigative Corroboration A Lost Art? (CLE Professionalism Hours Eligible)

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom B

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Investigative Corroboration is not a departure from, but an addition to, the traditional *Who, What, When, Where, and Why* of an investigation. It seeks to place the investigator inside the mindset of prosecutors who are required to prove every statement, detail, and point in a criminal of family court case.

Corroborative evidence has different "values." Some, such as a detailed confession, can stand alone. Others, such as theme pornography, may not prove an offense, but are supportive of the allegation. An investigator's role is to identify as many areas of corroboration as possible.

An investigator's effectiveness is rooted in his ability to know and utilize the advantages and disadvantages of various investigative corroboration techniques and apply them in a **timely** investigative manner. This presentation will educate attendees on numerous forms of investigative corroboration.

Although geared toward investigators, this is an interactive Investigative Multidisciplinary Team based instruction, MDT coordinators, forensic interviewers, advocates, and forensic medical professionals will find this presentation fruitful in

identifying key details and corroborating those details for use in protection and prosecution.

Speaker



Michael Johnson

Detective (retired) | Plano, TX Police Department (retired)

Cancelled - Research Session (not eligible for ce credit) - Child Maltreatment Among Socially Vulnerable Communities: An Examination of Associations by Type of Maltreatment

3:00 PM – 3:30 PM | Location: Oak Alley (4th floor)

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Multiple community-level risks have been associated with child maltreatment. This study aims to explore the influence of community-level social vulnerability on rates of maltreatment by type.

Speaker



Jessica Wilkes

Social Work Doctoral Student, Licensed Clinical Social Worker | Louisiana State University School of Social Work

Break

4:00 PM – 4:15 PM

Integrating Screening for ACEs During Well Child Visits

4:15 PM – 5:15 PM | Location: Grand Couteau

HEALTHCARE

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Implementation of a screening program for ACEs in the primary care setting can aid in the identification of children with risk factors and refer them for services to improve outcomes.

Speakers



Janice Ceccucci

CNO | Utica University



Nancy Harris, MS, ANP-C

Medical Manager Child Advocacy Centers | St. Peter's Health Partners

Guarding the Game: Protecting Athletes from Grooming and Abuse

4:15 PM – 5:15 PM | Location: Nottoway (4th floor)

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

This session explores grooming in sports, detailing tactics, prevention policies, resources, and case studies to equip participants with skills to recognize, prevent, and address grooming behaviors in athletic environments.

Speaker



Bobby Click

Executive Director | Sport Safety

Creating a Community of Alert Adults - Protecting Children from Predators

4:15 PM – 5:15 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom D

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

Adults believe they are doing all they know to do to protect children from predators - and they are. KTS teaches them what they don't know they don't know. Our program will identify the potentially risky behaviors that adults can see, recognize as risky, and interrupt in order to thwart grooming. Presenting these behaviors is not just informational - it's about giving adults - all adults - simple, easy ways to interrupt the behaviors and prevent creating vulnerable environments.

The key piece, of creating a "community," however, is finding ways to engage the general population in an effort to prevent child sexual abuse. Most don't think it applies to them and very few will even talk about it. However, we have found a pathway to including everyone in the effort. We will share information about how to engage the general population in becoming Alert Adults and being part of a growing community of adults creating and maintaining environments where child sexual abuse simply cannot happen.

Speakers



Sharon Doty

Owner/Manager | Keeping Them Safe



Shannon Wimberly

Executive Director | Because of You, Inc.

Navigating the digital world safely: Training tools for youth, parents and educators

4:15 PM – 5:15 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom B

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

Safe Screens Sound Minds is dedicated to promoting digital well-being through education, resources, and support including guides, videos, and workshops to help you navigate the digital world with confidence.

Speakers



Sallye Longshore

Director | Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention (Children's Trust Fund)



Jeff Davis

Executive Director | Fowler Davis 4 Change

A Daddy Dom and His Littles: An Online and Hands-On Web of Abuse from Colorado to the Carolinas

4:15 PM – 5:15 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom A

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

A joint investigation into an adult online BDSM and hands-on offender involving eight law enforcement agencies, six juvenile victims identified and one infant rescued from hands-on abuse.

Speaker



Matthew O'Reilly

Detective | Winston-Salem Police Department

Reclaiming Knowledge, Rebuilding Trust: Trauma-Informed Sexual Health for Girls Who Have Experienced Sexual Abuse

4:15 PM – 5:15 PM | Location: Grand Chenier

HEALTHCARE

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

This workshop explores trauma-informed sexual health education for girls impacted by sexual abuse, highlighting strategies to rebuild trust, reduce risk, and foster empowerment, resilience, and healthier relationships.

Speakers



Alessandra Ortiz

Clinical Social Worker-Center for Child Protection | UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland



Shelley Hamilton

Manager-Center for Child Protection | UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland

Fortaleciendo las prácticas de entrevistas forenses para niños hispanohablantes y bilingües

4:15 PM – 5:15 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom E

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING ADVANCED

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Esta presentación proporcionará estrategias prácticas para fortalecer sus habilidades con niños hispanohablantes y bilingües. Los participantes aprenderán a identificar y responder a diferencias de dialecto, considerar los estilos de comunicación cultural y adaptar el ritmo de la entrevista y las técnicas de entrevista. Los asistentes se irán con métodos concretos para mejorar la precisión, sensibilidad y capacidad de respuesta cultural en entrevistas forenses.

Todos son bienvenidos a asistir. El contenido, la discusión y los materiales serán presentados en español con el propósito de fortalecer el acceso a capacitación especializada directamente en nuestro idioma. Gracias por acompañarnos y por su compromiso con el servicio a niños, niñas y familias de habla hispana.

Speakers



Dulce Solis

Investigative Interview Program Director/Bilingual Forensic Interviewer | SungateKids Child Advocacy Center



Eli Molina

Director of Forensic Services | Dallas Children's Advocacy Center

Research Session (not eligible for ce credit) - Growing Up Sharented: Psychological Maltreatment and Privacy Violations as Predictors of Intent to Post Own Children

4:15 PM – 4:45 PM | Location: Oak Alley (4th floor)

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Eighty-nine young adults were surveyed about their parents posting images of them online when they were children. 40% reported posts that involved privacy violations and/or psychological maltreatment.

Speakers



Amy Baker

New York Foundling



Marla Brassard, PhD

Professor Emerita | Teachers College, Columbia University



Akeem Marsh

Vice President, Vincent J. Fontana Center for Child Protection | The New York Foundling Hospital

Research Session (not eligible for ce credit) - Parenting Styles And Exposure To Child Social Media Content As Predictors Of Young Adult Empathy Toward Children In Psychologically Maltreatment Videos

4:45 PM – 5:15 PM | Location: Oak Alley (4th floor)

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Young adults were surveyed to see if good parenting was protective and exposure to child content on social media desensitizing to the suffering of children in psychologically maltreating videos.

Speakers



Amy Baker
New York Foundling



Akeem Marsh
Vice President, Vincent J. Fontana Center for Child Protection | The New York Foundling Hospital



Marla Brassard, PhD
Professor Emerita | Teachers College, Columbia University

Second Line Through the Streets of New Orleans sponsored by the Institute for Human Services (IHS)

5:15 PM – 6:30 PM | Location: 5:15 Sheraton lobby

Celebrate in true New Orleans fashion with a Second Line that will lead APSAC attendees from the Sheraton Hotel through the streets of the French Quarter. All of the APSAC attendees form a second line behind the brass band who hold decorated parasols. Have the time of your life dancing to the music, throwing beads and waving handkerchiefs Big Easy style!

Special thanks to IHS for sponsoring this signature New Orleans experience and helping bring the spirit of connection and celebration to APSAC Colloquium 2026.

The second line will end on the second floor of the Crescent City Brewhouse which features innovative New Orleans cuisine and is the oldest brewpub in Louisiana, a 17-barrel state-of-the-art brewery, where world-class beer is brewed in small quantities. Savor a selection of New Orleans nouvelle cuisine in a bistro atmosphere

Thursday, June 18, 2026

Registration/Check-in

8:00 AM – 2:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

Continental Breakfast

8:00 AM – 8:30 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

'And Then He Shot Mommy': Interviewing Witnesses to Violent Crimes (CLE Professionalism Hours Eligible)

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom A

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING ADVANCED

The whys and hows of interviewing witnesses of violent crimes.

Speaker



Stephanie Randolph
Forensic Interviewer & Trainer | CornerHouse

Next-Gen Solutions: Evolving Workforce Development Strategies

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM | Location: Grand Chenier

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

Workshop profiles an initiative to improve Mississippi's child-serving workforce through a curriculum on child maltreatment; a facility to simulate child protection interventions; and partnership with local CACs.

Speaker



Sheila Brand
Chief Strategy and Operations Officer | Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi

Building Domestic Violence-Informed Practice: An Introduction to the Safe & Together Model

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM | Location: Grand Couteau

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

Learn foundational concepts of the Safe & Together Model including perpetrator pattern-based approach, survivor partnerships, and Multiple Pathways to Harm framework for domestic violence-informed child welfare practice.

Speaker



Leah Vejzović, LMSW
North America Regional Manager | Safe & Together Institute

Devastating and Divergent Paths to Sextortion: Surviving Caregiver Reflections

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom D

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

Moderated by NCMEC, surviving caregivers will discuss the challenges of financial sextortion cases, law enforcement and tech responses to honor their child's experience.

Speakers



Shannon Traore
Senior Program Manager | NCMEC



Lanae Holmes
Director | NCMEC

Complex Strategies for Addressing Chemically Dependent, Trauma Reactive Youth

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom B

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This advanced workshop will address the clinical complexities of treating the chemically dependent, trauma reactive youth. A trauma informed addictions treatment model designed for use with youth will be outlined

Speaker



John Seasock

specialist/consultant | R.P.C.

Research Session (not eligible for ce credit) - Practicing What We Preach: Embedding Continuous Quality Improvement in Qualitative Evaluation of Child Welfare Practice

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom E

ADMINISTRATION, LEADERSHIP, AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This case study examines CQI strategies used by one state-level child welfare evaluation team to enhance data trustworthiness, prevent staff burnout, engage stakeholders, and increase the utility of findings.

Speakers



Jordan Goodwin, LSW, MDiv

PhD Candidate | Rutgers School of Social Work



Cory Morton

Rutgers

Break

10:00 AM – 10:15 AM

Making START the Standard: Evidence-Based Strategies for Families Affected by Substance Use

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Chenier

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE

Discover how Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams transform child welfare by improving child safety and parental recovery through collaboration, peer support, and proven strategies for large-scale, system-wide implementation.

Across the country, child welfare professionals point to Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START) as a model that should be considered the standard of practice. START is an evidence-based model that addresses the intersecting challenges of parental substance use, mental health, and child safety. With proven results in both child well-being and parental recovery, START offers a blueprint for how systems can effectively respond to families affected by substance use disorders.

This session will provide an overview of the START framework, which emphasizes early engagement, rapid access to treatment, and intensive cross-system collaboration. Participants will explore strategies for building strong partnerships among child welfare, behavioral health, treatment providers, the judicial system, and other family-serving entities. By fostering collaboration at the case and systems level, START shows how child welfare can be a catalyst for broad, positive change.

A key feature of START is the integration of peer support specialists—individuals with lived experience who play a vital role in engaging families and sustaining recovery. Participants will also examine lessons learned from large-scale implementation in a state-administered, county-operated system, gaining practical insights, strategies, and tools to replicate and sustain START in their own contexts.

Speakers



Fawn Gadel

Director of Ohio Start | Public Children Services Association of Ohio



Tina Willauer

Director, National START Training and TA Program | Children and Family Futures

Navigating Support for Families in Child Welfare: Parents' Cognitive and Mental Health Challenges

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom A

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HEALTHCARE

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Parents' cognitive and emotional abilities are crucial to supporting their children after abuse and maltreatment. This presentation will explore supporting families with decision-making problems and traumatic experiences.

Speakers



Sebastian Del Corral Winder

Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychiatry | Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center - New Orleans



Amy Dickson

Clinical Psychologist/Assoc. Prof. | LSUHSC



Elizabeth Carey

Pre-Doctoral Psychology Practicum Student | LSUHSC - New Orleans

Forensic Interviewers Testifying as Expert Witnesses in Child Sexual Abuse Cases

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom D

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING ADVANCED

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

INTERDISCIPLINARY

A prosecutor and forensic interviewer will present a case study to discuss the use of expert witnesses to prosecute complex child sexual abuse cases.

Speakers



Heather Denenea

Program Director | Hope House Children's Advocacy Center



Zach Popovich

Assistant District Attorney | 22nd Judicial District Attorney's Office

My Healing Language: Where Science, Spirit, and Story Meet Trauma Care and Healing for Survivors

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Couteau

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This session presents My Healing Language™, integrating science, spirit, and survivor wisdom with somatic practices and telomere-based biomarkers to transform trauma care and center culturally responsive, survivor-led healing.

Speaker



Glenda Macatangay

Founder | My Healing Language

Early Intervention, Lasting Change: A Family-Centered Approach to Domestic Violence, Substance Use, & Child Welfare

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom B

SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE

This session explores the intersection of domestic violence, substance use, and child welfare involvement, emphasizing trauma-informed, cross-system collaboration to promote child safety, family resilience, and integrated support strategies.

Speaker



Jane Pfeifer

Programmatic Technical Assistance Program Director, Regional Partnership Grant (RPG) Program | National Center on Substan...

Research Session (not eligible for ce credit) - Evaluating a Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Program for Pre-K to 5th Graders: Lessons Learned & Preliminary Results

10:15 AM – 11:15 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom E

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Implementation lessons learned and preliminary results will be shared from evaluating the Healthy Relationships Project, a school-based child sexual abuse prevention program implemented in 15 Washington, DC elementary schools.

Speakers



Beth Molnar

Professor | Northeastern University



Sheryldine Samuel

Director Prevention and Outreach | Safe Shores The DC Children's Advocacy Center



Bianca Ejiofor

Senior Prevention Specialist | Safe Shores - The DC Children's Advocacy Center

Break

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM

Leading with Care: Supervision Strategies and Team Resilience in Clinical Child Abuse Response

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom D

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

Gain practical supervision tools to build resilient, trauma-informed teams, reduce burnout, and strengthen outcomes in the demanding field of child abuse response.

Speakers



Dana Divine

Dallas Children's Advocacy Center



Reanna Bell

Therapist/Assistant Director of Clinical Services | Dallas Children's Advocacy Center



Gavi Wilkins

Assistant Director of Clinical Services | Dallas Children's Advocacy Center

Conducting a Forensic Mental Health Evaluation: Selecting, Designing, Presenting and Defending Against Bias

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom B

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

This workshop cover the selection, design, and presentation of a child mental health evaluation when maltreatment is a concern by applying the APSAC Forensic Mental Health Evaluation Guidelines.

Speaker



Kelly Champion

Clinical and Forensic Psychologist | Cadeus Behavioral Health LLC

Cancelled - High-Conflict MDT Cases: Strategies for Breaking Through When Collaboration Breaks Down

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

ADMINISTRATION, LEADERSHIP, AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Learn practical, evidence-based strategies to navigate and resolve high-conflict multidisciplinary team cases, improving collaboration, decision-making, and outcomes for children across diverse communities.

Speakers



Meghan Gaborik

Executive Director | Children's Advocacy Center of NEPA



Courtney Grubbs

Director of Administrative & Clinical Services | Children's Advocacy Centers of Northeastern Pennsylvania



Ashley Ceccacci

Director of Forensic Services & Forensic Interviewer | Children's Advocacy Center of NEPA

Cancelled - The Future of Prevention Work: How Technology in Evidence-Based Practice Influences Parent Engagement

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

This presentation will explore parenting education interventions that can be utilized by child welfare agencies. Participants will learn the benefits of evidence-based practices with AI and social media influences.

Speakers



Sean Brune, LMSW

Social Worker | Ochsner



Jessica Wilkes

Social Work Doctoral Student, Licensed Clinical Social Worker | Louisiana State University School of Social Work



Catherine Moon

The Real Differential Diagnosis of Child Abuse vs. Courtroom Diagnoses.

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom E

HEALTHCARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Children are injured and may become sick through the actions or inactions of their caretaker or naturally occurring conditions. Differential diagnosis: an analysis distinguishing a disease from other similar ones. .

Speaker



John Wright

professor | ecu