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# Event Agenda

APSAC 32nd Annual Colloquium

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## Sunday, June 22, 2025

### Pre-Conference Institutes Registration

7:30 AM – 4:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

### Leveling Up: Practical Applications of Enhancing Skills in the Forensic Interview

8:30 AM – 4:30 PM | Location: Grand Couteau

#### FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

This preconference, specifically for forensic interviewers, will provide an opportunity for dialogue and practice in different components of the forensic interview. Participants should be ready to work, starting with identifying one's baseline and culminating in establishing an action plan for continuous improvement. Topics include interview preparation, rapport-building, narrative event practice, employing externally verifiable information, and question patterns.

#### Speakers



**Julie Kenniston**

Program Manager | FVTC/National Criminal Justice Training Center



**Ali Alstott**

Owner | Ali Alstott, AM, LCSW, LLC

### Child Physical Abuse: From Diagnosis to Prosecution

8:30 AM – 4:30 PM | Location: Grand Chenier

#### CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

#### HEALTHCARE

#### INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

#### LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

According to the most recent NCANDS data, more than 17% of child maltreatment victims or nearly 95,011 children suffered physical abuse in the US in 2022. Physical abuse may manifest with a wide range of signs and symptoms, from subtle bruising to significant traumatic brain or abdominal injury. Evaluating children who are suspected victims of physical abuse requires a multidisciplinary approach with collaboration between medical professionals, child protective services worker, and law enforcement. Medical findings, terminology, and biomechanics of injury may be very perplexing for non-medical community partners. Therefore, this pre-conference institute will cover the basics of child physical abuse including cutaneous lesions (bruises, bumps and burns), oral injuries, fractures, and internal injuries in a manner that is both understandable and fun. Multiple case examples allowing audience participation will be presented.

#### Co-speaker



**Debra Esernio-Jenssen**

Child Abuse Pediatrician | Retired

#### Speaker



**Barbara Knox**

Chief Center for Child Protection | Division of Child Protection & Forensic Pediatrics

### Early Registration and Exhibitor Setup

9:00 AM – 4:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

### Break

10:00 AM – 10:15 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

### Lunch (on your own)

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM

### National Initiative To End Corporal Punishment (NIECP) Summit- Observers are Welcome

1:00 PM – 5:00 PM | Location: Nottoway (fourth floor)

### Break

2:30 PM – 2:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

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## Monday, June 23, 2025

### Registration and Exhibits

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

### Narrative Event Practice: The Key to Unlocking Corroboration

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

#### FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

The successful prosecution of child predators relies on the quality and quantity of corroborative evidence in a child abuse investigation. When well executed, the utilization of a thorough narrative event practice sets the foundation for memory retrieval and context-rich disclosure in the forensic interview. Corroboration lives in the context of crimes. This presentation will highlight the correlation between

narrative event practice and increased production of articulated details in the forensic interview while increasing participant's ability to execute the thoughtful facilitation of disclosure.

#### Speaker



**Ali Alstott**

Owner | Ali Alstott, AM, LCSW, LLC

### Child Torture: Prosecuting the Unimaginable

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

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

Tying children to a chair for hours or days, beating them with extension cords, pushing their head underwater so they can't breathe--this type of abuse causes extreme trauma to the victims, which makes building a case upon their testimony difficult. The complexity of child torture cases makes effectively investigating, convincingly prosecuting, and adequately punishing these defendants difficult. This session will examine essential investigative steps, charging decisions, proving childhood PTSD as a Serious Mental Injury, case presentation, and arguing these cases to a jury.

Two case examples will highlight the issues in this type of prosecution. Sara Woody starved her step kids and subjected them to mental cruelty and torment. Rather than just charge her with third degree bodily injury, Mr. Gillespie utilized the first degree charge of causing Serious Mental Injury and proved that the childhood PTSD Woody inflicted was SMI.

Facing another child torture case, Mr. Gillespie led a trial team against Daniel Ortiz in January 2024, obtaining three 50-year sentences for Ortiz causing Serious Mental Injury to each of his three victims. Ortiz had dunked, waterboarded, beaten, and bound the little girls.

These cases will be discussed as examples of using PTSD to prove serious mental injury or impairment, which allows a more appropriate prison sentence for the offense.

#### Speaker



**Brooke Robb**

Assistant District Attorney | Wichita County District Attorney's Office

#### Co-speaker



**John Gillespie**

District Attorney | Wichita County District Attorney's Office

### What is Evidence-Based Practice? A Plain Language Explanation of a Foundational Concept.

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

LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Why is using evidence-based practices important? In many fields, evidence-based practices and programs are the gold standard. Understanding evidence helps us provide quality, effective, and impactful programs and services. It also ensures we do not cause unintended harm or waste resources.

When selecting a program or service, people may look at the research, and whether an evaluation was done. Even most clearinghouses and databases simply look at the empirical research related to an intervention. However, multiple types of evidence should be considered such as: research studies (i.e. systematic processes used by scientists), professional expertise (i.e. experiential evidence based on job experience), community input (i.e. contextual evidence to understand if the program or service works for the community).

However, not all research is created equal, so it is important to learn how to determine the *quality* of the evidence. Our team has created an easy-to-use tool, an Evaluating Evidence meter, that can help users understand the quality of a research design. We will also discuss the importance of assessing the quality of research evidence, scalability, and sustainability of a program or service.

Finally, understanding the community's needs and preferences will impact the success of a prevention strategy and should be considered in your decision-making process. This workshop will provide best practices on engaging community members in implementation of programs and services.

#### Speaker



**Alyssa Amendola**

Research Project Manager | Center for Violence Prevention Research

#### Co-speaker



**Csege Bodi**

Research Project Manager | Center for Violence Prevention Research

### Inspiring Solutions to Care for Youth with a History of Sexual Exploitation

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

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

There are few resources and interventions for caregivers who care for youth with a history of sexual exploitation. There are models that providing training for foster parents and/or resource families but very few for other types of caregivers (biological parents; kinship). This session will provide an overview of available resources and harm reduction strategies for caregivers of CSE youth including review of a 7-session group protocol developed for caregivers whose youth are at risk and/or have a history of sexual exploitation. Helpful resources in English and Spanish will be reviewed with detailed descriptions, demonstration, and practice incorporated. Data will be provided as well as case examples will be discussed. This presentation examines effective parenting strategies, reviews specialized issues in caring for youth with a history of sexual exploitation and provides practical strategies to use with caregivers and their youth. Harm reduction approaches will be discussed as it is now being considered in working with sexually exploited youth (Hickle & Hallett, 2016).

#### Speaker





**Daniela Barrera-Barajas**

Mental Health Therapist II | UC Davis CAARE Center

#### Co-speakers



**Samantha corona**

Behavioral Health Psychiatry Professional | UC Davis Children's Hospital, CAARE Center



**Cruz Rocio Franco**

Clinical Licensed Social Worker | UC Davis Children's Hospital, CAARE Center

### Support Groups as a Trauma-Informed Modality for Survivors of Munchausen by Proxy Abuse and Medical Child Abuse

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM | Location: Nottoway (fourth floor)

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

The scientific knowledge on survivors of Munchausen by Proxy Abuse (MBPA), a form of Medical Child Abuse (MCA), is composed of several foundational case reports. There is pressing need for more research and program development to better understand and support this underrepresented group. Evidence suggests that support groups are an effective modality for survivors of complex trauma including child abuse. In fact, the act of providing support is even more impactful on healing than the act of receiving support alone. Participation in support groups facilitates posttraumatic growth including increased: cognitive restructuring, openness to new possibilities, ability to relate to others, and sense of personal strength. In line with these findings, Munchausen Support, a nonprofit for those impacted by MBPA/MCA, began offering free online peer-led support groups in 2022. To date, 40 survivors have participated in groups, with additional members awaiting placement, indicating demand. The presenters learned valuable lessons in implementation and program improvement by running multiple cycles of effective support groups. The goal of this training is to deepen professionals' understanding of how to support adult survivors of child abuse, specifically MBPA/MCA. This training gives professionals a better understanding of: the effective mechanisms of online support groups, the strengths of a community-building approach, implementation procedures, ethical considerations, and limitations.

#### Speaker



**Chrissy Campo**

NYU; Munchausen Support

#### Co-speaker



**Flynn Kelly-Branyak**

Doctoral Student | University of Tennessee Knoxville; Munchausen Support

### Sexual Abuse Advance Training Institute Part 1

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

HEALTHCARE

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

This half **day** advanced training program will discuss important current and emerging issues in child sexual abuse focusing on what's new, what's novel, and what needs improvement. Included will be a review of the current scientific literature regarding timing and types of forensic evidence collections, advances in STI testing including current recommendations and review of acceptable testing, and the significance of anogenital findings. In addition, updates of child sex trafficking and the medical evaluation will be reviewed. Finally, there will be a special interactive training on court testimony for cases of child sexual abuse. This will include practice on direct and cross examination testimony.

#### Speaker



**Debra Esernio-Jenssen**

Child Abuse Pediatrician | Retired

#### Co-speakers



**Barbara Knox**

Chief Center for Child Protection | Division of Child Protection & Forensic Pediatrics



**Stacie Leblanc**

CEO | Up Institute

### Scaling Child Welfare Workforce Training with AI Technology

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

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This presentation addresses the critical challenge of scaling training for child welfare workers while maintaining high quality. It begins by exploring current training obstacles facing provider organizations and introduces innovative tools designed to integrate skills directly into practice.

A key feature is the use of practice vignettes with instant, AI-feedback in a safe environment, allowing workers to develop essential skills (such as MI) through simulation before applying them in real-world situations. The presentation highlights how technology can be used to enhance continuous quality improvement through consistency and standardization of training content, diversity in and quality control of practice vignettes, ongoing feedback, and supervisory support mechanisms that promote impactful supervision. The presentation will conclude with insights from a trauma-informed care case use example to demonstrate how the Lyssn platform supports practical skill development through immediate feedback and coaching, creating a more effective approach to professional development.

#### Speakers



**Kelly McCaulley, LSCSW**

Account Executive | LYSSN



**Ernestine Briggs-King**

Kennedy Krieger Institute/Johns Hopkins University

## Break

10:00 AM – 10:15 AM

### The 2024 APSAC Endorsed Guidelines and Decision-making Standards for Assessing Suspected Psychological Maltreatment: Application to CPS cases in Duluth MN (This session is not eligible for CME Credit)

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

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

This workshop provides an overview of the 2024 APSAC-endorsed comprehensive, evidence-based operational definition system and decision-making standards for child psychological maltreatment (PM) along with the evidence supporting its reliability, validity, reduced bias, and preventative impacts. Clinical presentations of PM and valid procedures and measures to assess and substantiate caregiver behavior (e.g., interview, observation, records review, questionnaires) and child harm will be reviewed and illustrated. Evidence-based Interviewing is particularly important as many perpetrators and victims of PM may not think of their behavior/experiences as abusive or neglectful. Using a de-identified CPS case, presenters will demonstrate how the revised definition has been applied in Duluth MN under a typically broad state law that defines PM as emotional harm/mental injury due to abuse or neglect. Barriers and successes in developing PM cases will be shared. Participants will have the opportunity to work a case under MN law using the 2024 APSAC definition, consider the implications for using the definition their state law and applications to minoritized families, and share their own experiences with preparing PM cases and the measures and strategies they have used.

#### Speaker



**Maria Brassard**

Professor Emerita | Teachers College, Columbia University

#### Co-speakers



**Stuart Hart**

Professor Emerita | Indiana University



**Adam Ries**

Consulting Psychologist-IV | St. Louis County-PHHS, Duluth MN



**Akeem Marsh**

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

### Equity In Action: Centering Lived Experience in Child Welfare (CLE Professionalism Hours Eligible)

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

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

This session explores the transformative role of lived experience in advancing equity within the child welfare system. Recognizing that systemic inequities, including structural racism and implicit bias, have historically marginalized communities of color, this workshop emphasizes the critical importance of listening to and integrating the voices of those directly impacted by child welfare policies and practices. Through interactive discussion and case examples, attendees will learn strategies to amplify these voices, foster collaboration in decision-making processes, and embed equity in everyday practice. Specifically, author, Amnoni Myers will share some of her experiences of aging out of the foster care system to becoming an advocate on Capitol Hill. Attendees will leave with actionable tools to create child welfare environments that are equitable, culturally informed, and driven by the leadership and expertise of those most affected by the system.

#### Speaker



**Ernestine Briggs-King**

Kennedy Krieger Institute/Johns Hopkins University

#### Co-speakers



**Rocio Chang**

Assistant Professor | University of Connecticut



**Amnoni Myers**

Founder, Launch Ahead | Author, Entrepreneur

### Reluctance and Recantations: How Trauma Impacts the Child's Statement

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

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

This course will focus on the impact traumas has on a child and the overall investigation. During the training, participants will have an opportunity to delve into possible sources of reluctance from children and will discuss potential strategies and approaches to overcome these issues during the forensic interview. The presentation will also discuss how trauma impacts not only the child but the overall family dynamics and how some dynamics create an environment for the potential recantation from the child. During the presentation there will be opportunities to share ideas for questions to be asked during the interview and successful techniques that have been used to overcome barriers.

#### Speaker



**Cyndi Cantu**

Chief Team Relations and Forensics Officer | Center for Child Protection

### Providing Culturally Competent Care When Completing a Forensic Team Assessment and Recommending Therapeutic Interventions to Address Child Abuse and Neglect Risk and Protective Factors.

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING ADVANCED

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

INTERDISCIPLINARY

The current presentation explores the intersection between forensic mental health practice guidelines and cultural competency when assessing risk in Child Abuse and Neglect. Examples of the challenges and successes in working with families to provide care commensurate to their stage of acculturation will be identified and explored. There has been a notable increase over the years of

cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic/demographic diversity in our society. Forensic professionals often evaluate individuals who are drastically different from themselves. One's culture often determines parenting decisions, acceptable responses to risk and threats, behavioral norms and expectations, and methods of communication, as well as explanations for child abuse and neglect, delinquency, and medical and psychiatric illnesses. Assessment instruments used by forensic professionals help identify parenting deficits and characterological difficulties. However, these tools tend to be designed around principles of the greater cultural group thereby discounting the variability across populations. Discounting variability can lead to inappropriate recommendations for therapeutic services, which further complicates participation in therapeutic and risk-reducing services. The forensic team approach in assessing increases objectivity and provides oversight, particularly with regard to culturally competent, unbiased, goal-oriented decisions.

#### Speaker



**Melissa Ciottone**

Program Director | Center for Evaluation and Counseling, Inc.

#### Co-speaker



**Cindy Melo**

Program Director | Center for Evaluation and Counseling, Inc.

### From Sticks to Flowers: Working with Parents Justifying Corporal Punishment with Scripture

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

FAITH

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING ADVANCED

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

As the legal definition of reasonable force continues to contract, there is increasing tension between criminal justice/child protection professionals and parents who physically discipline their children based on religious beliefs. Using a case study, this workshop offers concrete guidelines for working with caregivers whose physical discipline of their children exceeds the law but is rooted in their interpretations of scripture.

#### Speaker



**Victor Vieth**

Director Center for Faith and Child Protection | Zero Abuse Project

### Sexual Abuse Advance Training Institute Part 2

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

HEALTHCARE

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

This half **day** advanced training program will discuss important current and emerging issues in child sexual abuse focusing on what's new, what's novel, and what needs improvement. Included will be a review of the current scientific literature regarding timing and types of forensic evidence collections, advances in STI testing including current recommendations and review of acceptable testing, and the significance of anogenital findings. In addition, updates of child sex trafficking and the medical evaluation will be reviewed. Finally, there will be a special interactive training on court testimony for cases of child sexual abuse. This will include practice on direct and cross examination testimony.

#### Speaker



**Debra Esernio-Jenssen**

Child Abuse Pediatrician | Retired

#### Co-speakers



**Barbara Knox**

Chief Center for Child Protection | Division of Child Protection & Forensic Pediatrics



**Stacie Leblanc**

CEO | Up Institute

### Workforce Development Initiatives in Child Welfare to Promote Workforce Wellbeing

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

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Advancing California's Trauma-Informed Systems (ACTS) project aims to create collaborative partnerships with California child-welfare county leaders to advance trauma informed system change. This workshop will focus on the implementation and sustainment practices of our Workforce Development efforts, specifically how counties can improve workforce well-being and decrease secondary traumatic stress through organizational systems change (e.g., reflective practice, secondary trauma workgroups, staff support groups, day-to-day practice change). The presenters will discuss key lessons and experiences from partnering with multiple counties in California to implement workforce development and staff wellbeing strategies as a model for addressing STS and workforce resilience at the organizational and interpersonal levels.

#### Speakers



**Melissa Bernstein**

Project Director | Rady Children Hospital - Chadwick Center



**Al Killen-Harvey**

Lead Trainer | Chadwick Center

### Lunch (on your own)

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

### Roundtable Sessions not eligible for CME Credit

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

## Roundtable - "It felt good to be able to share her story": Comparative practices of peer mentors in a substance use treatment intervention

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE

Family peer mentors (FPMs) are parents and guardians who have successfully navigated substance use and child welfare involvement and are employed to support parents and families with similar challenges. This roundtable will explore the use of FPMs in past child welfare and substance use interventions as well as their essential role within Ohio START, a child welfare substance use intervention. The roundtable will review results from a descriptive qualitative case study using weekly contact logs for 117 families spanning 10 FPMs and three Ohio counties to understand how START FPMs support clients with different journeys toward sobriety. Results were coded using thematic and comparative analysis based on SAMHSA definitions of types of peer support between FPMs and families. We will identify the eight types of peer support that emerged from the data: engaging relationships, linking to resources, supporting recovery planning, supporting collaboration, providing skill building, providing support, managing crises, and sharing lived experiences. These results will be compared depending on the family's time to complete substance use treatment and cultural factors such as race, ethnicity, social class, education, and geographic location. Finally, we will delve into implications for use of peer mentors in child welfare and substance use interventions, including collaboration to develop methods of implementing peer mentor interventions within participants' own areas of practice.

### Speaker



Megan Allbright-Campos

Doctoral Student | Ohio State University

## Roundtable - Physical and Psychosocial Care of the Migrant Child: An Interdisciplinary Approach

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HEALTHCARE

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

War, poverty, and other forms of geopolitical instability have caused a marked increase in global migration of children and families. Migrant children often experience significant physical and psychosocial health disparities due to factors such as inadequate access to healthcare, poverty, cultural and language barriers, and culture shock. Migrant children are also more likely to experience trauma due to displacement, family separation, resettlement, and witnessing traumatic events. This presentation highlights the specific physical health problems most common among migrant children, including communicable diseases, nutritional deficiencies, and chronic conditions. Additionally, it addresses the mental health issues of migrant children, such as grief and loss due to parental separation, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder, which are exacerbated by migration-related stressors. By focusing on an interdisciplinary approach and practicing Trauma-Informed Care, the health outcomes and overall well-being can be improved in this vulnerable population of children.

### Speakers



Ellen Chiocca

Assistant Professor | University of Missouri School of Nursing



Gail Hornor

Pediatric Nurse Practitioner | International Association of Forensic Nurses

## Roundtable - From Research to Practice: Implementing a Survivor-Informed Media Support Resource

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

This workshop equips child maltreatment researchers and practitioners with a comprehensive understanding of trauma-informed media support, specifically tailored for survivors of child sexual abuse by religious and institutional authorities. Attendees will be introduced to "A Survivor Guide to Mastering Media" and will learn about the research that went into its design, as well as how to apply its strategies across various settings. The session includes hands-on activities, including group discussion, practice of grounding techniques, and considerations for personalized media plans. Designed for all experience levels, the workshop bridges the gap between research and practical application, offering evidence-based strategies adaptable to academic and clinical contexts. By exploring the resource's development process, participants will gain insights into its research foundation and practical relevance, making it a valuable tool for professionals committed to enhancing their work in the field of child maltreatment.

### Speaker



Amie Myrick

Consultant, Trainer | New Phase Counseling and Consulting

## Roundtable - 2025 Child Sex Abuse Material, Online Exploitation, and Social Media: Addressing the Impacts on Victims

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

INTERDISCIPLINARY

The impacts suffered by victims of online exploitation and child sexual abuse material ("CSAM") facilitated through social media include all the consequences of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse inflicted to produce CSAM is more likely to involve sadistic acts and very young children. When CSAM is posted online, shared, and collected, the impact continues into the victims' adulthoods and beyond ad infinitum. This will be an update to the presentation given in June 2024 as there have been three monumental decisions in the last two months which have opened pathways for victims.

This workshop will be presented by attorneys James R. Marsh and Hillary M. Nappi who are leaders in civil litigation on behalf of CSAM victims and their families. The materials will highlight current litigation and emerging trends focusing on victim impact and the forensic assessment, support, research, and treatment of CSAM victims. The goal is advise providers and frontline workers about the criminal and civil legal remedies available to CSAM victims, and sensitize the audience to the unique issues and challenges of this victimology.

This presentation will discuss current litigation and emerging risks for victims of child sex abuse material, online exploitation, and social media; the impact of this victimization on children and their families; criminal and civil legal remedies; and the unique issues and challenges of serving and treating this population.

\*FULL DESCRIPTION ATTACHED

### Speaker



**Hillary Nappi**

Partner | Hach Rose Schirripa & Cheverie LLP

**Co-speaker**



**James Marsh**

Founder | Marsh Law Firm PLLC

**Roundtable - Beyond Awareness: Practical Application of the My Life My Choice Exploitation Prevention Model (This session is not eligible for CME Credit)**

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

This training offers an introductory exploration of the My Life My Choice Exploitation Prevention Model, equipping participants with practical tools to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). By bridging awareness with actionable strategies, this session empowers youth serving professionals to recognize exploitation, address systemic inequities, and implement meaningful change within their agencies.

This training is designed for professionals committed to translating knowledge into impactful solutions, ensuring a safer and more equitable future for all youth.

**Speaker**



**Marissa Rogers**

Director of Training | My Life My Choice

**Co-speaker**



**Audrey Morrissey**

Executive Director | My Life My Choice

**Introduction to APSAC Forensic Mental Health Evaluation Guidelines: Why, Who, What, Where, How & Something About When**

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

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

APSAC guidelines are an important resource for advancing interdisciplinary prevention of maltreatment. When children come to the attention of the courts via criminal or family court involvement or the child protection system there are often important unanswered questions about the child's mental health, resources and vulnerabilities. And there maybe questions about caregivers' capacity to parent or about what happened to the child. This training session will introduce APSAC's practice guidelines for Forensic Mental Health Evaluations When Child Maltreatment Is at Issue. The presentation will introduce the guidelines including the goals of the guidelines and additional resources for more training. During the session, participants will explore the guidelines via hypothetical case examples and consider how child protection, mental health, court professionals, and attorneys might use the guidelines. I will spend time on the limits of professional guidelines and ways in which professionals can use these guidelines to encourage more just, informed, less biased and more effective mental health evaluations when child protection is a concern. APSAC guidelines are one of the many valuable resources that APSAC generates to help professionals serve children better. In this workshop, I hope that together we will bring this document to life, advance both individual and multidisciplinary efforts to protect children from harm.

**Speaker**



**Kelly Champion**

Clinical and Forensic Psychologist | Cadeus Behavioral Health LLC

**The Color of Complexity: Navigating ethical grey zones in the care of at-risk kids living with social turbulence**

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

HEALTHCARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

When caring for children those whose risk for abuse or neglect appears to arise from turbulent social circumstances, it is important that healthcare providers explore the complexities of their patient's caretaking environment and identify the ethical considerations relevant to patient care. A clinician must not only communicate empathetically with families under stress, but also (1) provide and assess engagement with -or obstacles to- resources that will mitigate the patient's risk of abuse, (2) create a monitoring plan that does not unduly burden already struggling caregivers, and (3) establish a threshold for intervention if the risk of abuse becomes too great. Observation and compassionate communication should be paired with an articulated ethical framework, which can provide a structured approach to decision-making, buttress consistency in care, and minimize bias. This workshop will explore an ethical framework for clinical decision-making when the best course of action to support a child his family is not immediately clear. This framework follows the principles of beneficence, justice and autonomy and is anchored in the concepts of best interests and the rights of children. Through a brief didactic session with audience participation, self reflection, and case discussion in small groups, participants will explore these precepts and identify methods to construct management plans that protect vulnerable children while respecting the complexities of family dynamics.

**Speaker**



**Marcella Donaruma-Kwoh**

Associate Professor of Pediatrics | Baylor College of Medicine/Texas Children's Hospital

**Co-speakers**



**Sharon Record**

Texas Children's Hospital



**Amanda Scully**

Physician | OHSU

**And Then I Had to Work: Forensic Interviews in CST Cases**

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

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING ADVANCED

Child Sex Trafficking allegations have dynamics core to sexual abuse forensic interviews, but consideration should be noted regarding simultaneous maltreatment as well as the exploration of the business aspects of this abuse. Navigating these challenges, alongside alleged victim response to formal interventions, makes these interviews complex. Come learn to conduct these interviews and develop skills and strategies to successfully explore CST allegations.

#### Speaker



**Lindsey Dula**  
Founder | NFIN

### Not Your Ordinary CPS: Innovative and Inspiring QI projects in CPS resulting in Solutions for Improved Service Delivery and Employee Satisfaction

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

#### CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

This workshop will provide an overview of the fundamentals of CQI planning and QI projects in Social Services programs and how they work hand in hand with better service delivery, employee satisfaction and retention, and improving the community we serve. It will include a presentation on a successful Child Protective Service project that generated greatly improved service delivery, employee retention and satisfaction and a panel discussion with professionals involved in this project. This comprehensive curriculum will empower participants to drive meaningful changes and achieve sustained excellence.

This presentation will provide:

- An overview of CQI Planning and its Benefits, reviewing an example of a CQI plan and the components in the areas of quality-of-service delivery, workflow efficiency, employee satisfaction and retention, customer satisfaction.
- Data-Driven Decision Making: an overview of methods for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data to drive improvements.
- The role of Quality Improvement Projects in CQI planning: an overview of LEAN Six Sigma based methodology and how to apply it in projects for Social Services Programs.
- A detailed presentation on the CPS Specialized Roles QI project that revolutionized CPS Assessments/Investigations process in Union County, NC as a result of the need for improved service to the vulnerable in the community and in response to the needs for improved employee satisfaction, including personal and professional development.

#### Speakers



**April Duvall**  
Senior Human Services Evaluator | Union County NC Health and Human Services



**DeCora Bowers, EdD, LCMHC**  
Tele Therapist | Novant Health

#### Co-speakers



**Cheryl Bowers**  
Business Process Manager | Union County NC Health and Human Services



**Decora Bowers**  
Social Work Program Manager | Union County NC Health and Human Services



**Kevin Alexander**  
Senior Social Work Supervisor | Union County NC Health and Human Services



**Whitney Massey**  
Union County Government

### You can't make this stuff up: unusual, interesting and sometimes bizarre cases of suspected abuse

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

#### INTERDISCIPLINARY

When evaluating a child who presents for medical attention, a thorough history and physical examination usually helps determine a differential diagnosis. If child abuse is considered in the differential diagnosis, medical professionals are mandated to report their suspicions to their state registry. As child abuse has known long-term health consequences therefore reducing abuse is a desired public health goal.<sup>1</sup> Medical professionals who care for children also have an ethical responsibility when suspecting abuse to think carefully about diseases that mimic child abuse so patients receive appropriate medical care and families are protected from the social and legal ramifications of a misdiagnosis.<sup>2</sup> This workshop will review unusual, interesting and sometimes bizarre cases of suspected abuse that presented for medical evaluation. Some cases were mimics of abuse. However, the ultimate diagnoses relied on a multidisciplinary approach and the cooperation of medical providers with community partners (child protective services and law enforcement).

#### Speaker



**Debra Esernio-Jenssen**  
Child Abuse Pediatrician | Retired

#### Co-speaker



**Barbara Knox**  
Chief Center for Child Protection | Division of Child Protection & Forensic Pediatrics

### The Implementation of a No-Hit Zone in an Urban Homeless Shelter

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

#### CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

#### CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

#### POLICY AND ADVOCACY

#### PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

No Hit Zones (NHZs) are public places in which "No adult shall hit a child. No child shall hit another child. No adult shall hit another adult. No child shall hit an adult". The NHZ policy originally arose in a pediatric outpatient clinic and has subsequently been implemented in a variety of other medical and nonmedical settings. This session will describe the impetus for the implementation of a NHZ in an urban homeless shelter, its objective to create a safe environment for the children, families, and staff, and compare it to the shelter's policy on Intimate Partner Violence. Additionally, parent's opinions about the NHZ policy will be examined, as well as the process of teaching the parents residing at the shelter normal child developmental behaviors, alternatives to hitting, and the importance of maintaining their own mental health. Steps for implementing a NHZ and links to resources will also be discussed.

#### Speaker



**Ellen Chiocca**

Assistant Professor | University of Missouri School of Nursing

### Unveiling the evil at his fingertips: It was never just images.

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

**HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES**

**INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION**

CyberTips are regularly received by ICAC Detectives; however, in 2021, the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation reached out to detectives at a municipal law enforcement agency stating, 'Hey, I'm sending you a CyberTip. This one is hard to watch. Don't have the volume on'. The handle 'MK Ultra' would ultimately be identified as the suspect but he was not who they thought he was. A juvenile at the time, MK Ultra's fascination with radical ideologies along with his idolizing figures such as Peter Scully (sadist), James 'Bart' Husky (sado-masochist) and Caleb Merritt (child abductor and rapist) required the detective to view brutal images and videos which were ultimately deemed 'hard to watch' due to involving child torture and child death. Due to the extreme nature of these images, this detective was forced to find creative solutions to find balance between the need to be cognizant of his exposure to viewing these images with the clock running until he was able to scrutinize the images in order to reach probable cause due to legislative limitations when the perpetrator is a juvenile. Through extensive collaboration and coordination with law enforcement not only across the United States but also internationally, and consultation with the FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit, the detective's creative solutions resulted in a conviction in Federal Court for Sexual Exploitation of Minors.

#### Speaker



**Abraham Basco**

Detective | Winston-Salem Police Department

#### Break

2:30 PM – 3:00 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

### Opening and Welcome Plenary's

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

#### Opening Plenary - Championing Wellness and Safe Zones

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

#### Speakers



**Troy Vincent, Sr.**

Executive Vice President of Football Operations | National Football League (NFL)



**Tommi Vincent**

#### Opening Plenary - Evidence in Action: Translating the Latest Research into Best Practices

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

#### Speaker



**Lisa Jones**

Research Assoc Professor Psychology | Univ of New Hampshire - Crimes Against Children Rsrch Center

#### Opening Plenary - Exploring Innovative Solutions to the Explosion of Online Sexual Abuse

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

#### Speaker



**Mary Pulido**

World Childhood Foundation USA | Executive Director

#### Opening Plenary - State of the Organization

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

#### Speaker



**Darrell Armstrong**

President & Pastor | Shiloh CDC & Shiloh Baptist Church

### Awards, Reception and Poster Presentations (Poster sessions are not eligible for CME Credit)

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM | Location: Waterbury and Lagniappe

#### Poster - "The hardest thing I've ever done. The best thing I've ever done": Ecological factors impacting identity development in foster parents

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

**CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE**

**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS**

The objective of this presentation is to increase awareness around factors contributing to foster parent identity development and consider how this understanding can contribute to foster parent workforce



development, recruitment, and retention. Guided by thirty-one interviews of current foster parents, results are organized around ecological systems theory. Within foster parent *microsystems*, foster parents identified the impact of relationship quality and degree of support from foster children and their birth families, agency workers, immediate and extended family, and self on their approach to fostering. In *mesosystems*, foster parents described the degree of success foster families could work with others such as birth families, caseworkers, and informal support systems to enhance their functioning as a foster parent. The *exosystem* highlighted how interactions external to the foster family, such as experiences within court or birth parent connections to treatment systems, influenced their approach to fostering. The *macrosystem* explored influences of culture, societal narratives around foster care, policy, and religion on fostering. The *chronosystem* delved into how human development, trauma history, considerations for the future, and current events impacted foster parents. Given the results, the child welfare system and policymakers should identify funding, education, and support that address foster parent needs to ensure foster parent stability and longevity within the field.

#### Speaker



Megan Allbright-Campos

Doctoral Student | Ohio State University

### Poster - Empowering Caregivers, From Historically Underserved Ethnically Diverse Communities, Through Inclusion of Positive and Productive Coaching Groups, in No Hit Zones

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HEALTHCARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The Audrey Hepburn Children's House (AHCH) at Hackensack Meridian Health (HMH), the largest health network in New Jersey, successfully established the No Hit Zone (NHZ) program throughout the HMH network by promoting painless/productive parenting among team members, guests, and local community partners. NHZ utilizes educational sessions, eye-catching materials, and practical approaches to encourage healthy interpersonal relationships to reduce violence in homes and communities. The HMH NHZ expanded the foundation of the NHZ program to incorporate positive/productive parent coaching. Coaching groups support caregivers identify emotional, cultural, and historical components of their caregiving behaviors. Caregivers are validated when exploring their caregiving patterns and subsequently provided with emotional and behavioral techniques to support non physical and emotionally healthy discipline. Through partnerships with Head Start programs the HMH NHZ program was initiated throughout ethnically diverse communities, where prevention services are typically less accessible. Data was collected examining the impact of the community awareness and positive/productive parent coaching group components of the program. The poster presentation effort is to share with other professionals how to effectively establish, maintain and expand the NHZ program to benefit ethnically diverse communities who traditionally do not have access to mental and/or behavioral health services.

#### Speaker



Brett Biller

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

#### Co-speaker



Maria Juliana David

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

### Poster - Associations Between Maternal History of Child Abuse and Later Child Abuse Risk Toward Sons and Daughters Across Time

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

Child abuse risk can be shaped by a parent's own history of abuse, but such risk could be expressed differently toward sons and daughters. This study examined how history of maternal abuse was associated with later child abuse risk. A sample of culturally diverse mothers ( $N=201$ ; 47% African-American) was recruited in the last trimester of pregnancy and reported their history of psychological and physical abuse. Abuse risk toward their child was then measured at 18 months and age 4 via explicit self-report of psychological and physical aggression and an analog task designed to capture abuse risk implicitly. For daughters, mothers' psychological abuse history predicted increased psychological and physical aggression at 18 months and age 4 but not implicit abuse risk; physical abuse history was associated with psychological and physical aggression at 18 months, but only psychological abuse and the implicit risk measure at age 4. For sons, mothers' psychological and physical abuse histories were linked to both forms of abuse at 18 months, but not by age 4. This suggests maternal abuse history increases abuse risk with more consistent findings across time for daughters. The association may be less pronounced over time for sons, possibly due to gender-specific underlying mechanisms, highlighting that child gender may play an important role in how abuse history influences abuse risk. Prevention programs may need to account for child gender and age to mitigate child abuse risk.

#### Speaker



Jewelina Fairchild

Student | Virginia Consortium Program in Clinical Psychology

#### Co-speaker



Christina Rodriguez

Professor & Director of Clinical Training | Old Dominion University, Virginia Consortium Program in Clinical Psychology

### Poster - Do family conflicts matter more to child prosocial behavior than parental mental health?

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Reducing physical fights and verbal aggression, and maintaining parental mental health, are all crucial for fostering child prosocial behavior. However, the combined influence of these family factors on child prosocial behavior remains unclear. Using data from the 2019 and 2021 Panel Study of Income Dynamics, this study used latent profile analysis to identify patterns in family conflicts and parental psychological distress ( $n=1,134$ ). Family conflict was measured by parent-reported agreement with using fights or verbal attacks to settle arguments, while psychological distress was assessed using the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale. Child prosocial behavior was measured by summing scores from the Child Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. The relationship between these patterns and child prosocial behavior was then analyzed using a mixed-effects model. Child prosocial behavior did not improve in our models unless verbal aggression between family members was also reduced, even when physical fights and parental psychological distress were lessened. This suggests that meaningful improvements in prosocial behavior require reductions in verbal conflict within the family. The study highlights the need for holistic interventions that address both family conflict and parental mental health, rather than targeting these issues in isolation, to effectively promote child prosocial behavior.



#### Speaker



**Jesse Helton**

Associate Professor | St. Louis University

#### Co-speaker



**Jun-Hong Chen**

Assistant Professor | Saint Louis University

### Poster - Assessing Trauma Symptoms in Child Survivors of Sexual Abuse: Before and During Participation in a Trauma Recovery Program

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

#### MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

Statistics show that 1 in 10 children experience child sexual abuse (CSA) before the age of 18. CSA is strongly linked to a range of psychosocial and health-related outcomes, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Given the high prevalence of CSA and its lasting impact on children's well-being, it is crucial to examine how children personally report and experience trauma symptoms, particularly in the context of therapeutic interventions. This study aimed to explore children's self-reported trauma symptoms before and during participation in a Trauma Recovery Program. Specifically, we examined the effects of Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) on trauma symptoms in children who had experienced sexual abuse. Preliminary results indicate that children who presented with more severe trauma symptoms at the outset of the program continued to experience higher levels of trauma after 12 weeks of TF-CBT. However, while the changes were not statistically significant, there was a general trend indicating that, overall, children reported fewer trauma symptoms after completing 12 weeks of therapy. These findings suggest that while TF-CBT may reduce trauma symptoms over time, more research is needed to understand the variability in symptom reduction, especially among children with more severe initial trauma experiences.

#### Speaker



**Nicole Lim**

Assistant Director of Program Evaluations | New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

### Poster - Differences in Adult Attachment Styles by Physical and Emotional Sibling Violence in Childhood

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

#### CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

#### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The association between physical and emotional sibling violence (PESV) and adult attachment types of *security*, *pre-occupation*, *dismissiveness*, and *fearfulness* remains unclear despite the need to understand this connection.

Participants (n=2458) were recruited through Reddit asked about experiences with PESV in childhood (Perkins, 2014) as well as different attachment styles (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) using the Revised Adult Attachment Scale-Close Relationships version (Collins, 1996). Along with demographics, a series of ANOVAs were run to examine differences in attachment styles based on experiencing PESV in childhood.

Participants were 56.3% male and 65% Caucasian with 36.7% having undergraduate degrees and 35.7% having some college/ Associate's degree. The mean age was 27.41. Mean frequency of each type of PESV was highest for *dismissive* and *fearful*, with *secure* having the lowest frequency of PESV, with statistically significant differences between *dismissive & fearful* and *secure* on emotional, physical, and total sibling violence.

PESV may influence attachment in close relationships in adulthood and contribute to insecure attachment types. Future research should examine how PESV impacts one's ability to relate with others in adulthood to better understand prevention and intervention strategies.

#### Speaker



**Ahyun Moon**

PhD Student | Loyola University Chicago

#### Co-speaker



**Nathan H. Perkins**

Associate Professor | Loyola University Chicago, School of Social Work

### Poster - Educational Experiences of Youth in Residential Care Settings

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

#### CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

#### CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

#### POLICY AND ADVOCACY

#### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

**Background and Purpose:** Youth in residential care often experience educational disruptions, lack of continuity in learning environments, and barriers to specialized services. This study aimed to explore the educational experiences of youth in Ohio's residential care, identify challenges, and propose solutions to improve educational outcomes. **Methods:** We developed the Children's Residential Center (CRC) survey to better understand educational service delivery, barriers to service provision, and transitional planning. Qualitative data were collected through interviews with Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and Public Children's Services Agencies (PCSAs). Descriptive statistics were applied to the quantitative survey data, while thematic analysis was used to examine the qualitative data. **Results:** Most CRCs served youth primarily in PCSA custody and receiving services through individualized education plans. Key barriers included delayed educational records transfer, insufficient resources, and lack of trauma-informed training for educators. Interviews highlighted systemic issues, such as unclear responsibilities for educational service coordination and limited support from state agencies. **Conclusions and Implications:** Systemic changes, including improved guidance for educational transitions, increased funding for trauma-informed training, and stronger collaboration between state agencies are needed. Addressing these gaps can enhance educational outcomes.

#### Speaker



**Sarah Parmenter**

Program Manager and Doctoral Candidate | Ohio State University

#### Co-speakers



**Yujeong Chang**

Doctoral student | The Ohio State University, College of Social Work



**Susan Yoon**

Associate Professor | The Ohio State University College of Social Work



**Kathryn Maguire Jack**

## Poster - Exploring Adverse Childhood Experiences in Justice Involved Trans and Cis-gendered Women

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

As research pertaining to the negative effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on health and quality of life continues to proliferate, there has been an increasing number of studies examining their impact on persons who identify as transgender. For example, some research has found that individuals who identify as transgender, reported a higher number of ACEs compared to cisgender individuals, with emotional abuse, physical neglect, and emotional neglect more frequently reported. Additionally, it has been asserted that there may be unique adverse experiences among individuals who identify as transgender due to social stigma (see Baggio, 2022 & Schnarrs et al., 2019; 2022; 2023 for more information). Despite the increasing research in this area however, very little is known about the ACEs of justice involved transgender women. The current study examined a sample comprised of two groups of justice involved individuals; transgender females and cisgendered females to explore possible differences between the number and types of ACEs experienced. Results indicate that primary prevention strategies are required to mitigate the impact of ACEs.

#### Speaker



**Dawn Pflugradt**

Psychologist | Comprehensive Health Law Services

#### Co-speaker



**Bradley Allen**

Chapter 980 Evaluator | SRSTC

## Poster - Impacts of Work-Related Stress and Subsequent Coping Responses Among Forensic Interviewers in Children's Advocacy Centers

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

### CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

### FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

### LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

### INTERDISCIPLINARY

The work of forensic interviewers (FIs) is critical to ensuring the safety of children in the U.S., but this weighty responsibility brings with it a high degree of work-related stress, subsequently placing this population at high risk of burnout, secondary traumatic stress, and compassion fatigue. Currently however, there is a dearth of research focused specifically on role features and occupational experiences unique to the FI workforce, wherein studies investigating the work-related stress and burnout experiences of this population are particularly lacking. Utilizing a phenomenological analytical approach, the present qualitative study seeks to bridge this gap in the literature, by increasing understanding of the personal and professional impacts of work-related stress on FIs working in Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) throughout the U.S. Participating FIs were asked to respond to three open-ended questions, and responses were analyzed using a six-stage thematic analysis process. Several key themes emerged illustrating how the nature of FI roles within CACs, including both internal and external features of workers' organizational contexts, can both directly and indirectly influence stress experiences and subsequent coping responses amongst this workforce. Results imply the need for future studies which develop and/or adapt strategies that effectively support FI functioning and well-being, which can subsequently improve retention of this workforce by employing CACs.

#### Speaker



**Rebecca Phillips**

Assistant Professor of Sociology & Social Work Program Lead | Western Oregon University

#### Co-speaker



**Oliver Beer**

Associate Professor | University of Plymouth

## Poster - Perceptions and Expectations About Child Sexual Abuse

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

### CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

### INTERDISCIPLINARY

To reduce the occurrence of child sexual abuse (CSA), research has examined factors such as indicators, perpetrator and survivor characteristics, and intervention strategies of CSA. However, people's beliefs about CSA are not always consistent with research on CSA. The limited research examining people's expectations regarding CSA reveals varying beliefs about perpetrators and survivors of abuse and the abuse itself (Cromer & Goldsmith, 2010; Gewirtz-Meydan & Finkelhor, 2020; Livingston et al., 2024). But this is only a small portion of the expectations that may exist for CSA. It is important to understand people's expectations of CSA as they might misidentify instances of CSA that are inconsistent with their schemas. We examined people's expectations about CSA. Participants answered questions regarding their perceptions of perpetrators and survivors of CSA (e.g., relative/nonrelative, age, etc.) and how they believed the abuse occurred (e.g., modality, length of abuse). Data reveals similarities and discrepancies between people's expectations and research about CSA. Further analysis and interpretation will be discussed. These discrepancies can lead to misperceptions of CSA, resulting in misidentification and continuation of abuse. Also, despite these similarities, there are still high rates of CSA occurring. By identifying people's expectations of abuse, we might be better able to inform them about instances of CSA outside their schemas to further reduce the rates of CSA.

#### Speaker



**Kayla Spenard**

Graduate Student | Sam Houston State University

## Poster - Getting in The Door: The Relationship Between Referral Source and First Appointment Attendance for Traumatized Youth and Families

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

Over two-thirds of youth in the United States experience at least one traumatic event by age 16<sup>1</sup>, with 10-33% developing posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health problems.<sup>2,3</sup> Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)<sup>4</sup> is a phase-based treatment shown in over 25 randomized controlled trials to reduce symptoms of PTSD, depression, and anxiety in traumatized youth.<sup>5,6,7</sup> Factors such as lack of transportation and financial barriers, mental health professional shortages, and stigma impact families' participation in therapy.<sup>8,9,10</sup> Another factor that may impact trauma treatment attendance is referral source. A positive alliance between therapist and client is a strong predictor of treatment attendance.<sup>11,12</sup> Therefore, the relationship between prospective client and the referral source may also impact attendance, particularly to a first appointment.

A Chi-Square test of independence was conducted to examine the relationship between referral source and whether individuals started therapy or not. The relation between these variables was significant,  $\chi^2(4, N = 606) = 15.725, p = .003$ . This indicates that the referral source is associated with whether or not a person started therapy. The Family Advocacy Center had the highest percentage of therapy starters (46.2%), while CPS had the lowest (25.9%).

#### Speaker



**Alyssa Williamson**

Doctoral Fellow | Child HELP Partnership

#### Co-speakers



**Olivia Fiallo**

Doctoral Fellow/Student | ChildHELP Partnership/St. John's University



**Gabriella Nicolosi**

### Poster - Addressing the Shortage of Foster Placements for Adolescents with Behavioral Challenges

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The shortage of foster placements for adolescents with behavioral challenges is a critical issue in child welfare. These youth, often dealing with trauma and mental health disorders, face significant barriers to finding stable homes. Many foster families feel unprepared to manage their complex needs, leading to placement disruptions. This shortage is worsened by a lack of specialized resources and inadequate support for foster families.

Frequent moves deepen adolescents' trauma, increasing the risk of negative outcomes such as school failure, juvenile justice involvement, and aging out without family support. Solutions include better trauma-informed training for foster families, expanding therapeutic foster care, and increasing access to mental health services. Stable, trauma-informed placements are essential to promoting healing and stability for these vulnerable youth.

#### Speaker



**Amanda Young**

Student | California Baptist University

### Poster - Breaking the Intergenerational Cycle of Child Sexual Abuse

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

#### Speakers



**Sebastian Del Corral Winder**

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



**Amy Clomburg**

Assistant Professor of Psychiatry-Clinical | LSUHSC

### Poster - Lessons Learned: Implementing Evidence-Based Practices in Child Welfare Systems Under FFPSA

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

This research explores lessons learned across nine states implementing evidence-based practices (EBPs) within their child welfare systems under the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). Through a qualitative, peer-learning approach, focus groups were conducted with child welfare leaders to examine key challenges, successes, and strategies related to EBP implementation, funding utilization, workforce training, and fidelity monitoring. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and actionable insights for policy and practice. Findings reveal that states employing phased EBP rollouts experienced fewer disruptions, while others faced workforce shortages and inconsistent referrals. Medicaid billing complexities and restrictive eligibility criteria limited sustainability, prompting innovative funding solutions, such as per diem models and alternative local funding streams. Successful strategies included cross-agency collaboration, targeted workforce coaching, and technical assistance to improve data tracking and fidelity adherence. These findings provide critical insights for policymakers and practitioners navigating FFPSA implementation. A phased, flexible approach to funding, training, and implementation can mitigate barriers, enhance sustainability, and maximize outcomes for families. By fostering cross-state collaboration and shared learning, child welfare systems can advance prevention-focused strategies and improve service delivery under FFPSA.

#### Speaker



**Amy Vargo**

Research Assistant Professor | University of South Florida

### Poster - From Practice to Research: Evaluation of Community-Based Prevention Programs

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

Community-based child welfare organizations across the country continue to develop and implement programs to promote positive outcomes for families at risk of abuse, neglect, and child removal based on best-practice and the culturally diverse needs and strengths of their community. As these organizations strive to provide families with effective services, there has been a lack of rigorous evaluation

associated with implementation. This presentation will discuss using a mixed method approach that combines implementation analysis with quasi-experimental design that is aligned with the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) requirements to examine the impact of intensive family preservation, prevention and intervention programs. Examples of program evaluation conducted by the research team will be shared including potential challenges, methods, and findings.

#### Speaker



**Cathy Sowell**

Clinical Social Worker | University of South Florida

#### Poster - Punishment to Progress: Using Innovate Policymaking to End School Corporal Punishment

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this poster, I will discuss our policy efforts to end corporal punishment in Kentucky schools. In the 2017-18 school year, there were 452 incidents of school corporal punishment in Kentucky. Through a multi-pronged effort of state and local advocacy, advocates found a policy loophole that would encourage all 171 school districts to end the harmful practice. For the first time in recent history, there zero incidents of corporal punishment in last school year in Kentucky. The poster will discuss successes, challenges, and recommendations for child advocates. In this poster, I will discuss our policy efforts to end corporal punishment in Kentucky schools. In the 2017-18 school year, there were 452 incidents of school corporal punishment in Kentucky. Through a multi-pronged effort of state and local advocacy, advocates found a policy loophole that would encourage all 171 school districts to end the harmful practice. For the first time in recent history, there zero incidents of corporal punishment in last school year in Kentucky. The poster will discuss successes, challenges, and recommendations for child advocates.

#### Speaker



**Alex Young**

Student | University of Notre Dame

#### Poster - Creating a Public Facing Dynamic Literature Map to Advance the Science in Child Maltreatment

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

Child maltreatment is a significant and global public health concern with a complex array of causes and consequences. Identifying the most impactful modifiable factors at all levels of the ecosystem and navigating the multidisciplinary literature that accompanies such complex and dynamic problems pose significant challenges for policymakers, practitioners, students, and researchers. This project addresses this problem by creating a public-facing dynamic literature map that provides an accessible summary of knowledge across disciplines. This poster presents the process of and outcome of a novel application of Group Model Building (GMB), a systems science method, combined with a vast scoping review. The project began by creating a mental "map" of child maltreatment based on GMB workshops with numerous academic and field practitioner experts. This map was then revised by and integrated with empirical evidence from over 300 review articles. The integrated map provides three layers of knowledge. At the highest level, a schematic map outlines nine domains related to child maltreatment. The second layer details the hypothesized dynamics within each domain, showing the interconnections of key constructs. The third layer provides summary descriptions of constructs and links. The result of this multi-year process of integrating qualitative and quantitative insights is an interactive visual mapping tool designed to help summarize knowledge across disciplines to advance science to prevent and address outcomes of maltreatment.

#### Speakers



**Sinko Wang**

PhD Student, LSW | Brown School, Washington University



**Ghufuran Alghafli**

Poster presenter | Center for Innovation in Child Maltreatment Policy, Research and Training

#### Poster - The Physician's Role in Ending Modern Day Slavery: Human Trafficking

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

HEALTHCARE

Human trafficking is modern day slavery, and physicians play a pivotal role in ending this pandemic. Unfortunately, there is a lack of knowledge and awareness among physicians regarding how to identify and help victims of human trafficking.

The purpose of this study was to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of a brief educational intervention on human trafficking for physicians at a large, highly-ranked academic medical center.

#### Speaker



**Marissa McChesney, MD**

Pediatric Resident | Mayo Clinic

#### Poster - Implementation of a Skills-Based Secondary Traumatic Stress Program among a Diverse Multi-Disciplinary Team

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM

HEALTHCARE

This poster presentation will present data on the implementation of an innovative skills-based secondary traumatic stress program implemented in the Pediatric Public Health Department of a large Children's Hospital. The program is delivered to a diverse multi-disciplinary team that includes child abuse pediatricians, mental health providers, home visitors, and many more. Topics discussed during the monthly skills groups include: incorporating coping skills into the workday, reducing rumination, emotional availability and reducing avoidance, cognitive coping skills, and many more.

The poster will present results regarding the feasibility and acceptability of a monthly skills group to address vicarious trauma. Additionally, results highlight the positive impact the program can have on professional wellbeing. Of the 24 respondents to a feedback evaluation on the program:

- 96% reported they have implemented the skills learned during the program
- 88% reported they agree or strongly agree that the program has had a positive impact on their professional life
- 92% reported they agree or strongly agree that the program helped them make their needs and mental well-being a priority.
- 92% reported the program was more effect than other workplace wellbeing initiatives that have been implemented within the department and institution wide
- 92% reported they agree or strongly agree that the program is meaningful

This poster presentation will offer the opportunity for fruitful discussions regarding the lessons learned, strategies implemented, and resources needed to implement a program to address secondary traumatic stress and improving workforce resilience.

#### Speakers



**Mackenzie Hughes**

Assistant Professor and Clinical Psychologist | Baylor College of Medicine/Texas Children's Hospital



**Cassandra Vigil**

Data Analyst | Texas Children's Hospital

### Poster - Fostering Success: Empowering Former Foster Youth Through Higher Education Initiatives

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM | Location: Waterbury and Lagniappe

#### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This poster, "Fostering Success: Empowering Former Foster Youth Through Higher Education Initiatives," examines the significant challenges former foster youth face when pursuing higher education, highlighting issues like educational instability, limited college preparation, and mental health struggles. The phenomenological research presented identifies systemic gaps, including insufficient academic preparation, inadequate guidance on funding resources, and barriers during the transition into college. In response, The Village Project (TVP) was established, offering tailored support through monthly resource-focused gatherings, peer-led community-building sessions, and comprehensive programs addressing students' academic, social, and emotional needs. Initial outcomes demonstrate improved retention, mental health, and academic success among participants. Expansion to additional Illinois universities and collaborations with community-based organizations underscore the importance of community partnerships in enhancing program effectiveness. The poster emphasizes the need for sustained holistic support to ensure former foster youth can overcome barriers and achieve college graduation and career success.

#### Speaker



**Dr. Sharva Hampton-Campbell**

Director of The Village Project | University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

### Poster - Violence During Childhood: Findings from the VEX 2023 Survey with Louisiana and California Adults

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM | Location: Waterbury and Lagniappe

#### PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

#### POLICY AND ADVOCACY

#### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study provides state-representative descriptive statistics on experiences of violence in childhood using data from the Violence Experiences (VEX) surveys, conducted in California and Louisiana in 2023. VEX is led by Newcomb Institute in partnership with UC San Diego and NORC at the University of Chicago to conduct semi-annual statewide surveys on experiences of violence and mental health with adults using online survey data. Prevalence data from this study were weighted to yield population-representative statistics from each state. For Louisiana, physical violence was experienced by 12% of women in childhood (0-10) and adolescence (11-17), respectively, and 19% and 29% of men in childhood and adolescence, respectively; sexual violence was experienced by 8% of women in childhood and 21% of women in adolescence, where it was experienced by 6% of men in childhood and 14% of men in adolescence. Similar prevalence levels were seen in California. We found that family were more often perpetrators of physical violence in childhood, where peers were more common perpetrators in adolescence. Women are more likely than men to report partners as perpetrators of physical and sexual violence in adolescence. Findings demonstrate that violence against children is pervasive and presents in gender-specific ways, highlighting the need for gender tailored prevention.

#### Speaker



**Aditi Morumganti**

Research Intern | Newcomb Institute, Tulane University

## Tuesday, June 24, 2025

### Registration and Exhibits

7:30 AM – 5:00 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

### Keynote - It's Not Rocket Science: Preventing School Employee Sexual Misconduct

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

#### Speaker



**Charol Shakeshaft**

Distinguished Professor | Virginia Commonwealth University

### Break

9:45 AM – 10:15 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

### Esmeralda // Thinking Through the Impacts of Trauma

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

#### PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

Building on the success of the short film *Esmeralda*, co-produced by APSAC, this powerful narrative delves into the complex cycle of intergenerational recidivism associated with child sexual abuse, past traumas, survival, and forgiveness. The film has resonated deeply with audiences worldwide, earning selections in over 20 prestigious film festivals.

We are thrilled to introduce an in-depth training inspired by this compelling case study, developed by an exceptional team of professionals: Dr. Rocio Chang, Ingrid Muerrle, Hannah Grossman, and Andrea Ocampo whose objective is to provide a theoretical framework to conceptualize the impact of sexual abuse at the individual, family and community level, to increase awareness of defining sexual abuse as well as to explore prevention and treatment options.

#### Speaker



**Jennifer Greco**  
Film Director | NYU

#### Co-speaker



**Rocio Chang**  
Assistant Professor | University of Connecticut

### A Trauma-Informed Approach: It Starts with You! (This session is not eligible for CME Credit)

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE FORENSIC INTERVIEWING FORENSIC INTERVIEWING ADVANCED  
HEALTHCARE INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION INTERDISCIPLINARY

Approximately 1 in 3 females and 1 in 6 males have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime. However, around 67.5% of victims do not report their victimization to law enforcement. This presentation will provide attendees with information on the neurobiology of trauma and investigative strategies to respond to crimes in a victim centered, trauma informed manner. This 90-minute interactive lecture will discuss real case studies starting at the reporting and investigative stages through the medical-forensic treatment and long term follow-up.

Working in Baltimore, they are experienced in interacting with diverse populations, ensuring to be sensitive to cultural beliefs and values. Utilizing a multidisciplinary response is considered best practice as it provides a collaborative, victim-centered response to sensitive crimes by reducing the potential for revictimization and begins the process of healing both physically and emotionally. These two presenters have a long history of working together and collaborating on complex cases involving sexual assault, sexual abuse, and human trafficking, ensuring that victims of all ages receive the best care possible. They have presented on the local, regional, and national scale and enjoy sharing this important information with others working in the field of child abuse.

#### Speaker



**Laura Clary**  
Director | GBMC SAFE, Domestic Violence & Child Protection Program

#### Co-speaker



**Scott Kilpatrick**  
Detective | Baltimore County Police Department

### He loved to laugh: A child's journey to justice

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

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION INTERDISCIPLINARY

Almost a decade ago law enforcement responded to a home where a two (2) year old had been found unresponsive in a bathtub. The child was transported to the hospital but never regained consciousness, dying three days later. Due to the nature of the incident, detectives responded the day the child was initially found and were met immediately, with resistance from the adult occupants of the residence which included their negative influence over the child witnesses. The young children were told that the police were scary and would hurt them. Additionally, they were given specific instruction to not speak to police. As updated information was received from medical personnel at the treating hospital, the gravity and extent of the two-year-old's practically full-body injuries confirmed this was not accidental. Faced with the knowledge that there was a good possibility the other children in the home witnessed what happened to the victim, coupled with the obstacle of how to obtain interviews with those child witnesses, detectives were forced to come up with creative solutions to overcome a child's reluctance to share information in order to achieve justice for this child. Throughout the investigation they did not focus on the negative but rather remembering, 'he loved to laugh'.

#### Speaker



**Jennifer Dobey**  
Sergeant | Winston-Salem Police Department

### Lost in Translation? Considerations for Interpreter-Mediated Forensic Interviews

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

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING FORENSIC INTERVIEWING ADVANCED HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION  
LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING POLICY AND ADVOCACY RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS INTERDISCIPLINARY

The use of an interpreter in forensic interviews is a critical skill requiring precision, cultural sensitivity, and adherence to legal standards. This presentation will cover:

**Overview of Forensic Interviews:** A look into the purpose and structure of interviews involving children who are potential victims or witnesses.

**Role of the Interpreter:** Ensuring accurate, neutral communication between the child and interviewer, without influencing the child's responses.

#### Challenges in Interpretation:

- **Language Barriers:** Addressing dialects, regional variations, and cultural nuances that may impact interpretation.
- **Emotional Sensitivity:** Managing emotional content to ensure the child feels understood without altering meaning.
- **Legal and Ethical Considerations:** Recognizing the legal impact of errors and remaining unbiased.

#### Best Practices for Interpreters:

- **Preparation:** Understanding the case background and the child's language needs.
- **Active Listening and Clarification:** Ensuring accurate communication while avoiding leading the child.
- **Collaboration with the Interviewer:** Promoting clear, culturally appropriate questions.



**Case Studies:** Real-world examples highlighting challenges and effective strategies in interpreter-mediated forensic interviews.

**Conclusion and Recommendations:** Emphasizing the critical role of interpreters in safeguarding the integrity of forensic interviews, with strategies for improving practice and support.

#### Speaker



**Erika Dupepe**

Executive Director | Jefferson Children's Advocacy Center

### Child Welfare Professional Development Panel (Young American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children YAPSAC)

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

INTERDISCIPLINARY

The workshop will include a diverse panel of entry-level and seasoned professionals speaking candidly on their experience working in various child welfare fields and answering questions about building their careers. Panelists will discuss their field of study, career trajectory, professional successes and pitfalls. Additionally, panelists and YAPSAC hosts will discuss interview and recruitment tips, and strategies to help participants succeed in their next professional interview

#### Speaker



**Leslie Brand**

Consultant | Founder & President- Brand New Vision Consulting

#### Co-speaker



**Trevor Raushi**

Assistant Vice President | The New York Foundling

### Pitfalls and Cautions in the Reform of Child Welfare Services

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

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

There is no doubt that historically, Child Welfare Services (CWS) have been underfunded and under resourced. In addition, while CWS may have admirable child protection values and goals, these agencies often embody cultural attitudes which result in bias and disparities, while failing to support the children in their care. Reform is overdue. The Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018 aimed to provide services to families who are at risk of entering the child welfare system by preventing children from entering foster care through expanded federal funding for mental health services, substance use treatment, and in-home parenting skill training. It has catalyzed a nationwide movement to reform CWS in what is reported as "general neglect," who and how mandatory reporting is done, and divert at risk children and families from CWS and the courts to community services.

These reforms must be thoughtfully designed with child safety first. A cautionary case will be presented where the policy of family preservation resulted in the death of an infant.

Several recommended reforms will be discussed. They tend to be admirable, but impractical, partial, have far reaching secondary effects, or be ill considered. Successful reforms will require open and sophisticated interdisciplinary dialogue.

#### Speakers



**Jeffrey Gordon**

Physician | California Citizens Review Panel - Critical Incidents



**Romero Davis**

Director of Child and Family Well-being | Social Current

### ""Distribution Abuse"" – Do Parents and School Officials Really Need to View CSAM?"

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

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

Law enforcement officers assess child sexual abuse material (CSAM) images to determine if they meet statute for Criminal charges for the possession, production, or distribution of child pornography. In conducting their investigation, they often interview parents and other family members. School officials may also deal with similar issues in a different context: when images are discovered from youths taking and transmitting pornographic pictures of themselves. This workshop discusses the challenges for these professionals and proposes guidelines for handling these situations while respecting youth's rights and avoiding additional trauma.

We address the following questions: Should law enforcement officers show CSAM images to parents or guardians of the child victim for investigative purposes? Are there ways to complete law enforcement's necessary investigative interviews with parents with parents or others without involving the abused child? How should school officials handle "sexting" situations? Should they show the images to parents? Are there any circumstances that would allow peripherally involved adults to view or distribute "sexted" CSAM images in matters not involving the criminal justice system? The workshop draws from the presenters' work in developing an APSAC position statement that is currently under review by its Board of Directors.

#### Speaker



**Paul Graf**

Independent Consultant, Child Abuse Investigative and Legal Matters | Self Employed

#### Co-speaker



**Theodore Cross**

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

### Child Torture as a form of Child Abuse: A Guide for Recognition and Response for Front Line Professionals

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

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This presentation discusses severe child maltreatment consistent with torture from a law enforcement perspective. An in-depth analysis



of offender, victim and offense characteristics of this type of child abuse will be discussed through the findings of a recent study by the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit and the recent publication of a guide for front line professionals. Through case examples, the presenters will emphasize the need for a multi-disciplinary, specialized approach to child torture investigations due to their unique dynamics.

#### Speaker



**Barbara Knox**

Chief Center for Child Protection | Division of Child Protection & Forensic Pediatrics

#### Co-speaker



**James Hardie**

Supervisory Special Agent | Federal Bureau of Investigation

### Research Session - Re-envisioning Physical Child Abuse Risk: Emerging Evidence for a Dual-Processing Socio-Emotional Information Processing Theory

10:15 AM – 10:45 AM | Location: Nottoway (fourth floor)

#### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Child abuse prevention efforts would benefit from improved identification of the factors contributing to parents' use of physical parent-child aggression (PCA). Moving beyond classical Social Information Processing (SIP) theory of physical child abuse, this presentation will weave together several recent studies that support a Socio-Emotional Information Processing Model with potential dual-processing mechanisms. Data are drawn from a series of studies that examined expansions of the SIP model. For example, emotions have not been adequately tested with the SIP model, but the role of worry and anger were integrated into two studies to demonstrate how they may function; furthermore, the impact of parents' justification for using parent-child aggression to ensure obedience also emerged as critical in accounting for child abuse risk. Data also indicate that some elements may differ for African-American parents, particularly with regard to parental worry, justification for PCA, and approval of PCA use, which may contribute to the limited success of abuse prevention programs for parents of color. Many child abuse prevention program also focus on qualities that reflect cognitive, conscious processing of a discipline situation, whereas additional data also indicate that mothers may react automatically as well, which has not been well considered in programming. How these findings could be applied to better enrich child abuse prevention programs will be discussed.

#### Speaker



**Christina Rodriguez**

Professor & Director of Clinical Training | Old Dominion University, Virginia Consortium Program in Clinical Psychology

#### Co-speaker



**Jewelian Fairchild**

Student | Virginia Consortium Program in Clinical Psychology

### Research Session - Knowledge and Practices of Children's Health Care Providers Regarding Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

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

#### CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

Child sexual abuse (CSA) prevention should be a public health priority. Primary care and general mental health settings could provide an opportunity to disseminate information about CSA prevention broadly. However, little is known about the knowledge and practices of pediatricians and child-focused mental health providers (CMHPs) regarding CSA prevention. **Goal:** This study investigated the knowledge and practices of pediatricians and CMHPs regarding CSA prevention. **Methods:** Pediatricians and CMHPs ( $n = 101$ ) were recruited in 15 states in the US. Participants completed a survey investigating their knowledge of and practices regarding CSA prevention. **Results:** CMHPs and pediatricians were both knowledgeable about CSA. However, CMHPs were most likely to engage in CSA-related conversations with children (and their caregivers) who were at relatively high risk of victimization. Moreover, they discussed more CSA prevention strategies with patients. In contrast, pediatricians reported engaging in CSA-related conversations with a broader range of patients but included fewer prevention recommendations in their discussions. **Conclusion:** The findings provide preliminary information about current knowledge and practices of pediatricians and CMHPs regarding CSA prevention. Given that pediatricians have limited time to discuss prevention with their patients, behavioral health providers may be well suited to engage in more extended conversations with patients and their caregivers.

#### Speaker



**Cassandra Dukes**

student | Western Michigan University

#### Co-speaker



**Amy Damashek**

Professor | Western Michigan University

### Roundtable sessions are not eligible for CME Credit

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

### Roundtable - Empowering Higher Education to End Child Maltreatment: The CAST Initiative

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

#### CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

#### CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

#### LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

#### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

#### INTERDISCIPLINARY

Child Advocacy Studies (CAST) is a groundbreaking higher education curriculum that addresses the urgent need for child maltreatment education across various disciplines. Developed in 2004, CAST provides professionals with evidence-based training, preparing them to identify, prevent, and respond to child abuse. Now implemented in over 90 institutions across 30 states, CAST equips students in fields such as Social Work, Education, Criminal Justice, Law, and Healthcare with the skills needed to protect vulnerable children.

This workshop will focus on CAST's role as a transformative academic program, exploring its development, research-backed foundation, and deployment options in higher education. Attendees will examine key studies that demonstrate CAST's impact on learner preparedness, showing how it meets the demand for professionals trained in maltreatment prevention and response. Participants will also gain insights into how CAST can be integrated into institutions, from offering it as a minor or certificate to embedding it within existing programs.

The session will also highlight resources from Zero Abuse Project to support seamless CAST implementation. By bridging the gap between education and workforce needs, CAST empowers higher education to play a critical role in safeguarding children, making it essential for colleges and universities committed to addressing child protection.

#### Co-speaker



**Theodore Cross**

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

#### Speaker



**Nicole Davis**

Program Manager | Zero Abuse Project

### Roundtable - Preparing the Workforce: A Conversation about Building Trainee Competency in Working with Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

HEALTHCARE

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

Childhood sexual abuse (CSA) has pervasive psychological consequences for survivors. Despite the prevalence of CSA, the literature reveals that trauma training at the graduate level remains inconsistent and unsatisfying for students, particularly around treatment approaches for survivors. A Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) in a large metropolitan area has provided a unique clinical training experience to advanced pre- and post-doctoral trainees in working with children and adolescents who have reported CSA. The CAC's patient population is largely underserved, with many patients lacking adequate insurance coverage, and many patients coming from historically marginalized communities. Trainees receive weekly didactics, as well as experience engaging in interprofessional collaboration, including law enforcement, child advocates, and medical professionals. The proposed roundtable will provide an overview of a training model in a CAC from both trainee and supervisor perspectives, including outlining benefits and challenges. Special attention will be paid to topics including barriers to providing training with this population; provision of culturally sensitive, evidence-based therapy to survivors; and how training relates to prevention work. Participants will be invited to engage in strategic problem solving and idea generation regarding opportunities, implications, and recommendations for building competency among graduate trainees in working with survivors of CSA.

#### Speaker



**Maggie Gigler**

Licensed Psychologist | UCLA Santa Monica Medical Center—Stuart House

#### Co-speaker



**Linda Escobar-Olszewski**

Health Sciences Assistant Clinical Professor, Step I | David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA

### Roundtable - Mental Illness and Child Maltreatment: Reality vs. Misconceptions

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This discussion will be led by a forensic psychiatrist who is also a maternal mental health psychiatrist and professor; and a child abuse pediatrician and researcher. Mental illness diagnosis is often considered a risk factor for child maltreatment. To date, the intersection of mental illness and child maltreatment is based on studies which have neither considered the vast differences between various mental health disorders nor considered whether a parent is in treatment. Furthermore, within psychiatric risk assessments, mental illness is considered a dynamic rather than a static risk factor. For children and families to have the best outcomes, beliefs of child maltreatment professionals should be explored. For example, sometimes various mental health disorders are conflated, yet the general violence risk from personality disorder is very different than risk from postpartum depression or risk from substance use disorders. However, recent research suggests that not only is mental illness a dynamic risk factor for child maltreatment, but that having a mental illness which is treated is actually protective against child maltreatment. This has critical implications for researchers, practitioners, and authorities. On a practical level, the inclusion of maternal mental health or forensic psychiatrists in addition to child maltreatment experts on Child Fatality Review Teams benefits understanding of mental illness and risk.

#### Speaker



**Susan Hatters-Friedman**

The Phillip Resnick Professor of Forensic Psychiatry, Professor of Pediatrics, Reproductive Bio, Law | Case Western Reserve Un...

#### Co-speaker



**Joshua Friedman**

Akron Children's

### Roundtable - The Chemistry of Ethical Self Care

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

This Presentation will review parts of the NASW Code of Ethics that encourage self care among social workers. participants will learn information regarding the response of the brain and body to self care techniques. Participants will learn and practice strategies for healthy self care that they can use themselves and/or share with colleagues, clients and family members. these techniques can be used individually and organizationally.

#### Speaker



**Lisa Jacob, LCSW**

therapist/SWII | Mercy Family Center

### Roundtable - Identifying, Intervening and Preventing Child Exploitation

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Child exploitation is a serious and growing crime. Child exploitation may be one of the most difficult and pressing challenges affecting thousands of minors annually in the United States. The Department of Justice alleges that around one out of five children will be involved in some kind of maltreatment at some point in their lives which can impact their physical and psychological health. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in 2021 received approximately 29.4 million reports of suspected child sexual exploitation.

The effects of exploitation can be devastating and it may take a child or young person some time to deal with what has happened to them. This experience is likely to have a significant impact on their physical health, mental health, educational functioning as well as employment opportunities. Also to be considered is their relationships with family and friends.

Professionals can play a key role in identifying support for these children and young people to help recover from the exploitation they have experienced. This workshop will highlight the need for professionals that work with children and young people to be able to identify the different types of child exploitation, perpetrators and important contact information.

#### Speaker



**Ronald Dolon**

Professor of Social work | Ball State University

### Roundtable - Take Care of Mandatory Reporters: A Discussion on Medical Child Abuse Cases and Their Impacts

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HEALTHCARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

Given the national exposure of the "Take Care of Maya" movie on Netflix, the Kowalski vs. Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital (JHACH) trial, the world is talking about medical child abuse. It is more important than ever that those involved in the field of child abuse are familiar with recognition of red flags, mandatory reporting to Child Protective Services, and the far-reaching effects on survivors in cases of medical child abuse. The Kowalski vs JHACH trial brought to light concerning elements of the mandatory reporting process and potential retaliation for those who report abuse.

The session will focus on the hot topic of medical child abuse, also known as Munchausen by proxy, and its significant effects on victims and mandatory reporters. Media cases and cases seen in the hospital will be utilized to start the conversation about red flags for medical child abuse, reporting of cases to Child Services, legal implications of mandatory reporting, protecting the victim and promoting their ability to become a survivor.

Small groups, with the help of a presentation on the above topics and proctor guidance, will be asked to discuss specific potential cases and their potential impacts. The session will close with final words from a survivor of medical child abuse and time for questions.

#### Speaker



**Rebecca Gill**

Pediatric Hospitalist | Nemours Children's Hospital

### Roundtable - Beyond the Paddle: The Continued Presence of Corporal Punishment in American Schools

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

The use of corporal punishment in schools is a form of socially sanctioned violence against children and constitutes a human rights violation. This practice is associated with many negative physical and psychosocial health outcomes and is also applied disparately to children who are Black, boys, and children with disabilities. It also involves vicarious trauma for the children who hear or see this physical punishment. This presentation will involve a discussion of the negative effects of school corporal punishment and the disparities in its administration. It will also involve a discussion on ways attendees can educate parents and teachers about alternatives to physical punishment to ensure a safe and caring learning environment based on the advocacy work of organizations in the American South, where school corporal punishment is most prevalent.

#### Speaker



**Ellen Chiocca**

Assistant Professor | University of Missouri School of Nursing

### Improving family court response to violence and abuse: Kayden's Law and other policy changes

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Recent child murders and suicides associated with parental alienation (PA) claims in child custody disputes highlight the dangers of PA ideology. Abused children and protective parents are endangered by lawyers and mental health professionals who promote PA as scientifically validated and reliably distinguishable from other causes of resistance to child-parent contact. They convince family courts to give custody or unsupervised access to parents accused of abuse or violence as well as ordering parent reunification treatment/programs, some of which are prohibited under Kayden's Law due to insufficient scientific support for their effectiveness and safety. Presenter Leah Moses endured a 14-year custody dispute during which Leah repeatedly raised her ex-husband's violence toward her, their son Om, and daughter. In the end, a judge ordered full custody of Om to Leah, but she did not learn of that court order until after Om's father had murdered Om and committed suicide. Leah helped lead the passage of Om's Law in Utah modeled after Kayden's Law. Danielle Pollack, co-author of Kayden's Law, will detail its provisions. Jean Mercer will describe several young adults' and parents' experiences with PA claims and reunification programs. Kathryn Spearman will review policy initiatives addressing violence and abuse in family court cases and how the professional enterprise that profits from promoting PA and reunification therapies/programs impacts survivors.

#### Speakers



**David Corwin**

Professor and Director, Forensic Services | University of Utah Pediatrics Dept.



**Kathryn Spearman**

MSN, RN, PhD Student | Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing

#### Co-speakers



**Jean Mercer**

Professor Emerita | Stockman University



**Leah Moses**

Advanced Practice Director of Women's Health Midwifery | Intermountain Health



**Danielle Pollack**

Policy Manager | George Washington University

### What is the Why? The Reasons Behind What We Do & Don't Do in the Forensic Interview

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

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING ADVANCED

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Having worked decades in this field I see the same themes repeated over and over. MDT members are requesting that interviewers ask children questions that they are incapable of answering accurately. Interviewers often do not have the language for or a good understanding of the research to either explain to the MDT why a question might not be appropriate. They also may not have the skill to get the requested information in a way that is appropriate for the child. Interviewers find themselves doing things with no understanding of the reason behind the practice.

This session will address these issues by going through the forensic interview step by step and sharing the research behind the phases and question types. It will also address some of the recurrent themes that cause conflict between team members: time, clothing placement, penetration, etc. There is research on these topics that is not being applied in actual interviews. Additionally there are many practices occurring in interviews that, though important, are not appropriate for the forensic interview, such as general body safety and prevention discussions.

This session will provide information but will also encourage thoughtful discussion about these topics. The goal being that participants will critically think about the topics and practices to assist their teams/agencies to rethink things they are doing because "we've always done it this way" and do interviews that are efficient, effective and child centered.

#### Speaker



**Elizabeth Ghilardi**

Forensic Interview Program Manager | Children's Wisconsin

### Ensuring We Get Cases Right: Identifying Mistakes That Lead to Child Abuse Being Rule Out (This session is not eligible for CME Credit)

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

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

Proving child sexual abuse is difficult. Because there is seldom physical evidence to support a claim of abuse, a child's disclosures may be the most compelling evidence.

However, often the child's statements are discounted for reasons that are not supported by the latest science, such as the child was inconsistent in his or her disclosures, or the child seemed coached to make false allegations.

Also, the child may have given dates/time frame that made abuse by the accused impossible (e.g., accused had an air-tight alibi) or the child also disclosed fantastic and/or impossible elements (e.g., "I was rescued by my dog, who shot [the abuser]."). Finally, the child may subsequently recant his or her prior disclosures of abuse.

These are some examples of why a Child Protective Services investigator may discount or rule out abuse. Doing so often has a cascading effect in that law enforcement may not criminally charge an alleged abuser and judges in custody cases may fail to protect the child based on CPS's rule out.

Therefore, it is important that we have an understanding of the science concerning abuse, disclosures, children's use of language, and multiple issues related to properly conducting forensic interviews.

The presenter will discuss such science and will include real-world examples of instances where child abuse was ruled out or disregarded despite the presence of studies indicating that the reasons for doing so were not inconsistent with abuse.

#### Speaker



**Paul Griffin**

Legal Director | Child Justice Inc.

### Child Sexual Abuse Victimization and Parenting

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HEALTHCARE

Child sexual abuse is a problem of epidemic proportions. The official number of sexual abuse victims in the United States for 2020 was 58,092. However, this number represents only the tip of the iceberg: cases of sexual abuse reported to child protective services, investigated, and substantiated. One hundred and twenty million girls aged less than 20 years have experienced forced sexual contact worldwide. In addition, retrospective studies of adults indicate that 1 in 5 victims of sexual abuse never disclose their

victimization. Sexual abuse can result in significant lifelong sequelae for victims. Experiencing sexual abuse can negatively influence how an individual thinks, acts, and feels. Effective parenting is crucial to a child's physical, developmental, emotional, and social well-being. Parenting behaviors, attitudes, and practices are influenced by several factors, including caregiver values, beliefs, culture, and past experiences. Parental history of child sexual abuse can profoundly impact an individual's parenting ability. It is critical for professionals caring for children who have experienced sexual abuse or are being parented by a sexual abuse survivor, to understand the relationship between sexual abuse victimization and parenting to better advocate for vulnerable children and their caregivers. This session will explore sexual abuse victimization and its potential impact on adults who parent.

#### Speaker



**Gail Hornor**

Pediatric Nurse Practitioner | International Association of Forensic Nurses

### Hiding Spot - Short Film

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

**HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES**

**MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT**

Hiding Spot is a film about a happily married woman who's repressed sexual assault memory from childhood surfaces at the thought of having kids.

Suddenly suffering from anxiety and panic attacks, Evie meets with a therapist. After several months of therapy, Evie is still not able to open up and confront the truth. Her best friend presents the option of trying something other than western medicine. In a shamanic session, Evie recalls a time when an older neighborhood boy turned an innocent game of hide and seek into a traumatic experience.

My name is Edrei Hutson, and I am the writer, director, and producer of the short narrative film, Hiding Spot. Hiding Spot is loosely based on my story of depression, help, and healing. When I told friends that I was writing this story, I was surprised by how many of them had their own sexual assault stories. I knew that this film was going to make a difference.

I presented my film at the IVAT Summit in San Diego this August and the film was received well, and afterwards several people spoke out about assaults they had experienced and never told anyone. My hope is for sexual assault survivors to see the film and know that they are not alone in their journey and that there is a pathway to healing.

At IVAT, Hiding Spot and a short film, Tomorrow, presented together. Karis Campbell, the director of Tomorrow, has been emailing the Colloquium to discuss the best way for us to submit our unique short film proposals.

#### Speaker



**Edrei Hutson**

Partnership | Stop the Silence

### Responding to Trauma with Art and Mentorship to Impact Child Welfare

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

**CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE**

**LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS**

**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS**

This training demonstrates the power of the arts in building resilience and post-traumatic growth for youth and young adults experiencing parental separation due to abuse, neglect, or homelessness.

#### 1. Share the Power of Expressive Arts

The power of the arts to understand and heal trauma will be discussed. Evidence suggests that artistic expression can promote meaning-making and identity exploration; promote problem-solving, creative thinking, and self-efficacy; and regulate heart rate and cortisol.

#### 2. Spotlight Free Arts

Free Arts' program model and trauma-informed (TI) group mentoring approach will be shared. Free Arts is a non-profit organization serving youth and young adults experiencing parental separation due to abuse, neglect, or homelessness. Free Arts' research-based program model, *Art + Mentors = Resilience*, connects youth with caring adults and uses intentional art to develop skills, sense of self, and resilience. Free Arts practices a TI group mentoring model to deliver programming.

Evaluation data demonstrating the effectiveness of Free Arts' program model and TI group mentoring approaches on key positive outcomes will be shared.

#### 3) Train Attendees to Incorporate Art and Mentorship

Attendees will engage in expressive art activities and practice TI mentoring approaches to incorporate into their roles. Attendees will leave with new knowledge and tools for building resilience and expressive outlets for youth and families affected by abuse, neglect, or homelessness.

#### Speaker



**Jayley Janssen**

Director of Research | Indigo Cultural Center

#### Co-speaker



**Matt Sandoval**

CEO | Free Arts for Abused Children of Arizona

### Mental Health Treatment Consensus Guidelines for Youth who have Experienced Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation: Development and Treatment Applications

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

**MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT**

Youth and their families who have experienced trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation often present with complex mental health treatment needs. The National Center on Child Trafficking, in collaboration with a panel of clinicians and lived experience experts in the field, has developed evidence-based consensus mental health treatment guidelines for youth who have experienced trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. This presentation will share the 10 treatment guidelines and the expert panel consensus process, as well as the listening sessions with youth and adults with lived experience, national survey of mental health clinicians, and empirical literature review that were foundational to their development. Practice implications across the identified treatment elements (Safety, Engagement, Therapeutic Relationship, Pacing, Regulation, Interpersonal Relationships, Caregiver Involvement, Psychoeducation, Identify and Self-Concept, and Trauma Experience Integration) will be discussed, and applications with under-identified and under-served youth will be explored.

#### Speaker



**Kelly Kinnish**

Director, The National Center on Child Trafficking | Georgia State University

### Child Maltreatment and Practitioner Resilience: Triumph over Chronic Stress and Burnout

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Presenters will introduce inspiring solutions for diverse practitioners who have navigated complex cases of child maltreatment, which subsequently led to a period of personal emotional exhaustion. The presentation incorporates firsthand narratives from professionals across child maltreatment disciplines sharing their experiences, challenges, and resilience in the face of complicated crises affecting the children we serve. Exploring the dynamics of the emotional toll on practitioners, we will address how to engage our resilience to resolve our reactions to severe cases of child abuse and neglect. Participants will gain insight into recognizing our unique warning signs of burnout and build an awareness of our protective factors that promote well-being and flexibility, alleviating stress and fatigue. Participants will be equipped with actionable strategies to triumph over chronic stress and burnout, enabling providers to continue effectively supporting children and families in need using evidence-supported interventions with renewed compassion.

#### Speaker



**Machel Madsen Thompson**

Florida State University Research & Teaching Faculty | Florida State University

#### Co-speaker



**Savannah Collier, MSW, LCSW**

Assistant Director Stoops Center for Communities Families and Children | Florida State University

### Research Session - The voices of youth with potentially problematic sexual interests and behaviors

1:00 PM – 1:30 PM | Location: Nottoway (fourth floor)

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Research on youth with problematic sexual interests and behaviors is informed by youth, right? Probably not. Despite the strong literature supporting the use of community advisory boards in research, engaging youth with potentially problematic sexual behaviors in research presents distinct challenges. Forming youth advisory boards is complex, requiring efforts to generate interest, obtain parental consent, and facilitate mature discussions. Due to these complexities, only about 1% of empirical studies with children and adolescents include youth perspectives, mostly in clinical settings where trust with clinicians already exists.

Engaging youth with potentially problematic sexual behaviors in advisory boards introduces additional challenges, particularly in fostering trust and ensuring confidentiality, given the stigma and legal considerations associated with this topic. Establishing advisory boards for interventions on sensitive or stigmatized topics, such as child sexual abuse or youth at risk of perpetrating harm, in non-clinical environments presents even more unique complexities for community-based participatory research. In our ongoing study, we undertook the task of establishing such a board.

In this presentation, we share findings from our process of engaging youth with problematic sexual interests and behaviors in research. We share highlights from interviews as well as lessons learned in ensuring the effective representation of youth voices in research

#### Speaker



**Csenge Bodi**

Research Project Manager | Center for Violence Prevention Research

### Research Session - Exploring the Impact of Social Media and Social Networks on Juvenile Sexual Behavior Problems: A Scoping Review (This session is not eligible for CME Credit)

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Background: In 2022, over 23,500 juveniles aged 0-19 committed rape crimes (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2020). The number of juvenile sex abuse cases involving children sexually abusing children is increasing at alarming rates which may be strongly correlated with social media and social networks.

Methods: The Joanna Briggs Institute scoping review protocol will be used as a guide for this review. Peer reviewed journals and gray literature will be used. Databases across disciplines will be utilized and include Academic Search Complete, CINAHL Complete, APA PsycInfo, and Criminal Justice Abstracts. Study will be completed February 2025.

Short Abstract: Social media and social networks are the primary sources of communication between adolescent peers. Social media and social network sources are inundated with sexualized images, videos, and messaging. Children who are exposed to sexual imagery and pornography may exhibit sexually transgressive behaviors which have been found to be traits exhibited by juveniles with problematic sexual behaviors. Accessibility to developmentally inappropriate content has increased concerns about children being exposed to sexually explicit content at very young ages. This review will provide insight into what is known about the influence of social media and social networks on juvenile sexual behavior problems and will identify gaps in current research.

#### Speaker



**Shaleen Clay**

CEO and Founder | Gracefilled Opportunities of Hope

#### Co-speakers



**Catherine Moon**

LSU





**Rhonda Norwood**

Associate Professor of Professional Practice | LSU School of Social Work

## Research Session - Youth with Sexual Behavior Problems: How do we best treat and intervene?

2:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Nottoway (fourth floor)

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

Youth sexual behavior problems (YSBP) are common, with more than half of sexual offenses against children being committed by youth (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2024). Yet little resources or supports exist to aid in prevention and intervention for youth and families. This presentation will cover the characteristics and continuum of youth with SBP acknowledging the cultural and societal factors that influence SBP and diagnoses often co-occurring with these behaviors. Common myths and stereotypes will be discussed and debunked, including beliefs that all children/youth with SBP will become adult sex offenders, have histories of sexual abuse, have serious psychiatric problems, are unsafe, or need long-term, intensive residential treatment. As research demonstrates consistently very low rates of recurrence of SBP after intervention, (Caldwell, 2016; Calleja, 2015; Lussier, 2023), we will discuss the importance of first response by interdisciplinary professionals. Evidence-based prevention and intervention measures, such as engaging caregivers, addressing protective factors, forming comprehensive safety plans, and creating guidelines for supervision will be shared (NCA, 2024). By fostering a collaborative approach among professionals and families, we can significantly enhance the effectiveness of prevention and intervention strategies for youth with SBP, ultimately promoting healthier outcomes for both individuals and communities.

### Speaker



**Lindamarie Olson**

Assistant Professor | University of Alabama

### Co-speakers



**Maribeth Bowman**

Program Director and Forensic Interview Specialist | Owens House



**Mandi Fowler**

Program Director | Youth Services Institute at the University of Alabama

### Break

2:30 PM – 2:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

## The Role of Dissociation and Imagination in Healing for the Female Adolescent Incest Survivor

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Enter the detailed little-known alternate imaginary worlds created by girls to survive during molestation, inspiring practitioners to use best practices to facilitate safety and empowerment.

This training session focuses on dissociation as trauma-based survival to shed light on questions such as: How are adolescent girls of all economic, social, and cultural backgrounds resilient when experiencing the unbearable abuse inflicted by fathers, stepfathers, uncles, foster siblings, and more? How are these same girls achievers, friends, students, artists, musicians, and athletes? Research and practice confirm that during trauma and abuse, survivors may use dissociation to leave their bodies, yet what is less well known are the details of dissociation as survival where girls descend into the world of imagery and imagination. From magical conquests to sounds, and scents, to composing poetry, girls create worlds that allow them to withstand the inexpressible. Through first-hand clinical research, we cover these interior worlds and the power of dissociation for the adolescent girl during horrific abuse. Practitioners will gain skills for application clinically by examining dissociation as a healing cognitive, emotional, and intellectual survival mechanism of the unspeakable. Participants grasp dissociation as a positive force for survival through these detailed voices, and experiences when the bottom falls out, resilience steps in, and healing begins.

### Speaker



**Patti Feuereisen**

Author of Invisible Girls Founder and Director of Girthrive Inc. - Psychotherapist Private Practice | Girthrive Inc.

## The Art of Engagement: Working with Child Welfare Involved Families

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

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

Over 400,000 children in the United States are in foster care but few services directly support their parents. The UC Davis Parent-Child Care (PC-CARE) program uses a team of family partners and providers to help child welfare-involved (CWI) parents find resources, navigate the system, and have positive visits with their children.

CWI parents often have their own trauma histories and feel diminished and confused by an overwhelming system. Providers may also have biases about working with CWI parents. These factors must be considered when engaging families.

Effective engagement starts when our family partner calls to offer services to parents. During calls, she intentionally aligns with families, listens, and asks questions about their experiences with the system. Parents often describe their trauma and explain that it is hard to believe PC-CARE is voluntary when it feels mandatory. In response, our family partner shares her experience in foster care and understanding that the system can hurt families. This openness promotes trust, which helps families feel seen.

Engagement continues as PC-CARE providers start services. Providers validate parents' frustrations with system requirements while encouraging them to do the service. Throughout PC-CARE, they work with the family to ensure they meet the family's actual needs.

In this presentation, we review considerations for working with CWI parents and provide tips for improving engagement.

### Speakers



**Brandi Hawk**

Psychologist | UC Davis CAARE Center



**Cruz Rocio Franco**

Clinical Licensed Social Worker | UC Davis Children's Hospital, CAARE Center

#### Co-speakers



**Gabrielle Peralta**

Family Navigator | University of California Davis CAARE Center



**Blake Carmichael**

Psychologist 2, Supervisor | UC Davis CAARE Center

### Interviewing Children with Autism (CLE Professionalism Hours Eligible)

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

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING ADVANCED

INTERDISCIPLINARY

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. While this workshop is intended for forensic interviewers, other members of multidisciplinary teams may benefit from attending this workshop to better understand biases and assumptions related to investigating cases involving child victims with autism. Abuse dynamics, possible indicators of abuse or neglect, pre-interview considerations, question types, and other information on eliciting reliable information from children with autism will also be discussed.

#### Speaker



**Kate Homan**

Senior Consultant | Modell Consulting Group, LLC

### Responding to Corporal Punishment: The Role of the Medical Provider

2:45 PM – 4:15 PM | Location: Oak Alley (fourth floor)

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

HEALTHCARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

The participant will learn about the research regarding corporal punishment as well as what the current American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines are regarding this topic. The participant will be provided with examples of discussing corporal punishment and suggestions of what to say to caregivers in the clinical setting regarding this topic.

There is significant peer-reviewed research from professional organizations including the CDC, the AAP, and APSAC that indicate that corporal punishment is harmful to children and that professionals in child serving fields should discourage caregivers from using corporal punishment. However, there are no clear guidelines on how to promote dialogue and engage families in a non-judgemental manner regarding this potentially controversial topic. All professionals who work with child abuse are in a key position to change social norms about physical punishment of children by educating families about the harms of physical discipline and discussing alternatives. In this workshop, the participant will be exposed to research, clinical pearls, and suggested techniques to engage in dialog with caregivers.

#### Speaker



**Neha Mehta**

Medical Director- Audrey Hepburn CARE Center | Children's Hospital New Orleans

#### Co-speaker



**Judith Dodd**

Manning Family Children's

### The Investment Approach: The Art of Donor Stewardship in Non-Profit Fundraising

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

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

INTERDISCIPLINARY

In the ever-changing landscape of non-profit fundraising, the key to sustained success lies not just in securing donations but in fostering meaningful relationships. This workshop explores the profound impact of relationship-building in fundraising, providing attendees with actionable strategies and engagement techniques that go beyond traditional approaches.

Attendees will learn to shift from transactional to relational fundraising by understanding the psychology of donor motivation and trust. The session will explore the importance of storytelling, creating shared values, and showing genuine appreciation for supporters. Practical case studies will highlight how personal connections, consistent communication, and strategic donor engagement have transformed fundraising outcomes for various non-profits.

Participants will also delve into innovative engagement tactics, such as leveraging technology for personalized outreach, developing ambassador programs, and hosting experiential events that deepen donor involvement. Attendees will leave equipped with a toolkit to strengthen donor loyalty, increase recurring gifts, and build a resilient funding base.

This interactive session emphasizes that fundraising is not just about asking for money—it's about cultivating a community of supporters who feel invested in your mission and vision. By the end of the workshop, participants will have a clearer path to fostering partnerships that empower organizational success.

#### Speaker



**Thomas Mitchell**

Executive Director | Children's Advocacy Center - Hope House

### Enhancing Child Welfare Workforce Resilience: Supervisory Strategies to Combat Staff Burnout & Turnover

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

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The child welfare sector is grappling with a significant crisis characterized by workforce burnout and high turnover rates, undermining the quality of service to vulnerable children and families. This situation not only exacerbates caseloads for remaining staff but also negatively impacts morale, inflates recruitment and training costs, and threatens organizational reputation. Contributing factors include low salaries, overwhelming workloads, repeated exposure to trauma, and extensive documentation requirements, creating a cycle of attrition that burdens supervisors and managers alike.

This 90-minute training session for supervisors and managers will offer actionable strategies to address the root causes of burnout and turnover. Key elements of a supportive learning environment, including conducting training needs assessments and understanding levels of learning will be shared. You will gain effective techniques aimed at building critical skills and competencies within your team.

We will also delve into principles of trauma-informed supervision and other supervisory models, offering strategies to foster a work environment that prioritizes safety, warmth, wellness and professional growth. Attendees will discover that making small adjustments in supervisory practices can lead to significant improvements in team members' professional development, workplace culture, and staff retention.

#### Speaker



**Mike Nowlin**

Director of Operations | Institute for Human Services

#### Co-speaker



**Nan Beeler**

Program Manager | Institute for Human Services

### Metaphors for Resilience: Using Guided Imagery to Evoke Strength, Hope and Confidence in Caregivers, Parents and Children--an Innovative Child Maltreatment Prevention Approach

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

LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

The notion of 'Resilience' developed from materials science: how distorted can material be yet return to baseline? Stripped of context, resilience informs psychology and ecological systems theory. In trauma work, resilience implies ability to endure adversity and continue to thrive. Metaphors illuminate abstract ideas, with symbolic value that cannot reduce to literal interpretation. Images connect via metaphoric, rather than literal, links--visual thinking is distinct from linear verbal thinking and occurs in different brain regions. Scientific research into visual thinking has lagged. However, alternative therapies have employed guided imagery for decades and there have been several clinical trials. In guided imagery, patients engage in experiential exercises involving imaginative, evocative suggestions.

The workshop introduces resilience didactically, encouraging participants to develop metaphors suggesting strength--like trees that grow heartier in challenging climates, or powerful animals. Then the presenter will lead a guided, individualized visualization to reinforce participants' chosen metaphoric avatars. *Participants may choose a child-friendly avatar for the guided imagery that will help with their own understanding and assist in using imagery with children.*

This experience will be useful for personal growth and to integrate this practice into treatment of traumatized caregivers, parents or children. After the visualization there will be time for discussion.

#### Speaker



**Jeff Sugar**

Adjunct Professor of Clinical Psychiatry (USC); Consulting and Treating Trauma Psychiatrist (CSULB) | University of Southern CA...

### Connecting the Dots: NCA's Mental Health Accreditation Standard and Improving Access to Mental Health Care at CACs

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

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Accreditation and Mental Health staff of the National Children's Alliance will take an in-depth look at NCA's mental health standard of accreditation, one of 10 required standards for accredited Child Advocacy Centers. This interactive workshop is designed for both clinicians working at CACs and CAC staff, with opportunities for audience questions and discussion. According to the most recent CAC Census, 38% of CACs are reporting that kids spend 30 days or more on a waitlist. This session will review short-term evidence-based treatments that are appropriate for the CAC population and can help CACs shorten waitlists. It will also outline how a treatment modality is qualified to meet NCA's standards. We will cover ways to ensure clinicians are meeting accreditation requirements for foundational and on-going training and supervision. A portion of the workshop will also specifically be dedicated to discussion of the role of the mental health provider on the multi-disciplinary team, information-sharing, case review participation, and confidentiality. The presenters will provide ideas and feedback for navigating these challenges while adhering to ethical and legal requirements, and outline how having a mental health provider on the team improves outcomes not only for their clients but for all children seen at a CAC.

#### Speaker



**Alyssa Todd**

Accreditation Coordinator | National Children's Alliance

#### Co-speaker



**Michelle Miller**

Director of NCA Institute for Better Mental Health Outcomes | National Children's Alliance

### Research Session - Results of Working With Trauma Survivors

2:45 PM – 3:15 PM | Location: Nottoway (fourth floor)

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Child protective services social workers experience more stress in comparison to other professionals in the social services field (Blome & Steib, 2014), and the stress linked in their job may have negative effects on their mental and physical well-being. Child welfare professionals have reported facing numerous challenges, including a lack of clear work-life balance, poor physical health, and mental health issues (Griffiths et al., 2019). These difficulties often led them to prioritize job demands over their personal well-being, resulting in the development of unhealthy habits (Griffiths et al., 2019). The findings from this research study on child protective services social workers in North Carolina showed over three-fourths of the sample had elevated levels of secondary traumatic stress shown by the Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale. More than half of the participants scored in the first and second percentile of The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale which suggest concerns with overcoming adversity and dealing with stress. It could be postulated that child protective services professionals might experience lower levels of psychological well-being because most of them have low resilient coping as indicated by the Brief Resilient Coping Scale. An implication was a need for organizations to create and implement interventions to ensure their employees are adequately coping with secondary trauma.

#### Speaker



**DeCora Bowers, EdD, LCMHC**

Tele Therapist | Novant Health

### Research Session - Trauma-Informed Arts-Based Healing for Black, Indigenous, and Racialized Youth Experiencing Parental Separation or Homelessness in the U.S.

3:15 PM – 3:45 PM | Location: Nottoway (fourth floor)

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The arts have been highlighted as a mechanism to understand and heal trauma. However, the procedures and activities in traditional arts-based programming may feel unsafe or inaccessible to youth who experience trauma. Thus, a trauma-informed (TI) arts-based approach is needed. Such an approach is important for Black, Indigenous, and other racialized youth (BIPOC) given their experience of racism (interpersonal, institutional, and structural).

This paper utilizes mixed methods to explore the ways in which TI arts-based programming, Free Arts of Arizona, can facilitate spaces of healing for BIPOC youth (n=150) experiencing parental separation due to abuse, neglect, or homelessness.

Data from Free Art's program provide evidence of its transformation and healing effects. Quantitative data from youth pre-program and post-program surveys demonstrate that by providing safety and connection, youth experience statistically significant increases in key outcomes of identity, self-efficacy, mindfulness, and agency across time (panel model in Mplus).

Data from focus groups and interviews with Free Arts teaching artists, staff, and alumni mentors describe the mechanisms that lead to youth's positive outcomes. We highlight themes that emerged from these conversations: 1) Free Arts as family and the strength of relationships in the face of trauma, 2) Conflict resolution and building trust, and 3) Art as healing.

#### Speaker



**Jayley Janssen**

Director of Research | Indigo Cultural Center

#### Co-speaker



**Matt Sandoval**

CEO | Free Arts for Abused Children of Arizona

### Research Session - A Trauma-Informed Parenting Intervention for Resource Parents: A Pilot Study (This session is not eligible for CME Credit)

3:45 PM – 4:15 PM | Location: Nottoway (fourth floor)

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Children entering foster care are often exposed to a myriad of traumatic events- abuse, neglect, and exposure to violence. These experiences can be destabilizing and dysregulating, and present considerable challenges to foster caregivers charged with their care and supporting their trauma recovery. Trauma-informed parenting programs are noted to improve a caregiver's capacity to manage a child's trauma sequelae, and to improve family resiliency though many of these programs are didactic in nature. For families needing therapeutic support, evidence-based intervention options are limited. This pilot study examines intervention feasibility, acceptability, and outcomes of the Trauma-Informed Parenting for Resource Parents intervention in 34 caregivers over time. Statistically significant improvements were noted in disruption worry and knowledge and skills in foster parents from pre to post that were sustained at follow up. Significant changes in empathy were also noted. 24 caregivers provided additional qualitative information regarding their experiences. Overall, support was found for intervention acceptability, and measures of feasibility identified significant issues related to completion of study measures, even in those who completed the intervention. Based on these findings, there is evidence of effectiveness though recommended enhancements to the intervention and evaluation protocol are provided

#### Speaker



**Adrienne Whitt**

Associate Clinical Professor | University of Kentucky

#### Co-speaker



**Ginny Sprang**

Professor of Psychiatry/Center Director UYK Center on Trauma and Children | University of Kentucky

#### Break

4:15 PM – 4:30 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

### Rethinking the MDT: It's Not Just for Child Advocacy Centers Anymore

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

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

INTERDISCIPLINARY

The state of Oklahoma has established a distinctive model for addressing child maltreatment through its Freestanding Multidisciplinary Teams (FSMDTs), particularly in rural areas lacking Child Advocacy Centers (CACs). These teams bring together professionals from various disciplines—investigators, prosecutors, advocates, and service providers—to collaborate effectively in serving victims and their families. The primary goal is to prevent cases from slipping through the cracks of the system by ensuring coordinated investigations, comprehensive case reviews, and seamless service delivery.

FSMDTs receive technical assistance, training, and oversight from the Oklahoma Commission on Youth, which reviews their operations annually to ensure compliance with state statutes and adherence to best practices. This includes employing joint investigations and forensic interviews while identifying gaps in community services.

By fostering collaboration and sharing information, FSMDTs are able to develop tailored protocols that meet the specific needs of their communities, enhancing local child protection efforts. Furthermore, these teams play a crucial role in advocating for improved community education on child maltreatment, ultimately working toward a more integrated and responsive system for safeguarding children.

#### Speaker



**Brittany Gassner**

FSMDT Program Manager | Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth

## Moving the Goal Posts: Adopting and Adapting Forensic Interviewing for the US Center for SafeSport's Administrative Process

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

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

Following several high-profile cases of abuse within the sport community, the US Center for SafeSport opened its doors in 2017 and was recognized by Congress as the nation's safe sport organization. With jurisdiction over approximately 11 million individuals, many of whom are Minor Athletes, throughout the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement, the Center stands at the intersection of Prevention Education, Response & Resolution of allegations of misconduct, and Athlete Safety Compliance.

This presentation will focus on the Center's investigatory arm – the Response & Resolution Department – and its adoption and adaptation of the concepts of forensic interviewing to the Center's Administrative Investigation process. Specifically, the formation and implementation of the Center's Specialized Interview Team (SIT) and Minor Resolution Team (MRT), and its collaboration with law enforcement, Child Advocacy Centers, and child protection services to better serve minors experiencing abuse and to conduct comprehensive trauma-informed and defensible investigations.

### Speaker



Ashley Reece

Investigator | US Center for SafeSport

### Co-speaker



Molly Hamsher

Senior Legal Counsel | US Center for SafeSport

## Integral Integration: Elevating trauma-responsive care through behavioral health integration of child abuse consultation

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

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE HEALTHCARE MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT INTERDISCIPLINARY

The Children's Hospital of Colorado (CHCO) Child Protection Team (CPT) Clinic is a multidisciplinary clinic providing comprehensive consultation, assessment, and referral services for children and families who have experienced maltreatment. Recently, CHCO CPT adopted an innovative approach to behavioral health service integration. Integrated Behavior Health (IBH) spans a continuum of collaborative efforts between medical and behavioral health care providers. However, most IBH services are provided separately from the medical services even when offered during the same appointment. The CHCO CPT clinic model allows for medical and behavioral health providers to meet together with each child and family to provide a fully integrated experience. This model serves multiple functions, including a lower likelihood of re-experiencing trauma during history-taking; messaging that child's and family's medical and behavioral health needs are equally important; and increased multidisciplinary learning opportunities. During this seminar, we will discuss the challenges and opportunities of a fully integrated behavioral health care model in the context of child protection. We will help attendees identify and address barriers to implementation of integrated care services, including funding strategies, productivity standards, staff and leadership buy-in, and clinic processes. We will also share data on feasibility and acceptability metrics supporting this innovative delivery model.

### Speaker



Ashley Sward

Assistant Professor | University of Colorado School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry

### Co-speaker



Dara Lynne Tabugadir

Senior Instructor/Therapist | University of Colorado, School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry

## Justice Delayed: When the Abuser is Allowed to Return Home, A Case Study

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE FORENSIC INTERVIEWING FORENSIC INTERVIEWING ADVANCED INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

After pleading guilty to sexually assaulting his stepdaughter in the early 90s, Mark Brooks was placed on deferred adjudication, but because the victim's mother was unprotective, he was quickly moved back home. The victim, the oldest of 7 and the only non-biological child of the offender, had a caregiver role and a mandate to protect the family and protect the offender at all costs. Throughout her childhood, even with professional intervention, she did not outcry to subsequent abuse. When she came forward in her 30s, the police took her statement, confirmed that defendant had been previously charged, and got a warrant for his arrest. The prosecution team tracked down witnesses to corroborate the timeline of abuse, prove the offender had the opportunity to abuse the victim, and clarify that this abuse *did* happen subsequent to her first outcry and the following plea. We will discuss the impact of the offender returning home and her mother's actions on the victim's disclosure, the challenges of tracking down witnesses from a decade prior, and the process by which additional corroborative records were uncovered. We will discuss trial preparation in a case that happened 32 years before the trial, what probations entailed and what records could be found, and the challenges of explaining the unique dynamics at play in a case with understandable complications. We will discuss defensive strategies and preparation in a case where justice has been delayed for so many years.

### Co-speaker



Deanna Franzen

Assistant Criminal District Attorney | Tarrant County Criminal District Attorney's Office

## A New Approach to Treatment Planning: Development and evaluation of a collaborative Treatment Planning Model using strategies from Goal Attainment Scaling to measure treatment outcomes

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

HEALTHCARE MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

In 2021, ChicagoCAC developed a new protocol for treatment planning, based upon Goal Attainment Scaling. A work group of therapists studied literature on GAS and developed an inclusive protocol for including clients and caregivers. The group reviewed 2 years of treatment plans and identified 22 treatment goal categories. They then created definitions and scaling for the goal categories along with the description and flow chart of the treatment planning process. After a pilot period, the new protocol was implemented in July 2022. The aggregate data shows, in every quarter since implementation, all 22 goals have been used by clinicians. We have learned which goal categories are used most often and least often as well as which show the most and least aggregate gain or loss across the client population. We

have demonstrated through our data significant client improvements both quarter over quarter and from the beginning to end of treatment. Dr. Budde from the Juvenile Protective Association conducted analysis on our demographic and outcome data. His analysis of the 8 most frequently used goal categories shows statistically significant improvements in scores for four: anxiety, safety-environmental, affect expression, and affect regulation. His analysis shows interesting differences in goal category choices and changes in scores associated with the client's gender, race, and age. We continue to work with Dr. Budde to analyze the data implement programming and training changes.

#### Speaker



**Janice Waters**

Chief Program Officer for Clinical Services | Chicago Children's Advocacy Center

#### Co-speaker



**Rhiannon Reaves**

Director of Clinical Services | Chicago Children's Advocacy Center

### Consider My Needs; Creating an Inclusive Environment to Support Children with Autism and their Caregivers.

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

A new environment with unfamiliar people can make children anxious. For those on the autism spectrum, this new experience may be completely overwhelming and anxiety producing. Anxiety may be displayed in many ways, including behaviorally, ultimately revealing communication, sensory, and social needs. As providers, we need to have a heightened understanding and knowledge of the possible needs of children with autism and be willing to adapt our routines and environments to build a more inclusive, trust based experience. In this session, attendees will become familiar with many communication, sensory, and social needs. Communicating with caregivers and practical accommodations to service environments will be discussed. Attendees will gain an understanding of what to consider and respect when working with children on the autism spectrum.

Ruth Wiseman has over 20 years of experience in special education and is currently the Statewide Training and Education Coordinator for the Child Advocacy Centers of Tennessee. She will share her knowledge and experience of serving children with autism and parenting a child with significant needs, including what helped or hindered relationships with service providers.

#### Speaker



**Ruth Wiseman**

Statewide Training and Education Coordinator | Children's Advocacy Centers of Tennessee

### Best Practices for Adding Clinical Interns to Your Practice

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

This training will focus on best practices for utilizing clinical interns in your therapy setting. Clinical interns (master's level students) need places to complete their practicum and internship work and sites often need the extra help. It's a win-win situation! Learn how to set-up an internship program that will be mutually beneficial and result in more highly-trained clinicians in your community.

#### Speaker



**Stacy Faulkner**

Clinical Director | Children's Advocacy Center - Hope House

### Research Session - Are There Differences Between Mother and Father Perpetrators on Child Maltreatment Foster Care Outcomes? An Emphasis on Hispanic and Native American Families

4:30 PM – 5:00 PM | Location: Nottoway (fourth floor)

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) families impacted by child protective services (CPS) represent an understudied population, particularly regarding the role of fathers and their influence on child maltreatment and case outcomes. Engaging fathers in children's lives is crucial for development, and studies suggest it can reduce foster care placements, and increase reunification. This study examines whether having a mother, father, or both as perpetrators affects foster care placement in Hispanic and AI/AN families. Using the NCANDS child file from FY2017, we selected substantiated reports involving Hispanic or AI/AN parents, categorized by perpetrator type. Foster care placement was assessed within three months of the report. Multilevel Logistic Regression revealed that for AI/AN families, reports with father-only perpetrators had 60% lower odds of foster placement compared to mother-only, while both-parents reports had 35% greater odds. Among Hispanic families, father-only reports had 74% lower odds, and both-parent reports had 55% higher odds than mother-only cases. These findings highlight the need for prevention and intervention services tailored to the unique cultural experiences of Hispanic and AI/AN fathers, as fathers' involvement significantly influences CPS outcomes. Further research should explore pathways that address these groups' specific challenges with CPS, which may lead to new strategies for reducing child maltreatment in these communities.

#### Speaker



**Yadira Tejeda**

Doctoral Candidate | Washington University in St. Louis

#### Co-speaker



**Wynette Whitegoat-Ramirez**

Doctoral Candidate | Washington University in St. Louis

### Research Session - Measuring post-separation abuse and its relationship with children's health needs: Psychometric testing of the Healthcare, Economic, and Legal Post-Separation Abuse Tactics Scale

5:00 PM – 5:30 PM | Location: Nottoway (fourth floor)

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

**Purpose.** To develop interventions that promote children's access to healthcare in the context of post-separation abuse (PSA), validated instruments to measure behaviors that contribute to children's health needs are needed.



**Methods.** Items for the **Healthcare, Economic, and Legal Post-Separation Abuse Tactics Scale (HELP-T)** were generated based on qualitative interviews and expert review. Reliability and validity were tested in a sample (n = 497) of maternal survivors experiencing post-separation abuse in the USA. Factor analysis assessed construct validity and Cronbach's alpha assessed reliability.

**Results.** Factor analysis revealed 3 subscales for 21 items which were labeled (1) Healthcare PSA, (2) Legal PSA, and (3) Economic PSA. The subscales had acceptable reliability with Cronbach's alphas from 0.82 to 0.89. Higher scores on subscales were significantly associated with decreased access to children's mental health care (Healthcare PSA: OR 2.22; p-value 0.000; Legal PSA: OR 1.45; p-value 0.0080), decreased access to specialist health care (Healthcare PSA: OR 2.02; p-value 0.0000; Legal PSA: OR 1.45; p-value 0.0080), and children's special health care needs (Healthcare PSA: OR 1.98; p-value 0.000; Legal PSA: OR 1.41; p-value 0.0050; Economic PSA: OR 1.35; p-value 0.0030).

**Conclusion.** The three subscales exhibit strong preliminary psychometric properties and provide foundational insights into how abusive co-parent tactics impact children's health needs.

**Speaker**



**Kathryn Spearman**  
MSN, RN, PhD Student | Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing

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**Wednesday, June 25, 2025**

**Registration and Exhibits**

7:30 AM – 5:00 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

**State Section and Chapter members meeting**

7:30 AM – 8:30 AM | Location: Grand Chenier

**The SAGE Charles T. Hendrix Keynote Address - The Power of Data in Protecting Children: Turning Research into Action**

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

**Speaker**



**Melissa Merrick, PhD**  
President and CEO | Prevent Child Abuse America

**Break**

9:45 AM – 10:15 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

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

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

**INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION**

Since the founding of the first Children's Advocacy Center in 1986, CACs have had the dual purposes of promoting children's recovery from child abuse and coordinating the multidisciplinary investigation of abuse. Still, however, few child abuse cases are prosecuted, and prosecutions that occur burden children by relaying too much on their court testimony. In this workshop, an investigator and a researcher join forces to review research and practice experience that indicate methods for promoting offender accountability while supporting children and families. We discuss such methods as rapid response, coordination between investigators and service providers, developing investigative leads from the child forensic interview, exploring the link between in-person and online offending, and a team approach to corroborating and supporting the child. Effective methods increase offender confessions and guilty pleas, which support the child's credibility and avoids a trial. The workshop is updated from last year's by reviewing new research that shows that prosecutors and defense attorneys rate consistency of evidence as substantially more important than other factors, including children's credibility

**Speaker**



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

**Co-speaker**



**Michael Johnson**  
Manager | Detective Mike LLC

**Keeping Faith: Twelve Potential Roles for a CAC Chaplain**

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

**CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY** **CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE** **FAITH** **INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION**  
**MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT** **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS** **INTERDISCIPLINARY**

A significant and growing body of research indicates that most maltreated children suffer spiritual injuries, and addressing these spiritual wounds can dramatically improve the medical and mental health of abuse victims. Accordingly, several Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) have implemented chaplaincy or spiritual care programs. Recently, the U.S. Department of Justice awarded a grant to study this reform and develop resources to assist CACs in implementing these programs. This workshop details the potential value of this initiative.

**Speaker**



**Victor Vieth**  
Director Center for Faith and Child Protection | Zero Abuse Project

**Forensic Interviews and the Role of Anticipatory Guidance**

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

**FORENSIC INTERVIEWING**

There is great value in empowering youth with knowledge of the forensic interview process and letting them know what to expect as we flow through steps that are foreign to them. This presentation will identify components of the forensic interview that offer anticipatory guidance to youth and discuss the purpose for each.

#### Speaker



**Julie Kenniston**

Program Manager | FVTC/National Criminal Justice Training Center

### Amicus Committee Year in Review

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

After the Amicus Committee's 2024 Colloquium presentation, we gained seven new members and expanded our work by creating subcommittees to address Board-approved topics of great interest. This "year in review" session will involve substantive discussion of this year's projects. We'll discuss our work on Abusive Head Trauma, Parental Alienation Syndrome, public health approaches to child welfare in the appellate courts (impact on children of DACA termination, state level abortion bans, anti-LGBTQ law and policy, etc.); and more.

As was the case in 2024, all Committee members will be welcome to contribute their thoughts and expertise about a specific topic that the Committee worked on. With APSAC's permission, we may have one or two pre-recorded video contributions, as we did in 2024.

Please join the Amicus Committee as we inform APSAC members about the profile-raising work we do for the Society (briefs, graphics, publications) in the service of public education and child welfare. We are always open to new members!

#### Speaker



**Mary Kelly Persyn**

Founder and Principal Attorney | Persyn Law & Policy

### Exploring Alternative Hypotheses in Child Abuse Investigations

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

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Every investigation and forensic interview of child abuse should start with multidisciplinary team members generating multiple reasons to account for the allegations of abuse. Since the forensic interview is often the beginning of a child abuse investigation, as many reasonable alternative hypotheses should be explored within the interview and followed up with the subsequent investigation as appropriate. All nationally recognized child forensic interview protocols emphasize the importance of exploring alternative hypotheses as part of the interview; however, sometimes this is no more than an occasional tag question at the end of the interview: "Did someone tell you what to say here today?" This session will examine various alternative hypotheses to be considered and addressed in forensic interviews and subsequent investigations, and techniques to address them.

#### Speaker



**Amy Russell**

Owner/Operator | Russell Consulting Specialists, LLC

### Hope & Healing Camp: Providing a therapeutic camp experience for children and caregivers in a CAC setting.

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

Chicago Children's Advocacy Center is continuously working to manage long waitlists for trauma-focused therapy and create innovative solutions for providing families with access to services. One of those solutions was the development of a therapy group for children and caregivers called Hope and Healing Groups. The Hope and Healing groups are designed to provide flexible, immediate, short-term support to children and families who have experienced sexual abuse. Hope and Healing Groups are offered continuously to children and caregivers who are waiting for longer term therapy in order to provide psychoeducation and coping skills to reduce traumatic stress. In 2015, ChicagoCAC started to offer this group as a summer camp for children and their caregivers. As a result, recreational programming was added to the curriculum for both children and caregivers. The intention was to add play, expand community, and offer children the opportunity to engage in normative childhood experiences in order to build resilience. Due to high levels of violence and racial segregation in the city of Chicago, not all of our clients have access to recreational programming. Hope and Healing Group Camps are offered in both English and Spanish languages in order to ensure that all clients have access to these supports. The result of adding the recreational programming exceeded all of our expectations for the groups and led to improved outcomes for children, caregivers, and clinicians.

#### Speaker



**Rhannon Reaves**

Director of Clinical Services | Chicago Children's Advocacy Center

#### Co-speaker



**Janice Waters**

Chief Program Officer for Clinical Services | Chicago Children's Advocacy Center

### Medical evaluations in child sexual abuse—building a sustainable evidence-based practice

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

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HEALTHCARE

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Building a sustainable medical practice in the evaluation of child sexual abuse (CSA) requires a multidisciplinary approach, combining medical expertise, trauma informed leadership, legal knowledge, and compassionate trauma informed care for vulnerable patients. Building such a practice requires careful attention to clinical, legal, and emotional aspects, with a focus on providing comprehensive care to victims while maintaining the integrity of forensic evaluations. Evaluating over 800 children per year, since 1987, the Our Kids Center in Nashville, TN has evaluated over 37,000 children. With this experience and expertise, this workshop will review the challenges, lessons learned to create a unique practice model that meets the needs of families, community partners and is a sustainable

evidenced based practice.

#### Speaker



**Denise Alexander**  
Social Worker | Our Kids

#### Co-speaker



**Hannah Kestner**  
NP | Our Kids

### Research Session - Beyond Protection: Exploring Stakeholder Perspectives on Holistic Child Well-Being in Child Welfare Systems (This session is not eligible for CME Credit)

10:15 AM – 10:45 AM | Location: Nottoway (fourth floor)

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

**Background and Purpose:** Child welfare systems have shifted from solely protecting children to promoting their overall well-being. However, the complex nature of well-being remains insufficiently understood. This study explores stakeholders' perspectives on well-being, their roles in enhancing it, and gaps in service provision. **Methods:** An exploratory qualitative design was used, involving four focus groups with 27 participants (foster parents, primary parents, kinship providers, and child welfare caseworkers). Thematic and narrative analyses were used to identify key themes. **Results:** Four themes emerged: (1) Stakeholders defined well-being beyond federal metrics (physical, mental health, educational needs). (2) Challenges in meeting well-being needs included difficulties in assessment, fragmented services, and navigating the child welfare system. (3) Gaps in service provision highlighted a need for a holistic approach that maintains family bonds. (4) Roles varied: caregivers saw themselves as primary providers, while caseworkers and primary parents focused on meeting reunification goals and supporting parental well-being. **Conclusions and Implications:** A gap exists between policy definitions and stakeholder experiences of well-being, suggesting a need for reforms reflecting a holistic perspective and greater stakeholder involvement.

#### Speaker



**Sarah Parmenter**  
Program Manager and Doctoral Candidate | Ohio State University

#### Co-speakers



**Juan Lorenzo Benavides**  
Doctoral candidate | The Ohio State University College of Social Work



**Yujeong Chang**  
Doctoral student | The Ohio State University, College of Social Work



**Susan Yoon**  
Associate Professor | The Ohio State University College of Social Work



**Kathryn Maguire Jack**

### Research Session - Future Expectations of Youth in Child Welfare and in Group Homes

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Future expectations are part of a cycle between self-esteem, childhood conditions, and later behaviors. Quantitatively, I examine future expectations using the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being (NSCAW) II to see how protective and risk factors contribute to a teen's expectations to live to 35 and how these expectations change over 3 years. A person with a foreshortened future orientation does not anticipate many positive outcomes in the future and places more value on short-term outcomes than long-term ones. I examine how having a foreshortened future orientation mediates the relationship between negative self-esteem and expecting two traditional life course markers: expecting to graduate high school and get a good job. I find that having a foreshortened orientation fully mediates the relationship between negative self-esteem and expecting to graduate high school but not expecting to get a good job. I argue that this may be due to the relative saliency of high school graduation over job prospects.

I also worked with teens in group homes to visually capture their experiences in child welfare using a qualitative participatory method. Participants bring their lived expertise to data collection and analysis through discussions about their photos. Participants shared they experienced substantial personal growth while in the group home, and they recognize that this has contributed to their higher future expectations. These findings demonstrate the need for more research on youth's future expectations in child welfare, as fostering positive expectations can support multiple domains of child well-being.

#### Speaker



**A. C. Ferraro**  
Assistant Professor | Sam Houston State University

### Lunch (on your own)

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM

### Roundtable sessions are not eligible for CME Credit

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

### Roundtable - How to Play Nice in the Sandbox: MDT Response to Child Fatality & Abuse Investigations

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

Child fatality and abuse investigations are unique from both medical and law enforcement/legal perspectives. These investigations are time sensitive and require an immediate multi-disciplinary response in order to determine whether a crime has been committed. This presentation focuses on the importance of effective communication between law enforcement, child protective services, legal and medical professionals; and the critical role the investigation plays in successfully prosecuting these cases. The presentation will include an overview of different MDT approaches and examples of how prosecutors/law enforcement can create protocols to enhance medico-legal investigations and prosecutions. Through case studies, attendees will learn how uncoordinated responses and miscommunication between professionals affect the investigation; the critical role re-enactments and thorough scene investigations have in charging

decisions; and practical strategies that can be implemented to enhance prosecutions in their jurisdictions.

#### Speaker



**Melissa Kelly**

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

### Roundtable - Getting it Right: Institutional Responses to Sexual Abuse in the Jewish Community

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

#### FAITH

Join us for this conversation exploring the ways organizational leaders in faith communities get institutional responses to sexual abuse wrong, and the ways they can - and do - get them right.

Relying on research and reports from the field, we will examine the psychological, legal, and religious considerations that Jewish organizations face when building their responses to instances of abuse.

We'll investigate both the common errors and the responsible decisions organizations make in response to these and other questions. This session, while discussing specific considerations for Jewish communities, will offer learnings and practical suggestions for organizational and religious leaders across faiths.

#### Speaker



**Sami Saltzman**

Director, Education | Sacred Spaces

### Roundtable - California's Child Welfare System: Addressing Disproportionalities and Disparities

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

#### CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

#### CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

#### HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

#### POLICY AND ADVOCACY

#### PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

#### INTERDISCIPLINARY

The LAO recently published a report titled "California's Child Welfare System: Addressing Disproportionalities and Disparities." The full report may be accessed online here: <https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/4897>. We are continuing our research and analysis in this area.

For the report, we focused on disproportionalities and disparities at the front end of families' involvement with the child welfare system—that is, allegations, investigations, substantiations, and decisions to place a child in foster care—as well as families' circumstances prior to system involvement.

After providing background on the child welfare system and recent areas of legislative focus, the report examines some of the complex factors contributing to the pervasive disproportionalities and disparities across California's child welfare system. The report then identifies specific policy and implementation areas that may be contributing to front-end disproportionalities and disparities. These areas include: (1) mandated reporting, (2) state definition and data around neglect, (3) decision-making tools and training for social workers, and (4) prevention efforts. Finally, the report presents options for the Legislature to help address disproportionalities and disparities, while maintaining a system that ensures and prioritizes the safety and well-being of children.

#### Speaker



**Angela Short**

Principal Fiscal and Policy Analyst | California Legislative Analyst's Office

### Roundtable - Understanding Spanish-Speaking and or Bilingual Children in the Forensic Interview (CLE Professionalism Hours Eligible)

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

#### FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

This presentation will discuss cultural competency principals, helpful insights, best practices and strategies when interviewing Spanish-speaking and bilingual children. Attendees will learn the importance of assessing the language of the child being interviewed, learn how language differences can affect the forensic interview. We will discuss the factors that interviewers need to consider such as the different dialects of Spanish, the differences in social interaction between bilingual and monolingual children, the affects of a cultural practice of storytelling connected to family history, the ambiguity of some Spanish words, and code switching between Spanish and English in interviews.

Information about working with interpreters and suggestions will be shared for how multi-disciplinary interview teams can work together to obtain best results. The goal is to help interviewers, interpreters, and MDT members conduct interviews that are culturally sensitive and linguistically correct.

Parts of this presentation will be directly in Spanish to best support Spanish speaking interviewers.

#### Speaker



**Dulce Solis**

Bilingual Forensic Interviewer | Sungate Kids Child Advocacy Center

### Roundtable - Prevention with the Police and Prosecutors

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

#### CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

#### CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

#### HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

#### POLICY AND ADVOCACY

#### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

#### INTERDISCIPLINARY

This round-table will discuss how researchers, police and prosecutors can work together to implement trauma-informed prevention and intervention programs in high violence neighborhoods. The roundtable will be framed around evaluation and field evaluations being completed by researchers working with the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office and LAPD and with grassroots organization in Miami communities. The facilitators are the research partners for federal grants from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services and Bureau of Justice Assistance. It will examine how different models of responses operate and what core principles guide the work.

Topics to be discussed include how data is used, how interdisciplinary referral process can be designed and how innovative outcome measurements can be devised. In particular, the facilitators will discuss how families and children are engaged and involved in a range of response and prevention approaches, with a focus of building trust with governmental agencies, community providers and among community members.

## Speakers



**Shellie Solomon**

President | Children of Inmates, Inc.



**Maria Herczog**

Senior change Engineer | Children of Inmates

## Roundtable - Mandated Reporting Reform: Lessons from State Initiatives (2020-2025)

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

**CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE** **HEALTHCARE** **HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES** **INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION**  
**LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING** **POLICY AND ADVOCACY** **INTERDISCIPLINARY**

Mandated reporting expansions have occurred frequently since these laws' introduction in the 1960s. However, in recent years, numerous states have also launched initiatives (alternately "task forces," "commissions") or considered legislation aimed at limiting mandated reporting. These limiting efforts stem from an understanding that overreporting, bias, and reporter confusion may be leading to unintended harms.

This roundtable discussion begins with an overview of major themes and takeaways from recent reform-focused hearings and initiatives, in states including California, Colorado, Massachusetts, and New York. Participants then simulate their own small working group, discussing the challenges identified in other states, evaluating proposed solutions, and deriving interstate commonalities.

## Breaking Barriers: How Multidisciplinary Teams Transform the Response to Child Abuse

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM | Location: Gallier AB (fourth floor)

**CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY** **CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE** **INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION** **LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS** **INTERDISCIPLINARY**

Child abuse cases require a multifaceted approach to ensure justice for victims while minimizing trauma. Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) within the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) model have proven to be a game-changer in responding to these cases. By integrating professionals from law enforcement, child protective services, mental health, medical, and legal fields, MDTs streamline investigations and provide a child-centered approach to care. This coordination reduces the number of interviews a child must undergo, lessening the emotional burden while ensuring comprehensive, evidence-based investigations.

Research demonstrates that MDTs not only reduce trauma but also lead to higher rates of prosecution and conviction in child abuse cases. The collaborative approach also ensures timely access to mental health services, like trauma-focused cognitive-behavioral therapy (TF-CBT), improving long-term recovery outcomes for victims. Additionally, MDTs enhance support for non-offending caregivers, improving their ability to assist children through the legal process.

This presentation will explore the effectiveness of MDTs in breaking down barriers between agencies, improving child welfare, and increasing judicial outcomes. It will showcase how collaboration, efficiency, and a holistic approach make MDTs essential in transforming the response to child abuse.

## Speaker



**Joe Driver**

MDT Coordinator | Children's Safe Harbor

## Details Matter - Which Ones, When and How to Elicit Them in Child Forensic Interviews

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

**FORENSIC INTERVIEWING**

Child forensic interviews provide key evidence in child maltreatment cases, hence it is critical that the details elicited be as accurate and reliable as possible. Interviewers have long recognized the importance of being as open-ended and non-suggestive as possible, but our understanding of how best to formulate and use specific questions and prompts to elicit significant details has evolved considerably. Not everything that may be considered suggestive is inappropriate. What seem like subtle differences in the way prompts are worded, e.g., "Tell me about..." versus "Tell me everything that happened..." versus "Tell me what happens...", make a difference in the kind of details produced. Interviewers need to think critically about and prioritize the details they seek, and they need to understand the types of details children are most likely to provide when responding to open-ended invitations, and what kind of details require more cues. This presentation will review what's been learned about key distinctions in various open-ended prompts, about types of Wh- questions that are more and less open-ended, about least-preferred question types, and about how to structure questioning during an interview.

## Speaker



**Patti Toth**

Forensic Interview Clinic Manager | APSAC

## Medical Evaluation of Suspected Child Sexual Abuse at a Child Abuse Centers in New York State

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

**HEALTHCARE**

Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or another child asks or pressures a child for sexual contact. The abuser may use physical abuse, bribery, threats, tricks, or take advantage of the child's limited knowledge of sexual matters. Sexual abuse can also include taking photos of the child, or showing them pornography through pictures, magazines, movies, online, etc.

A commercially sexually exploited child is one under the age of 18 who engages, agrees to engage in, or offers to engage in sexual conduct in exchange for money, clothing, food, shelter, education, goods, or care. Exploited youth are not "child prostitutes", they are child victims.

Caregivers start to lay the foundation for protection by having age-appropriate conversations with them about their bodies. Children start to heal the moment they are heard. Are you listening?

In New York State we have 62 Child advocacy centers with only 47 providing medical exams. Out of the 47 Child advocacy centers 14, 029 children had forensic interviews, 383,785 were provided victim advocacy services, 5,221 received counseling services but only 3,873 were provided medical services.

How we can improve and increase the numbers for medical examinations. Who is talking to the children or parents about what a medical exam is, why it is necessary for healing, and why are they declining.

Are we protecting the child who is being sexually exploited and providing them with the appropriate medical care.

#### Speaker



**Nancy Harris**

Medical Manager NP-C | Trinity health

### Ethics and Decision-Making in Professional Practice

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

**INTERDISCIPLINARY**

This workshop will focus on ethical and legal issues that arise for professionals working in the field of child maltreatment. It will be an interactive session that will cover a variety of topics that impact decision making: ethical principles, personal biases, thinking errors, and working and coordinating with other professionals. Professional boundaries across different case types (e.g., office vs. home-based services; urban vs. rural settings, etc.) will also be explored in relation to one's role and discipline. Real-life case examples will be discussed.

#### Co-speakers



**Tricia Gardner**

Associate Professor | OUHSC



**Andrew Monroe**

Sr. Psychological Clinician | University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center



**Erin Taylor**

Associate Professor | OUHSC-Center on Child Abuse and Neglect

### HealthySteps & Reflective Practice: An Early Intervention Model for Child Abuse Prevention

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM | Location: Oak Alley (fourth floor)

**CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY**

**HEALTHCARE**

**PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS**

**INTERDISCIPLINARY**

HealthySteps is an evidence-based, interdisciplinary program based in pediatric primary care settings that improves family health and supports a child's early learning and overall well-being. The intervention places an emphasis on serving families living in low-income communities and results in improved outcomes in areas where health inequities exist. The HealthySteps Specialist, a child development and behavioral health promotion and prevention expert, partners with clinic teams to promote nurturing parenting, which improves infants' healthy development and well-being. The work is relationship-based which helps to better understand and identify needs for the families they serve. They provide parent education on infant development, early literacy, and attachment and assist with screenings, referrals, and system navigation. Focus on the pillars of infant mental health and early childhood development are paramount to the program. We also understand that 'how we are is as important as what we do'. Reflective supervision is a crucial component of the program that helps to create a parallel process to set the emotional tone of attunement and support in the lives of the caregivers which imparts a ripple effect with the families. Reflection allows the team involved to slow-down and increase self-awareness about our beliefs and how that influences the work. This encourages curiosity and flexibility in responses to situations and promotes a culturally sensitive mindset.

#### Speaker



**Samantha Heitman**

HealthySteps Supervisor | The Parent Child Center of Tulsa

#### Co-speaker



**Monique Huff**

HealthySteps Supervisor | HealthySteps

### Safe and Sound: safe screens-sound minds

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

**PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS**

Safe and Sound: safe screens/sound minds is an initiative of the Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention, "The Children's Trust Fund", which has been developed to education participants and key stakeholders regarding protecting our youth. Safe and Sound is a compilation of our agency's work in digital safety; opioid prevention; and mental health wellness.

#### Speaker



**Sallye Longshore**

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

#### Co-speaker



**Jeff Davis**

Executive Director | Fowler Davis 4 Change

### Locked Away: Solitary Confinement and Disability Discrimination in Juvenile Justice

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

**HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES**

**LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING**

**POLICY AND ADVOCACY**

A significant portion of youth in detention facilities suffer from disabilities. In detention facilities, youth experience discrimination and psychological and physical maltreatment. All too often they are punished because of their disabilities, denied access to necessary services and health care, mocked, and locked away in solitary confinement, where they are segregated from the rest of the residents.

Solitary confinement is the most extreme type of isolation a child can face, and it can have serious and long-lasting effects on their mental and physical health, including leading to depression, anxiety, and psychosis. Likewise, there is a strong link between juvenile suicide and solitary confinement. Despite this, nine states have no restrictions on the use of juvenile solitary confinement.

When there are no restrictions or inadequate restrictions on solitary confinement, youth are at risk of experiencing severe mistreatment, which exacerbates their disabilities. For instance, youth are subjected to unlawful restraints and are verbally and physically abused—all while being left alone in barren cells for days, weeks, and months at a time.

Young people who experience abuse and discrimination in detention facilities have remedies under the law, including under federal civil rights statutes, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Rehabilitation Act. Successful lawsuits can inspire policy and legislative reform and can end the harmful use of juvenile solitary confinement.



#### Speaker



**Allison Mahoney**

Founder & Managing Attorney | ALM Law

#### Co-speakers



**Matt Cron**

Managing Partner | Rathod Mohamedbhai LLC



**Ciara Anderson**

Attorney | Rathod Mohamedbhai



**Malik Pickett**

Senior Attorney | Juvenile Law Center

### Promoting Justice, Safety and Fairness: What Happened When One State Stopped Placing Juveniles on Sex offender Registries?

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

States have been placing juveniles on sex offender registries and subjecting them to community notification for more than 20 years. In that time a growing body of research has demonstrated that youth with problematic sexual behaviors are highly amenable to treatment, that registration causes harm to the youth and their families, and that registries have little impact on the incidence of sex offenses in either a juvenile or adult population. Clearly, sex offender registries do not play a role in prevention. In this session, we will summarize current research on youth with problematic sexual behavior from clinical and public policy perspectives, focusing on sex offender registration and notification from the framework of 'crime control theater'. We will present the results of an analysis of one state's data from the National Center for Juvenile Justice reviewing the incidence of youths with sex-related charges in juvenile court 5 years before and 5 years after registration and notification were suspended.

#### Speaker



**Janet Rosenzweig**

Senior Policy Analyst | The Institute for Human Services

#### Co-speaker



**Mike Nowlin**

Director of Operations | Institute for Human Services

### Research Session - Exploring Patterns of Abusive Parenting in Posts from r/raised by narcissists: A Reddit Content Analysis (This session is not eligible for CME Credit)

1:00 PM – 1:30 PM | Location: Nottoway (fourth floor)

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Relatively little is known about how Reddit communities are used to facilitate support for children of narcissistic or otherwise abusive parents. Six researchers identified one such community, the r/raisedbynarcissists group, to determine the extent to which the communication of healthy coping strategies influenced positive reinforcement from the community. A coding and classification scheme was applied to the most recent posts within the "rant/vent" flair (n = 90 posts). Fisher's exact and chi-square tests determined that mothers (52%) were most likely to be the subjects of posts describing emotional abuse. A regression model revealed that physical neglect ( $\beta = .29, p < .01$ ) explained a significant proportion of variance in the number of upvotes each post received. These findings demonstrate the pervasive and intricate nature of abusive parenting and offer hope to those searching for support in the form of an anonymous online community.

#### Speaker



**Savannah Lee**

Military Treatment Coordinator | Pawnee Mental Health

#### Co-speaker



**Tess Leftwich**

M.A. Student | University of Colorado Colorado Springs

### Research Session - Master of Social Work Students' Perceived Knowledge of and Capacity to Address Physical and Emotional Sibling Violence & Child Abuse (This session is not eligible for CME Credit)

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

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The preparedness of MSW students to address physical and emotional sibling violence (PESV) and child abuse (CA) has not been thoroughly investigated (Perkins et al., 2021) with insufficient focus on their perceived knowledge and capacity to intervene in instances of PESV and CA. A national survey of MSW students was conducted to examine this gap. A sample of MSW students (n=522) responded to items on their perceived knowledge of and capacity to address PESV and CA with clients along with their personal experiences of PESV (Perkins, 2014) and the ACEs Abuse subscale (SAMHSA, 2018). Frequencies and correlations were run to examine perceived knowledge of and capacity to address PESV and CA in clients along with associations with personal experiences of PESV and CA. Participants were 89% female, 72.4% Caucasian, 73.2% heterosexual with a mean age of 29.73. 78% strongly agreed/agreed they had knowledge of CA with 27.7% stating they had

knowledge of PESV. 85.6% strongly agreed/agreed they had the capacity to address CA with 58.7% stating they had the capacity to address PESV. Experiences of PESV was not correlated with knowledge or capacity to address PESV. Perceived knowledge of CA was correlated with experiencing CA. Education of future practitioners on PESV and CA is warranted as more repondents perceived their capacity as higher than their knowledge. Understanding how students' perceived capacity to address PESV and CA correlates with actual ability is an important next step.

**Speaker**



**Nathan H. Perkins**

Associate Professor | Loyola University Chicago, School of Social Work

**Co-speakers**



**Jennifer Shadik**

Associate Professor | Ohio University



**Emmanuel Agyei-Poku**

Student | Loyola University

**Break**

2:00 PM – 2:15 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

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

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM | Location: Nottoway (fourth floor)

**HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES**

**MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT**

**PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS**

**Abstract Description of Training for Program**

This youth-focused training explores the influence of anime on adolescent perceptions of problematic sexual behaviors. It integrates cultural, ethical, and media analysis to bridge the gap between popular media and clinical perspectives on youth mental health.

**Description of Training**

The impact of anime on youth culture in the U.S. is profound and growing. This training focuses on how these portrayals impact youth and adolescent perceptions and behaviors related to sex and relationships.

We will start the session with an overview of anime's popularity among American youth, citing data and trends highlighting its significant influence.

The second segment shifts the lens to Japanese culture, including ethical and cultural considerations contributing to problematic sexual depictions in anime. Emphasis will be placed on how these representations can distort the understanding of sexual behaviors and consent among adolescents. The third part will delve into specific examples from popular anime series, focusing on characters and scenarios that depict problematic sexual behaviors. In this segment, we will engage the audience in identifying the potential real-world consequences of such portrayals, especially among younger viewers.

The training concludes with a discussion on how stakeholders can address these concerns when interacting with youth and adolescents.

**Speaker**



**Jermaine Wall**

Clinical Therapist | Crescent Counseling Services

**Invisible Victims: The Critical Need for Support of Munchausen by Proxy Survivors in a World of Limited Research**

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom B

**CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY**

**CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE**

**HEALTHCARE**

**HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES**

**MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT**

**POLICY AND ADVOCACY**

**PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS**

**INTERDISCIPLINARY**

This training, led by two survivors of Munchausen by Proxy Abuse (MBPA), focuses on the long-term effects of this often overlooked abuse. Since 1995, MBPA has received limited research attention, creating a significant gap in understanding its complex trauma.

The presenters will share their personal stories, highlighting the psychological and physical harm endured and the life-altering consequences of this abuse. The session will explore how trauma from MBPA differs from other forms of child abuse, emphasizing that this complexity is often unrecognized by professionals.

Victims face unique challenges, as medical interventions have been weaponized against them, complicating their relationships with healthcare providers. The presenters will discuss their treatment experiences, sharing what has been beneficial, what has failed, and how these insights can guide more effective therapeutic practices. They will also address the specific challenges faced by queer and Mad survivors.

Additionally, the training will focus on the lack of specialized psychological interventions for survivors, illustrating how this gap impacts recovery and mental health. The presenters will stress the urgent need for targeted trauma-informed care, helping attendees understand how to support survivors effectively.

By integrating personal narratives with broader insights, this training aims to enhance understanding of MBPA and advocate for greater awareness and improved psychological support for its victims.

**Co-speaker**



**Paige Barker**

Post Graduate Researcher (PhD) | Liverpool John Moores

**Speaker**



**Mishelle Roberts**

Volunteer Facilitator | Munchausen Support

**One Year In: Statewide Response to Address Problematic Sexual Behaviors**

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM | Location: Grand Chenier

**HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES**

**MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT**

**PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS**

Nationally, 25% - 35% of sexual abuse cases seen at Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) involve two minors. Data collected by New Jersey's CACs and Regional Diagnostic and Treatment Centers (RDTCs) also revealed that between 15% and 30% of cases involve two minors. Research demonstrates that youth who complete evidence-based treatment focused on addressing problematic sexual behavior (PSB) cease their sexual acting out behaviors. In addition, evidence-based treatment models minimize the need for foster care, residential care, or juvenile justice intervention.

This session will focus on NJ's creation of a statewide response to ensuring that youth who exhibit problematic sexual behavior (PSB) and youth impacted by the behaviors have access to specialized medical and evidence-based mental health services. A workgroup was established that included leadership from child protective services, law enforcement, prosecution, victim advocacy, medical and mental health and youth serving organizations to establish a coordinated response to PSB. The workgroup developed a framework for the PSB Program, which emphasizes a collaborative approach to responding to cases involving PSB, and successfully advocated for funding to support the Program, including the creation of new positions throughout the state and specialized medical and mental health services for youth. Lessons learned from the development and implementation of the program, as well as data from the first 12 months, will be shared.

#### Speaker



**Nydia Monagas**

Director of Training and Statewide Initiatives | New Jersey Children's Alliance

#### Co-speaker



**Valeria Vila**

Program Coordinator | New Jersey Children's Alliance

### Supporting and Reporting: Disparities in Mandatory Reporting

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom E

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY POLICY AND ADVOCACY PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

Supporting and Reporting Training aims to equip participants with essential knowledge and skills related to mandated reporting and supporting youth and families. The training will cover an overview of mandated reporting, maltreatment/abuse, confidentiality, implications of disproportionate reporting, and effective support strategies for family and youth we serve. The goal is to ensure that participants are well-prepared to handle reporting responsibilities responsibly and to support the well-being of the individuals and communities they work with.

#### Speaker



**Jeffrey Brown**

Director of Communications and LMS Management. | The New York Foundling

### Utilizing the Muscle of the Law (Civil & Criminal) in Combating Child Sexual Abuse

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM | Location: Grand Couteau

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING POLICY AND ADVOCACY

*Kathryn Robb, Esq. the Director of the Children's Justice Campaign at Enough Abuse™ and a national expert on statutes of limitations (SOL) reform and child protection legislation, and Detective Mike Johnson, an internationally recognized expert on child sexual abuse (CSA) and exploitation will share their experiences and efforts in utilizing the power of the rule of law to effectively protect children and hold perpetrators and institutions accountable. They will explore the limits of the criminal system and why civil law offers an effective path for justice for survivors and the protection of children. Kathryn will discuss the national trend to reform SOLs for CSA, the types of effective revival statutes, the ability of the law to shift the financial burden of CSA, statistics, and the typical opposing arguments against state SOL reform as well as the need to reform Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code. Detective Mike will address the need for effective youth protection policies and training at all YSOs and share what he has learned during his 24 years as Lead Detective and Family Violence/Abuse Investigator at the Texas Police Department and his expert advisory efforts as the Youth Protection Advisor and Director for the National Office of the Boy Scouts of America. Together, Kathryn and Detective Mike will share the one-two punch of the dual power of both criminal and civil laws and policy in combating the epidemic of child sexual abuse.*

#### Speaker



**Kathryn Robb**

National Director, Children's Justice Campaign | Enough Abuse

#### Co-speaker



**Michael Johnson**

Manager | Detective Mike LLC

### Drug Endangered Children - Often the Forgotten Ones

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom D

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE FORENSIC INTERVIEWING FORENSIC INTERVIEWING ADVANCED HEALTHCARE INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE INTERDISCIPLINARY

This session will help participants understand who drug endangered children are, along with the risks and long-term impacts associated with parental and caregiver substance misuse and drug activity. Trainers will share the importance of and opportunities for early identification and intervention and the need for multidisciplinary collaborative efforts to identify and help these children. Trainers will provide examples that all disciplines can relate to and activities to assist in applying this challenging topic. Trainers will help attendees identify the opportunities to change the trajectories of the lives of drug endangered children and break multigenerational cycles.

#### Speaker



**Nikki Romer**

Director of Alliance Development | National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children

#### Co-speaker



**Carrie Jensen**

Director of Operations | National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children

## Heroes, Villains, and Healing

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM | Location: Oak Alley (fourth floor)

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Superheroes have always been a source of strength for those who feel weak. "Heroes, Villains, and Healing" will be used to show how the DC and Marvel heroes and villains we love and love to hate can be used to help heal the trauma of PTSD in survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Superheroes such as Flash, Superman, Batman, and villains such as Joker, Two-Face, and Mister Zsasz provide more than entertainment in comics we read and movies we watch. They provide a means to understanding coping mechanisms such as hypervigilance, workaholicism, addiction, and even humor to progress throughout the healing progress to become more than a hero, villain, victim, or survivor, but the complete individuals they were meant to be. Superheroes provide a safe means to address complex issues that survivors can use to thrive as they progress along their journey of healing.

### Speaker



**Kenneth Rogers**

Author / Survivor | Lost Imaginations

## What have we accomplished? The views of 30-40 professionals who have worked 30-40 years in the field.

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom A

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

Over the past year, I have had open ended in person interviews with 30-40 professionals in the field of child maltreatment, asking the question: What has our child protection system in the U.S. accomplished for children and families over the past 30-40 years? The oral responses have been tabulated and will be followed up with written surveys in the next 3-4 months in time for presentation at the June colloquium. To date, the single most common response to the question has been: "Huh....that's a really interesting question...." followed by silence.

When given time to think and reflect, several people identified areas such as "better interviewing". "better examination technique", and "a reduction in corporal punishment. No one could state that the children and families coming into the child protection system were better off that they were before they were reported. And many noted that the annual number of child abuse fatalities had not appreciably changed in decades.

In the absence of outcome data, and given the calls by some to "abolish" the child protection system, it appears to be time to have a "do-over". How that should happen and how to move toward a system that measures the quality and outcomes of its practice will be discussed at this session.

### Speaker



**Richard Krugman**

Distinguished Professor | University of Colorado School of Medicine

## Break

3:15 PM – 3:45 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

## Plenary Session - The Healing Power of Relational Moments: The Impact of Adversity on Neurodevelopment and Why Healing is a Community Process

3:45 PM – 5:00 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom C

### Speaker



**Bruce Perry MD, PhD**

Principal | Neurosequential Network

## Second Line Parade!

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM | Location: 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!

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.

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## Thursday, June 26, 2025

### The Profound Stories of Maltreated Children Who Overcame Trauma to be Resilient Adults

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

["Stories are healing because telling and listening to them are how we repair our souls, our relationships, our earth, and our world. Stories bind us together and cross boundaries, borders, languages, time, and space" \(Remen, 2010\). This presentation will utilize the profound stories of four adults through video interviews and narrative history who have experienced significant childhood maltreatment](#)

[\(death of two siblings, sex trafficking, sexual abuse, and chronic neglect\) and subsequent trauma to explore their resiliency journey in adulthood through varying chronological ages. The key resiliency factors for each and their adult challenges due to the impact of their maltreatment and trauma will be discussed. Each will weigh on what formal services and/or informal supports were most beneficial in contributing to their resiliency as a child and into adulthood. Lesson learned will be shared for practitioners who serve maltreated children by the four adults and the facilitators who have witnessed and participated in integral ways for each of the adults.](#)

#### Speaker



**James Henry**

Professor | Western Michigan University

### Discrimination Against Children in Investigation: A Dangerous Mistake (CLE Professionalism Hours Eligible)

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Child victims and witnesses of abuse are often not heard or believed after making disclosures of abuse, and there are dangerous consequences when this occurs. Why does this happen? Could disbelieving a child over an adult be considered a form of discrimination? This session will discuss a number of reasons we are seeing investigators ignore or dismiss children's disclosures. We will also review ways to ethically advocate for a child when this manner is identified by those on your very own MDT. The discussion will include literature and case specific examples for clarity. We will include various topics such as ACES, mental health, ageism and studies that identify a lack of appropriate training that may contribute to this area of concern.

#### Speaker



**Jennifer Hillgoth**

Detective | Aurora IL police dept

#### Co-speaker



**Stacie Leblanc**

CEO | Up Institute

### Moms, Kids & Critters: Connecting the Dots between Child, Domestic and Animal Abuse

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

While much research and practice addresses the impact of domestic violence on children, less understood is how the abuse of family pets is a common part of this dynamic. Pets are part of an overwhelming majority of children's ecosystems. Evidence-based research connects animal abuse and neglect with child abuse, child sexual abuse, and domestic violence as a means of coercive control over vulnerable children and their mothers. Acts of cruelty to animals, whether perpetrated or witnessed by children and youth, frequently are an indicator and predictor of family violence and are strongly present in the criminal histories of juvenile offenders. Child sexual abuse is often connected to bestiality.

The area where animal cruelty, child maltreatment, and domestic violence intersect is called "The Link." By preventing and responding to family violence through this multi-species lens, child welfare and family services workers can gain a broader perspective of the needs, resources and environments of clients. The Link connects the dots in what are often disparate community services systems to guide more holistic and effective strategies.

This seminar will explore children's emotional attachments to animals, racial disparities in pet ownership rates, and research on the nexus of child, domestic and animal abuse. It will inspire participants with recommendations for implementing culturally sensitive policies and procedures that address the welfare of all vulnerable family members.

#### Speaker



**Phil Arkow**

President & Secretary | National LINK Coalition

### Toward a More Trauma-Informed Faith

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

FAITH

Most faith systems share a common theme: central figures within their Scriptures experience significant trauma. Whether it is war, slavery, attempted genocide, torture, sexual assault, child abuse, or other forms of trauma, trauma and faith seem inextricably linked. Despite this, few faith communities have embraced this narrative to foster more trauma-informed faith communities. This has hampered abuse prevention efforts and resulted in extensive retraumatization, even when faith communities are trying to care well for survivors of trauma. The damage this causes becomes more visible with each report of child sexual abuse or other forms of abuse within faith communities. Faith communities are beginning to respond, but a consistent framework remains elusive. Understanding and applying principles of trauma-informed practice can help faith communities establish stronger prevention efforts, respond to trauma and abuse disclosures more effectively, and prompt beneficial collaboration between faith communities and others in the community who are working to safeguard children and all who may be vulnerable.

#### Speaker



**Mike Sloan**

Director of Safeguarding | Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment (GRACE)

## How Predators Groom Children, Families, and Organizations

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

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Predators do not simply target children—they strategically groom entire families and organizations to gain access and harm children. This presentation, led by Patricia Dailey Lewis, Esq. CEO of the Beau Biden Foundation for the Protection of Children, will provide an in-depth exploration of grooming tactics used by predators to manipulate and exploit vulnerable populations.

Participants will learn how grooming unfolds in stages, from targeting a child and building trust to creating dependence, breaking boundaries, and silencing victims and bystanders. The session will focus on institutional grooming, where predators exploit gaps in policies, procedures, and workplace culture to gain access to children.

Through case studies and real-world examples, attendees will develop the skills to recognize grooming behaviors early, strengthen prevention efforts, and establish policies that create safe environments in homes, schools, and organizations. This presentation will also highlight how predators may exploit children with disabilities, making it crucial for professionals to implement protective strategies tailored to this population.

By the end of the session, participants will leave with a clear understanding of grooming behaviors, actionable strategies to prevent abuse, and practical tools to create a culture of child protection within their professional and personal environments. This training is essential for child-serving professionals, educators, law enforcement, and community leaders dedicated to safeguarding children from exploitation and abuse.

### Speaker



**Patricia Dailey Lewis**

CEO | Beau Biden Foundation for the Protection of Children

## Research Session - The Impact of Family Resiliency and Childhood Adversity in Youth Flourishing: A Latent Class Analysis

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM | Location: Grand Chenier

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

Studies on resiliency focus on strengths to understand how families cope with hardship, but many do not fully account for serious adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) or multiple forms of resilience. Our study addresses these gaps by using latent class analysis (LCA) to classify U.S. families based on adversity and resilience factors, then analyzing how youth in different families flourish or struggle. Data were from the merged 2021/2022 National Survey of Children's Health (N=63,652). Parents reported adversities their children (ages 6 to 17) faced, including economic hardship and violence, along with routines, social support, and communication. Flourishing was measured by the child's ability to always/sometimes/never stay calm, show interest, and finish tasks. Multinomial logistic regression was used following the LCA. Four classes emerged: low ACE/high Res (47%), low ACE/low Res (39%), high ACE/low Res (8%) and high ACE/High Res (6%). Children in families with high ACE/high Res were not more likely to "never" flourish compared to children in families with low ACE/low Res but were 1.75 times ( $p < .01$ ) more likely to "always" flourish compared to children who only "sometimes" flourish. Other analyses showed a similar pattern: resilience helped protect children with high ACEs from difficulties and also improved their ability to flourish. The importance of improving communication and routines – both modifiable practices – in families facing serious adversities is discussed.

### Speaker



**Jesse Helton**

Associate Professor | St. Louis University

### Co-speaker



**Jun-Hong Chen**

Assistant Professor | Saint Louis University

## Research Session - What Happens When Child Abuse Pediatricians and CPS Investigators Collaborate? A Study of the Multidisciplinary Pediatric Education and Evaluation Consortium

9:00 AM – 9:30 AM | Location: Grand Chenier

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

The Multidisciplinary Pediatric Education and Evaluation Consortium (MPEEC) is a medically directed program that mandates real-time interagency collaboration among child abuse pediatricians (CAPs), child protective services (CPS) investigators, and law enforcement. MPEEC provides consultation resulting in a definitive medical opinion regarding manner of injury when allegations of serious harm involving children less than three years old living in Chicago are reported to Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

This study is the first to link data from a medically directed, inter-agency program with CPS investigations data to specifically examine the duration of CPS investigations and the level of concordance between the manner of injury as determined by CAPs and the investigation's outcome when CPS investigators and medical professionals are required to formally collaborate.

On average, MPEEC produced a written opinion 16 days from the time of referral and DCFS made a final determination 45 days after receiving the report for the 690 cases referred to MPEEC over a 3-year period. The concordance level ranged from 75-90%.

MPEEC is an innovative, replicable model for mandated interagency collaboration that provides CPS investigators with real-time medical expert consultation, reduces referral bias, and ensures investigations are medically informed. We aim to share our experience, process, and findings with others involved in maltreatment investigations.

### Speaker



**Veena Ramaiah**

Associate Professor of Pediatrics | University of Chicago Comer Children's Hospital

## Research Session - Best Practices for Assessing Caregiving in Research with Parents with Abuse Histories: An Equitable-Functional Approach

9:30 AM – 10:00 AM | Location: Grand Chenier

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This talk showcases best practices for assessing caregiving when conducting research with parents with maltreatment histories. This research requires sensitivity in interactions with participants, complex ethical



considerations for consent and data collection, managing clinical and mandated reporting issues, and appreciation of equity issues when interpreting statistical findings. We discuss suitability of various self-report, interview, observational, and implicit paradigm-based measures of parenting in this population. Additionally, we present results validating a new *equitable-functional* approach to observationally assessing caregiving in a diverse sample of 225 mothers with high rates of maltreatment histories. By emphasizing the *function* of parenting behaviors rather than their specific form, this approach better accounts for diverse strategies parents from various backgrounds use to accomplish the same parenting goals. Codes were shown to be reliable (ICCs = .715 - .937) and factor analysis confirmed the theorized functional dimensions of caregiving. Linear regressions of relative predictive utility showed observational codes were associated with child socioemotional outcomes ( $\beta$ s = .365-.385,  $ps < .043$ ) whereas parenting self-report measures were not ( $ps > .724$ ). Collectively, results demonstrate the equitable-functional approach is a valid, feasible, and flexible avenue for increasing cultural sensitivity when assessing caregiving in parents with abuse histories.

#### Speaker



**Hannah Swerbenski**

Postdoctoral Research Associate | Mt. Hope Family Center/University of Rochester

#### Break

10:00 AM – 10:15 AM | Location: Grand Ballroom Foyer

#### Updates from non-offending fathers and family who try to protect their children from Munchausen By Proxy and Medical Child Abuse

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Both the general public and child abuse professionals have gained awareness in recent years of Munchausen By Proxy/Medical Child Abuse cases. Many are puzzled why nonoffending parents and family members do not act to stop the abuse or report the cases they witness. This training session will explore this puzzle from lived experience of the challenges faced by fathers and other nonoffending family members who do act and report cases of MCA abuse, as well as developing solutions to help them, including direct experiences leading support groups. Over the last two years, the nonprofit Munchausen Support has provided resources such as the APSAC MBP Guidelines (2017) to nonoffending family members, professionals, and investigators. Many nonoffending family members joined family support groups and continue to meet over the long term.

These family members have frequently revealed similar challenges and roadblocks that they have had to overcome to act to protect their children from abuse. Often these continue to complicate any actions to protect their children after the abuse has been reported. We will discuss solutions that have been collaboratively developed, as well as successes helping support those family members as they continue working to help their children heal.

#### Speaker



**Brian Fleming**

Vice President | Munchausen Support

#### Sexting, Sextortion, and Generative Artificial Intelligence- Updating Internet Safety Messages to Counter the Latest Threats

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

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) like many new technological advances before it brings with it exciting new opportunities as well as new risks. How should the accessibility of GAI change our internet safety messages for children, youth, and parents? At the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, we receive reports that include youth produced content depicting children of all ages. Investigating these cases is difficult enough, but how can we prevent a crime when the victim is the one creating the images used to exploit them or when the images of the child are created using GAI? This workshop will include an interactive discussion of how we must update prevention messaging to children, adolescents, and adults about youth produced content and nonconsensual image sharing using a developmental perspective. We will then discuss how to apply a trauma-informed approach to tailoring prevention messages to specific age groups regarding self-generated and GAI materials. Additionally, we will share free resources that can be used in your community to address these issues with children of all ages.

#### Speaker



**Susan Kennedy**

Director, Community Engagement | NCMEC

#### Is This Abusive, Please Help! Understanding Abusive Injuries

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

HEALTHCARE

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Giving the attendees basic knowledge of what causes bruising. Then leading to patterned injuries and sentinel injuries. Educating on the mnemonic TEN4 (bruising to the torso, ears, neck of any child and injuries under the age of 4 months), patterned injuries, and how even the smallest bruise in a young child needs to be evaluated by someone who specializes in abusive injuries to children. The goal of the presentation would be education and prevention. If sentinel injuries can be recognized and evaluated in a timely manner then we could prevent further injuries and death.

#### Speaker



**Carrie Watt**

Nurse Practitioner | Pediatric Resource Center

#### Enhancing MDT Success Through Simulations

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

This seminar will review key components of a new simulation training designed to help MDTs communicate more effectively. Facilitators will discuss the common problem areas and techniques utilized in the training to build better collaboration. Research findings from the program evaluation will be presented by the research team from Children and Family Research Center at the UIUC.

Building on our expertise of simulation trainings with child protection professionals, The Alliance for Experiential Problem-Based Learning at the University of Illinois Springfield received federal funding to create simulation trainings in partnership with the Children's Advocacy Centers of Illinois with Multidisciplinary Teams across Illinois. This statewide evidence-based training provided a total of six trainings in two locations, hosting 74 professionals from 11 different multidisciplinary teams from Illinois.

The Learning Objectives emphasized a trauma-informed approach to working cases of complex child maltreatment, utilizing a residential simulation lab and problem-based learning to improve critical decision-making and reduce the impact of bias. Specifically, participants received didactic information and participated in multiple experiential learning exercises. The didactic discussions also acknowledged poverty as trauma and prepared participants to identify bias, including cultural and racial disparity.

#### Co-speaker



**Theodore Cross**

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

### Research Session - Modeling the Impact of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) on Children of Immigrants' Socioemotional Development: Is Home Visitation Protective?

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Research indicates that witnessing IPV during childhood is common in the general population and may result in untoward socioemotional development. Exposure to trauma and other stressors may be buffered by participation in home visitation. However, some research suggests IPV may limit home visiting participation. It is unclear how these relationships may hold for immigrant families. The present study addresses the gaps regarding the socioemotional development of young immigrant children and the conditions under which the direct and indirect effect of IPV (measured at program enrollment) may be mediated by maternal depression and home visiting. The sample included 4149 immigrant households with children aged 10–72 months ( $M = 21.3$  months,  $SD = 16.2$ ; 52.4% boys) at exit who participated in PAT home visiting program between 2010–2022. Conditional indirect effects were tested via path models with longitudinal data using structural equation modeling. Findings revealed a significant indirect effect of baseline IPV report on later child socioemotional development via maternal depression ( $\beta = 1.74$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This was moderated by the length of home visiting engagement, such that the indirect effect was found only in families who stayed in the program for more than two years ( $\beta = 2.36$ ,  $p < .05$ , 95%CI [0.25–4.48]). Results suggest extra support is needed to address parent depression and IPV to promote positive child socioemotional development among immigrants enrolled in home visitation.

#### Speaker



**Fithi Andom**

Post-doctoral research fellow | Washington University in St. Louis

### The Care Process Model for Pediatric Traumatic Stress (CPM-PTS): Changing the Course of Trauma through Screening & Trauma-Informed Response

10:30 AM – 2:30 PM | Location: Grand Coueteau

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

HEALTHCARE

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

Participants will gain new ideas and specific resources for strengthening trauma screening and response in their pediatric setting, including introductory training in the Care Process Model for Pediatric Traumatic Stress (CPM-PTS). Professionals from Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs), particularly victim advocates and directors, will find this training particularly helpful in their healing support of children and families and in meeting National Children's Alliance (NCA) accreditation standards.

#### Speakers



**Brooks Keeshin, MD**

Associate Vice Chair of Research in Child Mental Health | Huntsman Mental Health Institute



**Lindsay Abdulahad**

Assistant Professor | University of Utah, Department of Pediatrics, Division of Behavioral Health, Pediatric Integrated Po



**Michelle Miller**

Director of NCA Institute for Better Mental Health Outcomes | National Children's Alliance

### Research Session - CPS WORKERS' PERSPECTIVES ON MST-IPV AND OTHER INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILD MALTREATMENT AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

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

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Although the co-occurrence rate of intimate partner violence (IPV) and child abuse and neglect (CAN) is about 40% (Appel and Holden, 1998; Herrenkohl et al., 2008), little research currently exists on integrated treatment for these concerns. Furthermore, no known published studies investigate child protective services (CPS) workers' perspectives on such treatment. The present study explores the perspectives of CPS workers on treatment for co-occurring IPV and CAN, specifically focusing on Multisystemic Therapy for Intimate Partner Violence (MST-IPV). A total of 18 Connecticut CPS workers participated in semi-structured interviews. Seven participants had experience working with MST-IPV treatment providers, while 11 participants had no experience with MST-IPV. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis, resulting in five main themes: "Complexity of IPV Cases," "Recommending What's Available Rather Than What's Best," "Varied Treatment Effectiveness," "Importance of Digging Deep," and "Above and Beyond." The findings of this study highlight CPS worker satisfaction with MST-IPV and underscore the importance of developing, researching, and funding treatments for co-occurring IPV and CAN.

#### Speaker



**Malea Lash**

Postdoctoral Fellow | UC Davis CAARE Center

### Research Session - Considering Betrayal Among Young Mothers Maltreated as Children and Subsequent Dating Violence Victimization and Perpetration

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

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

**Introduction:** Young mothers (YMs) are at greater risk of dating violence (DV) compared to their non-parenting, female peers. One salient predictor of DV is child maltreatment (CM). CM perpetrated by a parent is defined as a high betrayal trauma (HBT). YMs who experience a HBT may endorse betrayal blindness to cope with abuse from their parent, however, may fail to detect betrayals later in their romantic relationships. We explored the role of betrayal among a sample of YMs maltreated as children.

**Methods:** YMs (N = 66) were recruited via ambulatory clinics and social media ads to participate in an online, cross-sectional survey. YMs completed questionnaires about their CM histories, posttrauma appraisals, and relationship behaviors.

**Results:** HBT was positively associated with DV victimization,  $r(32) < .05$  and perpetration,  $r(31) < .05$ . Betrayal blindness was not observed due to a positive, and not negative, association between HBT and the posttrauma appraisal of betrayal,  $r(53) < .01$ . Generalized linear regressions showed for every one unit increase in betrayal, DV victimization increased by 21% and perpetration by 20%.

**Discussion:** YMs were aware of the betrayal they experienced during their childhood yet may still expect harm in their romantic relationships due to a false sense of safety and control. These results may inform evidence-based, trauma treatment for YMs who experience DV in their romantic relationships.

#### Speaker



**Lauren Wallace**

Clinical Psychology Post-Doctoral Fellow | UC Davis CAARE Center

#### Lunch (on your own)

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM

#### What Made You Do It? Forensic Interviews with Children Who Engage in Problematic Sexual Behavior

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

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

FORENSIC INTERVIEWING

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Addressing problematic sexual behaviors in children is a daunting task, one that begins, often, with an investigation by a multidisciplinary team and ends, ideally, with high-quality therapeutic services to manage behaviors, enhance safety, and ameliorate the effects of identified risk factors and other adverse childhood experiences. Where does the forensic interview fit in? This session is designed to consider how we address cases in which pre-adolescent children may have engaged in problematic sexual behavior and to identify what needs to be assessed in those cases. Research shows us that children who engage in these behaviors *may* be reacting to sexual abuse, but there are many other co-morbid experiences and factors that correlate with these behaviors. This session will present possible areas of inquiry for forensic interviews with children who have engaged in problematic sexual behavior and will explore specific recommendations for conducting these interviews.

#### Speaker



**Anne Post**

Director | Montgomery County Child Advocacy Center

#### Engaging with Christian Communities to Combat Child Sexual Abuse

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE

FAITH

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

LEGAL ISSUES AND TESTIFYING

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

INTERDISCIPLINARY

As more and more scrutiny is placed on Christian communities regarding child sexual abuse within their ranks, it is important to understand the cultural factors that may help to contribute to an environment in which abuse or its cover-up can thrive. This presentation will examine these cultural factors and provide insight on how to engage with churches in changing the culture and engaging them in the fight to prevent child sexual abuse. Additionally, it is equally important to engage Christian communities in meeting the needs of victims, becoming champions of fostering and adopting abused/neglected children, and becoming safe havens or sanctuaries for those in need and the brokenhearted. Topics of discussion will include spiritual abuse and betrayal trauma, clericalism and views on challenging faith leaders, views on forgiveness and repentance, views on church discipline and the authority of the government, views on gender roles, and views on child abuse. Mandatory reporting requirements and child protection and spiritual abuse policies and procedures will also be discussed. Furthermore, as both a pastor and a juvenile judge, the speaker will address practical ways of enlisting churches to address foster care needs in your communities.

#### Speaker



**Matthew Belser**

District Judge | 21st Judicial District Court

#### Carrots, Twigs and The GROUT Line: Working with Justice-Involved Families (This session is not eligible for CME Credit)

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

CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

HOT TOPICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTERDISCIPLINARY

The Carrots, Twigs and Grout Lines workshop will cover 1) research knowledge about the breadth, depth and impacts of incarceration on children, 2) key research and real-life experiences about how to engage fragile families, 3) highlights from evidence-based approaches to helping children in this predicament and 4) case studies with complex families involved in multiple systems of care.

Founded in 2007, Children of Inmates, Inc. is a community-based organization dedicated to helping children of incarcerated parents thrive, no matter their circumstances. Our aim is to mitigate childhood trauma caused by parental incarceration, by supporting children and their families with opportunities that foster positive child development. Our focus is raising children to be happy, healthy and productive citizens. This workshop will engage the audience to 1) explore how to engage justice-involved families who may be reluctant and fearful of services, i.e. carrots; 2) how to use research findings to guide and help the children and families develop pathways to improve their stability and success, i.e. twigs and 3) discuss the importance of helping justice-involved families navigate the processes of the established criminal justice, social welfare, child welfare, education and other systems, i.e. Grout lines.

#### Speaker



**Shellie Solomon**

President | Children of Inmates, Inc.

**Co-speakers**



**Lela Lombardo**

Senior Change Engineer/ Arts Lead | Children Of Inmates, Inc.



**Maria Herczog**

Senior change Engineer | Children of Inmates

**Infant Prenatal Substance Exposure: Analysis of Interactions and CPS Involvement**

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

**CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD WELFARE**

**HEALTHCARE**

**PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS**

**SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE**

Infants are vulnerable because of their caregivers' behaviors, even more so in times of natural crises or pandemic episodes (Flynn, 2023). Vulnerabilities lead to insecure attachment (Shannon et al., 2021), lower birth weight (Champine et al., 2021), and not meeting developmental milestones (Brocato, 2022). Infants with prenatal substance exposure (IPSEs) are considered vulnerable and the most at-risk, which indicates a need for intervention by Children Protective Services (CPS) due to requirements of federal law (CARA, 2016); however, CPS intervention usually only occurs if the parent or infant has a positive drug toxicology screen at the time of birth (Brocato, 2021). Additionally, families of racial diversity or in a minority status have a higher likelihood for involvement with CPS as compared to their white counterparts (Edwards et al., 2021; Putnam-Hornstein et al., 2022). The purpose of this study is to examine how the interactions between race, poverty, and frequency of CPS substantiations for IPSEs vary across the nation.

Despite federal law requiring a CPS report and investigation for IPSEs (CARA, 2016), there are discrepancies in investigation practices across the nation. We used data from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) for Fiscal Year 2021. We found that IPSEs are not effectively being supported to ensure their safety is not further compromised later in life. As such, CPS interventions should be improved to address these issues.

**Speaker**



**Sean Brune**

PHD Student | Louisiana State University

**Co-speakers**



**Catherine Moon**

LSU



**Jessica Wilkes**

Graduate Research Assistant | Louisiana State University School of Social Work



**Alexandra Chinn**

PhD Student | Louisiana State University

**Assessing Youth and Adolescents with Problematic Sexual Behavior: Current Trends and Best Practices**

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

**MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT**

**POLICY AND ADVOCACY**

**PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SOLUTIONS**

**INTERDISCIPLINARY**

The National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth ([www.NCSBY.org](http://www.NCSBY.org)) provides national training and technical assistance to improve the accuracy, accessibility, and strategic use of accurate information about the nature, incidence, prevalence, prevention, treatment, and management of youth with problematic sexual behavior.

Data collected by the National Children's Alliance estimates that approximately a quarter of sexual offenses against children are committed by other youth. Families are often bereft on what to do to address safety and the treatment needs of all the children when PSB occurs. Professionals across systems want to help, but they may also be mired in misconceptions or may simply not know what to do.

This presentation will provide a brief overview of youth with problematic sexual behaviors including information on child development, appropriate identification of concerning and problematic sexual behaviors, best practice assessment protocols for youth with PSB, as well as facts that dispel common myths about these youth. These best practices are directly linked to improved safety planning, community safety, recidivism of PSB, and ultimately enhancing protection of both the initiator and impacted youths.

This presentation will also address the biases and/or myths that impact racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual minority youth which increase their overrepresentation in our juvenile justice and child welfare systems. This can be a single or two part session.

**Speaker**



**Natalie Gallo**

Psychological Clinician | University of Oklahoma Health Science Center

**Co-speaker**



**Andrew Monroe**

Sr. Psychological Clinician | University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center