

**2024 ADARA Conference**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**  
**May 29 – June 1, 2024**



**CONFERENCE PROGRAM BOOK**

**Updated: May 5, 2024\***

**\*Agenda is subject to change**

- **This program is approved by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) (Approval # 886568022-5715) for 24 continuing education contact hours.**
- **This program is approved by the National Board for Certified Counselors (Approval ACEP no. 6824) for 24 continuing education contact hours.**
- **This program is approved by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (Approval Number: 60007982909) for 24.75 continuing education contact hours (24.75 CRC General, 24.75 CVE General, 1.25 CRC Addictions Counseling, 2.50 CRC Ethics).**
- **This program is approved for up to 2.4 RID CEUs. GaRID is an Approved RID CMP Sponsor for continuing education activities.**

# 2024 ADARA Conference Sponsors

## **Piedmont (Platinum) Sponsorship Level:**

- Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Office of Deaf Services

## **Cumberland (Diamond) Sponsorship Level:**

- National Technical Institute for the Deaf

## **Blue Ridge (Gold) Sponsorship Level:**

- Avita Community Partners
- ACCESS: Deaf Mental Health Services -St. Joseph's Healthcare System
- Georgia Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Sorenson Communications

## **Appalachian (Silver) Sponsorship Level:**

- Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind / National Technical Institute for the Deaf Regional STEM Center
- Aspire Indiana Health
- CaringWorks, Inc.
- Communication Service for the Deaf, Inc. (CSD)
- Gallaudet University
- PAHrtners Deaf Services
- ZVRS/Purple Communications

## **Golden Isles (Bronze) Sponsorship Level:**

- Atlanta Area School for the Deaf
- Bellman & Symfon
- Deaf Connections at Little Creek Behavioral Health
- Interprettek Atlanta
- Southeast Regional Institute on Deafness (SERID)

## Exhibitors

- ACCESS: Deaf Mental Health Services -St. Joseph's Healthcare System
- Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind / National Technical Institute for the Deaf Regional STEM Center
- American Society for Deaf Children (ASDC)
- Aspire Indiana Health
- Atlanta Area School for the Deaf
- Avita Community Partners
- Bellman & Symfon
- CaringWorks, Inc.
- Communication Service for the Deaf, Inc. (CSD)
- Deaf Connections at Little Creek Behavioral Health (Acadia Healthcare)
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child Resilience Center – Gallaudet University
- Deafroot & McGregor Deaf Art
- Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP)
- Gallaudet University
- Georgia Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Office of Deaf Services
- Hamilton CapTel
- Interpretek Atlanta
- National Technical Institute for the Deaf
- PAHrtners Deaf Services
- sComm
- Sorenson Communications
- Southeast Regional Institute on Deafness (SERID)
- The SOS Agency
- Virtual ASL Academy
- Vona Center for Mental Health by Volunteers of America of MN & WI
- ZVRS/Purple Communications



## **2024 ADARA Conference**

### **Workshop Abstracts, Descriptions, Objectives, and Presenters' Bios**

**Wednesday, May 29, 2024**

**All-Day Workshop: 9:00 am – 4:00 pm**

**(Lunch Break: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm)**

#### **Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG)**

*Gabriel Lomas, Holly Miller & Rebecca Mowell*

Abstract: This workshop is designed for interdisciplinary school staff, but has applications for anyone working in an organization that may experience threats. Presenters will review each aspect of the evidence-based school threat assessment model. It will include both lecture and interactive parts. Schools and organizations should purchase the CSTAG book in advance (available on Amazon and at school.com. It is ideal if attendees are in interdisciplinary groups including school resource officers, mental health, leadership, and others serving on a safety team.

#### Objectives:

- Identify rationale for threat assessment
- Conduct a threat assessment
- Process case studies to illustrate three pathways to violence
- Identify legal and practical issues in threat assessment
- Identify research that supports the practice of threat assessment
- Use exercises to categorize and resolve threats
- Identify the next steps in implementation of the model

**Wednesday, May 29, 2024**

**Concurrent Sessions: 8:00 AM – 9:15 AM**

#### **Tactiling Mental Health Care for DeafBlind Community**

*Concetta Pucci*

Abstract: As a DeafBlind mental health professional, this has been a challenge to ensure that the quality of mental health care for the DeafBlind community is up to par. Oftentimes, the mental health providers, who work within the Deaf community, may feel not comfortable tactiling and would adopt abled and sighted therapeutic approaches to work with the DeafBlind clients. The session will cover several issues on how to work with this overlooked population in mental health care including learning the lived experience of DeafBlind individuals in their daily functioning and their wellbeing, adopting a tactiling therapeutic approach to work with them navigating their life, and advocating for accessible and inclusive mental health care. From a micro perspective, DeafBlind individuals often experience depression, anxiety, and isolation as they navigate through their life with limited vision. From a mezzo perspective, DeafBlind individuals often struggle with

having healthy relationships around their surroundings and may lose family, friends, and even jobs because of their vision. From a macro perspective, DeafBlind individuals often face systemic oppression that is designed for abled and sighted individuals. Ultimately, DeafBlind individuals' mental health wellbeing is being harmed because of discrimination, oppression, and unfamiliarity. This is critical for mental health professionals to provide quality service through tactile so that DeafBlind people are part of our community. This is a much needed session to improve the quality of services especially that there are a very few DeafBlind therapists and that would reduce burdensome on them as well.

#### Objectives:

- Learn about the lived experience of individuals who are DeafBlind along with their daily functioning and mental health wellbeing.
- Recognize the challenges and barriers that DeafBlind clients face especially in mental health care.
- Ensure that they are committed to provide quality accessible and inclusive mental health services for their DeafBlind clients.

### **How to Harness the Power of Networking and Why We Do It**

*Amanda Tuite and David Tuite*

Abstract: According to Columbia University Center of Career Education, networking is the process of making connections and building relationships. The rich experience of networking itself can provide you with advice and contacts, which can help you make informed career decisions. Did you know that networking alone can even help you find employment or internships that are not open to the public? Networking can happen anywhere, virtually or in-person. The Forbes publication shows that the best kind of networking is face-to-face networking, which rings true for Deaf professionals and students. Join this session to learn more about how to start, how to harness the POWER in your networking skills for success anywhere!

#### Objectives:

- Assess the reasons why they need to maximize their networking abilities.
- Identify their weaknesses and strengths in their interpersonal relationships with colleagues and decision makers.
- Define the action of networking and identify strategies for networking.

### **Getting Connected: Therapy, Virtual Socials, and Supportive Interventions for individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind**

*Tomina Schwenke & Susanne Morgan-Morrow*

Abstract: For many Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and DeafBlind individuals' quality, supportive and therapeutic interventions are difficult to access. Therapeutic approaches that are targeted at addressing issues unique to the lived experience of Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and DeafBlind individuals are limited. However, novel approaches that utilize online platforms provide unique opportunities for individuals to connect, gain insights, and develop coping skills. Therapy, virtual socials, and supportive Interventions for individuals who are Deaf, hard-of-hearing, and DeafBlind are expanding and require specific skill sets from the interpreters and mental health practitioners. This interactive presentation will focus on real-life efforts to provide social support and clinical care that is respectful, empowering, and culturally sensitive. Presenters will use case examples, small group activities, and larger group discussions to explore this important mental health topic.

### Objectives:

- Learn, through case examples, about novel approaches to providing supportive interventions to sign language users.
- Learn about interpreting and facilitator considerations for establishing interventions that involve multiple language users.
- Identify factors frequently addressed in supportive interventions including identity and wellness issues.

### **Locked Out of Education: Deaf and Hard of Hearing College Students Enrolled in Prison Education Programs**

*Jenifer Montag*

Abstract: Starting in July, 2023, individuals who are incarcerated will have access to Pell Grants to pay for college (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2021). Maruschak, et al. (2021) states 38% of those incarcerated have a disability, with 10% of those incarcerated citing they had a hearing disability. Providing access for Deaf/Hard of Hearing students who are incarcerated must be factored into any college correctional education or social justice will not be implemented. Implementing access and inclusion for disabled students inside the prison walls is extremely complex, but not impossible. Discussion and research/practice-based case studies will provide insider knowledge about the barriers inside, research-developed tools to navigate those barriers, and ways to help your college create disability access and inclusion for this doubly impacted population of students.

### Objectives:

- Identify and anticipate two barriers to learning for Deaf and Hard of Hearing college students created by the high security prison environment.
- Apply a variety of accommodation and inclusion strategies that can be developed and implemented to remove the identified barriers for the various example vignettes, identifying at least one solution for a provided case study.
- Understand two barriers that the service provider experiences in trying to implement the appropriate accommodations within the prison setting for the enrolled Deaf/Hard of Hearing/Disabled college students and identify at least one collaborative strategy to implement to reduce the impact of the highly constrained prison setting has on providing interpreters, real-time captioning, closed captioning, notetaking assistance, assistive listening devices, etc.

### **Working with Language Deprivation in Community Mental Health**

*Holly Rioux, Lauranna Turano & Michaela Borstel*

Abstract: GNMH Deaf Services proposes to discuss how we apply what we know about language deprivation to our work specifically in an outpatient, community mental health center setting. Our program model is one of few in the country of its kind for our community. It is our hope for our colleagues to observe the 20+ years of research being clinically applied in “the real world.” We will review basic language deprivation concepts citing the work of researchers in our field. We will share narrative experiences of applying clinical concepts to support therapeutic relationships and ensure client empowerment while navigating ethical codes, cultural and linguistic conflicts in a public system of care. We also will make references to micro, mezzo and macro social work concepts.

### Objectives:

- Review general concepts of language deprivation.
- Identify 3 approaches or interventions that may support treatment outcomes when working with language deprivation.

- Identify applicable ethical codes when working with language deprivation.
- Apply micro, macro and mezzo social work concepts when discussing language deprivation.

**Wednesday, May 29, 2024**

**Concurrent Sessions: 9:45 AM – 11:00 AM**

**Disabled Journey through the System**

*Ben Wright*

Abstract: This presentation will be about the job search frustration at the intersection of disability and having a felony record. I will present a raw and real presentation that will highlight several others who go through the same thing. I will bring in research that shows the data of how Deaf individuals struggle to find employment after incarceration. I will work closely with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities on this as well. The workshop will include a dialogue between participants-- I will present case studies for them to collaborate and problem solve together on.

Objectives:

- Identify the gaps in the job search and those with a felony.
- Identify the real issue of D/deaf and hard of hearing individuals being incarcerated and their struggles post incarceration.
- Collaborate and problem solve to provide real support, rather than advice, for job seekers.

**Organizational and System Advocacy: The Ethics of Challenging the Status Quo**

*Laura Thompson & Meghan Williams*

Abstract: This workshop will discuss the ethical responsibilities Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRCs) have toward advocating for changes within their own agencies, organizations and state systems. Presenters will review portions of the 2023 Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors published by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC). Ethical dilemmas related to accessibility for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind coworkers and clients/customers will be discussed. Workshop participants will be presented with scenarios and have opportunities for group discussion on strategies to resolve them.

Objectives:

- Understand the ethical responsibilities CRCs have to engage in Organizational and Systemic Advocacy.
- Review scenarios and identify ethical dilemmas faced by Rehabilitation Counselors.
- Discuss strategies for advocating for positive and progressive changes within their own organizations and systems.

**The Arts of Storytelling: Incorporating Theater Arts, Literacy, and S.T.E.M. in Classroom and on Stage**

*Fred Beam, Zain Ahmed & Tharon Ahmed*

Abstract: There is growing interest in enhancing the education platform to better prepare deaf students for both analytical and creative thinking and reduction of deaf youth performing on stage using their own language. Traditional STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) degrees focus on convergent skills whereas art degrees focus on divergent skills. Having the ability to execute both at scale can better

position our nation for global competitiveness. This interactive workshop will incorporate different STEM activities with form of theater arts and storytelling in classroom.

Objectives:

- Apply literacy and theater arts techniques in a classroom that needs S.T.E.M focus and on stage.
- Develop skills/ activities aimed at enhancing creativity in S.T.E.M.
- Incorporate S.T.E.M. topic in their classwork.
- Create their own materials from the given models/lessons/activities.

**Behavioral Health Blended Case Management: An Overview of a Successful Service Model**

*Melissa Watson & Jessica LaMartin*

Abstract: Attendees will get a bird's-eye view of who we serve as case managers, a description of service offerings, details on how we determine eligibility and successful ways to obtain funding through counties and Medicaid. We will discuss the role of blended case managers and how we promote education, provider collaboration, client stabilization, continuity of care, enhanced service access, and expansion of the client's circle of support. Included in this will be information about navigating challenging scenarios specific to the Deaf/HoH/DeafBlind/CODA individuals we serve as well as other more mainstream challenges such as poverty and service access. We will review best practices for helping clients with severe psychosis, working with children and the elderly, and getting "buy-in" from mainstream providers unfamiliar with culturally Deaf individuals and their needs. The business side of offering case management services will be reviewed. A list of the types of agencies we collaborate with will be provided. We will go over productivity expectations, billing justification, paper work and documentation challenges, how to best serve large geographical areas, and advocating for longer service times for our unique population. Lastly, we will highlight the benefits of case management services for those we serve, how we support our case managers providing said services, tips for avoiding burnout and techniques for successful supervision.

Objectives:

- Apply best practices in providing culturally affirmative case management services to the Deaf/HoH population.
- Gain knowledge in types of skills case managers need to be trained on in order to successfully render case management services.
- Learn how to navigate the challenges of meeting the expectations of the agency, MCO, regulations and individuals served.

**Beyond Illusion: Let's Get Real; Harm Reduction and the Deaf BIPOC community**

*DeAnna Swope & Thomas Swope, Jr.*

Abstract: This presentation is to empower and educate the Deaf community about harm reduction strategies and address the intersection of racism against the Deaf BIPOC community within this context. This presentation also aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of harm reduction principles and practices, emphasizing its importance as a public health approach.

Objectives

- Explore the intersection of racial identity, Deaf identity, and other aspects of identity within the Deaf BIPOC community, recognizing that these factors impact experiences related to substance use & harm.
- Facilitate open and honest discussions about the impact of racism on the Deaf BIPOC community, including disparities in healthcare, substance use, and access to resources.



- Promote cultural competency and sensitivity among service providers and workshop participants, ensuring that harm reduction initiatives are inclusive and equitable.

## **Wednesday, May 29, 2024**

### **Concurrent Sessions: 11:30 AM – 12:45 PM**

#### **Let's Talk about Health: Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) in Action**

*Earl Allen*

Abstract: The National Center for Deaf Health Research (NCDHR) has a 19-year history of continuous funding from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to utilize Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) to work with populations to promote health and prevent disease. The NCDHR utilizes CBPR with Deaf ASL-users and people with hearing loss to identify their community health priorities and work together to develop resources (surveys, clinical trials, video libraries) to address these priorities. We want to understand and learn more about the health issues and priorities of Deaf communities within the United States. Generally, Deaf and hard of hearing people across the country aren't afforded equal access to health information, health promotion programs, and quality healthcare. In an attempt to develop partnerships and identify the health priorities of Deaf communities, we will facilitate a roundtable discussion to share experiences, identify health issues of concern, list community priorities, and brainstorm action steps. The NCDHR utilizes a 'deaf-to-deaf' approach for all community engagement and research activities. This presentation will be facilitated and supported by team members who identify as Deaf or hard-of-hearing and will conduct the presentation and discussions in ASL.

#### Objectives:

- Understand what Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) is and how these approaches may differ from traditional research.
- Identify health priorities of concern within their local or national Deaf communities.
- Able to brainstorm and share actions to dismantle systems that contribute to Deaf health disparities.

#### **Lessons Gleaned from the First-Ever National Deaf Employment Summits**

*Denise Kavin, Charles McFadden & Julie Tibbitt*

Abstract: This Summit was inspired by the Harkin International Disability Summit and focused on strategies, showcasing success stories and employment resources, improving employment opportunities and hiring of deaf and hard of hearing individuals, and enhancing the quality of employment for such individuals. There were several notable speakers at the Summit including but not limited to: Senator Harkins himself; Mayor of Rochester Malik Evans; Joseph Morelle, US Representative for New York; Claudia Gordon, Senior Accessibility Strategist for T-Mobile; and Howard Rosenblum, CEO, National Association of the Deaf. A report was compiled, summarizing all the information and outcomes of the Deaf Employment Summit including but not limited to nuggets of wisdom, real-life shared experiences, ideas and goals, emerging trends, action plans and resources. This presentation will share and expand upon the information shared in the final report. We employed a Graphic Organizer for the duration of the Summit, who took very unusual, detailed, visual and vivid notes of the information shared. The visuals were very helpful to participants during and after the Summit. Photographs of the visual notes will be shared and espoused upon. There will be time for audience members to discuss and respond to some questions, also posed during the actual Summit itself. This information will be used by the DES planning committee to help shape the agenda for the next Summits, slated for 2025.

### Objectives:

- Understand the various barriers that deaf and hard of hearing individuals may experience in obtaining gainful employment.
- Gain an appreciation of the various obstacles that deaf and hard of hearing individuals may experience when striving for career mobility in the workplace.
- Gain an appreciation of the benefits of pertinent legislation and systems that enhance employment opportunities and experiences for deaf and hard of hearing individuals including but not limited to: Vocational Rehabilitation, Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act and a Centralized Resource Accommodations Fund.
- Understand emerging themes, practical ideas, and action plans pertaining to employment of deaf and hard of hearing people.
- Locate resources pertaining to employment of deaf and hard of hearing people.

### **From Ow's to How's: Understanding Belonging**

*Elizabeth Stone*

Abstract: This workshop aims to promote a culture of belonging by understanding key concepts with diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility lens in deaf diverse communities. The objectives include acquiring a knowledge of empathy principles, examining unconscious bias that contribute to the oops and ows, gaining a conceptual understanding of belonging, transforming your practice, and gaining and sharing expertise.

### Objectives:

- Gain a deeper understanding of how belonging impacts in all areas of life-sense of self, sense of community and sense of the world.
- Identify actions that can transform your practice and/or community especially after performing oopses and/or experiencing ows.
- Learn different empathy, belonging, and micro-affirmation frameworks that are centered on diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility principles to better bolster your practice or approach in guiding your clients or colleagues as they navigate through conflict or challenges.

### **Deaf and Hard of Hearing College Students' Experiences with Alcohol and Related Consequences**

*Christine Gannon*

Abstract: Alcohol misuse on college campuses has been shown to be the cause of physical, socio-emotional, and academic harm. Alcohol is also an issue at Gallaudet University, but there is a gap in the literature describing the phenomenon and how to address it. This presentation is on a qualitative case study which explored the perceptions and experiences of alcohol use and alcohol-related consequences through interviews with 50 students and staff at Gallaudet University. Alcohol misuse and related harms were explored through the framework of the social ecological model, focusing on the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and university-levels. Dr. Gannon will present the data collected from this study. This will include the following intrapersonal themes: amount of alcohol used, reasons for decisions about alcohol, something to do, young/freshmen, fear of missing out, "come to have fun," isolation, "numbing out" and coping, and religion. She will share themes related to interpersonal factors including communication, family, school environments, social networking through schools for the deaf, social isolation for mainstream students, social dynamics, belonging, "playing catch up with life," peer pressure, role of upperclassmen, athletes, role of staff, and protective behavior. Lastly, she will share the identified university-wide factors which included Gallaudet dynamics, tradition, "going hard" culture, education, intervention, and alternative activities. After presenting the data, Dr. Gannon

will invite questions. Then she will engage the participants in a discussion on how this data can be applied to our work with DDBHH consumers to help impact change.

Objectives:

- Identify and explain at least three factors that impact alcohol use and related consequences for DDBHH students.
- Describe at least one aspect of how the role of communication access and isolation impact social dynamics and alcohol related coping.
- Apply the data to at least one area of their work or personal life to impact positive change.

**Work With, Not For: Counselling for the Language/Information Deprived Client**

*Kristen Pranzl & Alison Nutt*

Abstract: In this workshop, we will use case studies to explore how we as an organization have worked to redefine how mental health services are offered beyond talk therapy. It is not new information that language or information deprived clients benefit from wraparound mental health services that connect them to the community, to their support system, and to information sources. However, we are creating a model of holistic care that expands to include focus on a variety of health and related areas, that has a benefit on client mental health and directing their own care. We will explore the role of counsellors, social workers and outreach workers in providing mental health supports to clients with a range of needs. Clients often show signs of learned helplessness, lack of support system and have become reliant on others doing things for them. Our program believes in the "work with" not "work for" philosophy when it comes to supporting clients; we will also discuss how we work with clients to identify areas of need or gaps in their knowledge, promote self-advocacy skills, and look beyond traditional mental health supports to promote overall well-being.

Objectives:

- Look at a broadened definition of what “mental health” and “mental health services” includes.
- Identify rationales for when to advocate for broader services under the umbrella of mental health.
- Utilize different skills in identifying what to include or consider as part of mental health service and supports a DHHDB individual.
- Understand how services and supports can be modified to accommodate someone who is language deprived.
- Consider new ways to collaborate with existing programs and organizations – making information and programming that is already available to the hearing community accessible to DHHDB populations; and how to work collaborative to ensure addition of Deaf cultural lens and need for language access.

**Wednesday, May 29, 2024**

**Concurrent Sessions: 1:45 PM – 3:00 PM**

**Bridging the Gap between DHH College Students & Mainstream Employers: Insights from Career Center Professionals**

*Hayley Stokar & Hollie Fallstone*

Abstract: This workshop will have two major components: (1) Presentation of findings from a 2023 research study examining insights from university career center professionals about connecting deaf job seekers with mainstream employers and (2) Small group peer engagement to exchange interdisciplinary expertise related to strategies and best practices for engaging deaf college students, employers, or both. The presenters will share themes that emerged from their study, shedding light on what leaders in this professional area are

already doing. Building upon this information, workshop participants in allied disciplines working with similar populations can share their own experiences and generate new ideas for how to improve employment outcomes by bridging the gap between students and employers. Knowledge gained can be useful for students, staff, recruiters, employers, and other community members.

Objectives:

- Evaluate the findings of an interview-based project involving career center professionals at institutions of higher education serving large DHH populations.
- Exchange ideas with allied professionals on best practices with college students applying for employment with mainstream employers.
- Apply insights gained from the session to future work with both DHH students and mainstream employers.

**Cultural Competence or Cultural Humility? Why Do We Need Both?**

*Durkhanai Haque*

Abstract: The interactive workshop aims to learn the difference between cultural competence and humility. Workshop participants will gain cultural knowledge and understand power imbalance. The participants will be introduced to the principles of cultural competence and humility. There will be an interactive group exercise on cultural awareness.

Objectives:

- Understand the difference between cultural competence and cultural humility.
- Identify and learn how to address systemic inequities and challenge their cultural assumptions and biases.
- Learn how to develop skills for communication and interaction with people of different cultures.

**Black Therapy Series: What Hair Got to Do with It?**

*Selah Davison*

Abstract: The correlation between Black hair and mental health expresses the extent to which hair trauma and racism interplays and how they impact Black folks personally and professionally. There will be movie video clips, vignettes, as well as testimonies from Black deaf (and interpreters) folks' experience with hair. The application of Ethnic Identity Theory and interventions will help professionals to develop cultural awareness and understanding the importance of your clients by amplifying appreciation of their Black hair. More than 49% of Black women experience depression and 10% are actively considering suicide. Black men, LBTGIA+ and non-binary folks experience the same. Afro hair is a portal to Black folks' overall well-being, including thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Since 2020, suicide has more than tripled. Hair trauma and racism have put Black deaf community on a national discourse. As human services professionals, how do we identify that our Black clients are struggling with their racial identity related to their hair? For example, some of them may experience barriers to achieving their vocational goals because your clients don't have the money to go to a hair salon and don't want to feel embarrassed in front of the job interviewers. As a therapist, how do you identify hair trauma, discuss with your client about making it part of their treatment goal, and discuss interventions to improve their mental health? How do we empower Black folks on their healing journey to appreciate their beautiful hair texture while improving their sense of belonging? Assisting your clients to identify the importance of self-exploration, becoming aware of ethnic issues, and how to resolve identity conflicts will improve your clients' overall well-being and appreciation of their Black hair.

### Objectives:

- Familiar with the historical context of how certain hairstyles saved the lives of many enslaved women and families after being taken from Africa to other countries.
- Understand the social health disparities in the Black community and the dangerous zones of Black folks' acculturation to the dominant culture that lead to hair trauma.
- Understand the connection between hair and identity in the Black culture and why a sense of belonging related to their hair is in the Black community.
- Learn about the application of Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) to measure the process of ethnic identity development and interventions to improve Black folks' mental health, promote self-advocacy, resolve ethnic issues, & provide resources to increase Black folks' appreciation of their hair.

### **Developing a Mental Health Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

*Tamara Taylor & Jennifer Hess*

Abstract: The desperate need for mental health services for DHH is known to those attending this conference. This workshop outlines the steps needed to develop our program, resources, barriers, traditional and nontraditional therapeutic modalities, advertising, and creating a self-sustaining program. This model is replicable and those participating will leave with a basic plan to create a program in their community.

### Objectives:

- Identify needs specific to your area including effectively serving minority populations.
- Identify barriers and resources.
- Create a plan by being flexible and open-minded.
- Identify steps needed for implementation.

### **Addressing Campus Sexual Assault/Discrimination: RIT/NTID's approach to working with the D/HH Population**

*Amy Stornello*

Abstract: Participants will learn about what college-aged students generally experience on-campus and what those challenges are as it pertains to Deaf young adults: romantic relationships, setting (and communicating!) boundaries, exploring gender identities/preferences, and sexual experimentation. How you can build confidence with your students: so they can learn what it means to not be a bystander: to empower them to speak up and take action to support their communities. After learning some foundational information and statistics, we will review some scenarios together, as we experience some of the various interactive activities that I share with our students, which can be adapted to fit your demographic needs. Examples of short, interactive presentations, hands-on activities will be reviewed. Language accessibility will be discussed as well. And for fun, pop culture references will be discussed for relevancy and a means to connect with this demographic. Then, we will wrap up with a roundtable conversation about working collaboratively together to ensure that our students have developed the skills that they need to enjoy healthy relationships in college and beyond.

### Objectives:

- Understand what Title IX means, the reporting mechanisms and supports that are in place for RIT/NTID students.
- Identify the issues and barriers of having healthy relationships and those associated barriers, and begin to educate our students now to prepare them for a better college experience.

- Educate D/HH students about consent as a way to prepare them for establishing healthy behaviors and boundaries.
- Find resources to utilize educational materials as well as to partner with people/agencies for continued programming.

**Wednesday, May 29, 2024**

**Concurrent Sessions: 3:30 PM – 4:45 PM**

### **Racial Disparities in Interpreter Training Programs**

*Sara Rock & Michelle Perry*

Abstract: About 11 million Americans consider themselves deaf or hard of hearing, according to the Census Bureau's 2011 American Community Survey, and Black people make up nearly 8 percent of that population. In the United States, there are 64,900 working American Sign Language interpreters. Only 6% of interpreters are Black or African American. With more than 100 interpreter preparation programs in the country, what causes this large gap in ethnically diverse interpreters? There are a variety of barriers for interpreters of color that impact their ability to successfully navigate and graduate from interpreter training programs. Two major barriers are access to higher education and the cost of schooling and certification. Cultural competency training within interpreter training programs need to include a variety of topics to best prepare interpreters to be culturally competent practitioners.

#### Objectives:

- Increase awareness about the large gap in ethnically diverse interpreters in the deaf community.
- Discuss the importance of cultural competency education within interpreter training programs and how it impacts the field of interpreting.
- Identify educational and vocational barriers for BIPOC interpreters.
- Discuss differences between ASL and Black ASL and how it can impact the interpreting process for BIPOC interpreters and Black - Deaf consumers.

### **Empowering Futures: Pre-ETS Best Practices in Collaborative Partnerships with Schools, VR, and Vendors**

*Daniela Rivera & Angela Gargano*

Abstract: Join us for an interactive and informative workshop, "Elevating Futures: Pre-ETS Best Practices in Collaborative Partnerships with Schools, VR, and Rehabilitation Providers." In this session, we will dive deep into strategies and practical approaches to empower students with disabilities as they transition into the workforce. Based on the abstract's proposal, our workshop will explore the core components of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), highlighting the significance of tailored interventions, vocational training, mentorship programs, and assistive technology. Through engaging case studies and real-world examples, you will witness successful collaborative models between schools, vocational rehabilitation agencies (VR), and rehabilitation providers. Learn how to create inclusive environments, promote diversity, and effectively utilize community resources. This workshop is designed to empower educators, vocational professionals, and rehabilitation providers with actionable strategies and tools to ensure students with hearing loss are well-equipped for future success. Together, we can shape a more inclusive, diverse, and empowered workforce. Don't miss this opportunity to make a difference in the lives of students and the future of work.

### Objectives:

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of the essential elements of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), including tailored interventions, vocational training strategies, mentorship programs, and assistive technology integration, enabling them to design effective support systems for students with hearing loss.
- Learn how to establish successful collaborative partnerships between schools, vocational rehabilitation agencies (VR), and rehabilitation providers. Through real-world case studies, attendees will gain insights into building effective teamwork, communication, and resource-sharing mechanisms, fostering an inclusive environment for students' transition from education to the workforce.
- Explore strategies to create inclusive educational environments and promote diversity within the context of Pre-ETS programs. By understanding the importance of diversity and inclusion, attendees will learn how to cultivate an atmosphere where all students, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or identities, can thrive and contribute meaningfully to the workforce.
- Discover innovative approaches to harnessing community resources to enhance Pre-ETS initiatives. Through practical examples and collaborative exercises, attendees will learn how to identify, access, and leverage local resources, ensuring that students receive comprehensive support tailored to their unique needs and aspirations.
- Engage in interactive discussions and workshops, enabling them to develop actionable strategies and plans for implementing Pre-ETS best practices in their respective educational and vocational settings. By the end of the workshop, attendees will leave with concrete steps and ideas to enhance their support systems and positively impact the transition experiences of students with hearing loss.

### **Understanding Complexities of Audism: Strategies for Dialogue and Action**

*Genie Gertz & Patrick Boudreault*

Abstract: In an ever-evolving socio-context, it's essential to revisit and review the foundations of Audism and its impact on the Deaf community. While many might be familiar with the term, the depth of understanding and its broader implications in various spheres of life remain under-discussed and misunderstood. This workshop will delve into the intricacies of Audism, exploring its manifestation in different areas, and offering insights into addressing and combating this form of oppression. An overview of the inception of audism — discrimination against individuals based on their hearing ability — and the framework, it has created will be provided, including the ideological, institutional, and individual dimensions of audism and how each dimension has manifested into institutional arrangements, especially in the fields of medicine, early intervention, education, rehabilitation, and more. This session will be structured into four comprehensive segments: 1) Foundational framework and examples of audism, 2) its influence within the Deaf community, 3) manifestations in professional settings, and 4) approaches for difficult but constructive dialogues about its challenges. The intent is to develop a common understanding of audism and to understand the differences between medical and cultural models so that practitioners are more aware and become equipped with strategies to transform institutions and individuals to ensure that deaf people are more apt to live with dignity rather than discrimination. Engaging discussions on Audism, cultural humility, and competence will be pivotal in charting the path forward toward a more inclusive future.

### Objectives:

- Identify and articulate the historical and contemporary manifestations of Audism, recognizing its ideological, institutional, and individual dimensions, especially as they pertain to fields such as medicine, early intervention, education, and rehabilitation.
- Gain insights into the differences between medical, societal, and cultural models, fostering a deeper

understanding of the multifaceted challenges and nuances within the Deaf community.

- Acquire tools and strategies for initiating and navigating difficult but essential conversations on Audism, with an emphasis on cultural humility and competence, thereby promoting transformative approaches for more inclusive institutional and individual practices.

### **Making Heads or Tails of Assistance Animals: Clinical, Ethical, and Legal Considerations for Practitioners working with DHHDBDD Clients**

*Cara Miller*

Abstract: This workshop for providers will include an introduction and overview of current definitions, laws, and regulations regarding assistance animals in the United States, with particular attention to those categories of animals which practitioners working with Deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind, and Deaf-Disabled (DHHDBDD) clients may most often encounter. We will review legal definitions and differences between trained service animals and emotional support animals (ESAs); federal laws governing the right to be accompanied by certain animals in certain settings as a disability-related reasonable accommodation; and consider various factors influencing both practitioner and client perceptions of assistance animals. Additionally, we will examine the growing trend of individuals requesting ESA “certification letters” from licensed mental health professionals, and explore potential role and ethical conflicts that may exist when a treating mental health professional is asked to assess a client for an ESA. This workshop incorporates relevant empirical literature and current research in the interdisciplinary field of human-animal interaction, with particular focus on relevant ethical and legal issues, emerging standards, and recommendations for mental health providers.

#### Objectives:

- Explain differences between service dogs, including psychiatric service dogs, and emotional support animals.
- Identify two articles of governance pertaining to access in housing, transportation, and public settings by disabled individuals with service dogs.
- Describe three relevant ethical and legal issues related to the writing of Emotional Support Animal letters by mental health professionals.

### **Considerations When Implementing Trauma-Focused- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children**

*Kristine Gile & Elly Romero*

Abstract: The workshop will begin with an overview of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child Resilience Center and the goals of the Center, which include a focus on the development, implementation, and training of evidence based treatments (i.e., PCIT, SMART, TF-CBT). The aim of our TF-CBT track is to connect families and clinicians to culturally affirmative treatment. We will review the topic of trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES). This will include considerations relating to identifying trauma and trauma related stressors specific to the DHH population. We will review different types of trauma assessment tools that can be utilized for treatment. While discussing these tools, we will review communication considerations for treatment (e.g., Certified Deaf Interpreter). This presentation will also focus on TF-CBT components, phases, and criteria. We will review the nine core components, which are summarized by the acronym PRACTICE. While discussing each component and phase, we will examine ways in which clinicians can incorporate strategies to ensure the treatment is accessible for the DHH community. We will cover strategies for discussing difficult topics with parents/caregivers, evaluating to see if the youth fit the criteria for treatment, and assessing readiness to begin treatment. TF-CBT can help children, teens and their families recover and heal. We will also share



information about the upcoming trainings provided by the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child Resilience Center, how to locate certified TF-CBT signing clinicians, and the process for becoming certified in TF-CBT.

Objectives:

- Describe two Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES).
- Identify two trauma related stressors specific to the DHH population.
- Describe two components of TF-CBT PRACTICE.
- Identify the next steps in becoming certified in TF-CBT.

## **Wednesday, May 29, 2024**

### **Concurrent Sessions: 5:15 PM – 6:30 PM**

#### **Vocational Rehabilitation State Coordinators for the Deaf – Meet & Greet**

For VR State Coordinators for the Deaf only

#### **Roundtable: Gallaudet University Clinical Psychology Ph.D. Program Student Research Interests and Projects**

*Kathryn Wagner & Lawrence Pick*

Abstract: Join Gallaudet University Clinical Psychology students; learn about their process of research, join a discussion of next steps, ethical considerations, and the implications of literature gaps! We have several students talking about the process of their research and interests. We will explore mental health services in Kenya, Africa, and early language experience; whether or not this increases risk of intimate partner violence. We will examine clinical psychologist's attitudes towards, knowledge of and experience with animal assisted therapy. We will dive into impacts of summer camps on Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults along with an expressive therapy approach through Dungeons and Dragons. The design of this workshop is a lightning round approach for presentations then a round table discussion welcoming questions and feedback from the audience.

Objectives:

- Identify three steps in the research development process.
- Explain three ethical considerations of research with D/HH subjects.
- Name three research interests of doctoral students in the field of psychology.
- Explain basic principles of one psychotherapy approach.

#### **Modernize the American Disability Act: Speak up for Underrepresented College Student Populations in Online Learning**

*Tracy LaChapelle*

Abstract: Pioneer an equitable, inclusive, and accessible educational system for college students who have difficulty hearing online. Professors, administrators, and any college employee can represent underprivileged and underrepresented college students who are Deaf, deaf, and Hard of Hearing (D/d/HH) within college online learning environments. College students with difficulty hearing online must often request reasonable accommodations to access communications. This presentation demonstrates that 100% of the participants when asked for accommodations, are denied, ignored, or delayed hearing-assisted technology and resources. Discover how 21st-century technology rebuilds the antiquated American Disability Act (ADA) laws within college online learning environments. In this 90-minute visual and audio interactive demonstration, you

experience the emotional responses of those students in college who are denied external multidimensional support. The hearing population can step up and speak up, defy modern-day audism, and improve equitable access to communication. Prevail over audism by implementing best practices strategies with multidimensional connectivism ideologies. With a multidimensional extrinsic supportive system, college students with D/d/HH self-advocate and learn autonomously.

#### Objectives:

- Increase awareness of college students with hearing difficulties to access equitable communication within Online Learning Environments (OLEs).
- Appreciate that connectivism is the new paradigm shift for online learning environments.
- Increase an understanding of a multidimensional framework for implementing best practices within college OLEs.
- Demonstrate how the American Disability Act (ADA) is outdated.
- Understand the legal compliances for equitable access to communication utilizing online resources.

### **Unpacking “Effective Communication” in Healthcare: When compliance isn’t enough**

*Jeni Rodrigues*

Abstract: This presentation reports on findings from my doctoral study exploring access to effective communication in U.S. hospitals. Deaf patients report that hospitals provide inconsistent interpreting services and struggle to secure access, despite hospital policies, Joint Commission Standards, and federal legislation mandating “effective” communication. Even when healthcare systems maintain compliance by developing policy, establishing a language access plan, and creating an Interpreter Services (IS) department, barriers persist, and those barriers run deep, far deeper than the number of complaints, lawsuits, or settlement agreements suggest. I problematize the term “effective” as an ambiguous discursive construct, providing minimal guidance to hospitals, potentially leading entities to assume they have achieved compliance, contributing to disparities deaf patients report. Even hospitals that provide ASL-English interpreters, they cannot guarantee whether the interpreters are qualified due to the lack of standardized healthcare training, language assessment, or screening tools. I will share Deaf patients’ and medical professionals’ perspectives on working with interpreters with advanced language skills and specialized healthcare training, and interpreter reflections on the challenges they experience interacting with healthcare staff who hold faulty assumptions about deafness, signed language, and interpreters. Among the multidimensional factors implicated in producing “effective” communication. Participants will leave the workshop understanding the issue's complexity while coming away with strategies and tools they can incorporate into their practice to interpret confidently and “effectively” in healthcare settings.

#### Objectives:

- Identify factors that prevent deaf patients from receiving access to effective communication in U.S. hospitals.
- Investigate barriers Deaf patients face when interacting with healthcare staff when an interpreter is present and when one is not.
- Determine strategies institutions and individuals can implement to improve access for deaf patients in healthcare settings.

## **Understanding the Intersection of Deaf Domestic Violence and Mental Health Impact**

*DeAnna Swope & MeLisa Dennis*

**Abstract:** This workshop aims to shed light on the often-overlooked issue of domestic violence within the Deaf community and its profound impact on mental health. By raising awareness, promoting education, and fostering open discussions, we seek to empower participants with knowledge and tools to address this critical issue effectively.

### **Objectives:**

- Raise awareness about the prevalence and unique challenges faced by Deaf individuals experiencing domestic violence. Educate participants on the cultural, linguistic, and communication barriers that contribute to the invisibility of this issue within the Deaf community.
- Develop an understanding of the profound emotional and psychological impact of domestic violence on Deaf survivors. Explore the specific mental health issues that may arise, such as trauma-related disorders, and promote empathy and understanding.
- Receive information about available support services and resources specific to the Deaf community. Empower individuals to effectively support Deaf survivors by sharing information on legal rights, accessible helplines, counseling options, and Deaf advocates.
- Collaborate and develop strategies to raise awareness and prevention efforts within their communities. Empower them to become allies and advocates for Deaf domestic violence survivors, highlighting intersectionality and the importance of cultural competency.

## **Wednesday, May 29, 2024**

**Special Event: 7:20 PM**

**Atlanta Braves Baseball Game**

*Truist Park*

---

## **Thursday, May 30, 2024**

**Opening Plenary Session: 8:00 AM – 9:15 AM**

**Keynote: Recover, Recharge and Reconnect**

*Alesia Allen*

**Abstract:** The well-being of Deaf individuals hinges on recognizing the importance of recovery, recharge, and reconnection. Deaf individuals face unique challenges related to communication and cultural identity, which can lead to emotional fatigue and isolation. Recovery entails emotional and mental rejuvenation, enabling Deaf individuals to heal from these challenges and enhance their resilience. Recharge emphasizes the need for activities that promote personal fulfillment and growth, rekindling their passions and talents. Reconnection, both within the Deaf community and beyond, fosters a sense of belonging, support, and shared experiences. Prioritizing these pillars not only enhances individual well-being but also strengthens the resilience of the entire Deaf community. Moreover, it promotes a more inclusive society that values diversity and celebrates the rich tapestry of Deaf culture and heritage.

### Objectives:

- Become inspired to form new connections, and revive old connections.
- Understand the importance of working together towards fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity.
- Exchange of knowledge in hopes to transform the Deaf community toward a future defined by inclusivity, strength, and shared achievement.

**Thursday, May 30, 2024**

**Concurrent Sessions: 9:45 AM – 11:00 AM**

### **Navigating the CODA Identity: Bridges and Burdens of Children of Deaf Adults**

*Melissa Healey & Claire Hunt*

Abstract: This presentation explores the unique experiences and challenges faced by Children of Deaf Adults (CODAs). Growing up in a bilingual and bicultural environment, CODAs bridge the Deaf and hearing worlds, often taking on roles as protector-advocates and communication facilitators. They grapple with identity dilemmas, isolation, and complex emotions. CODAs serve as cultural mediators and educators, advocating for Deaf rights, dispelling stereotypes, and facilitating understanding between two distinct cultures. This presentation sheds light on the often-overlooked struggles of CODAs and offers insights into the impact of parentification, where they are expected to interpret in medical situations. It also addresses the reservations CODAs may have about seeking therapy due to the fear of betrayal. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of the CODA experience and the importance of culturally competent healthcare for this unique community.

### Objectives:

- Articulate the unique experiences and challenges faced by Children of Deaf Adults (CODAs), including their linguistic and cultural duality, feelings of isolation, and the pressure to educate and advocate for Deaf culture and rights.
- Gain insight into the concept of parentification within CODA families, particularly in the context of interpreting for their Deaf parents, such as in adult medical situations and intergeneration family conversations.
- Understand how parentification can affect family dynamics and relationships and its potential consequences.
- Learn about the importance of culturally competent healthcare and services for CODAs and the Deaf community. They will be able to identify the potential harms of "hearing cultural bias" and gain an awareness of the need for healthcare professionals to provide culturally sensitive care.
- Develop a better understanding of the CODA experience and the broader issues surrounding their identity, family dynamics, and access to culturally competent services.

### **Evaluating Signs of Safety: A Deaf-Accessible Therapy Toolkit for AUD and Trauma**

*Melissa Anderson, Megan Erasmus & Alyssa Buccholz*

Abstract: In partnership with Deaf-owned agency National Deaf Therapy (NDT), we will conduct the first-ever full-scale psychotherapy trial conducted in the Deaf community. Available behavioral health treatments fail to meet Deaf clients' unique language access needs. Leveraging extensive community engagement to address these barriers, our team of Deaf and hearing researchers, clinicians, filmmakers, actors, artists, and Deaf people with AUD/PTSD developed and pilot tested Signs of Safety, a Deaf-accessible toolkit to be used with the Seeking Safety treatment protocol. Leveraging the existing infrastructure and robust referral network of

NDT, starting in late 2024, we will enroll 144 Deaf adults with past-month PTSD and problem drinking into a national, full-scale, virtual clinical trial comparing (1) Signs of Safety with (2) treatment as usual and (3) a no treatment control. Primary clinical outcomes at immediate post-treatment and post-treatment follow-up are past 30-day alcohol use frequency/quantity (Alcohol Timeline Followback) and past 30-day PTSD severity (PTSD Checklist for DSM-5). Assessment will occur at baseline, mid-treatment, immediate post-treatment, three-month post-treatment follow-up, and six-month post-treatment follow-up. Additionally, we will analyze potential moderators and mediators that lead to positive outcome, including coping self-efficacy, self-compassion, motivation for treatment, and access to health information. This study will potentially validate the first-ever evidence-based therapy for Deaf people, as well as provide future behavioral health researchers with a vital roadmap for conducting community-engaged clinical trials with Deaf people.

#### Objectives:

- Describe the common barriers to therapy for Deaf people with alcohol use disorder and PTSD.
- Identify the ways in which the Signs of Safety toolkit seeks to overcome these barriers to treatment.
- Understand the basics of clinical trial methods and how they will be adapted and applied in the Signs of Safety nationwide, virtual clinical trial.

#### **Code of Ethics – Vocational Rehabilitation**

*Laura Thompson & Laura Fussell*

Abstract: This workshop will offer the opportunity for participants to make connections in this ASL-based discussions with interactive scenarios applicable to Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf-Blind, and Late-Deafened. Emphasis on use of essential tools for effective practices of the Council on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors in Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) settings. Participants will practice identifying key ethical principles and ethical decision-making processes for consideration from VR counselors' perspectives. Additionally, group discussions will assist participants to identify and develop methods of change to bring back to their communities. Presenters will touch on the ethical challenges of providing quality public VR services to the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf-Blind, and Late-Deafened population.

#### Objectives:

- Review the overview of current Code of Ethics effective January 1, 2023 and guided principles discussion.
- Discuss the ethical scenarios application
- Identify and implement methods to create change in their own communities.

#### **Horizontal Trauma within the Deaf Community and by the Deaf Community**

*Amanda Somdal & Natasha Kordus*

Abstract: This workshop will look at the factors that develop and influence the perpetuation of horizontal traumas that occur in the Deaf community. Whether clients are struggling with a history of mental illness or domestic violence, their private lives are often not private. The use of social media and the rumor mill in the Deaf community means that private information and the healing process is always on "blast". As such, clients are retraumatized again and again by the constant interrogations and disbelief of members of their own community and lack of awareness of the pain being caused. This is complicated by the dearth of mental health practitioners fluent in ASL and trauma that can help clients manage the originating event as well as the horizontal trauma that follows.

### Objectives:

- Recognize horizontal trauma.
- Identify components of horizontal trauma that can be passed on from generation to generation of Deaf individuals.
- Identify ways to work with clients dealing with horizontal violence experiences.
- Create ways to help deaf community with recognizing their trauma and rescue oneself from perpetuating trauma.

### **Agrarian Cultural Impacts on Mental Health: Understanding the Culture to Effectively Provide Mental Health Services**

*Lori Vigesaa*

Abstract: Most people have not given much thought to the different worlds that exist in rural areas and the cultural norms that impact those that live in those worlds. In the Midwest, farming, or agrarian living, is a culture all to itself. Studies have shown the United States 86% of our food is grown on family farms and over 2 million of these farms dot the countryside across the nation. One family-owned farm feeds approximately 166 people annually. Many stressors come with living in rural area and in the farming life such as fluctuating commodity prices, labor shortages, trade disruptions, physical health issues, etc. Twenty-five percent of farmers struggle with mental health issues. The latest report shows that the suicide rate of farmers is 33.1% and that substance use disorder currently is experienced by 32% of farmers. The need for mental health services is great in rural areas, but engaging with this culture in mental health services can be a challenge if you do not know what they are facing and how to speak their unique language. This presentation will focus on the unique culture of farming families in rural areas. This presenter will talk about the challenges and stressors that impact mental health in an Agrarian community, barriers for obtaining services and keeping with continuity of care, and ways to break down the barriers and provide ethical and comprehensive mental health services to this cultural group.

### Objectives:

- Define what an Agrarian Culture is and the characteristics of its members.
- Understand the unique stressors that members of this group experience.
- Describe the barriers to services and continuity of care.
- Put into practice ways that break down those barriers and be able to creatively provide comprehensive services to this population.

**Thursday, May 30, 2024**

**Concurrent Sessions: 11:30 AM – 12:45 PM**

### **Considerations in Creating Accessible Psychological Measures in Signed Language: Transadapting, Comprehensibility, and Community Inclusion**

*Patrick Boudreault & Tiffany Bridgett*

Abstract: Transadapting materials is crucial for linguistic inclusivity, especially considering that the majority of the Deaf population experiences language deprivation. There is a significant gap in knowledge when it comes to translating content to reach a broader spectrum of users. The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child Resilience Center (DHHCRC), supported by a grant from SAMHSA, is elevating the growing movement of translating standardized measures into sign language. This workshop will highlight our in depth process of adapting and

translating mental health tools to ensure their cultural and linguistic alignment with the deaf and hard of hearing community. We will provide the audience with experiential learning opportunities in transadaptation, addressing linguistic variations and comprehensibility, and fostering inclusivity. In the Transadaptation section, attendees will delve into a process that precedes traditional translation. It commences with strategic groundwork, accompanied by a comprehensive review of each measure and its scoring process, and engagement of a multidisciplinary team. This approach solidifies the team's understanding and administration of assessment measures, ensuring reliable and valid score interpretations. The Variations and Comprehensibility section will highlight the importance of accounting for variability in the signing community, health literacy levels, content delivery modes, and linguistic proficiency. It will address the challenges posed by language deprivation. Attendees will engage with transadapted questionnaires and review its iterative process. The Building Relationships section underscores the vital aspect of connecting with those overlooked in psychological research due to language deprivation. It will discuss insights and strategies for integrating an inclusive approach into one's professional training.

Objectives:

- Learn the steps and strategies for effective transadaptation to make standardized measures accessible to the DHH.
- Understand how to adapt content considering the signing community's variability, health literacy, and language deprivation.
- Acquire skills to build relationships with those overlooked in research, promoting inclusivity in psychological practice.

**Through an Antiracist Lens in Education: Raising the Bar for Black Deaf Youth**

*Christopher D. Johnson*

Abstract: In this interactive and engaging workshop, each participant will explore the hermeneutical phenomenological lens of the critical intersection of antiracism, education, community advocacy, & the unique challenges faced by Black Deaf youth. The goal of this workshop is to equip professionals in vocational rehabilitation, independent living homes, school settings, & community advocates with the knowledge and tools needed to create a more inclusive and equitable educational environment for Black Deaf students. The presenter hopes that each workshop participant will be better prepared to take a proactive role in dismantling systemic barriers, fostering inclusivity, & raising the bar for the educational experiences and outcomes of Black Deaf youth. Please consider being part of this essential dialogue on specific challenges within the educational system and leave the workshop with an explicit vision to create a space for each Black Deaf to belong.

Objectives:

- Explore the intersectionality of race, disability, and gender identity by gaining insights into the multifaceted experiences of systemic barriers that Black Deaf students endured within the educational system.
- Learn about the hidden curriculum that effectively supports Black Deaf students' identity development through case studies and trivia. This is intended for each participant to deepen their understanding with actionable plans in mind.
- Discuss strategies for advocating for policy implementation and providing meaningful support to the Black Deaf ecosystem at both the individual and systemic levels.

## **Keep Scrolling, It's Your Mental Health**

*Christina Costello & Colleen Donohue*

Abstract: Social media has become an integral part of many people's lives, but its impact on mental health is a topic of ongoing research and debate. Have you encountered concerns regarding cyberbullying, self-esteem, the spread of false information/misinformation, increased violent/self-harm materials being shared online, the uncertainty of AI, online trafficking/exploitation, and scams/leaked private information being shared within the therapeutic space? Have you ever wondered how much time you spent on social media and how it may impact your mental health? As the digital landscape continues to evolve, continued use of social media and related concerns are expected to expand. We will take a dip into the abyss beyond what is often viewed as harmless scrolling and clicks to delve into various areas where social media has had a monumental influence. This presentation will focus on the interplay between social media and mental health. The potential challenges encountered throughout the navigation of the digital maze that is social media will be examined. In this presentation, a clinical psychologist and a licensed counselor will discuss strategies with a focus on increasing digital literacy and adaptive use of social media. Clinical examples where social media use is a primary focus will be explored with audience participation. This will be an interactive presentation where your experiences and thoughts will serve to amplify real time discourse to gain audience engagement.

### Objectives:

- Recognize a minimum of three advantages and disadvantages linked to the utilization of social media.
- Learn social and emotional consequences of social media usage for both children and adult users.
- Acquire strategies they can utilize to empower consumers to make informed choices about their digital engagement and safeguard their mental well-being when online.

## **Developing and Providing Education to Crisis Intervention Teams on Working with Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Deaf-Blind Individuals**

*Kimberly Clarke & Lauren Crowley*

Abstract: Crisis Intervention Training curriculum will be discussed with the audience. The curriculum includes Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Deafblind, and Deaf with disabilities basics. It touches on the behavior norms, communication styles and barriers. Role playing is a vital part of the curriculum for maximum impact. It addresses the various mental challenges the first responders may encounter during a crisis. In addition, the presentation of CIT provided in NC will be shared with audience members. They will experience a condensed version of the CIT curriculum. The audience will get a chance to participate in the role play version of the curriculum. A "taste" of the curriculum will show the impact of the information on the first responders as they take the course. Information will be provided on how audience members can bring this to their local community. Information will include where to find funding, agencies to partner with, source of contact and network possibilities.

### Objectives:

- Explain what Crisis Intervention Training entails.
- Develop an understanding of the basics of a CIT and presentation development.
- Identify agencies, contacts, and resources in local communities with potential interest in CIT.



## **Introduction to TraumaPlay Therapy**

*Angela Scruggs*

Abstract: This workshop provides participants with an introduction to TraumaPlay Therapy, a flexibly sequential play therapy model that is grounded in attachment theory. Participants will gain a working knowledge of the seven treatment goals that serve as a therapeutic framework under which clinicians have the freedom to employ a variety of interventions. Heavily informed by our current understanding of the neurobiology of play and the neurobiology of trauma, participants will learn about these vital components and the power of how one heals the other. Whether a clinician or a parent, this workshop will equip attendees with a wealth of targeted techniques that are tied to the model's umbrella treatment goals. Also, this workshop offers a best practice framework for trauma work with families while encouraging ongoing assessment and offering flexibility to the clinician to tailor treatment to the needs of individual families. This is achieved through the TraumaPlay treatment continuum, which allows room for both non-directive and directive approaches to be employed. These approaches include clinically sound elements of other evidence-based treatments such as Child Centered Play Therapy, Theraplay, and Cognitive-Behavioral Play Therapy. While offering original TraumaPlay interventions, these other modalities will be incorporated to demonstrate how to maximize therapeutic absorption through every play-based learning portal.

### Objectives:

- Gain a working knowledge of the TraumaPlay Therapeutic Model that can be employed in a variety of settings from clinical practice, classrooms, and even daily/home life.
- Understand the vital components of the neurobiology of play and the neurobiology of trauma and learn the power of how one heals the other.
- Enhance awareness of how to employ both non-directive and directive approaches in a clinically sound and flexible method.
- Learn about experiential practice in original TraumaPlay interventions that can be used and adapted in many settings.
- Understand how to apply the TraumaPlay Therapy Model with children and families impacted by deafness.

**Thursday, May 30, 2024**

**Concurrent Sessions: 1:45 PM – 3:00 PM**

## **Mindful Eating Groups: Dialectical Behavioral Therapy Adaptations to Decrease Emotional Eating**

*Amanda O'Hearn & Sharon Hayne*

Abstract: Mindfulness helps focus our attention on the present moment, while disengaging from habitual, unskillful behaviors. Mindfulness practices have been used to treat depression, anxiety, stress and chronic pain. Mindfulness principles are core in the teaching of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) skills. DBT has been modified for a variety of patient populations. We have modified the DBT protocol used for use with Deaf clients who identify emotional eating as a problem. Groups focus on skills acquisition as well as mindful eating practices on a regular basis to have a more satisfying relationship to food and eating. In mindful eating, one learns what foods satisfy physical hunger and when eating is being driven by something other than physical hunger.

### Objectives:

- Describe the four modules of Mindful Eating Group.
- List several mindfulness practices helpful in decreasing emotional eating.
- Describe modifications made to DBT that are culturally/linguistically relevant to Deaf participants.

### **Accommodations and Technologies for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Hearing Graduate Students are GREAT: Don't forget the SOFT SKILLS**

*L'Tanya Fish, Antoinette De Luca & Heather Deal*

Abstract: Hard skills, or technical skills, are measurable abilities and knowledge that come through learning and can be job or task specific. An online course has several components that deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) and hearing graduate students must reconcile. In class, components can include the instructor, projection display in zoom, whiteboard, PowerPoint Presentation, various media sources, interpreting, and real-time captioning. Outside the classroom, components can include materials from the instructor, web-based learning management system (CANVAS), notes from chat, and a lecture transcript generated via real-time captioning as well as writing lab, tutoring, library services and IT support. Graduate students need assistance with soft skills as they are navigating course work assignments, various faculty and staff, practicum, and internship. Soft skills are general traits often termed as transferable or interpersonal skills. Strong abilities in communication, leadership, problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork, time management, and organization are soft skills that graduate admissions committees and employers are looking for in addition to academic and professional performance. This workshop will provide descriptions and visual examples of in class technology and accommodations and scenarios of good and bad soft skills demonstrated by graduate students.

### Objectives:

- Provide examples and descriptions of six to ten classroom technologies for online classes.
- Provide two to three visual examples of classroom accommodations utilized in zoom for graduate students who are deaf and hard of hearing.
- Increase the audience's knowledge about soft skills and provide some strategies for improving these skills with graduate students before graduation.
- Engage the participants in group discussion or dialogue by reviewing case scenarios and comments from graduate students.

### **Intersectionality in Mental Health Settings**

*Brian Moss & Sandy Pascual*

Abstract: Consumers' language in mental health settings can be a unique demand for interpreters and practitioners. Their language may be considered dysfluent and can be impacted by various factors, including their mental health status, medications, fund of information deficits, or language deprivation. Intersectionality and multilingual cultures place an added layer of language challenges when working with deaf individuals. Unfortunately, many interpreters and practitioners do not have the training needed to work effectively in mental health settings with deaf clients and often revert to mainstream deaf cultural practices without considering additional language or cultural factors. In some situations, having a trilingual/multilingual interpreter, and/or a deaf interpreter or visual gestural specialist, and/or an interpreter of the same culturally identified background of the client as part of the interpreting team can be beneficial and help alleviate some of the linguistic challenges that may arise. For this reason, this workshop will define certain terms that we hope to apply these towards the ideas we express and the action or inaction of working with deaf individuals in mental health. We hope to demonstrate how to best advocate for additional interpreters including interpreters who share the same language/languages, cultures, and/or a deaf interpreter or visual gestural

specialist when appropriate to improve the communication process.

Objectives:

- Gain knowledge and acquire a list of resources available when working with multilingual clients.
- Discuss skills needed when working in mental health settings with clients who have intersectional identities.
- Acquire tips and tools for working with Deaf interpreters and professionals as part of the mental health care team.

**Handcuffing the Deaf Community: An Overview of Interactions with the Criminal Legal System**

*Deb Guthmann, Gabriel Lomas & Grace Lester*

Abstract: This presentation will focus on deaf individuals who are involved with the criminal legal system including those with hearing and additional communication or linguistic challenges. There is a considerable disparity regarding research and training related to what is happening in the criminal legal system for this population. This presentation will explore strategies to provide education and help raise awareness about the numerous barriers and injustices that frequently happen with individuals who are incarcerated. The presentation will discuss current research, case studies, updates on civil lawsuits, available resources, access issues and improvements needed within carceral settings.

Objectives:

- Provide current research regarding demographic information related to deaf suspects and offenders who may have additional diagnoses.
- Discuss how future research (surveys, qualitative, and quantitative studies) can incorporate the inclusion of all aspects of the deaf population to strengthen the data collected regarding deaf individuals in the criminal justice system.
- Describe how the challenges and opportunities for professionals-in-training, interpreters, social workers and psychologists to become informed advocates for their deaf students and other deaf adults who are caught up in the criminal legal system.
- Discuss how the legal system often fails deaf individuals and what can be done to invoke change to this system.

**Eye Movement Therapies and Research into Their Effectiveness with DHH Clients**

*Michael Deninger & Aileen Aldalur*

Abstract: The workshop will begin with movement and sensory activities to both relax participants and to signal that MEMI therapy is less about cognitions and more about what happens in the body as a result of our experiences--be they pleasant or frightening. That will be followed by a brief overview of MEMI's theory, protocol, assessments and basic eye movements for those who are new to the therapy. To show the therapy in action, a demonstration video of a session with a DHH person who wants to overcome a resentment will be shown. In the second part of the presentation, the differences between four eye movement therapies (MEMI, EMDR, Accelerated Resolution Therapy and Brainspotting) will be explained along with their theoretical orientations, course requirements and total costs for certification. This section will conclude with analyses of recent research studies evincing the pivotal role that eye movements play in the deactivation of fear memories where they are formed and persist in the amygdala. In the final phase of this presentation, the Dr. Aileen Aldalur and Dr. Jessica Kuehne, co-chairs of a research group formed to study the use of MEMI with DHH subjects, will report on the group's activities to date and future plans. The team is currently studying

practitioner attitudes regarding the use of MEMI with DHH subjects. If the results are promising, MEMI might be converted into a manualized treatment in preparation for controlled studies of the therapy's outcomes with DHH individuals.

Objectives:

- Name and explain one of the formative assessments used in MEMI.
- Explain two ways that DHH practitioners can receive basic training in the MEMI model and procedures.
- Explain two differences between the theories supporting MEMI and EMDR.
- Cite and explain the importance of two recent research findings that provide evidence of the role of bilateral eye movements in deactivating fear memories.
- Explain why the use eye movements therapies in desensitizing traumatic memories might be a preferred over cognitive approaches.

**Thursday, May 30, 2024**

**Concurrent Sessions: 3:30 PM – 4:45 PM**

**Panel Discussion: Rethinking Licensure Norms with Early Career Therapists Navigating Unconventional Paths**

*David T. Bruno, Ryssa Fleischer, Monie Gwaltney & Marissa McBride*

Abstract: Explore the powerful stories of early career therapists from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community in examining unique pathways to licensure in our workshop. Join these therapists in an open conversation where they share their personal journeys, the challenges faced along the way, and innovative strategies utilized. We will delve into the complexities of passing standardized exams and the need for an equitable licensure process, especially for the deaf and hard of hearing. Our panelists will discuss how they've challenged traditional norms, embraced creative practices, and adapted traditional therapeutic models, all while advocating for more accessible licensure. They'll talk about the obstacles they've overcome and how mentorship, technology, and community involvement played crucial roles. This workshop is your chance to draw inspiration from therapists with diverse backgrounds who've shown resilience and innovation. It highlights the importance of adapting to an ever-changing therapy landscape and calls for changes in licensure to better support deaf and hard of hearing therapists. Participate in this important conversation, which has the potential to redefine how therapists are licensed. By challenging existing norms and supporting a fair, equitable licensure process, we aim to create a more inclusive and accessible field, benefiting therapists, clients, and communities alike.

Objectives:

- Analyze and compare the unique journeys of early career therapists, especially those from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, as they navigate unconventional paths to licensure.
- Evaluate specific challenges early career therapists face, such as standardized exams and the need for streamlined licensure, and identify innovative strategies used to overcome them.
- Apply insights into adapting traditional therapeutic models and practices to address the evolving dynamics of the therapy profession, particularly within the framework of compact licensure.
- Empowered to take actionable steps towards advocating for more inclusive licensure practices, particularly in support of Deaf and Hard of Hearing therapists and other marginalized groups.

## **Hope Squad**

*Kim Thornsberry and Kent Schafer*

**Abstract:** This workshop will discuss the importance of peer-to-peer suicide prevention programs for youths to address the increasing rates of youth suicides. These programs aim to train, educate, and engage youths in collaborative approaches to prevent suicide in their peers. A specific school for the Deaf in Ogden, UT has successfully implemented such a program, effectively preventing suicide and offering support to those in need. The program empowers youths to take small actionable steps to assist their peers in seeking help.

### **Objectives:**

- Gain two insights into peer-to-peer suicide prevention programs.
- Understand the process of selecting, screening, and training youths in Question Persuade and Refer (QPR) and/or Acknowledge Care Tell (ACT) through culturally and linguistically appropriate workshops, activities, and gatherings.
- Identify two programs to support Deaf and Hard of Hearing youths in their respective communities.

## **It Couldn't Happen Here: Lessons Learned from/in the Aftermath of the Mass Shooting in Maine**

*Tristen Evah Hellewell, Terry Morrell, Sitara Sheikh & Kristine Gile*

**Abstract:** By sharing our personal and professional experiences that transpired in Lewiston, Maine on October of 2023, we hope to demonstrate our resilience and determination during the tragedy and its aftermath. In this presentation, the goal is start a conversation on how to collaborate between community members and stakeholders regarding exchange of information effectively during times of crisis..

### **Objectives:**

- Provide one convincing argument to the participants why promoting sign fluent individuals for crisis responses are best practice to reduce trauma.
- Discuss how this crisis impacted the Deaf/HH/Interpreting communities and to demonstrate how different agencies are working together.
- Discuss continuous advocacy and community transparency as we develop best practices.

## **Forensic Evaluations with Deaf Defendants**

*Paul Silvasi*

**Abstract:** Forensic evaluations play an important role in the criminal justice process. Competency evaluations, for instance, are a safeguard needed to ensure the protection of a defendant's constitutional right to participate in their own defense. On the other hand, evaluations of criminal responsibility protects defendants who, because of a mental illness or developmental disability, have limited culpability for their alleged offenses. Despite the importance of these evaluations, there is a scarcity of well-trained evaluators who are able to complete them. For instance, the United States is currently undergoing a "competency crisis," where there is a growing amount of competency evaluations ordered to be completed each year; however, not enough evaluators are available to complete them. Of particular concern are deaf and hard of hearing defendants, who encounter barriers throughout the criminal justice process. Problematic interactions can occur with arresting officers, inappropriate accommodations may be provided during interrogations, and limited accessibility following one's sentence can result in frequent recidivism. Additionally, although there are many well-trained forensic evaluators throughout the United States, very little of them possess the training and experience necessary to complete these types of evaluations with deaf and hard of hearing defendants. Therefore, poorly trained forensic evaluators may arrive to erroneous conclusions, inadvertently infringing on

a DHH defendant's constitutional rights. Due to this concern, it is encouraged that more professionals that work with this population consider obtaining training in forensic evaluations. This workshop will introduce attendees to criminal forensic evaluations, and identify additional considerations when completing them with DHH defendants.

Objectives:

- Describe the two prongs of competency outlined by Dusky v. United States (1960).
- Identify three different ways in which not guilty by reason of insanity is defined by jurisdictions throughout the United States.
- Describe five unique considerations when completing criminal forensic evaluations with DHH defendants.

**Clinical Reflections on Working with Deaf Men**

*Kota Takayama, David Barclay & Michael Brown*

Abstract: This research project conducted qualitative interviews with eight mental health therapists, focusing on their experiences with deaf and hard of hearing men and boys. The participants had diverse backgrounds, and preliminary findings revealed several key themes. Deaf males tended to be action-oriented and lacked emotional literacy. They were at risk of abuse but often avoided discussing it. Seeking mental health services was a challenge, particularly for Deaf BIPOC males. Lack of role models, employment barriers, and regional differences affected their experiences. Boys living near deaf schools felt more confident. Deaf males interacted differently with male and female therapists, desiring "straight talk" from the former and compassion from the latter. Body image issues weren't prominent, and therapists suggested understanding individuality, addressing gender biases, learning about trauma, recruiting more male therapists, and teaching emotional literacy to better serve D/HH males. Generational trauma and CODA issues also played a role. In the 90-mins workshop, the presenters will present recommendations for clinical practice with deaf and hard of hearing men and boys based on literature reviews and semi-structured interview. The workshop proceeds in three parts in which we: present a result of literature reviews; a concept of Masculinary Culture; recommendations for practice. Session one: Share literature review outcomes and discuss Masculinary Culture concept. Session two: Discuss and share a result of the semi-structured interviews. Session three: Discuss and elaborate potential recommendations for working with deaf men and boys.

Objectives:

- Understand unique issues in clinical practice with deaf male clients.
- Identify appropriate therapy approaches for deaf male clients.
- Describe Masculinary Culture.

**Thursday, May 30, 2024**

**Special Event: 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM**

**Reception, Poster Sessions, Book Signing, and Artists Showcase Event**

## Poster Sessions:

Fostering Corrective Family-Centered Experiences: A Therapeutic Model of Assessment for Deaf/Hard of Hearing Youth	<i>S. Schoffstall</i>	<i>C. Ryan</i>
Bringing Awareness to the Needs of Older Adults who are DeafBlind	<i>T. Brown-Ogilvie</i>	<i>J. Alleman-Goodman</i>
The Mindfulness Resources Project	<i>G. Roman</i>	
Gallaudet University Clinical Psychology PhD Program Student Research Interests and Projects	<i>K. Wagner</i>	<i>L. Pick</i>
A Therapeutic Trifecta: Including Deaf, ASL, and Spanish Interpretation Services in Outpatient Therapy Sessions	<i>S. Schoffstall</i>	<i>R. Lotz</i>
Pathway to State Government	<i>L. Siegel</i>	
The Certificate in Educational Interpreting (CEI) 2023-2024: Perspectives on Specialized Professional Development	<i>L. Prinzi</i>	<i>K. Kurz</i>
Be Comfortable with the Uncomfortable in Developing Effective Communication Techniques for Success for Individuals who are D/deaf or Hard of Hearing	<i>R. Dell'Angelo</i>	
Exploring the Role of Behavior Management/Intervention in Mental Health	<i>K. Pranzl</i>	<i>A. Nutt</i>
Enhancing Quality of Healthcare Informational Resources using Deaf Lens: Lessons from Material Development in Japan	<i>A. Minakawa</i>	<i>K. Takayama</i>
Mental Health Resources for K-12 Deaf Children	<i>C. Camp</i>	
Toward Equal Access: A Model for Lay Advocacy Programs Serving People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing	<i>M. Bell</i>	
Deaf Weight Wise Implementation research with Deaf communities in Western and Central New York State	<i>L. DeWindt</i>	<i>E. Allen</i>
Caring Works Inc. - Hope House	<i>K. Black</i>	<i>S. Burkes</i>
Addiction Recovery and CARES, the workforce with lived experience	<i>E. Smart</i>	<i>H. Sherlock</i>
Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)	<i>L. Fowler</i>	<i>S. Bridges</i>
Aspire Indiana Health's Integrated Healthcare for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Population	<i>S. Lopez</i>	

## Friday, May 31, 2024

### Concurrent Sessions: 8:00 AM – 9:15 AM

#### Harm Reduction through Effective Interpreter Collaboration

*Megan Wetzal & Lori Milcic*

Abstract: Join this session to identify possible solutions on how to reduce harm during the interpreting process in the mental health world. This workshop will highlight challenges of interpreting within the mental health field, especially with clients who suffer from language deprivation in childhood and/or language loss in adulthood due to isolation. The two presenters will share various examples of effective and ineffective interpreting methods. With the guidance of the presenters, participants will gain an understanding of what “markers of success” interpreters should be seeking while working in mental health settings.

#### Objectives:

- Identify two challenges for Mental Health professionals in providing care during interpreter-mediated encounters.
- Describe ethical and legal implications of providing care to individuals who may have additional disabilities, including but not limited to mental health, language deprivation, and intellectual disability.
- Increase awareness of barriers and implications of ineffective interpreting.
- Apply at least 2 ways to advocate for effective communication.

## **The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Addiction, Recovery, and Employment**

*Pam Williamson*

Abstract: There are thousands of people in recovery from addiction who are unaware of their civil rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA insures that people with addiction to alcohol, and in recovery from opioids and other drugs have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. Find out how the ADA addresses alcohol and substance use disorders differently. This session will also introduce how the ADA applies to addiction and recovery during three phases of employment: pre offer, post offer, and employment. These differences will be illustrated with scenarios about alcohol, opioids, cocaine and marijuana.

### Objectives:

- Understand the ADA's definition of disability and how it applies to addiction and recovery.
- Distinguish how the ADA applies to people with addiction to alcohol, and those in recovery from opioids and other drugs.
- Learn about dos and don'ts during the three stages of employment (interview and application, post offer and pre-employment, and during employment).

## **Exploring Diverse Gender and Sexual Identities in Counseling**

*Tandy Lewis*

Abstract: This interactive workshop will encompass a range of key topics including understanding diverse gender and sexual identities, strategies to guide clients on their personal journeys, and the unique challenges faced when clients have unsupportive families, friends, or communities. We will first briefly delve into the historical context of oppression and discrimination faced by the LGBTQIA+ and trans communities, shedding light on their enduring struggles and resilience throughout history. Attendees will gain an understanding of the historical challenges faced by these communities and the imperative need for culturally sensitive counseling practices. In today's ever-evolving society, counselors can play a crucial role in helping clients navigate the complexities of identity, trauma, and self-acceptance. Multicultural theory describes how individual struggles do not exist in a vacuum, but rather are constantly shaped by relationships and systems. You will learn how you can utilize therapy sessions to support clients in exploring their gender and sexual identities and navigating systemic and individual traumas. You will learn how to use specific therapeutic techniques to foster greater acceptance and joy in their identities and experiences. You will learn how to best support clients when they experience discrimination or rejection due to their gender or sexual identity. Overall, this presentation will aim to encourage attendees to gain practical knowledge and techniques to better serve this diverse population. In holding space together, our community can continue to expand the capacity to create a safe and affirming space for our clients on their journeys of self-discovery.

### Objectives:

- Understand the impact of historical oppression and trauma on this population, enabling them to provide more holistic and inclusive counseling services.
- Share techniques that can support clients in exploring their individual gender and sexuality identities, fostering self-acceptance and personal growth.
- Provide strategies on how to address harmful experiences such as discrimination and rejection because of their gender or sexual identities.



## **Caregiving Services and Access by Deaf, Deafblind, Hard of Hearing Seniors: What Providers Should Know**

*Christine Gannon, Sherri Collins & Poorna Kushalnagar*

**Abstract:** There is a strong need to address the needs of aging deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing (DDBHH) individuals. Researchers found that a lack of cultural competence, provider training, interpreters, and trust of providers, in combination with barriers to getting appointments and health literacy issues negatively impact the overall access to healthcare services for DDBHH aging individuals. When services are not in ASL, it created barriers to communicating clearly with DDBHH older adults. DDBHH individuals may need care, counseling, and training, but have not had these needs met. Finding ways to meet the unique needs of DDBHH older adults helps to preserve their autonomy. There is a large volume of research on aging in general, but less on deaf and hard of hearing individuals. During this presentation, presenters will share efforts to learn more about DDBHH individuals' access to and anticipated needs of aging support and caregiving services. Presenters will describe deidentified, aggregated data collected from Arizona Age of Access study and plans to better address the needs of aging deaf and hard of hearing adults. After presenting the data, presenters will invite questions. Then they will engage the participants in a discussion on how these efforts and this data can benefit DDBHH older adults in our work and communities.

### **Objectives:**

- Identify and explain at least three factors that impact the quality of care for aging individuals who are DDBHH.
- Describe at least one aspect of efforts needed to improve health and health care for older DDBHH individuals.
- Apply the information to at least one area of their work or personal life to impact positive change.

## **ASL Hypnotherapy: Yes, It's Possible! Part I**

*Michael Deninger*

**Abstract:** This presentation will introduce ASL Hypnotherapy to practitioners, a reliable method for bringing the healing power of this medium to signing clients. With numerous advances in neuroscience over the last decade, the therapeutic benefits of hypnosis have now been validated. Because classic hypnosis relies on the spoken word to induce trance-like states, a belief has endured that it's not possible to hypnotize DHH individuals. Not so! Over 20 years ago, this presenter developed ASL Hypnotherapy for use with this population. This method combines ASL signs and metaphors with breath work, eye movements and eye gaze (all in lieu of the spoken word) to help clients settle into the relaxed state. This is the state where we have access to deeper thought structures nested in our unconscious minds that influence our habitual thought patterns and behaviors. Through a combination of lecture, discussion, experiential activities and practice, participants will learn the theory, as well as the mechanics of hypnotizing DHH clients. Participants will also learn two specific hypnotic techniques designed to help clients achieve desired therapeutic outcomes.

### **Objectives:**

- Explain how the ASL Hypnotherapy model differs from hypnosis for hearing individuals.
- Demonstrate how to use breath work, eye gaze and ASL morphs to induce a relaxed state in DHH clients.
- Demonstrate how to use tactile cues as an attention getting device during a hypnotic procedure with DHH clients.
- Describe the purpose of and demonstrate at least two specific hypnotic techniques for achieving positive client outcomes.

**Friday, May 31, 2024**

**Concurrent Sessions: 9:45 AM – 11:00 AM**

**Fostering Postsecondary Success for D/HH Students: Collaborative Transition Strategies for Service Providers and VR Counselors**

*Charity Reedy Warigon*

Abstract: In this presentation, we will emphasize the importance of preparing D/HH/DB students for life beyond high school by utilizing collaborative efforts between service providers and VR counselors. We will discuss an accessible, video-based online curriculum that considers the full range of diversity among D/HH students, including those with cochlear implants, hearing aids, signing, oral deaf, unilateral deaf, DeafBlind, and those with IEPs or 504 Plans. This tailored curriculum enables efficient addressing of WIOA-mandated transition goals while providing essential life and career readiness skills across five key domains: Job Exploration and Counseling, Work-Based Learning Experiences, Postsecondary Pathways and Counseling, Work Readiness (Soft Skills), and Self-Advocacy. The curriculum is accessible through direct instruction in sign language, supplemented with voiceover and captioned transcripts. Furthermore, we will explore how state Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies can collaborate with service providers to support D/HH/DB students during and after high school, fostering well-rounded academic and career experiences.

Objectives:

- Understand the importance of collaborative transition strategies between service providers and VR counselors in supporting D/HH/DB students' post-secondary success.
- Identify and describe the main features of the WIOA-compliant, video-based online Pre-ETS curriculum tailored for D/HH/DB students.
- Develop strategies for effective collaboration and communication between service providers, VR counselors, and educators to streamline support for D/HH/DB students.
- Understand the role of the WIOA in shaping transition services for D/HH/DB students and the implications for service providers and VR counselors.
- Describe various options for deploying the video-based online Pre-ETS curriculum, and determine the most appropriate approach based on the available infrastructure and service options within the participant's geographic location, ensuring optimal support for D/HH/DB students.

**Considering the DeafBlind Journey: Mental Health & Work Readiness**

*Eleanor Coley-Brody & David Volper*

Abstract: This workshop will provide education on the impact of mental health and adjustment to vision & hearing loss on a person's readiness for change, developing skills and getting ready for employment. The presentation will also emphasize the need for mental health supports and participants will walk away with recommended strategies. Join us as we explore the lived experience and journey that individuals with combined hearing and vision loss go through. We will explore the myriad of factors that impact the individual's adjustment to their vision and hearing loss and subsequently readiness to develop new skills in order to be gainfully employed. These factors are critical to take into consideration when setting up services, such as rehabilitation services.

Objectives:

- Identify at least three common etiologies (i.e. Usher syndrome, CHARGE syndrome, acquired

conditions) and what some of the typical life experiences may look like.

- Identify at least five ways combined vision and hearing loss can impact mental health and readiness for work.
- Describe at least five factors, such as identity, family support, and incidental knowledge that impact mental health at each stage of life.
- Describe at least three strategies to determine additional mental health supports related to adjustment to vision & hearing loss are needed prior to referring them to rehabilitation services.

### **Intersectional Feminism Movement: How Women are Changing the Way America Listens Within Colleges' Online Learning**

*Tracy LaChapelle*

Abstract: The intersectionality of college students with hearing difficulties had inconsistent access to communication and self-advocacy barriers for hearing assistance resources in online learning. Women challenged social norms throughout history, such as insubordination overcoming obstacles to self-advocating. The intersectionality of feminism challenges the binary gender norms and biases, permitting gender identity on a spectrum and creating supportive learning, creates a compelling need to self-advocate and autonomous learning for all student abilities and feminist gender identities, including transgender communities, filling the literature gap in the critical area of reasons students do not disclose hearing difficulties and ask for accommodations. Participant reflection includes self-empowerment strategies promoting awareness and inclusive environment competencies. Listening to equitable communication access is essential for abolishing the marginalization of students' unique identities and abilities.

#### Objectives:

- Increase awareness of college students' intersectionality of unique hearing abilities and identities for equitable access to communication within College Online Learning Environments (OLEs).
- Understand the skill-building practice for healing and empowering themselves and others.
- Gain multidimensional framework for understanding and implementing best practices within college OLEs.

### **How to be an Anti-Racist Organization/Program**

*Selah Davison*

Abstract: Equity, diversity, and inclusion are all about elevating your organization (or program) in a new and innovative way. In the workplace, leaders and employees will learn how to utilize anti-racism work, balance mental health and well-being, and apply action-packed strategies. These amplify staff productivity and professional relationships, retain diverse teams, increase psychological safety, and many more for the long run. Starting a journey is a choice for introspection in becoming an effective anti-racist organization (or program) and demonstrating kindness on all levels. Diversity in the workforce and hiring trends are placing stronger emphasis on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). Diversity is more than just about marking off the checkbox. How do we elevate our organization/program by making real changes? How do we tackle issues by continuously ensuring new ways of advancing equity and equality for the deaf people of color by retaining them and creating a safe & inclusive workplace for all? How do we identify strategies that are working or not working? What output can you look for that anti-racism work is successfully working in your organization or program? This workshop will benefit leaders and employees in any professional field. This also applies to employees who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color and are encouraged to participate.

### Objectives:

- Learn a variety of bias terms (i.e. idiosyncratic radar bias, affinity bias, deaf elitism bias, etc.), how to address them, and understand their impact to an organization/program such as hiring process and compliance/policies.
- Learn significant EDI changes of 2020 versus 2024 (i.e., multiculturalism era, blowback of legal decisions, and downfall of equity, inclusion & diversity).
- Discuss race and race equality in a safe and healthy way and how to respond appropriately and safely.
- Discuss the dangerous zones of the "white affinity groups", whether they are lawful versus unlawful with the application of exclusionary rule, and the white affinity groups' impacts on Black, Indigenous, and people of color.
- Identify how to recognize that effective anti-racist organization/program, supervisors, and colleagues are going on the right track.
- Apply theories and models, and learn tips such as practicing contemporary fairness, how to reduce blind spots, and measures to identify positive outcomes (related to accessibility, inclusion, workplace culture, psychological safety, recruitment and hiring process).

### **ASL Hypnotherapy: Yes, It's Possible! Part II**

*Michael Deninger*

Abstract: This presentation will introduce ASL Hypnotherapy to practitioners, a reliable method for bringing the healing power of this medium to signing clients. With numerous advances in neuroscience over the last decade, the therapeutic benefits of hypnosis have now been validated. Because classic hypnosis relies on the spoken word to induce trance-like states, a belief has endured that it's not possible to hypnotize DHH individuals. Not so! Over 20 years ago, this presenter developed ASL Hypnotherapy for use with this population. This method combines ASL signs and metaphors with breath work, eye movements and eye gaze (all in lieu of the spoken word) to help clients settle into the relaxed state. This is the state where we have access to deeper thought structures nested in our unconscious minds that influence our habitual thought patterns and behaviors. Through a combination of lecture, discussion, experiential activities and practice, participants will learn the theory, as well as the mechanics of hypnotizing DHH clients. Participants will also learn two specific hypnotic techniques designed to help clients achieve desired therapeutic outcomes.

### Objectives:

- Explain how the ASL Hypnotherapy model differs from hypnosis for hearing individuals.
- Demonstrate how to use breath work, eye gaze and ASL morphs to induce a relaxed state in DHH clients.
- Demonstrate how to use tactile cues as an attention getting device during a hypnotic procedure with DHH clients.
- Describe the purpose of and demonstrate at least two specific hypnotic techniques for achieving positive client outcomes.

**Friday, May 31, 2024**

**Concurrent Sessions: 11:30 AM – 12:45 PM**

**Strategic Insights into the Organizations that Serve Our Communities**

*Shane Feldman*

**Abstract:** Join us for a journey into the world of organizations committed to serving the Deaf and hard of hearing community. This workshop offers a deep dive into the intricate fabric of these institutions, providing a nuanced understanding of their core characteristics, objectives, state-specific structures, and the significant impact they wield within their respective communities. A primary focus of this workshop is to shed light on the vital roles played by these organizations in catering to the unique needs of Deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Participants will gain a profound appreciation for their multifaceted efforts. Moreover, the workshop will not shy away from acknowledging the existing service gaps, bringing attention to areas that demand further attention and support. This immersive experience is enriched with real-world case studies and thought-provoking analysis. Through these, participants will gain a thorough understanding of the strategic approaches that underpin the operations of these organizations. By the workshop's conclusion, attendees will emerge with a heightened awareness of the invaluable role and work these organizations undertake to serve and advocate for the Deaf and hard of hearing community.

**Objectives:**

- Describe the core purpose, general characteristics and objectives, and structures of organizations dedicated to serving the Deaf and hard of hearing community. They will gain insights into the diverse roles these organizations play in serving and advocating for the Deaf and hard of hearing community.
- Identify and analyze existing service gaps within the Deaf and hard of hearing community. They will explore potential solutions and strategies to bridge these gaps, contributing to more effective and equitable service provision for this community.
- Acquire practical knowledge of the strategic approaches employed by these organizations. They will be equipped to appreciate the complexity of the human services landscape for the Deaf and hard of hearing and may identify opportunities to support or collaborate with these organizations.

**Crippling the Paradigm: Neurodivergence in Practice**

*Rayne Depukat & Nikki Cherry*

**Abstract:** This workshop will be a dynamic learning experience, providing valuable insights and framework for attendees to analyze and transform their understanding of “normal.” Crip theory, historical context, and multiple models are utilized to enhance attendees’ understanding of neurodivergent populations and contexts. Through case study and personal analysis, participants will be able to identify areas of implicit bias, opportunities for individual growth and identity development, and strategies to apply in their work. Crippling has a way of turning old ideas on their head and unmaking concepts of things like normal vs abnormal. This is the avenue for change in regards to neurodivergent people, both clients and colleagues. And maybe even ourselves.

**Objectives:**

- Describe the Neurodiversity Paradigm and how it relates to their current professional setting.
- Recognize how interpreters’ understanding of the neurodiversity paradigm can impact interpreted interactions, as well as the impact of neurodivergent representation among interpreters.
- Develop an internal bias analysis to identify areas they can improve to better understand the Neurodiversity Paradigm and the crippling of these concepts.
- Develop at least 3 strategies to implement when in mixed neurology settings that affirm the Neurodiversity Paradigm and neurodivergent people.

## **Recognizing Audism: Uncovering Its Roots in Interpreter Education Programs**

*S. Jordan Wright & Genie Gertz*

**Abstract:** This presentation will share the results of an investigation into signed language interpreters' perspectives on settings related to sexual health. Studies have shown that the health literacy of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals in the United States significantly lags behind that of their hearing peers, which leads to adverse and delayed care. Sexual Health access; particularly as it relates to Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) in deaf communities is an underserved topic cloaked in taboo beliefs, a dearth of research, and compounded barriers to access to information. The findings of this pilot study have been extrapolated from three focus groups where signed language interpreters working in the United States reflected on their experiences of interpreting in sexually transmitted infection (STI) related medical scenarios. Findings reveal that preparedness and skill level vary widely based on factors including inconsistencies of sexual knowledge, professional preparation, academic training, personally held beliefs related to sex, and trust. We also find that interpreters hold paternalistic and audist attitudes towards deaf consumers as it relates to health literacy, language deprivation, and systemic navigational capital. This investigation leads us to sharply examine what becomes an additional set of systemic barriers for deaf and hard-of-hearing people who receive their health information through signed language interpretation. We aim to spotlight gaps in the Interpreter Education Programs that can be remedied for the long-term improvement of sexual health access.

### **Objectives:**

- Articulate the barriers of health care access for D/HH individuals.
- Recognize gaps in Interpreter Education Programs as it pertains to healthcare.
- Strategize long-term planning for improved Interpreter Education Programs.

## **Pilot Testing a Cognitive Behavioral Intervention to Promote Mental Health Treatment Engagement among Deaf individuals**

*Aileen Aldalur & Sean Cosslett*

**Abstract:** This workshop will explore Deaf adult's treatment-seeking beliefs and barriers using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as a framework and present data from an open pilot trial of an intervention designed to increase Deaf adult's mental health treatment-seeking behaviors. Background information about the TPB applied to mental health treatment-seeking and the development of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Treatment-Seeking (CBT-TS) will be presented as context. The presenters will discuss the process of adapting CBT-TS to meet the unique needs of Deaf adults following the ADAPT-ITT model, a pragmatic framework for adapting evidence-based interventions (Wingood & DiClemente, 2008). Data will be presented from two qualitative studies, funded by the National on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, that informed the adaptation process. Finally, the presenters will present preliminary results of an ongoing, single-arm, open pilot trial of the adapted intervention, Deaf CBT-TS, funded by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences. Participants include 30 Deaf adults with untreated depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, insomnia, or alcohol use disorder. Participants complete baseline assessments of their symptoms, beliefs about treatment, and intentions to seek treatment prior to receiving the intervention (1-2 sessions). One month later, participants complete a follow-up assessment of their symptoms, beliefs about treatment, intentions to seek treatment, and utilization of treatment services since their intervention session. Participants also complete an exit interview including ratings of their level of satisfaction and feedback about the intervention sessions. We will discuss preliminary results from the trial and next steps for the intervention's continued development.

### Objectives:

- Explain the Theory of Planned Behavior applied to mental health treatment-seeking behaviors.
- Identify Deaf behavioral, normative, & control beliefs that may prevent them from seeking mental health treatment.
- Discuss how Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for treatment-Seeking may be used as an intervention to improve mental health treatment engagement.
- Explain the ADAPT-ITT framework for adapting evidence-based interventions for different cultural populations.
- Identify methods for conducting clinical trials with the Deaf community.

### **Expanding Our Trauma Treatment Toolkit: Applications of Somatic Experiencing with DHH People and Communities**

*Cara Miller*

Abstract: Somatic approaches are increasingly gaining traction in psychotherapy research and practice. There is emerging evidence for treatment models and interventions that emphasize physical and physiological manifestations of traumatic experiences. One such approach, Somatic Experiencing (SE), works to increase clients' capacity for embodiment as well as affect tolerance, resists client re-traumatization, increases client recognition of nervous system states, and minimizes reliance on language-based narratives. This workshop will introduce theoretical frameworks and basic principles of somatic approaches for which the route of access is inner attention to the body, rather than language-based narratives. Particular attention will be given to Somatic Experiencing®, a modality emphasizing client physiology and nervous system regulation. The presenter will discuss foundational SE™ concepts to enhance depth, efficacy, and outcome of psychotherapeutic interventions, and offer experiential exercises for learning “from the inside out.” Attendees will be invited to consider adaptations to somatically-informed approaches as a potentially effective clinical intervention with Deaf and hard of hearing people, and will learn about further accessible training opportunities.

### Objectives:

- Describe three theoretical principles underlying common somatically-oriented trauma treatment approaches.
- Define the role of tracking inner experiences to respond to and support nervous system state.
- Discuss considerations in adapting somatic approaches for use with Deaf and hard of hearing clients.

**Friday, May 31, 2024**

**Concurrent Sessions: 1:45 PM – 3:00 PM**

### **Empowering DHH Students: Gallaudet's Support Programs and Vocational Rehabilitation Strategies**

*Tami Santmyer, Dylan Westbury, & Avonne Brooker-Rutowski*

Abstract: Join us for an informative workshop that explores the remarkable support ecosystem at Gallaudet University, the world's only liberal arts institution exclusively dedicated to DHH students. In this engaging 30-minute presentation, we will unveil the diverse array of resources available at Gallaudet, including the Office of Students with Disabilities, Counseling and Psychological Services, the Hearing and Speech Center, Career Success Services, specialized centers like those for Black Deaf Studies and Latinx Deaf Studies, and programs covering financial literacy, technology, health services, and an English Language Institute. We will also delve

into Pre-Employment Transition Services, Charge Ahead Dual Enrollment opportunities, and scholarships for undergraduates and graduates. Following the presentation, you will have the opportunity to participate in a 30-minute Q&A session, where we will address your queries and provide insights into how Gallaudet University can effectively collaborate with Vocational Rehabilitation Services to empower DHH students. By attending, you will gain valuable insights and be better equipped to advocate for Gallaudet as a vital resource for these students. Take advantage of this chance to discover the potential for collaboration and support within the DHH community.

Objectives:

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of the diverse range of support programs and resources available at Gallaudet University for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) students, including academic, career, and personal support services.
- Explore strategies for effective collaboration between Gallaudet University and Vocational Rehabilitation Services to maximize the educational and vocational opportunities for DHH students, leading to successful outcomes.
- Acquire the knowledge and advocacy skills necessary to promote Gallaudet University as a crucial resource for DHH students within the context of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, allowing attendees to better support and guide DHH individuals in their educational and career journeys.

**Embracing Diversity in Therapy using the Multicultural Orientation Framework**

*Alesia Allen & Tiffany Huntley*

Abstract: This workshop will provide an overview of barriers deaf and hard-of-hearing clients who are marginalized based on their social identities face when attempting to access quality mental health services. This will be followed by an introduction to the Multicultural Orientation (MCO) framework and its influence on clients as well practical tools for how to integrate MCO in therapy (and beyond). MCO is framework centering a therapist's way of being with their clients, which are influenced by their own and their clients' worldview, identities, and values. The MCO framework consists of three pillars: (a) cultural humility, defined as a therapist's tendency to be curious and open to diverse perspectives; (b) cultural opportunity, or the degree to which a therapist picks up on and addresses cultural themes in therapy when they arise; and (c) cultural comfort, or the therapist's level of calm and courage in engaging in discussions of culture and identity. Presenters will also share lived experiences applying MCO framework to clinical practice. Workshop will conclude with invitation to discuss how we can build cultural fortitude toward racial healing and cultural repair.

Objectives:

- Identify at least one clinical impact of racism and racial trauma for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.
- Define the three pillars of the Multicultural Orientation (MCO) framework.
- Apply at least one aspect of the MCO framework to clinical practice.
- Consider culture in all aspects of therapeutic work and beyond.

**Interpreting Ethical Considerations while Working in the Field of Mental Health**

*Monie Gwaltney & Valerie Avila*

Abstract: Though there are insufficient numbers of providers with programs familiar with servicing the d/hh community, the mental health field is acknowledging the severe need of accessible mental health programs



for deaf/hh patients and mental health practitioners. In addition, interpreters in training need specialized mental health interpreter training to successfully accommodate and provide effective services. One way both providers can consider possible ethical considerations is to analyze the barriers in policies or practices that impede either provider's ability to provide efficient mental health and interpreting services. It is also important to carefully consider the language, culture, and history of Deaf people to understand the unique challenges within the community. We will share how these steps may play a crucial role in understanding ethical considerations. In our proposed presentation, we will discuss the impact of limited access to mental health services for Deaf communities including ethical concerns related interpreting that may emerge during mental health sessions with clients. We will also discuss various approaches to address ethical challenges. We will facilitate a dialogue with the participants to share relevant experiences regarding working with interpreters, which may allow for a broader discussion with local mental health providers to implement inclusive and sensitive practices.

### Objectives

- Develop a deeper understanding of the unique cultural, linguistic, & historical aspects of the Deaf/hard-of-hearing community to provide more culturally sensitive & ethical mental health services.
- Recognize and analyze ethical considerations that may arise when working with interpreters in mental health settings, including issues related to confidentiality and effective communication.
- Learn strategies and approaches to address the limited access to mental health services for Deaf communities and identify potential barriers in policies and practices. Explore alternative provisions such as interpreting services to enhance the quality of care for Deaf/hard-of-hearing clients, and consider the role of interpreters in improving accessibility.
- Gain skills in facilitating dialogue and collaboration between mental health providers, interpreters, and the Deaf/hard-of-hearing community to implement inclusive and sensitive practices.
- Encourage participants to share relevant experiences and case studies to foster a broader discussion on improving mental health services for the Deaf/hard-of-hearing population.

### **What do trauma-informed youth-serving systems look like? Applying the Core Curriculum on Childhood Trauma**

*Lori Day, Dru Balsley & Sheila Maynard*

Abstract: Professionals working in youth-serving systems - including schools, community centers, and juvenile justice settings - will undoubtedly benefit from incorporating trauma-informed practices into their everyday work. How these practices are incorporated into daily work, however, is not always clear. As a result, a taskforce convened by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network developed the Core Curriculum on Childhood Trauma (CCCT) which is a high-quality training curriculum on core principles of childhood traumatic stress. This curriculum can be adapted for mental health professionals as well as professionals working in various youth-serving systems. Given the need for high-quality trauma-informed care in the deaf and hard of hearing community, the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child Resilience Center has partnered with the CCCT team to develop training material that is specific to deaf and hard of hearing children. This workshop will guide participants through CCCT experiential learning activities designed to apply the 12 Core Concepts for Understanding Traumatic Stress Responses in Children and Families while also considering factors that are unique to the deaf and hard of hearing community.

### Objectives:

- Apply the 12 core concepts to guide critical reasoning about foundational concepts of trauma-informed care.
- Identify the factors in a child's life and environment that may be contributing - either positively or

negatively - to a child's traumatic experiences.

- Discuss unique deaf-specific factors that impact a child's everyday experience.

## **Designing Deaf-MET: Utilizing Community-Engaged Research Methods to Develop a Deaf-Friendly AUD Intervention**

*Alexander Wilkins & Erika Lohmiller*

Abstract: This workshop will 1) define community-engaged research, 2) describe the specific model we followed to adapt motivational enhancement therapy (MET) for deaf and hard of hearing clients, 3) briefly describe the original motivational enhancement therapy intervention, and 4) provide an overview of our progress so far. Community-engaged research is research conducted in partnership with the individuals on whom the research is being conducted or will directly affect. The goals of community-engaged research include gathering community input on research questions and methodology, ensuring culturally and linguistically appropriate research processes and/or outcomes, and building greater trust between academic researchers and community members. We will discuss the model we followed and how it incorporates various approaches to community-engaged research, including interviews with community members and stakeholders, the creation of an intervention development team, and several rounds of pilot testing. We will also briefly discuss MET and its theoretical underpinnings, why this pre-intervention is generally a good fit for deaf and hard of hearing individuals with alcohol use disorder (AUD), and identify components that need adaptation. We will share our progress thus far, including sharing the main themes from our community member interviews, describing how we have integrated information from the interviews with the experience and expertise of the intervention development team to adapt and develop content for Deaf MET, and the describing the types of adaptations we have made and materials we have developed thus far.

### Objectives:

- Describe different types of community engaged research and the pros and cons of each of them.
- Describe barriers and facilitators to AUD recovery in deaf and hard of hearing individuals.
- Describe how community-engaged approaches can be used to adapt existing behavioral health interventions for deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

## **Friday, May 31, 2024**

### **Concurrent Sessions: 3:30 PM – 4:45 PM**

#### **Sneak Peek at the NAD Deaf Youth Well-Being First Aid**

*David T. Bruno & Rachel Postovoit*

Abstract: Discover innovative methods for designing toolkits tailored to your deaf youth population and gain insights into evaluating NAD's Youth Well-being Committee's practical Deaf Well-being Toolkit. In this interactive roundtable format, presenters will share creative communication and engagement tools for working with deaf youth, particularly those from families where English may be a second or third language. The session will prioritize historically marginalized deaf youth, including BIPOC, introducing strategies for inclusion, barrier elimination, and fostering discussions on culturally appropriate mental health resources. This workshop will delve into the unique challenges and strategies associated with working with deaf and hard of hearing youth, emphasizing the practice of cultural humility over cultural competence. It will cover a range of communication skill strategies and diverse mental health support tools. Historically, universally accessible deaf-friendly wellness resources have been lacking, perpetuating siloed and bystander effects during times of need. The workshop's goal is to equip frontline workers and anyone interested with proactive and

foundational engagement skills for working with deaf youth, all while creating a nationwide Deaf Youth Well-being Toolkit accessible to all.

Objectives:

- Enhance the awareness and understanding of mental health challenges specific to Deaf and Hard of Hearing youth among mental health professionals. Identify common mental health issues within this population.
- Acquire knowledge and skills in applying the principles of Mental Health First Aid specifically to D/HH youth. This includes effective communication strategies, understanding cultural nuances, and recognizing unique challenges in providing support.
- Engage with the kit during the workshop and review its contents, assess its usability, and provide feedback on the materials and resources.
- Explore the cultural competence and cultural humility required when working with D/HH youth. This includes understanding the Deaf community's unique culture and values, as well as the impact of hearing loss on their identities and mental health.
- Gather valuable feedback from participants. Mental health professionals should be encouraged to share their thoughts on the DYWB First Aid's strengths and weaknesses and provide.

**Dismantling Mental Health Stigmas: A Social Justice Lens**

*Lisa Montalvo, Shea Jefferson Strain & Katrina Aristy*

Abstract: There are many stigmas within the mental health fields, by the same token, there are stigmas within the Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color who have certain views on mental health. More so, who those mental health services are designed by and for. This creates dichotomy within the mental health field and communities of color. Frankly, more harm is done when we do not address those stigmas and dismantle the unjust norms that can cause harm for counselors, therapists, clients, students and families alike. We will be discussing stigmas of mental health and bias all within a social justice lens. Mental health is multifaceted and social justice and equitable values go hand in hand. By pointing out this correlation, we can foster a healthier relationship in our roles within the system. There will be a sharing of the social justice lens, key terms to remember, as well as group discussions using thought provoking questions.

Objectives:

- Able to be more mindful about working with clients of a different background (culturally, religiously, or educationally).
- Navigate the interactions with clients, families, students, and other mental health and counseling related professionals by disclosing their bias to facilitate those relationships in a safe and brave space.
- Learn from others and participate in several discussions with a variety of multifaceted people.

**Honing your craft: Medical Interpreting Strategies**

*Elizabeth Schniedewind & Campbell McDermid*

Abstract: In this workshop, the presenters will review lessons learned from an online training program for medical interpreters, Promoting Equity in Healthcare Interpreting (PEHI). Topics will range from shadowing to feeding strategies to identifying expansion techniques based on the research and training conducted in the PEHI. Participants working in pairs will be asked to apply a number of strategies while doing consecutive or simultaneous interpreting. Emphasis will be on application of theory and self-assessment of effectiveness. This workshop offers a unique opportunity to refine your sign language interpreting skills and gain confidence in handling challenging scenarios in various settings. Whether you are an experienced interpreter seeking to

enhance your proficiency or a newcomer looking to build a strong foundation, this workshop is designed to cater to all levels of expertise. Join us and take your sign language interpreting skills to the next level!

Objectives:

- Apply a variety of techniques when feeding another interpreter.
- Develop an understanding of medical superordinates and hyponyms.
- Learn new vocabulary in ASL by shadowing an ASL text.

**Ready for Court: Ethical and Legal Issues for Mental Health Providers**

*Gabriel Lomas, Jessica Kuehne, and Erin Farley*

Abstract: Going to court can provoke anxiety, even in seasoned clinicians. This workshop will review foundational ethical and legal issues clinicians should consider when preparing for court. The presenters will review some key concepts, then break the audience into two groups to process how to respond to specific cases.

Objectives:

- Identify their role when giving testimony.
- Identify how to work with attorneys while protecting client confidentiality.
- Articulate how to give testimony that is defensible.

**Emotion Regulation Skills System: Bridging the DBT Gap for Deaf Individuals with Language Deprivation**

*Donna Guardino & Amanda O'Hearn*

Abstract: Dialectical Behavioral Therapy is an evidence based approach that was designed for hearing people. The Deaf Wellness Center (DWC) modified the DBT protocol for Deaf clients to use; however, deaf language deprived clients has not benefitted much from the materials leading us to finding Dr. Julie Brown's work. Dr. Brown strayed away from the DBT protocol and made materials more accessible, for individuals who have cognitive challenges, by concretizing information and teaching it in chunks. DWC has modified Dr. Brown's work and has found the materials to be easily digested by our clients. The focus of this presentation is to have therapists be familiar with this approach and use it as needed with their clients who struggle with the original DBT adaptations.

Objectives:

- Describe how to utilize the System Tools.
- List nine different skills that form the Skills List.
- Describe modifications made that are culturally and linguistically relevant to Deaf clients.

**Friday, May 31, 2024**

**Special Events:**

**5:00 PM – 5:45 PM**

**ADARA General Membership Meeting**

**6:00 PM – 9:00 PM**

**Banquet and Awards Ceremony**

**Saturday, June 1, 2024**

**Concurrent Sessions: 8:00 AM – 9:15 AM**

**School and Clinical: Consultation and Collaboration**

*Kent Schafer & Christina Costello*

Abstract: Ever wonder what conditions affect diagnostic factors for educational or clinical settings? How does an educational framework benefit clinicians outside the school? What is the purpose behind differentiating educational and clinical diagnosis? Why is an educational perspective beneficial in assessment and evaluations? What can we do to strengthen the school and clinical pipeline for deaf services? A licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and a Director in school evaluations and counseling will discuss how education support service personnel and clinicians have a common goal: to get a child the support they need. It is our hope that the main takeaway from this dialogue that the audience will advocate school and outside clinical services to strengthen the consultation/collaboration approach to build a whole child.

Objectives:

- Identify at least two interventions for classroom/school environment within mental health.
- Differentiate educational and clinical treatment approaches.
- Describe the challenges and opportunities for sign fluent to become informed advocates for their deaf students caught up in situations of injustice.
- Gain comprehension in separating language deprivation from language deprivation \*syndrome\* for adjusting language delivery services in order to accommodate difficult deaf students who are more likely to have language deprivation.

**Surviving and Thriving in a Semi-Virtual Workplace: Tips for Providing Training**

*Cindy Camp & Marcia Kolvitz*

Abstract: Why is there a shift from in-person events to virtual training? Virtual events can be less costly than those held in person. Participants don't have to travel or have too much disruption to their schedules. Training can be designed to occur in shorter time blocks over several weeks or months, with accompanying "homework" assigned between sessions to reinforce learning or support practical applications of the content discussed. This session will provide an overview regarding the types of platforms available as well as what decisions would likely need to be made about the session's format and delivery. For colleagues working in Deaf services, the sessions must be fully accessible for all participants. This session will include information about accessibility options and recommendations about what might be most effective in different settings. Supervisors and team leaders may also need to structure activities that support the development of the team, even though they're not able to meet face-to-face as frequently. The switch to virtual events can be daunting. This presentation will provide strategies for engaging the audience, ensuring that virtual learning experiences are effective, and practical tips for setting up a presentation space, preparing slides, and conducting small group activities.

Objectives:

- Describe at least two benefits and two drawbacks to providing virtual training.
- Determine which type of learning format would be appropriate for their setting.
- Delineate at least three critical decisions that need to be made in the planning of a virtual training event.
- Describe at least three strategies for ensuring that a virtual training activity will be accessible for their stakeholders.

## **Empowering Career Journeys of Deaf Individuals who identify as DeafDisabled**

*Julie Tibbitt*

Abstract: This workshop will actively engage attendees, including hiring professionals, vocational rehabilitation counselors, career service staff, and educators, in practical strategies designed to support individuals with multiple disabilities on their unique career journeys. A special emphasis will be on formative assessments, enabling individuals to better gauge and articulate their abilities and needs, all the better for making informed career decisions. Attendees will also have the opportunity to share the challenges that they encounter in their practice. The workshop will discuss approaches for assessing abilities and using these to guide career articulation. This contributes well to the theme of "Recover, Recharge, and Reconnect." It seeks to inspire attendees to enable DeafDisabled individuals to regain their career momentum, recharge their aspirations, and reconnect with their professional goals. The integration of personal stories and collaborative strategies will foster an enriching environment, where shared experiences and innovative methods empower attendees to support and guide individuals with multiple disabilities towards fulfilling and successful career journeys.

### Objectives:

- Explore effective and innovative practices for supporting career pathways for Deaf, DeafBlind and DeafDisabled individuals in the context of vocational rehabilitation and education.
- Highlight the role of vocational rehabilitation counselors, career service staff, and teachers in this endeavor.
- Examine the intersection of cultural competency and intersectionality when working with this diverse community.
- Provide actionable insights and resources for supporting individuals with multiple disabilities in their career journeys with a special emphasis on assessment.

## **Functional Behavior Assessment in Schools**

*Joshua Weinstein*

Abstract: This presentation provides a concise overview of Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), a critical process in understanding and addressing challenging behaviors. FBA is a systematic approach used to analyze and identify the underlying causes of student's behaviors, with the primary aim of developing effective intervention strategies. Key topics covered in this presentation include the principle of behaviorism FBA process, assessment methods, and the importance of data collection and analysis. Additionally, the presentation emphasizes the significance of identifying the function of behavior, which is typically categorized as escape/avoidance, attention-seeking, access to preferred items/activities, or sensory stimulation. Identifying the function helps school professionals tailor interventions that focuses on the root causes of challenging behaviors, leading to more successful outcomes in supports for individuals with diverse needs.

### Objectives:

- Describe the key steps involved in the Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) process.
- Apply practical FBA techniques to assess and analyze challenging behaviors.
- Use the information gathered from the FBA to develop individualized behavior support plans.

## **Unlocking Healing: EMDR, Brainspotting, Flash Technique and the Implicit Memory in Trauma Recovery**

*Joy Plote*

Abstract: This workshop aims to provide participants with insights into the therapeutic foundations and

benefits of Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and Brainspotting. Participants will gain an understanding of implicit and explicit memory systems and their implications for trauma recovery, particularly in cases of preverbal trauma. Through education, demonstration, and case studies attendees will learn how EMDR and Brainspotting can help clients process and heal from deep-seated traumas.

Objectives:

- Differentiate between implicit and explicit memory systems, comprehending their distinct roles in the formation and storage of traumatic experiences.
- Gain insights into how language influences the memory system.
- Acquire basic principles and methodologies underlying EMDR and Brainspotting therapies.
- Understand that there are advanced strategies for approaching and processing preverbal trauma using EMDR and Brainspotting.
- Engage in meaningful discussions about modifications and tailored approaches essential for effectively applying EMDR therapy techniques with Deaf clients.
- Understand the importance of the preparatory steps involved to prepare clients to safely reprocess early trauma.

## **Saturday, June 1, 2024**

### **Concurrent Sessions: 9:45 AM – 11:00 AM**

#### **Colleges, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Student Success!**

*Denise Hampton, Samantha Smith & Matthew Reynell*

Abstract: This session will demonstrate how college and vocational rehabilitation counselors can, with collaboration, ensure student success. The presenters will discuss the resources RIT/NTID have put in place to assist prospective and continuing students as well as families and VR agencies. This presentation will also describe how the Pennsylvania Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to RIT/NTID works with VR offices in PA, students and families, and colleges to build successful partnerships and resources. We will discuss how both organizations have more similarities than differences in our shared goal and mission to serve students. We will provide an overview of some strategies that VR offices and colleges use in working together to overcome some of the challenges faced when assisting students in the postsecondary education process. We will discuss the PA VR model and demonstrate policies, procedures, and actions both organizations are implementing as we collaborate and work together to ensure students receive the support needed for a successful college and career outcome.

Objectives:

- Demonstrate college and VR Collaboration successes and challenges.
- Explain the PA OVR Model.
- Learn the strategies that VR offices and colleges can use.

#### **The Leadership Journey: Creating Our Path Forward**

*Shane Feldman*

Abstract: Join an interactive and immersive workshop, "The Leadership Journey: Creating Our Path Forward," that invites you to embark on a transformative exploration of critical leadership concepts. Guided and enriched by facilitation and insights from Shane Feldman, CEO of Innivee Strategies, an organizational and leadership development consulting company, speakers, you will bridge theory with practice, forming a solid

foundation for your continued leadership growth. We will provide you with discoveries and knowledge to continue your journey beyond this event. The workshop is a journey of self-discovery, purposeful discussions, and meaningful growth. We have crafted an experience that frames leadership as a shared journey. Together, we'll understand and assess each participant's path as a microcosm of their unique leadership journey. Through a series of interactive activities and challenges, you'll delve deep into the realms of constituent engagement, effective communication, decision-making, and team dynamics. This odyssey is an opportunity to uncover the leadership qualities within you and your fellow explorers. Our activities are designed to serve as mirrors for real-world leadership scenarios, fostering personal growth and collaborative learning. You'll craft a personal action plan for implementing your newfound knowledge and skills. This workshop is more than a learning opportunity; it will catalyze your continued leadership journey.

#### Objectives:

- Demonstrate an understanding of essential leadership principles, including constituent engagement, effective communication, decision-making, and team dynamics. They will bridge theoretical knowledge with practical application.
- Engage in self-discovery activities and discussions that encourage introspection and the identification of their leadership qualities.
- Gain insights into their own leadership style and those of others, ultimately enhancing their self-awareness as leaders.
- Devise a personal action plan that outlines a broad concept of the knowledge and skills necessary for their leadership journey.

#### **Teaching to Fish: A Holistic Approach to Mentoring Interpreters**

*Megan Johnson, Michelle Montelongo, and Jeff Jaech*

Abstract: Taking on a mentor role can feel overwhelming if you don't know where to start. In this session, interpreter mentors from the State of Nevada's Communication Access Services (CAS) will explain the structured mentorship curriculum they created and use. The discussion will include the specific sequence of activities and learning objectives which focus on self-analysis and emphasize a holistic approach. We will also provide additional materials and resources that we use to supplement the curriculum where needed. Lastly, we will share our preliminary results and mentee experiences. Participants will gain an approach to a structured mentorship program they can adopt and/or modify to meet their unique needs.

#### Objectives:

- Explain a holistic approach to mentoring and why that approach is vital to mentoring interpreters.
- Describe the series of interpreting activities used in the State of Nevada's Communication Access services structured mentorship program curriculum.
- Explain the educational objectives and sequencing of activities.

#### **988 Videophone Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Transforming Crisis Care for American Sign Language Users**

*Solecito Romero*

Abstract: In this workshop, participants will delve into the groundbreaking 988 Videophone operations, including lessons learned and identified best practices from two other national videophone crisis line services provided by DeafLEAD, the crisis center partner that receives and responds to videophone calls for three national crisis lines - the 988 VP, the Disaster Distress Helpline, and the Deaf Crisis Line. The workshop will include case scenarios from crisis contacts related to various mental health concerns and a demonstration of



the 988 VP services. Participants will gain insights into the future of crisis intervention and mental health support for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community through interactive demonstrations and engaging discussions.

Objectives:

- Learn the operation of the 988 Videophone Suicide & Crisis Line services.
- Develop insights into the technical aspects of the 988 VP infrastructure that enable effective crisis intervention via videophone communication.
- Understand the best practices learned through the implementation of videophone crisis line services to date.

**Healing through Arts**

*Amy Cohen-Efron*

Abstract: Healing through Arts is not art therapy, it is one of healthy coping strategies for a social service professional to deal with vicarious trauma or work-related stress on the job and in this workshop, it will be hands-on art activities provided and develop an action plan for future self-care. At the end, workshop participants will write a short-term action plan for continued self-care.

Objectives:

- Participants will be able to tap their innermost creativity using art materials to express their works based on prompts provided.
- Participants will be able to create at least one process-based creative artworks.
- Participants will be able to reflect their experience during this workshop and write up a short term action plan for future self-care.

**Saturday, June 1, 2024**

**Closing Plenary Session: 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM**

**Bellflasher Award for the most outstanding and thought-provoking conference presentation.**

**Endnote: What's New in the Hearing Loss and Dementia Connection? Continuing the Conversation**

*Jaime A. B. Wilson*

Abstract: Recent research has indicated an increased prevalence of dementia diagnoses among our d(D)eaf and hard of hearing population. Reasons for the increased prevalence of dementia diagnoses are not clear but may be related to factors associated with hearing loss etiology. Individuals with a hearing loss have a 24% increased risk of dementia development. The type of dementia depends on the trajectory of the disease progression. Risk factors and ways to combat development of dementia are discussed.

Objectives:

- Name dementia prevalence statistics among our D/HH population.
- Recognize whether or not dementia part of the "normal aging process"?
- Indicate the "Big Seven" risk factors.
- Know how to get treatment and implement other protective factors.

## **Presenter Biographies**

### **Tharon Ahmed**

Tharon Ahmed has been a member of NTID Sunshine 2.0 since summer of 2023. He graduated with Associate of Occupational Studies in Design and Imaging Technology from Rochester Institute of Technology / National Technical Institute of Technology in Rochester, NY. He has been involved in several plays at NTID Theater Department since 2019.

### **Zain Ahmed**

Zain was born and raised in Pakistan. He moved to Chicago when he was 8 years old. He has recently graduated in Marketing with a minor in Psychology at Rochester Institute of Technology. In high school, he was involved in many plays at a local theater at International Center on Deafness and the Arts (I.C.O.D.A) in Chicago, IL. Zain was cast in his first acting role as Dopey in Snow White. Eventually, he was cast in other roles in West Side Story, Into The Woods, and St. Paddy Day. He was also involved in a dancing group, Traveling Hands Troupe (T.H.T), for two years. In his senior year of high school Zain and his team went to Dubrovnik, Croatia in Europe for the International Conference for Deafness arts showcase.

### **Aileen Aldalur**

Dr. Aldalur is a research scientist and Senior Instructor in Psychiatry at the University of Rochester Medical Center who has studied the adaptation of trauma treatment models for use with DHH subjects. She is a licensed clinical psychologist at the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC). Dr. Aldalur obtained her PhD in clinical psychology from Gallaudet University in 2020 and then completed a postdoctoral fellowship in clinical research in the Department of Emergency Medicine at URMC. Dr. Aldalur is now the Research Director of the Deaf Wellness Center (DWC) and is funded by a KL2 Career Development Award through the NIH-sponsored Clinical and Translational Science Institute at URMC to adapt and pilot test an intervention to increase mental health treatment-seeking among Deaf individuals. She also provides mental health treatment to Deaf clients in the DWC.

### **Melissa Anderson**

Melissa is a hearing Gallaudet University-trained psychologist and clinical researcher who strives to provide accessible behavioral healthcare to members of the U.S. Deaf community. She is an Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Population & Quantitative Health Sciences at UMass Chan Medical School. She founded the DeafYES! Center for Deaf Empowerment and Recovery at UMass Chan, where she has continually provided outpatient therapy and conducted research on Deaf mental health since 2011.

### **Alesia Allen**

Alesia Allen, Ph.D., is Assistant Vice President (AVP) of Diversity and Inclusion at National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). In this role, she monitors diversity, inclusion, equal opportunity and access regulations and issues in higher education and advises the president and other NTID administrators on matters related to diversity and inclusion. She also ensures accessibility and inclusive collaboration while bridging gaps between NTID and university-wide initiatives at RIT. Dr. Allen has more than 15 years of professional, clinical, and teaching experience and she worked on several initiatives to promote system changes that impact deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals who come from diverse backgrounds. Dr. Allen holds a doctoral and a master's degree in clinical psychology from Gallaudet University and a bachelor's in psychology from RIT.

**Earl Allen**

Earl Allen is a Research Coordinator with the National Center for Deaf Health Research (NCDHR) and is on the Deaf Weight Wise (DWW) Study Team as a DWW intervention Counselor and co-manages NCDHR's Communications. Earl previously worked with NCDHR in 2018 on the New York State Deaf Health Survey Project and rejoined the team in 2022 after working at NTID/RIT for four years. Earl grew up in the Washington, DC area, graduated from Gallaudet University with a degree in Sociology, and spent most of his career in the US government. Earl can be seen competing in deaf bowling tournaments and playing with his 7-year-old daughter.

**Katrina Aristy**

Katrina is a Family Educator at Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD). She hailed from Florida and grew up in mainstreamed setting along with parents who are able to communicate via ASL. From her own experience being in a mainstreamed setting where she has seen systemic injustice which sparks her passion for equitable education and work with students and families from all walks of life. Upon her graduation from Gallaudet University in Deaf Education, she has teaching in mainstreamed setting and schools for the deaf before working at MSSD.

**Valerie Avila**

Valerie Avila is a first-generation Mexican-American, queer, trilingual interpreter fluent in Spanish, American Sign Language, and English based in the Bay Area. She has a Bachelor's of Art in Deaf Studies with an emphasis in English<->ASL interpreting and is an RID Certified interpreter. Valerie has dedicated the last ten years to the interpreting field and has worked in various settings. She has encountered and confronted ethical decision making on an individual and agency wide basis in the mental health setting. She conducts her work with a social justice framework and is passionate about developing and maintaining strong relationships with the Deaf community. Valerie enjoys spending time with her two dogs and two cats. She loves hiking, camping, yoga, and has a passion for coffee and ice cream.

**Dru Balsley**

Dru Balsley, MA is a first-year PhD student at Gallaudet University. Prior to the program, Dru worked as a Licensed Mental Health Clinician at a residential treatment program for deaf and hard of hearing trauma-impacted youth. Her research interest includes adapting evidence-based interventions for deaf children and in the area of language Deprivation.

**David Barclay**

Dr. David Barclay received an MSW in 1997 and a Ph.D. in Social Work in 2007. He has conducted research and presented on the following topics: adult survivors of traumatic brain injury, spirituality among deaf and hard of hearing persons, substance use disorder treatment, and LGBTQ+ issues. Most recently, Dr. Barclay conducted university climate research regarding LGBTQ+ educational content and student satisfaction which laid the Generalist for him to establish a certificate program in Sexuality and Gender studies.

**Fred Beam**

Fred Michael Beam is the outreach coordinator for Sunshine 2.0. He is an experienced performer with acting credits that include Nicholas in "By the Music of the Spheres" at the Goodman Theater, Harry in "Harry the Dirty Dog" at the Bethesda Academy of Performing Arts; Witness in "Miracle Workers" and Stranger in "Mad Dancer" at the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C.; just to name a few. A dancer, director and choreographer, Beam has worked with the Gallaudet Dance Company, the National Deaf Dance Theatre, the DuPont Dance Company, the Penn Vision Dance Company and the Bethesda Academy of Performing Arts. He has performed around the globe, including in Africa, Australia, Egypt, England, France, Jamaica, Japan, Sweden, South

America and the Virgin Islands. He also was choreographer for the production of “Jesus Christ Superstar” at the Open Circle Theater in Washington, D.C. He is an executive director of In-visible Hands, Inc., which promotes deaf awareness through performing arts and was a founding member of The Wild Zappers, an all deaf male dance company. He also established Theater Arts Leadership Training for Deaf People of Color at Gallaudet University. Beam also was a board member of Quest for Arts, Inc., the Governor's Advisory Committee on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities in Maryland and a former president of District of Columbia Black Deaf Advocates. For his outstanding work with the deaf community, Beam was chosen one of “Essence Magazine’s” Real Men of the Year, and has been “DEAF LIFE” magazine’s Deaf Person of the Month.

### **Michaela Borstel**

Michaela Borstel, MSW, is a Deaf, New England native who uses American Sign Language (ASL) as a Greater Nashua Mental Health (GNMH) clinician. She graduated with her Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) in 2019, before pursuing, and obtaining, her Masters in Social work (MSW) at Gallaudet University in 2021. Michaela joined GNMH Deaf Services in 2021.

### **Patrick Boudreault**

Dr. Boudreault is a Research Scientist at Gallaudet University and earned his Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. He currently serves as the Director of both the Gesture Literacy Knowledge Studio and the Translation Track at the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children Resilience Center (DHHCRC). His areas of expertise include sign language translation, gestures, Deaf interpreting, communication strategies for linguistically deprived and marginalized deaf populations, genetic counseling, and mental health. As an advocate for Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR), Dr. Boudreault emphasizes the importance of an inclusive research design that embraces diverse and intersectional communities, ensuring their voices and experiences are central to the research process.

### **Tiffany Bridgett**

Tiffany Bridgett, Ph.D., is a postdoctoral fellow with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child Resilience Center (DHHCRC). She earned her B.A. in psychology and pre-med, with a minor in criminal justice from Rochester Institute of Technology. She holds a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Gallaudet University. Her extensive training encompasses a variety of healthcare settings, including outpatient clinics, psychiatric hospitals, university departments, DC Courts, Crisis Text Line, and domestic violence services. Dr. Bridgett is passionate about dismantling systemic, cultural, and linguistic barriers in the field of psychology, with a particular focus on intervention. At DHHCRC, she is dedicated to bridging the gap in psychological services for deaf and hard of hearing children and families, especially for those affected by language deprivation and trauma.

### **Avonne Brooker-Rutowski**

Avonne Brooker-Rutowski is a passionate advocate for the transformative power of learning and currently serves as the Undergraduate Admissions Director at Gallaudet University. With a remarkable career spanning three decades, Avonne has dedicated herself to the field of deaf education, making a significant contribution at every stage of her journey, from K-12 educator to principal and statewide outreach services for K-12 families with deaf and hard of hearing children in Texas.

### **Michael Brown**

I am a recent graduate from Gallaudet in Masters of Social Work, passionate about working in mental health with deaf and hard of hearing individuals. I have a goal to attain my clinical license in social work so I can work more in depth with therapy and the mental health field. I also want to provide direct access to the deaf and hard of hearing population in the mental health settings.

**DT Bruno**

DT Bruno (he/him/his), MSW, graduated with pride from Gallaudet University with a BSW degree. He then obtained his MSW degree from Columbia University's esteemed School of Social Work. Following graduation, DT has engaged in roles within community mental health, public health, and the private sector while actively pursuing licensure. Since 2022, DT has been instrumental in various capacities at My Deaf Therapy and is currently serving as the Education and Research Specialist. Concurrently, DT is a full-time faculty member in Gallaudet's MSW program. His teaching focuses on clinical practice and macro social work. He is deeply passionate about addressing severe disparities in ASWB exam passing rates that exemplify the hindered diversity growth in the social work profession.

**Alyssa Buccholz**

Alyssa is the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of National Deaf Therapy (NDT), a virtual mental health practice that provides services in ASL to deaf and hard of hearing individuals across the United States. Alyssa has been with NDT for four years, and during that time, she has played a key role in developing and growing the business. As COO, Alyssa is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of NDT, including authorizations, billing, and outreach. She is also a certified medical biller specializing in mental health teletherapy billing. Alyssa is passionate about providing equitable access to mental health therapy for all Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, and she is committed to making NDT the leading provider of ASL virtual mental health services in the country.

**Cindy Camp**

Cindy Camp is the Marketing and Communications Specialist with the Described and Captioned Media Program. She holds a Master's degree in English, is a nationally certified interpreter, certified in mental health interpreting, as well as a C-Print captionist and trainer. She has provided access services for students who are deaf and hard of hearing for over 25 years.

**Nikki Cherry**

Nikki Cherry (they/she), M.Ed., NIC, Ed:K-12, currently works full time as a Designated Interpreter/Access Coordinator for the RIT/NTID Deaf Healthcare and Biomedical Sciences Hub (Deaf Hub). They own their own agency that prioritizes recruiting marginalized interpreters for work in specialized settings. Nikki has been interpreting for over 15 years in various areas and most enjoys working with Deaf Professional scientists and researchers. They are open about their physical disability and neurodivergence to help remove stigmas and let others know they are not alone in their struggles.

**Kimberly Clarke**

Kimberly Clarke has been working in the mental health field for over 30 years. She has worked with Deaf/Hard of Hearing individuals during these 30 years. Her experience includes substance use, center for independent living, managing community-based living services and outpatient therapy. She obtained her Master of Social Work from Ohio State University. Kimberly has been working with RHA Health services for 5 years as an outpatient clinician for Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Deafblind and Deaf with disabilities.

**Amy Cohen Efron**

Amy Cohen Efron, a native Brooklynite and lived in Atlanta area for almost 20 years. As a school psychologist/counselor for about 30 years made a significant career change as an art teacher. Cohen Efron is currently getting her second master's degree in teaching at Georgia State University to teach art to Deaf children. Cohen Efron several art classes at school and college and participated De'VIA curriculum workshops since 2016. Cohen Efron is a professional artist and calls herself as an activist.

**Eleanor Coley-Brody**

Eleanor Coley-Brody is a deaf professional from Long Island, NY. In 2012, she earned her M.S.W. in Social Work from Gallaudet University with a specialization in School Social Work, and received a B.A. in Psychology and Women's Studies from SUNY New Paltz in 2010. From 2012-2016, she was a Mental Health Therapist and provided counseling services to deaf, hard of hearing and DeafBlind youth and adults in the state of Minnesota before returning to Long Island. Upon returning to Long Island, Eleanor became a member of the HKNC team. As a Case Manager, Eleanor provided one-on-one support to DeafBlind consumers by collaborating with HKNC training staff, their families and vocational rehabilitation and other agencies. Then in 2021, Eleanor became the Mid-Atlantic Regional Representative, supporting DeafBlind individuals and their families in New York and New Jersey.

**Sherri Collins**

Sherri Collins, MA: A nationally recognized advocate for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing, Sherri Collins is the Executive Director of the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (ACDHH), a position she has held since May 1998, where she is the agency's Registered Public Lobbyist. Collins has a Bachelor of Science degree in Child Development from Gallaudet University Washington, DC and a Master's in Adult Education/Organizational Development from North Carolina State University.

**Sean Cosslett**

Sean Cosslett is a human subject research coordinator trainee at the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC). He received an AS in applied mechanical technology and is currently studying for his BS in psychology with a minor in ASL and Deaf Culture at the Rochester Institute of Technology. Sean plans to apply for the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. Program at Gallaudet University.

**Christina Costello**

Christina M. Costello (MA, NCC, LPCC) currently serves as a Region V Mental Health Therapist with the Office of Deaf Services based in Birmingham, AL. As part of her work, she provides direct services to individuals who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing/Deafblind at regional Mental Health centers, group home and Alabama Institution for the Deaf and Blind (school, technical program and supportive housing community). She also provides consultation to school, families and other programs. She graduated from West Chester University with degree in Psychology and worked as Intensive Case Manager in Philadelphia suburbs for several years. She pursued her Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling at Gallaudet University and graduated in 2012. When not working, Christina can be found reminding her fans why Philadelphia sports are number one and why going to Disney is the best advice needed.

**Lauren Crowley**

Lauren Crowley obtained her BS from Purdue University in 2006 and her MSW from Gallaudet University in 2008. She has been a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in NC since 2012. Currently, she is employed as a Clinical Lead Therapist for the Deaf Services program at RHA Health Services, based in Raleigh NC. Prior to moving to NC and obtaining her LCSW, Lauren worked in community health as a case manager for Deaf services programs in Cincinnati and Washington, DC. Lauren grew up oral/hard of hearing. She integrated into the Deaf community while at Gallaudet, and became profoundly Deaf in her late 20's. Though Lauren has lived in NC since 2011, she grew up in Indiana and remains loyal to her Midwestern roots.

**Selah Davison**

Selah Davison identifies as a person of color who is a licensed clinical social worker for 11+ years with roles ranging from psychotherapist to clinical director. She is the alma mater of Indiana University and with combined 20 years' experience; she has worked in various settings such as deaf schools, university, nonprofit,

and government. Currently, she works as an advanced forensic social worker/extern supervisor for the State of Colorado. Her first love is working in psychiatric hospitals with compassion for folks with severe persistent mental illnesses and is excited to be back working in the forensic field. In her own time as a visionary with strong clinical and equity knowledge, she is developing a small practice to provide trauma-focused psychotherapy in the deaf community as well as innovative clinical and equity trainings for professionals/interns to earn their CEUs or certifications.

### **Lori Day**

Lori Day, PhD is a licensed psychologist and Professor in the Department of Psychology at Gallaudet University. She is engaged in training the next generation of psychologists to support the behavioral health of deaf people. As the Director of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child Resilience Center, Lori is leading a team of professionals to address disparities in mental health services and deaf and hard of hearing youth by adapting and translating child behavioral and trauma measures, training clinicians in evidence-based treatments, studying language deprivation, and disseminating accessible, high-quality mental health information.

### **Heather Deal**

Heather Deal is a first-year graduate student at Winston Salem State University in the master degree program in Rehabilitation Services. She currently works for the NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services in Morganton, NC as a Casework Technician for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. She received her BA degree in Human Services from Lees McRae College in Banner Elk, NC.

### **Antoinette De Luca**

Antoinette De Luca is a second-year graduate student at Winston Salem State University in the master degree program in Rehabilitation Services. She currently works as a Substitute Teacher for Pitt County Public Schools advocating for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. She received her BA degree in Deaf Studies from Gallaudet University. She is Deaf and uses American Sign Language.

### **Michael Deninger**

Mike Deninger is a licensed professional counselor, author, master trainer and internationally recognized expert in the use of eye movement integration (EMI) techniques. After earning a MS in special education and a PhD with distinction in special education administration, he rose to a leadership position in the education of deaf children at Gallaudet University. That all changed, however, when he was confronted by traumatic experiences from his youth. Following his recovery, he embarked on a new career in mental health, earned a graduate degree in counseling and opened a private practice where he specialized in the treatment of trauma. Mike's attention is now focused on mentoring and training other therapists in the methods he has developed through Trauma Counseling & Training of Tucson. Mike has given presentations at hundreds of national and international conferences and trained thousands of mental health practitioners in sensory-based approaches to treating PTSD and lesser forms of trauma.

### **MeLisa Dennis**

MeLisa Dennis is a Licensed Mental Health Clinician and has been working in the mental health field since 2011. MeLisa is the current Program Director for BRIDGES, which currently serves Georgia domestic violence survivors.

### **Rayne Depukat**

Rayne Depukat, NIC, RI (she/they) is an autistic, multiply neurodivergent, multiply disabled ASL/English interpreter and consultant. She has worked as an interpreter for 15 years, specializing in mental health and substance use settings, disability and neurodivergent spaces, and working with Deaf interpreters.

Rayne is also a neurodiversity/disability consultant and presenter, working directly with individuals, families, and providers as well as presenting and training on neurodiversity and disability related topics. She lives in Rhode Island with her family in an autistic and disability affirming household.

### **Colleen Donohue**

Dr. Colleen Donohue, Psy.D., LP, a Deaf RIT graduate, received her MA and Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, an APA-accredited doctoral program, located in Chicago, IL. Her dissertation was a qualitative, autobiographical study examining the process of professional identity development of a psychology graduate trainee with severe-profound hearing loss. Dr. Donohue presents with a wide range of experience in providing direct care services to D/deaf and hard of hearing individuals in various settings. Her pre-doctoral externship experiences include a therapeutic residential school, an inpatient psychiatric unit, and an outpatient community mental health clinic. She completed her pre-doctoral internship at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, FL, and her post-doctoral fellowship with Minnesota's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services' Division's Mental Health Program (DHHSD-MH) located in St. Paul, MN. She also worked at a private practice in Washington State for several years before rejoining DHHSD-MH as a licensed psychologist. When not working, Colleen can be found with a book in her hands or rooting on her beloved Chicago Cubs.

### **Megan Erasmus**

As a Co-Founder and CEO of National Deaf Therapy, a trailblazer in mental health advocacy for the Deaf community, Megan is passionate about providing accessible and inclusive therapy services to those who need it most. Through her work, she has seen firsthand the transformative power of healing and the importance of creating a safe space where everyone can thrive. She is driven to make a lasting impact on the world, and believes that mental health is essential to our collective well-being.

### **Hollie Fallstone**

Hollie Fallstone has been involved in the field of Human Resources for over 22+ years. Before coming to the Department of Business at Gallaudet University as a full-time faculty member and Undergraduate Program Director, she worked as a Human Resources Coordinator at Clerc Center and has 11+ years of classroom experience at Gallaudet University. She has held various positions within the fields of education, hospitality, youth recreation, and non-profit settings. Professor Fallstone holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a Master of Science in Administration & Supervision, and is currently a Ph.D. candidate at Iowa State University in Hospitality Management.

### **Shane Feldman**

Shane is CEO of Innivee Strategies, Inc. an organizational and leadership development consulting company. He has over 15 years of exceptional and invigorating leadership that has impacted many national and local organizations along with their constituents. As an executive, he has aligned organizations to the expectations of the communities that they serve. These achievements came through systemic change in governance and leadership. Shane received his Master's in Management and Certificate in Nonprofit Financial Management from the University of Maryland University College and was selected to the Diversity Executive Leadership Program in the American Society of Association Executives. Additionally, he holds a Certified Association Executive (CAE) designation from the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE).

### **L'Tanya Fish**

Dr. L'Tanya Fish has worked at Winston Salem State University as an adjunct Professor within the Master of Science Rehabilitation Counseling program since February, 2009. She graduated from North Carolina A & T State University in 2016 with a doctorate degree in Rehabilitation Counseling and Rehabilitation Counselor



Education plus 16 hours in trauma informed care. In 2008, Dr. Fish retired from the State of North Carolina after 30 years of services. While employed with the North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, she held different positions in Raleigh, NC: State Coordinator for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing for 11 years, Education Training Specialist for 9 years, and Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing for 7 years.

### **Ryssa Fleischer**

Ryssa Fleischer, AMFT, is an associate marriage and family therapist who specializes in trauma-focused work. Ryssa holds an MS degree in Counseling with a concentration in Marriage and Family Therapy from California State University, Northridge, and a BA degree in Psychology from Gallaudet University. Currently, Ryssa works as a clinical mental health therapist providing tele-health therapy for My Deaf Therapy. She provides therapy to a wide range of clients. Learn more about My Deaf Therapy at [www.mydeaftherapy.com](http://www.mydeaftherapy.com). Ryssa has worked in a variety of clinical settings, including a domestic/sexual violence agency, Peace Over Violence, in Los Angeles, CA. Ryssa is a fifth-generation Deaf person and fluent in American Sign Language. She goes by the pronouns: she/her/hers.

### **Laura Fussell**

Laura is originally from California East Bay but studied Psychology and American Sign Language at Western Oregon University. Her master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling with a Deaf/hard of hearing emphasis integrated both areas of expertise. Laura has worked in state vocational rehabilitation services in Oregon, Utah and now Nevada totaling over ten years of services to the Deaf and hard of hearing communities.

### **Christine Gannon**

Dr. Christine Gannon is a senior lecturer in the Department of Public Health and a faculty collaborator with the Center for Deaf Health Equity at Gallaudet University. She has been providing health related education and training to the Deaf community since 1995 and has been at Gallaudet University since 2011. She completed her PhD in 2023. Her dissertation was on deaf and hard of hearing students' alcohol use and related consequences. She has her B.A. in sociology from University of Lynchburg, a master's degree in human sexuality education from the University of Pennsylvania, a certificate in chemical dependency from the Minnesota Chemical Dependency Program for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Individuals, and a Master's of Philosophy in health education and promotion from Walden University.

### **Angela Gargano**

Angela C. Gargano, esteemed Manager of Community-Based Services at Hudson Community Enterprises, contributes over 7 years of dedicated employment services expertise to our organization. Armed with a Bachelor of Science in Deaf Studies and Human Services from Towson University, as well as an Associates in Art: American Sign Language and Deaf Studies from Union County College, Angela possesses a robust educational background. Her rich qualifications, coupled with her extensive professional experience, uniquely position her to play a pivotal role in expanding work opportunities for Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. Angela's commitment and knowledge are instrumental in creating meaningful pathways for individuals within the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community.

### **Genie Gertz**

Dr. Gertz serves as a Professor of Deaf Studies at Gallaudet University and has earned her Ph.D. in Cultural Studies within Education from UCLA, with a concentration in racial/ethnic studies. She is credited with coining the term "dysconscious audism" in her dissertation. Possessing nearly three decades of in-depth experience, Dr. Gertz masterfully weaves together various facets of Deaf Studies, emphasizing its interdisciplinary scope. Her research areas include Deaf Women, Marginalized Deaf Communities, Audism, Dysconscious Audism, and

Early Intervention. Her contributions to the field were further underscored in 2016 when she co-edited the influential Encyclopedia of Deaf Studies alongside Dr. Patrick Boudreault.

### **Kristine Gile**

Kristine D. Gile, LCPC, MHRT/C, BC-TMH, NCC is a member of the TF-CBT Intervention Track at the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child Resilience Center. She is responsible for developing and disseminating Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) materials for deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) clients to agencies that serve deaf clients. Kristine is an Interim Clinical Director at Maine Behavioral Healthcare, where she oversees two clinical locations and is the statewide Deaf Service Contract. She is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and a board certified telemental health in Portland, ME.

### **Donna Guardino**

Donna Guardino, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Rochester School of Medicine. Dr. Guardino received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at Gallaudet University in 2018. Dr. Guardino currently provides individual, couples, and group psychotherapy at Deaf Wellness Center (DWC). Dr. Guardino also trains therapists on using Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) modifications with their Deaf clients to increase access to information. In addition to her role at the DWC, Dr. Guardino educates providers locally and nationally on effective communication, including the use of Deaf Interpreters.

### **Debra Guthmann**

Debra Guthmann, Ed.D., NIC, is a National Consultant who has worked within the Deaf community for over 40 years in educational, medical and social service settings. Dr. Guthmann founded the Minnesota Substance Use Dependency Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals and was the Director of Pupil Personnel Services at the California School for the Deaf, Fremont responsible for clinical services. Dr. Guthmann has published books, book chapters and articles focusing on substance abuse, criminal and ethics within the deaf community. Dr. Guthmann was the lead consultant for a grant that translated and validated 10 screeners in SUD, mental health, and career interest into ASL.

### **Monie Gwaltney**

Monie Gwaltney (she/her/hers) received her BA degree in Psychology with a minor in Family and Children's studies at Gallaudet University. She went on to obtain her MSW degree from Columbia University School of Social Work. Dedicated to her passion, which is to increase accessibility in the mental health sphere, she wrote an academic journal where she highlights the importance of language access and understanding Deaf culture for mental health practitioners to provide comprehensive, inclusive services to deaf clients. Currently, she works at Felton Institute-Deaf Community Counseling Services as a Program Supervisor and as a part-time clinical mental health therapist providing tele-health services for My Deaf Therapy.

### **Denise Hampton**

Denise is the Assistant Director of Vocational Rehabilitation Services at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, a college of the Rochester Institute of Technology. Denise has worked at RIT/NTID for 21 years. She earned a B.A. degree from the University of Rochester and a M.S. degree from the Rochester Institute of Technology. Denise has an active role in counseling students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing on VR policies, as well as building relationships with VR agencies throughout the country. Her responsibilities include: managing VR support for the education of students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing; providing outreach services to admitted and continuing students, explaining how to seek/maintain VR benefits; resolving VR questions or concerns; and providing workshops/one-on-one consultation regarding VR and other pertinent topics. Denise works to promote the goal of RIT/NTID, VR, and students all working together for successful outcomes.

**Durkhanai Haque**

Durkhanai Haque is an intern for the National Deaf Therapy while pursuing her Master's degree in Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling at Western Oregon University. She also works as a full-time Case Manager for the D/deaf, hard-of-hearing, and Deaf-Blind. Her parents moved to the United States from Afghanistan. She grew up oral with her hearing family and communicated in ASL with her classmates and teachers in educational settings. Being the only deaf person in the family and Afghan American community was a challenging experience for her. Her personal experiences influenced her in a dynamic family. She aims to remove the stigma and negative perceptions in the culturally diverse D/deaf, hard-of-hearing, and Deaf-Blind communities.

**Sharon Haynes**

Sharon Haynes, LMSW is a therapist who has worked in this field since 2000. She is a primary therapist at the University of Rochester Medical Center at the Deaf Wellness Center. She is experienced with client assessments, treatment planning and ongoing evaluations. She is well-versed in effective intervention and assessment techniques. She helps clients unravel physical, mental and emotional layers to identify root causes of problems and develop strong coping skills for diverse scenarios. Ms. Haynes is proficient in interdisciplinary collaboration with passion for leaving a positive impact on patient lives. She has published on modifications that make Dialectical Behavior Therapy more accessible to Deaf people and has trained therapists on the use of these modifications both nationally and internationally.

**Melissa Healey**

Melissa Healey (she/her/hers) is a graduate from the University of Michigan, with a Master's Degree in Social Work. She is licensed clinical social worker with extensive experience in mental health. As a Child of Deaf Adults (CODA) and fluent in American Sign Language, Melissa is uniquely equipped to address the complexities of CODA experiences. She specializes in anxiety, depression, ADHD/ADD, trauma, PTSD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and postpartum depression. With over ten years of clinical experience, she provides compassionate, strength-based therapies, working with diverse individuals, youth, and families. Her commitment to cultural competency extends to her work with the Deaf and hard of hearing population, the LGBTQA+ community, and BIPOC individuals.

**Jennifer Hess**

Jennifer Hess- MS in Psychology with a specialization in ABA from Capella University, BA Clinical/Counseling Psychology from Alfred University in New York, Interpreter Training at Cincinnati State Technical College, Registered Behavior Technician, CEO/Executive Director of Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services of Florida, Inc.

**Claire Hunt**

Claire Hunt (she/her/hers) is a third-year doctoral student working toward her PhD in Clinical Psychology at Gallaudet University. She has experience studying the roles of language neglect, communication abuse, and mental health literacy, as they influence the risk for trauma in Deaf and hard-of-hearing communities. Prior to beginning her graduate school studies, Claire obtained her B.S. degree in Psychology from the University of Maryland, College Park. Claire went on to complete a 2-year intramural research training fellowship at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD. During her baccalaureate career, she was inspired by the clinical setting, which granted her the opportunity to develop therapeutic relationships with all walks of life, including individuals across both in- and out-patient populations. Claire's time spent at NIH laid the groundwork for her current passions for working with underserved trauma populations, specifically as they reside in deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) communities.

**Tiffany Huntley**

Tiffany Huntley, MS, NCC, received MS in Mental Health Counseling from Chatham University in Pittsburgh PA, and BA in Psychology from Gallaudet University. I am originally from southern California. I went to mainstream schools starting in 7th grade where I started learning sign language. I am Nationally Certified Counselor working on my License Professional Counselor Credential. I have over 20 years of experience in the mental health setting. I am currently an Outpatient Therapist for National Deaf therapy and Pittsburgh Mercy. In addition to becoming a license counselor, I am working become a black birth doula. I have great interest in educating, developing, and creating accessible opportunities for the Black Deaf communities. My hobbies include being my daughters' chauffer, cook and activities planner.

**Jeff Jaech**

Jeff Jaech, MA, CI, CT, is an interpreter mentor with the State of Nevada Communication Access Services program. He has been interpreting professionally since 1986 in a wide variety of settings. He has also been an interpreter educator since 1997, teaching workshops and in ITPs throughout the country. He worked for the Gallaudet University Regional Center as the coordinator of the RSA-funded Regional Interpreter Training Project serving Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, and Nebraska. Jeff's commitment to equal access for the Deaf and hard of hearing community is what fuels his passion for mentoring interpreters as they grow professionally and personally.

**Christopher D. Johnson**

Christopher D. Johnson graduated with two degrees: a bachelor's in Sports Management from the University of West Georgia and a master's in Sign Language Education from Gallaudet University. Johnson's unquenchable thirst for knowledge led him to pursue his journey in the Deaf World. He gained his first great sense of identity through his employment experience at various deaf residential institutions. A Black deaf male who is passionate about a 'Community of Love' founded and implemented a social club called Cup of Wisdom (C.O.W.) at Tennessee School for the Deaf—Knoxville in 2017 with a true intention to develop future Black deaf trailblazers. Mr. Johnson's exemplary community advocacy and toughness of spirit are reflected through his scholarship at the National University's Educational Leadership program.

**Megan Johnson**

Megan Johnson, MS, NIC, EIPA 5.0, has been interpreting for 15+ years. As a nomad at heart, she has lived and worked in five states, Washington D.C., and abroad. After many years as a freelance interpreter, she turned to higher education where she interpreted and coordinated services for students with sensory disabilities. Megan is currently working for the State of Nevada as a Sign Language Interpreter Mentor. Her life's work is to leave the world a little bit better than she found it through kindness.

**Denise Kavin**

Denise Kavin holds an Ed.D. in Leadership and Educational Policy Studies from Northern Illinois University, a M.S. in Education and Social Policy from Northwestern University, a M.S. in Secondary education of the Deaf, from NTID/RIT, and a B.A. in Communication Arts and Psychology from Gallaudet University. She also holds certification from the Training Program on Administration of Programs serving Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Late Deafened Adults at San Diego State University. Denise Kavin serves as Assistant Dean for Admissions and STEM Outreach where she provides oversight for four departments: Admissions, Pre-College Outreach, Project Fast Forward, and the NTID Regional STEM Center, a partnership with the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind serving the 12-state Southeastern region and nationally. In addition, Denise is an instructional faculty member with NTID's Department of Liberal Studies where she teaches courses in the new bachelor-degree program in Community Development and Inclusive Leadership.

**Marcia Kolvitz**

Marcia E. Kolvitz, Ph. D., is a consultant who focuses on issues related to education, vocational rehabilitation, and transition services. Marcia has over 40 years of experience addressing education and access issues for students who are deaf and hard of hearing in K-12 programs and postsecondary educational settings. She is a frequent presenter at state, regional, and national conferences related to deafness and disability issues.

**Natasha Kordus**

M. Natasha Kordus, Ph.D. earned her doctorate from the Clinical Psychology program at Gallaudet University in Washington DC. She has worked at the School for the Deaf in Fremont, St. John's Mental Health Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Santa Monica and at the California School for the Deaf in Riverside. Dr. Kordus has also worked as an Adjunct Professor for the DeafTEC program at the Rochester Institute of Technology and Western Oregon University teaching classes on classroom and therapeutic interventions. At present, Dr. Kordus is the Supervisor of Assessment and Training at Collaborative Psychology Group private practice in Riverside. She also conducts assessments and therapy full time. She specializes in diagnosis, trauma, LGBTQ, anxiety, and depression.

**Jessica Kuehne**

Jessica Kuehne is a licensed and qualified professional in the field of counseling. She holds a Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision from Liberty University, which is accredited by CACREP. Additionally, she possesses professional licenses in North Carolina and the District of Columbia. She has a Master of Arts degree in Mental Health Counseling from Gallaudet University, which is also accredited by CACREP. She also holds a National Certified Counselor credential, which further attests to her qualifications and expertise. Dr. Kuehne has more than thirteen years of clinical counseling experience, four years of supervisory experience, and a few years of teaching experience in professional counseling. For eight years, she worked as a clinical therapist for the deaf and hard of hearing population in Western North Carolina. During thirteen years between 2004 and 2017, she also worked with deaf children and adolescents in various capacities. In the summer of 2022, Dr. Kuehne became an Assistant Professor of Counseling at Gallaudet University. Prior to this, she spent almost four years working as a mental health counselor and clinical supervisor at Counseling and Psychological Services at Gallaudet University. Her research interests include grief counseling, counseling within the Deaf community, the role of self-compassion in trauma survivors, ethical and legal issues in counseling, adult children of alcoholics, as well as art therapy and creative approaches in counseling.

**Poorna Kushalnagar**

Poorna Kushalnagar, Ph.D. is a principal investigator of multi-million grants, close to \$15 million, funded by the National Institute of Health (NIH) that support studies aligned with her research interest: patient centered outcomes, cancer health communication, and applied interventions to reduce deaf health disparities. In addition to directing the Center for Deaf Health Equity, Dr. Kushalnagar serves as the Dean of Research and Chief Research Officer for Gallaudet University.

**Tracy LaChapelle**

Dr. Tracy LaChapelle has dedicated over 30 years of her career as a Licensed Professional Counselor to working with diverse populations with disabilities. I identify as D/d/HH with learning disabilities. My experiences with D/d/HH led to the motivation and passion for my research study. Experienced hearing difficulties were often misunderstood in administrative positions and academic environments, similar to the challenges the participants expressed in my study. I am pursuing further peer-reviewed research and presenting at the National University's 8th Annual Women in Leadership Virtual Conference. I am now a sole proprietor of therapeutic practice and Commissioner of Disabilities for my town in Massachusetts, dedicated to advocating equitable accessibility for all.

**Jessica LaMartin**

Jessica obtained her BSW from Gallaudet University and attended Howard University for her MSW. Jessica started as a case manager at PAHrtners Deaf Services. She was promoted several times and now oversees the case management department at PAHrtners including PAHrtners West. Jessica is a strong advocate for the individuals served.

**Grace Lester**

Grace Lester is a Master of Social Work student at the University of Chicago, with an emphasis on Transforming Justice. She graduated with a Bachelor of Social Work from Gallaudet University in May 2023. At Gallaudet University, she founded Students Against Mass Incarceration Club, and conducted qualitative research on the lived experiences of deaf people who have been incarcerated. She is a member of LEADing Collaboration and with them has co-facilitated focus groups regarding the relationship between first responder law enforcement officers and members of the deaf community.

**Tandy Lewis**

Tandy Lewis (they/them), a Deaf white Non-Binary trans individual, is currently a Social Worker at a deaf school in Boston, Massachusetts. Tandy has over five years of experience working with Deaf/Hard of Hearing children in both urban and rural bilingual schools, as well as with Deaf adults in behavioral health settings. Tandy is passionate about destigmatizing negative stereotypes and misinformation around LGBTQIA+ folx by providing accessible resources in American Sign Language. To that end, Tandy aims to expand community resources for all deaf and signing LGBTQIA+ folx and their loved ones to have the support they deserve in their unique journeys.

**Erika Lohmiller**

Erika is a Hard of Hearing Ph.D graduate from the International University for Graduate Studies (2005) in Addiction Studies and Mental Health Counseling. She is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, and a Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor in the state of Illinois. She has been in the field of rehabilitation and addiction counseling for the past twenty years with many different types of populations. She has been employed as a psychotherapist at the Advocate Illinois Masonic Hospital's Behavioral Health Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program in Chicago, Illinois for 22 years. Erika is now an independent psychotherapist. She is also an Adjunct Professor at Northern Illinois University and has taught at Gallaudet University, and the Chicago School for Professional Psychology.

Erika has a passion for continuing with direct services to consumers to foster healing for people who struggle with mental health and substance abuse issues. She works providing mental health, trauma and addiction psychotherapy services for people who are Hard of Hearing and Deaf, as well as for hearing populations.

**Gabriel Lomas**

Gabriel I. Lomas is a professor and program director for Counseling at Gallaudet University. Lomas is also the founder of the Connecticut Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation where he has worked closely with schools to manage threats and prepare for crisis situations. He is a certified PREPaRE trainer and certified CSTAG trainer. He also has deep experience in testing, forensics, counseling, and integrated healthcare. His research has focused heavily on the legal system, trauma, child therapy, and forensic evaluations. He has worked closely with victims, offenders, lawyers and judges on thousands of cases around the nation. Lomas has received over \$6M in federal grant funding, most of which designed to grow the integrated healthcare workforce and to establish an infrastructure for school safety in the State of Connecticut.

**Sheila Maynard**

Sheila Maynard (she/hers), MA, is a clinical psychology doctoral student at Gallaudet University. She is a predoctoral intern at Gallaudet University Psychology Clinic and a Graduate Apprentice at the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child Resilience Center. Her research and clinical interests include providing trauma-informed care for DHH youth and their families.

**Marissa McBride**

Marissa McBride (she/her/hers) is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). She holds a BA degree in Psychology and an MA degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Gallaudet University. Following graduation, Marissa worked for a community-based behavioral health center where she worked with families with deaf members in Massachusetts for 2 ½ years before moving to Virginia in early 2023. Currently, Marissa works full-time as a mental health counselor at Gallaudet University and as a part-time clinical mental health therapist providing tele-health services for My Deaf Therapy. She is currently licensed in the District of Columbia and Minnesota.

**Campbell McDermid**

Campbell McDermid is currently an associate professor at Gallaudet University in the Department of Interpretation and Translation. His research encompasses translation theory, identity, Groupthink, pragmatics, cohesion, accuracy and assessment. His accomplishments include national interpreter certification in the United States and Canada, and a textbook outlining his theories, entitled "Learning to Interpret."

**Charles McFadden**

Charles McFadden is currently the Senior Director of RIT/NTID's Outreach Consortium responsible for the development, implementation, and operations of all pre-college educational activities including NTID's flagship Explore your Future summer program designed to encourage prospective deaf and hard of hearing high school students to consider STEM careers and attend college at RIT/NTID. Charles joined RIT/NTID in the spring of 2023 after 5 years as Chief Technology Officer and President at Communication Service for the Deaf and 30 years as a software engineer and engineering manager within the aerospace/defense industry primarily with Lockheed Martin assigned to classified and unclassified programs associated with sonar systems, satellites, and enterprise IT services. Charles earned a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from RIT and a MBA from Villanova University. Charles has served on the Board of Trustees at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf in Pittsburgh and on the Board of Directors at the Deaf Hearing Communication Centre in Philadelphia including five years Board Chair.

**Lori Milcic**

Lori Milcic, MA, CI, CT, QMHI, has a unique skill set that blends knowledge of psychology and language development. Lori is one of two Qualified Mental Health Interpreters in Pennsylvania and currently works as the Deaf Services Coordinator for PA's Office of Developmental Programs. She trained in the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT), which focuses on the interaction of neuroscience and trauma, and is pursuing her doctorate in Developmental Psychology with a research focus on language deprivation. Lori has broad experience with communication assessments, advocacy, and teaching. Her deep calling is to create collaborative environments where effective access is provided for all people, no matter their communication needs.

**Cara Miller**

Cara A. Miller, Ph.D., SEP is an Associate Professor of Psychology in the Clinical Psychology doctoral program at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C, and a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice in the District of Columbia and Maryland. Along with teaching, supervision, and research mentoring of clinical psychology

students, Dr. Miller maintains a research agenda in human-animal interaction; trauma and post-traumatic growth; grief and bereavement; deafness, disability and identity; and gender and sexuality. She has particular interest in assistance dog partnerships as well as the interpersonal neurobiology of human-canine interaction. Her research includes exploration of deaf and hard of hearing individuals' experiences of hearing dog partnerships, attitudes regarding service dog partnerships as a function of disability identity, and disabled partners' bereavement following the loss of a service dog.

### **Holly Miller**

Holly J. Miller is the Psychologist at the American School for the Deaf and has worked there since 2001. She also has a private practice doing therapy and psychoeducational evaluations with deaf and hearing clients in CT and in MA.

### **Jenifer Montag**

Jenifer Montag, Ed.D., (she/her) is the director of disability services / ADA coordinator at Marion Technical College (MTC). Not only does she have over 20 years of experience in postsecondary disability service provision, at a variety of higher education institutions, but she has also taught graduate, undergraduate, and community college classes. More recently she has been facilitating disability services, including ASL interpreters, real-time captioning, and ALDs, for students enrolled in the MTC classes at two state prisons. Along with facilitating these complex accommodations in the highly constrained prison environment, she has also been fortunate to be able to teach the college's First Year Experience class to students enrolled in the MTC prison education program.

### **Lisa Montalvo**

Lisa is a school counselor at Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD) from a Puerto Rican family in Florida. She has 22 plus years of experience in the counseling/mental health field. She currently holds a LPC and NCC. Growing up in Florida, Lisa went to mainstream school and was the only Deaf/Hard of Hearing student in her class. Upon graduation, Lisa attended Lenoir-Rhyne College to major in Human Services. After graduation, Lisa enrolled into University of South Florida to pursue her counseling degree.

### **Michelle Montelongo**

Michelle Montelongo, RID/NAD IV, has worked for over 20 years as a certified sign language interpreter, specializing in mental health, congressional, platform, and post-secondary education with an emphasis on STEM. For over a decade she served as Interpreter/Cultural Consultant for the County of Kern Mental Health System of Care. During her tenure she trained clinical and psychiatric staff in the dynamics of working with interpreters and DHH population. Her congressional experience ranges from being a contracted Congressional Interpreter for the U.S. Senate's Special Services Department in Washington D.C., touring with California's Governor's Commission, to serving as Lead Interpreter for Deaf-Blind Young Adults in Action (DBYAA) where she interpreted on Capitol Hill, the White House, and Helen Keller World Conference in Uganda. While in Uganda, she trained mental health professionals on developing mental health intakes for DHH consumers. Since 1995 she has worked with several post-secondary institutions including several campuses within the California State University System, University of California, Yale University, and Brown University. Some of Michelle mentoring experience includes serving as Supervision Leader/Mentor for Western Oregon University, and Supervision Leader for Robyn Dean's International Interpreting Institute for Reflection-in-Action & Supervision (IIRAS).

### **Susanne Morgan Morrow**

Susanne (Susie) is the Project Director of the New York DeafBlind Collaborative and is a nationally certified Sign Language Interpreter and interpreter educator. Susie's career started working with the DeafBlind adult



community at Helen Keller National Center almost 30 years ago. From those direct experiences she then went on to work on the national deafblind project where she worked on various topics, such as self-determination, advocacy, and transition planning for DeafBlind young adults. Throughout her career Susie has had the opportunity to present, interpret and provide coordination services in a wide array of venues for Deaf and DeafBlind people. Her work has been seen at regional, national and international conferences, in higher academia, as well as at countless musical and theatrical performances.

### **Brian Moss**

Brian "BAM" Moss, BSW, is the Visual Gestural Specialist for the ADMH:ODS. BAM grew up in Montgomery where he attended mainstream schools during his younger years. Later he emerged himself in Deaf culture as a student at the Alabama School for the Deaf. He graduated from Jacksonville State University with a Bachelor of Social Work. Before returning to college for his Social Work degree, BAM worked as a Deaf Care Worker for several years. He was very motivated to work closely with patients again, and upon graduation returned to ADMH in his current role. In the past year, he has presented on various topics related to cultural demands in the mental health field and is currently pursuing the opportunity to become a Certified Deaf Interpreter.

### **Rebecca Mowell**

Rebecca Mowell is the Director of Student Support Services at Texas School for the Deaf (TSD). A Licensed Specialist in School Psychology, Mowell has worked at TSD since 2010.

### **Alison Nutt**

Alison was born and raised in British Columbia, Canada. Since completing her MSW at Gallaudet in 2011, she worked initially in the field of early intervention with families who have DHHDBDD children, later moving into mental health first as a mental health clinician and currently as the clinical supervisor for the Deaf Well Being Program. Alison was connected to sign language from as an infant and throughout childhood, later taking formal ASL & Deaf Studies and becoming socially connected to the community prior to attending Gallaudet. Alison's husband is Deaf and they have a young CODA daughter.

### **Amanda O'Hearn**

Amanda M. O'Hearn, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Psychiatry (Psychology) at the University of Rochester School of Medicine since September 2001. Dr. O'Hearn serves as Clinical Services Director of the Deaf Wellness Center (DWC). In addition to her role at the DWC, Dr. O'Hearn conducts research with the National Center for Deaf Health Research. She is a graduate of Gallaudet University's Clinical Psychology doctoral program. Dr. O'Hearn completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Miami. She has published on modifications to methods and materials that make Dialectical Behavior Therapy more accessible to Deaf people and has trained therapists on use of these modifications.

### **Kristen Pranzl**

Kristen was born Deaf in British Columbia, Canada. Kristen has worked with the DHHDBDD population her whole career and has been in the mental health field since 2014. Kristen is passionate about social justice and advocating for culturally sensitive, holistic health services for the DHHDBDD community. Kristen enjoys hiking with her partner and watching her kids play hockey!

### **Sandy Pascual**

Sandy Pascual, NIC, QMHI-S, OCHI, CoreCHI, is a Qualified Mental Health Interpreter Supervisor and the Region 2 coordinator for the ADMH:ODS. Sandy is trilingual with 22-years of interpreting experience. She initially learned ASL to communicate with her cousin who is Deaf, fell in love with the culture and language and pursued a degree from the ITP at Miami-Dade College. From 2017-2022 she worked as a medical and

mental health staff interpreter in Oregon. Sandy holds an MBA and MS in I/O Psychology from Albizu University. She continuously collaborates with other BIPOC professionals in the community and has served on numerous boards including, ORID and Mano-a-Mano. She's lead supervision groups and has presented on topics related to medical, mental health and cultural and linguistic demands.

### **Michelle Perry**

Michelle Perry, CRC, M.S. Rehabilitation Counseling received both her B.S. in Rehabilitation Studies and Master's from Winston Salem State University. She began working as a Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf in the state of North Carolina for half a decade. She is now a Disability Consultant providing Expert Testimony for the Social Security Administration, an adjunct Professor at Winston Salem State University, and a Sign Language Interpreter. Michelle is a Child of Deaf Adults. On her paternal side, her grandmother had 9 children, 3 are Deaf, 3 are Hard of Hearing, and 3 are Hearing. She loves to learn experiences of students who attended Black Schools for the Deaf during segregation, the origins of Black ASL, how it has evolved, and support her parents in encouraging interpreters of color to sustain the self determination to complete their interpreter training programs and enter the interpreting profession.

### **Lawrence Pick**

Dr. Lawrence Pick is a Professor of Psychology in the Clinical Psychology PhD Program at Gallaudet University. His research interests are focused on 1) the development, translation, and adaptation of psychological measures to examine the cognitive and emotional experiences of DHH individuals and 2) equitable and accessible training for DHH behavioral health professionals. He is a licensed psychologist and board certified clinical neuropsychologist.

### **Joy Plote**

Joy Plote brings a unique blend of experiences as a licensed counselor in Arizona, specializing in trauma, abuse, and deprivation. Joy is not only a licensed counselor but also a licensed and nationally certified interpreter and interpreter educator with a 30-year track record in the field of deafness. As a Child of Deaf Adults (Coda) and the spouse of a Deaf adult, Joy possesses a multifaceted background that equips her with a comprehensive understanding of the intersectionality between trauma, mental health, and Deaf culture. Joy holds additional certifications as a trauma specialist for both individuals and families and certifications in various evidence-based trauma treatments. Her multifaceted background equips her with a comprehensive understanding of the intersectionality between trauma, mental health, and Deaf culture.

### **Rachel Postovoit**

Rachel is a mindfulness facilitator; founder of AMAS, a private practice owner, a writer, and has been in the field of nontraditional community clinical mental health, counseling, social work, education, supervision, and community work since graduating from Gallaudet with a dual masters in Social Work and Administration and Supervision. Ms. Postovoit's range of experience includes working exclusively with deaf youth, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, to hearing with diverse and multicultural backgrounds and their families to hearing and deaf adults and co-occurring diagnoses as well as, non-clinical settings, such as education and government. Rachel is passionate about social justice, cultural and language equity, deaf children having access to ASL, language, and emotional -social wellness. Rachel previously served on NAD's Language Deprivation Task Force.

### **Concetta Pucci**

Dr. Connie Pucci is the Director of Undergraduate Field Education and a Lecturer in the Department of Social Work at Gallaudet University. She holds a PhD in Special Education Administration at Gallaudet University, MSW from New York University, and BSSW from Rochester Institute of Technology. Dr. Pucci also provided telemental health services for several years, but now she is on pause focusing on studying to take the board

exam to become a clinical licensed social worker. She currently serves as a member-at-large on the board for The American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association (ADARA). Her interests focus on strengthening professional ethics in social work practice, advocating for quality service for DeafBlind individuals, and practicing self-love and self-care.

### **Holly Rioux**

Holly Rioux, LICSW is a bilingual deaf social work alum from University of New Hampshire, who has been locally serving in social work and human services for nearly twenty years. Since 2010 at GNMH Deaf Services, Holly has worked as community-based case manager, lead clinician and coordinator, and now Director of Deaf Services and Language Access. Throughout her career, Holly has worked with clinicians of various communication abilities and cultural backgrounds who are best able to serve their respective populations. Holly has also taught for several semesters as an adjunct professor teaching Sociocultural perspectives on Deaf Culture, and co-teaching Mental Health Interpreting at UNHM. Her self-care activities include time spent with her partner, pups, being active outdoors, while maintaining a regular dose of streaming television.

### **Daniela Rivera**

Daniela Rivera, esteemed Vice President of Program Development at Hudson Community Enterprises (HCE), possesses an impressive career spanning over a decade, dedicated to advancing vocational rehabilitation services. In her pivotal role, Daniela takes the lead in conceptualizing and implementing innovative, scalable programs at HCE, with a primary focus on fostering economic inclusion for individuals with hearing and/or vision loss. Armed with a Master's in Business Administration from Capella University, where she graduated with Magna Cum Laude honors, Daniela's expertise is complemented by her educational background in Deaf Studies. Notably, she has made significant contributions to the development of the transition toolkit for deaf students in New Jersey. Her outstanding contributions and inventive problem-solving abilities have played a key role in shaping inclusive environments for the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities.

### **Sara Rock**

Sara Rock is currently a second year Master' student at Winston Salem State University, studying Rehabilitation Counseling with a concentration in Deaf and Hard of Hearing. She has her bachelor's degree in ASL interpreting from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and works as an educational sign language interpreter for Winston Salem Forsyth County Schools. Sara enjoys working with Deaf+ students and helping them develop skills and work on their self-advocacy.

### **Jeni Rodrigues**

Jeni Rodrigues is an Assistant Professor in the Department of ASL and Interpreting Education at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at the Rochester Institute of Technology. She also serves as director for the department's healthcare interpreting program, coordinating the Masters in Health Care Interpretation degree and the Certificate in Healthcare Interpreting program. Jeni has worked as a practitioner for 25 years, specializing in healthcare and mental health interpreting for the past decade. She earned her master's degree in Interpreting Pedagogy from Northeastern University in 2011 and completed her Ph.D. in Interpreting from Gallaudet University in 2022. Jeni's work explores access barriers deaf patients face in healthcare settings and best practices in healthcare interpreting education for ASL-English Interpreters.

### **Elly Romero**

Dr. Elly M. G. Romero, Ph.D. joined the TF-CBT Intervention Track Co-Director at the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child Resilience Center in 2021. They are responsible for developing and disseminating Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) materials for deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) clients to agencies that

serve deaf clients. Dr. Romero is a Clinical Psychologist at Cory Cove Wellness, Worcester, MA, where they provide individual, family, and group psychotherapy, as well as psychological assessment.

### **Tami Santimyer**

Tami Santimyer is the current Graduate Admissions Director at Gallaudet University, where she continues to focus on admissions and enrollment strategies. Prior to this role, Tami worked in various capacities at Undergraduate Admissions at Gallaudet. Additionally, she has five years of teaching experience at Model Secondary School for the Deaf, where she also directed numerous theatrical productions.

### **Kent Schafer**

Kent Schafer, MA, MSE, PhD, NCSP continues to actively identify and challenge decisions made for sign fluent individuals. He is currently employed with the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf as the director of counseling and evaluation. In the past, he worked for the the Alabama Department of Mental Health providing inpatient psychological services and administrative oversight for deaf individuals with severe and persistent mental illness while maintaining a small community caseload as a therapist. His first master's was in Alcohol and Substance Use from University of Illinois at Springfield clinically treating substance use or challenging youth via prevention education. His second master's was in School Psychology from University of Wisconsin at Whitewater educationally challenging students, parents, then teachers to dare to make a difference. Whether clinical or educational, Dr. Schafer has created differential registers and modalities merging deaf mental health and deaf education. Dr. Schafer continues to be vested as a nationally certified school psychologist promoting the consultation/collaboration model for a visual language foundation. Inside his circle, he is affectionately known as the "research man" who enjoys disseminating strategies through deaf eyes. His doctoral dissertation focused on building psychometric value to Roger Williams and Charlene Crump's Communication Skills Assessment to which Mental Health Centers across Alabama utilize in their treatment plan by matching communication preferences. His predoctoral internship consisted of rotations at Civitan-Sparks Pediatric Clinic (Project LEND) and Bryce Psychiatric Hospital. In the past, Kent has worked on numerous media related projects for an executive agency in Illinois. As a current board-at-large member, former president or President-Elect of national deaf organizations, ADWAS, DDGA, and ADARA, he continues to have a vested interest in addressing policy and program concerns to promote best practices for behavioral health and social services. Dr. Schafer also serves as a visiting guest lecturer for multiple universities challenging students to a greater good. Dr. Schafer relishes opportunities to expand the six inches of grey matter between your ears. Outside the work sphere, as a recent Hall of Fame inductee, Kent can be found somewhere chucking round plastic objects towards metal encaged baskets in the sport called disc golf or spending time with his wife and two daughters.

### **Elizabeth Schniedewind**

Elizabeth Schniedewind has been an interpreter in private practice for over thirty years and has been a faculty member in the Sign Language Interpreter program at Idaho State University for the past ten. She received MA and BA degrees from Gallaudet University and completed her doctorate at Boise State University. She has owned/operated an interpreter referral service, served on RID committees, including the NAD/RID Code of Ethics Committee. She owes her career and happiness to Deaf people who taught her ASL and allowed her to be part of their lives and culture.

### **Tomina Schwenke**

Tomina J. Schwenke, PhD, ABPP, is a licensed and board-certified psychologist. She is a nationally certified sign language interpreter (CI/CT), with a specialized certificate in mental health interpreting (QMHI). In 2023, she earned s a juris master's degree from Emory School of Law. She is an Assistant Professor in the Emory Psychiatry and Law Service and is the director of Emory's jail-based Competency Restoration program. She

was awarded the Richard Morrel Community Commitment Award (Emory), the Martin Seligman Research in Psychology and Deafness Award (ADARA), Outstanding Journal Article Award (JADARA), the Dennis Brady Service Award (CUNY), and the Excellence in Patient Care Award (Emory Healthcare).

### **Angela Scruggs**

Angela Scruggs, PhD, LPC/MHSP-S, NIC, QMHI, has a doctorate in Psychology & Counseling and a Master's in Marriage & Family Counseling. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor with a Mental Health Service Provider designation (LPC-MHSP) and an approved supervisor in Tennessee. To be more accessible to the DHH community, Dr. Scruggs is also an LPC in the Texas, Louisiana, and an approved Florida telehealth provider. Trained in several therapeutic modalities, Dr. Scruggs specializes in Cognitive-Behavioral Therapies, Child-Parent Relationship Therapy, and TraumaPlay Therapy. Dr. Scruggs' involvement in the DHH community began nearly 25yrs ago in the US and abroad working in various capacities such as: residential and recovery programs, school systems, nonprofit agencies, traditional counseling settings, and in-home therapy. Her passion is to cultivate hope and healing for children, adolescents, individuals, and families.

### **Paul Silvasi**

Paul M. Silvasi, Ph.D., is a licensed psychologist in the State of Utah, and employed as a forensic evaluator at Utah State Hospital. He is a Deaf individual with native fluency in ASL, and a graduate from Gallaudet University, where he received specialized training in the provision of clinical services with Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing individuals. His primary research interest relates to the interactions between Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing individuals and the legal system, and this began during his undergraduate studies at Rochester Institute of Technology. Though early in his career, he has had the opportunity to publish one of his works as well as present at national conferences.

### **Samantha Smith**

Samantha is an employee of the Office for Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), her position is Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, based out of the Erie, PA District Office, Samantha works closely with RIT/NTID as a Supervising Counselor, point of contact, as a secondary counselor supervising caseloads for PA-VR customers/students attending RIT/NTID, for the primary counselors of PA. Samantha has been with OVR for 4.5 years, and has been a supervising counselor for 4 years. Samantha earned her B.S. Degree from Edinboro University, and her Master's from RIT/NTID. Samantha's active role in collaborating and partnering with RIT/NTID is crucial for the success outcomes for each RIT/NTID PA-student receiving OVR services through Pennsylvania. Samantha meets with the PA-students receiving VR services on campus on a semesterly basis; providing 1:1 guidance & counseling, updating their casefiles, amending any current plans (as-needed with permission from the primary counselor), connect students with resources & accommodations available to them on campus, explain/review VR procedurals & agreements, process VR funds as approved based on unofficial transcripts each semester, explain & remind students their responsibilities as a VR customer, and any other issues or topics that may arise; if any concerns that are out of Samantha's hands, she then reports back to the primary counselor for further assistance. Samantha works with RIT/NTID as a Liaison and collaborative partner to promote the goal of OVR, and to oversee the successful outcomes of each PA-OVR customer.

### **Amanda Somdal**

Amanda G. Somdal is a licensed clinical social worker. She's a Deaf Therapist for the Alabama Department of Mental Health, Office of Deaf Services – serving the southeast area of Alabama. Amanda has worked with the Deaf community for over 25 years in providing individual and family therapy, specializing in deaf batterers, deaf mental health, and sexual assault survivors. Amanda served on several boards, such as the Advocacy Council for Abused Deaf Children and the Association of Batterer's Intervention Programs. Amanda loves

giving workshops on various issues, from mental health issues, self-harm, sexual assault, and domestic violence to deaf culture and mental health interpreting. Amanda graduated from California State University, Northridge, and Gallaudet University.

### **Shea Jefferson Strain**

Shea is the Senior Instructional Support Coordinator at (MSSD) from a Black family in Virginia Beach, VA. Growing up in mainstream schools with a Deaf and Hard of Hearing program, a lot of systemic inequalities were evident for Shea. This only fueled her passion when teaching and working with Deaf/Hard of Hearing students and their families in the area of social justice. After graduating from Gallaudet University with a BA in English, Shea taught at the English Language Institute, working primarily with International students. Following her enrollment in to the Master of Science in Deaf Education at McDaniel College, Shea started working at MSSD in 2018.

### **Hayley Stokar**

Hayley Stokar is the Undergraduate Social Work (BSW) Program Director at Gallaudet University. She holds a PhD in Social Work from Loyola University Chicago, an MSW from Gallaudet University, and a BA in Anthropology from Wesleyan University. Her research focuses on access/accommodations and Deaf-hearing interactions in employment and first responder contexts. Dr. Stokar has over 8 years of experience in the classroom with undergraduate students, and has worked with Deaf, Deafblind, Hard of Hearing, and Hearing clients in domestic and international social work settings since 2006.

### **Amy Stornello**

Amy Stornello is the RIT/NTID Title IX Deputy Coordinator, who works with the Deaf/Hard of hearing faculty, staff and students on campus to educate, inform and address concerns as they pertain to sex and gender-based discrimination and harassment. She has been working at RIT/NTID for the past 23 years in various capacities within Student Affairs: Residence Life, First Year Experiences, Admissions/Visitation, Career Exploration, Orientation and the Co-op and Career Center. Her ability to understand and connect with college students to ensure that they have happy/healthy relationships with others, is what motivates Amy to do the work that she does. One fun fact about Amy: she is a 200HR certified yoga instructor and currently obtaining training to become a mediator.

### **Elizabeth Stone**

Elizabeth "Liz" Stone, is a University Ombuds since 2015 and the current director of Ombuds Programs at Gallaudet University providing confidential, informal, independent, and impartial conflict management resources. Stone is a certified professional diversity coach trained with the Coach Diversity Institute and a conflict management practitioner with 20+ years of experience in higher education, nonprofit, and government-affiliated settings. Stone earned her bachelor's in social work, master's in public administration, and holds several certificates in mediation, racial justice facilitation, and restorative justice.

### **DeAnna Swope**

DeAnna founded a domestic violence program BRIDGES in 2019. She is Deaf and considers herself as Jill of all trades. DeAnna is currently working as a Senior Program Associate for Activating Change on Accessing Safety Initiative and a CEO of Diamond Speaks LLC. DeAnna has given presentations on trauma, domestic violence, and mental health over the years. DeAnna graduated with a BA in social and criminal justice as well as an MA in public administration from Ashford. She's happily married to Thomas with five children.

**Thomas Swope, Jr.**

Thomas Swope has rich experience as a certified educator in working with Deaf/HOH children at Deaf schools for the past 10 years and is currently working as a therapist for National Deaf Therapy. He has a BA in psychology from Ashford as well as a dual MA in school counseling and clinical mental health from Walden University.

**Kota Takayama**

Kota Takayama, Ph.D. is the MSW program director at Gallaudet University. Dr. Takayama has spent clinical working with deaf communities in Japan for nearly 20 years. His clinical experience focuses on psychological assessment and crisis intervention for Deaf and Hard of Hearing populations. Also, he currently work for deaf diabetes project with National Cancer Research Center from 2020. Dr. Takayama published 37 scholars and presented 35 conference presentations since 2005. As a deaf community educator, he provided over 200 presentation and workshops for Japan and global deaf communities.

**Tamara Taylor**

Tamara Taylor, MSW from University of South Florida, BA from University of South Florida, Certificates in Deaf/Blind Mental Health from Helen Keller National Institute, Social Worker for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services of Florida, Inc.

**Julie Tibbitt**

Julie Tibbitt currently oversees the Office for Career Success at Gallaudet University. In addition to elevating career outcomes for Gallaudet students and alumni, she holds a special interest in empowering Deaf learners of all ages through accessibility, administration, agency and assessment.

**Laura Thompson**

Laura "LT" Thompson, diagnosed with Usher Syndrome, Type II, has been involved in various advocacy efforts and served on several different commissions and boards since graduating with a master's degree in social work in 2011. After moving from Chicago to Las Vegas in 2017, she continued her advocacy work as an Adult Case Specialist for the D/HH in the Las Vegas area, eventually joining the Vocational Rehabilitation team in January 2019 as a Rehabilitation Counselor III for the D/HH.

**Kim Thornsberry**

Kim Thornsberry, MS, CMHC (UT), LPC (AL) CRC, NCC (she/her/hers) is a Michigan native, Kim was born Deaf. She did not acquire American Sign Language until the age of 21. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Family and Consumer Studies with a specialization in Child Development and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Gallaudet University in 2003. She pursued a Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling with the Deaf at Western Oregon University in 2006. Additionally, she pursued the Early Childhood and Infant Mental Health program at Troy University in 2022. She took additional courses in the Mental Health Counseling program and School Counseling program at the University of Utah in 2012 - 2014 and 2023 to meet the requirements for licensing purposes. Kim worked for the Alabama Department of Mental Health from 2014 to 2022 as a Region 1 Mental Health Therapist. She then transitioned to being a Licensed Professional Counselor at the Utah Schools of the Deaf in Ogden and Salt Lake City, Utah, where she works with students from kindergarten to 12th grade. Furthermore, she is a licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor in Utah, focusing on organizing work logistics to offer clinical services, supervision, and consultations to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. Kim is an active member on the ADARA board and serves as an appointed board member for the National Association of the Deaf (NAD). Additionally, she acts as the Jr. NAD advisor for JMS and holds the position of Region 4 Jr. NAD Representative. Throughout her careers and volunteering positions, she works with and advocates for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals ranging from birth to elderly to get the services they need through training,

educating, setting up preventive services, and promoting available resources. During her free time, she draws, paints, and sometimes sells her artwork, donating some artwork to fundraising events to support Deaf/Hard of Hearing professional organizations. Kim is married to Brian for 24 years and has two children along with two Goldendoodles.

### **Amanda Tuite**

In 2020, Amanda realized a lifelong dream to provide access and training on a variety of subjects that would provide an impact on the deaf and hard of hearing community. So, with this in mind, she founded Access Vine which currently holds a variety of state contracts to provide a service array of various services including advising on communication access, technology as it pertains to individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing as well as spotlighting Deaf professionals to provide examples of real-world role models. Prior to founding Access Vine, Amanda was an account executive for various Video Relay Service (VRS) companies, capitalizing on her sales experience. In addition to her work in the VRS industry, Amanda was a trainer for the Texas Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services where she trained & provided technical assistance to agency program staff and stakeholders on a variety of topics. Amanda also served as the Camp Sign Director, a state-wide camp geared toward Deaf children. Currently, Amanda lives in Austin where she is married to a Deaf husband, along with her two adult CODA children and two dogs, both of which like to sit in her Zoom meetings.

### **Lauranna Turano**

Lauranna Turano, MSW, was raised in New York City by a Sicilian-Paganism family. I became deaf as a young adult and am multilingual using American Sign Language and Lingua dei Segni Italian-Italian Sign Language. I have 32 years of dual experience in deaf education and human services for a full spectrum of ages, mental illnesses, and disabilities. I earned a Bachelor of Science in Social Work from Colorado State University of Pueblo and a Master of Social Work from Newman University to better support the mental health needs of our population, including deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing and blind/low vision community members. I relocated to New England, am living in New Boston area and joined GNMH Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services.

### **Lori Vigesaa**

Lori Vigesaa is the Clinical Supervisor of the DHHDB Program at Therapeutic Services Agency, Inc. (TSA) in Minnesota. She holds licensure as a Professional Clinical Counselor. Lori was born into a Deaf-parented family and is a heritage language user of American Sign Language. Lori studied in the areas of Language Deprivation, Toxic Stress, and Agrarian Culture and has extensive training in DC 0-5 Assessment, TheraPlay, and EMDR for the treatment of trauma related disorders. Lori has a passion for working with individuals and families as they address life's challenges. Her focus is on developing positive mental wellness, awareness of self, and resiliency.

### **David Volper**

David Volper joined HKNC as a DeafBlind Employment Specialist (DBES) in January 2019 and was promoted to Regional Representative (RR) in 2021. Before HKNC, David was a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in Florida. With well over a decade of experience in working in vocational rehabilitation, deaf services, and the Helen Keller National Center combined, he has come to appreciate the challenges and rewards of working with individuals with disabilities, including deaf, hard-of-hearing, and DeafBlind individuals. He completed a BA in Technical Writing at the University of South Florida and went on to complete his MA studies in Rehabilitation Counseling at the University of Kentucky.

### **Kathryn Wagner**

Dr. Kathryn Wagner is an Assistant Professor in the Clinical Psychology PhD Program at Gallaudet University. They have in-depth training and experience using qualitative methodologies to examine disability and queer theory. They are a licensed clinical psychologist in DC and MD.



**Charity Reedy Warigon**

Charity Reedy Warigon is a seasoned retired higher education executive with nearly two decades as a higher education administrator responsible for overseeing the Office of Admissions, Financial Aid, and Youth and Outreach Programs, including pre-college programs such as summer youth programs and career exploration & preparation for college. Traveled and presented at over 3,000 K-12 schools and community colleges in 50 states, 9 Canadian provinces and overseas about educational and career readiness & pathways for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind individuals. Worked with professionals including secondary education teachers, Vocational Rehabilitation, administrators and organizations such as CEASD, CSAVR and national parent organizations. In-depth knowledge of the IEP and 504 Plan both as an administrator and as a parent of two Deaf children.

**Melissa Watson**

Melissa Watson started her career as a mental health counselor working in various settings: inpatient, outpatient, partial hospitalization, residential services with Deaf/HoH children, adolescents and adults. Melissa graduated from Gallaudet University with her Masters in Mental Health Counseling. She also acquired her Applied Behavior Analysis degree from Florida Institute of Technology. Melissa obtained her PhD from Capella University.

**Joshua Weinstein**

Joshua Weinstein assumes the vital role of a culturally Deaf school psychologist at the esteemed Tennessee School for the Deaf. His career constellation has unfolded over a span of more than two decades, during which he has amassed a wealth of expertise in both the private behavioral health sector and the domain of education. Joshua, identified as a Deaf individual with a capital "D," is resolutely propelled by an earnest ambition to effectuate positive paradigm shifts within the arena of Deaf education pedagogy. His regular engagement in collaborative consultations stands as a testament to his commitment, contributing his seasoned proficiency towards the cultivation of a resilient and meticulously crafted classroom milieu and curriculum, thoughtfully tailored to the unique requisites of Deaf children.

**Dylan Westbury**

Dylan Westbury worked in K-12 education for five years. He worked as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for the Texas VR agency, then as an intern Statewide Coordinator of Services for the Deaf for the DC VR agency. He was a manager for the Transition Programming for Model Secondary School for the Deaf before he took the role of Vocational Rehabilitation Liaison Specialist for Gallaudet University. He is very passionate about how VR services can assist Deaf people in getting a successful outcome.

**Megan Wetzel**

Megan Wetzel is a Certified Deaf Interpreter in Pittsburgh, PA. With a Bachelor's degree in Communication and a Master's degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs, Megan's knowledge and experience inform her interpreting work daily. She has diverse professional experience with Deaf individuals in mental health and behavioral health settings, spanning direct support to administration. Megan teaches ASL and is, herself, a user of interpreting services, as well. Her perspectives lend invaluable insights to any training environment.

**Alexander Wilkins**

Alexander Wilkins, PhD, is an Assistant Professor at UMass Chan Medical School, where he is also the co-Director of the DeafYES! Center for Deaf Empowerment and Recovery at UMass Chan. He is a recipient of a K23 Career Development Award from NIAAA. His program of research focuses on a community-engaged approach to developing resources for mental health and behavioral health care for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. He also provides outpatient mental health services for deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

### **Meghan Williams**

Meghan Williams completed her Bachelor's Degree in Advocacy and Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in 2013 and her Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counselor with a concentration in Deaf and Hard of Hearing services in 2017. She has been a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor since 2018 and worked as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for the D/HH/DB in North Carolina before moving into her current role as an RCD in Chicago, Illinois. Meghan has a special interest in improving access to state services for individuals with both hearing and vision loss.

### **Pam Williamson**

Pam Williamson serves as the Assistant Director of the Southeast ADA Center, a project of the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University. Ms. Williamson contributed to the development and implementation of four online courses: Foundations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA Basic Building Blocks, At Your Service: Welcoming Customers with Disabilities, and the ADA Title II Tutorial. She also co-authored the curricula, Serving Customers with Disabilities in Air Travel and the ADA and Self-Advocacy for Youth - Train-the-Trainer Curriculum: An Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Roadmap, and the publication, The ADA and Face Mask Policies. Ms. Williamson is a person with a psychiatric and neurological disability. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Therapeutic Recreation from Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Georgia.

### **Jaime A. B. Wilson**

As the first Deaf board certified neuropsychologist in the world, Dr. Wilson provides an array of neuropsychological and psychological health care services to deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and blind individuals through a private practice, Wilson Clinical Services, PLLC. ([www.WilsonClinical.com](http://www.WilsonClinical.com)). Dr. Wilson has worked extensively with physicians, other healthcare providers, and forensic experts in the provision of neuropsychological evaluations. The field of neuropsychology is dedicated to learning about and diagnosing conditions related to the brain and nervous system.

### **Ben Wright**

Ben Wright has a BA in English, completed a M.Ed in Special Education, and worked in the K-12 sector for ten years. He also attended Marion Technical College for a degree in Business Administration. As a justice-impacted individual, he is excited to bring his perspective to the team! He loves theater, literature and anything fantasy related. A fun fact is that he recently starred in a production of "Tribes" as a deaf character named Billy and won a Best Actor award through OCTA, a state-level competition in Ohio. Representing the D/deaf community was an honor for him, as he is Deaf himself. He is a master's student in English Literature and a student in the MFA program for Creative Writing at SNHU, with plans to go straight into a Ph.D. or an EdD program to study fairy tales in literature. He hopes to bring his passion for literature into his career with justice-impacted individuals. He also currently works for SNHU's Project AIM, which has the initiative of helping currently incarcerated folks get higher education opportunities.

### **S. Jordan Wright**

Dr. Wright is a Critical Theorist, Health researcher, and director of the Deaf MetaLiteracy lab at Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf. The Deaf MetaLiteracy Lab is housed within The Deaf Biomedical Science and Healthcare Hub, which focuses on three strands of inquiry: Health Literacy, Digital Literacy, and Cultural Literacy as they interact with the lives of Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, and Hard of Hearing individuals. Dr. Wright has a strong interest in the intersectional experience of health and technology within the Deaf LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC communities, and presently runs three studies in the arena of sexual health. As a professor of Deaf Studies and literacy, Dr. Wright is a firm believer of bringing research to the classroom.