2026 ADARA Conference
Salt Lake City, Utah
May 26 – May 30, 2024

CONFERENCE PROGRAM BOOK

***Agenda is subject to change**

Updated 2/6/2026

2026 ADARA Conference Sponsors

Kings Peak (Platinum) Sponsorship Level:

Tokewanna Peak (Diamond) Sponsorship Level:

- **National Technical Institute for the Deaf**

Mount Ellen Peak (Gold) Sponsorship Level:

- **Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults**
- **Utah Division of Services of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing - Sanderson Community Center**

Deseret Peak (Silver) Sponsorship Level:

- **ACCESS Deaf Mental Health, St. Joseph's Health**
- **DeafLEAD**
- **DeafYes! – Center for Deaf Empowerment and Recovery**
- **Gallaudet University**
- **Utah Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Substance Use and Mental Health**

Golden Isles (Bronze) Sponsorship Level:

- **Hamilton CapTel**
- **Utah Association of the Deaf**
- **Vancro Integrated Interpreting Services**

Exhibitors

- ACCESS Deaf Mental Health, St. Joseph's Health
- DeafLEAD
- DeafYes! – Center for Deaf Empowerment and Recovery
- Gallaudet University
- Hamilton CapTel
- Helen Keller National Center
- InnoCaption
- McGregor Deaf Art
- National Technical Institute for the Deaf
- RiseHands, LLC
- RHA Health Services
- Rocky Mountain ADA Center
- Utah Association of the Deaf
- Utah Division of Services of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Utah Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Substance Use and Mental Health
- Vancro Integrated Interpreting Services

Tuesday, May 26, 2026

All-Day Workshop: 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

(Lunch Break: 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm)

Multichannel Eye Movement Integration (MEMI) Certification Training
Mike Deninger

Abstract: Multichannel Eye Movement Integration is a bottom-up, sensory-based therapy designed for DHH clients--now being used by over 30 ASL therapists across the U.S. This 6-hour workshop represents the first half of the standard MEMI certification training. The second half will be scheduled in two three-hour Zoom sessions after ADARA. The workshop will move quickly from theory to practice with ample time for questions and discussion. Through lecture, live demonstrations, videos and practice in pairs, participants will learn MEMI's theory, presuppositions, straightforward protocol, and assessments. Focus will be on readying participants to start using MEMI with associates and low-risk clients in preparation for the second half of the training. Post-conference virtual sessions will focus on reinforcing skills and doing case mentoring. MEMI will give you the skills necessary to resolve PTSD symptoms as well as "little t traumas." This is a technique you want in your toolbox for those difficult trauma cases.

Objectives:

- Explain with examples the four elements in the MEMI theoretical model
- Demonstrate how to perform MEMI's five basic eye movements.
- List and describe the 10 steps in the MEMI protocol.
- Describe how the MEMI Intensity Scale is used
- Describe two of the four MEMI PTSD success criteria.

Tuesday, May 26, 2026

All-Day Workshops: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Interpreting Track

Anchoring the Profession: Supervision and Mentorship in Mental Health Interpreting
Sandy Pascual & Brian McKenny (2 hours)

Abstract: Interpreting ranks among the most stressful professions, yet many practitioners lack the tools to effectively manage its emotional and cognitive demands. Those who have developed such strategies have both an opportunity and a responsibility to share them as mentors and supervisors. This session explores sources of occupational stress faced by interpreters in mental health and other high-stress settings and

introduces practical techniques for processing and managing that stress. Participants will explore supervision approaches adapted from clinical practice and develop strategies for integrating these tools into mentoring/supervision relationships within the interpreting field. The session emphasizes reflective practice, resilience, and the cultivation of supportive professional networks that sustain interpreters and strengthen the next generation of practitioners.

Objectives:

- Identify at least three effective strategies for engaging as mentors and supervisors within the interpreting profession.
- Apply at least two supervisory approaches adapted from clinical disciplines to recognize key sources of occupational stress in mental health and other high-stress settings, and develop strategies to process that stress.
- Refine at least one practical technique that can be integrated into mentoring and supervision practices within the interpreting field.

Interpret Outside the Box: Lessons for the Neurodiverse Classroom
Amanda Kennon (3 hours)

Abstract: Neurodiversity is a hot topic on social media. However, research and discussions have been limited within the interpreting field despite many neurodivergent interpreters and consumers regularly experiencing stigma and discrimination due to their perceived differences. Notably, systemic barriers within the medical, mental health, and education systems hinder the Deaf community's access to diagnoses and accommodations. Drawing from lived experience, professional practice, and research, Amanda will introduce participants to neurodiversity and the behavioral, socio-emotional, linguistic, and ethical considerations encountered while working with neurodivergent hard of hearing, d/Deaf, DeafBlind, and DeafDisabled consumers in educational settings. As participants examine these considerations, they will also integrate research- including original research conducted with Dr. Laura Polhemus- to develop strategies for ethical and effective interpreting services.

Objectives:

- Explain the differences between neurodiversity, neurodiverse, neurodivergent, and neurotypical as well as list at least three examples of neurodivergent conditions.
- Provide at least two examples of how students are impacted by the intersectionality of race, deafness, neurodivergence, and/or other identities.
- Describe at least one consideration from each of the following categories: behavioral, socio-emotional, linguistic, and ethical.
- Integrate research in order to formulate interpreting strategies to utilize while working with neurodivergent students, including atypical language users, such as teaming, technological resources, and props.
- Apply Demand-Control Schema, the RID-NAD Code of Professional Conduct, and NAIE Educational Interpreter Code of Conduct to evaluate ethical dilemmas through a neuro-affirming lens.

Three Languages, One Message: Inside the Practice of Trilingual Interpreting
Claudia Mansilla & Sandy Pascual (2 hours)

Abstract: This workshop explores the complexities of trilingual interpreting and transcreation within Spanish–English–ASL contexts, emphasizing the linguistic, cultural, and ethical dimensions that distinguish it from bilingual interpreting. Participants will examine worldviews and cultural values within Latine communities, analyzing how interpreter identity and representation influence communication and community trust. Through guided discussion and case scenario analysis, participants will apply ethical reasoning and decision-making frameworks to multilingual and multicultural contexts, addressing challenges related to culture, language variation, and power dynamics. By engaging in reflective dialogue and applied practice, participants will deepen their understanding of cultural responsiveness and transcreation techniques and strengthen their ability to promote equity and professionalism in trilingual interpreting.

Objectives:

- Define trilingual interpreting and transcreation within the context of Spanish–English–ASL, and describe how they differ from bilingual interpreting across linguistic and cultural dimensions.
- Examine cultural values and worldviews present in Latine communities, and analyze how interpreter identity, language background, and representation influence communication, interpreting choices, and community trust.
- Apply ethical reasoning and decision-making frameworks to case scenarios involving multilingual settings, identifying potential challenges related to culture, language, and power dynamics.

Tuesday, May 26, 2026

Half-Day Workshop: 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Hands, Hearts, and Healing: Applying TBRI® Principles in the Deaf Community
Angela Scruggs

Abstract: This interactive full-day workshop introduces Trust-Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI®) through a Deaf community lens, blending trauma-informed care, attachment theory, and hands-on learning. Participants will explore how TBRI's three principles, Connecting, Empowering, and Correcting, can be adapted for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing individuals. Through engaging lectures, small-group dialogue, and experiential sessions (Sensory Lab, Nurture Lab, and Role Play Labs), attendees will gain practical tools for promoting co-regulation, connection, and felt safety. This unique training synthesizes trauma science and Deaf cultural competence, empowering attendees to recognize trauma responses, strengthen caregiver-child connections, and implement practical strategies for healing in schools, homes, clinical, and community settings.

Objectives:

- Define the three TBRI® principles (Connecting, Empowering, Correcting) and explain their role in trauma-informed care for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing individuals.
- Identify indicators of trauma and barriers to felt safety unique to Deaf populations, including language deprivation.
- Demonstrate sensory and nurture group activities that promote self-regulation and connection.
- Apply TBRI® engagement strategies (eye contact, playful interaction, choices, compromises, re-dos) through structured role play.
  Develop an individual or organizational plan to integrate TBRI® tools into Deaf-accessible environments.

Tuesday, May 26, 2026

Half-Day Workshop: 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

How Belonging Is Built: Applied Healing Justice Strategies for Job Development in DDBHH Communities
Liann Osborne

Abstract: This interactive session explores how job development can be reimagined as a site of healing and belonging for Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, Late-Deafened, and DeafDisabled (DDBHHLD) communities. Rather than treating employment as merely transactional, participants will explore a Healing Justice framework that emphasizes cultural humility, systemic awareness, and person-centered care. Grounded in lived experience and national workforce development expertise, this session integrates intersectionality, relational-cultural theory, and access-centered practices. Attendees will leave with practical tools, renewed vision, and a redefined sense of purpose in their work supporting DDBHHLD individuals toward meaningful careers.

Objectives:

- Define a healing justice approach to job development in DDBHHLD communities.
- Identify and interrupt transactional practices that harm client engagement and retention.
- Apply relational-cultural theory and cultural humility to workforce support services.
- Explore systemic impacts of audism, ableism, and racial capitalism on employment.
- Design actionable strategies that foster belonging, dignity, and long-term success for clients.

Tuesday, May 26, 2026

Half-Day Workshop: 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Fluency Without Freedom: Structural Dissociation in Deaf Adults
Mel Whalen

Abstract: This presentation introduces “fluency without freedom,” a new theoretical framework for understanding trauma and dissociation in Deaf individuals who achieve linguistic fluency after early language deprivation. Drawing on structural dissociation theory, attachment research, and Deaf trauma studies, this framework proposes that delayed access to language can fragment not only memory and identity but the architecture of selfhood itself. Clinicians working with Deaf clients often misread these adaptive splits as personality pathology or cultural difference. “Fluency without freedom” reframes them as the inevitable neuropsychological cost of linguistic trauma—an internalized captivity within language. This model integrates neuropsychological findings and clinical practice to expand trauma theory beyond hearing-centric assumptions.

Objectives:

1. Define “fluency without freedom” as a form of structural dissociation arising from language deprivation.
2. Identify clinical features that distinguish linguistic trauma from personality pathology.
3. Apply trauma-informed interventions that integrate ASL, narrative repair, and relational safety.
4. Reexamine trauma theory through the lens of Deaf experience and cultural-linguistic access.

Tuesday, May 26, 2026

Half-Day Workshop: 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

The Mindful Summit: Climbing the Mountain of Self-Compassion
Concetta Pucci

Abstract: We, as mental health professionals among other human service providers, may think that we know how to take care of ourselves, are we really taking care of ourselves? Professionals spent more time taking care of their clients than themselves. This is a rise of dealing with burnout, vicarious trauma, and compassion fatigue in which led them losing the sense of balancing their lives and forgetting to take care of themselves. This pre-conference session is designed for seasoned professionals who need further training in self-compassion, balancing work life, and applying the 4 Ms of mental health care. Mindfulness activities and discussions will also take place during the session.

Objectives:

- Reevaluate their emotional, physical, and spiritual wellbeing as providers.
- Recognize the symptoms and challenges of compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma.
- Recharge by applying the self-compassion and mindfulness package.

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

Opening Plenary Session: 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM

Welcome Remarks
Kent Schafer, President of ADARA
Lance Pickett, Director of the Division of Services of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Utah

Keynote: When Our Fields Overlap, People Rise
Carla Shird

Abstract: Reaching New Peaks is not always about climbing higher—it is often about integrating what we already carry. In this opening plenary, Carla Shird reflects on her journey across professional roles in interpreting, counseling, education, and mental health, and how these overlapping fields have shaped her practice, ethics, and sense of belonging. Through personal reflection, she explores how internalized self-doubt, systemically reinforced barriers, and subtle microaggressions can limit access and opportunity. This keynote invites participants to view moral fatigue as a systems-level signal and to consider how cultural humility, intersectional awareness, and belonging create pathways for sustainable change.

Objectives:

- Identify how overlapping professional roles can strengthen ethical practice and sustainability.
- Recognize shared interdisciplinary skills that support presence, trust, and ethical decision-making.
- Examine dual roles and moral fatigue through a contextual, systems-centered lens.
- Apply cultural humility and intersectional awareness to foster belonging and support change.

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

Concurrent Sessions: 10:30 AM – 11:45 AM

Authentic Community Engagement in Deaf Mental Health Research: Lived Experiences of DeafYES Team Members
Melissa Anderson & Alex Wilkins

Abstract: We propose a presentation and panel discussion about the critical importance of practicing meaningful, authentic community engagement in Deaf mental health research efforts. We will start with a 30-minute presentation on strategies that we use at the DeafYES! Center for Deaf Empowerment and Recovery to engage diverse Deaf community members throughout the research process. Then, approximately five DeafYES team members will serve on a discussion panel, answering questions about their experiences serving as community advisors, intervention development team members, research staff persons, and interns. Former study participants will also have an opportunity to contribute their perspective – either as panelists or by providing testimonials. Following a set of predetermined discussion questions, we will reserve time for the audience to ask questions of the panelists and presenters.

Objectives:

- Describe several reasons why Deaf community members might be hesitant to participate in mental health research.
- Name at least three strategies that DeafYES study teams use to increase the level of community engagement in their mental health research.
- Appreciate the ways in which engaging as part of a research team can benefit an individual Deaf community member.
- Appreciate the ways in which meaningful, authentic community engagement in mental health research can benefit the Deaf community as a whole.

From Access to Empowerment: The Evolving Role of Educational Interpreters
Stephanie Beatty & Irena Glover

Abstract: Educational interpreters do more than convey language—they shape Deaf students' access, identity, and emotional wellbeing. This session examines the evolving role of interpreters in K–12 settings through Deaf perspectives, research, and mental health awareness. Drawing from qualitative data and lived experiences, participants will explore how interpreter behaviors and microaggressions can empower or harm Deaf students, influencing confidence, engagement, and psychological safety. Grounded in trauma-informed and Deaf-centered frameworks, the session highlights strategies for fostering emotional safety, recognizing signs of distress, and promoting collaboration within educational teams. Discussion will also address interpreter burnout, compassion fatigue, and self-care. Attendees will gain tools for building equitable partnerships and supporting Deaf learners' academic and mental health success.

Objectives:

- Identify Deaf perspectives on interpreter influence in educational settings.
- Recognize examples of microaggressions and their emotional and psychological effects.
- Apply trauma-informed and Deaf-centered strategies to promote student wellbeing.
- Reflect on interpreter self-care, emotional boundaries, and professional sustainability.

Working with immigrant families with Deaf & Hard of Hearing children
Celena Ponce

Abstract: Immigrant families with Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) children often face multiple barriers, including language deprivation, limited access to resources, and cultural misunderstandings within schools and service systems. This presentation explores effective strategies for supporting these families by centering linguistic access, cultural humility, and community partnerships. Drawing on real-world experiences from Hands United, we highlight how providing American Sign Language classes, culturally responsive enrichment, and advocacy tools empowers parents to navigate both educational and immigration systems. Participants will gain practical approaches to build trust, bridge language gaps, and create inclusive environments where immigrant families of DHH children are supported to thrive.

Objectives:

- Define barriers experienced by the immigrant community
- Describe multiple solutions to these barriers
- State how to find data on DHH communities by area

Community Healing and Resilience: Ascending Through Multi-Level Ecological Approach
Shilpa Hanumantha Lacy & Concetta Pucci

Abstract: Communities today face serious challenges—political division, organizational struggles, and global crises—that make it hard to stay united and healthy. Drawing from ecological systems frameworks, this presentation shows how social workers and psychologists can work together to support community wellness at different levels. Participants will explore micro-level strategies like recognizing their own biases and values while maintaining self-care, mezzo-level approaches for managing divided groups and promoting healing across diverse perspectives, and macro-level methods for community involvement and advocacy. Through interactive discussion, you'll gain practical tools for building resilience while exploring: how do we get involved effectively without adding to division? How do we create safe space for ourselves and others? This session offers real-world strategies for supporting communities during difficult times.

Objectives:

- Recognize how widespread stress from political division, organizational struggles, and global crises affects community health.
- Use self-care strategies and reflect on how personal values impact their work with clients and communities.
- Apply techniques to help divided groups heal together while respecting different viewpoints.
- Combine multi-level approaches to support community wellness across individual, group, and system levels.

Unmask Neurodivergent "Superheroes"
Terese Rognmo

Abstract: Gaining more knowledge about neurodivergent people and how a delayed diagnosis can significantly affect their relationships, employment, and general well-being is the aim of this workshop. It's time to end the stigma associated with ADHD and create a welcoming, compassionate, and encouraging work and/or learning

environment for neurodivergent people. The target audience is professional providers and scholars who need to learn how to embrace neurodivergent individuals in the workplace and advocate for changes in structure. Hearing from someone who has experienced a late diagnosis and working together to identify different ways to support the current and future neurodivergent individuals in academic and professional contexts would be the highlight of the benefits that attendees will receive.

Objectives:

- Acknowledge the definition of ADHD in context with neurodivergence and important traits that could affect both personal and professional lives.
- Explore workplace accommodation and self-advocacy strategies for neurodivergent individuals.
- Collaborate and foster an inclusive space for neurodivergent professionals.
- Embrace their individual neurodivergent experiences, resiliency, and "superhero."

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

Special Event: 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

BIPOC Gathering (Lunch on your own)
Salon A-C

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

Concurrent Sessions: 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Beyond Monogamy: Ethical and Inclusive Support for DHH Polyamorous Relationships
Hades Romero & Tandy Lewis

Abstract: Polyamory and consensual non-monogamy are increasingly visible relationship structures, yet clinical understanding of these dynamics within Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) communities remains limited. This workshop explores intersectional factors affecting DHH polyamorous clients, including communication access, cultural identity, and relationship boundaries. Participants will learn affirming approaches to address stigma, manage relational complexity, and support clients exploring polyamory. Using case examples, attendees will gain tools for navigating confidentiality, informed consent, inclusive documentation, and multi-party communication in therapy. The session emphasizes culturally and linguistically responsive care grounded in Deaf cultural competence, ethical practice, and resource accessibility.

Objectives:

- Describe how Deaf culture, language access, and audism influence experiences of polyamorous relationships.
- Identify ethical, linguistic, and clinical considerations when working with multiple partners and interpreters in therapy.
- Apply culturally responsive strategies to support DHH clients exploring polyamory or other relationship structures.
- Revise documentation and intake processes to include inclusive language and relationship options. Locate or develop accessible resources to strengthen support networks for DHH polyamorous clients.

Beyond the Margins: Building Accessible Service Delivery for Deaf Individuals with ID/DD
Ivy Vélez

Abstract: Deaf individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (ID/DD) often experience double marginalization: excluded from Deaf community services due to assumptions about ability, and underserved in ID/DD systems lacking language and cultural access. This session explores the systemic barriers that limit equity and highlights strategies for creating inclusive, accessible supports. Drawing on statewide coordination experience and community advocacy, the presenter will share Deaf-centered models that integrate ASL, visual learning, and culturally responsive practices. Participants will examine case studies, engage in collaborative discussion, and gain tools for adapting service delivery across behavioral health, education, interpreting, vocational rehabilitation, and independent living. Attendees will leave with actionable strategies to foster inclusion and ensure Deaf individuals with ID/DD receive equitable, affirming support.

Objectives:

- Identify at least three systemic barriers that Deaf individuals with ID/DD face in accessing equitable services.
- Differentiate between traditional ID/DD service delivery and Deaf-centered models that incorporate ASL, Deaf culture, and visual learning strategies.
- Integrate cross-disciplinary approaches (rehab counseling, behavioral health, education, interpreting) into an inclusive service framework for Deaf ID/DD individuals.
- Develop a professional action plan that includes at least two new strategies to improve accessibility for this underserved population.

Creating an Accessible Safety Plan for Deaf Clients
Aileen Aldalur& Amy Lambert

Abstract: The Stanley-Brown Safety Planning Intervention (SPI) is an evidence-based approach that helps individuals recognize warning signs, identify coping strategies, and access support to reduce suicide risk. However, the traditional written English SPI is not fully accessible to many Deaf clients whose primary language is American Sign Language (ASL), limiting engagement and effectiveness. This workshop introduces the development of a visual-based SPI tailored for Deaf individuals, created through collaboration among suicide prevention researchers at the Center for the Study and Prevention of Suicide, clinicians from the Deaf Wellness Center, and feedback from Deaf patients. Presenters will discuss adaptation methods, implementation experiences, and lessons learned. Attendees will gain practical guidance for integrating visual and ASL-informed safety planning into clinical and community-based suicide prevention practices.

Objectives:

- Describe the purpose and key components of the Stanley-Brown Safety Planning Intervention (SPI) as an evidence-based suicide prevention tool.
- Identify common barriers Deaf clients face when using traditional written English safety plans.
- Explain the process of developing a visual-based SPI through collaboration among suicide prevention researchers, Deaf clinicians, and Deaf community members.
- Demonstrate strategies for implementing visual and ASL-informed safety planning with Deaf clients in clinical or community settings.

Climbing Higher: Fostering Emotional Strength in DeafBlind Lives
Ashley Benton & Eleanor Coley-Brody

Abstract: This 75-minute workshop equips professionals across disciplines to effectively support DeafBlind individuals as they adjust to combined vision and hearing loss. Participants will gain foundational knowledge of the types of sensory losses in the DeafBlind population and the psychosocial adjustment process, including stages of grief, identity development, and emotional adaptation. Participants will explore strategies to foster emotional resiliency, promote self-esteem, and encourage independence. The session emphasizes the power of mentoring and peer support in building confidence and belonging. Participants will learn practical approaches for guiding DeafBlind individuals through self-advocacy, communication access, and readiness for employment or community engagement. Real-world examples help attendees apply tools for supporting well-being and self-determination.

Objectives:

- Describe common types of dual sensory loss and the emotional responses related to DeafBlindness
- Identify strategies that strengthen resiliency and coping
- Apply techniques that promote independence, meaningful participation, and a positive sense of identity

Viability of Being a Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf
Ben Hollingsworth

Abstract: This workshop will cover the current climate in the world of vocational rehabilitation and the necessity of hiring qualified individuals to be Rehabilitation Counselors serving D/DB/HH/LD caseloads. We will look at various setups of how VRCs/RCDs work, conceptualizing caseload sizes, and so forth. We will discuss the demands upon counselors today versus those in the past.

Objectives:

- Recognize that there is a need for qualified applicants for VRC/RCD positions and recognize where those positions are located.
- Learn about historical trends in the world of VR for D/DB/HH/LD and potential future trends.
- Identify gaps in resources in their home area based on discussion material.

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

Concurrent Sessions: 2:45 PM – 4:00 PM

Why Belonging Is the Work: A Healing Justice Lens on Job Development for DDBHH Communities
Liann Osborne

Abstract: Belonging is not an outcome of good job development it is the work itself. This session introduces a healing justice framework for understanding how historical harm, systemic exclusion, and relational disconnection show up in employment services for Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, and Hard of Hearing (DDBHH) communities. Participants will explore how job development practices can unintentionally reinforce harm when belonging, power, and cultural humility are not explicitly addressed. Through brief case examples and guided reflection, this session centers belonging as an ethical and relational responsibility rather than a

soft skill. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of how healing justice reframes job development as a practice of repair, accountability, and shared humanity even within constrained systems

Objectives:

- Define belonging within a healing justice framework as it applies to job development and employment services for DDBHH communities.
- Identify common job development practices that unintentionally create disconnection or reinforce systemic harm.
- Describe the relationship between power, culture, and trust in employment-related interactions with DDBHH job seekers.
- Recognize ethical responsibilities of job developers to engage in relational accountability and repair.
- Reflect on one actionable shift they can make to center belonging in their own professional role.

Coercive Control
Jennifer McCann & Echo Dixon

Abstract: The presentation will define coercive control and examine its impact at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. It will discuss this issue through an intersectional lens and review how it contributes to systemic inequalities. Presenters will use case studies involving atypical language users, BIPOC individuals, people with disabilities, and service providers. These case studies will explore trauma-informed practices, ethical considerations, and introduce a new framework for cultural humility and competency.

Objectives:

- Define coercive control and understand its various tactics.
- Recognize the micro, mezzo, and macro effects of coercive control on minority cultures.
- Apply intersectionality theory to gain a deeper understanding of individual experiences and the role of systemic inequalities.
- Enhance ethical standards of practice to promote cultural humility.

Understanding SUD through Deaf Eyes
Kyla Pierlioni & Laura Peters

Abstract: This interactive workshop provides behavioral health professionals with a deeper understanding of the unique challenges faced by Deaf and hard of hearing individuals with Substance Use Disorder (SUD). Participants will explore how language barriers, cultural identity, and systemic inequities impact access to care, assessment accuracy, and treatment outcomes. The session will include case examples, practical strategies for integrating American Sign Language (ASL) and Deaf cultural competence into behavioral health practice, and approaches to reduce barriers within SUD programs. Attendees will leave with actionable tools to improve engagement, accessibility, and culturally responsive care for Deaf clients. This workshop is designed for clinicians, counselors, social workers, and other professionals seeking to enhance their understanding and effectiveness in serving the Deaf community in behavioral health settings.

Objectives:

- Recognize how cultural and linguistic barriers impact behavioral health outcomes for Deaf individuals with SUD.

- Describe effective strategies for integrating ASL and Deaf cultural competence into SUD treatment.
- Identify approaches to reduce systemic barriers and promote equitable behavioral health services for Deaf clients.

At the Edge of What's Next: Helping Clients Understand and Navigate Transitions in Life
Lori Vigesaa

Abstract: This presentation explores the intricacies of a common experience, transitions in life. It will use the research of William Bridges, Glen H. Elder, as well as several other consultants, sociologists, and mental health professionals to provide an in depth look at how transitions can impact an individual and, if not dealt with, can negatively impact an individual's mental health in a negative way.

Objectives:

- Learn how transitions impact people and how they can lead to mental health issues.
- Learn the three stages of transition and understand their implications.
- Identify when a client is struggling with a transition and how to assist clients in moving through them.

Expanding Inclusive Trauma-Informed Practice: Core Curriculum Trainings to Strengthen Professional Practice
Lori Day, Morgane Vincent, Mikah Covelli, & Moss MacLean

Abstract: This workshop highlights an initiative to expand access to the Core Curriculum on Childhood Trauma (CCCT), a national training developed by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) to strengthen trauma-informed practice across professions serving children. Through this project, the CCCT has been adapted and delivered to both Deaf and hearing professionals, in American Sign Language (ASL), with an additional focus on the unique and often shared considerations for those who work with Deaf and hard of hearing children. This presentation will share training design, emerging findings, and implications for expanding inclusive, trauma-informed education across professional disciplines supporting deaf and hearing children.

Objectives:

- Explain the goals of the Core Curriculum on Childhood Trauma.
- Identify at least 3 unique considerations when applying this curriculum for deaf and hard of hearing children.
- Examine preliminary outcomes from pilot trainings to understand how trauma-informed knowledge, confidence, and reflective practice develop through inclusive learning environments.

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

Special Event: 4:15 PM – 5:15 PM

ADARA General Membership Meeting

Thursday, May 28, 2026

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

Exploring Ketamine-Assisted Psychotherapy with Deaf Individuals
Aileen Aldalur & Amanda O'Hearn

Abstract: Deaf individuals experience higher rates of mental health problems, yet there remain no evidence-based treatments available for Deaf adults. Ketamine Assisted Psychotherapy (KAP) has demonstrated promise as a highly effective, rapid intervention for a range of mental health disorders (e.g., depression, anxiety, substance use disorder, PTSD, etc.), and may be an especially attractive option for use with Deaf individuals given the limited reliance on English, flexible and individualized approach, the inward-focused nature of the ketamine experience, and the ease of conducting therapy in ASL—either through an ASL-fluent provider or via certified ASL interpreters. This workshop will present observational data from a structured experiential professional retreat that explores the use of Ketamine Assisted Psychotherapy (KAP) with Deaf individuals.

Objectives:

- Describe the history of Ketamine Assisted Psychotherapy and its use within psychotherapeutic contexts
- Provide a rationale for how Ketamine Assisted Psychotherapy may help reduce mental health disparities in the Deaf community.
- Discuss the application of a Ketamine Assisted Psychotherapy protocol with Deaf individuals, including possible modifications and strategies to maximize effectiveness.

Enhancing the Well-Being of the Deaf Community in Utah Through Legal Advocacy
Jodi Christel Becker

Abstract: This workshop will focus on the societal issues affecting the Deaf community in Utah. The Utah Deaf History website emphasizes the dynamic systemic issues and barriers that impact the experiences of Deaf individuals. While we will outline specific challenges, it is essential to foster a broader discussion about issues in Deaf education, rehabilitation, and interpreting services. By collaborating with legislators and advocates, we can address these critical issues and work together to eliminate the barriers they present. Through collective action and shared knowledge, we aim to enhance accessibility and well-being for Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. Let us unite to inspire change and promote a more inclusive future for everyone!

Objectives:

- Understand the changes made to Utah's state statute regarding Deaf education.
- Recognize the importance of legislative advocacy in the establishment of the Robert G. Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- Analyze the efforts that contributed to securing the center, which provides essential services, including ASL interpreting, case management, employment assistance, access to technology, outreach programs, and various educational initiatives.
- Identify the legislative measures that established certification requirements for interpreting services in the state, and understand their impact on service quality and accessibility for the Deaf community in Utah.
- Apply strategies for effective advocacy in their own contexts, learning from successful legislative efforts

within Utah.
- Foster discussions on best practices for promoting inclusive educational environments and ensuring equitable access for all students.

Bridging the Gap: How White Therapists Can Effectively Support Black and Brown Clients
Kimberly Clarke & Yvonnia Johnson

Abstract: While mental health services offer support to many, they are often rooted in Eurocentric theories that overlook the lived experiences and healing traditions of Deaf, Black, and Brown communities. This presentation explores how traditional clinical approaches can unintentionally cause harm by ignoring cultural, linguistic, and historical contexts. Attendees will examine the intersections of race, language, and Deaf identity, and learn how to recognize and challenge systemic biases in mental health care. Through case examples and culturally grounded strategies, this session encourages clinicians to decolonize their practice, amplify community-informed healing, and provide affirming care that respects diverse ways of knowing and being.

Objectives:
- Understand the impact of generational trauma and epigenetics of Black/Brown people.
- Recognize how white fragility shows up in the therapeutic relationship.
- Learn the difference between cultural competence and cultural humility.
- Create a safe and affirming therapeutic space for Black/Brown people.
- Observe a role play that will be conducted to present a safe and affirming therapeutic space.

Personal and Professional Self-Care: Combatting Burnout
Hunter Madsen

Abstract: This interactive workshop will explore the complex dynamics of professional burnout, with a particular focus on professionals serving Deaf and Deaf+ individuals. Participants will learn to identify early signs of burnout across emotional, cognitive, and physical domains, and examine how systemic and cultural factors within the Deaf and Deaf+ communities contribute to compassion fatigue and professional exhaustion. Through guided reflection, small group discussion, and practical skill-building, attendees will develop personalized strategies to prevent and recover from burnout. The workshop will also emphasize collective approaches to workplace wellness—highlighting how we can foster peer support, strengthen resilience, and sustain our professional effectiveness while maintaining cultural and linguistic integrity in our work.

Objectives:
- Identify and list how they personally display symptoms of burnout in their professional and private lives.
- Identify and know how to implement habits of self-care to prevent burnout.
- Identify and list a simple process to follow to recover from burnout.
- List new things they learned related to burnout recognition, prevention, and recovery.

Deaf Awareness & Mental Health Cultural Competencies Approaches
Tempest Cooper

Abstract: This interactive workshop explores the intersection of Deaf awareness, mental health, and cultural competency, with an emphasis on addressing the unique experiences of the Black Deaf community. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of how cultural identity, language access, and systemic inequities influence mental health outcomes for Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. The session highlights the importance of recognizing Deaf culture as a distinct linguistic and cultural minority while also addressing the impact of race, particularly for Black Deaf individuals who navigate both racial and disability-related barriers in healthcare and society. Through guided discussion, case studies, and role-play exercises, attendees will learn practical strategies to create more inclusive, accessible, and culturally affirming environments within clinical, educational, and community settings. Topics include understanding intersectionality, the role of interpreters, promoting ASL access in mental health services, and implementing anti-racist and trauma-informed approaches.

Objectives:

- Identify key aspects of Deaf culture and the unique intersectional experiences of Black Deaf individuals in relation to mental health access and outcomes.
- Recognize barriers to effective communication and culturally responsive care within mental health and community service settings for Deaf and hard-of-hearing clients.
- Apply principles of cultural competence, anti-racist practice, and trauma-informed care when supporting Deaf individuals, particularly those from marginalized racial and ethnic backgrounds.
- Demonstrate strategies to create inclusive environments that promote language accessibility, respect Deaf identity, and foster psychological safety.
- Advocate for systemic and institutional changes that advance equity, representation, and culturally affirming mental health services for the Deaf and Black Deaf communities.

Thursday, May 28, 2026

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

Unlock the VRverse: Deaf Youth Need More Than a Mini-Map
Amanda Gerson

Abstract: Navigating Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) can feel like entering a game with hidden rules—especially for Deaf youth who are often expected to self-advocate without the tools, context, or shared language needed to succeed. This session reframes VR professionals as collaborative partners in this game, rather than gatekeepers, emphasizing the shift from compliance-driven practices to person-centered, discovery-based support. Drawing from experiences at Gallaudet University and VR Administration, we will examine strategies that empower Deaf youth to understand the purpose behind VR processes, build confidence, and take ownership of their employment journeys. Participants will learn practical approaches to co-create IPE goals, services, and supports that reflect each student's interests, strengths, and identity. When we equip students with context, clarity, and partnership, we level up true self-advocacy—and everyone wins.

Objectives:

- Identify common barriers Deaf youth face when navigating the VR system, including language and information gaps, procedural complexity, and lack of prior system knowledge.
- Apply person-centered strategies—such as checklists, visual tools, and clear explanations—to help Deaf students understand and engage in the VR process.

- Explain the importance of the "why" behind each VR step or requirement, and how that clarity builds student trust and motivation.
- Utilize person-centered principles to support Deaf students in developing individualized, strengths-based IPE goals and services.

What Does It Mean to Create a Safe Space in Today's Political Climate?
Hades Romero & Tandy Lewis

Abstract: This workshop explores how clinicians, interpreters, vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors, and educators can more effectively support Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) LGBTQIA* individuals in an increasingly hostile political climate. As legislative attacks and systemic barriers grow, DHH LGBTQIA* communities face heightened stress, marginalization, and disruptions to traditional support systems. This session examines the intersection of Deaf culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, and mental health, emphasizing the critical role of chosen family as a protective and affirming factor. Participants will learn practical strategies for adjusting treatment modalities, fostering safety, and creating accessible, affirming environments. Through case studies, discussion, and applied practice, attendees will gain tools to strengthen cultural humility, advocacy, and trauma-informed care for DHH LGBTQIA* clients.

Objectives:
- Identify how current political climates impact the mental health and access to care of DHH LGBTQIA* individuals.
- Apply trauma-informed and culturally responsive strategies to adjust treatment modalities and communication approaches.
- Recognize the importance of chosen family as a protective and affirming factor in mental health support.
- Use affirming language and cultural humility to build trust and safety with DHH LGBTQIA* clients.
- Collaborate effectively across roles (clinicians, interpreters, VR counselors, educators) to reduce systemic barriers and promote equity in care.

Counselor Support of Sexual Health and Wellness in the Deaf Community
Jessica Guess & Jack Dean

Abstract: Individuals outside the Deaf community or within educational spaces often decide on the sexual health and wellness education of Deaf individuals based on their own comfort level. This leads to Deaf adults being more likely to experience victimization and knowledge gaps related to sexual health. When seeking support through counseling, counselors are required to not only be sensitive towards their Deaf identity, but also their sexual and gender orientations. This training focuses on sexual health and wellness within the Deaf community and highlights the importance of better support and affirming care that is accurate and accessible for Deaf adults. Counselors will learn about topics and resources that will allow them to better support Deaf clients' needs. This presentation will also address the topics necessary for counselors to identify information and resources that will allow them to become culturally competent in the area of sexual health and wellness as it pertains specifically to the Deaf community.

Objectives:
- Identify the sexual health and wellness needs of Deaf adults.

- Describe gaps in Deaf sexual health and wellness education.
- Distinguish the risk factors related to victimization in the Deaf Community.
- Use more inclusive language related to sexuality and the queer community.
- Recognize the importance of Counselor training and identifying resources to improve topic competence.

What's Your Niche? Encouraging Sign-Fluent Providers to Obtain Additional Specializations
Paul Silvasi, Jesús Barreto-Abrams, & Alexander Wilkins

Abstract: As a minority population, Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) clients often lack access to specialized mental and behavioral health care that they need. Though there may be sign-fluent providers available, they may lack the specialized training to provide the type of clinical services the client needs. Conversely, there may be providers who possess these specialty experiences, but lack knowledge and training in working with DHH clients. This presents as an ethical issue, as providers should only provide services within the boundaries of their competence. Additionally, research shows that providers unqualified to work with DHH clients have difficulty adapting therapeutic practices and correctly diagnosing DHH clients. AN ideal solution would be to encourage more DHH professionals to obtain specialty training; however, the unfortunate reality is that they face systemic barriers. This workshop will propose how we can unpack biases to increase specialization. Finally, it will discuss areas of specialization in therapy, assessment, and consultation for providers working with DHH communities and discuss real-life experience in pursuing these areas of specialization.

Objectives:
- Identify three issues that can arise when providers lack linguistic and cultural competence when working with DHH clients.
- Discuss two areas of ethical risk associated with sign-fluent providers practicing outside their scope of competence in specialty settings.
- Provide an example of barriers DHH professionals have in obtaining specialty training experiences.
- Identify workarounds or approaches to solve issues of DHH professionals obtaining specialty training.
- Compare three behavioral health specialty areas and evaluate the educational and clinical preparation required to practice ethically within each.

Community Trust and Mapping: Building Local Deaf Ecosystems through Social Capital
Yoko Kobayashi, Kota Takayama, & Yutaka Osugi

Abstract: Deaf communities thrive when social capital—trust, reciprocity, and collaboration—is intentionally cultivated. This interactive 90-minute workshop introduces two complementary methods: community mapping and neighborhood action checklist activity. Participants will identify key regional actors (schools, interpreting centers, agencies, and governments), analyze trust dynamics, and co-design strategies to enhance inclusion. Drawing on case studies from global Deaf ecosystems, the session demonstrates how Deaf-led initiatives and cross-sector partnerships improve mental health, employment access, and belonging. Attendees will create a visual Community Trust Map and an actionable Neighborhood Checklist to apply in their own regions, turning theory into practical, sustainable change. This session advances ADARA's mission by translating social capital theory into community-driven, evidence-based practice.

Objectives:

- Define social capital and trust within local Deaf community contexts.
- Identify key actors and networks supporting D/HH inclusion in their region.
- Use community mapping tools to visualize and evaluate social relationships and gaps.
- Develop and apply a neighborhood action plan to strengthen collaboration and equity.

Thursday, May 28, 2026

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

Disability Advocacy, Education, and Training
Jenifer Montag & Ben Hollingsworth

Abstract: The presentation will focus on practical strategies, including ethical pitfalls, for overcoming these challenges and ensuring that deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing individuals have the support they need to succeed in their vocational pursuits.

Objectives:

- Identify two different methods of disability advocacy within the D/deaf/hard of hearing/DeafBlind communities and explain the pros and cons of each type of advocacy.
- Identify two different types of education opportunities and explain two barriers that can occur within each type of opportunity.
- Discuss vocational opportunities and explain how education opportunities can support pursuit of vocational choices.
- Identify and explain the challenges facing the D/deaf/hard of hearing / DeafBlind community in pursuing vocational choices in the variety of education options available.
- Discuss the application of advocacy methods in supporting avenues of overcoming barriers to education and vocational opportunities.
- Identify and explain two ethical concerns that may arise from the advocacy for and with the D/deaf/hard of hearing/DeafBlind communities within educational and vocational opportunities.
- Describe the ethical decision-making process they can implement when presented with disability advocacy ethical dilemmas in education and training situations.

Bridging Practice: Deaf Clinicians & Interpreter Partnerships
Christina Costello & Sandy Pascual

Abstract: This workshop will examine the unique dynamics that arise when Deaf clinicians and hearing interpreters work together in mental health settings. Participants will consider how privilege and power dynamics influence the therapeutic alliance and the roles each professional holds in clinical interactions. Through discussion and case examples, the workshop will explore both the differences and the intersections of Deaf and interpreter ethical frameworks. In addition, participants will learn strategies for collaboration that address gaps in linguistic and cognitive access, ultimately supporting equitable, effective, and culturally responsive mental health care for Deaf clients.

Objectives:

- Consider the influence of privileges and power dynamics present in the therapeutic alliance between

Deaf clinicians and hearing interpreters.
- Explore the differences and similarities of ethical frameworks.
- Explore how Deaf clinicians and hearing interpreters can collaborate to address gaps in linguistic and cognitive access.

Hope and Resilience for Families Affected by Alcoholism within the Deaf Community
Jessica Kuehne

Abstract: This presentation will cover research-based information about family alcoholism, children of alcoholics (COA), and adult children of alcoholics (ACOA) and explore how it impacts the Deaf community. Cultural considerations regarding alcohol use will be included in the presentation. The purpose of the workshop is to engage participants in increasing their knowledge and understanding of working with the unique group. It is important to note that the lack of studies and resources focusing on family alcoholism which impacts a group of COAs and ACOAs in the Deaf community. The presentation will begin with a brief overview of how family alcoholism impacts individuals in their development, including anxiety, depression, and attachment disruptions in various age groups of individuals affected by family alcoholism. Special recognition will be given to the Deaf culture and language use. Participants will examine the common traits of children and adult children of alcoholics. Identifying the common traits can help mental health professionals and educators utilize appropriate interventions and integrative holistic approaches.

Objectives:
- Identify the characteristic traits and behavioral patterns of individuals affected by family alcoholism, including deaf and hard of hearing individuals.
- Utilize screening tools such as the Children of Alcoholics Screening Test (CAST) and other assessment techniques to evaluate individuals impacted by family alcoholism.
- Recognize the stigma associated with family alcoholism within the Deaf community.
- Discuss the role of Deaf culture, language use, and communication methods in supporting individuals and families in alcoholic households.
- Promote resilience and compassion through strength-oriented perspectives in counseling and education.

Beyond Translation: Contextualized Transadaptation to Improve Accessibility for Cognitively and Linguistically Diverse Deaf Populations
Patrick Boudreault, Lori Day, & Wyatte Hall

Abstract: This workshop presents innovative translational work on ASL assessment measures using a transadaptation framework that integrates linguistic, cognitive, and cultural accessibility to ensure high-quality translation. Many Deaf individuals with histories of language deprivation continue to face challenges with abstract reasoning, temporal concepts, perspective-taking, and inferential understanding. Even properly translated measures can remain difficult to comprehend. Our center's transadaptation model expands beyond linguistic equivalence to consider how Deaf audiences process and interpret meaning based on their cognitive and experiential backgrounds. Findings from two stages of transadaptation development will be shared.

Objectives:
- Define the transadaptation framework and explain how it differs from traditional ASL translation.

- Identify barriers related to language deprivation that affect comprehension and reasoning in Deaf populations.
- Apply contextualized translation techniques to increase accessibility and response validity in ASL materials.
- Evaluate evidence supporting the reliability and validity of contextualized ASL measures.
- Describe how "ASL leveling" frameworks can improve communication across health and behavioral health contexts.

Share, Submit, Review, & Strengthen: Writing and Reviewing in Deafness-Related Research
Damara Paris

Abstract: A persistent shortage of manuscript submissions and peer reviewers in deafness-related fields limits the quality, scope, and accessibility of research impacting Deaf individuals—particularly in social service disciplines. Contributing factors include limited funding for deafness-focused studies, the underrepresentation of Deaf and hard-of-hearing scholars in academia, and the demanding schedules of practitioners who struggle to document their experiences. Additionally, "reviewer fatigue" compounds the problem, as a small pool of qualified experts is repeatedly called upon to evaluate new work, leading to publication delays. This workshop will examine the challenges underlying these shortages and present practical strategies for authors, reviewers, and institutions to strengthen research participation and enhance the knowledge base within deafness-related fields.

Objectives:
- Identify key elements of an effective manuscript proposal for deafness-related and discipline-specific journals.
- Describe ethical and culturally responsive approaches for engaging with Deaf, hard-of-hearing, and other culturally and linguistically diverse populations in research and writing.
- Apply practical strategies to generate and refine manuscript ideas drawn from professional or field-based experiences.
- Differentiate between author and reviewer roles within the scholarly publication process.
- Reflect on personal and professional barriers to publication and identify actionable steps to enhance engagement in the research and review process.

Thursday, May 28, 2026

Special Event: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

SUD Professionals Gathering (Lunch on your own)
Salon A-C

Thursday, May 28, 2026

Concurrent Sessions: 2:00 PM – 3:15 PM

Healing Through Hands and Color: A Professional Development Network for signing Racially/Ethnically Diverse Clinicians
Carla Shird, Hades Romero & Aileen Aldalur

Abstract: Healing Through Hands and Color is a professional development and mentorship network for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and signing therapists who identify as Black, Asian, Indigenous, Latine (o/a), or People of Color. This workshop explores how culturally affirming spaces promote healing, resilience, and connection within marginalized communities. Participants will learn about the creation and continued development of Healing Through Hands and Color, including the collective leadership team, start-up activities, and ideas for future events, training opportunities, mentorship, and community-building practices. Through shared stories and interactive discussion, attendees will reflect on the importance of intersectional identity, representation, and support networks in mental health professions. This session aims to inspire collective action toward more inclusive, sustainable, and equitable spaces for minoritized signing clinicians and their communities.

Objectives:

- Describe the mission and structure of Healing Through Hands and Color.
- Identify challenges and systemic barriers faced by Deaf and signing racially and ethnically minoritized clinicians.
- Apply mentorship and community-building strategies to promote resilience and professional growth.
- Reflect on ways to enhance representation and inclusivity within their own professional spaces.

Innovative Relapse Prevention
Erika Lohmiller

Abstract: This interactive workshop will address the needs of this unique population, and some innovative solutions and tools to potentially help them prevent relapses. Participation, questions and comments are highly encouraged to make this a worthwhile learning experience with valuable networking and ideas to take away from this workshop. A case study will be showcased to brainstorm tools.

Objectives:

- Understand why it is crucial for this population to have an individual relapse prevention plan or toolkit.
- Learn about how to help a person craft an accessible individual relapse prevention plan.
- Acquire helpful resources that can help professionals be able to be more impactful with providing treatment and care for this population.

Workforce Partnerships for Transition: Innovative Ways for an Inclusive Experience
Ashley Schweiger & Michael Fox

Abstract: Join us for an interactive workshop that reflects on the lessons learned from our annual transition event, which sparked strong interest from Workforce Partners and secondary schools across Washington State. This session will explore how we overcame key challenges and turned them into opportunities for growth—

creating a budget-conscious model for accessible and engaging career exploration.
Participants will learn how we adapted career exploration activities using assistive technologies, visual and tactile resources, and culturally responsive practices to meet the diverse needs of youth. The session will highlight practical, cost-efficient approaches to planning inclusive events, and offer tools for educators, service providers, and community partners to support meaningful post-secondary transitions for students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind.

Objectives:

- Identify and implement creative approaches to improve transition planning and employment opportunities for D/HH youth.
- Increase awareness and integration of assistive technologies (AT) including Video Relay Interpreting (VRI) among educators, employers, families, and support professionals.
- Foster collaborative partnerships among state agencies, schools, service providers, and communities to enhance outcomes for D/HH individuals.
- Explore cost-effective solutions for maximizing accessibility despite budget constraints.

iOS and Android Accessibility Options for Deaf & Hard of Hearing
Tina Gonzales-Childress

Abstract: Mobile technology has revolutionized communication access for individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH). This session will explore the latest native accessibility features available on iOS and Android platforms, including speech-to-text and text-to-speech services, sound notification alerts, captioning options, and hearing device integrations such as Auracast. Participants will also examine selected third-party apps that extend functionality for real-time captioning, text-to-speech, video communication, and remote microphone use. Through demonstrations and discussion, attendees will gain practical knowledge on how these tools can enhance daily communication, safety, and independence for DHH users across multiple settings. Strategies for recommending and customizing features based on individual needs will also be highlighted.

Objectives:

- Identify and describe native iOS and Android accessibility features that support communication access for individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.
- Evaluate third-party mobile apps that enhance real-time captioning, text-to-speech, and remote communication capabilities.
- Demonstrate strategies for recommending and customizing mobile technology tools to meet the diverse needs of DHH users in various environments.

Becoming Who I Needed: Why the Deaf Mental Health Hub Matters in a Digital Age of Access
Naima Johnson

Abstract: Many Deaf individuals seek mental health support only to encounter systems not designed with us in mind. As a Deaf therapist who once struggled to find a provider who signed, my personal healing journey became the foundation for my professional path. This presentation shares how lived experience informed the creation of the Deaf Mental Health Hub—a Deaf-led space centered on belonging, cultural safety, and language affirmation. Participants will explore the emotional and systemic barriers that impact Deaf clients, gain insight into Deaf-centered healing practices, and learn strategies for building accessible, community-

rooted support networks. Together, we consider how becoming who we needed can transform not only ourselves, but the communities we serve.

Objectives:

- Identify key systemic and cultural barriers that impact access to mental health support for Deaf individuals.
- Describe how language, identity, and lived experience influence the therapeutic relationship and client engagement.
- Apply Deaf-centered practices that promote cultural safety, emotional connection, and a sense of belonging in counseling or support settings.
- Recognize the role of community-rooted healing spaces—such as the Deaf Mental Health Hub—in supporting wellness across diverse Deaf communities.
- Reflect on their own professional or personal experiences to determine how they can contribute to more equitable, culturally responsive mental health care for Deaf clients.

Thursday, May 28, 2026

Concurrent Sessions: 3:45 PM – 5:00 PM

Research Presentations and Panel Discussion: Gallaudet University Clinical Psychology Doctoral Students
Lisa Swanson, Margalit Roitman, Thanh-Ha Christina Nguyen, Marguerite "Maggie" Wildermuth, McKenna Amdal, & Alexandra Novak

Abstract: This workshop is a panel series of brief presentations sharing results from research projects completed by Gallaudet University Clinical Psychology doctoral students. The presenters will describe the following research projects: 1) Early language exposure and the associations with frequency of number of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) experienced; 2) Cultural identity development and help-seeking behaviors among Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Deaf populations; 3) Retrospective social emotional impacts of summer camps attendance on Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults; 4) Expressive therapy approaches through the role-playing Dungeons and Dragons game 5) Information deprivation trauma among Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults; and 6) Influence of ASL linguistic factors on confrontational naming tests in neuropsychological assessments. The presentations will be followed by Q&A.

Objectives:

- Compare and contrast at least three methodological designs and recruitment procedures used in research with Deaf and Hard of Hearing populations.
- Discuss the impact of language access, communication preferences, and cultural-linguistic barriers on engagement in mental health service research.
- Evaluate ethical and cultural considerations and reflect how these may impact research and clinical outcomes with Deaf/Hard of Hearing individuals.
- Analyze how role-playing based therapy can be made culturally affirmative and effective with DHH community groups.
- Integrate the information related to different settings and ages of sign language exposure and how they might mitigate the risk of experiencing significant amounts of early childhood adversity.

Accessible Work for All: Removing Barriers in Deaf-Serving Roles
Katie McMahon

Abstract: This presentation explores the barriers that Deaf, DeafBlind, and DeafDisabled professionals face in today's job market within Deaf-serving organizations, particularly the overemphasis on relocating, transportation expectations, and other able-bodied requirements. Even if an employer is willing to waive such requirements, the mere presence signals inaccessibility to those affected. These systemic barriers limit employment opportunities in an already small job market, discouraging qualified applicants. When employers insist on in-person roles only, services are limited to local clients rather than reaching a wider community. The session will discuss strategies for creating more inclusive hiring practices, providing more remote work options, and increasing services through accessible, equitable employment structures and a wider client base.

Objectives:

- Analyze how relocation, mobility, and other able-bodied requirements limit employment opportunities.
- Become informed on how to create more inclusive hiring practices and workplace accommodations.
- Evaluate the benefits of remote work and flexible employment structures.

An Introduction to Internal Family Systems Therapy for the Deaf
Jory Agate

Abstract: We all have parts that help us cope and deal with the challenges of life and the injustices of the world: especially our Deaf clients who navigate a hearing world not designed for them and their needs. Sometimes these parts of us get stuck in extreme roles that are not helpful to our daily functioning: Perhaps parts that cope with substances, anxiety, depression, or masking what we truly need and feel. Internal Family Systems is an evidenced-based therapeutic model that views the multiplicity of the mind as our natural state. It works to heal the parts of ourselves that have developed maladaptive behaviors as protective strategies for our internal pain and shame. Participants will be exposed to an overview of the model, its history and development, and some basic tools for how to utilize a client's innate healing energy to transform their inner system. This workshop will be didactic, experiential and include a session demo.

Objectives:

- Identify the fundamental concepts of the Internal Family Systems model of psychotherapy.
- Identify parts within their clients' systems and their protective strategies.
- Map a client's system, identifying manager, firefighter and exile parts.
- Interview a protective part and learn the vulnerability it is protecting.
- Identify the 8 steps towards healing the burdens, or misguided beliefs, within their client's systems.
- Learn how other levels of systems, family, schools, political, etc. can impact the internal system, especially those with experiences related to Deafness, and explore avenues for individual healing and systemic change.

How to Diagnose Adult ADHD Without Standardized Testing: Practical and Culturally Responsive Approaches
Adam Brownfeld

Abstract: Many ADHD self-report measures are limited by self-report biases, linguistic variability, and narrow definitions of impairment that may not reflect the clients' experiences.

Led by a licensed psychologist and ADHD specialist, the session will review the limitations of standardized measures and the DSM framework, highlighting how these tools can both inform and mislead diagnostic formulation. Participants will learn to gather diagnostic data through structured clinical interviews, collateral information, and behavioral observations, as well as incorporate functional assessments to evaluate attention, organization, and executive functioning. Participants will also learn treatment planning focused on executive functioning strategies that improve daily organization, time management, and follow-through.

Objectives:

- Identify limitations of standardized testing and DSM-based criteria in diagnosing adult ADHD.
- Apply alternative assessment strategies such as structured clinical interviews, behavioral observations, and functional analyses.
- Differentiate ADHD symptoms from other clinical or contextual presentations using a comprehensive, evidence-informed framework.
- Learn various executive functioning strategies to support daily functioning.

Climbing Higher: Fostering Emotional Strength in DeafBlind Lives
Ashley Benton & Eleanor Coley-Brody

Abstract: This interactive workshop equips professionals across disciplines to effectively support DeafBlind individuals as they adjust to combined vision and hearing loss. Participants will gain foundational knowledge of DeafBlind etiologies and the psychosocial adjustment process, including stages of grief, identity development, and emotional adaptation. Through case discussions, group activities, and peer sharing, participants will explore strategies to foster emotional resiliency, promote self-esteem, and encourage independence. The session emphasizes the power of mentoring and peer support in building confidence and belonging. Participants will learn practical approaches for guiding DeafBlind individuals through self-advocacy, communication access, and readiness for employment or community engagement. Real-world examples and hands-on exercises will help attendees apply tools for supporting well-being and self-determination.

Objectives:

- Describe common etiologies and emotional responses related to DeafBlindness.
- Identify strategies that strengthen resiliency and coping.
- Apply techniques that promote independence, meaningful participation, and a positive sense of identity.

Thursday, May 28, 2026

Special Event: 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

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

Poster Sessions:	**Presenters:**	
DeafBlindness and Mental Health: Addressing the Research Silence	*Jamie Gleason*	
Mindfulness Practice in the Deaf Community	*Gianni Voytilla*	*Kathryn Wagner*
Exploring Mental Health Crises for Deaf with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	*Haley Turner*	
Evaluating a Brief Didactic Intervention on Medical Students' Knowledge of Language Development in DHH Populations	*Shannon Montague*	
Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy: Contemporary Understanding of Psychoanalytic Theory and Practice	*David King*	
The Utilization of the MMPI 3 with Examinees Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing	*Richard Amsel*	*Tali Shir*
Echoes of Audism: Recurring Trauma Among DHH Aides and Interpreters in Mainstream K–12 Settings	*Ivory Gonzales*	
Education for ALL Means ALL Education: Access to Postsecondary Education in ALL Its Forms	*Jenifer Montag*	
Effective Communication Under the ADA	*Jaime Garvin*	
Connect and Discover: Assistive/Access Technologies in Today's World	*Tina Gonzales-Childress*	
Beyond Sound: Multi-sensory Alerts for a Safer Home	*Tina Gonzales-Childress*	
Deaf Children Become Deaf Parents: Intergenerational Trauma and the Invisible Legacy of Language Injustice	*Joy Plote*	
Deaf Adolescents' Linguistic Contexts and Identity/Acculturation Processes as Related to Self-Esteem	*Derrian Tabilin*	
Why Accessible and Equitable Crisis Care Matters	*Bryan Leeper*	

Friday, May 29, 2026

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

If We Aim for Equitable Care, Where Do Deaf Interpreters Fit In?
Donna Guardino, Joshua Mora & Julayne Feilbach

Abstract: Misconceptions about the role of Deaf Interpreters (DIs) among Deaf and hearing healthcare providers and hearing interpreters (HIs) contribute to the underutilization of DI and DI-HI interpreting teams. This underuse compromises the ability to provide culturally responsive care to Deaf patients and hinders both the growth and retention of the DI field. This workshop presents preliminary findings from the presenters' research on DIs and DI-HI interpreting teams in healthcare settings, clarifies common misconceptions, and highlights the benefits of DI involvement. Drawing on experiences from the University of Rochester Medical Center - home to several DIs - the session also offers individual and systemic strategies for Deaf and hearing healthcare providers, HIs, and DIs to collaborate and effectively integrate DIs in healthcare.

Objectives:

- Learn about the benefits of using Deaf interpreters in various settings.
- Explain a type of interpreting approach that can increase session effectiveness with Deaf patients.
- Identify at least two strategies providers and interpreters can incorporate to utilize or advocate for DIs in healthcare.
- Develop strategies to advocate for the use of Deaf interpreters within their workplace.

Supporting Deaf Mothers: Postpartum Mental Health, Equity, and Access to Care
Melinda Fonda

Abstract: Postpartum mood and anxiety disorders affect many mothers, yet Deaf mothers face disproportionate barriers to care, including lack of ASL-accessible services, provider bias, and systemic inequities. This session examines the intersection of maternal mental health, Deaf culture, and healthcare access. Participants will learn to recognize signs of postpartum depression and anxiety in Deaf mothers and explore strategies to provide culturally responsive, accessible, and trauma-informed support. Designed for therapists, healthcare providers, interpreters, and advocates, this session equips participants with practical tools to empower Deaf mothers and promote equitable, family-centered postpartum care.

Objectives:

- Identify common perinatal mood and anxiety disorders and signs in Deaf mothers.
- Recognize systemic barriers to postpartum mental health care in the Deaf community.
- Apply culturally responsive, evidence-based strategies to support maternal mental health.
- Develop practical tools for improving access and equity in perinatal care.

Integrating Art Therapy into a Partial Care Program
Dominique Pickett & Dana Rudison

Abstract: This presentation recommends adding art therapy to the Partial Care program as a structured therapeutic activity to support client recovery. Art therapy will provide a creative outlet for emotional

expression, stress development by complementing existing groups; it will enhance engagement, promote emotional regulation, and contribute to the program's holistic approach to treatment goals.

Objectives:

- Understand the role of Art therapy in Partial Care. Participants will identify benefits of art therapy and its role within Partial Care program.
- Identify key techniques and approaches. Participants identify practical art therapy techniques for emotional expression, stress management and coping skill development.
- Evaluate outcomes & effectiveness. Explore strategies to integrate art therapy into existing behavioral health programming.

Trauma Through Deaf Clinical Lens: Equity, Language Access, and Clinical Responsibility
Kristine Gile & Danielle Previ

Abstract: This presentation examines trauma through a culturally and linguistically informed lens, highlighting how systemic barriers, language deprivation, audism, and medical trauma intersect to shape traumatic experiences within these communities. Standard trauma definitions and assessment tools often exclude signed language users and do not account for communication inequities, resulting in underdiagnosis, misdiagnosis, and ineffective treatment. This presentation will explore common clinical challenges, including the misinterpretation of language dysfluency as psychosis, overdiagnosis of behavioral disorders in deaf youth, and the pathologizing of adaptive cultural behaviors. Through case examples and current research, we will discuss strategies to improve diagnostic accuracy while reducing ethical and cultural risks in clinical practice.

Objectives:

- Identify unique trauma experiences in Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind individuals, including the impact of language deprivation, communication barriers, and systemic discrimination.
- Recognize common assessment challenges and clinical or vocational misdiagnoses (e.g., confusing language dysfluency or trauma responses with cognitive impairment, behavior disorders, or psychosis) and apply strategies to improve diagnostic accuracy.
- Apply culturally and linguistically responsive trauma-informed practices, including treatment adaptations and ethical collaboration with interpreters and Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDIs), to improve service outcomes.

Empowering Futures: A Deep Dive into Pre-Employment Transition Services
Meg Cassinelli & Laura Thompson

Abstract: This concurrent session will provide an essential overview of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), designed to support students with disabilities in preparing for life after high school. Participants will gain a clear understanding of the five required pre-ETS services: Job Exploration Counseling, Work-Based Learning Experiences, Counseling on Postsecondary Education, Workplace Readiness Training, and Instruction in Self-Advocacy. Special emphasis will be placed on Workplace Readiness Training and Work-Based Learning Experiences, highlighting practical strategies and successful implementation models. Attendees will leave with a stronger grasp of how these services empower students to make informed career decisions and build foundational skills for employment.

Objectives:

- Understand the core elements and legal foundations of Pre-ETS under WIOA.
- Understand the structure and goals of Workplace Readiness Training and Work Based Learning Experiences.
- Learn how to engage students, families, and stakeholders in the process.
- Explore success stories and implementation strategies.

Friday, May 29, 2026

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

Bridge of Time: Caregivers & Care Receivers with Hearing Loss in Alzheimer's and Dementia
Jaime Wilson

Abstract: This workshop is designed to empower attendees with practical tools, cultural insight, and emotional resilience to navigate the complex realities of caregiving in the context of memory loss and hearing loss. Whether the caregiver or the person being cared for is Deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened, or hearing, this session offers a culturally affirming framework that fills a major gap in dementia care resources. Participants will explore how hearing loss affects memory, communication, emotional expression, and safety—and how to build strong, accessible support systems that bridge these challenges.

Objectives:

- Understand how hearing loss and dementia interact and impact both caregivers and care receivers.
- Gain practical caregiving strategies that promote safety, communication, and emotional well-being.
- Learn to recognize and address signs of caregiver burnout before they become overwhelming.
- Discover how to assemble a trusted, culturally aware care team—including interpreters and Deaf-friendly professionals.
- Reflect on the emotional journey of caregiving, including how to let go when it's time—and why doing so is an act of love, not failure.

Advocating for Justice-Involved Deaf Individuals: Mental Health, Communication, and Community Solutions
Tomina Schwenke & Kelly Sterling

Abstract: Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and Deaf-Blind individuals face unique challenges within the criminal justice system, where competency, capacity, and mental health are frequently misunderstood. Building on findings from Deaf People in the Criminal Justice System (Guthmann, Lomas, Paris, & Martin, 2021) and Roger Williams's work on linguistic incompetence, this workshop explores how language deprivation, diagnostic bias, and systemic barriers impact justice outcomes. Presenters will share professional experience and current research to help judicial partners critically assess mental health evaluations, identify misdiagnoses, and improve collaboration with sign language users. Emphasis will be placed on advocating for social justice within the criminal justice system through providing participants with practical strategies and community resources to promote equitable, accurate, and culturally informed outcomes for deaf individuals in forensic and judicial settings.

Objectives:

- Identify the training and expertise necessary for professionals working with deaf individuals in forensic and judicial settings.
- Describe how linguistic deprivation and dysfluency affect assessments of competency, capacity, and mental health.
- Recognize diagnostic and systemic biases contributing to the inequitable treatment of deaf individuals.
- Locate and utilize community and institutional resources to improve outcomes and foster systemic change for deaf individuals in the legal system.

Left Behind at Base Camp: Information Deprivation and Trauma in DHH Communities
Morgane Vincent & Shilpa Hanumantha Lacy

Abstract: Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) people face disproportionately high trauma exposure, often linked to communication exclusion and information deprivation. During crisis events, inaccessible communication increases fear and impedes coping. This preliminary mixed-methods study investigates acute trauma responses among up to 10 DHH students and staff present during the September 10, 2025 Utah Valley University shooting. Standardized measures (PDI, PCL-5) will assess peritraumatic distress and PTSD symptoms, while ASL-accessible interviews will examine communication barriers, dissociation, and protective factors during the event. Findings will advance understanding of information deprivation as a trauma mechanism and inform evidence-based emergency preparedness for DHH communities.

Objectives:

- Examine the concept of information deprivation trauma as a potential psychological risk factor for heightened distress and posttraumatic stress disorder in DHH populations.
- Discuss the broader mental health impacts of mass violence within DHH communities, including barriers to crisis support and systemic inaccessibility.
- Identify strategies for inclusive, trauma-informed emergency preparedness, response, and recovery systems.

Deaf Clinicians Working with Deaf Interpreters in Therapy Settings
Mary Bird & Andrew Veith

Abstract: The presentation will highlight key aspects of the clinician–interpreter relationship, including how to manage therapeutic alliances, maintain confidentiality, and navigate dual roles. Practical examples will be drawn from real-world case scenarios to illustrate how Deaf clinicians can ensure equitable, culturally and linguistically appropriate care for Deaf clients while maintaining professional integrity. Participants will leave with a framework for collaboration that enhances client outcomes and strengthens team communication.

Objectives:

- Identify role boundaries and expectations between Deaf clinicians and Deaf interpreters.
- Describe communication and ethical strategies that support therapeutic effectiveness.
- Apply best-practice models to common clinician–interpreter challenges.
- Evaluate case examples for culturally responsive and ethical decision-making.

How to Use Vocational Assessment Data
Steven Sligar

Abstract: Vocational assessment professionals collect extensive data from a variety of sources. These include background reports from other professionals, client self-reports, test scores, and direct observations made throughout the assessment in the office, on the job, or in the community. All of these are grounded in communication and the lived experiences of Deaf and Deaf+ people, which determine the validity of the collected data. How can a professional determine if the data is trustworthy and accurately reflects the client's level of functioning? The presenter will offer suggestions about collecting usable data, conducting an analysis, applying triangulation to verify interests, values, and aptitudes, and interpreting the data to support recommendations. Participants will develop new insights into data interpretation and effective reporting.

Objectives:

- List the different types of data collected in a vocational assessment of a person who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing.
- Discuss and compare three types of data analysis.
- Define and apply triangulation.
- Identify two types of and four levels of data interpretation.
- Assess the applicability of data analysis, triangulation, and interpretation for people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Friday, May 29, 2026

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

Project Fast Forward: A Higher Education Pathway for Deaf & Hard of Hearing High School Students
David Strom

Abstract: Project Fast Forward helps deaf and hard-of-hearing high school students get a head start on a college degree by offering dual-credit college courses in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields. The ultimate goal of the program is to spark students' interest in STEM careers and provide them with introductory skills while earning college credits. The dual-credit courses are offered by Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf and taught at the students' high schools by their own teachers during regular school hours. The credits can be applied toward a degree at RIT/NTID or transferred to other colleges that accept them. Teachers, guidance counselors, and school administrators involved with Project Fast Forward benefit from all-expenses-paid professional development training for up to one week during the summer on the RIT campus. Participants receive a stipend and learn about secondary education training at RIT/NTID, today's world of STEM careers from RIT/NTID employment specialists, and strategies for connecting with and educating deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

Objectives:

- Define what Project Fast Forward program is.
- Differentiate from higher education dual enrollment and dual-credit programs.
- Recall and share information about RIT/NTID Project Fast Forward program with secondary school educators, staff and administrators of DHH HS students.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Couples: Expanding Access, Awareness and Equity in Therapy
Ryssa Fleischer & Simone Mau Slone

Abstract: Research on couples therapy for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) individuals remains limited, often leaving therapists without guidance tailored to this population. Mainstream models, such as Gottman's and Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT), provide useful frameworks but frequently overlook the unique communication, cultural, and relational dynamics of DHH couples and families. Drawing on clinical observations with both Deaf–Deaf and Deaf–Hearing couples, this presentation highlights relational strengths, barriers, and patterns shaped by audism and societal inequities. We will discuss strategies for culturally responsive, linguistically accessible therapy while reflecting on identity development, communication access, and power dynamics. By examining these experiences through a social justice lens, this presentation emphasizes the need for research-informed approaches that better support DHH couples and families in therapy.

Objectives:

- Describe gaps in current couple and family therapy frameworks and explain why additional research is needed to support DHH couples and families.
- Identify ways to adapt and apply existing models, including Gottman's and EFT, using clinical observations and culturally relevant research.
- Analyze case reflections to recognize patterns, strengths, and challenges unique to DHH couples and families in therapy.
- Reflect on their own therapeutic approaches and consider strategies to increase equity, accessibility, and cultural responsiveness when working with DHH clients.
- Examine the influence of identity development, communication access, and audism on relational and familial dynamics through a social justice lens.

Equity: Building Recovery: Peer Support and Recovery Coaching for Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Karran Larson

Abstract: This presentation examines the development and implementation of culturally and linguistically appropriate addiction recovery coaching services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. established in 2017 as the first Deaf Addiction Recovery Coach program, this initiative addresses the significant barriers in traditional treatment settings. Recovery Coaching utilizes a comprehensive wellness model, development of recovery capital, and systemic advocacy. This session will include recruitment strategies, training adaptations and case scenarios. Participants will gain insight into the necessity of peer support. How Recovery Coaches differ from Peer Support Specialists, and the unique challenges and successes of serving this population.

Objectives:

- Understand the concept of Equity in Recovery.
- Explore the holistic approach to recovery and its connection to equity.
- Engage with the three pillars of recovery coaching, self-directed, strength -based, forward facing.

Diagnostic Trends: A 20-year Alabama Study
Kent Schafer

Abstract: This session presents a longitudinal study investigating mental health diagnostic trends and patterns among Deaf and Hearing individuals using a comprehensive dataset from Alabama Department of Mental Health spanning 2004-2024 (Deaf=4,547; Hearing=2,056,188). The analysis focused on diagnostic differences between deaf and hearing consumers. The study also documented a steady increase in some specific disorder diagnoses among deaf individuals over time. These trends suggest that systemic challenges may contribute to diagnostic inconsistencies. We will identify a few factors that improved diagnostic accuracy and reduced misdiagnoses, underscoring the economic and clinical value of appropriate services. Audience will gain insights into how these trends impact their practice and how they can contribute to effective care..

Objectives:

- Summarize key findings from a study that identified statistically significant diagnostic differences between Deaf and hearing consumers.
- Explain how systemic factors affect diagnostic consistency and contribute to at least two differences, especially among Deaf individuals.
- Identify at least two roles or strategies that support more accurate deaf mental health assessments and reduce the risk of diagnostic overshadowing.

Translating Deaf Identity Measures: Balancing Clinical Accuracy and Cultural Authenticity
Patrick Boudreault & Aileen Aldalur

Abstract: This interactive workshop explores the ethical and conceptual challenges of translating Deaf identity-based measures from English into ASL. Presenters share insights from a Deaf-led process that revealed how linguistic precision and cultural meaning often diverge. These tensions highlight that shared community identity does not simplify translation but deepens the ethical responsibility to represent meaning faithfully. Participants will engage in small-group translation activities, compare ASL renderings of assessment items, and discuss how expression, grammar, and context shape interpretation. The session concludes with a reflection on advancing Deaf-centered research and culturally grounded assessment practices.

Objectives:

- Recognize key challenges in translating assessment measures from English into ASL.
- Describe how language and culture influence the meaning of Deaf identity measures.
- Practice translating and comparing ASL versions of sample assessment items.

Friday, May 29, 2026

Special Event: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

LGBTQ Gathering (Lunch on your own)
Salon A-C

Friday, May 29, 2026

Concurrent Sessions: 2:00 PM – 3:15 PM

Deaf Cultural Concepts of Distress
Aileen Aldalur & Wyatte Hall

Abstract: This workshop will present data from a project designed to begin identifying and documenting Deaf cultural concepts of distress. The DSM-5 defines cultural concepts of distress as "the ways that cultural groups experience, understand, and communicate suffering, behavioral problems, or troubling thoughts and emotions" (p. 758) Cultural concepts of distress include cultural syndromes, cultural idioms of distress, and cultural explanations for mental health problems. While extensively studied in other groups, this has yet to be explored with Deaf individuals. This study conducted semi-structured interviews with culturally Deaf adults following the DSM-5 Cultural Formulation Interview protocol to identify cultural definitions and perspectives of the cause and context of mental health problems and begin to identify potential Deaf cultural concepts of distress.

Objectives:

- Explain cultural concept of distress and provide examples of cultural syndromes, cultural idioms of distress, and cultural explanations that have been documented among different cultural groups.
- Identify the unique sociocultural factors that influence how Deaf individuals experience, talk about, and explain mental health problems.
- Identify potential Deaf cultural concepts of distress and engage in discussion about new concepts that should be documented.

Accountability That Sticks
Ben Daniels

Abstract: Professionals who serve Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind individuals often struggle with accountability across agencies and disciplines. When follow through is weak, teams and consumers feel the consequences through fragmented services and lost opportunities. This session introduces a practical framework for accountability that emphasizes trust, clarity, and collaboration. Through interactive exercises and real-world scenarios, participants will explore how to set shared expectations, give constructive feedback, and hold colleagues accountable without damaging relationships. The workshop will highlight strategies that strengthen interdisciplinary teamwork and improve service outcomes. Participants will leave with tools that can be applied immediately in vocational rehabilitation, behavioral health, interpreting, education, and independent living contexts to create accountability that lasts.

Objectives:

- Identify at least three common barriers to accountability in interdisciplinary teamwork serving Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind consumers.
- Demonstrate two strategies for giving constructive feedback across agencies or disciplines without eroding trust.
- Apply the sticky accountability framework to strengthen collaboration and improve consumer outcomes.

- Develop an action plan for integrating accountability practices into their own professional settings.

Advancing Behavioral Health Equity for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Adults in Georgia
Makoto Ikegami & Kota Takayama

Abstract: This session presents findings from a statewide needs assessment of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH+) adults in Georgia. Through a bilingual survey of 56 participants, the study identified high unmet needs in counseling, psychiatric care, peer support, and housing, with disparities linked to education and insurance. One-quarter of respondents—particularly men—were unaware of available services, underscoring gaps in outreach and navigation. We will discuss systemic barriers such as a shortage of ASL-fluent providers, interpreter dependence, and limited culturally responsive care. The session highlights actionable strategies, including community-led outreach, provider training, and regional coalitions. Participants will gain insights into advancing equity, access, and culturally affirming behavioral health practices for DHH+ populations.

Objectives:
- Identify systemic barriers that impact DHH+ adults' access to behavioral health and developmental disability services.
- Analyze survey findings that link unmet service needs to education, insurance status, and awareness of state resources.
- Describe culturally responsive, language-accessible strategies for service delivery and provider training.
- Apply community-based and coalition-building approaches to reduce disparities and improve equity.
- Develop outreach and advocacy strategies to engage underrepresented DHH+ subpopulations.

Dancing the Dance: Community-Based Approaches that Honor the Struggle
Jennifer Giaquinto & Brittany Granger

Abstract: This presentation moves beyond theory to equip clinicians with tangible strategies integral to the "dance" of trauma-informed care. These methods are selected for their efficacy, cultural competence, and role in ensuring a higher standard of care. Attendees will learn actionable techniques that foster clinician confidence and client empowerment by learning and applying techniques of visual timelines and spatial mapping, structured mirroring, and deaf-centric safety planning.
The practical application of these tools demonstrates cultural humility and helps clinicians build a coherent trauma narrative with Deaf persons served.

Objectives:
- Understand and practice the application of Visual Timelines and Spatial Mapping: The use of the visual-spatial nature of American Sign Language to help persons served externalize and organize trauma narratives in a culturally and linguistically congruent manner.
- Understand and practice Structured Mirroring: An intentional technique where the clinician matches the person served's signing pace, emotional tone, and non-manual markers to build profound rapport and facilitate co-regulation.
- Gain familiarity with Deaf-Centric Safety Planning: This will have a strong emphasis on choices with safety boundaries for the person served and the working provider/clinician. Deaf-centric safety plans that integrate culturally specific resources, such as Deaf-friendly community providers or hotlines, rather than relying on inaccessible, hearing-centric crisis services.

NTID Stakeholder Collaboration and Outreach-Strategic Planning Through Building Relationships
Theresa Johnson & Charles McFadden

Abstract: NTID, one of nine colleges of the Rochester Institute of Technology,is designed to serve students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Students from across the nation and the globe choose NTID because of its' exemplary support services, direct instruction by faculty who can communicate with them, and the many academic offerings available. However, many young students-especially those who are not exposed to Deaf/HH role models-cannot envision the possibilities as someone who is Deaf. And even those who dream of a career in a specific field often have no idea what the path might be to achieve that dream. The NTID pre college programs are designed to reach out to students, families, educators and rehab specialists, and in collaboration, create experiences which will lead to a better understanding of what is possible for Deaf/HH individuals in the workplace. The presenters will share details about the summer programs for middle school and high school students, conferences for educators, parent workshops and networking with rehab staff, all of which serves to guide students to dream big, set goals and work hard to achieve the career goals they aspire toward. Audience participation is encouraged.

Objectives:

- Learn about the broad range of stakeholders considered essential to sustain the ongoing global impact that NTID has on students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.
- Learn about the ongoing efforts of the pre-college team to cultivate youth which may ultimately lead to meaningful employment in a field of their choosing.
- Learn what specific programming and resources are available to students, educators, vocational rehabilitation staff and others offered by NTID throughout the year both on campus and across the nation.

Friday, May 29, 2026

Concurrent Sessions: 3:45 PM – 5:00 PM

Competency to Stand Trial (CST): A critical Review of CST Evaluations Involving Deaf Defendants and the Changing Legal Landscape
Gabriel Lomas & Erin Farley

Abstract: This workshop will share cases in which Deaf people were evaluated for Competency to Stand Trail (CST), and their outcomes. The number of Competency to Stand Trial (CST) evaluations has increased over the past two decades with the most recent research estimating more than 140,000 Competent to Stand Trial (CST) evaluations are conducted every year in the United States (Kois, Potts, Cox, and Zapft, 2024). This increasing volume of CST evaluations is leading to increased pressure on the court system, as well as the associated behavioral health systems. In response, various jurisdictions across the US have undertaken efforts to reform the CST and restoration process. This presentation will discuss these recent reform efforts, including the creation of competency dockets, expansion of competency restoration programs, and the implications these reforms have for Deaf defendants. Recommendations for restoration programs will be offered.

Objectives:

- Identify key aspects of competency to stand trail evaluations.
- Identify reform efforts to the CST and restoration process.

- Identify at least two recommendations to improve restorations for Deaf defendants.

Improving Access for Deaf and Disabled Learners in Corrections: Findings from a National Pilot
Ben Wright & Jenifer Montag

Abstract: Incarcerated individuals with disabilities, especially those who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind, remain among the most underserved populations in education, vocational rehabilitation, and behavioral health systems. This session will share insights from a national pilot project—led by The Community in collaboration with Dr. Jenifer Montag and AHEAD—that is currently visiting 25 states to examine and improve disability access in prison education programs. Participants will explore how disability is identified and accommodated across adult basic education, GED, vocational, and higher education contexts inside correctional facilities. The presenters will share findings from site visits and stakeholder interviews, including common barriers to access, promising practices, and recommendations from educators, interpreters, and disability coordinators working inside carceral environments. The session will also introduce a new Disability Access Training Manual designed to support staff and faculty in providing equitable, culturally responsive services. Interactive components will allow attendees to reflect on their own practice, identify gaps in access, and adapt strategies for their setting.

Objectives:
- Identify common systemic barriers to disability access in carceral education programs, particularly for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind individuals.
- Describe effective strategies and accommodations currently used across prison education programs in 25 pilot states.
- Apply key components of the Disability Access Training Manual to improve practices within their own vocational rehabilitation, educational, or behavioral health setting.
- Analyze how intersectional identities—including disability, incarceration status, and communication modality—impact service delivery and access to education.
- Develop action steps to support inclusive, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive services for incarcerated learners with disabilities.

Mental Health Diagnoses and Language Considerations
Charlene Crump & Roger Williams

Abstract: This workshop aims to consider the complex interplay between language patterns, language dysfluency, and mental health diagnoses, when working with Deaf populations. Language can be a potential indicator of symptomology related to mental health diagnoses. Professionals working in the field, including therapists and interpreters need to be able to recognize how language can be impacted and changed based on the specific mental health diagnoses, and subsequently what approaches should be considered in regards to communication with the consumer.

Objectives:
- Discuss symptomology associated with specific mental health diagnoses and its impact on communication.
- Examine potential strategies to maximum effective communication with mental health work.
- Consider how assessment of communication occurs with treatment when working with deaf individuals.

Mental Health Awareness Through a Graphic Novel
Christine Gannon & Dae-Kun Kim

Abstract: Mental health illnesses are increasing across the country and include deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Researchers conducted a qualitative case study to explore whether reading and discussing Rock Steady, Brilliant Advice from My Bipolar Life by Ellen Forney would increase mental health awareness for deaf and hard of hearing college students. The 20 participants found Rock Steady to be helpful for improving mental health literacy and providing tools for healthy coping. Though more research is needed, researchers' findings suggest that using Rock Steady can be one part of larger efforts to address mental health. The presenter will share the results of this study and engage participants in a discussion about how this and additional alternative approaches can benefit efforts to provide mental health support.

Objectives:

- Justify with at least one reason for the need to expand mental health services beyond counseling services to further support individuals.
- Identify at least three different settings where it would be feasible to use a graphic novel as a tool for providing mental health support.
- Describe at least one benefit of using graphic novels, including Rock Steady, Brilliant Advice from My Bipolar Life, as tools in providing mental health support.
- Identify and explore at least three additional alternative ways to address mental health that are inclusive of all individuals including Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of hearing students.

Deaf Child Welfare Practice in the Judicial System: Collaboration and Operational Frameworks
Veronica Ino & Lynnette Miller

Abstract: In this workshop, presenters bring over 20 years of frontline experience as Deaf-led children's social workers within the judicial system. They will present a historical timeline and status of how the Deaf-led advocacy group, Advocacy Council and Ally for Deaf Children, successfully established a formal Deaf Services Unit within the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. The session also highlights the collaboration with San Diego County that led to the creation of its Deaf Services Program under County Health and Human Services. Presenters will illustrate how Deaf-led Social Workers services have improved service outcomes, closing disparities, advancing equity, and ensuring legal compliance. The workshop will also address the overlooked needs of CODAs and SODAs in the judicial system.

Objectives:

- Trace the historical development of Deaf Services Units, including the role of Deaf-led advocacy in Los Angeles and San Diego counties.
- Identify systemic disparities affecting Deaf families, CODAs, and SODAs in the judicial and child welfare systems, and analyze how Deaf-led social workers have addressed these gaps.
- Describe the operational framework of Deaf Services programs, including startup models, inter-county collaboration, and challenges posed by government regulations.
- Evaluate the impact of culturally responsive practices and legal compliance in improving service outcomes for Deaf children and families.
- Apply advocacy strategies to support, expand, and protect Deaf Services programs.

Friday, May 29, 2026

Special Event

6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Banquet and Awards Ceremony

Saturday, May 30, 2026

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

When There Are No Words: Healing Preverbal Trauma through the Affect Reset Protocol
Joy Plote

Abstract: This experiential workshop explores how preverbal and language-deprivation trauma shape emotional understanding and self-regulation. Based on EMDR and the When There Are No Words framework, the Affect Reset Protocol helps clients reprocess early affective experiences stored in the body rather than language. Participants learn to identify and reset affective channels in the brain using bilateral stimulation and somatic awareness to restore emotional clarity and balance. Designed for clinicians and behavioral-health professionals, the session provides hands-on, culturally responsive and effective tools for working with Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind clients.

Objectives:

- Explain the neurobiological basis of preverbal and language-deprivation trauma and its impact on affect regulation.
- Identify and map Panksepp's seven primary affective circuits and recognize how emotional misattunement arises from deprivation and delayed language acquisition.
- Demonstrate the steps of the Affect Reset Protocol (ARP) for accessing, labeling, and releasing preverbal affective material.
- Integrate bilateral stimulation, sensory awareness, and movement-based techniques to restore balanced emotional functioning.
- Apply ARP modifications for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind clients whose emotional experiences are shaped by communication barriers or language delay.

Navigating Leadership as Deaf Professionals: Barriers, Resilience, and Systemic Change
Kristine Gile

Abstract: This panel features Deaf leaders sharing experiences navigating leadership in systems not built for Deaf accessibility. Panelists will discuss barriers such as limited interpreter access, lack of resources, and centralized decision-making that excludes the Deaf community. They will also address broader systemic challenges—insurance, regulations, and funding—that affect all leaders, not just Deaf professionals. Through personal reflections, panelists will share lessons on building allyship, fostering accessibility (e.g., ASL training for staff), and embracing Deaf identity as a leadership strength. Attendees will gain insights into resilience, advocacy, and practical strategies for creating inclusive systems where Deaf professionals can thrive.

Objectives:

- Identify common barriers faced by Deaf leaders within organizational and systemic structures, including accessibility, resource, and policy challenges.
- Differentiate between Deaf-specific challenges and broader systemic issues that impact leadership across all communities.
- Describe strategies Deaf leaders have used to foster allyship, promote inclusion, and strengthen Deaf visibility within professional spaces.
- Apply practical approaches to create more accessible and equitable environments in their own organizations or workplaces.
- Reflect on personal and institutional actions that support Deaf leadership and long-term systemic change.

That's Not My Role: Learned Helplessness of Interpreters in Complex Settings
Allyssa Cote

Abstract: This presentation will explore the concept of learned helplessness that some interpreters may experience during their career. Through considering elements of DC-S analysis, examining ways to stimulate change of existing thought worlds, and discussing interpreting as a values-based profession, interpreters can learn to gain agency within themselves to increase clarity of their scope of practice and avoid burnout within the field of interpreting. This presentation aims to empower interpreters to optimize the controls they have available to them when working in complex settings and encourages the profession to grow in an upward and outward direction.

Objectives:

- Define and identify the term learned helplessness.
- Discuss various self-analysis tools to address learned helplessness.
- Examine strategies to identify controls using DC-S analysis in complex interpreted settings.

Restoring Competence, Reimagining Access: A Pilot Program for Deaf Defendants
Tomina Schwenke & Paul Silvasi

Abstract: Current competency restoration approaches rarely address the specialized needs of deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) defendants. As a result, these individuals often experience prolonged restoration periods due to uninformed clinicians, inadequate accommodations, and the absence of evidence-based standards. Research on specialized interventions, such as the Slater Method for defendants with intellectual and developmental disabilities, demonstrates that tailored approaches yield more effective outcomes than traditional methods. Building on this framework, our pilot project seeks to develop and implement a standardized competency restoration curriculum specifically designed for DHH defendants. The goal is to promote timely restoration by incorporating culturally and linguistically appropriate materials, informed clinical practices, and structured training to improve equity and outcomes within forensic mental health settings.

Objectives:

- Identify three issues deaf and hard of hearing defendants encounter with current competency restoration approaches.
- Describe two differences between the roles of American Sign Language interpreters and Certified Deaf

Interpreters.
- Describe one challenge that arises when adapting competency restoration curricula to meet the linguistic and communication needs of deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) defendants.
- Identify one effective strategy, including the use of standardized ASL legal terminology, that can be used to successfully engage DHH defendants in competency restoration.

Embodied Healing: Trauma Center Trauma Sensitive Yoga (TCTSY) for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Communities
Stephanie Taksel & Sarie Higginson

Abstract: Trauma Center Trauma Sensitive Yoga (TCTSY) is the first yoga-based, empirically validated clinical intervention for complex trauma or chronic, treatment-resistant post-traumatic stress disorder. Developed originally at the Trauma Center in Brookline, Massachusetts by Dave Emerson and Jenn Turner, in collaboration with Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, the TCTSY methodology is based on central components of the hatha style of yoga, where participants engage in a series of physical forms and movements. Elements of standard hatha yoga are modified to maximize experiences of empowerment to cultivate a more positive relationship to one's body. This workshop will explore the history and research behind TCTSY. We will discuss how TCTSY principles support nervous system regulation, empowerment and agency through interoceptive awareness. Participants will be introduced to the TCTSY programs that we offer at DeafLEAD and will be able to experience TCTSY in action during a 30-minute, optional movement practice.

Objectives:
- Recognize the role of choice, agency, and interoceptive awareness in supporting trauma recovery.
- Describe the core principles and theoretical foundations of TCTSY as an adjunctive treatment for trauma.
- Explore ways to connect and collaborate with TCTSY facilitators to integrate embodied approaches into established frameworks.

Saturday, May 30, 2026

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

Oxygen Masks Before Superhero Duties: Thriving in Disability Services Without Losing Your Sanity
Dahlene Holliness

Abstract: Working in disability services can feel like juggling flaming torches while riding a unicycle — emotionally, physically, and psychologically demanding. In this interactive session, we'll go beyond generic self-care advice to explore practical, real-world strategies for thriving — because even superheroes need to put on their oxygen masks first. Through relatable case studies (e.g., faculty meetings that could have been emails or managing unexpected student crises), participants will explore reflective supervision, trauma-informed strategies, peer support, collaborative problem-solving, strength-based and appreciative inquiry approaches, and technology tools. Attendees will share sparks, brainstorm solutions, and co-create actionable strategies, leaving with a personal Resilience Toolkit to manage stress, maintain energy, and support long-term professional growth. This highly interactive session ensures participants both learn from and contribute to the collective wisdom of their peers.

Objectives:

- Identify and manage professional stressors by applying reflective supervision, peer support, and trauma-informed strategies.
- Develop practical, sustainable self-care and workflow tools using strength-based approaches, appreciative inquiry, and technology to maintain professional resilience.
- Collaborate and co-create actionable strategies through interactive case studies, group brainstorming, and guided reflection to enhance personal and team effectiveness.

Bridging the Gap: Improving Cancer Care Access for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind Patients
Stephanie Wilcox

Abstract: For Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind patients, the cancer journey often includes unique challenges that extend far beyond medical treatment. Barriers such as lack of qualified interpreters, inaccessible medical language, and limited health information in American Sign Language (ASL) can lead to confusion, delayed decisions, and emotional isolation. Rehabilitation and healthcare professionals play a critical role in bridging these gaps through culturally responsive and linguistically accessible practices. This interactive workshop, led by a Deaf cancer survivor and Community Advocate from Pink Wings of Hope (PWOH), highlights practical strategies for improving access and equity in cancer care. PWOH, a program of Deaf Empowerment Awareness Foundation, Inc. (DEAF, Inc.), has supported the community for 16 years through peer mentoring, customized care packages, and The Cocoon—a cancer education video series presented in ASL with captions and audio.

Objectives:

- Identify common barriers to equitable cancer care experienced by Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind individuals.
- Recognize the importance of culturally and linguistically accessible communication in improving patient engagement and treatment outcomes.
- Explain how Deaf-centered programs such as Pink Wings of Hope (PWOH) and The Cocoon video series address gaps in education, support, and advocacy.
- Apply practical strategies to strengthen collaboration between rehabilitation professionals and community-based organizations serving Deaf populations.
- Develop approaches to ensure Deaf individuals have equal access to emotional, educational, and peer support throughout the cancer journey.

When the Helper Becomes the Target: Addressing Stalking, Threats, and Harassment of Clinicians
Colleen Donohue & Christina Costello

Abstract: Mental health professionals are trained to support others through trauma, crisis, and instability, yet may feel unprepared when they become the target of threats, harassment, and/or stalking by current, former clients, or others. These experiences can have significant repercussions for providers' emotional well-being, professional functioning, and overall sense of safety. Such threats, while serious, may be underreported, minimized, or inadequately addressed in agency protocols and graduate-level training. This workshop examines the impact of aggression toward mental health providers, including the psychological toll and the legal and ethical challenges that may arise. Practical tools to enhance both personal and professional safety will be identified. Case vignettes and group discussions will offer opportunities for reflection, skill-building, and application to clinical practice.

Objectives:

- Describe at least three psychological and professional impacts of client-initiated stalking, threatening, and harassment behaviors towards mental health providers.
- List two relevant legal/ethical considerations when addressing threats or boundary violations.
- Identify three safety planning strategies/resources to enhance personal and professional safety.

A Sea Change Coming in Trauma Research and Treatment
Mike Deninger

Abstract: In this three-part workshop: 1.) We will present an analysis of trauma studies that demonstrate how and why research energy is shifting away from cognitive and behavioral approaches to sensory-based methods, to psychedelics and to new pharmaceuticals aligned with recent developments in neuroscience. Specific examples of promising new pharmaceuticals will be given 2.) In Part II the presenter will conduct a live "content-free" demonstration of the MEMI protocol with an audience volunteer, who will be asked NOT to explain details of the problem causing them anxiety. 3.) In Part III an ASL panel of MEMI trained therapists will explain their experience in using MEMI with DHH clients, how it differs from other approaches and provide case examples of their work. Questions and discussion will follow.

Objectives:

- Cite and explain two areas of study receiving greater focus by the research community in PTSD treatment.
- Explain two benefits of psychedelic use with PTSD clients.
- Explain the two safety mechanisms that make MEMI a safer therapy for DHH clients.
- Describe one important takeaway from the panel discussion at the end of the workshop.

Cannabis Use of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Individuals
Christine Gannon

Abstract: As a part of our substance use prevention and intervention efforts, Gallaudet University seeks to deepen our understanding of Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing (DDBHH) college students' cannabis use. Gannon et al. (2024) identified themes of isolation, communication barriers, and experiences related to being DDBHH that impacted alcohol use. Some participants in the Gannon et al. (2024) study suggested that alcohol served as a way to cope with life challenges related to being DDBHH. Other research on hearing college students has also shown that coping is associated with cannabis use. It is unknown whether these dynamics are also true for DDBHH college students who use cannabis. Recognizing the impact of regular use on our students' physical, mental, social, and academic health, we aim to collect data on student use and then use this information to inform programming and services for students. This research is scheduled to be collected in early 2026. As a way to triangulate the research and do a members check, the presenter seeks to share preliminary findings with a knowledgeable focus group of stakeholders at ADARA and invite them to share their perspectives, feedback, insights on this behavior.

Objectives:

- Identify at least three themes found in research on cannabis use with DDBHH students.
- Describe at least three themes seen by colleagues and peers related to cannabis use in the session.
- Identify at least one colleague that could offer support and insight with substance related issues.

Saturday, May 30, 2026

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

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

Endnote: Reimagining Food Security, Mental Health, and Health Equity through Deaf-Governed Systems
Zachary Ennis & Wyatte Hall

Abstract: This closing keynote presents the Rochester Deaf Kitchen (RDK) and Deaf Community Food Pantry (DCFP) as Deaf-led innovations addressing food insecurity, and behavioral and public health inequities. Co-led by Zachary Ennis and Dr. Wyatte C. Hall, it introduces the Deaf Community Architecture of Trust (CAT) framework—anchored in Deaf leadership, linguistic sovereignty, and systemic accountability—as a model for equitable health infrastructure. Drawing from two years of program data, lived experience, and community-based research, the session examines how Deaf-centered food systems foster autonomy, trust, and accessibility. Participants will learn how RDK's culturally grounded design principles and partnerships create replicable models for statewide and national health equity efforts, and how food security can be integrated into broader health and social service practices within Deaf communities that have high behavioral health needs and inequities.

Objectives:

- Identify structural causes of food insecurity and health inequities in Deaf communities.
- Describe how Deaf-led, linguistically accessible programs can build community trust and systemic resilience.
- Apply the principles of the Deaf Community Architecture of Trust (CAT) to improve equity within their own organizational settings.
- Evaluate strategies for sustainable collaboration between Deaf community organizations and mainstream public health systems.

Presenter Biographies

Jory Agate
Jory Agate, LMHC, MDiv., MA, IFS Certified, is an Internal Family Systems therapist, trainer, and consultant with a private practice in Cambridge, MA. Jory is committed to creating a collaborative clinical space that honors the cultural uniqueness of her clients. She specializes in treating trauma without pathologizing individuals for the creative ways they may have learned to cope. Jory had previous careers as a Sign Language interpreter/Deaf educator in the US and abroad. Jory is a trainer/presenter for the IFS Institute, PESI, and the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI). The mother of two young adults, one hearing and one Deaf, she lives with her wife and their pandemic puppy.

Aileen Aldalur
Aileen Aldalur, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Rochester Medical Center. A licensed psychologist and Director of Research at the Deaf Wellness Center, her work focuses on adapting and developing evidence-based mental health interventions for Deaf individuals, with particular emphasis on suicide prevention and treatment engagement. She currently leads a National Institute of Mental Health K23award titled, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Treatment-Seeking to Improve Treatment Engagement and Reduce Suicide Risk Among Deaf Individuals. A former KL2 Career Development Scholar, Dr. Aldalur has earned recognition for her community-engaged research, including the 2025 Best Community Engagement Project Award at URMC. Her work bridges clinical psychology, Deaf studies, and health equity to expand access to appropriate mental health care for Deaf communities.

Melissa Anderson
Melissa Anderson, Ph.D. is Associate Professor of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at UMass Chan Medical School. She is a Gallaudet University-trained psychologist and clinical researcher who strives to provide accessible behavioral healthcare to members of the U.S. Deaf community. She founded the DeafYES! Center for Deaf Empowerment and Recovery at UMass Chan in 2014, where she and her team provide outpatient therapy and conduct groundbreaking research on Deaf mental health. Most recently, Melissa and her team received a five-year, $3.6 million award from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) to launch the first nationwide therapy clinical trial for Deaf people.

Jesús Barreto Abrams
Jesús Barreto Abrams, PhD is a licensed psychologist and fellowship-trained clinical neuropsychologist. He completed his PhD in clinical psychology from Gallaudet University in 2020. He completed his APA-accredited internship at the University of Mississippi Medical Center and a postdoctoral fellowship in lifespan cultural neuropsychology at the UCLA Semel Institute. As the founder of Barreto Abrams Psychological Services, Dr. Barreto Abrams provides neuropsychological and psychoeducational evaluations in California and remotely in Florida. He has a special interest in forensic psychology, focusing on the intersection of neurological conditions (e.g., neurodevelopmental disorders or dementias), criminal behavior, and conservatorships. Additionally, he is a nationally certified sign language interpreter with extensive teaching experience across various psychology, early intervention studies, and interpreting programs at the graduate and undergraduate levels.

McKenna Amdal
Mckenna is a third-year Clinical Psychology doctoral student at Gallaudet University. Texas born-and-raised (howdy, y'all), she graduated from Brigham Young University with a B.S. in Psychology and Statistics minor. She has enjoyed her practicum clinical work providing therapy and psychological assessments with DHH

individuals in a university counseling center and an elementary school. She enjoys critical literature review, which sparked her pre-dissertation topic: studying the oft-cited phenomenon "information deprivation trauma." She will share her findings from surveying clinicians about the presence and impact of lacking access to information during traumatic events among DHH adults.

Stephanie Beatty

Dr. Stephanie Beatty is an educator, researcher, and a certified American Sign Language interpreter. She holds a BEI Advanced certification with medical/mental health and 7–12 educational endorsements and has over 15 years of experience working with the Deaf community. Dr. Beatty earned her B.A. in Sign Language Studies – Interpreting Concentration from Madonna University and her PhD in Psychology with an education concentration from Walden University. Her focus is the intersection of Deaf culture, education, and mental health to create equitable learning experiences for Deaf students. She is a full-time Lecturer at the University of Michigan and also works as a freelance interpreter.

Jodi Christel Becker

Jodi was born in Germany and grew up as an Air Force child. She earned both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Social Work from Gallaudet University. In 2000, she moved to Utah, the home state of her spouse, Duane Kinner, and assumed the role of ADA Accessibility Advisor at Salt Lake Community College. Since then, Jodi has served on various boards and councils, including the Utah Interpreter Certification Advisory Board, the JMS Utah Deaf Education and Literacy, Inc. Board, the USDB Institutional Council, the Utah Deaf Education Core Group, the DSDHH Legislative Task Force, and the Utah Association of the Deaf. As a parent of two Deaf adult children, Joshua and Danielle, she advocates for Deaf education in Utah. In 2009, she participated in a USDB Legislative Task Force that improved access to Deaf schools across four regions, moving away from the previous requirement that students be mainstreamed. Since 2006, Jodi has focused on researching Deaf history in Utah, particularly issues related to civil rights, accessibility, and linguistic rights faced by the Utah Deaf community. She is also passionate about Women's Studies, especially regarding the contributions of Deaf women. For more information about Utah Deaf History, please visit: www.utahdeafhistory.com.

Ashley Benton

Ashley Benton, MSW is an advocate with more than 25 years of experience in providing a wide array of services to the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind populations. Ms. Benton is the Director of Field Services for the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC). Her professional experience includes being the Deaf/DeafBlind/Hard of Hearing Services Lead with the North Carolina (NC) Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Use Services, and the Deaf/DeafBlind Services Coordinator with the NC Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Before her time with state government, she was a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Mental Health/Substance Use therapist for 10 years. Ms. Benton received her MSW with Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind specialty certification from East Carolina University. Her community involvement includes recently serving a term as Vice President of the NC DeafBlind Associates (NCDBA), Chair of the NCDBA Dogwood DeafBlind Retreat, former board member of the NC Interpreter and Transliterator Licensing Board, former member of the National Task Force on DeafBlind Interpreting and serving as coordinator of the American Association of the Deaf-Blind Mentoring Pilot Project. Ms. Benton grew up on a family farm in eastern NC, is married to a sign language interpreter and has a young adult son. She enjoys reading, spending time with friends and riding her tandem bike.

Mary Bird
Mary L. Bird is a Deaf Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker and native signer. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Keene State College and her Master of Social Work from Boston College. With over 30 years of experience, Mary has provided clinical services in a wide range of settings, working with Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind individuals—from infants to older adults. She currently serves as a Clinical Social Worker Supervisor-C at Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital under the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health. In this role, she provides clinical services to both Deaf and hearing patients. In addition to her work in the public sector, Mary is developing a private practice, Bird Counseling LLC, where she continues her dedication to culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health care for the Deaf community.

Patrick Boudreault
Dr. Patrick Boudreault is an Associate Professor of ASL Studies at Gallaudet University. He has dedicated over 25 years to teaching, researching, and advocating for ASL and Deaf Studies. He earned his Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Manitoba in 2006. Patrick leads the Translation Track within the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child Resilience Center, advancing culturally responsive translation and access initiatives for DHH children and their families. His research explores sign language translation, gesture, Deaf interpreters, communication access for deaf individuals with limited language exposure, and technology-driven accessibility solutions that promote inclusion. Patrick believes research and teaching must be inclusive and community-driven to strengthen sign language access and enrich Deaf communities.

Adam Brownfeld
Adam Brownfeld, Ph.D. has conducted over 30,000 clinical interviews and psychological assessments for agencies such as Social Security Administration, Department of Veteran's Affairs, and Adult Career and Continuing Education Services - Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) over 11 years. Currently, he serves as the Assistant Director of Behavioral Health Partners at University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC) where he oversees adult ADHD assessment and treatment. He is also recognized as an ADHD Certified Clinical Services Provider (ADHD-CCSP).

Meg Cassinelli
Meg was born in the Los Angeles region and completed oral education in Portland, Oregon, alongside her older brother, who is Deaf. Meg acquired proficiency in American Sign Language at California State University, Northridge, where she majored in Community Health Education. Following professional experience in community health and human resources, Meg pursued further academic training at Western Oregon University, obtaining a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a master's degree in Rehabilitation & Mental Health counseling in 2022. Since 2023, she has been based in Las Vegas, where she applies her diverse expertise to empower Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients in defining and pursuing their career paths.

Tina Gonzales Childress
Tina Gonzales Childress, Au.D., CCC-A is a dynamic audiologist, advocate, and accessibility consultant who bridges the worlds of audiology, accessibility, and lived experience. She is also a sought-after presenter, adjunct lecturer, and mentor to individuals of all ages navigating hearing loss. As a late-deafened adult with bilateral cochlear implants and fluency in American Sign Language, Dr. Childress brings a rare and valuable dual perspective—equally at home in Deaf/Hard of Hearing and hearing communities. A recognized subject matter expert on assistive and access technologies, her expertise spans tools for both visual and auditory communicators, advocacy for inclusive practices in diverse environments and virtual platforms, and supporting the emotional journey of hearing loss. She actively contributes to local, state, and national Boards and

Committees and creates widely used online resources to empower individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and those who support them. Explore her resource hub at TinaChildressAuD.com.

Kimberly Clarke
Kimberly Clarke, MSW, is a seasoned mental health professional with over 30 years of experience serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) individuals. Her diverse background includes work in substance use treatment, centers for independent living, community-based living services, and outpatient therapy. Kimberly earned her Master of Social Work from The Ohio State University and currently serves as an outpatient DHH clinician at RHA Health Services. She approaches mental health through a non-traditional, decolonized lens, integrating culturally affirming practices to meet the diverse needs of her clients. Her work incorporates Multichannel Eye Movement Integration (MEMI) and emphasizes inclusive, client-centered care. Kimberly is deeply committed to challenging systemic norms and creating therapeutic spaces that honor the full identities and experiences of the people she serves.

Eleanor Coley-Brody
Eleanor Coley-Brody, MSW has 15 years of experience providing support, advocacy, and counseling to the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind population. Ms. Coley-Brody received her Masters of Social work from Gallaudet University. As a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) Ms. Coley-Brody worked as a mental health therapist in the state of Minnesota before she entered the Helen Keller National Center family in 2016, initially as a Case Manager and now as a Regional Representative covering New York and New Jersey. Ms. Coley-Brody carries a small caseload of therapy clients as well. At home, she has three young children and two dogs with her husband in Long Island, NY. She is also an avid knitter and enjoys crafting.

Tempest Cooper
Tempest is a Black Deaf mental health therapist and school counselor dedicated to promoting emotional well-being, cultural awareness, and accessibility within Deaf and hard-of-hearing communities. With professional experience in counseling and education, Tempest integrates her deep understanding of Deaf culture, intersectionality, and mental health equity into her therapeutic and advocacy work. She is passionate about creating safe spaces where Deaf students and clients especially those from marginalized racial and cultural backgrounds can thrive and be authentically heard. Through her workshops and community outreach, Tempest empowers professionals to adopt culturally competent, anti-racist, and trauma-informed practices that support holistic mental health for Deaf and Black Deaf individuals.

Christina Costello
Christina M. Costello, M.A., NCC, LPCC, is a Region V Mental Health Therapist with the Alabama Department of Mental Health, Office of Deaf Services, based in Birmingham. She provides direct therapy and consultation for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deafblind individuals across regional mental health centers, group homes, and the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind. A Gallaudet University graduate with a Master's in Mental Health Counseling, she previously served six years as a Mental Health Specialist with Minnesota's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division. Christina holds licensure as a Professional Clinical Counselor and was recognized as the 2025 COSDA Deaf Professional of the Year. She currently serves as Treasurer on the ADARA Board (2025–2027).

Allyssa Cote
Allyssa is an interpreter with the Alabama Department of Mental Health Office of Deaf Services and coordinator for the Mental Health Interpreter Training Alumni Sessions. She began her career with ADMH as

the staff interpreter based at Bryce Psychiatric Hospital In Tuscaloosa, AL. After three years in the in-patient setting, she transferred to the Region I Interpreter Coordinator position, covering services for multiple community mental health centers across north Alabama. Allyssa received her National Interpreting Certification (NIC) in 2022 and her Qualified Mental Health Interpreter (QMHI) certification in 2023. She is looking forward to her continued growth as a professional in the field of mental health, deafness, and interpreting.

Mikah Covelli

Mikah Covelli is a DHH Yale University alum and a first-year student in the Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program at Gallaudet University. Through her studies and professional experience working in Deaf education and addiction research, Mikah has developed a strong passion for accessible mental health resources and supports, tailored for working with diverse Deaf communities. Her primary research interests include the interactions between early exposure to trauma & adversity, and the development of later psychopathology and substance use in Deaf and hard of hearing populations. Mikah aims to serve the Deaf community through her pursuit of clinical research focused on trauma and addiction, and through the provision of evidence-based, culturally-responsive interventions, aimed at improving mental health outcomes and quality of life among Deaf and hard of hearing individuals and other community members.

Charlene Crump

Charlene is the State Coordinator for Communication Access and Training with the Alabama Department of Mental Health. In this capacity, she has developed the Mental Health Interpreter Training Project including a supervised mental health practicum program and established certification standards codified into state law - Alabama is the only state in the nation to train and certify interpreters as qualified to work in mental health. Her work has received national recognition by the National Alliance of Mentally Ill. Charlene is a contributor to the RID Standard Practice Paper on Mental Health Interpreting and has served on several expert focus groups regarding mental health interpreting. Previously she assisted in the passage of state law that recognizes ASL as a foreign language and served two terms as Chair of the Alabama Interpreting Licensure Board. She is a nationally certified interpreter and has a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling and post graduate certifications in both Clinical Mental Health Counseling and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services programming. She is recognized as a Qualified Mental Health Interpreter Supervisor. She is a frequent presenter on regional and national levels and has published several book chapters and articles related to work in mental health interpreting, language dysfluency, and communication assessment.

Ben Daniel

Ben is an entrepreneur, Certified Deaf Interpreter, and co-founder of 5 Star Interpreting, a national ASL interpreting agency. He has presented workshops and keynotes across the country on leadership, collaboration, and accessibility. Ben draws on his lived experience as a Deaf professional to provide unique insights on how accountability, trust, and teamwork can improve outcomes for teams and communities. Ben also previously worked as a Director of Financial Planning and Analysis at Communication Service for the Deaf and gained a wealth of experience in cross-disciplinary partnerships. Ben is passionate about equipping professionals with tools that directly benefit the communities they serve. In Ben's free time, he enjoys spending time with his wife and four children and rooting for the Atlanta Braves.

Lori Day

Lori Day, Ph.D. is a licensed psychologist and Professor in the Department of Psychology at Gallaudet University. 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, supporting the development of a measure of language experience, adapting evidence-based treatments, and providing training and ongoing consultation for clinicians.

Jack Dean
Jack Dean (they/them) is a first-year master's student in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at Gallaudet University. They are white, hearing, nonbinary, queer, and disabled, living with autism, chronic back pain, and IBS. Jack is passionate about inclusive, accessible mental health care, especially for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing community, LGBTQ+ individuals, disabled people, and neurodivergent individuals.

Mike Deninger
Dr. Deninger holds a BA in English, master's degrees in Deaf Education and Mental Health Counseling and a PHD in Special Education Administration. Mike has been an English professor (NTID), a Gallaudet Administrator (Dean of Clerc Center), a private practice therapist (Alexandria, VA), and is now the CEO of Trauma Counseling & Training of Tucson. He is recognized internationally as an expert in eye movement integration therapies. He's been an ally to the Deaf community throughout his career.

Echo Dixon
Dr. Echo Dixon, LCSW, DSW, has dedicated the past 26 years to working at the intersection of Deafness, trauma, disability, and interpersonal violence as a social worker. Since 2011, she has served as a community therapist with a focus on trauma, institutional abuse, intersectional abuse, and empowered recovery. In her work, Echo emphasizes trauma-informed care, active listening and empathy, crisis intervention, cultural humility, advocacy, various therapeutic modalities, collaboration and networking, education, resilience-building, and self-care. She also studied coercive control at the University of Southern California, concentrating on its prevalence and impact within the Deaf community.

Colleen Donohue
Dr. Colleen Donohue, a Deaf graduate of RIT, earned her MA and Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, an APA-accredited doctoral program in Chicago, IL. With extensive experience in providing direct care to D/deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, and Hard of Hearing individuals, Dr. Donohue has worked in diverse settings including schools, residential academic programs, inpatient and outpatient community health clinics, and private practice. She is a licensed psychologist with Minnesota's Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing State Services Division's Mental Health Program. Outside of her professional work, Dr. Donohue enjoys reading fiction novels, spending time with her pets and loved ones, and cheering on the Chicago Cubs.

Zachary Ennis
Zachary is the Founder and Executive Director of Rochester Deaf Kitchen, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit addressing food insecurity within the Deaf community in Rochester, New York. Since its founding in 2022, Ennis has led the creation of the Deaf Community Food Pantry and Nourishing Deaf Learners programs, distributing over 150,000 pounds of food in the first year and establishing a scalable model of Deaf-led food equity. A skilled organizer and strategist, he oversees operations, fundraising, and community partnerships that center Deaf leadership and linguistic access. A Gallaudet University graduate with a B.A. in Government and minors in Philosophy and Deaf Studies, Ennis brings a background in entrepreneurship, education, and advocacy to building sustainable, culturally responsive solutions to public health inequities.

Erin Farley
Erin J. Farley, PhD., is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice and a faculty member in the Government program. Since joining the faculty in 2019, Erin has taught a range of sociology and criminal justice courses, and she is responsible for developing Gallaudet University's Criminal Justice minor. Her research and scholarly work includes an examination of the fees and fines associated with the decriminalization/legalization of recreational marijuana, gun violence and law enforcement, impacts of COVID-19 on the criminal justice system, environmental crime, legal competency and Deaf defendants, the costs of mandatory ADA accommodations and more. Erin earned her Ph.D. in Criminology from the University of Delaware in 2007 and graduated from Virginia Tech in 2000 with a B.S. in Psychology.

Julayne Feilbach
Julayne Feilbach, MS is an ASL interpreter at the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC) in Rochester, NY. She is a qualified mental health interpreter with a Master's degree in Healthcare Interpreting from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf. In her current role, Julayne serves as a designated interpreter, teaming with a designated Deaf interpreter– for a weekly psychopharmacology clinic that serves deaf patients. Prior to her current position, she worked on a team of interpreters for several medical students during their clinical rotations, exposing her to the providers' perspective of healthcare. The combination of her training and experiences led to her research on how the interpreting approaches of Deaf-hearing teams impact healthcare providers' perceptions of their patients.

Ryssa Fleischer
Ryssa Fleischer, AMFT, is an Associate Marriage and Family Therapist serving clients in California with a focus on trauma and interpersonal relationships at My Deaf Therapy. She provides counseling and advocacy for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals and trauma survivors, with a commitment to raising awareness of Deaf and Hard of Hearing mental health. In addition to her clinical work, Ryssa teaches undergraduate psychology and the graduate counseling program at Gallaudet University. She also serves as an internship coordinator for students in the graduate programs in Clinical Mental Health and School Counseling. She is dedicated to fostering inclusive, culturally responsive, and accessible mental health practices for Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.

Melinda Fonda
Melinda Fonda, AMFT, is an Associate Marriage and Family Therapist specializing in perinatal mental health, parenting, and family systems. She has completed advanced training in perinatal mental health and works extensively with Deaf mothers and families, focusing on postpartum wellness, culturally responsive care, and equitable access to services. Growing up with a Deaf sister, she brings personal understanding of Deaf culture and family experiences. Melinda integrates supportive, evidence-based strategies to empower mothers and strengthen family bonds during the perinatal period, helping families navigate postpartum mental health challenges and access appropriate care.

Michael Fox
Michael is a program manager with the Washington Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH). Michael provides guidance, resources, and technical assistance to the public with hearing loss. Manages the Assistive Communication Technology (ACT) program in Washington, maintains ongoing partnerships with hearing loss organizations, offers training to organizations and other state agencies, provides demonstrations on assistive listening devices, and serves on the disability access committee. For eight years, he served as a vocational

rehabilitation counselor and assistive technology practitioner with the Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR).

Christine Gannon
Dr. Christine Gannon combined her personal experience as the daughter of deaf parents with her professional training and work. She is an associate professor and the director of the Public Health program 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 dissertation in 2023 on deaf and hard of hearing students' alcohol use. 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, a Master of Philosophy and PhD in health education and promotion from Walden University.

Amanda Gerson
Amanda is the Vocational Rehabilitation Outreach Manager at Gallaudet University, where she works to build strong, collaborative pathways among students, VR agencies, and campus partners. After 15 years in VR and disability services, including leadership roles in VR administration, she understands how navigating VR can feel like a "boss-level" challenge without clear guidance or shared language. Amanda's work centers on shifting VR from a rule-focused system to a person-centered, transparent process that empowers students to understand their options and take ownership of their goals; drawing on wellness and developmental counseling approaches, she supports students in building confidence, self-advocacy skills, and meaningful career pathways. As the twin sister of a Deaf adult, Amanda brings both professional expertise and personal commitment to her advocacy.

Jennifer Giaquinto
Jennifer "Jenn" Giaquinto, LCSW, brings seven years of dedicated experience as a social worker at Advocates, Inc., where she provides direct clinical services and supervises staff as the Assistant Clinical Director of Deaf Services. Her background in human services, including work in group homes and community-based independent living, grounds her practice in real-world application. Jennifer embodies the micro-level perspective, focusing on the "how-to" of therapy. She models the "dance" in her own clinical work and mentors other clinicians in its application, ensuring the framework is both practical and effective in fostering client autonomy and trust.

Kristine Gile
Kristine D. Gile, LCPC, BC-TMH, NCC is a clinical supervisor and clinician with My Deaf Therapy and the Co-Director of the TF-CBT Track at the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child Resilience Center (DHHCRC). She is a nationally certified Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) Trainer and provides training and consultation across the United States. Kristine specializes in trauma treatment with Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind (DHHDB) children, adolescents, and their families, with additional expertise in Parent–Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), and Trauma Focused Cognitive Therapy (TF-CBT) and telehealth service delivery. She has extensive experience training mental health and medical providers in culturally responsive and linguistically accessible practices for the Deaf community. Her professional interests include trauma recovery, advocacy, Deaf culture, and increasing equitable access to evidence-based mental health care.

Irena Glover
Irena Glover, Ph.D., LMSW, joined the Social Work Department at Madonna University in August 2017 as an Assistant Professor. She earned a B.A. in Developmental Psychology from the University of Detroit Mercy in 1998, an M.S.W. from Wayne State University in 2000, and a Ph.D. in Human Services with a specialization in Family Studies and Intervention Strategies from Walden University in 2016. Prior to joining Madonna University, Dr. Glover gained experience in diverse settings, including Children's Hospital of Michigan and the Family Reunification Program, as well as nonprofit and program development. Her professional interests include parenting education, father engagement, supporting at-risk children and youth, addressing intergenerational issues such as poverty and teenage pregnancy, and providing individual and family counseling.

Brittney Granger
Brittney Granger, LICSW, has a decade of experience in community mental health for the Deaf. Brittney provides administrative leadership and strategic oversight. She is responsible for program integrity and works directly with external stakeholders to ensure service sustainability and quality. Brittney represents the macro-level viewpoint, addressing the "why" behind the approach and "what's needed" systemically to support it. Her role is crucial in navigating the larger programmatic and systemic challenges that impact care for the Deaf population.

Donna Guardino
Donna L. Guardino, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Rochester Medical Center. A licensed psychologist, she specializes in adapting evidence-based mental health interventions for Deaf individuals, with a focus on Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and emotion regulation among those affected by language deprivation. Through her Dean's Teaching Fellowship, Dr. Guardino is developing and evaluating Deaf-ACCESS, a training initiative advancing equitable, cross-cultural communication between providers and Deaf patients. She regularly provides national trainings on culturally and linguistically responsive clinical care for Deaf patients. Dr. Guardino earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Gallaudet University and continues to promote equitable behavioral health services through clinical practice, teaching, and community-engaged research.

Jessica Guess
Dr. Jessica Guess works at Gallaudet University as a faculty member teaching in the counseling program. She has an M.S. in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of Wisconsin-Stout and her Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision from the University of Cincinnati. Jessica's research interests primarily relate to disability access, disability competence in counseling, human sexuality and disability, job readiness for transition-age youth, and disability identity development. Having worked with disability populations for much of her life, her experiences as a deaf-disabled adult have allowed her to focus her work, research, and advocacy (personally and professionally) on disability representation and access.

Wyatte Hall
Dr. Wyatte C. Hall is an Assistant Professor of Public Health Sciences, Pediatrics, and Obstetrics & Gynecology at the University of Rochester Medical Center, where he directs the Visual Language Access and Acquisition Lab. He also serves as Language Deprivation Track Director at Gallaudet University's Deaf Child Resilience Center. A clinical psychologist by training, Dr. Hall is internationally recognized for his pioneering research on language deprivation and its effects on lifespan health, development, and behavioral outcomes among Deaf individuals. His NIH-funded work has shaped national discussions on Deaf health equity, education, and

language access. In 2025, he was named to the Forbes Accessibility 100 and received the Dr. David Satcher Community Health Improvement Award for his contributions to advancing Deaf health and language equity.

Sharon Haynes
Sharon L. Haynes, LMSW (she/her) is a licensed master social worker and therapist at the Deaf Wellness Center within the University of Rochester Medical Center's Department of Psychiatry. She earned her M.S.W. from Syracuse University in 2000 and has been a longtime advocate for the Deaf community. In 1999, she co-founded Advocacy Services for Deaf Abused Victims, now Deaf Ignite at the Willow Domestic Violence Center of Greater Rochester. Sharon has contributed to developing a film on Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), adapting key concepts for Deaf populations using visual and language-accessible methods. At the Deaf Wellness Center, she provides individual, couples, family, and group therapy. She is also involved in Partners in Deaf Health, an initiative focused on promoting health equity within the Deaf community.

Sarie Higginson
Sarie is a Qualified Mental Health Interpreter with more than two years of experience interpreting Trauma Center Trauma Sensitive Yoga. She is drawn to work that weaves language, presence, and embodied awareness to help trauma survivors access healing spaces with safety and choice. Now training to become a certified TCTSY Facilitator, Sarie brings a deep understanding of both the interpreting process and trauma research, approaching each session as a collaboration in communication, presence, and connection.

Dahlene Holliness
Dahlene is a passionate and flexible professional dedicated to helping students find their path in higher education. With a Master of Science in Educational Counseling, she brings over a decade of hands-on experience as a faculty member and student services advocate, specializing in supporting diverse student populations, including those with disabilities. As a fierce fempreneur, a devoted pet mom to two, and a person who deeply values family, Dahlene's approach is rooted in her belief that a strong support system is key to success. A CODA (Child of Deaf Adults) and SODA (Sibling of a Deaf Adult), she is fluent in American Sign Language, which allows her to connect with and empower every student she serves.

Ben Hollingsworth
Ben Hollingsworth, MS, CRC is the State Coordinator of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. Ben has worked in services related to hearing loss for 22 years as an advocate, case manager, mental health therapist, and rehabilitation counselor. Ben holds a M.S. in Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of Tennessee, along with a B.A. from the University of Maryland.

Makoto Ikegami
Dr. Ikegami is a clinical social worker and educator with over 15 years of experience serving the Deaf community. His expertise focuses on mental health and culturally responsive practices, grounded in his DSW research on social workers' experiences with Deaf and hard of hearing clients. He served as President of ADARA from 2023-2025 and teaches in Master of Social Work programs at Gallaudet University and Arizona State University.

Veronica Ino
Veronica is a Children's Social Worker with 25 years of experience at Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, including a decade in the Deaf Services Unit. She provides services for families in the judicial system and works in the Adoption Division's Family Finding and Engagement Program. Veronica is

lead coordinator and partner with Deaf and Ally community professionals, aiming for systematic reform of Deaf Child Welfare services. She serves on a consultation panel supporting UCLA researchers on Deaf maternal healthcare, is a member of Decoding Dyslexia CA , ACADC and ADARA. Veronica is an avid runner, participates in annual half marathon. Veronica and her husband are proud parents raising a neurodiverse youth and frequently cheer on their teens at lacrosse games.

Naima Johnson
Naima Johnson, MA (she/her) is a Deaf, Black/Multiracial Multidisciplinary Healer and pre-licensed mental health therapist committed to community-centered healing. She holds a Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling and provides culturally affirming, trauma-informed therapy rooted in Deaf lived experience, language, and identity. Naima is the Founder of the Deaf Mental Health Hub, a Deaf-led platform dedicated to expanding access to Deaf-centered mental health resources, increasing visibility of Deaf providers, and fostering spaces of belonging. Her work integrates ASL storytelling, somatic awareness, creativity, and identity affirmation as pathways to healing. Guided by her own journey of navigating systems not built for Deaf people, Naima's mission is to become who she once needed and to support others in remembering they are not alone in theirs.

Theresa Johnson
Dr. Theresa Johnson holds degrees from San Antonio College, the University of Texas, and the University of Georgia, with postgraduate work completed at the University of Arkansas. She is currently the Associate Director of DeafTEC, a national resource center focused on STEM opportunities for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind students, based at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID). In this role, she coordinates programs and training initiatives across multiple states, including ACT preparation courses for high school students, parent training on transition planning, and professional development events for teachers.

Yvonnia Johnson
Yvonnia Johnson, LCSWA, CADC, is a compassionate and dedicated Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) clinician based in Wilmington, North Carolina. As a Licensed Clinical Social Worker Associate and Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor, she specializes in culturally responsive mental health and substance use treatment for DHH individuals, particularly within the BIPOC community. Yvonnia's approach centers on trauma-informed care, advocacy, and empowerment, ensuring clients feel seen, heard, and supported throughout their healing process. She is committed to ongoing professional development and actively works to promote inclusive, affirming environments for diverse populations. Through her clinical practice and community engagement, Yvonnia strives to bridge gaps in access and equity, making mental health care more accessible and effective for marginalized Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals.

Amanda Kennon
Amanda Kennon, MA, NIC, is an ASL-English interpreter, Cued Language Transliterator, and mentor from West Chester, PA who is passionate about accessibility, inclusion, and collaboration. She received her B.A. in Interpreting and ASL/ Deaf Studies from Maryville College, then her M.A. in. Interdisciplinary Studies: Individualized Studies: Ethics and Interpreting from George Mason University. With over twenty years in the field, Amanda has worked as a staff and freelance interpreter in various settings; served on the VRID Board; worked with the Center for Atypical Language (CALI) as a Supervising Partner; published VIEWS articles; and presented at local and national conferences. In collaboration with Dr. Laura Polhemus, she has been researching neurodiversity in the interpreting field and recently travelled to Singapore to deliver interpreter training.

Dae-Kun Kim
Dae-Kun Kim, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of English at Gallaudet University. His research explores how Deaf readers engage with comics, manga, and graphic novels to develop literacy, identity, and cultural awareness. He focuses especially on Asian Deaf communities and how visual storytelling shapes expression and belonging. A Gallaudet alumnus with a Ph.D. in Critical Studies in the Education of Deaf Learners, Dae-Kun teaches English courses on writing, graphic novels, critical literacy, and culture. His work aims to expand representation and foster a deeper appreciation for visual narratives within Deaf education and literature.

Yoko Kobayashi
Dr. Yoko Kobayashi is an Assistant Professor within the Department of Diversity and Inclusion Studies at Tsukuba University of Technology in Japan. Dr. Kobayashi specializes in Deaf Studies, public health, community inclusion. Her current research focuses on the intersection of trust, equity, and collaboration within Deaf ecosystems in Japan and internationally. She coordinates multiple cross-institutional projects with several academic institutions to promote Deaf-led leadership and international learning. She is committed to advancing accessible education, participatory research, and policy initiatives that center Deaf perspectives in building equitable and inclusive communities.

Jessica Kuehne
Dr. Jessica Kuehne is an Assistant Professor of Counseling at the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies at Liberty University. She has a Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision and holds professional licenses in North Carolina and the District of Columbia. Her research interests focus on adult children of alcoholics, counseling within the Deaf community, law and ethics in counseling, grief counseling, and counselor education pedagogy. She has over a decade of clinical experience working with diverse populations. Dr. Kuehne is passionate about serving others and promoting their wellness through teaching, counseling, and research.

Shilpa Hanumantha Lacy
Dr. Shilpa Hanumantha Lacy is a clinical psychologist specializing in services for the deaf community. Originally from India, she earned her degrees from George Mason University and Gallaudet University. Dr. Lacy currently serves as Associate Professor in the undergraduate psychology program under the School of Human Services and Sciences at Gallaudet University, where she is in her sixth year. She is also a partner at Aligned Clinical and Educational Services (ACES) in Charlottesville, VA, providing comprehensive assessments and therapeutic services. Her research focuses on identity processes, cultural microaggressions, and psychological well-being within the deaf community. She has presented her work at national and international conferences. Dr. Lacy remains dedicated to continuous professional development, expanding her expertise to better serve her students and clients.

Amy Lambert
Amy Sue Lambert, M.A. is a Clinical Psychology doctoral candidate at Gallaudet University and a pre-doctoral psychology intern at the University of Rochester Medical Center. Her clinical training spans inpatient psychiatry, outpatient mental health, and university counseling settings, providing psychotherapy and assessment services to Deaf and hearing clients in American Sign Language. Amy's research focuses on alcohol use and health behaviors within the Deaf community, exploring cultural and linguistic influences on mental health and substance use. She has published and presented nationally on Deaf mental health, LGBTQ+ inclusion, and language access in psychological care. Amy is passionate about advancing culturally and

linguistically affirming mental health services for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing individuals through research, advocacy, and clinical practice.

Karran Larson
Karran is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor with a profound commitment to supporting Deaf and Hard if Hering individuals in their recovery journeys, As a Certified Recovery Coach Facilitator Karran specializes in Working in the Deaf community, integrating her lived experience and professional understanding in effective coaching practices.

Tandy Lewis
Tandy Lewis, MSW, LICSW (they/them), a Deaf white Non-Binary trans individual, is a Full-Time Temporary Social Work professor at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. Tandy has over seven years of experience working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing children in both urban and rural bilingual schools, as well as with Deaf adults in behavioral health settings. They are passionate about destigmatizing negative stereotypes and misinformation around polyamory, consensual non-monogamy, and LGBTQIA+ identities by providing accessible resources in American Sign Language. Tandy aims to expand community resources for Deaf and signing LGBTQIA+ individuals and their loved ones, ensuring they have the support they deserve on their unique journeys.

Erika Lohmiller
Erika Lohmiller, PhD, LCPC, LMHC, CADC, MISA II 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, in the State of Illinois. A Licensed Mental Health Counselor in Florida, 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 thirty 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. Dr. Lohmiller is now an independent psychotherapist. She was also an Adjunct Professor at Northern Illinois University and has taught at Gallaudet University, and the Chicago School for Professional Psychology. She currently works at Nova Southeastern University, and is in the process of setting up a behavioral health program for people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Gabriel Lomas
Gabriel Lomas, PhD., is the Director of Counseling Programs at Gallaudet University. He has published widely on topics related to assessment, forensics, deaf and hard of hearing, as well as crisis preparation. With over 2,000 forensic evaluations completed for a variety of agencies, attorneys, judges, and courts, Gabe is a national expert in forensic evaluation. Gabe has offered expert testimony in over 200 cases, most of which involve deaf people and the justice system. In collaboration with colleagues, Gabe is a co-editor of the book "Deaf People and the Justice System: Selected Topics on Advocacy, Incarceration, and Social Justice" published in 2021 by Gallaudet Press. Gabe serves as an advisor on the documentary film, *Being Michelle*.

Valerie Lopez
Valerie is a children's social worker with over 23 years of experience serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing families in the judicial system. Valerie provides a variety of front-line services including Emergency Response, Family Maintenance, Family Reunification, and permanency planning. She participates in focus groups that seek to improve service delivery and promote equity for Deaf and Hard of Hearing families in Los Angeles County. In

2025, Valerie Lopez received the ADARA Award for “Outstanding Direct Services to Deaf People” recognizing her contributions.

Moss Ferdinand MacLean
Moss Ferdinand MacLean is a white, hearing, genderqueer doctoral student in the School Psychology PsyD program at Gallaudet University. They are originally from Ithaca, NY. Moss holds a B.S. in Psychology from Guilford College and an M.A. in Developmental Psychology from Gallaudet University. Moss is currently serving as the program assistant for the Graduate Level Inclusion and Diversity Education Program and research assistant for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child Resilience Center at Gallaudet University. Their research interests include early childhood mental health, culturally responsive psychoeducational assessment of DHHDBDDLD children, and LGBTQIA+ issues.

Hunter Madsen
Hunter is a Deaf Licensed Master of Social Work. In 2023 he received a Bachelor of Arts from Utah State University in Sociology, with a double minor in ASL and Social Work. He attended Gallaudet University until his graduation in May 2025, with his Master of Social Work Degree.
Hunter practices virtual therapy with clients in multiple states with My Deaf Therapy and specializes in anxiety, depression, and trauma.

Claudia Mansilla
Claudia Mansilla MA, QMHI, NIC, is the Alabama Department of Mental Health Region III Interpreter Coordinator at the Office of Deaf Services. She was born and raised in Lima, Peru. As an immigrant and a native Spanish speaker, she experienced firsthand the communication barrier when she arrived in this country and is aware of the encumbrances this represents. Communication is not just key for the social realm, but also for job opportunities and better living conditions. It is Mansilla’s desire to support both the Spanish speaking and Deaf communities, but her passion emerges when both of these two communities mesh together. In order to support the community, there must be support to the interpreters who work within it; since she obtained her ASL/English Interpretation degree at the University of North Florida, followed by her master’s degree in Spanish/English Interpreting and Translating at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, she has been providing support to her trilingual interpreter colleagues. Currently, she serves as the secretary for Mano a Mano, and is the co-founder of Ñ-MHT. In addition, as part of her continued professional development, Mansilla obtained her QMHI in 2021, and her BEI Trilingual Advanced Certification in 2022.

Simone Mau-Slone
Simone is a Clinical Mental Health Counseling intern at My Deaf Therapy (MDT), where she works with individuals and couples in the Deaf community. Drawing from clinical experience, research, and the study of couple therapy models such as Gottman’s and Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT), Simone offers insight into relational strengths and challenges often overlooked in traditional frameworks.

Jennifer McCann
Jennifer McCann, LCSW, has spent the past 28 years working at the intersection of Deafness, communication, disability, and interpersonal violence as both a social worker and ASL interpreter. She volunteers as a domestic violence and sexual assault advocate for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf Plus, and Deaf Blind individuals throughout the state of Maine. In addition, Jennifer engages in community prevention and education as a sexuality health educator, both independently and as a member of the Thrive Together Collaborative. This

group focuses on establishing and providing training for direct support professionals in settings that offer care and support for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Charles McFadden
Charles joined RIT/NTID in early 2023 to lead their pre-college outreach initiatives after 35-year career in IT predominately in the aerospace/defense industry with Lockheed Martin. He held positions of increasing responsibility from that of a software engineer coding solutions for high value national systems both classified and unclassified mostly involving satellites to overseeing the development and maintenance of internal enterprise-wide IT Service Management solutions, and finally as an IT executive overseeing IT operations and development for a non-profit organization. Chaz has degrees from RIT and Villanova and is a certified privacy technologist from the international Association of Privacy Professionals.

Brian McKenny
Brian C. McKenny, CI, CT, NIC, QMHI, is the Region V Interpreter Coordinator for the Alabama Department of Mental Health's Office of Deaf Services. He is recognized as a Qualified Mental Health Interpreter pursuant to chapter 580-3-24 of the Code of Alabama, maintains certifications of interpretation and transliteration¸ as well as NAD-RID National Interpreter Certification – NIC, from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. Brian has presented as the local, regional, and national level on topics of interpreting in mental health and addictions recovery.

Katie McMahon
Katie is a Deaf Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) with experience working directly within the Deaf community in a variety of roles. She brings professional insight into workplace accessibility, inclusion, and the challenges Deaf, DeafBlind, and DeafDisabled professionals face in employment.

Lynnette Miller
Lynnette is a Senior Protective Services Worker with 24 years' experience in case management with Child Protective Services in San Diego County with the Deaf Services Unit. She is passionate about providing training and education on supporting the needs of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing families involved with the child welfare system. Lynnette is a proud mother of two CODAs. She enjoys playing carbles and organizes tournaments to bring her community together.

Jenifer Montag
Dr. Jenifer Montag, Ed.D., is the Associate Director of the National Center for College Students with Disabilities (NCCSD) through AHEAD, bringing over two decades of experience advancing disability access in higher education and correctional settings. She has served as a disability services director, instructor, researcher, and national advocate dedicated to expanding equitable opportunities for Deaf, hard of hearing, and disabled learners. While leading disability services for a community college, Dr. Montag facilitated complex accommodations—including ASL interpreting, real-time captioning, assistive listening systems, and magnification technology—for incarcerated students in two state prisons, navigating an environment with extraordinary systemic constraints. Her teaching includes First Year Experience courses delivered inside the prison system, where she championed access as a fundamental right. Dr. Montag's work continues through national conference presentations, technical assistance, scholarship, and her current focus on ensuring justice-involved individuals with disabilities understand and access vocational rehabilitation as a pathway to employment and reintegration.

Joshua Mora
Joshua Mora, EdM is a Deaf Interpreter at University of Rochester Medical Center. He earned his Master of Education (EdM) in Language and Literacy Education from Boston University. As a Deaf Interpreter, he works on bridging communication between patients and healthcare providers to ensure equitable access and understanding. He supports patients in navigating complex medical information and advocates for their needs within clinical settings. Skilled in language assessment and evaluation, he collaborates closely with clinical teams to enhance patient-centered care and improve accessibility across healthcare settings. Committed to fostering inclusive environments where every deaf patient can feel heard, understood, and respected.

Alexandra Novak
Alexandra is a fourth-year Clinical Psychology doctoral student at Gallaudet University. She currently works as a graduate teaching assistant for the Department of Psychology and as a neuropsychology technician at NeuroPro Concussion Clinic. Her research focuses on adapting neuropsychological measures for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. Alexandra is passionate about culturally and linguistically appropriate assessment and intervention in neuropsychology.

Thanh-Ha Christina Nguyen
Thanh-Ha is a fifth year Clinical Psychology doctoral student at Gallaudet University and a second-generation Vietnamese-American. With a background in Deaf Studies, her work is grounded in recognizing the cultural and linguistic dimensions of identity and their impact on mental health. Her clinical work centers on culturally responsive care for marginalized communities. Her research examines the intersection of cultural identity, accessibility, and mental health, with a focus on help-seeking behaviors among Asian Deaf populations. She provides therapy in ASL, Vietnamese, and English and is committed to advancing equity in mental health treatment accessibility for minoritized populations. Christina is currently completing her doctoral internship at San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health.

Amanda O'Hearn
Amanda M. O'Hearn, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Rochester Medical Center and Director of Clinical Services at the Deaf Wellness Center. A licensed psychologist specializing in Deaf mental health, Dr. O'Hearn has over two decades of experience integrating clinical care, research, and advocacy to improve behavioral health access for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. Her work has included collaboration in the Rochester Prevention Research Center, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, focusing on health promotion and equity. Dr. O'Hearn earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Gallaudet University and completed her postdoctoral training at the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Medical Center. She continues to advance culturally and linguistically competent mental health services nationwide.

Liann Osborne
Dr. Liann Osborne is a Creole Black Deaf woman, Director of Employment Services at Communication Service for the Deaf, and a national voice for equity in vocational rehabilitation. She leads culturally responsive programs that support Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, and DeafDisabled individuals in accessing meaningful employment. Dr. Osborne designed the CSD Works Job Development Training Program, oversees preparations for CARF accreditation, and provides training nationwide. Her work weaves cultural humility, relational theory, and healing justice to disrupt institutional harm and foster belonging. She holds an Ed.D., Master of Science, and Master of Arts and is a practicing Buddhist who centers care, community, and wholeness in all she does.

Yutaka Osugi
Dr. Yutaka Osugi is a Professor within the Research and Support Center on Higher Education for the Hearing and Visually Impaired at Tsukuba University of Technology in Japan. Dr. Osugi specializes in Deaf Studies, sign language linguistics, and inclusive higher education. With experience as an actor, educator, and community advocate, he has led numerous research and practice initiatives. His work explores the historical and regional diversity of sign languages and promotes Deaf culture through education, arts, and international collaboration. He also contributes to global initiatives, including the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf. His current research focuses on empowering Deaf and Hard of Hearing students and professionals, fostering Deaf-led learning environments, and building inclusive communities through sign language and cultural understanding.

Damara Paris
Damara Goff Paris, NCC, CRC, LPC, is a full professor in Gallaudet University's Counseling Programs. She holds a Doctorate in Deaf Education and Deaf Studies from Lamar University and a Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling from Western Oregon University. With over 25 years of experience in non-profits, state agencies, corporate, and higher education, Dr. Paris has authored several books, book chapters, and numerous journal articles focusing on deaf individuals, disability, Indigenous populations, technology, estrangement, and social and criminal justice. She was a recipient of the 2023-2024 John E. King Endowed Professor award at Emporia State University, and the 2024 Frederick C. Schreiber Award. Since 2022, she has served as editor of JADARA (Journal of ADARA).

Sandy Pascual
Sandy Pascual, M.S., MBA, NIC, QMHI-S, OCHI, CoreCHI, is mental health interpreter and coordinator for the ADMH, Office of Deaf Services. Sandy is trilingual with 25-years of interpreting experience, specializing in medical and mental health. She graduated from the ITP at Miami-Dade College and from Albizu University with an MBA and a Master of Science in Industrial and Organizational (I/O) Psychology. She has served on numerous boards including local RID Chapters and Mano-a-Mano. She's the co-founder of Ñ-MHT, a program offering quarterly trainings for individuals working in mental health in the combined languages of ASL, English and Spanish. Sandy has led supervision and discussion groups and has presented on topics related to medical, mental health and cultural and linguistic demands in the interpreting field.

Laura Peters
Laura Peters is a SUD Service Coordinator, Massachusetts Certified Addiction Recovery Coach and Certified Peer Specialist with eight years of experience providing recovery support through the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Deaf Recovery Coach Program. She works with Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind individuals, as well as their families, supporting recovery from substance use, behavioral addictions, and mental wellness challenges at Behavioral Health Network in Springfield, Massachusetts. Laura is a woman in dual recovery and draws on her lived experience to provide authentic, empathetic support. She is a proud mother of four biracial Deaf/Coda children and an advocate for reducing stigma and trauma. Laura's vision is to create a sustainable, accessible recovery community that fosters growth, empowerment, and multiple pathways to recovery.

Lance Pickett
Lance lives in Utah with his wife, their three kids, and two dogs, and he spends his life working to elevate people by building connections and helping others succeed in meaningful ways. At the core of his work is a simple belief: relationships are everything, and real progress happens when people connect and appreciate

one another across differences in experience, belief, and perspective. He believes failure is simply success in progress, and that growth comes from trying, learning, and becoming a little better each day. Known for thoughtful problem-solving and creative ideas, Lance challenges assumptions, sees the good in people, and helps others understand different perspectives. He currently serves the State of Utah as the Director of the Division of Services of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Kyla Pierlioni
Kyla is an LADC Intern specializing in behavioral health services for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals. As a lived experience Deaf professional and advocate, Kyla is committed to advancing accessibility, cultural competence, and communication equity within substance use and mental health care. Her work focuses on bridging service gaps by promoting Deaf-centered approaches in assessment, treatment, and recovery support. Kyla's passion lies in empowering Deaf clients through culturally responsive practices and encouraging collaboration among providers to improve behavioral health outcomes across the Deaf community.

Joy Plote
Joy Plote, LPC, CCTS-I&F, is a Deaf-parented trauma therapist, interpreter educator, and mother of five Codas. She is the founder of The Space Between, a Deaf-centered counseling and education agency in Arizona. Joy is a native signer and licensed clinician specializing in EMDR, Internal Family Systems (IFS), Brainspotting, and legacy trauma healing. With over 30 years of experience, she provides therapy, supervision, and culturally responsive training on language deprivation, intergenerational trauma, and the unique challenges Deaf-parented families face. Joy's dual lens as both a Deaf-parented individual and a mother of Codas gives her unmatched insight into the emotional, cultural, and physiological impacts of being raised in and raising Deaf families. Her work centers resilience, repair, and recognition.

Celena Ponce
Celena is trilingual in English, Spanish and ASL. She founded and runs a nonprofit that works with immigrant families with Deaf and hard of hearing children. Through her organization she teaches ASL classes in spoken Spanish, connects families with resources and develops curriculum for professionals and parents alike.

Danielle Previ
Dr. Danielle "Dani" Previ, PhD, is a licensed clinical psychologist and the Intervention Track Director for Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) at the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child Resilience Center at Gallaudet University. She specializes in trauma treatment for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind children and adolescents, with a focus on increasing equitable access to evidence-based interventions. Dr. Previ leads efforts to adapt trauma treatment to be culturally and linguistically accessible for signing populations. Her clinical and research interests include trauma-informed care, child–caregiver attachment, family systems, and accessibility in mental health service delivery. She is dedicated to advancing culturally responsive practices and reducing disparities in trauma treatment.

Concetta Pucci
Dr. Pucci is the Director of Undergraduate Practicum Education and a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Social Work at Gallaudet University. She earned her Ph.D. in Special Education Administration from Gallaudet University, her MSW from New York University, and her BSSW from the Rochester Institute of Technology. Dr. Pucci is a licensed clinical social worker with extensive experience providing community-based and telemental health services in both group practice and agency settings. She currently operates her private psychotherapy

practice, HeartForza Mental Wellness & Consulting, LLC. Also, Dr. Pucci serves as a member-at-large on the board of the American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association (ADARA) and as Vice President of Social Workers for Equity and Anti-Racism (SWEAR) in Maryland. Her professional interests include strengthening ethical standards in social work practice, advocating for high-quality services for DeafBlind individuals, and promoting self-love and self-care.

Terese Rognmo

Terese Rognmo, MSW, is a Professor of Social Work at Gallaudet University. I currently teach social work courses at the 300 and 400 levels. I am the only person in my family who is deaf, and I was born and raised in Norway. As a teenager, my dad relocated to British Columbia, Canada, and I joined him. I decided to attend Gallaudet University to earn my BSW and MSW. I spent more than 18 years working in the social work field after that. I currently reside in Maryland with my family and three adorable cats.

Margalit Roitman

Margalit is a third year Clinical Psychology Doctoral student at Gallaudet University. She graduated from The Pennsylvania State University with a B.S. in Human Development and Family Studies and a minor in Child Maltreatment and Advocacy studies. This field of study has led her to a clinical and research interest in prevention and treatment of childhood maltreatment for DHH individuals. She currently is an extern at a outpatient community clinic with trauma exposed children and works as a graduate assistant at Gallaudet University's Counseling and Psychological Services.

Hades Romero

Hades Romero (they/them), Ph.D. is a Hearing Cuban-American Genderfluid licensed clinical psychologist at Cory Cove Wellness, LLC in Worcester, Massachusetts. They provide therapy and psychological assessment in American Sign Language, English, and Spanish. They helped establish Healing in Color, a network uniting BIPOC signing therapists through mentorship and shared growth. Their clinical and research interests include trauma, PTSD, intersectional identity, and migration-related stress. Hades specializes in working with polyamory, consensual non-monogamy, and LGBTQIA* Deaf individuals, addressing the complex needs at the intersection of language, culture, gender, and sexuality. Their approach integrates trauma-informed, culturally responsive care and a commitment to equity and access for marginalized communities.

Dana Rudison

Dana is a mental health clinician with over 20 years of experience. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Prairie View A&M University in Texas and a Master of Science degree from Southern New Hampshire University. Dana specializes in traditional group therapy, supporting clients in developing their interpersonal skills and cultivating a stronger sense of purpose. She currently practices group therapy at the Access Partial Care program in New Jersey, where she continues to pursue her commitment to counseling and wellness. Outside of her professional work, Dana actively participates in church and ministerial activities and enjoys traveling to adventurous destinations.

Kent Schafer

Kent Schafer, Ph.D., NCSP, holds an extensive educational background in psychology and special education, culminating in a Doctor of Philosophy in School Psychology from the University of Alabama. His dissertation focused on developing psychometric properties for functional communication assessments used as screening tools in mental health centers across Alabama. He earned a Master of Science in Education from the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater and a Master of Arts in Human Services with a concentration in

Substance Use from the University of Illinois at Springfield, equipping him with a strong foundation in deaf mental health, particularly through counseling strategies for the deaf with substance use issues. Professionally, Schafer currently serves as the Regional Director for the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, where he oversees educational administration and team leadership in a multi-functional center in rural west Alabama serving individuals from birth through geriatric care who have sensory or development delay. Aside from multiple publications, he has been a guest lecturer at various universities, teaching graduate courses for psychology, counseling, and/or communication studies. His previous roles include Director of Counseling and Evaluation, where he supervised counseling teams and managed diagnostic assessments, as well as interim director focusing on clinical oversight for deaf patients inside psychiatric and forensic settings while maintaining a small therapeutic caseload in the community. Kent is the current President of ADARA.

Ashley Schweiger
Ashley is a Regional Transition Consultant with the Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), specializing in Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). With a background as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf, she brings extensive experience supporting students with disabilities, particularly those who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind. In her current role, Ashley supports transition planning, workforce development, and collaboration with school districts. She also provides contract oversight and serves as a statewide liaison for services supporting Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind youth.

Tomina J. Schwenke
Tomina J. Schwenke, PhD, ABPP, is a licensed and board-certified psychologist with a post-doctoral juris master's degree from Emory School of Law. She is a nationally certified sign language interpreter (CI/CT), with a specialized certificate in mental health interpreting (QMHI). She is an Assistant Professor at the Emory School of Medicine, served as the director and on-site psychology supervisor for the Emory's jail-based Competency Restoration program and is the forensic psychology training director for the Emory Psychiatry and Law Service. She holds the clinical distinction of Senior Psychologist within the Emory Brain Health Clinic where she provides therapy to a variety of patients including those who are deaf, hard-of-hearing and deaf-blind.

Angela Scruggs
Dr. Angela Scruggs, PhD, LPC-MHSP-S, NIC, QMHI, is a licensed professional counselor, trauma specialist, and national leader in Deaf mental health access. With over twenty years of experience serving Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (D/HH) individuals across the U.S. and abroad, she integrates trauma-informed and attachment-based approaches to promote healing and empowerment. Dr. Scruggs holds a Ph.D. in Psychology and Counseling and is a Certified TBRI® Practitioner, Mentor, and TraumaPlay® Therapist. She is the founder of Dr. Scruggs Counseling & Professional Solutions and the Deaf Wellspring Center, a nonprofit dedicated to culturally responsive mental health care. Her mission is to bridge communication, culture, and compassion through accessible, evidence-based interventions. www.drscruggscounseling.com

Carla Shird
Carla Shird (she/her) is an African American Deaf cisgender woman and a Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) and Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) based in Washington, D.C. Her work sits at the intersection of interpreting, counseling, education, consultation, and mental health, with a strong commitment to cultural humility, ethical practice, and community sustainability. She facilitates workshops on identity, ethics, power, and systems change, maintains a clinical counseling practice, and provides consultation and community-centered professional support for racially and ethnically marginalized counselors and interpreters.

Paul Silvasi

Paul M. Silvasi obtained his PhD in Clinical Psychology from Gallaudet University. He completed his predoctoral internship at Utah State Hospital, focusing on forensic psychology. Following his internship year, he completed a formal forensic postdoctoral fellowship in forensic psychology with the Colorado Department of Human Services. Dr. Silvasi is one of the few individuals in the United States that has specialized training in the provision of clinical services with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals, as well as in conducting forensic psychological evaluations. As such, he has a particular passion regarding conducting forensic evaluations with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals, and he has published as well as presented at national conferences regarding this specialized area.

Steven Sligar

Dr. Steven R. Sligar, CVE/R, is currently Professor Emeritus at East Carolina University, where he taught for 17 years. He met his first Deaf client on August 1, 1972, and has evaluated over 1,000 people since then. During his career, he worked for two state VR-operated facilities and two private rehabilitation centers. He taught ASL at two community colleges and a university. He has provided over 300 international, national, state, and local workshops on deafness rehabilitation with a concentration on vocational evaluation. He has 52 publications, with one in development about ethical report writing. In 1977, he attended his first ADARA conference and was present when the name changed from the Professional Rehabilitation Workers with the Adult Deaf to ADARA.

Kelly Sterling

Kelly is the Director for the Office of Deaf services. The office of Deaf Services is positioned within the Division of Behavioral Health with the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. From October 2015-May 2018 Kelly was the Clinical Director for the ODS working with providers to advance quality of care enterprises wide within DBHDD services. In June 2018-March 2019 Kelly transitioned to the community behavioral health side working as the Director for Deaf Services at Avita Community Partners which was focused on establishing behavioral health services for Deaf individuals across the state. In March 2019 Kelly returned to DBHDD as the Director for the Office of Deaf Services. Kelly received his BSW from Evangel University 2006 and his MSW from Appalachian State University 2012. Within his current position, he is focused on fulfilling department mandates related to Deaf Service provisions within DBHDD. The focus of these efforts are building relationships and developing programs that will lead to increased access to quality services across the state of Georgia. Kelly has worked within the Deaf community at Residential Schools for the Deaf, Iowa and North Carolina respectively. In addition to this, Kelly has worked as a Clinical Social Worker within an inpatient psychiatric hospital for the Deaf Services Unit at Broughton Hospital in North Carolina. Kelly is licensed as a clinical social worker in North Carolina and Georgia. Kelly is formerly licensed as a school social worker in North Carolina. Kelly grew up signing. His mother and father were Deaf. As a child of deaf adults (coda), Kelly has been able to acquire American Sign Language and is sensitive to the cultural interplay between the Deaf Community and the Hearing community. Kelly is married to Staci and has two children, Russell and Violet.

David Strom

David holds a B.S. in Manufacturing Engineering and an M.S. in Career and Human Resource Development from Rochester Institute of Technology. He is a transformational leader with extensive experience at Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), Sprint Telecommunications, and Gallaudet University. Throughout his career, David has been dedicated to serving the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities by advocating for lifelong services and resources. He is recognized

as a change agent, working to preserve Deaf culture and language, and promoting equity and inclusion for all people.

Lisa Swanson
Lisa hails from New Mexico and as a stout believer in education, she is a fourth-year Gallaudet University Clinical Psychology doctoral student. She has 20+ years of experience working in the field of mental health and continues to be curious! She has worked building her clinical experience through a university counseling center, outpatient clinical assessment center and with children and parents at a trauma stress center. Lisa's research interests combine her interests of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people, the outdoors and the impact of attending summer camps.

Kota Takayama
Dr. Kota Takayama is an Associate Professor within the MSW Program at Gallaudet University and a Visiting Researcher at Tsukuba University of Technology in Japan. Dr. Takayama is a deaf scholar whose research bridges mental health, public health, and Deaf/Disability Studies. Trained in both mental health and public health, his work focuses on developing inclusive and evidence-based systems that promote the well-being of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. His research examines disaster preparedness and recovery, accessible mental health care, and equity in higher education through culturally and linguistically responsive approaches. Drawing on Deaf and Disability Studies frameworks, Dr. Takayama explores how deaf-led initiatives and cross-sector collaborations can enhance community resilience and social inclusion.

Stephanie Taksel
Stephanie is a social worker specializing in healing trauma through embodied movement practices. Currently serving as the TCTSY Program Manager at DeafLEAD, they provide TCTSY not only to survivors of violence, but also to the 400 employees of DeafLEAD working virtually throughout the country, and as community care for direct service providers. Stephanie is passionate about supporting the providers that support others and is leading the effort to expand DeafLEAD's embodied healing services with Reflective Art and Trauma Informed Weight Lifting practices.

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. Since September 2025, she is Vocational Rehabilitation supervisor.

Kimberly VanOrden
Kimberly A. VanOrden, Ph.D., is a clinical geropsychologist and Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Rochester Medical Center. She completed her undergraduate training at Columbia University, her doctoral training at Florida State University, a clinical internship at Montefiore Medical Center, and a postdoctoral research fellowship at the University of Rochester Medical Center. She directs the HOPE Lab (Helping Older People Engage), which studies programs to promote social connection and healthy aging and prevent suicide in later life. She co-directs the Center for the Study and Prevention of Suicide at URMC, as well as a research fellowship in suicide prevention. She mentors students and fellows and maintains a clinical practice providing evidence-based psychotherapy to older adults.

Andrew Veith

Andrew Veith, CDI, was born deaf and native signer. He obtained his studies from Delgado Community College in Certification of Technical Studies (CTS) focusing on ASL Studies and (Associate of Arts) A.A. in Interpreting, then completed his Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Deaf Studies at Gallaudet University, recently completed fellowship with UMass Eunice Shriver Kennedy Center in Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disabilities (LEND) certification, currently completing the Masters in Public Administration (MPA) at Suffolk University Sawyer Business School. Andrew has been in management level of employment since 2006 in different areas as account manager, clinical program manager, director, owner, and operations manager. Currently working as Interpreter Supervisor at Worcester Recovery Center and Hospital under the Department of Mental Health. He holds CDI (Certified Deaf Interpreter) and contracts with MCDHH and RICDHH. He is currently consulting, teaching and mentoring ASL users and Interpreters, active Deaf Interpreter, and contractor as Coordinator, Logistic, and Support Services for over 20 years.

Ivy Vélez

Ivelisse (Ivy) Vélez, MS, is a Deaf professional with more than 35 years of experience advocating for Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf Plus communities. She currently serves as a statewide coordinator of Deaf and Hard of Hearing services, where she develops programs, policies, and trainings to ensure equity and accessibility. Her career spans leadership in program administration, independent living, mental health, vocational rehabilitation, and education, with a special focus on underserved populations, including Deaf individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (ID/DD). Ivy is also an experienced presenter and facilitator, known for engaging workshops on cultural humility, leadership, and inclusive practices. She holds a Master's degree in Organizational Management & Leadership and is pursuing a PsyD in Leadership Psychology.

Lori Vigesaa

Lori holds licensure with the Minnesota Board of Behavioral Health and Therapy as a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor. She currently is a therapist for Minnesota's Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing State Services. Prior to that, Lori held the role of Mental Health Professional and, eventually, as Clinical Supervisor at Therapeutic Services Agency's DHHDB Program. Lori also worked with college-aged students in a campus Drug/Alcohol Prevention Program. She developed a strategic plan to support students in choosing healthier lifestyles and worked within early alert systems to identify students at risk or struggling with mental health and/or addiction issues. Lori has training in Play Therapy, TF-CBT, and Sensory Motor Arousal Regulation Treatment. Lori is working towards certification in EMDR and is a board approved clinical supervisor.

Morgane Vincent

Dr. Morgane Vincent is a French Deaf clinical psychologist and Assistant professor in the Department of Psychology at Gallaudet University. She earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Gallaudet, where she grew a strong commitment to culturally and linguistically accessible mental health care for Deaf and marginalized communities. She has extensive clinical training across diverse settings including schools, substance use programs, hospitals, and community mental health centers. Her research focuses on refugeeism, trauma, and sexual and gender-based violence, with an emphasis on the intersections of identity, displacement, and resilience. Through her teaching and clinical work, she aims to advance trauma informed, inclusive psychological services that recognize and empower individuals from multilingual and multicultural backgrounds.

Mel Whalen
Dr. Mel Whalen, PhD, LP, is a Deaf clinical psychologist and trauma scholar whose work bridges dissociation theory, Deaf mental health, and disability studies. Their clinical and academic focus centers on the psychological consequences of early language deprivation, attachment rupture, and complex trauma in Deaf and disabled adults. A nationally recognized advocate for culturally and linguistically accessible care, Dr. Whalen integrates lived experience with trauma-informed clinical practice to expand prevailing models of self, safety, and connection. Their forthcoming work, Fluency Without Freedom, reframes structural dissociation through the lens of Deaf embodiment, language access, and relational repair. Dr. Whalen maintains a private practice in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Stephanie Wilcox
Stephanie is a Community Advocate for Pink Wings of Hope (PWOH) at Deaf Empowerment Awareness Foundation, Inc. (DEAF, Inc.). As a Deaf cancer survivor, she brings both lived experience and professional expertise to her advocacy. Stephanie began volunteering with PWOH in 2020 and now serves full-time, providing peer mentoring, education, and support for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind individuals navigating cancer. She also hosts The Cocoon, a cancer education video series in ASL with captions and audio, designed to improve accessibility and awareness. Stephanie frequently presents to healthcare and rehabilitation professionals about Deaf culture, accessibility, and inclusive communication. She is currently pursuing her Patient Navigator certification to strengthen her ability to guide patients toward equitable, person-centered care.

Marguerite "Maggie" Wildermuth
Maggie is a fifth-year student at Gallaudet in the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. program. She currently is an extern at the Center for Autism Development at Children's National Hospital in DC and works at the Gallaudet CAN (Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience) lab as a research assistant. Her research focuses on the use of tabletop games in therapy with Deaf and Hard of Hearing therapy groups. Clinically, her interests focus on neurodiversity affirming care and assessment for neurodevelopmental differences. As she continues to grow in her clinical work, she aims to empower clients from a strengths-based perspective to learn about their brains and build lives that work with their differences, rather than against them.

Alexander Wilkins
Alexander Wilkins, PhD, MSCI is a licensed clinical psychologist, Assistant Professor at UMass Chan Medical School, and co-Director of the DeafYES! Center for Deaf Empowerment and Recovery. He earned his PhD in 2019 and completed his MS in Clinical Investigation in 2025. Recipient of the K23 Career Development Award from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), Dr. Wilkins has specialized training in substance use disorders and clinical research. His work centers on developing and adapting evidence-based treatments to meet the unique needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals, with a strong focus on community engaged research approaches. Dr. Wilkins also provides comprehensive outpatient mental health and substance use treatment, integrating innovative, culturally and linguistically accessible approaches for DHH clients.

Roger Williams
Roger C. Williams is retired from the South Carolina Department of Mental Health where he served as the Executive Director for the Spartanburg Area Mental Health Center. He was formerly the Director for SCDMH Deaf Services, the Program Manager at the Piedmont Center for Mental Health Services and the Social Worker IV at the Deaf Services Program at Patrick Harris Psychiatric Hospital. In addition, he has a private practice

specializing in consulting and training related to the needs of deaf adults in the mental health system. He has interpreted in a wide variety of settings, including the NAD and RID conferences and in forensic and court settings. Mr. Williams is a South Carolina Licensed Independent Social Worker – Clinical Practice/Supervisor and holds an RID Certificate of Transliteration and a SCAD/NAD IAP Level 5 Interpreting Certificate. He is the 1989 winner of the N.C. Governor's Advocacy Council for Persons with Disabilities Distinguished Service Award, the 1979 winner of the Robert D. Frisina Award for deaf/hearing integration, the 1996 winner of the "Outstanding Transition to the Community" from the South Carolina Mental Health Association and the 2001 "Interpreter of the Year" for the South Carolina Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. As the parent of four deaf children and two hearing children and the spouse of a deaf adult, Mr. Williams is active in a number of local, state-wide, regional and national advocacy and social organization, including being the United States representative to the International Institute on Mental Health Leadership Task Force on Deaf Individuals. Roger is recognized as a Qualified Mental Health Interpreter Practicum Supervisor.

Jaime Wilson

Dr. Jaime Wilson is a prescribing medical psychologist and board-certified neuropsychologist, practicing full-time both within and beyond Washington State. He holds privileges at several hospitals and collaborates extensively with physicians, healthcare providers, and forensic experts, providing neuropsychological evaluations nationwide. Neuropsychology is a field dedicated to understanding and diagnosing conditions related to the brain and nervous system. Born with a profound hearing loss, Dr. Wilson grew up using bilateral hearing aids and primarily communicated using spoken language, although he is also fluent in American Sign Language. He resides in Olympia, WA, with his equally Deaf wife (an RN), their three children, and their spirited King Charles Spaniel, Pepper Jack. Discover more about his work, connect online, or explore his books at www.WilsonClinical.com or via your favorite social media channels: https://linktr.ee/dr_wilson

Ben Wright

Ben is the Director of Disability Access in Prison Education at The Community and President of the Board for the Formerly Incarcerated College Graduates Network (FICGN). He is Deaf and brings both lived experience and professional expertise to the national conversation on equity and access for incarcerated learners with disabilities. Ben holds an M.A. in English Literature, an M.Ed. in Special Education, and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing. He is currently completing his Ph.D. in English Literature with a focus on disability, incarceration, and education. He has presented nationally at AHEAD, ADARA, and NASFAA, and leads a pilot project involving over 25 states to develop inclusive training materials and best practices for carceral education programs.