



School Social Work
Association of America



2024 National Conference Breakout Sessions March 12-15, 2024 Baltimore, MD

PLEASE NOTE: This listing is provided to aid individuals with registration. All session descriptions, titles, and sessions themselves are subject to change at any time and without notice.

Wednesday, March 13th, 2024 (Sessions A & B)

A1 Affirm to Action: Disrupting the Disparate Impact of Disproportionate Education Policies

This session will focus on the role of School Social Worker(s) in disrupting the disproportionate outcomes of education policies being implemented in the academic setting heavily focused within urban school districts. School Social Workers practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels; School Social Workers are the connectors to home, school, and communities, all to support education rights and promote advocacy. This session will briefly address the dismantling of Affirmative Action and the impact it has on School Social Workers to ensure ethical guidelines and educational policies are practiced within the academic setting.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will analyze current education policies impacting the role of School Social Workers.
2. Participants will identify three to five action steps to implement within their school to decrease barriers to student success within disproportionate education policies.
3. Participants will consider best practices to address disproportionate policies and lack of social justice within the academic setting.

Presenter: Ashley Johnson, EdD, LSSW



School Social Work
Association of America

A2 Creating Restorative Response Teams to Address Racial Harassment in Schools

We are ethically called to create and sustain equitable, inclusive, and brave spaces for our students to thrive. When harassment is initiated based on a person's race, color, national origin, ethnicity, or ancestry, it is our responsibility to respond, repair, and eliminate the conduct with healing-centered approaches. This session is designed to provide a strength-based and healing-centered approach to prevent, mitigate, respond, and recover from racial harassment incidents within the school community. This session will allow individuals to create a restorative response team structure designed to respond to, repair, and eliminate racial harassment.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will identify and examine federal, state, tribal, and local civil right policies that enhance and protect racial justice in schools.
2. Participants will examine current service delivery approaches for preventing, mitigating, responding, and recovering from racial harassment incidents in schools.
3. Participants will give examples of Restorative Response Team Structure to enhance racial justice and eliminate racial harassment in schools at the micro, mezzo, and macro level.

Presenter: Jacqueline Pierce, MSW, LMSW, CSSW

A3 Applying Experiential Therapy Techniques for School Social Work

Prairie walks, feeding goats, weeding vegetable gardens, puppets... what do they have in common? This session will expand knowledge of experiential therapy approaches and apply them in the school setting. The presenter will provide background knowledge and real-life examples of these approaches, including animal, horticulture, drama, and nature-based therapies from her very own school setting. Hands-on experiences will engage learners in the session and provide a guide to the application to individual and small group sessions. Attendees will leave with a lesson plan for social work sessions and how to tie CASEL SEL Competencies/IEP Goal progress to their plan. This session will refresh your approach and tie in current research on Nature-Based Therapy and the Science of Play.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will identify therapeutic foundations to experiential therapy approaches.
2. Participants will role-play in hands on practice in applying experiential therapy approaches in the school social work setting.
3. Participants will apply experiential therapy approaches in lesson planning for goals according to IEP's and CASEL SEL Competency areas.

Presenter: Katie Szarzynski, MSW, LCSW

A4 Preparing for National Certification: Hands-on Workshop with Nationally Certified School Social Workers

Are you an active SSWAA member with four years of post-MSW experience who wants to become a Nationally Certified School Social Worker (NCSSW) candidate? Attend this hands-on session to learn about the certification process from application to competency statement submission and the submission rating process. This session will prompt you to examine how the SSWAA National Practice Model and your practice intersect, test your skills at writing a



**School Social Work
Association of America**

competency statement, and identify artifacts that you could use to support it. Participants will receive an update on school social workers who have received a pay increase upon earning national certification and any state legislative updates. This session will help you evaluate your readiness to invest time into the national certification process and develop a plan to successfully complete it.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will explain the application and national certification process to a colleague.
2. Participants will evaluate their own practice as it applies to the national model and a national certification competency.
3. Participants will weigh the benefits and challenges of national certification.

Presenters: Lou Paschall, LPSW, NCSSW
Michelle Alvarez, EdD, MSW &
Ken Rautiola, LCSW, NCSSW

A5 What do we know about McKinney-Vento? A Deep Dive into Our Knowledge

For over 35 years, The McKinney-Vento Act (MVA) has been the major federal policy that addresses educational needs for children experiencing homelessness in America. Despite the policy's importance, few examinations of what we know about the MVA have been conducted. This presentation will cover a comprehensive scoping review of everything we know about the MVA, condensing over 100 articles into a manageable and understandable presentation. This will provide attendees with a solid base of evidence-based information. Further, this session will be a space to further discuss the future directions of our knowledge on the MVA by leveraging both research and practice knowledge to improve and narrow any practice to research-to-practice gaps.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will discover the scope, depth, and extent of the published literature on the McKinney-Vento Act.
2. Participants will express and identify future directions for McKinney-Vento Act research.
3. Participants will assess current gaps in our understanding of the McKinney-Vento Act.

Presenters: James Canfield, PhD, MSW, BSW, LMSW &
Kennesha Smith, MSW, LMSW

A6 Neurodiversity Affirming Practice in the Classroom

Given the rise of the identification of neurodivergent (ND) profiles, it is crucial that school social workers enhance their understanding and skills in supporting ND students. Through interactive discussions and case studies, participants will gain valuable insights into neurodiversity and its implications for inclusive education. The workshop will explore a range of neurodivergent profiles as social workers learn evidence-based strategies for creating inclusive and supportive environments that cater to the diverse needs of ND students. We will explore sensory sensitivities, accommodations, communication, and social interactions, providing practical techniques to enhance student engagement and address common misconceptions and stigma related to neurodiversity. Comprehensive collaboration is emphasized.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will define and describe the neurodiversity paradigm, including a range of neurodivergent profiles such as autism spectrum, ADHD, dyslexia, and others, including their strengths-based characteristics and potential challenges.



School Social Work
Association of America

2. Participants will identify 3 strategies for creating inclusive and supportive classroom environments that cater to the diverse needs of neurodivergent students, including modifications, accommodations, and individualized supports.
3. Participants will examine 5 techniques and tools that facilitate effective communication and social interactions with neurodivergent students.

Presenter: Sara Rodrigues, DSW, MSW

A7 Advocacy and Allyship for LGBTQ+ Youth: How School Social Workers Can Make a Difference

This workshop is intended to provide educators and youth-serving professionals with the competency and confidence to ensure LGBTQ+ youth are in spaces where they are supported, valued, and have the opportunity to learn and grow free from bullying, violence, and harassment. The workshop will provide foundational information and data to support youth-serving professional advocacy, dispel common misconceptions about including LGBTQ+ topics in schools, and increase confidence by role-playing common scenarios that require a response from students and families.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will discover with current data on LGBTQ+ youth from leading LGBTQ+ organizations including HRC's 2023 Youth Report and the Trevor Project's 2023 US National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People.
2. Participants will describe basic competency concepts to ensure understanding of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression as well as how structures around cisheteronormativity show up in school settings.
3. Participants will give examples of common myths around LGBTQ+ inclusion by learning factual information to debunk the misconceptions and tools for engaging in necessary discussions to support LGBTQ+ youth and families.

Presenters: Ted Lewis, M.Ed & Cheryl Green, M.Ed

B1 School-Based Mental Health: One Size Does Not Fit All

This session introduces participants to a school-based mental health framework specifically designed for Black students. During this session, participants will gain a heightened awareness of the importance of taking factors such as race, class, and culture into account when working with Black students on mental health-related issues. Participants will leave with practical measures to support the mental health of Black students that can be easily implemented within their school divisions.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will examine what Black students need in order to have their mental health needs adequately addressed and supported.
2. Participants will identify culturally relevant factors that school-based mental health practitioners need to acknowledge (and/or understand) regarding their work with Black students.
3. Participants will demonstrate strategies school-based mental health practitioners should use when they are working with Black students. Specifically, participants will create 2-3 individual action items that they will implement in their practice with the Black students they serve.

Presenter: Shenita Williams, PhD, LCSW



**School Social Work
Association of America**

B2 The MARVELous Summer Experience: A Unique Way to Connect Students with Socio-Emotional Learning

The Marvelous Summer Experience was developed for our district's most at-risk students. It is four weeks of summer learning where students build agency while learning Math, English Language Arts, and Social-Emotional Skills. The information provided during class is reinforced during practical activities, including creative and performing arts, including creative and performing arts, mindfulness, and outdoor education. Because the majority of the students that attend the camp have behavioral concerns, Restorative Justice is an integral framework used in our practice. Circles are strategically used throughout the day to maintain space as a community. All camp activities focus on the whole child as we incorporate parents/families in all experience elements.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will examine educator knowledge on developing a summer support model that includes evidence-based practices.
2. Participants will describe evidence-based frameworks as a strategy to address social and emotional needs of at-risk students.
3. Participants will summarize the importance of incorporating social and emotional learning and mental health in educational practices.

Presenter: Stephanie Steward-Bridges, MSW

B3 7 Stages: Providing Treatment in a Mental Health Crisis

Middle School is a difficult developmental period for many adolescents. Many will encounter mental health needs that could lead them to cope by self-harming, experiencing suicidal or homicidal thoughts, or having a psychotic episode. Knowing how to provide treatment during a crisis can decrease the potential of the event becoming traumatic and increase the effectiveness of the intervention. In this session, participants will learn how to use Albert R. Robert's 7-Stage Crisis Intervention Model to intervene through assessment, provide the most effective and least restrictive disposition, and reintegrate the student back into school. Rules of confidentiality, duty to warn, and state laws will be taken into consideration.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants apply Albert R. Robert's 7-Stage Crisis Intervention to complete a comprehensive crisis assessment.
2. Participants will use provided tools for determining the most effective and least restrictive disposition.
3. Participants will dramatize assessment and disposition through case vignettes.

Presenter: Lauren Reed, LCSW, LSSW, MPA

B4 Creating and Sustaining Social Work & Mental Health Programs in Challenging Times

This presentation will describe strategies for creating and sustaining social work and school-based mental health programs amidst challenges, including perceptions of social work, stigma, mental health staffing shortages, and COVID-19. The presentation will also describe how school systems can remove barriers to mental health services, create equitable access to services, and address the needs of ethnically, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse student populations. Through receiving a description of a suburban school district's five-year journey in creating, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining a social work and school-



**School Social Work
Association of America**

based mental health program, attendees will be able to identify resources, potential partnerships, and strategies for enhancing support to students.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will describe at least three actions, supports and/or resources needed to address challenges to creating and sustaining school-based mental health and social work programs.
2. Participants will use a provided model for building and scaling up a new school-based mental health services and social work program and provide an example of how to apply this model.
3. Participants will identify resources, potential partnerships, and strategies for enhancing supports to students through social work and school-based mental health programs.

Presenters: Consuela Robinson, EdD, LCSW-C
Kami Wagner, MA, NCC &
Cynthia Schulmeyer, PhD, NCSP

B5 Best Practices in SSW Internships: Lessons from a District and University Collaboration

The Rochester City School District (RCSD) is an urban school district in New York state that serves over 23,000 students a year in grades k-12. Over 100 social workers are currently employed in various settings across the district, and those social workers provide internships for both BSW and MSW interns from five area colleges and universities. Nazareth University, one of these partners, has collaborated with RCSD to strengthen our relationship while assessing barriers to social workers taking interns. This session will outline the work Nazareth is doing to support RCSD social workers in taking students.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will identify foundational components that contribute to Rochester City School District's successful internship program.
2. Participants will evaluate strengths and needs in their existing internship programs.
3. Participants will formulate ways to utilize specific components from the Rochester City School District's internship program to then implement in their own school settings.

Presenters: Tamara Sheppard, LCSW, M.S.Ed &
Erin Cole, DSW, LCSW

B6 Does Restorative Justice Improve School-Based Relationships in Three Rural High Schools Serving Native American Students?

Native students are disciplined at roughly two times the rate of their White peers and have a dropout/pushout rate twice the national average. Restorative justice (RJ) is a viable strategy for addressing these disparities by taking a relational versus a punitive approach to address the harm caused to others. Typically, student educational outcomes (GPA, attendance, and discipline reports) are used to measure the success of the RJ approach, but less understood is whether RJ creates a relational school culture and improves school-based relationships and a sense of belonging. Semi-structured interviews across three high schools were conducted with principals, assistant principals, school social workers, and students. Findings were mixed among Native and non-Native high school students.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will examine what the current research says about restorative justice in schools.



School Social Work
Association of America

2. Participants will compare the strengths and weakness of each schools implementation of restorative justice.
3. Participants will analyze the implications of how restorative justice can create a relational school climate.

Presenter: Tasha Seneca Keys, PhD

B7 Program Development Using an Anti-Oppressive Framework: Starting a Program from a Brand-New Perspective

School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) and Dominican University (DU) are in the process of developing a certification for school personnel that provides training in Culturally Informed Responses to Grief and Loss. In this session, we're going to discuss what it actually takes to develop a culturally informed, equity-focused, inclusive program and what it takes to maintain a program with integrity. This session will critically look at program development and how to ensure that programs are equity-focused from the start and will be broken down into four sections that address the critical elements of program development.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will identify and name three components of a current programs in their setting that is built on racist/ableist/anti-LGBTQ+ philosophies.
2. Participants will give examples of two instances of oppressive gatekeeping in current programs, schools, or agencies.
3. Participants will describe one new policy for a program that is actively equity focused by the end of this session.

Presenters: Susie Bohun, MSW, LCSW & Leticia Villarreal Sosa, PhD, LCSW

Thursday, March 14th, 2024 (Sessions C & D)

C1 Indigenous-Based Social-Emotional Learning: Bridging the Gap Between Indigenous Practices in Alaska and Social-Emotional Learning in Schools

The use of Indigenous Culture and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in schools works to support students in a holistic and traditional manner. Using the cultural knowledge of the 228 Federally recognized tribes within the state and the CASEL framework to build a Culturally responsive SEL Practice for the schools of the Interior of Alaska helps to combat trauma by focusing on traditions. This session will focus on how to bring cultural knowledge into everyday SEL at all school levels and promote culturally responsive practices within schools. It will talk about Alaska-specific practices, as well as how to adapt different practices to fit different school environments. Specific strategies and tools to create partnerships between indigenous communities and schools will be discussed.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will discover a framework for Culturally Responsive Social-Emotional Learning.
2. Participants will determine strategies to promote cultural knowledge in a k12 school environment.



**School Social Work
Association of America**

3. Participants will identify how to build community partnerships to cultivate culturally sensitive trauma-informed practices.

Presenters: Melissa Zatica, MSW

C2 Educational Censorship: Implications for Justice-Oriented School Social Work

This workshop is focused on the scope and prevalence of education censorship, including curricula laws, media influence, school boards, and school social work. First, we review state policies enacted to showcase how censorship has evolved in scope. Second, we explore the reinforcing role of the media. Although censorship is driven by a network of elites, the media, at times, positions divisive narratives that may inflame political polarization. Third, we examine school boards as a place of both support for censorship and public resistance. We explore these complex interactions and discuss strategies of resistance, advocacy, and mechanisms of healing to support school social workers in their ongoing efforts toward justice-oriented practice in schools.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will analyze the scope and prevalence of education censorship across the U.S.
2. Participants will examine the relationships between the network elites shaping censorship, the reinforcing role of the media, school board contention, and the complex impact on schools.
3. Participants will determine equity-based reform strategies to promote mechanisms of healing in a time of censorship.

Presenters: Brandon Mitchell, MSW
Robert Lucio, PhD, LCSW &
Emilie Souhrada, MSW, LISW

C3 We Deserve Better: Exploring Radical Self-Care for School Social Workers Through the Lens of Human Rights

School social work is inarguably rife with significant challenges, including burnout and vicarious trauma. Burnout is often perpetuated by delegitimizing, abusive institutions and systems, with myriad negative consequences for practitioners and the profession in general. While individual self-care practices are an essential component of practitioners' longevity toolkits, this session will explore the concept of radical self-care, or the reprioritizing of personal well-being and the disruption of delegitimizing, draining systemic and institutional contexts. Specifically, this workshop will offer a critical appraisal of the policies and practices that imperil SSW well-being at the building and district levels and beyond.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will discover the concept of radical self-care, how it differs from more traditional conceptualizations of individually-focused self-care, and why a human rights-informed approach to self-care is essential.
2. Participants will identify systemic and institutional policies and practices that perpetuate burnout at the building and district level, and beyond.
3. Participants will work collaboratively to choose new strategies to combat burnout as a collective, as well as how to challenge the systemic and institutional dynamics of burnout in their districts and buildings.

Presenters: Stephanie Carnes, PhD, LLM, LCSW &
Robin DeLuca-Acconi, PhD, LCSW



**School Social Work
Association of America**

C4 Getting Off of the Social Work Island: Finding Your People Through Collaboration and Transformational Leadership

Are you the sole social worker in your district? Are you the first social worker hired by your district? If so, this session is for you. This session will give you the tools to create a collaboration of support as you navigate through servicing students in a host setting. It will guide you through building a network to support both your macro and micro-level practices in your building or district. Through self-efficacy and transformational leadership, this session will empower you to be the leader your community, schools, families, and students need you to be.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will recognize the tools and skills necessary to create a network of school social workers within your locality.
2. Participants will illustrate the need for consistency in macro level documentation and processes through shared knowledge and existing systems of support.
3. Participants will identify the value of collaboration as it relates to supervision, self-care, and self-efficacy.

Presenters: Christina Harper, MA/LSW, LPCC-S, LPSC & Rebekah Hrcka, MSW, LISW

C5 Rural School Social Work: Resources for Practicing School Social Workers

Rural communities and schools are individually unique, having their own strengths and challenges. They also share similar traits that serve to unify social work practice in these rural areas. A foundational knowledge of rural school social work practice will be shared. Then, drawing on information from local and national perspectives, this workshop will identify strengths and barriers faced by staff, families, and students in rural school settings and provide a framework for addressing the barriers found. Focusing on the change process and utilizing social work competencies and ethical practices throughout the process of change, specific strategies and skills for working with rural students and their families at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels will be addressed.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will recognize what rural means and how rural communities and schools differ from other communities and schools.
2. Participants will identify strengths and weaknesses of rural communities, school districts, families, and students.
3. Participants will examine specific strategies and skills for working with students and families in rural areas.

Presenters: Laura Ainsworth, PhD, LCSW
Kennesha Smith, MSW, LMSW, PhD Student & Kimberly Allen, LPC-S, LMFT

C6 A Comprehensive Approach to Address the Fentanyl Crisis in Schools

In the current crisis of fentanyl poisoning, school-based interventions, and overdose prevention strategies must be adapted to the context of fentanyl, and innovative approaches must be deployed. This presentation will describe a comprehensive, multi-tiered, research-based approach to addressing the fourth wave of the opioid epidemic.



**School Social Work
Association of America**

Current literature describes a continuum of school-based prevention and intervention activities— opioid misuse educational programs, linkages to opioid treatments, Narcan/naloxone distribution, and fentanyl testing programs. This presentation provides a continuum of overdose prevention and intervention strategies and activities practiced in educational settings, challenges for addressing the fentanyl public health crisis in youth, and future directions.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will consider the four waves of the current opioid crisis and the impact on youth.
2. Participants will evaluate research-based practices for opioid overdose prevention in schools.
3. Participants will formulate a comprehensive multi-tiered opioid prevention program.

Presenters: Phillip Breitenbucher, EdD, MSW & Ana Gamez, PhD, MBA

C7 Get Your School Mental Health System into SHAPE!: A Free Quality Improvement Platform to Improve Mental Health

Leaders from the National Center for School Mental health (www.schoolmentalhealth.org) will review the School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation (SHAPE) System, a free, online platform for states/territories, districts, and schools to assess their school mental health quality and engage in continuous quality improvement.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will identify the key features of a comprehensive school mental health system.
2. Participant will discover the functionality of the School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation (SHAPE) System.
3. Participants will describe how to use the SHAPE system to engage in quality assessment and improvement of comprehensive school mental health.

Presenter: Sharon Hoover, PhD

D1 Encouraging Latinx Students to Pursue Higher Education with the Support of School Personnel

There is a discrepancy between White and Latinx students in obtaining a high school (HS) diploma in the United States (US). Systematic barriers such as segregation, minimal diversity in school personnel, inconsistent retention of teachers in at-risk schools (not meeting state standards), and inadequate school resources have been used to oppress and marginalize Latinx students through the achievement gap (McCormack, 2022; Milner & Howard, 2013). According to the Pew Research Center (2022), the US Hispanic population reached 62.5 million in 2021, an increase of 50.5 million from 2010. This presentation aims to share the results of a scoping review of Latinx HS students' structural risk and protective factors.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will identify protective factors that positively impact Latinx students in being able to obtain a high school diploma.
2. Participants will list risk factors that negatively affect Latinx students from obtaining their high school diploma.



**School Social Work
Association of America**

3. Participants will analyze the importance of critical race theory and Latino critical race theory and its application to policy in school systems in the United States.

Presenters: Maria Sinkule, DSW, MSW, LCSW & Marjorie Colindres, MSW, LCSW, PhD Student

D2 Here We Go with This Sh*t! Advocating for Equity in Schools

Navigating an educational system is hard. Especially when the only time you're invited to have a seat at the table is during parent-teacher conferences. Partnerships between caregivers and the educational institution are invaluable to their success. But for reasons such as lack of communication, lack of knowledge regarding policies and procedures, lack of relationships with school personnel, trauma exposure and experiences (inside and outside the school), and historical, secondary, and generational, parents do not feel empowered to advocate for the best interest of their child, even within those brief 15 minutes. The disconnect between the educational and the family system fosters an academic and social divide. The divide is often exacerbated among marginalized students of color.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will explain implications of race on equity within the educational system.
2. Participants will summarize how social systems shape constructs of trauma.
3. Participants will discover simplistic approaches to collaborate with parents/schools system.

Presenter: Alicia Smith, LMSW

D3 Fostering Belonging in Special Education

Special education in the U.S. aims to help students with disabilities become productive citizens. Special education has increasingly adopted the concept of including individuals with disabilities in mainstream classrooms, believing that doing so counters the inherent othering of exclusion. But special education tacitly continues a mission of assimilating students with disabilities, revealing an ableist bias and perpetuating othering attitudes toward those on its roles. This session summarizes research and wrestles with the question: How can school social workers facilitate belonging for students with disabilities within a structure that is inherently othering?

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will describe the implicit othering of dis-ability and special education.
2. Participants will analyze ways to amplify the voices of persons with disabilities in advocating for greater inclusiveness and belonging in schools.
3. Participants will modify language and practice to ally with persons with disabilities.

Presenter: Christopher Gackenheimer, MSW

D4 12 Criteria for Selecting Strengths-Based Screeners in Schools.

The use of a screener in the school setting is an essential component in identifying which students may be considered "at-risk" for targeted interventions. While understanding a student's strengths and weaknesses is an important part of the process, many screeners place high priority on identifying student deficits and may not be inclusive of the population being screened. Using an appropriate screener provides information that informs the need



**School Social Work
Association of America**

for further assessment and interventions and contributes to improving student outcomes. In this workshop, attendees will examine three strengths-based screeners using twelve criteria to rate the rating scales as well as discuss ways to advocate for the use of appropriate screeners in schools.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will list twelve criteria needed to select the most appropriate screening tool.
2. Participants will identify and apply 6 of the 12 criteria to examine three strengths-based screeners: Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS); Devereux Student Strengths Assessment-Mini (DESSA-Mini); and Social-Emotional Assets and Resilience Scale (SEARS).
3. Participants will examine what systemic changes need to occur in their districts to use the screener selected.

Presenters: Tiffany Nelson, DSW, LCSW, PEL:SSW & Jim Raines, PhD, LCSW

D5 Proactive and Practical: Building Actionable MTSS Anchored in Student Voice

Strong relationships and a sense of belonging form the backbone of whole-student learning. This well-researched principle guides Bigelow Middle School’s (Newton, MA) student support work. Our session will explore a simple, scalable practice of student reflection and how reflection data informs a proactive approach to identifying and supporting student needs. We’ll unpack how incorporating student voice into MTSS, PBIS, RTI, and COST processes can mitigate bias, increase student connectedness to school, and more proactively identify students who are struggling. Bigelow Middle School will share their journey, and a combination of activities and discussion will support school social work leaders in understanding practical ways to apply this approach to their context.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will give examples of how to use student voice and student reflection data in MTSS to mitigate adult bias in selecting student support needs.
2. Participants will identify meaningful student well-being metrics for MTSS and practical data sources for building an actionable student services practice.
3. Participants will examine research-based practices for fostering sense of belonging in schools and discuss ways to support and measure sense of belonging in their own school contexts.

Presenters: LaKisha Hoffman, MSW
Chassity K. Coston, MSA & Jordanna L’Esperance, PsyD

D6 Using Restorative Practices to Empower Student Collaboration in Traditional School Discipline

The Alternative Step to Expulsion Program (ASTEP) serves students recommended for expulsion for the first time. The ASTEP Social Work Team works with students and schools to empower accountability resiliency, and repair the relationship between school, student, and family. Young people who successfully complete the program are more confident, have stronger relationships with faculty, and display responsible decision-making skills. School



School Social Work
Association of America

social workers leading this program will share their experiences on how they use Restorative Practices to build community and make the schools a better and safer place for everyone.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will describe the Alternative Support to Expulsion Program (ASTEP).
2. Participants will apply restorative practices within the Alternative Support to Expulsion Program (ASTEP).
3. Participants will evaluate ways they can build stronger relationships that help to empower students to use their voice to advocate for themselves.

Presenters: Elaine Swain, DSW, LMSW
Savannah Santis, LMSW &
Sharana Sloss, LMSW

D7 Effective Human Trafficking Prevention Education, Not a Number, In DeKalb County Public Schools

Love146 will provide information on how to effectively reach youth through a case review of human trafficking (HT) prevention education (PrevED) in DeKalb County Public Schools (90% minority enrollment; 51% economically disadvantaged). This session will detail how to successfully integrate research-based HT PrevED into existing structures, generate youth engagement, and sustain within a district. The presentation will highlight prevention strategies to protect against HT by identifying resources to reduce victimization and reviewing how trauma increases vulnerabilities. Through guided discussion group/individual activities, this interactive forum will provide participants the opportunity to identify characteristics of effective PrevED and how to implement them in their own districts.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will identify effective human trafficking prevention education strategies for school-based youth.
2. Participants will describe two ways in which you can implement human trafficking education within your role.
3. Participants will discover specific community resources and protective factors to help mitigate human trafficking in their communities.

Presenters: Sarah Mouser, MS &
Erin Glaccum, BS

Friday, March 15th, 2024 (Sessions E)

E1 Yes, We're Going to Talk About Bruno (and the Red Panda): Culturally Relevant Therapeutic Interventions based on Encanto and Turning Red

Encanto and Turning Red took us all by storm with catchy music and strong characters, but these movies continue to resonate deeply with many clients of school-based clinicians both emotionally and culturally. In this session, participants will consider the many possible clinical applications of these movies for school-based work with children and adolescents. We will build from a shared foundation of research-based knowledge about intergenerational trauma and the immigrant experience, specifically discussing implications for communities



School Social Work
Association of America

of color in the school setting, and then explore creative interventions based on talk, art, song, and play which participants will be able to use with child and adolescent clients immediately. (Prior film viewing is not required but is highly recommended.)

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will identify at least three elements of the movies Encanto and Turning Red which demonstrate the effects of intergenerational trauma and the immigrant experience.
2. Participants will recognize the cultural relevance for communities of color of the movies Encanto and Turning Red.
3. Participants will discover at least three therapeutic interventions for use with child or adolescent clients in individual and/or group therapy (i.e. sand tray, art, etc.).

Presenter: Allie Perez, MSW, LICSW, RPT & Quinn Flowers, LICSW, LCSW-C, LCSW

E2 Suicide Prevention and Postvention: The Time is Now to Evaluate How Well our Systems Are (or Are Not) Protecting Student Lives

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for youth in the United States. It is imperative that school systems understand the need to support and evaluate suicide. In this presentation, the focus will include basic information on assessing youth for suicide and the power dynamics at play when assessing and determining supports for diverse youth. Parental engagement will be explored from the lens of understanding systems of power and how to foster relationships with parents and students during a mental health crisis. Also addressed will be an exploration of policy, staff bias, and systemic racism impacting student interventions with regard to suicide. Finally, an overview of Postvention will be included to prepare learners with tools to implement following the death of a student by suicide.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will examine systems of power that influence suicide assessments and intervention in school settings.
2. Participants will discover how intersecting systems (laws, district policies, etc) marginalize students most at risk for suicide.
3. Participants will choose two to three postvention tools, interventions and methods to implementing postvention as a form of prevention.

Presenter: Sheri Koller, LCSW, LCSW-C, PPSC, NCSSW

E3 System vs. Symptom? A Beginning Conversation on Restoring Wellbeing with Students and Staff

This interactive and experiential presentation seeks to move social work forward by focusing on what matters most, which is humans and healing. Social Workers must adopt critical consciousness to identify, analyze, and solve real-world problems, especially those that result in societal inequalities. Using a critical consciousness that is culturally competent and aligned with interpersonal neurobiology principles has the opportunity to create optimal learning environments for students and staff. In this presentation we will explore and experience meditation, three key brain regions conducive to addressing trauma and restoring wellbeing and analyze a culturally relevant case study—all to promote positive social change and restore healing and well-being.



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Association of America**

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will distinguish the difference between systems and symptoms.
2. Participants will recognize culturally relevant pedagogy to inform policies and practices.
3. Participants will illustrate ways to critically think and solve real-world problems to promote positive social change and healing.

Presenter: Kenneth Bourne, MSW, LSW

E4 Research Informed School-Based Mental Health Practice

This session introduces participants to a research design using a conventional Delphi approach that centers the expertise of Black scholars and researchers in the production of knowledge that informs the practice of school-based mental health practitioners. The use of the Delphi method amplifies the belief that Black researchers and Black scholars exist. The Delphi method further validates Black people as expert participants who are significant contributors to research-informed practice and practice-informed research focused on providing adequate and appropriate school-based mental health support to Black students.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will identify three basic features of a conventional Delphi method approach to research.
2. Participants will define the word "expert" within the context of cultural representation and appropriateness in research.
3. Participants will discover how to translate data collection from mental health research into practice that guides and directs their day-to-day work.

Presenter: Shenita Williams, PhD, LCSW

E5 Playful Techniques to Build Bridges with Black Families and Communities

Black children, families, and communities are dealing with high rates of racial and intergenerational trauma that may impact the school social worker's ability to build strong therapeutic relationships. This workshop will explore the complexities of trauma in the Black community and how it may be showing up in the interactions and parenting practices of Black caregivers. Time will be spent discussing the use of play therapy, such as filial therapy and Child-Parent Relationship Therapy, to help engage Black caregivers in the mental health treatment of their children. Participants will also explore the use of play-based interventions to implement in their schools and communities to build stronger relationships with their students and the caregivers in their villages.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will examine the impact of intergenerational trauma on parenting practices of Black caregivers.
2. Participants will identify ways to engage Black caregivers in play therapy.
3. Participants will analyze play-based activities to integrate into school and community events to build relationships with Black families and communities.

Presenter: April Duncan, DSW, LCSW, RPT-S

E6 Eating Disorders in the School Setting: What School Professionals Should Know

Eating Disorder diagnoses are on the rise in pre-teen and adolescent populations across the US. Contributing factors are the Covid-19 pandemic, social media, and the co-occurrence of



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Association of America

other mental health conditions. The significant increase in diagnoses, the mortality rate associated with these disorders, and the severe physical and emotional health risks all contribute to the importance of early intervention and treatment. Students spend a significant amount of time with school professionals, and therefore, it's imperative that these staff members know and understand warning signs and how to respond if concerns arise. School social workers should feel empowered and confident in their ability to support their students in their journey of healing and recovery from eating disorders.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will recognize the warning signs and diagnostic criteria for common eating disorders in school-aged populations.
2. Participants will discover the impact of eating disorders on school-aged children's cognitive, academic, physical, emotional, and psychological well-being.
3. Participants will give examples of prevention, intervention, and post-vention responses, using tools and resources provided, to meet the needs of students and families.

Presenters: Chantelle McCormick, MSW, LCSW, DSW Student

E7 Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in Schools and Communities

This program will focus on what all educators can do to create the most inclusive and affirming spaces in their schools and communities. We will address common behaviors, best practices, and important terminology with the focus of having participants leave feeling prepared to be the best upstander possible and embracing allyship. The program packet will have a variety of resources in it that are relevant to various topics and concerns that arise when working and advocating for this population. Participants who complete the program will leave with an action plan on how to make affirming and impactful changes back at their schools and communities. While no student voice will be present at this event, this program has been developed in union with LGBTQ+ youth.

Learning Objectives:

1. Participants will describe the complexities surrounding the LGBTQ+ community and best practices within schools.
2. Participants will choose their own goals in working with the LGBTQ+ community in areas they are hoping to grow the most.
3. Participants will identify an action plan, including resources, in order to make impactful change within their own schools.

Presenter: Peter Hutcheon, MSW, LCSW

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