

LACAC
Annual
Conference



"It Starts With Us Growing Towards Excellence" Conference

2023

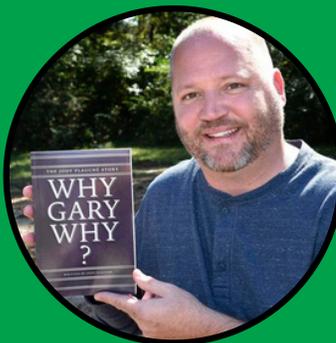
January 31-February 2, 2023
DoubleTree Hotel
300 Canal St, New Orleans,
LA 70130

OUR AWESOME KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:



KEVIN MCNEIL
Advocate, Author,
Speaker

This 3-day, three separate track training opportunity will bring you experts in the field of child abuse, and is purposefully planned for CAC staff, MDT members and their specific discipline.



JODY PLAUCHE
Advocate, Author,
Speaker

REGISTRATION:

504-715-4955 

Training@lacacs.org 

www.LACACS.ORG 



OPENING KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Kevin McNeil Advocate, Author, Speaker

While working as a former Special Victim's Detective, Kevin McNeil noticed a disturbing trend. It seemed that for every case he closed, there were three more to investigate. This discovery helped Kevin realize that placing people in jail and responding to abuse was not enough.

Kevin's own personal battle with abuse encouraged him to find a way to make others aware of the destructive effects of abuse on our world. As a survivor of abuse, he struggled with constant thoughts of suicide, alcohol addiction, and depression. He worked long hours as a police officer, but it was at home that he faced his greatest enemy-himself. The consequences of the abuse he had faced lingered, therefore he sought out therapy to aid in his healing process. It was in therapy that Kevin immersed himself in literature about abuse. He learned about the effects abuse had on the brain and a person's behavior and found a correlation between abuse and violence in our culture.

He found that reading about abuse and educating himself on the effects played an immeasurable role in his healing process. The suicidal thoughts stopped, his urge to drink decreased, and his depression faded. His work productivity increased, he won numerous awards, and quickly excelled to the top of his field. He took pride in his discoveries and began sharing his story and findings with other victims.

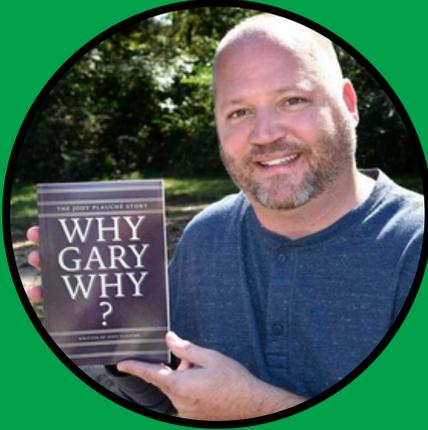
When Kevin shared his findings with victims and their parents, parents began taking their children to counseling, and sought out other educational resources on abuse. Some parents expressed to him that they did not know how to seek out information on abuse that they desired and that they wanted someone who would make the information simple and readily available.

Kevin created **The Twelve Project** to be the bridge between the lack of knowledge and awareness about abuse and people's desire to learn. He provides resources with the aim of healing and teaching individuals, families, and communities. The Twelve Project is a safe place where people can learn about abuse 24/7. Inspired by the positive results people experienced from reading his teaching materials, he took his plan a step further; he retired as a detective and began speaking and educating full time.

The Twelve Project was born!



CLOSING KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Jody Plauche' **Advocate, Author, Speaker**

Jody Plauche' from Baton Rouge, La., made national headlines in March 1984 when he was abducted by his karate teacher and taken 2,000 miles away from home to Los Angeles, Ca. FBI officials rescued Jody and his abductor was arrested. Upon his karate teacher's return, Jody's father Gary, shot and killed him. The shooting was captured by WBRZ news crew, a local ABC affiliate.

Jody obtained his bachelor's degree in General Studies from Louisiana State University with minors in Psychology, Speech Communications, and Philosophy.

Jody has worked in the field of violence prevention since 1995. While attending Louisiana State University, he served on the executive board for Men Against Violence, a campus organization aimed at preventing campus violence, including sexual assault and other physical violence.

For seven years, Jody worked at Victim Services Center of Montgomery County, a comprehensive crime victim center in Norristown, PA. At Victim Services, Jody worked as a sexual assault counselor as well as a prevention educator, and eventually became the Supervisor of Community Education Programs. Jody provided crisis intervention to sexual assault victims on the agency's 24-hour crisis hotline as well as in person support at hospitals and police stations. He facilitated sexual violence risk reduction programs to students ranging from pre-K through college age. Jody also presented numerous professional training sessions for police officers, hospital staff, parents, and school administrators.

Jody has also co-facilitated a workshop at the PCCD's Pathways for Crime Victims conference. In October 2002, he attended The White House Conference on Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children, in Washington, D.C. featuring Colin Powell and President George W. Bush. While in Pennsylvania, Jody served on the state-wide Men Against Sexual Violence Committee. In 2004, he was named the Survivor/Activist of the Year by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

Jody has shared his personal story as well as his knowledge about working with survivors of sexual assault on numerous TV shows including: Geraldo (1991, 1993, 1996), Now it can be Told (1991), Maury Povich (1993, 1996), Oprah (1995), Leeza (1995), Real TV (1996), The Montel Williams Show (1997, 2005), The John Walsh Show (2002, 2003), CNN's Connie Chung Tonight (2003), ABC World New's Tonight, ESPN's E:60 (2013) and has done several interviews for local papers and local television stations, as well as several radio interviews.

Currently, Jody presents professional and college trainings about sexual violence risk reduction throughout the country.



MEET THE EXPERTS



Dr. Neha Mehta leads a group of dedicated medical professionals as the Medical Director of the Audrey Hepburn CARE Center- the child abuse evaluation program- at Children's Hospital New Orleans. Dr. Mehta is a pediatrician who is also fellowship-trained and board certified in Child Abuse Pediatrics. Prior to being recruited to serve in New Orleans, Dr. Mehta served as the Medical Director of the Child Abuse Program at Sunrise Children's Hospital in Las Vegas Nevada and also served as the Medical Director for the Southern Nevada Children's Assessment Center. Dr. Mehta worked in Las Vegas for over 9 years during which she served as the Co-Chair for Clark County Child Fatality Review and was awarded the District Attorney's Meritorious Award for Outstanding Services to the Community. Dr. Mehta has been practicing in the field of Child Abuse Pediatrics for over 21 years. Her areas of special interest include: Child Fatality Review, Multidisciplinary Team Education, and Child Abuse Prevention



My name is Paige Culotta and I am a Child Abuse Pediatrician. I grew up in New Orleans and completed my pediatric and child abuse training in Houston, Tx at Texas Children's Hospital/Baylor College of Medicine. Since the completion of my training, I have been working at the CARE Center with Children's Hospital in New Orleans.



MEET THE EXPERTS



Maria Isabella Pontoriero ("MIP") is a licensed social worker and forensic interviewer providing extensive case management, crisis counseling, and safety planning to child trafficking victims, youth who are high-risk for exploitation, child victims of other crimes and abuses, and non-offending caregivers at the New Orleans Children's Advocacy Center/Audrey Hepburn CARE Center at Children's Hospital. Maria Isabella leads a child trafficking survivor services multidisciplinary team to ensure collaboration and coordination in service provision for these victims. She trains throughout the community and State of Louisiana to assist in the identification and improved response to CSEC victims, and has developed and implemented CSEC trainings for the New Orleans Police Department, and community. In addition, MIP is a faculty member for the RADAR forensic interview protocol and is a supervisor for forensic interviewers who are new to the field.



Caitie Dahl is a Forensic Interview Specialist and Trainer with Zero Abuse Project. Prior to joining Zero Abuse, Caitie served as a Forensic Interviewer, Forensic Program Coordinator, Trainer, and Multidisciplinary Team Facilitator with First Witness Child Advocacy Center in Duluth, Minnesota. Caitie enjoys working with children, and providing a trauma-friendly, and legally defensible opportunity for victims of abuse to share their experience. Additionally, she enjoys training professionals in the field to strengthen their response to reports of child maltreatment, and collaborate with other multidisciplinary professionals when working with children and families throughout the investigative process.

Caitie received a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Superior, where she also studied and conducted research on topics such as coercive interviewing, false confessions, wrongful convictions, and suggestibility and memory errors. Caitie also served as the Program Manager at the campus Gender Equity Resource Center, and is passionate about recognizing and addressing the unique needs of LGBTQIA+ youth who have experienced maltreatment.



MEET THE EXPERTS

For the past 19 years, Jessica has served as Chief Executive Officer of the Gingerbread House Children's Advocacy Center, an accredited children's advocacy center by National Children's Alliance. The Gingerbread House, Louisiana's busiest children's advocacy center, provides critically needed services for over 900 child victims of sexual abuse, severe physical abuse, and child sex trafficking per year, as well as prevention education to over 35,000 children and adults in northwest Louisiana.



Jessica serves on the U.S. Attorney Northwest Louisiana Human Trafficking Task Force, the I-20 Central Corridor Anti-Trafficking Team, the Community Response Team Expert Trainer Panel, the NCA Standards Revision Task Force-Child Abuse Prevention Committee, the NCA Leadership Conference Abstract Review Committee, the Board of Directors of Forensic Nurse Examiners of Louisiana, and as a volunteer for other organizations. Jessica was a Founding Member of the Louisiana Alliance of CACs, and served five terms as President of the Board of CACs of Louisiana. In June, 2019, Jessica was appointed to the Louisiana Governor's Human Trafficking Prevention Commission and Advisory Board – Primary and Secondary Prevention Committee, and in October, 2019, she was appointed to the Diocese of Shreveport Permanent Review Board. In April, 2022, Jessica was selected as one of two representatives from Louisiana to the American Enterprise Institute Leadership Network.

Jessica is married to Lance Miller and they have three children. In addition to her work with children's causes, Jessica enjoys international travel and photography.

Sophia joined the Gingerbread House Children's Advocacy Center, a National Children's Alliance Accredited CAC, in October, 2015, and began the Child Life Program at the Gingerbread House. In 2021, the Child Life Program was expanded, adding additional child life staff, as well as becoming an internship site for those seeking the Child Life Specialist Certification. Sophia received her child life training and degree from Louisiana Tech University and is a Certified Child Life Specialist through the Association of Child Life Professionals. Sophia's past experience in Child Life includes an internship at Oklahoma Children's Hospital in Oklahoma City, as well as working as a Spanish Language Child Life Specialist at Children's Hospital of San Antonio in San Antonio, Texas. In December, 2018, Sophia was recognized as a 40 Under 40 Young Professional.



As the Director of Community Engagement at the Gingerbread House, Sophia partners with individuals and organizations in the community to increase awareness of the Gingerbread House and help raise funds through community involvement and special events. In her role as Director of Child Life, Sophia trains and supervises child life staff to provide stress-reducing preparation and support to child abuse victims before and after the forensic interview process.



MEET THE EXPERTS



Patricia Boyou is a Licensed Professional Counselor in the state of Mississippi. She received her B.S. in Psychology from Louisiana Tech University in 2007. Patricia received her M.S. in Counseling Psychology from Southern Miss in 2009. For the first six years of her career, she worked primarily with children and adolescents both in the school setting as well as in the home.

In September 2015, Patricia began working with victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking. She currently serves as the Chief Clinical Officer of the Gulf Coast Center for Nonviolence in Biloxi, MS where she oversees most of the client service programs which includes two emergency shelters, counseling programs, as well as housing programs.



Alicia Tarrant serves as the Youth Outreach Educator at the Gulf Coast Center for Nonviolence. Alicia provides educational programs on interpersonal violence for children, youth, parents, and professionals. Prior to joining the Center in 2016, she worked with children and families at the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast for fifteen years. Alicia earned her B.A. in International Studies from the University of South Alabama in 1998 and her M.S. in Child and Family Studies from the University of Southern Mississippi in 2011.

Alicia has extensive experience in working directly with children through the GCCFN's therapeutic preschool and previously worked with children with emotional disabilities with the Boys & Girls Club as an outreach behavioral facilitator in self-contained classrooms at two different public schools. Additionally, Alicia is a survivor of childhood abuse and credits early trauma-informed care practices for helping her thrive.



MEET THE EXPERTS



Kristen Cassidy MA, LPC-S, NCC, earned an MA degree in counseling psychology from McNeese State University. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor-Supervisor and a National Certified Counselor in private practice in Jennings. She provides counseling to adults and children, addressing a variety of issues including sexual abuse, autism spectrum disorders, depression, and anxiety. She works with juveniles and their families as the FINS officer for the 31st Judicial District Court in Jefferson Davis Parish. She is a co-founder of B Curriculum, LLC, and Truth, Facts & Lies education program. She has experience facilitating social skills groups for children on the autism spectrum and conducting forensic interviews with victims of sexual abuse.

As a counselor and former CAC forensic interviewer, have an extensive background in trauma-focused care and have provided educational and therapeutic services to children and their families in classroom, legal, and clinical settings. As a co-founder of B Curriculum, LLC, I have assisted in the developme

My name is Shanavier Clark. I'm a LMSW (Licensed Master Social Worker) for the state of MS. I'm currently employed by Coastal Family Health Center as a Behavioral Health Specialist. I specialize in Trauma Therapy, ADD/ADHD, Depression, Anxiety, Mood Disorders, Personality Disorders, Family Therapy, and Self-Care. I'm the founder of Rays of Hope and owner of The Bleauxprint Behavioral Health & Wellness and recently created a line of journals dedicated to helping others improve their mental health and self-care. I have nearly ten years of experiences working with families and individuals in various treatment settings such as CPS, Substance Abuse, and Community Health.

I'm a native of Leakesville, Ms. I'm a graduate of William Carey University where I obtained my BS in Psychology and my MS in Psychology with an emphasis in Child and Adolescent Therapy. I'm also a graduate of Southern University at New Orleans where I obtained my Master's in Social Work.

I believe in total wellness and total healing: Mind, body, and soul. When one is out of alignment then it throws EVERYTHING out of alignment. I believe therapy shouldn't be approach as a "one size fits all" to healing. I enjoy thinking outside the box and introducing my clients to the unorthodox side of therapy.





MEET THE EXPERTS



Nyoki Cosey-Brown, LCSW-BACS, is a graduate of Southern University at New Orleans Master of Social Work Program. She is currently enrolled in the Doctorate of Social Work program at the University of Kentucky with an expected graduation of May 2023. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker credentialed in Louisiana, Kentucky, Arizona, and Tennessee with temporary Licensing Credentials in New Jersey for emergency response. She is the Co-Owner and Co-founder of Innovative Approaches Counseling Center, LLP. She is also employed in Senior Clinical Leadership as a Program Advisor in telehealth at AbleTo, a mental health tech company in New York. Mrs. Cosey-Brown is a certified Triple P Positive Parenting Program Provider, Board-Approved Clinical Supervisor, clinical consultant, Trauma-Focused CBT Trained provider, OCD specialty trained therapist, and Crisis Response Consultant. She has presented at several noteworthy conferences including the LSU Social Work Conference and the Louisiana Families in Need of Service Conference. Mrs. Cosey-Brown's training topics include Compassion Fatigue During a Pandemic, Moving Beyond Competence: Cultural Humility in Mental Health Tech, and the Co-Presenter of the popular "Private Practice 101" workshop series.



Dr. Gina Crean, LCSW, CCTS-I, CFRC is the Clinical Director at the Nashville Children Alliance, a child advocacy center (CAC). She is a certified trauma professional and has extensive experience in the area of mental health trauma and children. She completed her doctoral capstone on Trauma Informed Programming for Children in Schools. Gina also conducts a private practice where she treats trauma, specifically with first responders. She works with social work students as faculty at universities in Michigan and Tennessee. With experience in various roles at multiple CACs, it has become Gina's passion to increase mental health support and reduce traumatization for children, non-offending caregivers and professionals that walk through the doors of a CAC.



MEET THE EXPERTS

Kate Homan, MS is a Senior Consultant for Modell Consulting Group, LLC. Since 2017, Ms. Homan has assisted in teaching and co-authoring multiple multidisciplinary trainings. This included a leading the development of a first of its kind project collaborating with national experts to develop a forensic interviewing model for interviewing adults (FIND Foundations); in addition to co-authoring the suite of Project FIND trainings including, but not limited to an advanced forensic interviewing model for interviewing individuals with disabilities and an interviewing model with adaptations for individuals who do not speak (FIND Adapted).

In addition to developing and delivering FIND trainings, Ms. Homan has spent over 8 years interviewing children who have experienced abuse and trauma serving as the Lead Forensic Interviewer at the New Orleans Children's Advocacy Center (NOCAC). Ms. Homan provides training for professionals on interviewing children using the RADAR Forensic Interview Model and advanced multidisciplinary topics in addition to providing ongoing consultation for developing CACs.

Britney Smith is a Clinical Director and Certified Local Coach in the Wraparound Model at Ascent Health, Inc., a non-profit based in Houma, Louisiana. She is also a Licensed Professional Counselor and a National Certified Counselor, working in the Mental Health field for 11 years. Britney started off as a Care Coordinator for Wraparound Services in 2014 and was promoted to Clinical Director in 2021. She has been implementing Wraparound as a Local Coach since May of 2019. Britney has a Master of Education Degree in School Counseling where her internship required her to work with students in an in-school suspension setting. These were students that were not meeting expectations that were set out by their teachers and the school. Before working with Wraparound, she managed an outpatient treatment center located on Nicholls State University Campus. Between managing daily operations of the clinic, counseling clients, and holding CITs to the expectations that were set by the University and the Louisiana LPC board, she was able to gain a lot of knowledge that has been used in her current role. Britney's strengths of responsibility and discipline has helped her to hold those she coaches to a high standard when it comes to Wraparound Implementation.



MEET THE EXPERTS



Dr. Troy is a nurse practitioner at the Audrey Hepburn Clinic. She has 35 years of psychiatric nursing and forensic experience. She has presented nationally and internationally on topics involving prevention of and care for children and families after interpersonal trauma. She is an Associate Professor of Nursing at the University of Holy Cross. Both will be presenting this topic in Dallas at the International Association of Forensic Nurses in 2022.



Mark D. Everson, PhD is Professor Emeritus, in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where he served as Director of the Program on Childhood Trauma and Maltreatment. Dr. Everson also served on the National Board of Directors of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC). He is still active as the lead developer of the RADAR Child Forensic Interview Model. During the last 40 years, Dr. Everson's professional career has focused on the assessment of allegations of child maltreatment with an emphasis on the application of research to practice.



MEET THE EXPERTS



Sylvie Malta is the Clinical Director at Ascent Health, Inc., a Non-Profit based in Monroe, Louisiana that provides Wraparound and mental health services. Sylvie obtained her Master of Arts Degree in Substance Abuse Counseling from the University of Louisiana at Monroe and her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology from Louisiana Tech University. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor, a National Certified Counselor, a Certified Local Coach through the National Wraparound Implementation Center, and a Certified TCOM Training of Trainer in the Child and Adolescent Needs & Strengths Assessment. She has been working in the Mental Health field for 15 years. Working the last 9 years at Ascent has allowed Sylvie to grow into different roles within the organization and grow personally and professionally. She has co-developed local and national trainings including presenting to clinicians from all over the country at the annual meeting of the National Wraparound Implementation Academy. Sylvie is passionate about bringing creative, sustainable options to families to keep children with their families and thriving in their community. She developed a training on the effects of trauma on the developing brain. The focus of the training is to increase understanding among healthcare providers, educators, and community members on interpreting behaviors using a trauma-informed lens. She has conducted this training over 50 times since October of 2020 to well over 1500 people across the state of Louisiana. She is passionate about changing the way we view and treat mental health in order to help children that would otherwise fall through the cracks. Before being at Ascent she worked in the mental health field at inpatient and outpatient treatment centers providing Substance Abuse Counseling and Trauma informed therapy focusing on individuals struggling with Addiction and Veterans diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. She also has experience working at a Non-Profit providing In-Home Multi-Systemic Therapy with children. This experience has helped her bring additional knowledge to her current role.

Sylvie has been a member of the Junior League for the last 9 years, serving as the Co-Chair for Tools & Literacy for Children Committee, and on the Nominating & Placement Committee. She has been a member of Sigma Kappa Sorority for the last 19 years. She is an active member of Forsythe Church of Christ where she volunteers for the children's ministry. Sylvie and her husband, Anthony, live in Monroe, Louisiana together with their two sons, Everette (7), and Slade (4). When she is not working or volunteering her time in the community, she enjoys spending time with her family and friends, traveling, painting, and rooting for the New Orleans Saints.



As Ascent's Program Director, Haylee Middleton conducts NWIC's Introduction to Wraparound Training, Engagement in the Wraparound Process Training, and Intermediate Wraparound Training in compliance with the state of Louisiana's training requirements. I also participate lead monthly coaching with our supervisory team. I have the honor of being part of a training team where we write and provide CEU credentialed trauma and de-escalation trainings to our community including schools, community organizations, and medial health agencies. Before my employment at Ascent, I worked as an elementary school teacher. I taught several different grade levels and gained invaluable experience with various teaching methods, as well as, helping children and families in our community. I am an active member of a church in my community. I lead a children's choir, Christmas program, and direct music for vacation bible school, as well as serve on the praise team. I feel passionate about helping the children and families of our community, by trying my best to exemplify the principles of wraparound in my personal life.



MEET THE EXPERTS



Lacie Hadley, originally from San Antonio, TX, moved to Natchitoches, LA on a soccer scholarship to attend Northwestern State University. She received her bachelor's degree in Psychology (2010) and continued her education to obtain a Master of Arts in Counseling from Northwestern State University (2012). Lacie went on to join the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) where she worked as a Child Welfare Investigator for almost two years. During her tenure at DCFS, she was introduced to the Gingerbread House Children's Advocacy Center and worked as part of the Multidisciplinary Team. In 2016, she was hired as a Forensic Interviewer by the Gingerbread House CAC, where she has conducted over 1,620 forensic interviews over the past 5 years. The Gingerbread House Children's Advocacy Center, is an Accredited child advocacy center by National Children's Alliance, and provides critically needed services for child victims of sexual and severe physical abuse, including victims of human trafficking, in the nine parishes that comprise northwest Louisiana. Lacie has been forensically trained in the National Children's Advocacy Center Forensic Interviewing protocol, Cornerhouse Forensic interviewing Protocol and Child Sex Trafficking Forensic Interviewer Training. She currently serves as the Director of Forensic Interviewing at the Gingerbread House CAC, where she leads a team of five forensic interviewers and oversees over 900 forensic interviews every year. Lacie is a wife and mother to 2-year-old twin boys and loves to work out and spend time with family.



Alex Person received her associate's degree in Broadcast Journalism from Bossier Parish Community College (2007), her bachelor's degree in Family and Child Studies from Louisiana Tech university (2012), her Master of Science in Nonprofit Administration and Leadership from Louisiana State University-Shreveport (2019), and is a Certified Family Life Educator. Alex joined the Gingerbread House Children's Advocacy Center in April, 2012 as a Forensic Interviewer and the Education Coordinator. In January, 2020, Alex became the Director of Education and continues to also serve as a Forensic Interviewer. The Gingerbread House Children's Advocacy Center, is an Accredited child advocacy center by National Children's Alliance, and provides critically needed services for child victims of sexual and severe physical abuse, including victims of human trafficking, in the nine parishes that comprise northwest Louisiana. Annually, the Gingerbread House serves over 900 child abuse victims and provides community education to over 25,000 children and adults. Alex's extensive forensic interview training includes the National Children's Advocacy Center Forensic Interviewing of Children Protocol, Advanced Forensic Interviewing, Extended Forensic Interviewing, and Forensic Interviewing of Child Sex Trafficking Victims. Other topics Alex has been trained in are Human Trafficking, Delayed Disclosure, Victim Recantation, and Interviewing Reluctant Children. She has also had the opportunity to train with Homeland Security on interviewing skills. In her role as Forensic Interviewer, Alex has interviewed over 2300 children over the past nine years and has been deemed an Expert in Forensic Interviewing for court purposes.

In her education role, Alex presents the comprehensive Gingerbread House Knowledge is Power Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Curriculum, Stewards of Children by Darkness to Light, and Love 146: Not a #Number programs to children and adults in the community. Topics Alex presents on include Child Abuse Dynamics, Body Safety, Internet Safety, Safe Relationships, Human Trafficking, Mandated Reporting, and others.

Alex is a wife and mother to two children, serves on the Board of the Junior League of Shreveport-Bossier, and in her spare time loves to spend time with family and friends.



January 31, 2023

8:30am-12:00pm: Registration/Exhibit Hall set-up

12:00pm-1:15pm: Opening Ceremony

1:15pm-2:45pm: Keynote Speaker-Kevin McNeil

2:45pm-3:00pm: Break

3:00pm-4:30pm-Session 1

6:30-8:30pm: Networking Social Event

Day 2-February 1, 2023

8:00am-9:30am-Session 2

9:30am-10:00am-Break

10:00am-11:30am-Session 3

11:30am-1:00pm-lunch break

1:00pm-2:30pm-Session 4

2:30pm-3:00pm- Break

3:00pm-4:30pm Session 5

Day 3-February 2, 2023

8:00am-9:30am: Keynote Speaker-Jody Plaque'

9:30am-9:45am-Break

9:45am-11:15am- Session 6

11:15am-12:00pm-Closing remarks/raffles



January 31, 2023

Session 1 (Madewood A&B)

Child Life Specialists: The Missing Piece in Children's Advocacy Centers by Jessica Milan Miller, M.A., MBA and Sophia Herron Sanders, CCLS, CPST

Designed as an interactive presentation for professionals seeking to gain a better understanding of the role Child Life Specialists can play in Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs), "Child Life Specialists: The Missing Piece in Children's Advocacy Centers", will guide participants through best practices in the field of Child Life, innovative techniques specific to the role of Child Life within the work of CACs with child abuse victims, and successful funding strategies for the Child Life Specialist at a CAC.

This presentation incorporates the knowledge and expertise of a CAC Executive Director with 19 years of experience and a Certified Child Life Specialist with 7 years of hands-on experience at the busiest CAC in Louisiana, serving over 900 child abuse victims per year. In the 7 years that we have had a Child Life Program at our CAC, we have seen stress levels in children prior to the forensic interview dramatically reduced, while cooperation with the Multidisciplinary Team has greatly increased, leading to better-flowing interviews, quicker rapport building, easier disclosures, and higher satisfaction measurable outcomes from families.

AGENDA

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

8:00am-9:30am

"Addiction, Pornography, and the Teen Brain"

Kristen Cassidy, MA, LPC-S, NCC, CEAP (Madewood A)

Presenter will discuss the teen brain and how it is affected by addiction, especially pornography. The audience will learn why teens use pornography, how it affects their development, and how the teen brain differs from the adult brain in terms of learning, memories, and exposure to pornography and other addictive substances. The focus of pornography is based on its wide availability to teens via internet, smart devices, and social media. Presenters will also provide an overview of how this information is presented effectively to teenagers and their parents in school, medical, and counseling settings. As a counselor and former CAC forensic interviewer, have an extensive background in trauma-focused care and have provided educational and therapeutic services to children and their families in classroom, legal, and clinical settings.

"Pediatric Hot Liquid Burns: Child Abuse or Accident?"

Neha Harish Mehta, MD, FAAP (Madewood B)

Hot liquid burns in children are often associated with concerns of child abuse and neglect. This presentation will help guide medical professionals and investigators in evaluating cases of children who have hot liquid burn injuries. Many children experience hot liquid burns. When these children come in for medical care, there are aspects of documentation of injuries that are helpful in determining whether the injury is abusive or accidental in nature. In addition, there are specific features of the history and the scene investigation that can be obtained by investigators to help determine if an injury occurred in the way described by the caretaker. This interactive workshop will address both medical and investigative aspects of cases involving child with hot liquid burns and will include images from multiple pediatric burn cases.

"Yes you are the expert", Forensic Interviewers as an Expert Witness

Alex Person, M.S., CFLE and Lacie Hadley, M.A. (Rosedown A)

This presentation will allow attendees to understand the difference in testimony types along with gaining knowledge and how their expertise can be used. After this presentation attendees will have been informed with the benefits of factual testimony and expert testimony and when each are appropriate in court. Attendees will gain the confidence of knowing they are capable of being an expert witness in the field of forensic interviewing.

"Trauma and the Brain" (Rosedown B)

Britney H. Smith, LPC, Haylee Middleton, and Sylver Malta, LPC-S, NCC

In this training, we will take a deep dive into childhood trauma and its effect on the brain. We will complete hands on activities to "build a brain" and see first-hand how life experiences play a crucial role in brain development. We will also explore the ways healing from trauma can happen and how that healing can form new neural pathways in the brain. At the end of the presentation, we will share more about the wraparound program, and evidence-based process that can lead to healing for youth and families struggling with mental health, and behavioral health challenges. All the presenters for this training have been employed at Ascent Health for 8 years or more and have been trained and worked extensively with individuals who have experienced trauma. Ascent is a non-profit agency with offices in Monroe and Houma, LA. Ascent has served over 5,000 youth and families and is committed to helping create sustainable communities.



"Trauma-Informed Practices when Working with Survivors of Domestic Violence"

Patricia Boyou, LPC and Alicia Tarrant (Madewood A)

Domestic violence is common in children who have experienced trauma. It is essential for clinicians and MDT partners to fully understand the dynamics of domestic violence as there are many myths and unique cultural and societal beliefs surrounding domestic violence. Child survivors and their parents, who are often survivors themselves, need additional support beyond the minimum required or offered by most agencies. Most times, trauma-informed practices can be employed and assist greatly in filling in the gap.

Service agencies often have high turnover, mostly due to staff burnout. Working with survivors of domestic violence and other trauma can be difficult and triggering. Employing trauma informed practices is greatly beneficial for the service-provider as well. Service providers are better able to make things "less personal" as they have a better understanding of clients and their behaviors. They are better able to reflect on their personal beliefs and identify biases that they might have in working with difficult clients. They can recognize the importance of and set boundaries while still being flexible and responsive to clients' needs. Burnout and staff turnover is significantly reduced as a result of trauma informed practices.

"Sextortion"

(Madewood B)

Sextortion refers to the broad category of sexual exploitation in which abuse of power is the means of coercion and can be coupled with the threatened release of abusive images or information. Because the method of coercion is usually non-physical these cases are sometimes thought of as less egregious than cases with hands on offenses. This block of instruction will focus on the dynamics of sextortion, the victims, the forensic interview, and special case considerations when a large number of victims are involved.

"The Lost Art of Forensic Interviewing"

Mark D. Everson, PhD (Rosedown A)

Forensic interviewing is both art and science -- or so we have been taught. In reality, our field has long prioritized the science or contributions of research while neglecting the art or clinical elements of good interviewing. As a result, certain subsets of CSA victims (e.g., child victims who are not in active disclosure) have been poorly served. This paper will describe recent efforts to improve forensic practice by restoring greater emphasis on the art of the interview.

"Why are they acting this way?" (Rosedown B)

Dr. Gina Crean

Often times, our child protection teams are focused on collecting facts, evidence and creating a case to prove child abuse/neglect has occurred. With all the evidence being collected, the main source of evidence is often neglected: the child who experienced it. Continuing education is needed on how to support a child who has experienced abuse and/or neglect as the effects are present both acutely and chronically. While the evidence gathered on the scene may lead to a good case, if the child is unable to give corroborating evidence, then it will be difficult to prove. In addition, the ongoing mental health effects that a child will experience as a result of this trauma will be lifelong. If we, as the first responders, are able to provide safer relationships and safer processes throughout the investigation process, the effects of poor mental health can be reduced.

AGENDA

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

1:00pm-2:30pm

Annual
Conference



"Compassion Fatigue During A Pandemic"

Nyoki Cosey-Brown, LCSW-BACS (Madewood A)

Merriam-Webster defines Compassion Fatigue as "the physical and mental exhaustion and emotional withdrawal experienced by those who care for sick or traumatized people over an extended period of time". The impact of COVID 19 has intensified the service delivery, crisis response, stress accumulation, and exposure to traumatic events as we confront the everyday challenges in our professional work. It is essential that we learn the correlation between our professional, external, and interpersonal stressors that place us at a higher risk to experience adverse reactions to our secondary trauma experiences. This presentation will identify the distress responses, warning signs, deficiencies in self-care, and struggles in work-life balance that lead to the incessant occurrence of compassion fatigue during the time of a pandemic.

"Working Together: How CACs and MDTs can best serve children with disabilities"

Kate Homan, MS (Madewood B)

Research shows, children with disabilities experience abuse and neglect at disproportionate rates (Harrell, 2021, Helton et al., 2017; Hershkowitz et al., 2007; Spencer et al., 2005; Sullivan & Knuston, 2000). However, cases involving children with disabilities are not often prosecuted. Common biases among multidisciplinary team members, such as the perception that children with disabilities cannot provide credible statements in a forensic setting often affect the trajectory of cases leaving children with disabilities largely underserved (Brown, et. al., 2018; Hershkowitz et al., 2017). This training aims to challenge common perceptions held by multidisciplinary team members to send cases involving child victims with disabilities down a trajectory that follows investigative best practices. This training aims to not only challenge biases, but also will provide insight on gathering critical information to understanding the child with a disability as an individual, which is essential to creating a forensic process that is victim-centered and provides appropriate accommodations pre-interview.

"Presenting Evidence During a Forensic Interview"

Ashleigh Fuller (Rosedown A)

As technology becomes more prevalent in our communities, presenting evidence in the forensic interviews is essential to obtaining the best outcomes for our cases. However, it is imperative forensic interviewers have the appropriate training on how and when to present evidence. It is also important for MDT partners to understand the research and best practices for presenting evidence with children and adolescents to avoid revictimizing victims. By presenting evidence, MDTs can affirmatively identify victims, afford the child with an opportunity to disclose their abuse when not in the active disclosure phase, corroborate a child's statement, provide the child with services for healing, accurately define charges, and increase the likelihood of possible pleas.

"Sexually Transmitted Infections and Child Sexual Abuse"

Paige A. Culotta, MD (Rosedown B)

This presentation discusses current recommendations on evaluation, testing, and treatment of sexually transmitted infections in children with concern of sexual abuse. We will discuss prophylactic treatment and considerations in prepubertal and pubertal children as well as follow up testing. We will review current guidelines for diagnoses of STIs in relation to sexual abuse diagnosis as well. Proper evaluation and treatment of STI in child sexual abuse is of utmost importance in the health and safety of our patients.

AGENDA

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

3:00pm-4:30pm

Annual
Conference



"The Body Tells the Story"

Shanavier Clark, LMSW (Madewood A)

Learners will be provided with an understanding of the utilization of the ACEs scores to target interventions to effectively treat childhood maltreatment. At the end of this activity, participants will understand the ACEs scoring, model, and information as it relates to creating preventive measure for the effects of childhood trauma. Learners will be provided with a basic understanding function of the brain, key components of the central nervous system and its functions, and how this impacts the cognitive, physical, and emotional relationships. At the end of this activity, participants will be able to describe the autonomic nervous system and its role in the human stress response system. At the end of this activity, participants will have a better understanding of functions of the brain. Learners will be provided information to a trauma informed framework for understanding the key concepts of trauma-informed care and application. At the end of this activity, participants will be able to identify what ACTIVE trauma informed care is and apply those key concepts to educate and treat the client.

"Considering Grooming and Manipulation in the Investigative and Judicial Process"

Caitie Dahl (Madewood B)

Grooming behaviors are estimated to be present in nearly half of all child sexual abuse cases. It is important for child abuse professionals to recognize manipulative patterns and behaviors that offenders employ to groom their victims for compliance with abuse and non-disclosure, so interventions can be made as early as possible. This training will provide professionals with information on what grooming is, how to recognize grooming behaviors, stages of grooming, a look at legislation regarding grooming across the US, and considerations and techniques for exploring dynamics of grooming and manipulation in the forensic interview.

"Non-Verbal" What it Means and Why a Forensic Interview is Still Possible

Kate Homan (Rosedown A)

This workshop is intended for forensic interviewers who want to learn how to communicate with children who do not speak or who are considered "non-verbal." This training is founded in forensic interview best practices with considerations and adaptations to account for individuals who do not speak, use gestures, use a communication device, or speak few words. Through this workshop, participants will have increased understanding of verbal behavior and communication methods; increased knowledge of communication considerations when interviewing a child who does not speak; and learn reliable and legally defensible techniques that can be applied in interviews.

"Human Trafficking Disclosures: Barriers & Meeting Survivor Needs Without Them"

Maria Isabella Pontoriero, LMSW (Rosedown B)

Recognizing the signs of child trafficking are vital in identification of the crime and understanding survivor needs. However, due to trauma-bonds to exploiters, prior incidents of abuse and the system responses to that abuse, as well as reluctance to disclose with unmet needs, youth victims of trafficking are not as likely to disclose their exploitation immediately. With a traditional reliance on disclosures, these cases often go uninvestigated or not prosecuted, without the child's statement. This session will provide participants with the tools for identifying child trafficking and meeting survivor needs without that disclosure, as well as present case examples and practical strategies for navigating these complex cases without them. Child trafficking victims can have extensive needs beyond trauma-focused counseling that are largely left unmet. They involve co-morbidity of victimization requiring intense crisis counseling and identification of a multitude of services as well as other needed resources, such as shelter, safe placement, transportation, educational and job skills resources. Having an understanding of the process of disclosure and the barriers to them for trafficked youth, and how service providers, investigators, and prosecutors can involve youth in informed decision-making processes, can allow for systems in which survivors can regain their autonomy, while also having their investigative, prosecutorial, psychological, and other basic needs met.



Session 6 (Madewood A&B)

"Implicit Bias and Gender Affirming Care"

Anne Troy PhD, FNP, APRN

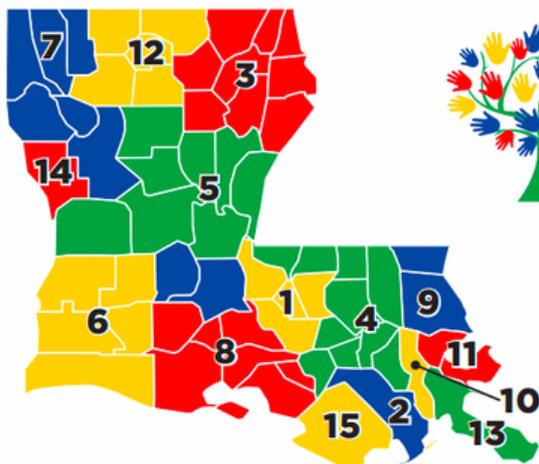
Participants will gain skills for engaging with their LGBTQ+ patients respectfully and therapeutically through increased awareness of their implicit and explicit biases. Participants will also:

- 1) Gain an understanding of the difference between implicit and explicit bias
- 2) Gain tools for addressing their unconscious biases in particular with the LGBTQ communities.
- 3) Explore verbal and behavioral skills required to communicate compassion and competence in caring for the diverse needs of people in these communities.



Louisiana Children's Advocacy Centers

EMPOWERING. COLLABORATING. ADVOCATING.



LACAC

LOUISIANA ALLIANCE OF CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS

LACAC is the statewide membership association established to promote, assist, and support the development, growth, and sustainability of Children's Advocacy Centers (CAC) across Louisiana. Each CAC is an independently operating organization.

See below to find your local CAC!

1. BATON ROUGE CAC

626 East Boulevard
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
(225) 343-1984 www.batonrougecac.org

2. CAC OF LAFOURCHE

705 Plantation road
Thibodaux, LA 70301
(985) 637-8336 www.cacoflafourche.org

3. CAC of NELA

614 North 2nd street
Monroe, LA 71201
(318) 398-0945 www.standforhope.org

4. CHILD ADVOCACY SERVICES

1504 West Church Street
Hammond, LA 70401
(800) 798-1575 www.childadv.net

5. CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY NETWORK

P. O. Box 8418
Alexandria, LA 71306
(318) 448-4006 www.childrensadvocacy.net

6. FAMILY & YOUTH COUNSELING AGENCY

220 Louie Street
Lake Charles, LA 70601
(337) 436-9533 www.fyca.org

7. GINGERBREAD HOUSE CAC

1700 Buckner Square, Suite 101
Shreveport, LA 71101
(318) 674-2900 www.gingerbreadhousecac.org

8. HEARTS OF HOPE

P. O. Box 53967
Lafayette, LA 70505
(337) 269-1557 www.theheartsofhope.org

9. CAC HOPE HOUSE

223 West 28th Avenue
Covington, LA 70433
(985) 892-3885 www.cachopehouse.org

10. JEFFERSON CAC

P. O. Box 2243
Gretna, LA 70054
(504) 364-3857 www.jeffersoncac.com

11. NEW ORLEANS CAC

1101 Calhoun Street
New Orleans, LA 70118
(504) 894-5484
[www.chnola.org/community/
audrey-hepburn-care-center](http://www.chnola.org/community/audrey-hepburn-care-center)

12. PINE HILLS CAC

100 West Texas, 2nd Floor
Ruston, LA 71270
(318) 255-7273 www.pinehillscac.org

13. PLAQUEMINES COMMUNITY C.A.R.E. CENTERS

115 Keating Drive
Belle Chasse, LA 70037
(504) 393-5750 www.pcccf.org

14. PROJECT CELEBRATION, INC.

580 W. Main Street
Many, LA 71449
(318) 256-2064 www.projectcelebration.com

15. TERREBONE PARISH CAC

305 Verret Street
Houma, LA 70360
(985) 872-5437 www.tpda.org