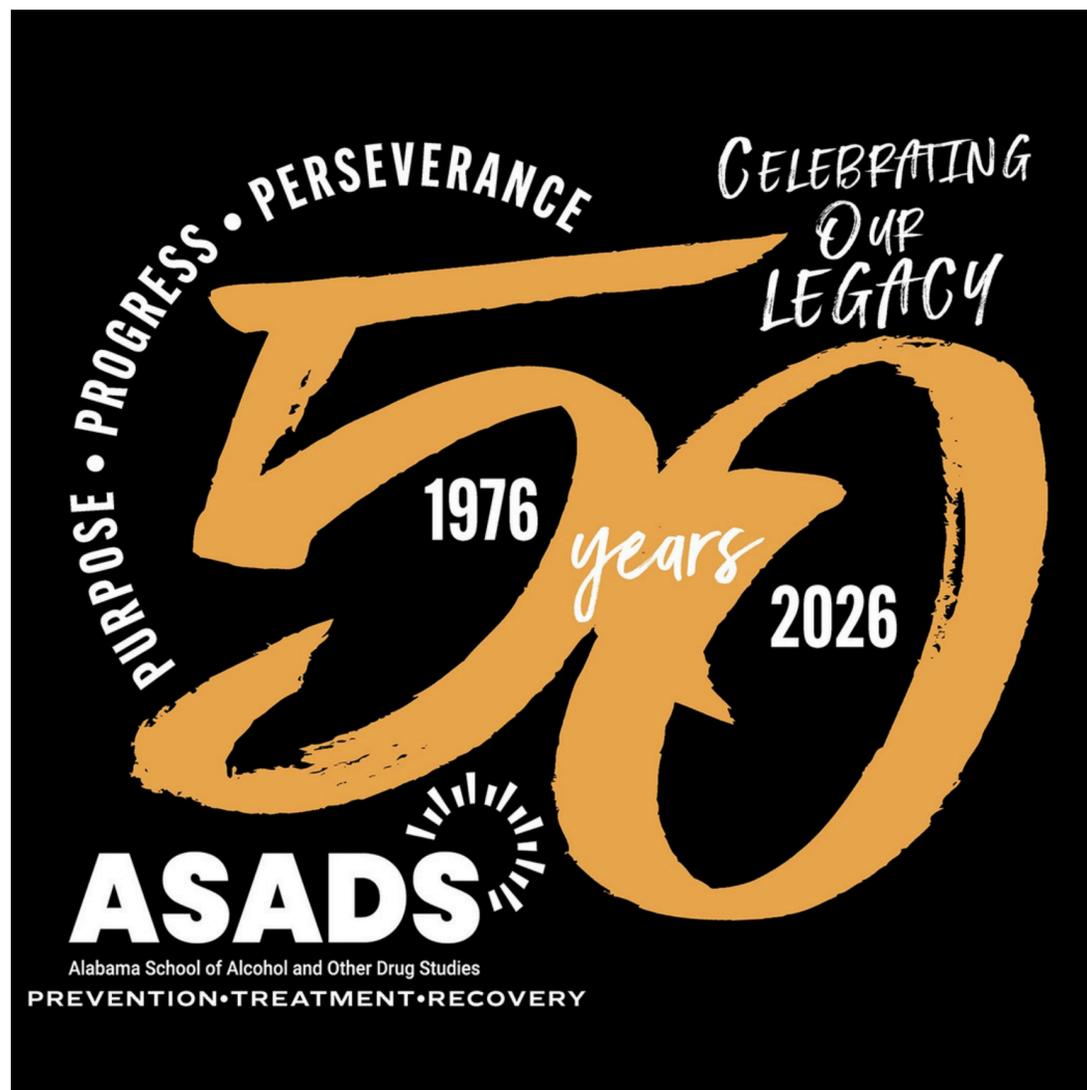




# 50th Annual Alabama School of Alcohol and Other Drug Studies



## CONFERENCE BROCHURE



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***ASADS 2026 – 50 years of Purpose, Progress, and Perseverance***

Greetings to our partners, colleagues, participants, vendors, and friends of ASADS:

It's time for the 2026 Alabama School of Alcohol and other Drug Studies Annual Conference at Bryant Conference Center on the beautiful University of Alabama campus in Tuscaloosa, AL - March 23-27, 2026! Welcome to a truly historic moment! We can hardly wait for this year's conference!

This year, we proudly celebrate 50 years of ASADS and five decades of purpose-driven progress in substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. Since our founding, ASADS has trained thousands of dedicated providers, strengthened systems of care, and supported professionals who show up every day with compassion, expertise, and an unwavering belief in the people they serve. This milestone is not just a celebration of our past; it is a powerful affirmation of our future.

Over the last 50 years, ASADS has been a place where collaboration thrives, practices grow stronger, and evidence-based approaches become lived realities in communities across not only our state, but the country. Together, we have advanced the use of research-informed, person-centered care while never losing sight of what matters most: the individuals and families navigating recovery.

This year's theme, *Purpose, Progress, and Perseverance*, captures the heart of ASADS and the spirit of every participant in this school.

- Purpose drives our commitment to excellence and our belief in the potential of every consumer we serve.
- Progress honors how far we have come and inspires us to continue improving, innovating, and expanding access to quality care.
- Perseverance reflects the dedication required to walk alongside individuals through challenge, change, and hope.

At ASADS, we believe recovery is not just about treatment; it is about building better lives, supporting people as they rediscover meaning, and offering consistent, compassionate care rooted in dignity and respect. This school is designed to strengthen your skills, deepen your knowledge, and energize your passion for client-centered, evidence-based practice. As we celebrate 50 years of impact, we also celebrate you, the professionals whose work makes recovery possible and whose commitment shapes the future of our field. Thank you for being part of this milestone year and for continuing ASADS's legacy with purpose, perseverance, and progress.

As we mark this extra special and significant year, we also extend our deepest appreciation to the ASADS Board of Directors, whose generosity, leadership, and passion make this celebration possible. Their tireless volunteer service and thoughtful planning have helped shape an experience that is not only educational but truly unique, moving, and meaningful. We are grateful for their commitment to ASADS, to our mission, and to creating a memorable 50th anniversary school for all who join us.

We are honored to learn, grow, and celebrate with you!

With gratitude and excitement,



Debbi Metzger  
President, ASADS 2025-2026

*Celebrating 50 Years of Service, Impact, and Hope...Our Legacy!*

# ASADS Board of Directors

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Rodney Maiden  
Donna Oates  
Ashley Robinson

Alabama Department of Mental Health  
Montgomery Family Court  
The University of Alabama  
Veteran Military Crisis Line  
Alabama Department of Public Health  
Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles  
Alabama State University/NAADAC  
VA Medical Center Tuscaloosa  
Federal Bureau of Prisons  
Bradford Health Services  
Alabama Department of Youth Services  
Alabama Department of Corrections  
Walker Recovery Center  
Rhonda Lawless Consulting, LLC.  
Alliance Health Center  
AL Alliance for Recovery Residences  
Troy University  
AL Administrative Office of Courts  
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

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Alabama Department of Mental Health  
Recovery Resource Center  
Addicts for Christ  
Calloway Consulting, LLC  
Walker Recovery Center  
CIT  
Alabama Department of Finance  
ED Transform Central  
Agape Ministries  
Turning Point Treatment Facility  
Shelby County Community Corrections

## Staff

Ellen Robertson, *General Manager*  
Jaime Vazquez, *Administrative Coordinator*

# ABOUT THE 2026 PROGRAM

The 50th Annual conference offers a unique opportunity for professional development, information exchange, and networking. It is designed to address the need for knowledge and skill development through advanced training and will begin on Tuesday March 24, 2026 at 8:00 a.m. and end on Friday, March 27, 2026 at 12:30 p.m.

## CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEES

Advance Registration* Deadline: March 1, 2026**	
Attendance	Rate
4 Day	\$490.00
3 Day	\$430.00
2 Day	\$310.00
1 Day	\$185.00

Late Registration* after March 1, 2026 + Onsite	
Attendance	Rate
4 Day	\$525.00
3 Day	\$470.00
2 Day	\$340.00
1 Day	\$200.00

\*Students may register with a 50% discount. Please email [asadsalabama@gmail.com](mailto:asadsalabama@gmail.com) to receive a code. You must include a copy of the university student ID (with picture).

\*\*Registrations postmarked after March 1, 2026, will incur an increased fee.

## CONFERENCE REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Participants may register online at [www.asadsonline.com](http://www.asadsonline.com). Registrations will also be accepted by mail or fax for those who do not have internet access. Organizations may mail/fax\* a Purchase Order or Voucher for approval with names of participants identified. To request a registration form, contact the ASADS Office at 256-620-3304 or [asadsalabama@gmail.com](mailto:asadsalabama@gmail.com).

## INDIVIDUAL COURSE REGISTRATION\*

Every effort will be made to ensure participants are enrolled in their first choice; however, enrollment is limited, and reservations are made on a first-come, first-serve basis. ASADS reserves the right to cancel any course for which minimum enrollment is not reached. If a course is cancelled and a transfer is not possible, a full refund of the tuition fee will be made.

\*Many courses are filled prior to March 1, 2026. To ensure the class of your choice register early!

## ONSITE REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Onsite registration will be offered in the Cavalier Room at the Bryant Conference Center during conference week. However, we highly recommend registering online in advance, as course and session availability cannot be guaranteed. Register early to ensure your spot!

## FOOD AND REFRESHMENTS

Breakfast is served from 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. each day. Lunch is served from 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Beverages and light snacks will be offered during break times. Visit [www.asadsonline.com](http://www.asadsonline.com) for more detail on breakfast and lunch menus.

## HANDOUTS/SLIDES

Participants must go to [www.asadsonline.com](http://www.asadsonline.com) two weeks prior to the conference start date to download and/or print course-specific handouts/slides. The handouts and certain slides will be available up to June 1, 2026.

## SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS

Please indicate any accommodations needed when registering for the conference, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. For additional assistance, contact Jaime Vazquez at (256) 620-3304 or email [asadsalabama@gmail.com](mailto:asadsalabama@gmail.com).

## HOST HOTEL

A special room rate of \$134.00 per night (plus tax) has been arranged for ASADS Conference participants at the Hotel Capstone, located adjacent to the Bryant Conference Center at 320 Bryant Drive, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35401. The rate applies to Traditional Single King or Double Queen rooms. To reserve your room, call (205) 752-3200 or 1-800-477-2262, and mention the ASADS Conference.

The special room block and rate are available until **February 23, 2026**. After this date, the hotel may discontinue the discounted rate. A one-night deposit is required when making your reservation. Click here to book your room at Hotel Capstone.



BLOCK NAME: 2026 ASADS

BLOCK DATES: March 23 – March 27, 2026

LAST DAY TO BOOK IN BLOCK: February 23, 2026

Rate: \$134– Traditional Double Queen or Traditional King, does not include breakfast, a parking fee currently at \$7 per day and a \$2.00 safe fee

[2026 ASADS](#)

How to use the link --

- Hold down control and double click on the link above to open up the webpage
- Choose your date of arrival by clicking on “check-in” and departure in “check-out”; select “search”
- Select the room type you prefer by clicking on “Show Rooms” and it will drop down your available options
- Select “Book Now” for the room that fits your needs
- Complete your reservation by entering all requested information and click “Continue”; you will receive a confirmation number upon completion.
  - NOTE -- Only the dates above and room types contracted are available at the contracted rate -- rooms requested outside of your block dates or different room types are based on availability and at the prevailing rate.

Prefer to book by phone:

- Rooms in the block can be booked by calling 205-752-3200.
- The Agent will ask for an email address, so that we may email your confirmation letter. They will also be able to provide the confirmation number for you over the phone.
- Please be prepared with your payment method as it will be required to make a reservation over the phone.

## ADDITIONAL HOTELS

<b><u>Embassy Suites</u></b> 205-561-2500	<b><u>Homewood Suites</u></b> 205-349-2727	<b><u>Holiday Inn Express and Suites</u></b> 205-464-4000
<b><u>Hotel Indigo</u></b> 205-469-1660	<b><u>Home2 Suites</u></b> 205-349-2002	<b><u>Hampton Inn</u></b> 205-553-9800

## CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS

Continuing Education (CE) acknowledges the commitment of individuals attending approved educational programs. Conference participants can earn up to **25.25** CE contact hours based on documented daily attendance.

## CE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Alabama Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association  
Alabama Alcoholism and Drug Counselor Certification Board Certified Rehabilitation Counselor  
National Board of Certified Counselors-6600  
Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners-0502 Alabama Psychological Association  
Alabama Board of Nursing Home Administrators  
Alabama Board of Nursing-ABNP 1475 *\*Participants must bring nursing card for on-site electronic scanning.*

## CE PROVIDER STATEMENTS

This school is sponsored by ASADS and the **Alabama Psychological Association** (aPA). The aPA is approved by the American Psychological Association (APA) to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. aPA maintains responsibility for this program and its contents. Partial attendance, late arrival, or early departure will preclude the issuance of CE credits.

ASADS has been approved as a Continuing Education Provider with the **Alabama Board of Social Workers** and may offer approved clock hours for programs that meet Alabama Board of Social Workers guidelines.

**APOSTC:** This conference can be used for Alabama Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission (APOSTC) credits if approved by your agency head.

**CRSS:** This program has been approved for continuing education credit hours for Certified Recovery Support Specialists.



ASADS has been approved by **NBCC** as an Approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP # 6600. Programs that do not qualify for NBCC credit are clearly identified on the conference agenda. ASADS is solely responsible for all aspects of the program.



Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services is approved by the **Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC)** to sponsor continuing education credits for counselors. Sponsor number 00060639.

### To qualify for continuing education (CE) credits, participants must:

- **Register:** Ensure you identify the type of CE requested when registering for the conference. Specific designations will also need to check in at the designated registration desk upon arrival (see below for designations).
- **Attend Sessions in Full:** CE credit is awarded based on full attendance at approved sessions. Partial credit will not be given. *Participants are responsible for selecting the course that meets the requirements of their certifying/licensing body for contact hours and renewal needs.*
- **Complete Evaluations:** Submit required conference/session evaluations by the specified deadline to receive credit.

### **Verification of Attendance:**

Attendance will be monitored through sign-in sheets (for specific designations), badge scanning (for all attendees), and completing the evaluation per session attended (with correct attendance code). Be sure to follow the specific procedures outlined during the conference.

### **Certificate Distribution:**

CE certificates will be issued via email within 6 weeks after the conference, provided all attendance and evaluation requirements are met. In accordance with CE granting authority guidelines, certificates cannot be issued early, transferred, or awarded for unapproved courses.

### **DESIGNATIONS THAT REQUIRE SIGN IN**

**CRC/CRCC**— All CRC/CRCC need to locate the **“CRC/CRCC Signage Station”** and complete the course completion form at the end of each day.

**ABN** - All nurses need to locate the **“ABN Signage Station”** and swipe their nursing license upon arrival and departure each day.

All other designations must have your badge scanned each morning and must complete the evaluation with correct attendance code before receiving the CE certificate.

If you have questions regarding CE and the ASADS course content, contact Dr. Ellen Robertson at [erobertson@asadsonline.com](mailto:erobertson@asadsonline.com) or 501-352-6192.

# CONFERENCE AGENDA AT A GLANCE

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday <i>ASADS T-Shirt Day</i>
7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.		Registration Breakfast*	Registration Breakfast*	Registration Breakfast*
8:15 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.		Welcome Opening Session  <i>From Mental 'Hellness' to Mental Wellness; My 50 Year Journey towards Hope</i>  <u>Presenter:</u> David Bartley	Welcome Opening Session  <i>The 'Primary Purpose' Behind Success</i>  <u>Presenter:</u> Joshua Nirella	Welcome Opening Session  <i>The Message in the Music</i>  <u>Presenter:</u> Marc Fomby
9:15 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.		Break	Break	Break
9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.		Workshops	Workshops	Workshops
12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.		Lunch* Poster Session	Lunch*	Lunch* Poster Session
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.		Breakout Session A	1:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Carl Nowell Award	Breakout Session C
			1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. <b>Keynote</b> <i>My Life. My Story. My Redemption.</i> <b>Maurice Clarett</b>	
3:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.	3:00 p.m.- 5:00 p.m. Exhibitor/Vendor registration & set-up	Break	2:45 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. Meet & Greet w/ Maurice Clarett	Break
3:15 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.		Breakout Session B	4:00 p.m.- 6:00 p.m. 50th Anniversary Reception at Peter Bryce Museum  * Check <a href="http://www.asadsonline.com">www.asadsonline.com</a> for additional breakfast/lunch details	Breakout Session D

## FRIDAY AGENDA - SELLERS AUDITORIUM

	7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.	8:15 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.	9:15 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.	10:15 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	10:30 a.m.- 11:30 a.m.	11:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.
Friday	Registration Breakfast	Welcome Opening Session  <i>Everybody Leads: Leadership Excellence Across the Healing Journey</i>  <u>Presenter:</u> Tim Lupinacci	<i>Leadership in Prevention: Cultivating Innovation, Vision and Impact</i>  <u>Presenter:</u> Seyram Selase	Break	<i>Leading the Treatment Field Forward</i>  <u>Presenter:</u> Zach Ludwig	<i>The Accidental Leader's Real Work</i>  <u>Presenter:</u> Charles Dent, PhD



ALABAMA SCHOOL OF ALCOHOL AND  
OTHER DRUG STUDIES

INVITES YOU TO

50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
RECEPTION

- 
- MEET MAURICE CLARETT •
  - TOUR ADMH MUSEUM •
  - RECOVERY STORIES •
  - LIGHT HORS D'OEUVRE •
  - AND MUCH MORE •

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MARCH 25, 2026  
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
PETER BRYCE MUSEUM  
200 BRYCE LAWN DRIVE  
TUSCALOOSA, AL 35401

CONFERENCE ATTENDEES MAY PURCHASE TICKETS FOR \$5. ADMISSION  
FOR NON-CONFERENCE GUESTS IS \$10.  
ATTIRE: DRESSY CASUAL

## **MEET THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

# **Maurice Clarett**

## **My Life. My Story. My Redemption.**

**Date:** March 25, 2026

**Time:** 1:30 pm - 2:45 pm



### **MEET AND GREET**

Date: March 25, 2026

Time: 2:45 pm - 3:15 pm



Maurice Clarett rose to national prominence as a standout freshman running back at The Ohio State University, earning Big Ten Freshman of the Year honors and playing a pivotal role in the Buckeyes' 2002 National Championship. After brief professional stints and significant personal setbacks, including a prison sentence, Clarett chose transformation over defeat. He rebuilt his life as the founder and CEO of the Maurice Clarett Brand (MCB), becoming a nationally sought-after author and motivational speaker known for his transparency, accountability, and resilience. In 2016, he founded The Red Zone, a behavioral health agency serving more than 1,500 children and adults across Ohio through holistic, evidence-based mental health and recovery services.

# Meet the Plenary Speakers

8:15 am - 9:15 am



## **TUESDAY**

**From Mental 'Hellness' to Mental Wellness;  
My 50 Year Journey towards Hope**

**Presenter: David Bartley**



## **WEDNESDAY**

**The 'Primary Purpose' Behind Success**

**Presenter: Joshua Nirella, BSW, MSOL**



## **THURSDAY**

**The Message in the Music  
Presenter: Marc Fomby, CPS**



## **FRIDAY**

**Everybody Leads: Leadership Excellence Across the  
Healing Journey**

**Presenter: Tim Lupinacci, JD, BA**

# COURSES AT A GLANCE

Course registration is available on a first-come, first-served basis, so be sure to register early! If you need assistance during the conference, visit the Cavalier Room.

No Partial Credits will be awarded.

<b>TUESDAY PLENARY 8:15 am - 9:15 am</b> From Mental "Hellness" to Mental Wellness: My 50-Year Journey Towards Hope <b>Presenter:</b> David Bartley		
March 24, 2026 9:30 am to 12:30 pm Workshops (3 hours)		
TAM1	Applied Ethics for Counselors: Real-World Scenarios and Solutions	Steve Mason
TAM2	Digital Dopamine: How Tech Addiction Hijacks the Recovering Brain	Janice Johnson Dowd
TAM3	Bridging Minds and Medicine	Garrett Aikens, Anne Taylor and Joseph Chen
TAM4	Paradoxical Approaches in Substance Use and Dual Diagnosis Counseling	Darrell Manning
TAM5	Ethical Dilemmas in Today's Treatment Settings	Lisa Akine
TAM6	Addressing Attachment Ruptures in Couples Impacted by Addiction	Michelle Pruett
TAM7	Bridging Technology and Therapy: Artificial Intelligence in Mental Health Settings	Dr. Lucy Cannon
TAM8	Recognizing, Rethinking, and Responding to Human Trafficking in a Therapeutic Setting	Jan Bell and Crystal Gregory
TAM9	Seasons: Substance Use Across the Lifespan	James Campbell
TAM10	How to Collect, Analyze and Report Substance Use Program Data Using Excel	Drew Reynolds

# COURSES AT A GLANCE

<b>March 24, 2026 BREAKOUT SESSION A</b> <b>1:30 pm – 3:00 pm (1.5 hours)</b>		
TPM1-A	How Can I Help You?	Jennifer Nelson
TPM2-A	STD's, TB and Early Intervention Services	James Choate and Anthony Merriweather
TPM3-A	AADAA: The Nuances of Getting QSAP Certified	Tom Mihokanich and Mike McLemore
TPM4-A	Partnering for Impact: From Intervention to Recovery in Institutional Contexts	Savannah Kiesel
TPM5-A	Techniques in Clinical Supervision to Enhance Effectiveness	Beth Bergeron
TPM6-A	HIPAA & 42CFR: What's the Difference in Healthcare an Behavioral Health	Ronda Lacey
TPM7-A	Integrating Evidence Based Tobacco Use Treatment Interventions in Mental Health and Substance Use Settings	David Davis and Brenae Waters
TPM8-A	CADCA's Over-The-Counter Medicine Safety Program	Angela Powe and Erin Burleson
TPM9-A	Destination Life Change: Where Evidence-Based and Faith-Based Recovery Intersect	Curt Lindsley, Katina Blanchett, David Clements and Jason Johnson
TPM10-A	Bruised but not Broken	Susan James-Andrews
<b>March 24, 2026 BREAKOUT SESSION B</b> <b>3:15 pm – 4:45 pm (1.5 hours)</b>		
TPM1-B	STD's, TB and Early Intervention Services	James Choate and Anthony Merriweather
TPM2-B	Ethics Still Exist In Telehealth Counseling	Michelle Crumbly
TPM3-B	Powerless to Powerful: Recovery through a Personal Empowerment Lens	James Campbell
TPM4-B	MHSU Certification Overview - What if Certification and why is it needed	Beth Bergeron
TPM5-B	HIPAA & 42CFR: What's the Difference in Healthcare an Behavioral Health	Ronda Lacey
TPM6-B	Humans and Horses- What The Research Tells Us About The Healing Power of Horses for Veterans, Military and First Responders	Kathleen Saucier, David Flounders and Gilbert Brian Eddy
TPM7-B	Interactive Prevention that Works!	Nicole Shine and Corlina Koranda
TPM8-B	Building Resilience through Adversities	Zina Cartwell
TPM9-B	What Evidence-based Faith-based Recovery Services Look Like	Judd Drake
TPM10-B	No Key is Needed to Set us Truly Free	David Bartley

**WEDNESDAY PLENARY 8:15 am - 9:15 am**  
The 'Primary Purpose' Behind Success **Presenter:** Joshua Nirella

**March 25, 2026**  
**9:30 am - 12:30 pm Workshops (3 hours)**

WAM1	Breaking the Silence: The Overlap Between Suicide and Opioids - Exploring Connections, Risks, and Community Solutions	Maegan Huffman and Kendrikka Suddith
WAM2	HIV/STIs: an Overview for the Substance Use/Mental Health Professional	Richard "Rick" Meriwether
WAM3	Models of Clinical Supervision - What works for you and your supervisee(s)?	Beth Bergeron
WAM4	Trauma-Informed Care: Advancing Alabama's Substance Use Recovery	Bertrina West and Constance Fields
WAM5	How the Brain Heals in Recovery: The Neuroscience of the Twelve Steps and Recovery	Merrill Norton
WAM6	The Medical Management of Alcohol and Drug Withdrawal	James Harrow
WAM7	Repairing the Mission Within: Relationship Health, Shame Resilience, and Community to Support Recovery	Garret Biss
WAM8	Calm In the Storm-How to Manage Stress in a Busy Environment	Patrick Tidwell
WAM9	Integrating Mental Health Promotion into Substance Use Prevention	Jordon Hillhouse
WAM10	How Can I Help You?	Jennifer Nelson

**WEDNESDAY KEYNOTE 1:15 pm - 2:45 pm**  
My Life. My Story. My Redemption. **Presenter:** Maurice Clarett

**THURSDAY PLENARY 8:15 am - 9:15 am**  
The Message in the Music **Presenter:** Marc Fomby

**March 26, 2026**  
**9:30 am - 12:30 pm Workshops (3 hours)**

THAM1	Supporting the Next Generation of Behavioral Health for Adolescents	Contenna Moore and Angela McElrath
THAM2	Youth in Crisis	Anthony Reynolds, Paula Steele and Edgar Finn
THAM3	From Trauma to Triumph: Dissolving Trauma Blocker Preventing Growth	Bertrina West
THAM4	Telehealth, Virtual Supervision and other Technology Issues	Beth Bergeron
THAM5	From Military to Calling: Helping Veterans Rebuild Meaning and Purpose in Recovery	Garret Biss
THAM6	Implementing SBIRT with Adolescents	Paige Parish
THAM7	Ethical Dilemmas in Today's Treatment Settings	Lisa Akine
THAM8	Adolescent Psychopharmacology	Merrill Norton
THAM9	Games Children Play	Marc Fomby
THAM10	Resilient Helpers: Using Emotional Intelligence to Prevent Burnout	Savannah Kiesel

**THURSDAY AFTERNOON SESSIONS**

**March 26, 2026 BREAKOUT SESSION C  
1:30 pm - 3:00 pm (1.5 hours)**

THPM1-C	Tobacco Use and Vaping Prevention in Adolescents and Transition Aged Youth	Kayla Stephens and Antone Robinson, Jr.
THPM2-C	A Job Corps Perspective on Substance Use Prevention	Jerry Morris
THPM3-C	A Systems Perspective on Adolescents in Substance Use Treatment	Nakia Jones
THPM4-C	Scrolling & Substances: The Hidden Influence of Media on Youth Choices	Jerria Martin
THPM5-C	Protecting Our Youth: DHR Mandatory Reporting Procedures	Ginger Roberts
THPM6-C	Engaging First Responders in Mental Health First Aid Training to Enhance Prevention Ethics	Jessica Hoggle
THPM7-C	The Weight of Caring: Staying Balanced in Trauma Work	Jeanna Reed
THPM8-C	Maternal Health & Substance Use	LB Brown
THPM9-C	Building Self Awareness and Positive Relationship's with Reflective Supervision/Consultation	Tyesha Durr
THPM10-C	Traumatic Brain Injury 101, Screening, Services and Supports	April Turner

**March 26, 2026 BREAKOUT SESSION D  
3:15 pm - 4:45 pm (1.5 hours)**

THPM1-D	Youth, Vaping, and Technology: Understanding Today's Drug Trends	Jamelle Allen and Austin Brown
THPM2-D	Scrolling & Substances: The Hidden Influence of Media on Youth Choices	Jerria Martin
THPM3-D	Protecting Our Youth: DHR Mandatory Reporting Procedures	Ginger Roberts
THPM4-D	Understanding Risk Factors for Effective Substance Use Prevention	Erin Burleson and Angela Powe
THPM5-D	Professional Wellness: A Brain-Based Approach to Self-Care, Burnout Prevention, and Holistic Health	Kristen Beasley
THPM6-D	Alabama Tobacco Hotspots: Integrating Sales, Youth Use, and Mortality Data for Targeted Public and Behavioral Health Action	Chisom Ajasa and Brenae Waters
THPM7-D	The Legal High: The Dangers of Gas Station Drugs	David Holloway
THPM8-D	Anger Management with Clients and Staff in Behavioral Health Settings	Meta Eatman
THPM9-D	Empowering Families: Using CRAFT to Support Recovery and Strengthen Connections	Kim Holder
THPM10-D	Trauma-Informed Care within the Criminal Justice System: A Dual Perspective	Samantha Barfield Morris

<b>FRIDAY PLENARY 8:15 am - 9:15 am</b>		
Everybody Leads: Leadership Excellence Across the Healing Journey <b>Presenter:</b> Tim Lupinacci		
<b>March 27, 2026</b> 9:15 am - 10:15 am (1 hour)		
FAM1	Leadership in Prevention: Cultivating Innovation, Vision and Impact	Seyram Selase
<b>March 27, 2026</b> 10:30 am - 11:30 am (1 hour)		
FAM2	Leading the Treatment Field Forward	Zach Ludwig
<b>March 27, 2026</b> 11:30 am - 12:30 pm (1 hour)		
FAM3	The Accidental Leader's Real Work	Charles Dent, PhD

# TUESDAY MORNING WORKSHOPS

9:30 am to 12:30 pm

## **TPL: From Mental 'Hellness' to Mental Wellness; My 50 Year Journey towards Hope**

### **Presenter:**

David Bartley, Professional Speaker

### **Course Description:**

After five decades of awareness campaigns, prevention strategies, and crisis response, we face a sobering truth: keeping people alive is not the same as helping them live well. In this keynote, internationally recognized mental health advocate and lived-experience speaker David Woods Bartley examines where the mental wellness movement stands today-and what is truly at stake if we fail to evolve. Blending personal insight with professional experience, this talk challenges the field to move beyond a deficit-based, crisis-only model and toward an asset-based approach rooted in connection, meaning, and human dignity. This keynote is both a reflection and a call to action-inviting leaders and practitioners to shape the next 50 years of mental wellness around preservation of life and cultivation of hope, resilience, and flourishing.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- evaluate the current state of mental wellness by reflecting on progress and limitations from the past 50 years of awareness, prevention, and intervention efforts.
- distinguish between crisis-focused models and asset-based, connection-centered approaches that support long-term resilience and human flourishing.
- identify actionable ways to strengthen connection, hope, and meaning within their professional roles to advance mental wellness beyond mere survival.

## **TAM1: Applied Ethics for Counselors: Real-World Scenarios and Solutions**

### **Presenter:**

Steve Mason, LPC-S, ADC

### **Course Description:**

Ethical decision-making is at the heart of helping professions, yet many of the most challenging situations arise in the "gray areas" where the right course of action is not always clear. This interactive 3-hour workshop moves beyond theory and into practice, equipping counselors with practical tools to navigate complex ethical dilemmas. Using real-world scenarios, participants will engage in discussion, small-group activities, and case analysis to strengthen their ability to apply their applicable Code of Ethics and other professional standards in everyday clinical work. Topics will include confidentiality, boundaries, dual relationships, informed consent, cultural considerations, technology in counseling, and supervision. Participants will leave with increased confidence and a structured decision-making model to guide ethical practice in diverse settings.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- identify common ethical challenges faced by counselors in clinical, organizational, and community settings.
- evaluate the impact of cultural, relational, and contextual factors on ethical decision-making
- utilize a step-by-step ethical decision-making model to guide professional practice.
- develop strategies for maintaining appropriate boundaries and managing dual relationships.
- strengthen confidence in addressing ethical concerns related to confidentiality, informed consent, and the use of technology.

## **TAM2: Digital Dopamine: How Tech Addiction Hijacks the Recovering Brain**

### **Presenter:**

Janice Johnson Dowd, LMSW

### **Course Description:**

As digital devices become part of everyday life, clinicians are seeing more clients whose struggles with technology overlap with substance use disorders. This workshop explores how digital platforms such as social media, gaming, streaming, and online shopping activate the same dopamine-driven reward pathways as drugs and alcohol. For individuals in recovery, excessive screen time may serve as an alternative coping mechanism for emotional regulation or escape. This behavior can reinforce the same neural pathways associated with addiction and threaten sobriety. Using insights from neuroscience and behavioral research, we will examine the concept of the "hijacked brain" and how chronic stimulation from technology can mirror or even replace chemical dependence. Special focus will be placed on adolescents and young adults, who face unique vulnerabilities at the intersection of peer pressure, technology immersion, and early exposure to substances.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- explain the neurobiological overlap between digital overuse and substance use disorders, with emphasis on the brain's dopamine reward system.
- identify signs of digital dependence or substitution behaviors that may emerge during or after substance use treatment.
- analyze the role of trauma, attachment patterns, and emotional dysregulation in the development and maintenance of both tech and chemical addictions.
- assess the clinical risks and relapse potential associated with unmonitored technology use among clients in early recovery.
- demonstrate effective interventions, treatment planning approaches, and psychoeducation strategies for helping clients develop healthier digital boundaries and routines and support long-term recovery.

# TUESDAY MORNING WORKSHOPS

9:30 am to 12:30 pm

## **TAM3: Bridging Minds and Medicine**

### **Presenters:**

Garrett Aikens, PharmD  
Anne Taylor, PhD  
Joseph Chen, PharmD

### **Course Description:**

This session explains how the brain, medications, and surgery all work together when caring for people with substance use disorders. We'll cover how doctors can safely prescribe medicine, what science tells us about addiction, and how to manage treatment before and after surgery. You'll learn practical ways healthcare teams can work together to support recovery, lower risks, and provide care that puts patients first.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- understand the basics of how addiction affects the brain.
- use brain science to improve prevention, treatment, and recovery.
- learn how prescription monitoring helps doctors make safe choices for patients with substance use disorders.
- understand what buprenorphine is and how it works.
- explore how buprenorphine treatment impacts surgery and recovery.

## **TAM4: Paradoxical Approaches in Substance Use and Dual Diagnosis Counseling**

### **Presenter:**

Darrell Manning, MS, RICP, LPC-S

### **Course Description:**

This course will focus on utilizing advanced techniques to assist those with substance abuse/addiction/dual diagnosis issues from assessment to treatment to recovery.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- verbalize a brief definition and history of Paradoxical Approaches.
- verbalize at least 4 of the Principles of Paradox.
- identify at least 4 areas of techniques to enhance the therapeutic process.
- provide feedback as to how to use in treatment these techniques for at least 4 substance abuse/addiction/dual diagnosis issues.

## **TAM5: Ethical Dilemmas in Today's Treatment Settings**

### **Presenter:**

Lisa Akine, APC, MS, CADC II, NCC

### **Course Description:**

In the rapidly changing landscape of therapy and counseling, professionals are increasingly confronted with complex ethical dilemmas within treatment settings. The evolution of therapeutic practices, emerging technologies, and diverse client populations has heightened the need for practitioners to navigate challenging situations with integrity and sound judgment. This presentation explores the multifaceted ethical issues therapists face today, offering practical strategies and frameworks for ethical decision-making in contemporary practice.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- recognize and articulate ethical dilemmas commonly faced in today's treatment environments.
- apply ethical codes and guidelines to challenging scenarios.
- utilize structured decision-making models to resolve ethical issues.
- reflect on personal values and biases that may impact ethical choices.
- access resources and seek consultation when confronted with difficult ethical decisions.

## **TAM6: Addressing Attachment Ruptures in Couples Impacted by Addiction**

### **Presenter:**

Michelle Pruett, LPC-S, M.Ed., Ed.S.

### **Course Description:**

The fallout of addiction lasts far beyond the cessation of addictive behaviors, often leading to prolonged hurt, isolation, and conflict in romantic relationships. Shame, self-doubt, anger, and grief are common responses in both partners as they navigate addiction and its aftermath. Clinicians helping couples navigate relationship repair is often difficult and confusing. In this workshop, participants will learn about a conceptual model of repair as it relates to healing attachment wounds as well as gaining an understanding of session-management tools to help navigate moments of dysregulation in couples in a way that leads to stronger connection and healing.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- understand the importance of identifying interactional cycles that prevent couples from moving forward with relationship repair after betrayal or other ruptures.
- implement strategies for managing sessions in which partners leave the window of tolerance into either hypo- or hyper-arousal.
- identify the three primary classifications of attachment.
- identify the three primary interactional stances and their associated strategies for gaining intimacy and independence within relationships.
- recognize blocking strategies frequently used in session by clients and options for overcoming those blocks.

# TUESDAY MORNING WORKSHOPS

9:30 am to 12:30 pm

## **TAM7: Mental Health and Artificial Intelligence; A Collaborative Effort in Treating Clients in Healthcare Settings**

### **Presenter:**

Dr. Lucy Cannon, Ed.D, LCSW, LICSW,CAADC,MATS

### **Course Description:**

AI is not just everywhere - it is actively sculpting the shape of our future." (Arnold, 2023) As healthcare professionals, we must become familiar with concepts of AI and how to incorporate various AI models that can be very beneficial in helping us as healthcare providers efficiently meet the needs of the clients we serve. It is imperative that we begin taking risks to learn more about the benefits of AI in healthcare settings and how it can help us better meet the needs of the clients we serve.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- be familiar with the of purpose of AI and key concepts healthcare professionals must be aware of in the mental health field.
- list specific ways AI is used in Co-occurring disorders healthcare settings.
- list best practice HIPAA Laws has it relates to AI.
- explain the relationship between AI and telehealth.
- be familiar with ethical considerations and legal issues that impact AI in the workplace.

## **TAM8: Recognizing, Rethinking, and Responding to Human Trafficking in a Therapeutic Setting**

### **Presenters:**

Jan Bell, MPH

Crystal Gregory, MS

### **Course Description:**

This workshop is designed to educate social workers, child-serving professionals, health and behavioral health professionals on how to prevent, identify, and respond appropriately including aiding in survivor recovery with individuals who are at risk or who have experienced trafficking including sex, labor, and on-line exploitation.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- describe the types of human trafficking and potential risk factors.
- understand differences between trafficking of adults vs. children, including the legal framework, role of DHR and Child Advocacy Centers, and appropriate response when minors are involved.
- identify individual and environmental indicators of trafficking.
- screen and identify individuals who may have experienced trafficking.
- utilize a trauma-informed, person-centered, multidisciplinary approach.

## **TAM9: Seasons: Substance Use Across the Lifespan**

### **Presenter:**

James Campbell, LPS, LAC, MAC, AADC, EOLD

### **Course Description:**

As we grow and develop as human beings, there are unique challenges that we face at each stage of life. Along with these specific challenges come particular risks associated with substance use. This session takes a frank look at the developmental challenges of each developmental stage along with some of the potential pitfalls related to substance use as well as considerations for recovery.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- identify tasks associated with developmental stages.
- list factors that impact risk in adolescents, emergent adults, middle-age, and older adults for substance use.
- describe the role of transitions and stress in susceptibility to substance use disorders.
- identify stereotypes about people in particular stages of life that may help or hinder seeking support.
- name two specific considerations for recovery from each of the stages.

## **TAM10: How to Collect, Analyze and Report Substance Use Program Data Using Excel**

### **Presenter:**

Drew Reynolds, PhD, MSW, MEd

### **Course Description:**

This three-hour, hands-on workshop is designed to equip students with the essential skills needed to perform basic data analytics in Microsoft Excel. Whether you're new to Excel or looking to strengthen your foundational knowledge, this session will guide you through the core tools and techniques used by data professionals every day.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- build and customize PivotTables and PivotCharts.
- use essential formulas to clean, transform, and analyze data.
- understand best practices for safe and responsible use of AI tools within Excel.
- apply structured approaches to turn raw data into meaningful insights.

# TUESDAY AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSION A

## 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

### **TPM1-A: How Can I Help You?**

#### **Presenter:**

Jennifer Nelson, LICSW-S

#### **Course Description:**

How do we help those with needs that are not as motivated or ready to align with us as helpers? How do we operate in our respective capacities, which are often delegated by codes of ethics, agency guidelines, client needs/expectations, and influences of our own perspectives of outcome/success? This workshop aims to aid helping professionals with strengthening self-awareness skills, increasing appreciation for professional self-care, assessing comprehension of client populations' needs and barriers, and identifying methods to honor client autonomy and strengthen partnership with clients.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- gain/strengthen self-awareness skills related to their respective roles within the helping profession.
- identify and engage in processing common and/or unique barriers to aiding clients/recipients/consumers/patients.
- gain/increase comprehension of automatic thinking distortions and the influence of personal motivations and convictions when working with clients/recipients/consumers/patients that desire autonomy that may be conflictual to positive outcomes.
- gain/strengthen knowledge/understanding of pathways to remain in compliance with professional ethics.
- engage in processing of comprehension of professional code of ethics and identify barriers/challenges within application.

### **TPM2-A: STD's, TB and Early Intervention Services**

#### **Presenters:**

James Choate, BSN, RN

Anthony Merriweather, MSPH

#### **Course Description:**

This course will provide information on STI's and TB in Alabama. Information will be shared on the correlation between STI's, TB and substance misuse in addition to risk populations and risk behaviors in Alabama. A discussion will occur on the community field tracking, tracing and treatment. We will share information on how behavioral health providers can integrate different prevention strategies into substance use treatment programs to assist with protecting the health of the public. Information will be shared on public health programs and resources that are available to treat individuals who are identified as high risk for contracting tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infections.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- provide an overview of STD's, high risk behaviors and link to substance use in Alabama.
- explain how PrEP can be used as early intervention strategy to reduce and prevent the spread of HIV transmission.
- provide an overview of Tuberculosis in Alabama and its link to intravenous drug use.
- discuss Early Intervention Services including pre and post test counseling, rapid testing and treatment services.
- list public health initiatives aimed at preventing infectious diseases among individuals who use drugs in AL.

### **TPM3-A: AADAA: The Nuances of Getting QSAP Certified**

#### **Presenters:**

Tom Mihokanich, BA, ADC, CAADP, APS

Mike McLemore, Ed.D, MA

#### **Course Description:**

This course will provide a general overview of the different certifications offered by the Alabama Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association. Information will be provided on the requirements for becoming a qualified behavioral health professional and how to maintain the credentials once obtained.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- provide an overview of the different AADAA Certifications behavioral health and criminal justice providers.
- discuss the process for becoming a QSAP and meeting the certification requirements.
- explain the nuances of becoming a licensed and certified treatment provider.
- discuss the requirements for renewing and maintaining AADAA certifications once obtained.

### **TPM4-A: Partnering for Impact: From Intervention to Recovery in Institutional Contexts**

#### **Presenter:**

Savannah Kiesel, MA, LPC, NCC

#### **Course Description:**

This presentation highlights the University of Alabama's comprehensive approach to supporting individuals in higher education and institutional settings through substance use education, prevention, intervention, and recovery. Drawing from evidence-based practices, we will explore how timely interventions can reduce risk and promote resilience, while tailored programming provides ongoing education and skill development. Recovery options will be examined as a vital component in sustaining well-being, with an emphasis on accessibility and inclusivity. Central to this model is collaboration: by partnering with large institutions, community stakeholders, and campus departments, we have created a network of support that maximizes impact and addresses diverse needs of clients. Participants will gain insight into practical strategies for implementing intervention programs, fostering recovery-friendly environments, and leveraging partnerships to enhance outcomes. The session will provide opportunities to reflect on challenges and successes in collaboration, offering actionable takeaways for those seeking to build or strengthen their own initiatives.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- identify key intervention strategies used to support individuals at risk.
- describe the role of educational programming in prevention and long-term success.
- examine effective models of collaboration between departments, community organizations, and large institutions.
- apply strategies for integrating intervention, programming, and recovery supports into their own contexts.

# TUESDAY AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSION A

## 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

### **TPM5-A: Techniques in Clinical Supervision to Enhance Effectiveness**

#### **Presenter:**

Beth Bergeron, LPC

#### **Course Description:**

With the growing need to recruit and retain a viable workforce in the Substance Use and Mental Health treatment field, the importance of good solid Clinical Supervision is vital. During this course, we will explore the differing techniques in clinical supervision to motivate and guide new counselors and increase effectiveness of clinical supervision.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- learn about differing techniques in clinical supervision - audio/visual supervision, case presentations, documentation review, role play and skills rehearsal, reflective journaling, structured feedback and evaluation methods
- gain understanding of group supervision technique.
- identify what works for you and your supervisees.

### **TPM6-A: HIPAA & 42CFR: What's the Difference in Healthcare and Behavioral Health**

#### **Presenter:**

Ronda Lacey, JC, CHPC

#### **Course Description:**

This course will provide information on the differences between 42CFR in substance use and mental health treatment settings and HIPAA in health care and medical settings. Information will be provided on common confidentiality and privacy violations and how to avoid ethical conflicts.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- provide a general overview of 42CFR in behavioral health (mental health and substance use).
- provide a general overview of HIPAA in health care.
- explain the differences between HIPAA and 42CFR.
- discuss common privacy and confidentiality violations and how to avoid them when working in behavioral health settings.

### **TPM7-A: Integrating Evidence Based Tobacco Use Treatment Interventions in Mental Health and Substance Use Settings**

#### **Presenters:**

David Davis

Brenae Waters

#### **Course Description:**

Tobacco use disorder is the addiction hiding in plain sight. It kills more people every year than alcohol and all other drugs combined, yet it is still too often ignored in mental health and substance use treatment. The differences in outcomes are staggering. SAMHSA's 2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health shows that 43.8 percent of adults with a past year behavioral health condition used some form of commercial tobacco, compared to just 22.0 percent of adults without such conditions. This is nearly double and highlights a public health crisis that has been left on the sidelines for far too long.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- identify evidence-based interventions for treating tobacco use disorder in mental health and substance use settings for youth and young adults.
- explain system level strategies that support integration of tobacco treatment into behavioral health services.
- apply evidence-based stage matched approaches to engage individuals with mental health and substance use conditions in treatment of tobacco use disorder.

### **TPM8-A: CADCA's Over-The-Counter Medicine Safety Program**

#### **Presenters:**

Angela Powe, B.CJ

Erin Burlison, B.S., CPS

#### **Course Description:**

The CADCA OTC program is a comprehensive initiative aimed at promoting the safe use of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines. It is a free, evidence-based, Common Core-ready educational program designed to educate youth about the dangers of OTC medicine misuse and encourage responsible behavior. The program includes resources for teachers, school nurses, and families, as well as interactive online games, quizzes, videos, and a digital storybook to reinforce OTC medicine safety. It also offers a household guide to OTC medicine safety and at-home activities to help families prioritize responsible medicine use.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- ensure participants understand the dangers of Over-the-Counter medications.
- teach participants how to read and understand an OTC labeling including active ingredients, indications, dosing, and side effects of common OTC products.
- demonstrate the ability to effectively present OTC content to a group using clear, structured teaching methods.

# **TUESDAY AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSION A**

## **1:30 pm to 3:00 pm**

### **TPM9-A: Destination Life Change: Where Evidence-Based and Faith-Based Recovery Intersect**

#### **Presenters:**

Curt Lindsley, BA, FBSS  
Katina Blanchett, CAC  
David Clements, Executive Director  
Jason Johnson, FBSS, CRSS

#### **Course Description:**

The National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR) has established the NARR Standards and the NARR Code of Ethics, two bedrocks for the establishment, recognition and certification of quality recovery residence programs across the United States. These standards are predicated on evidence-based best practices for recovery residence programs that are recognized by the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). In addition, Alabama faith-based recovery residence programs (AARR-certified) have successfully incorporated hallmarks of faith into their programs to provide a foundation for growth and success for residents. This training will share some strategies that these programs are utilizing to help men and women change their lives and find long-term recovery.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- explain what the NARR Standards are.
- explain why adhering to the NARR Code of Ethics is critical for a recovery residence program.
- explain the role recovery residences play in helping individuals with substance use disorder find long-term recovery.
- explain why faith-based programs are an important option for persons seeking long-term recovery.
- explain how faith-based programs can prepare men and women in recovery from substance use disorder for life.

### **TPM10-A: Bruised but not Broken**

#### **Presenter:**

Susan James-Andrews, MS., BS, CHTS

#### **Course Description:**

This session will address the transition and reintegration of justice-involved or justice-impacted youth with substance use disorders as they return to or remain in their communities, with a focus on enhancing service delivery. Emphasis will be placed on skill development for clinicians, peer support specialists/coaches, and individuals with lived experience working with these young people. Key strategies to be discussed include the importance of language, understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), reducing stigma, analysis of case studies, ethical considerations, and an in-depth examination of intergenerational trauma.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- list 3 challenges to youth success from a generational perspective.
- identify social media impact on recovery; good, bad and potential.
- identify 3 strategies to support youth in recovery who may also be justice-involved/impacted in achieving success.
- gain 2 techniques to implement youth storytelling as an engagement tool.

## **TUESDAY AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSION B**

### **3:15 pm to 4:45 pm**

#### **TPM1-B: STD's, TB and Early Intervention Services**

##### **Presenters:**

James Choate, BSN, RN  
Anthony Merriweather, MSPH

##### **Course Description:**

This course will provide information on STI's and TB in Alabama. Information will be shared on the correlation between STI's, TB and substance misuse in addition to risk populations and risk behaviors in Alabama. A discussion will occur on the community field tracking, tracing and treatment. We will share information on how behavioral health providers can integrate different prevention strategies into substance use treatment programs to assist with protecting the health of the public. Information will be shared on public health programs and resources that are available to treat individuals who are identified as high risk for contracting tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infections.

##### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- provide an overview of STD's, high risk behaviors and link to substance use in Alabama.
- explain how PrEP can be used as early intervention strategy to reduce and prevent the spread of HIV transmission.
- provide an overview of Tuberculosis in Alabama and its link to intravenous drug use.
- discuss Early Intervention Services including pre and post test counseling, rapid testing and treatment services.
- list public health initiatives aimed at preventing infectious diseases among individuals who use drugs in AL.

#### **TPM2-B: Ethics Still Exist In Telehealth Counseling**

##### **Presenter:**

Michelle Crumbly, NCC, LPC

##### **Course Description:**

The rapid expansion of telehealth counseling has created new opportunities for accessibility and client care, but important ethical questions are popping up. This course, \*Ethics Still Exist in Telehealth Counseling: Let's Talk, explores how ethical principles remain essential while adapting to and providing virtual counseling. Participants will examine issues of informed consent, confidentiality, technology competence, professional boundaries, and licensure guidelines.

##### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- identify important ethical principals of telehealth.
- examine common ethical challenges when administering telehealth and discuss strategies to promote client safety.
- examine legal and jurisdictional issues that impact telehealth counseling and describe strategies to use.
- engage in case studies to increase knowledge of how ethics play a role in telehealth.

#### **TPM3-B: Powerless to Powerful: Recovery through a Personal Empowerment Lens**

##### **Presenter:**

James Campbell, LPC, LAC, MAC, AADC, EOLD

##### **Course Description:**

Both historically and currently, active addiction is frequently discussed in terms of being "powerless" over substances. As a person engages in an active and vibrant recovery, however, the transition to becoming powerful is seldom spoken of. Additionally, the transition between being disempowered and empowered is also rarely explored. This session will clarify steps in moving away from the powerlessness of active addiction and toward becoming more empowered through the recovery process. Aspects of mindfulness, rational behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, as well as mutual aid models will be integrated in this session to provide participants with working tools to assist individuals in discovering their personal potency.

##### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- identify two challenges to empowerment.
- list three tools of the disempowered.
- articulate the role of personal awareness and the value of being present in recovery.
- differentiate control and influence.
- list two steps toward greater empowerment.

#### **TPM4-B: MHSU Certification Overview - What if Certification and why is it needed**

##### **Presenter:**

Beth Bergeron, LPC

##### **Course Description:**

ADMH MHSU Certification is required for the provision of substance use treatment, mental health treatment and prevention services. This workshop will explore why certification is required, overview of applying to Become a Community Provider and importance of compliance with ADMH Administrative Codes for all certified provides of MHSU treatment services.

##### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- identify the different ADMH MHSU Administrative Codes.
- gain understanding of Becoming a Community Provider.
- understand compliance with Administrative Codes.

## TUESDAY AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSION B

3:15 pm to 4:45 pm

### **TPM5-B: HIPAA & 42CFR: What's the Difference in Healthcare and Behavioral Health**

#### **Presenter:**

Ronda Lacey, JC, CHPC

#### **Course Description:**

This course will provide information on the differences between 42CFR in substance use and mental health treatment settings and HIPAA in health care and medical settings. Information will be provided on common confidentiality and privacy violations and how to avoid ethical conflicts.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- provide a general overview of 42CFR in behavioral health (mental health and substance use).
- provide a general overview of HIPAA in health care.
- explain the differences between HIPAA and 42CFR.
- discuss common privacy and confidentiality violations and how to avoid them when working in behavioral health settings.

### **TPM6-B: Humans and Horses- What The Research Tells Us About The Healing Power of Horses for Veterans, Military and First Responders**

#### **Presenters:**

Kathleen Saucier, MS, NCC, LPC, LMHC

David Flounders

Gilbert Brian Eddy

#### **Course Description:**

This course will provide an overview of the recent research conducted through the Department of Veterans Affairs Adaptive Sports Grant's equine-assisted programs designed to improve the quality of life and well-being of veterans with challenges such as post-traumatic stress (PTSD), traumatic brain injuries (TBI), major depressive disorder, anxiety disorders, and moral injury. Participants will be provided with the 2024 VA Adaptive Sports Grant Report, resources to support the utilization of equine assisted activities in the community, information to support grant funding proposals and conversations about how to move forward with an equine program in your local community. You will also have the opportunity to learn from leaders of the Alabama H.O.R.S.E. Alliance (Heroes Organization for Resilience, Service & Empowerment) a statewide coalition uniting Alabama barns, farms, and ranches to support military members, veterans, first responders, and their families through equine-based programs.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- understand and explain the up to date research related to equine assisted programs and the benefits for Military/Veterans.
- identify key organizations/individuals within their community to implement a equine-assisted program.
- apply the research to program implementation in their community, and grant funding proposals.
- evaluate the outcomes of a new or existing equine-assisted program.
- create a campaign to promote the benefits of equine-assisted programs at their site.

### **TPM7-B: Interactive Prevention that Works!**

#### **Presenters:**

Nicole Shine, MS, CPM, ICPS

Corlina Koranda, MA, CPS

#### **Course Description:**

This session will highlight evidence-informed, interactive strategies that engage individuals across the lifespan. Beginning with elementary-level approaches that build a foundation for prevention, participants will then explore innovative activities that spark dialogue and critical thinking among youth. The presentation will also demonstrate advanced methods to effectively involve families and college students in culturally responsive ways.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- identify age-appropriate prevention facilitation strategies that engage youth, families, and young adults.
- apply interactive activities in diverse community and educational settings.
- interpret local prevention data, juvenile arrest trends, and easy access to drugs and drug paraphernalia on online platforms.

### **TPM8-B: Building Resilience through Adversities**

#### **Presenter:**

Zina Cartwell, CPM, ICPS

#### **Course Description:**

The Strategic Prevention Framework set the foundation for a community to be able to come together to build protective factors to counteract risk factors that students and clients are facing. In this session, participants will learn how to use prevention strategies to build protective factors (resilience) to counteract risk factors (adversities) through an interactive and energetic approach. Participants will learn how to cope with their adversities to become resilient in their profession. Lastly, participants will leave refreshed and knowledgeable with the tools to make a difference in their communities.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- incorporate the Strategic Prevention Framework for program planning.
- learn strategies on building resilience.
- learn how use protective factors to counteract risk factors.
- build personal strategies on reflection and empowerment.

## **TUESDAY AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSION B**

**3:15 pm to 4:45 pm**

### **TPM9-B: What Evidence-based Faith-based Recovery Services Look Like**

**Presenter:**

Judd Drake, MiMPs, CRSS, COO

**Course Description:**

This session will explore how faith-based recovery services are evidence-based, drawing from established research and national models. Participants will learn how Christian recovery programs integrate proven approaches, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, the Community Reinforcement Approach, and Therapeutic Communities, with spiritual disciplines like discipleship, prayer, and community accountability. The presentation will highlight SAMHSA's recognition of faith-based recovery, show how ACRM's certification standards align with best practices, and demonstrate that faith-centered programs not only nurture spiritual growth but also produce measurable outcomes: reduced relapse, stronger family support, and long-term life transformation.

**Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- define the concept of evidence-based practices (EBPs) and explain how they are applied within faith-based recovery programs.
- identify the core components of major evidence-based models (e.g., Matrix Model, Community Reinforcement Approach, Therapeutic Communities, Recovery-Oriented System of Care) and recognize their overlap with faith-based practices.
- explain how SAMHSA acknowledges and supports faith-based recovery services as part of a Recovery-Oriented System of Care.
- demonstrate an understanding of how spiritual disciplines (prayer, discipleship, worship, accountability) can enhance clinical EBPs to support holistic recovery.
- evaluate the outcomes and research evidence showing the effectiveness of faith-based recovery services (e.g., relapse reduction, mental health improvements, increased community support).

### **TPM10-B: No Key is Needed to Set us Truly Free**

**Presenter:**

David Bartley, Professional Speaker

**Course Description:**

Freedom is often presented as something locked behind the right diagnosis, treatment, credential, or life change-as if once we find the correct "key," we'll finally be free. But what if no key is needed at all? This breakout session explores freedom as an internal and relational experience rather than an external achievement. Drawing from lived experience, mental wellness research, and asset-based approaches to human connection, participants are invited to reconsider how beliefs, language, and systems can unintentionally create internal prisons-even when they aim to help. Rather than asking "What's broken?" this session asks, "What's already here-and how do we strengthen it?" Participants will examine how recognition, understanding, and expression can restore agency, dignity, and hope without denying pain or struggle. This is not about bypassing hardship or offering easy answers. It is about reclaiming choice, connection, and meaning-and discovering that the door to freedom may never have been locked at all.

**Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- reframe freedom from an external outcome (fixing, curing, unlocking) to an internal, relational experience grounded in agency and connection.
- identify common internal "locks"-beliefs, labels, and language-that unintentionally limit hope, dignity, and flourishing.
- apply asset-based strategies that strengthen recognition, understanding, and expression to foster sustained well-being in personal and professional settings.

# WEDNESDAY MORNING WORKSHOPS

9:30 am to 12:30 pm

## **WPL: The 'Primary Purpose' Behind Success**

### **Presenters:**

Joshua Nirella, BSW, MSOL

### **Course Description:**

Have you ever been asked, "What is your purpose?"-and found yourself searching for the "right" answer? Purpose is one of life's most powerful motivators, yet its impact depends on our ability to clearly identify it and remain connected to it. Before purpose can be implemented, it must first be understood. Today's plenary session focuses on the singular theme of Purpose and explores how identifying one's primary purpose can strengthen purpose-driven prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts. Participants will gain insight into how purpose can lead to more meaningful outcomes for providers, clients, and communities. Attendees can expect an engaging and practical session that offers realistic strategies for integrating these concepts into both personal lives and professional practice.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- define and articulate the concept of "primary purpose" and explain its role in motivating effective prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts.
- examine how a clearly identified purpose influences outcomes for providers, clients, and communities within behavioral health and recovery-oriented systems.
- apply practical strategies for integrating purpose-driven approaches into personal reflection and professional practice to enhance engagement and long-term impact.

## **WAM1: Breaking the Silence: The Overlap Between Suicide and Opioids - Exploring Connections, Risks, and Community Solutions**

### **Presenters:**

Maegan Huffman, MPH

Kendrikka Suddith

### **Course Description:**

This interactive workshop addresses the complex relationship between suicide and opioid misuse-two leading public health crises with significant overlap. Participants will examine shared risk and protective factors, explore real-world scenarios, and identify warning signs that may indicate suicide risk or opioid misuse. Through guided discussions, case studies, and interactive polling, attendees will gain practical skills to respond effectively, promote prevention, and foster resilience. The session emphasizes integrated approaches, cross-sector collaboration, and the importance of breaking stigma to build healthier, more connected communities. By the end of the workshop, participants will be equipped with evidence-based strategies, resources such as the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and naloxone access, and a renewed commitment to hope, healing, and recovery.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- describe the overlap between suicide and opioid misuse, including shared risk and protective factors.
- identify warning signs and intervention strategies relevant to both crises.
- apply evidence-based prevention approaches that integrate suicide prevention and substance misuse response.
- engage in community-based solutions that promote connection, recovery, and resilience.
- share key resources (988 Lifeline, SAMHSA Helpline, naloxone access) with those in need.

## **WAM2: HIV/STIs: an Overview for the Substance Use/Mental Health Professional**

### **Presenter:**

Richard "Rick" Meriwether, B.S.

### **Course Description:**

This course will provide an overview of current developments in Sexually Transmitted Infection(s) (STIs)/HIV diagnosis & management to the lay person/professional especially those involved in the counseling & education of individuals living w/a dual diagnosis, i.e. alcohol/drug addiction AND a STI, including HIV and/or HBV/HCV.

Attendees will receive instruction on the nine most common STIs diagnosed in Alabama. Also, key Alabama laws regarding STIs/HIV will be discussed.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- define/identify the following terms: abstinence, safer sex, risk reduction, infection control, HIV, AIDS, STI/STD, PEP, PrEP.
- conduct a brief, accurate and sensitive assessment of an individual's sexual risk-taking behavior.
- discuss the epidemiology, clinical manifestations, diagnosis and treatment for following STIs: HIV, gonorrhea, Chlamydia, syphilis, herpes, bacterial vaginosis, venereal warts, viral hepatitis and pubic lice; and
- review risk reduction/behavior change theories and models as they relate to STI/HIV infection.

## **WAM3: Models of Clinical Supervision - What works for you and your supervisee(s)?**

### **Presenter:**

Beth Bergeron, LPC

### **Course Description:**

Clinical supervision is guided by different theoretical models that shape how clinical supervisors supervise, train, evaluate, and support counselors. We will explore current models of clinical supervision. Participants will be able to identify which model(s) work best for them and their supervisees.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- gain understanding of different models of clinical supervision - Developmental Models.
- gain understanding of different models of clinical supervision - Bernard's Discrimination Model.
- gain understanding of different models of clinical supervision - Psychotherapy based models.
- gain understanding of different models of clinical supervision - System Approach/Integrated .
- identify the supervision style self-assessment to identify which model you lean toward.

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## **WAM4: Trauma-Informed Care: Advancing Alabama's Substance Use Recovery**

### **Presenters:**

Bertrina West, PhD, LPC  
Constance Fields, LPC

### **Course Description:**

This presentation explores the critical intersection of mental health trauma and substance use disorders within Alabama's unique landscape. Drawing from current data showing Alabama's highest opioid prescription rates nationally (74.5 per 100 persons) and recent 18.24% decline in overdose deaths, we'll examine how trauma-informed approaches can accelerate recovery outcomes. Dr. Olivia West, a licensed professional counselor with expertise in international psychology and trauma recovery, will present evidence-based strategies for integrating culturally competent trauma care into substance use treatment. Attendees will learn practical implementation methods for addressing co-occurring disorders, with special focus on Alabama's diverse populations and the 50% co-occurrence rate between mental illness and substance use disorders.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- analyze the Connection Between Trauma and Substance Use in Alabama's Context.
- identify specific trauma patterns contributing to Alabama's substance use crisis, including the state's position as having the highest opioid prescription rate nationally.
- understand how Alabama's 18.24% reduction in overdose deaths (July 2023-2024) creates opportunities for trauma-informed intervention strategies.

## **WAM5: How the Brain Heals in Recovery: The Neuroscience of the Twelve Steps and Recovery**

### **Presenter:**

Merrill Norton, Pharm.D.,D.Ph.,CMAC,CCS

### **Course Description:**

This presentation will explore the impact that the neurobiological basis of the 12 steps can have on Reward Deficiency Syndrome (RDS) despite addiction risk gene polymorphisms. This exploration has already been accomplished in part by Dr. Ken Blum. The purpose of this research outlines the neurobiological and genetic links, especially as they relate to the role of epigenetic changes that are possible in individuals who regularly attend mutual help meetings. It begs the question as to whether "12 steps programs and fellowship" does induce neuroplasticity and continued dopamine D2 receptor proliferation that leads to recovery one day at a time.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- gain an understanding into the neurobiological brain's response to attending 12 step meetings.
- learn about the improvement of the brain's memory and pleasure systems of 12 step attendees.
- explore the evidence that through the 12-step program and fellowship cross-talk between the Pre-Frontal Cortex-Cingulate (site of decision-making) and the Nucleus Accumbens (NAc) [site of craving behavior] is developed.

## **WAM6: The Medical Management of Alcohol and Drug Withdrawal**

### **Presenter:**

James Harrow, MD, PhD, DABAM, FASAM

### **Course Description:**

Patients with alcohol and substance withdrawal usually present at hospital emergency departments, primary care settings or facilities with the expertise in treating addiction. The initial assessment is done to determine if the patient is undergoing withdrawal from alcohol, sedatives, opioids or other substances. For example an estimated 2 - 7 % of patients with heavy alcohol use admitted to the hospital will develop moderate to severe alcohol withdrawal. Individuals who have been prescribed long term sedative hypnotics will develop sedative withdrawal syndrome if the medication is abruptly discontinued and the risk of grand mal seizures. Patients who have been exposed to opioids for substantial periods of time will experience acute opioid withdrawal signs and symptoms that are not life threatening however can contribute to substantial morbidity.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- identify acute drug and alcohol intoxication.
- identify signs and symptoms of alcohol, sedative and opioid withdrawal.
- determine the level of treatment, outpatient or inpatient.
- identify Pharmacologic therapies for medical withdrawal management.
- understand the disposition of patients post treatment.

## **WEDNESDAY MORNING WORKSHOPS**

### **9:30 am to 12:30 pm**

#### **WAM7: Repairing the Mission Within: Relationship Health, Shame Resilience, and Community to support recovery.**

##### **Presenter:**

Garret Biss, MRED, CAPP, CPRC

##### **Course Description:**

When service ends, many veterans lose their foundation for human connection: unit cohesion, shared mission, clear roles and value. This session equips clinicians and peer supports to help clients rebuild relationship health as a protective factor for recovery and reintegration. The presentation traces a practical path from the inside out: restoring self-respect and authenticity; releasing shame and unresolved guilt; letting go of resentments; and reestablishing safe, workable boundaries. We'll then extend outward to repair high-value ties, curate positive influences, and reconnect with community through prosocial roles that reinforce identity and belonging. Designed for clinical and peer settings, including justice-involved populations, the session offers concise, repeatable exercises and planning templates you can use immediately to reduce isolation, improve engagement, and strengthen the support systems that sustain recovery.

##### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- differentiate shame from guilt and identify two impacts each has on recovery and relationship functioning for veterans.
- implement a brief, stepwise process to reduce self-blame and rebuild accountability in a case examples, including appropriate options for repair.
- facilitate a guided resentment-release exercise and formulate one small, controllable action to improve a targeted relationship.
- conduct a relationship-mapping activity to assess key influences and design a boundary/support plan that adds, limits, or strengthens at least one connection.
- develop a short community-reintegration plan that includes one act of service, one empathy-building practice, and one supportive connection to increase belonging and sustain recovery.

#### **WAM8: Calm In the Storm-How to Manage Stress in a Busy Environment**

##### **Presenter:**

Patrick Tidwell, PhD, LMFT

##### **Course Description:**

This course will teach you how to take better care of yourself so you can be there for those you serve and still have energy for your loved ones at home. Oftentimes, many human service professionals put it all in at work and have little left for home. This course is designed to help you have calm in a busy day so that at the end, you can still show up for your loved ones.

##### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- recall strategies and plans that have not worked to reduce stress. Use of "the Miracle Question."
- implement a daily strategy for dealing with stress (note not weekly).
- investigate and discover means of being calm to reduce stress.
- evaluate and discuss how to apply these strategies in your office to create positive habits.
- assimilate new information & how to use it daily.

#### **WAM9: Integrating Mental Health Promotion into Substance Use Prevention**

##### **Presenter:**

Jordon Hillhouse, CPS

##### **Course Description:**

Mental health and substance use are deeply interconnected. Promoting positive mental health is a powerful strategy for preventing substance misuse and supporting long-term recovery. This class explores comprehensive approaches to mental health promotion within prevention settings, emphasizing resilience-building, early intervention, and community engagement. Participants will learn evidence-based strategies to integrate mental health promotion into their existing prevention programs, collaborate effectively across systems, and reduce stigma around mental health challenges. Through interactive activities and case studies, attendees will gain practical tools to foster mental wellness in diverse populations, including youth, families, and underserved communities.

##### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- explain the relationship between mental health promotion and substance use prevention.
- identify key components of effective mental health promotion strategies.
- apply tools and frameworks for integrating mental wellness activities into prevention programming.
- develop community partnerships that support holistic approaches to behavioral health.
- design an action plan to promote mental health and reduce stigma within their organization or community.

## WEDNESDAY MORNING WORKSHOPS

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### **WAM10: How Can I Help You?**

#### **Presenter:**

Jennifer Nelson, LICSW-S

#### **Course Description:**

How do we help those with needs that are not as motivated or ready to align with us as helpers? How do we operate in our respective capacities, which are often delegated by codes of ethics, agency guidelines, client needs/expectations, and influences of our own perspectives of outcome/success? This workshop aims to aid helping professionals with strengthening self-awareness skills, increasing appreciation for professional self-care, assessing comprehension of client populations' needs and barriers, and identifying methods to honor client autonomy and strengthen partnership with clients.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- gain/strengthen self-awareness skills related to their respective roles within the helping profession.
- identify and engage in processing common and/or unique barriers to aiding clients/recipients/consumers/patients.
- gain/increase comprehension of automatic thinking distortions and the influence of personal motivations and convictions when working with clients/recipients/consumers/patients that desire autonomy that may be conflictual to positive outcomes.
- gain/strengthen knowledge/understanding of pathways to remain in compliance with professional ethics.
- engage in processing of comprehension of professional code of ethics and identify barriers/challenges within application.

# THURSDAY MORNING WORKSHOPS

9:30 am to 12:30 pm

## **THPL: The Message in the Music**

### **Presenter:**

Marc Fomby, CPS

### **Course Description:**

When we have the resources to enable the next generation no matter what barriers they may face, the duty lies with each of us. African proverb quotes, "It takes a village to raise a child," this is not just a saying but a duty. The responsibility of providing innovative resources to our youth is vital to their communities, family, and peers. Adolescence is a critical period for mental health and substance use challenges. With increasing rates of anxiety, depression, and substance abuse among youth, due to bullying, social media, traumatic events, adverse childhood experiences, gender identity, innovative approaches to prevention, intervention, and treatment are essential. This proposal outlines strategies to support the next generation through comprehensive behavioral health initiatives aimed at adolescents.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- increase knowledge about mental health and substance use through targeted educational programs in schools and communities.
- implement screening and early intervention programs to identify at-risk youth and provide timely support.
- develop accessible and youth-friendly treatment options that cater to the diverse needs of adolescents.
- foster partnerships with families, schools, and community organizations to create a supportive network for adolescents.
- utilize digital platforms for outreach, education, and telehealth services to reach a wider audience and reduce barriers to access.

## **THAM1: Supporting the Next Generation of Behavioral Health for Adolescents**

### **Presenters:**

Contenna Moore, Master of Psychology

Angela McElrath, LMSW

### **Course Description:**

When we have the resources to enable the next generation no matter what barriers they may face, the duty lies with each of us. African proverb quotes, "It takes a village to raise a child," this is not just a saying but a duty. The responsibility of providing innovative resources to our youth is vital to their communities, family, and peers. Adolescence is a critical period for mental health and substance use challenges. With increasing rates of anxiety, depression, and substance abuse among youth, due to bullying, social media, traumatic events, adverse childhood experiences, gender identity, innovative approaches to prevention, intervention, and treatment are essential. This proposal outlines strategies to support the next generation through comprehensive behavioral health initiatives aimed at adolescents.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- increase knowledge about mental health and substance use through targeted educational programs in schools and communities.
- implement screening and early intervention programs to identify at-risk youth and provide timely support.
- develop accessible and youth-friendly treatment options that cater to the diverse needs of adolescents.
- foster partnerships with families, schools, and community organizations to create a supportive network for adolescents.
- utilize digital platforms for outreach, education, and telehealth services to reach a wider audience and reduce barriers to access.

## **THAM2: Youth in Crisis**

### **Presenters:**

Anthony Reynolds, LPC, CAC

Paula Steele, LICSW-S

Edgar Finn, MD

### **Course Description:**

Each year, there are thousands of preventable tragedies that may be addressed with proper access to care and mental health resources. Many adults and possibly more youth are currently in crisis and are greatly impacted by stressors. Adolescent stressors refer to the various challenges and pressures that teenagers experience as they navigate the complex developmental stage between childhood and adulthood. These stressors can be psychological, emotional, social, and environmental, and they often vary in intensity and impact depending on individual circumstances. Key adolescent stressors include Academic Pressure, Peer Relationships, Family Dynamics, Identity and Self-Image, Romantic Relationships, Future Uncertainty, Socioeconomic Factors, Media and Technology, Health and Physical Changes. These stressors, while common, vary greatly between individuals. Some adolescents may be more resilient to stress, while others may struggle significantly, requiring coping mechanisms or external support from mental health professionals, family, and peers. The Alabama Crisis System of Care was developed to reduce the number of emergency room admissions and jail bookings due to behavioral health crisis. The Alabama Crisis System of Care currently has one Crisis Center dedicated to treating pediatric patients who are in crisis. These crisis services provide an ease of access to care and decrease the rate of expensive referrals while providing a regional approach to crisis services. This training will provide an in-depth look of the Alabama Crisis System of Care, access to care, and best practices utilized within each crisis center. Participant will gain an understanding of each of the six (6) Adult Crisis Centers, referral, assessment, and admission process for a Crisis Center with an in-depth look at youth in crisis. The course will review in detail current Crisis Center's treatment, case management, and referral processes.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- provide a general overview of stressors that result in mental health crisis for youth in Alabama.
- identify the different support systems that contribute to youth resilience during times of crisis.
- explain the Alabama Crisis Systems of Care for adults and adolescents and how to access crisis services
- discuss the best practices that are used in each crisis center from the initial referral to assessment, to triage, to temporary treatment, case management, and referral to more intensive mental health treatment services
- have a better understanding of youth in crisis and how to intervene, treat, and refer.

# THURSDAY MORNING WORKSHOPS

9:30 am to 12:30 pm

## **THAM3: From Trauma to Triumph: Dissolving Trauma Blocker Preventing Growth**

### **Presenters:**

Bertrina West, PhD, LPC  
Constance Fields, LPC

### **Course Description:**

Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) represents the positive psychological transformations that arise after facing traumatic experiences. Unlike resilience, PTG is a transformative journey, leading to enhanced personal strength, improved relationships, and a deeper appreciation for life. It reveals how adversity can be a catalyst for significant personal growth, offering new perspectives and a renewed sense of purpose. From Trauma to Triumph focuses on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), examining their impact on daily life and outlining steps to address trauma, ultimately fostering PTG.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- define trauma as it pertains to complex trauma and adverse childhood experiences.
- describe three Trauma-Focused interventions that can help reduce trauma symptoms resulting in PTG.
- recognize trauma blockages in their own lives preventing PTG.

## **THAM4: Telehealth, Virtual Supervision and other Technology Issues - The Counseling Profession and the ever-changing landscape**

### **Presenter:**

Beth Bergeron, LPC

### **Course Description:**

With the growing changes in the world of technology, the importance of good solid Clinical Supervision is vital. How can we clinical supervisors provide the guidance needed to assist our supervisees in this ever-changing landscape of technology and ensure ethical parameters are followed? During this course, we will explore the telehealth, virtual supervision and technology issues.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- gain understanding of changing landscape brought on by technology.
- explore ethical parameters.
- identify areas of technology that clinical supervisors need to be aware of and discuss with counselors.
- identify if your agency has social media/technology policies and procedures.

## **THAM5: From Military to Calling: Helping Veterans Rebuild Meaning and Purpose in Recovery**

### **Presenter:**

Garret Biss, MRED, CAPP, CPRC

### **Course Description:**

When service ends, many veterans lose the "why" that once organized life: mission, tribe, and identity. This session equips clinicians and peer supports to rebuild Meaning as the stabilizing base for recovery and reintegration. We map a clear arc across past, present, and future to show how adversity can be reframed into direction and strength. Participants will learn practical ways to help clients: draw lessons and strengths from what they've endured, increase their capacity to endure current hardships, and harness a compelling future to guide choices and build resilience. The audience will leave with concise worksheets and brief, repeatable exercises to implement immediately-tools that transform struggle into service, enhance engagement, and reduce relapse risk for military-connected clients.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- explain at least two ways in which disrupted meaning/identity after service increases vulnerability to SUD and hopelessness.
- describe the role of purpose and identify two PTG mechanisms that support sustained recovery and resilience.
- apply narrative reframing and meaning-making tools (e.g., redemptive narrative, heroic story, mapping adversity to purpose) in case examples
- guide clients through two practical exercises to reconnect with values, roles, and a renewed mission in civilian life.
- develop a 30-day joy and purpose activation plan for a hypothetical veteran that integrates responsibility, accountability, and engagement.

## **THAM6: It's Giving Complicated: Holistic Considerations for Adolescent Substance Use**

### **Presenter:**

Paige Parish, Ed.D., LCSW

### **Course Description:**

It's Giving Complicated: Holistic Considerations for Adolescent Substance Use equips all helpers with the tools to peel back the many layers of adolescent substance use. This training explores the intersection of child development, trauma, patient satisfaction, family dynamics, and community systems in shaping youth experiences across substance use prevention, intervention and recovery. Through practical strategies and real-world case work, participants will leave more confident in treating the whole teen from prevention through maintenance.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- analyze the developmental, psychological, and environmental factors that influence adolescent substance use, including trauma history, family dynamics, and social context.
- interact with and identify ways multi-layered prevention, treatment, and recovery frameworks can be integrated across care.
- describe the impact of patient satisfaction program compliance, and implement strategies to ensure youth feel heard, respected, and motivated to engage.

# THURSDAY MORNING WORKSHOPS

9:30 am to 12:30 pm

## **THAM7: Ethical Dilemmas in Today's Treatment Settings**

### **Presenter:**

Lisa Akine, APC, MS, CADC II, NCC

### **Course Description:**

In the rapidly changing landscape of therapy and counseling, professionals are increasingly confronted with complex ethical dilemmas within treatment settings. The evolution of therapeutic practices, emerging technologies, and diverse client populations has heightened the need for practitioners to navigate challenging situations with integrity and sound judgment. This presentation explores the multifaceted ethical issues therapists face today, offering practical strategies and frameworks for ethical decision-making in contemporary practice.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- recognize and articulate ethical dilemmas commonly faced in today's treatment environments.
- apply ethical codes and guidelines to challenging scenarios.
- utilize structured decision-making models to resolve ethical issues.
- reflect on personal values and biases that may impact ethical choices.
- access resources and seek consultation when confronted with difficult ethical decisions.

## **THAM8: Adolescent Psychopharmacology 2026**

### **Presenter:**

Merrill Norton, Pharm.D.,D.Ph.,CMAC,CCS

### **Course Description:**

This presentation is for professionals who work with adolescents and young adults challenged with a substance use disorder/mental disorders. The workshop will teach the body of knowledge from recent research relevant to the neurobiology of substance use disorders/mental disorders and a review of the latest neurotransmitter and neurohormonal research on the impact of psychoactive chemicals on the brain. The workshop will bring to the participants the latest adolescent pharmaceutical applications to the diagnostics of the DSM 5. Many younger patients take medications to function at their highest level of success, but psychotropics do present adverse drug effects and monitoring is required. An overview of counselor monitoring for medication efficacy will be discussed.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- recognize the latest neurotransmitter research of substance use disorders and mental disorders in adolescents and young adults.
- explain the neurochemical basis of the reward and anti-reward brain systems and their effects on the stress mechanisms of the brain.
- describe the neurobiological basis of substance use disorders in the adolescent and young adult brain.
- discuss and identify classes of drugs used to treat the spectrum of mental disorders.
- outline the neurobiology of anxiety, depression, personality disorders and psychotic disorders.

## **THAM9: Games Children Play**

### **Presenter:**

Marc Fomby, CPS

### **Course Description:**

There are numerous factors in today's society that impact a young person's life. As role models and decision-makers in the lives of youth adults are responsible for teaching youth proper coping skills. Youth look at events and occurrences in their lives different than adults and, therefore, respond accordingly.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- identify circumstances/situations that are commonly dealt with by youth.
- identify situations that possibly result in false report of suicide.
- identify unusual coping mechanisms.
- identify risk and protective factors relative to suicide awareness.
- identify own roles and responsibilities.

## **THAM10: Resilient Helpers: Using Emotional Intelligence to Prevent Burnout**

### **Presenter:**

Savannah Kiesel, MA, LPC, NCC

### **Course Description:**

Helping professionals often prioritize the needs of their clients, placing their own wellness at risk. Without intentional self-care, the demands of the helping field, especially working with trauma which is all too common in substance use, can lead to burnout and compassion fatigue. This presentation explores how Emotional Intelligence (EI) can be used as a protective factor for wellness. By cultivating self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and healthy relationship management, we can strengthen the ability to cope with stress, remain present with clients navigating trauma, and sustain balance in our own lives. Participants will learn practical strategies to recognize early signs of burnout, integrate Emotional Intelligence skills into self-care practices, and apply them within trauma-informed contexts. Emphasis will be placed on reframing self-care not as optional, but as a professional responsibility that enhances well-being and client outcomes. Through discussion, reflection, and interactive exercises, this session provides research-informed, actionable tools to embed Emotional Intelligence into daily routines - empowering helping professionals to thrive while supporting those they serve.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- explain the connection between Emotional Intelligence and professional wellness, particularly as it relates to reducing burnout and compassion fatigue.
- recognize how repeated exposure to client trauma can impact counselor well-being and identify early warning signs of stress and fatigue.
- apply Emotional Intelligence skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy, to enhance coping strategies and trauma-informed self-care.
- develop a personalized wellness plan that integrates EI practices into daily professional and personal routines.
- engage in interactive exercises that strengthen resilience and provide tools for sustaining long-term counselor wellness.

## THURSDAY AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSION C

1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

### THPM1-C: Tobacco Use and Vaping Prevention in Adolescents and Transition Aged Youth

#### **Presenters:**

Kayla Stephens, BS,MS  
Antone Robinson, Jr., B.S.

#### **Course Description:**

This session provides an in-depth look at the growing challenges of tobacco use and vaping among adolescents and young adults, particularly those navigating the transition into college and early adulthood. Participants will examine national and state-level trends in tobacco and vaping use, including disparities affecting youth populations. The session will highlight innovative prevention approaches in Alabama, such as youth-focused initiatives and policy strategies, and introduce the HBCU RISE Project as a model for prevention and mental health promotion in college settings. Through interactive discussion, participants will also explore how behavioral health providers, educators, and community leaders can integrate prevention programming into their services to better support young people.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- provide an overview of tobacco use and vaping trends in adolescents and young adult college students.
- provide an overview of Youth Tobacco Prevention Initiatives in Alabama.
- provide an overview of the HBCU Rise Initiative for young adult college students.
- explore how youth service providers can support and integrate prevention initiatives into agency programs and services.

### THPM2-C: A Job Corps Perspective on Substance Use Prevention

#### **Presenter:**

Jerry Morris, M.Ed.

#### **Course Description:**

This course will provide an overview of how the Montgomery Job Corp Program addresses substance use prevention through life skills development and career training for young adults between the ages of 16-24. Information will be shared on how the TEAP program integrates drug use prevention services with students in a supportive residential environment to give students a second chance to succeed in life while developing skills to establish a career.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- explain how Job Corps Programs and initiatives are aimed at supporting transition age youth between the ages of 16-24.
- discuss how Job Corps integrates substance use prevention and supportive services to students who are identified to have substance use and mental health issues.
- provide a general overview of the mission of Job Corps from a national and state perspective.
- list and explore opportunities for behavioral health providers to collaborate with Job Corps Programs to prevent further substance use progression with transition age youth.

### THPM3-C: A Systems Perspective on Adolescents in Substance Use Treatment

#### **Presenter:**

Nakia Jones, M.S., AMFT

#### **Course Description:**

Our youth today are facing a multitude of challenges individually and collectively impacting how they are capable of addressing their needs. Adolescent youth who struggle with substance use disorder can be challenged with learning how to navigate their personal issues while experiencing various developmental changes. In 2023, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration reported that 96.6% of adolescents aged 12-17 years old who were diagnosed with a substance use disorder did not receive treatment or think they should get it. Alarming, this static alone can provide us with a lens on how our youth may be facing unprecedented issues with a view of limited resources provided in their families and community. In this session, we will explore emerging cultural challenges and identity development to aid professionals in developing more refined, transformative practices who serve adolescent youth in substance use treatment. Professionals will be provided with the opportunity to explore and learn how adolescent development can be interred by SUD with highlighted emphasis on the impacts from their socioeconomic status, race, gender, etc. A systemic lens will be implemented throughout to provide professionals with an enhanced understanding of how to meet youth needs regarding how to appropriately incorporate parent and family involvement to aid in empowering our youth of today experiencing SUD.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- learn about family and parent/guardian involvement when working with adolescent youth in substance use treatment.
- learn about the comorbidity of mental health diagnoses and substance use disorders when working with adolescent youth in substance use treatment.
- learn about the effects of substance use disorders on adolescent development considering neurological and social patterns when providing treatment.
- learn how substance use disorders impact adolescent development of their identity within a cultural framework when providing treatment.

## THURSDAY AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSION C

### 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

#### **THPM4-C: Scrolling & Substances: The Hidden Influence of Media on Youth Choices**

##### **Presenter:**

Jerria Martin, CADCA/ORN

##### **Course Description:**

In today's digital age, media and social media play a significant role in shaping youth perceptions, behaviors, and choices-including their attitudes toward substance use. This interactive 90-minute training will explore how mainstream media, influencers, and viral trends impact youth decisions regarding drugs and alcohol. Participants will gain insights into the tactics used in media messaging, learn strategies to counteract harmful influences, and discover effective ways to engage youth in critical thinking about substance use.

##### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- analyze how movies, music, social media, and advertising shape youth attitudes and behaviors related to substance use.
- identify current online trends, challenges, and influencer-driven content that promote or normalize substance use.
- explore interactive activities and discussion techniques to engage youth in conversations about media influence and substance use prevention.
- discover ways to promote healthy online habits and support substance-free lifestyles through social media.

#### **THPM5-C: Protecting Our Youth: DHR Mandatory Reporting Procedures**

##### **Presenter:**

Ginger Roberts, LMSW

##### **Course Description:**

This course will provide an overview of mandatory reporting procedures for children and adolescents according to Alabama law. Information will be shared on who is considered to be mandatory reporters, what happens during the investigative processes and ethical considerations for protecting the child or adolescent. This presentation will equip educators, behavioral health providers and community service providers with understanding their responsibilities for protecting the welfare and safety of children and adolescents throughout the state.

##### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- provide an overview of mandatory reporting laws in Alabama for children and adults and who is considered to be a mandatory reporter.
- identify the role of behavioral health providers as mandatory reporters of child and adult incidents.
- explain the internal process for investigating abuse and neglect reports throughout the State.
- discuss the legal and ethical boundaries of client confidentiality and privacy issues that accompany the DHR investigative, post reporting process and communication limits after a report has been filed.

#### **THPM6-C: Engaging First Responders in Mental Health First Aid Training to Enhance Prevention Efforts**

##### **Presenter:**

Jessica Hoggle, DSW, LICSW

##### **Course Description:**

As our current culture and landscape become more polarized between First Responders, Mental Health and Substance Use Professionals, and the public, strategies are needed to dismantle barriers and strengthen these relationships. Law Enforcement and other First Responders are often the first contact for individuals struggling with a mental health or substance use issue. They are also consistently faced with critical incidents and vicarious trauma, resulting in much higher rates of PTSD and suicide than civilians. This presentation aims to inform participants on strategies and trainings to build professional relationships between Substance Use or Mental Health Professionals and First Responders, including Law Enforcement, Fire, and EMS Personnel. An overview of trainings will be discussed centered on enhancing mental health and substance use awareness with First Responders, including Mental Health First Aid, as well as the ways that these trainings are currently being implemented throughout the state of Alabama. Considerations for First Responder culture and language will be discussed, as well as the impacts that trainings are having on improving positive encounters between First Responders and the public.

##### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- recognize the impact of First Responder encounters on those with mental health and substance use issues, as well as the effects on First Responders themselves.
- describe an overview of mental health related trainings for First Responders, as well as efforts to expand trainings.
- utilize key strategies for forming, strengthening, and maintaining relationships with First Responder departments and personnel.

# THURSDAY AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSION C

1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

## **THPM7-C: The Weight of Caring: Staying Balanced in Trauma Work**

### **Presenter:**

Jeanna Reed, MA, LPC

### **Course Description:**

Clinicians often carry the weight of clients' stories and experiences. Over time, this exposure can contribute to vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout which impact not only personal wellness but also professional effectiveness. This presentation offers practical strategies to stay balanced, set healthy boundaries, and sustain resiliency while doing trauma-informed work. Drawing on evidence-based practices and real-world application, this interactive session will address common challenges faced by those working in high-stress addiction treatment and recovery as well as general mental health settings. It is the goal of this presentation for clinicians to leave with tools to support both professional and personal efficacy.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- define vicarious trauma, secondary traumatic stress, and compassion fatigue within addiction and behavioral health work.
- identify early signs of imbalance and risk factors for burnout in trauma-exposed professionals.
- apply practical strategies for maintaining resiliency, balance, and wellness while working with trauma-impacted clients.

## **THPM8-C: Maternal Mental Health Matters: Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Mothers Impacted by Substance Use**

### **Presenter:**

L.B. Brown, LICSW, CFSW, PMH-C

### **Course Description:**

Pregnant and parenting mothers who are impacted by substance use often experience overlapping challenges related to mental health, stress, identity shifts, and access to supportive care. This 90-minute session offers a maternal mental health-informed perspective on how professionals can better support mothers within prevention, treatment, and recovery settings through turning focus towards understanding the emotional, relational, and systemic factors that shape maternal well-being. Participants will explore how stigma, fear, and lack of maternal-specific supports can affect engagement and outcomes, and how small, intentional shifts in practice can create more supportive and responsive environments for mothers and families.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- recognize common maternal mental health stressors that may impact pregnant and parenting mothers who are affected by substance use.
- describe how stigma, fear, and system involvement can influence a mother's willingness to seek or remain engaged in services.
- identify maternal mental health-informed principles that can be integrated into substance use prevention, treatment, or recovery settings.
- explore simple, relationship-centered strategies that support trust, safety, and engagement with mothers and families.
- reflect on their own professional role and opportunities to create more supportive, mother-affirming spaces within their setting.

## **THPM9-C: Building Self Awareness and Positive Relationships with Reflective Supervision/Consultation**

### **Presenter:**

Tyesha Durr, LPC

### **Course Description:**

This session will focus on relationship building with staff and families. By increasing your reflective capacity, you will become more self-aware and aware of the needs of others. As professionals when you hold space for others and build on their strengths it creates a parallel process that allow them to provide better support to others.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- define Reflective Supervision/Consultation.
- discuss the 5 Essential Elements of Reflective Supervision/Consultation.
- discuss the benefits of Reflective Supervision/Consultation.

## **THPM10-C: Traumatic Brain Injury 101, Screening, Services and Supports**

### **Presenter:**

April B. Turner, MS, CRC

### **Course Description:**

In this session, the State Director of TBI Programs will dive into Traumatic Brain Injury 101, the prevalence, classification system and symptomology. She will then identify intersections between at risk populations, substance use and mental illness leading into identifying a history of a brain injury using Alabama's OBISSS (online brain injury screening and support system). Using this screener will lead to services described within the Alabama TBI System of Care.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- to understand TBI 101, classification, symptomology and prevalence.
- to recognize the intersection of TBI, Substance Use and MI.
- to recognize the intersection of TBI & At Risk Populations.
- to identify a history of brain injury-Screening using the OBISSS.
- to understand The AL TBI System of Care & Supports.

## **THURSDAY AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSION D**

### **3:15 pm to 4:45 pm**

#### **THPM1-D: Youth, Vaping, and Technology: Understanding Today's Drug Trends**

##### **Presenters:**

Jamelle Allen, Hoover Police Officer / COMPACT (Shelby County) Investigator  
Austin Brown, Shelby County Sheriff's Office / COMPACT Investigator

##### **Course Description:**

This presentation, led by Investigators from COMPACT, provides parents, educators, and community members with critical insights into the rapidly evolving landscape of youth drug use and technology. Attendees will learn about the latest vaping trends, the risks associated with THC products and nicotine, and how these substances are marketed toward young people. The course will also explore how technology, social media, and digital communication play a significant role in influencing youth behavior and concealing risky activities.

##### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- explain the health risks of vaping and identify strategies to avoid nicotine and other substance use.
- recognize how social media can impact mental health and apply strategies for safe and responsible use.
- identify emerging youth drug trends and describe the risks and consequences associated with substance use.

#### **THPM2-D: Scrolling & Substances: The Hidden Influence of Media on Youth Choices**

##### **Presenter:**

Jerria Martin, CADCA/ORN

##### **Course Description:**

In today's digital age, media and social media play a significant role in shaping youth perceptions, behaviors, and choices-including their attitudes toward substance use. This interactive 90-minute training will explore how mainstream media, influencers, and viral trends impact youth decisions regarding drugs and alcohol. Participants will gain insights into the tactics used in media messaging, learn strategies to counteract harmful influences, and discover effective ways to engage youth in critical thinking about substance use.

##### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- analyze how movies, music, social media, and advertising shape youth attitudes and behaviors related to substance use.
- identify current online trends, challenges, and influencer-driven content that promote or normalize substance use.
- explore interactive activities and discussion techniques to engage youth in conversations about media influence and substance use prevention.
- discover ways to promote healthy online habits and support substance-free lifestyles through social media.

#### **THPM3-D: Protecting Our Youth: DHR Mandatory Reporting Procedures**

##### **Presenter:**

Ginger Roberts, LMSW

##### **Course Description:**

This course will provide an overview of mandatory reporting procedures for children and adolescents according to Alabama law. Information will be shared on who is considered to be mandatory reporters, what happens during the investigative processes and ethical considerations for protecting the child or adolescent. This presentation will equip educators, behavioral health providers and community service providers with understanding their responsibilities for protecting the welfare and safety of children and adolescents throughout the state.

##### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- provide an overview of mandatory reporting laws in Alabama for children and adults and who is considered to be a mandatory reporter.
- identify the role of behavioral health providers as mandatory reporters of child and adult incidents.
- explain the internal process for investigating abuse and neglect reports throughout the State.
- discuss the legal and ethical boundaries of client confidentiality and privacy issues that accompany the DHR investigative, post reporting process and communication limits after a report has been filed.

#### **THPM4-D: Understanding Risk Factors for Effective Substance Use Prevention**

##### **Presenters:**

Erin Burlison, B.S., CPS  
Angela Powe, B.CJ

##### **Course Description:**

This training explores the underlying risk and protective factors that influence substance use behaviors. Participants will learn how individual, social, family, and environmental risk factors contribute to substance misuse and how protective factors can buffer against them. Through interactive discussion and practical examples, the course provides strategies for identifying risk factors and applying evidence-based prevention approaches.

##### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- identify key risk and protective factors that influence substance use across individual, family, peer, and community settings.
- apply evidence-based prevention strategies that address risk factors and strengthen protective factors in practice.
- develop practical action steps to integrate risk and protective factor knowledge into effective prevention planning and programming.

# THURSDAY AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSION D

## 3:15 pm to 4:45 pm

### **THPM5-D: Professional Wellness: A Brain-Based Approach to Self-Care, Burnout Prevention, and Holistic Health**

#### **Presenter:**

Kristen Beasley, M.S., C.R.C.

#### **Course Description:**

Professionals in the addiction and recovery field face unique challenges that put them at high risk for compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma, and burnout. When the brain struggles, everything struggles-including our ability to effectively serve those who depend on us. This interactive session will provide alcohol and drug studies professionals with neuroscience-backed strategies to optimize their own brain health while building sustainable wellness practices. Drawing from the Amen Clinics Method and evidence-based brain health research, participants will explore the powerful connection between brain function and professional resilience. Through the lens of the 4 Circles approach-biological, psychological, social, and spiritual wellness-attendees will learn practical tools to assess their current wellness status and identify targeted interventions for improvement.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- understand how chronic stress and secondary trauma impact brain function and professional performance.
- identify practical strategies for preventing burnout through brain-healthy nutrition, sleep optimization, and movement.
- identify early warning signs of burnout and implementing proactive prevention strategies.

### **THPM6-D: Alabama Tobacco Hotspots: Integrating Sales, Youth Use, and Mortality Data for Targeted Public and Behavioral Health Action**

#### **Presenter:**

Chisom Ajasa, MPH

#### **Course Description:**

Tobacco use remains a leading cause of preventable death in Alabama, yet its impact varies significantly across regions. This presentation examines tobacco "hotspots" by integrating retail sales data, youth usage trends, and mortality rates to identify areas of greatest concern. By combining these datasets, we aim to uncover patterns that inform targeted public and behavioral health interventions and policy strategies. The findings will highlight opportunities for community-level action to reduce tobacco-related harm and improve health quality across the state.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- identify Alabama's tobacco hotspots by analyzing integrated data sources, including retail sales, overall tobacco use, youth consumption, and mortality rates.
- highlight actionable recommendations for reducing tobacco-related harm and improving health outcomes in high-risk communities.

### **THPM7-D: The Legal High: The Dangers of Gas Station Drugs**

#### **Presenter:**

David Holloway

#### **Course Description:**

Substance use continues to be on the rise and access to mind-altering substances is as convenient as stopping by the gas station. These "legal high" products are literally at the fingertips of our youth, completely legal yet pose deadly risks. Learn about the various products that are now available and how they are being misused. Learn what signs and symptoms to look for and how you can advocate to eliminate access to these substances.

#### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- identify the similarities and differences of designer and synthetic drugs available on today's market.
- identify specific over the counter products that are posing health risks to the public through mislabeling and/or misuse.
- become familiar with the risks, symptoms and products that stimulate effects of illicit drugs that are easily accessible in area gas stations.
- understand how and why these drugs are considered legal and what you can do to help with this epidemic.
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## THURSDAY AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSION D

### 3:15 pm to 4:45 pm

#### **THPM8-D: Anger Management with Clients and Staff in Behavioral Health Settings**

**Presenter:**

Meta Eatman, MSW

**Course Description:**

This session will provide information on how to identify and utilize emotional intelligence as a strategy for managing anger in the workplace. Information will be shared on the impact of unresolved trauma on hostile behaviors, signs and symptoms of anger displayed by clients in behavioral health and criminal justice settings, and how to de-escalate aggressive behaviors through non-physical contact. Participants will learn how to integrate assertive communication and conflict resolution skills when working with clients and staff who display feelings of anger in the workplace. The goal of this session is to assist clients and staff with modifying angry behaviors to support healthy work spaces.

**Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- identify different types of behaviors exhibited by clients and staff who have been impacted by historical trauma.
- discuss how to integrate assertive communication skills and conflict resolution strategies to manage angry behaviors in the workplace.
- explain how emotional intelligence can be used to prevent anger amongst clients and staff in behavioral health treatment settings.

#### **THPM9-D: Empowering Families: Using CRAFT to Support Recovery and Strengthen Connections**

**Presenter:**

Kim Holder, MSW, ICADC, CRSS

**Course Description:**

Families play a vital role in preventing harm, promoting recovery, and sustaining long-term wellness for individuals with substance use disorders (SUD). This session introduces participants to Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) and related family-centered interventions proven to increase treatment engagement, reduce substance use, and improve family functioning. Participants will explore practical strategies for strengthening recovery capital, fostering resilience, and addressing the complex relational dynamics that arise when a loved one struggles with SUD. Emphasis will be placed on prevention-focused tools, communication skills, and culturally responsive adaptations to support diverse families and communities. Through discussion and real-world examples, attendees will learn how to integrate these approaches into prevention, treatment, and recovery settings to create healthier, more supportive environments.

**Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- explain the principles of Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) and how they empower families to support loved ones with substance use disorders (SUD).
- identify key benefits of family involvement in SUD prevention and recovery, including improved engagement, reduced relapse risk, and increased recovery capital.
- demonstrate effective communication and positive reinforcement strategies that strengthen family relationships and encourage treatment-seeking behavior.
- apply culturally responsive and trauma-informed approaches to family engagement in diverse prevention and recovery settings.
- integrate evidence-based family support interventions into prevention, treatment, and recovery programs to promote wellness and sustainable long-term outcomes.

#### **THPM10-D: Trauma-Informed Care within the Criminal Justice System: A Dual Perspective**

**Presenter:**

Samantha Barfield Morris, PharmD, AADC

**Course Description:**

This session provides an overview of evidence-based, trauma-informed practices for justice-involved individuals in jails, prisons, and law enforcement settings. Drawing from a dual perspective of clinical knowledge and lived experience, participants will learn how trauma impacts behavior, strategies to prevent re-traumatization, and how these approaches support long-term recovery, public safety, and overall quality of life.

**Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- provide an overview of the importance of being trauma-responsive when working with justice-involved individuals.
- discuss the value of communication, stigma-free language, and interpersonal skills as strategies to prevent retraumatization of individuals involved in the criminal justice system.
- explain the benefits of trauma-responsive practices and their positive impacts on long-term recovery, public safety, and overall quality of life.

# FRIDAY MORNING COURSES

8:15 am to 9:15 am

## **FPL: Everybody Leads: Leadership Excellence Across the Healing Journey**

### **Presenter:**

Tim Lupinacci, JD, BA

### **Course Description:**

What defines a great leader in the prevention field? This dynamic session will explore the critical leadership traits that elevate prevention work-vision, adaptability, cultural competence, collaboration, and the courage to innovate. Participants will examine how effective leadership drives sustainable change in substance use prevention by leveraging emerging tools, forging strategic partnerships, and creating responsive, community-centered solutions. Attendees will also explore real-world examples of prevention leaders who are reimagining outreach, engaging underserved populations, and addressing urgent challenges such as youth mental health, substance misuse trends, and digital influence. Whether you are a seasoned professional or new to the field, this session offers practical guidance, inspiration, and leadership strategies to help you lead with clarity, compassion and creativity in today's evolving prevention landscape.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- describe key leadership traits that drive innovation and sustainable success in prevention work, including communication, adaptability, and vision.
- learn how to lead collaborative initiatives across sectors by engaging stakeholders, building trust, and creating shared goals that strengthen community prevention efforts.
- leave with actionable strategies to apply innovative, culturally responsive leadership practices that meet the emerging needs of their communities.

9:15 am to 10:15 am

## **FAM1: Leadership in Prevention: Cultivating Innovation, Vision and Impact**

### **Presenter:**

Seyram Selase, B.S., I.C.P.S., C.P.M.

### **Course Description:**

What defines a great leader in the prevention field? This dynamic session will explore the critical leadership traits that elevate prevention work-vision, adaptability, cultural competence, collaboration, and the courage to innovate. Participants will examine how effective leadership drives sustainable change in substance use prevention by leveraging emerging tools, forging strategic partnerships, and creating responsive, community-centered solutions. Attendees will also explore real-world examples of prevention leaders who are reimagining outreach, engaging underserved populations, and addressing urgent challenges such as youth mental health, substance misuse trends, and digital influence. Whether you are a seasoned professional or new to the field, this session offers practical guidance, inspiration, and leadership strategies to help you lead with clarity, compassion and creativity in today's evolving prevention landscape.

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- describe key leadership traits that drive innovation and sustainable success in prevention work, including communication, adaptability, and vision.
- learn how to lead collaborative initiatives across sectors by engaging stakeholders, building trust, and creating shared goals that strengthen community prevention efforts.
- leave with actionable strategies to apply innovative, culturally responsive leadership practices that meet the emerging needs of their communities.

10:30 am to 11:30 am

## **FAM2: Leading the Treatment Field Forward**

### **Presenter:**

Zach Ludwig, LPC-S, NCC

### **Course Description:**

This plenary session will focus on the tenets of leadership necessary in the substance use disorder treatment field in order to move the profession forward in a meaningful and intentional manner. The session will explore current trends in the treatment field and the role all providers have in being a force for change in an evolving landscape. The necessity of adaptation to technology and market trends will be foundational to the discussion about how the future of treatment is being shaped today and a call to action will invoke all to consider how they participate and impact the field.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- be reminded of the areas of growth experienced in the behavioral health treatment field in recent history including expansion of telehealth, access to harm reduction models, and medication interventions.
- gain knowledge of the technological opportunities for the treatment field including, but not limited to, artificial intelligence, wearable devices, and other novel approaches.
- be challenged to reframe the approach of the "traditional 28 day treatment" model to focus on a more robust continuum of care.
- gain understanding of the shift to value-based care and the relevance of data-driven outcomes in the treatment field.
- review the headwinds we face in the industry as well as a call-to-action to tackle challenges as leaders.

# FRIDAY MORNING COURSES

11:30 am to 12:30 pm

## **FAM3: The Accidental Leader's Real Work**

### **Presenter:**

Charles Dent, PhD

### **Course Description:**

Ever been "voluntold" to lead, only to feel like you're winging it? In this dynamic closing session, we move beyond theory and into the real, messy, and human work of leadership in recovery spaces. Through a compelling live skit, we will highlight the stark contrast between "boss management", driven by control and the bottom line, and true "people-centered leadership" that builds trust and fosters growth. This isn't about title or authority; it's about the influence we wield every day. We will unpack practical tools for self-awareness, emotional regulation under pressure, and leading from your authentic professional identity. Leave equipped not just to manage tasks, but to inspire people and build resilient, healing-centered communities.

### **Course Objectives:**

After attending the course, a participant will be able to:

- articulate the critical behavioral differences between a "boss" (managing tasks) and a "leader" (inspiring people) within recovery-oriented environments.
- identify their own emerging leadership style and philosophy, defining one actionable step to strengthen their people-centered leadership practice.
- apply a framework for "regulated leadership" to maintain emotional balance and make values-driven decisions during stressful or triggering situations.

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

## **Garrett Aikens**

Garrett Aikens is a 2011 Graduate of the Auburn University Harrison College of Pharmacy and completed Post Graduate Residency Training through the University of Montana. He has practiced pharmacy in community, health systems, and government settings and is currently the Chief of Pharmacy Services at the Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center where among other services, he is involved in opioid stewardship and safety initiatives. He has partnered with the Auburn University Center for Opioid Research, Education, and Outreach (COACH) and the Alabama Department of Health since 2020 to offer education and training on effective utilization of the Alabama State PDMP database in healthcare practice, and is the host of Off Script - The Alabama Pharmacy Podcast. Garrett has no relevant financial relationships to disclose regarding this activity.

## **Chisom Ajasa**

Chisom Ajasa is a Prevention Fellow at the Southeast PTTC, where she supports substance misuse prevention and workforce development efforts across the Southeast, including collaborations with the Alabama Department of Mental Health. She is also a member of the Alabama Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup, where she works to address emerging substance use trends across the state. Her work is guided by a commitment to reducing harms associated with substance use and strengthening prevention efforts. Her background includes research on tobacco and vaping prevention, as well as health behavior. This includes quantitative and qualitative research on tobacco and vaping behaviors and data-informed strategies to reduce tobacco-related harms, with prior experience in the development of digital public health interventions and prevention resources.

## **Lisa Akine**

Lisa Anderson Akine is a licensed professional counselor with a degree in Clinical Mental Health and Counseling. Since 2008, she has been a CADC II and is the founder of Believe in the Process Counseling Services. Currently, Lisa is in private practice, serving clients throughout the greater Atlanta area. She has been at the forefront of harm reduction efforts, including a mass distribution of naloxone throughout the state of Georgia. In her role as Opioid Settlement Coordinator, Lisa has spoken at multiple conferences, educating providers and clinicians on the importance of client-centered care, which she believes is the cornerstone of successful therapeutic practice. On a personal note, Lisa is married to Greg and is the proud mother of six children and thirteen grandchildren. She is a person of long-term recovery, recently celebrating 35 years.

## **Jamelle Allen**

Officer Jamelle Allen began his law enforcement career in 2010 with the Bessemer Police Department after attending Alabama State University. In 2013, he joined the Hoover Police Department, where he continues to serve. Since 2022, Officer Allen has been assigned to the COMPACT Task Force in Shelby County, a unit dedicated to identifying and supporting students and young adults struggling with substance use.

## **David Bartley**

David Woods Bartley is an award-winning, internationally renowned mental health advocate, three-time TEDx speaker, and survivor of severe childhood trauma, depression, and a suicide attempt. After receiving life-saving support, he began a transformative journey from mental “hellness” to mental wellness. Today, David uses his lived experience to spark courageous conversations around suicide, male sexual trauma, human connection, and Hope. He has delivered more than 1,000 talks to global audiences, including all branches of the U.S. military, NATO, NASA, the VA, healthcare systems, major corporations, universities, K-12 schools, and interfaith communities. Known for powerful storytelling, David is passionate in his belief that connection creates Hope, and Hope saves lives.

## **Kristen Beasley**

Kristen Beasley holds a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Auburn University and is a Licensed Amen Elite Brain Health Trainer. Her credentials include certifications as a Functional Medicine Health Coach, Integrative Health Practitioner, High Performance Health Coach, and ReCODE 2.0 Coach specializing in cognitive health. She brings a unique perspective informed by both professional training and personal experience with neurodegenerative diseases, fueling her passion for brain health education and prevention.

## **Jan Bell**

Jan Bell co-founded and directs the Child Trafficking Solutions Project, a broad-based coalition working collaboratively in the fight against human trafficking of minors in Alabama since 2016. Jan received her undergraduate degree from Vanderbilt University and her Master of Public Health degree from UAB with a focus upon Health Organization and Policy. She has been honored by the UAB School of Public Health as Alumnus of the Year for her work in furthering a variety of public health initiatives. She is a recipient of the national FBI Director Community Leadership Award, the Department of Homeland Security's Outstanding Victim Protection in Countering Human Trafficking Award, and the City of Birmingham's StrongHer Award in recognition of her work to improve prevention as well as outcomes for survivors of child trafficking. The CTSP has been lauded as both an exemplary and effective model in anti-human trafficking.

## **Beth Bergeron**

Beth Malone Bergeron, LPC, currently works at the Alabama Department of Mental Health as the MHSU Director of Certification. She was the Executive Director of the Chemical Addictions Program, Inc. until 2013. Beth also worked for the GA Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities in the Division of Addictive Diseases as the Adolescent Program Specialist. She previously served on the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Certification Board of GA as the Secretary and Certification Chair and was a GA delegate to the International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC) where she served on various committees and work groups. Beth also served on the Georgia School of Addiction Studies Board of Directors and served as the GSAS conference planner. Beth's previous work experience includes clinically and administratively supervising the RSAT programs within the GA DOC. Beth received her Master's degree in Counseling and Human Development with a concentration in Addiction Studies from Troy University Montgomery. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Family and Child Development from Auburn University.

## **Garret Biss**

Garret Biss is a retired Marine Corps pilot and dedicated advocate for veterans, specializing in mental health, resilience, and recovery coaching. After facing his own challenges with anxiety, depression, and addiction following his military service, Garret developed a unique approach to recovery that emphasizes self-worth, identity, and the inherent strengths veterans bring to civilian life.

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

## **Katina Blanchett**

Katina Blanchett is a devoted mother of three and the proud wife of eleven years to Josh Blanchett. Katina is a person in long-term recovery, with thirteen years of sobriety. After completing residential treatment and returning home to the Sand Mountain community, Katina saw a great need for recovery resources in her community. This led her to found the Addicts 4 Christ ministry in 2012. In 2018, Katina founded The Father's House Recovery Home for Women, a women's recovery residence program for women struggling with substance use disorder. The Father's House later became the first recovery residence program in DeKalb County to become certified by the Alabama Alliance for Recovery Residences (AARR). This certification, based on the NARR Standards established by the National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR), signifies that The Father's House is recognized by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as employing evidence-based best practices for its operation. In 2024, Katina co-founded and co-chairs End Addiction Sand Mountain (EASM), an annual recovery-oriented community event for the five counties in Northeast Alabama that comprise the Sand Mountain region of Alabama. She also founded the End Addiction Sand Mountain Coalition, bringing together recovery partners from across Sand Mountain to collaboratively work towards addressing needs for persons with substance use disorder across the Sand Mountain region. In 2025, Katina founded The Potter's House Recovery Home, a recovery residence program for men in Jackson County, Alabama. Katina is deeply committed to supporting individuals on their journey to recovery and transformation. Her work includes serving as a Certified Addiction Counselor and a Certified Peer Support Specialist. In addition, Katina actively participates in a number of committees and associations that support persons in recovery, including the Alabama Recovery Advocacy Day (ALRAD) Planning Committee, the AARR Conference Planning Committee, as an Advisory Board Member for the Alabama School for Alcohol and Other Drug Studies (ASADS) and membership in both NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals and the Alabama Association of Addiction Professionals (AAAP). She also gives back to her community through her roles as a Municipal Clerk and Magistrate. Katina is President of the DeKalb County Clerks Association and is a member of the 2025-26 class of Leadership DeKalb. In addition, Katina serves as Youth Pastor at Refuge Student Ministries, a ministry of Rainsville Church of God. Beyond titles and roles, Katina is a lover of people, a passionate follower of Jesus Christ and a dedicated servant to others, using her life to inspire and make a difference in the lives of those around her.

## **Austin Brown**

Investigator Brown joined Compact in 2023 from the Shelby County Sheriff's Office and is assigned to Shelby County Schools. He embarked on his law enforcement journey in 2019 when he joined the Shelby County Sheriff's Office. Initially, he was assigned to the patrol division, where he engaged in various law enforcement duties such as responding to calls, conducting traffic stops, and ensuring the safety of the community. In the fall of 2022, Inv. Brown experienced a change in his career path as he was assigned to the School Resource Officer (SRO) Unit. This unit involves officers being placed in educational institutions to serve as a bridge between law enforcement and the school community. In Investigator Brown's case, he was stationed at Chelsea High School, where he took on responsibilities such as building positive relationships with students, staff, and parents, ensuring the safety and security of the school environment, and educating students about law enforcement and safety. Inv. Brown pursued a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice at The University of Alabama. This educational background provided him with a solid foundation in various aspects of criminal justice, including legal procedures, law enforcement strategies, and community policing. He is also a certified facilitator in Botvin Life Skills and INDEPTH/NOT (Nicotine and Vape) Dependence Cessation Programs as well as Youth Mental Health First Aid.

## **L.B. Brown**

L.B. Brown, LICSW, CFSW, PMH-C, is the Project Manager for the Every Step program within VitAL at the University of Alabama. L.B. brings a background in macro, medical and clinical social work, perinatal mental health, and program management, with experience translating evidence-based approaches into community and institutional settings.

## **Erin Burleson**

Erin Burleson is a prevention consultant for the Alabama Department of Mental Health-Office of Prevention. She received her BS from Auburn University and began her career in the prevention field in 2002. Mrs. Burleson worked for a prevention agency for seven years, serving as a community outreach coordinator and prevention director where she also became certified as a Prevention Specialist in 2004. In 2009, she transitioned to her current position as a prevention consultant. As a prevention consultant, Mrs. Burleson provides technical assistance and training to prevention agencies throughout the state.

## **James Campbell**

James Campbell, LPC, LAC, MAC, AADC has worked professionally in the human services field for over thirty years in a wide range of clinical settings, currently serving as the Associate Director for the Southeast Addiction Technology Transfer Center. His passion is equipping providers to support individual and family wellness effectively and build on the strengths they possess and equipping the next generation of addiction professionals to serve those in their care effectively. He's a member of both NAADAC and ACA and is a nationally recognized author and speaker.

## **Dr. Lucy Cannon**

Dr. Lucy R. Cannon, LCSW, LICSW, CAADC, MATS is a nationally recognized behavioral health expert, consultant, and educator with over 40 years of experience in mental health, substance use, and clinical social work. She is the CEO of LEJ Behavioral Health Services, LLC, an adjunct professor at Clark Atlanta University, and has served in leadership roles with local, state, and military organizations. A sought-after speaker and trainer, Dr. Cannon is known for her expertise in trauma-informed care, cultural competence, ethics, telehealth, and clinical supervision, and she continues to empower clinicians and communities nationwide.

## **Zina Cartwell**

Zina Cartwell is a motivational speaker and Prevention Director for Central Alabama Wellness with 20 years of experience in public speaking and professional development. Ms. Cartwell is well diverse in the following: criminal justice, substance use prevention and treatment, individual and group counseling, program development, leadership and community outreach.

## **Joseph Chen**

Joseph Chen, PharmD, is a dedicated psychiatric pharmacist with a heart for patient-centered care, especially for marginalized populations like Veterans and individuals with substance use disorders. His career is driven by a commitment to optimizing medication management, integrating evidence-based practices, and advocating for equitable healthcare access. When he's not making an impact in the pharmacy, you might find him dominating the pickleball court, singing along at his 50th+ concert (Eras Tour included!), or tackling a BBQ challenge-like the time he devoured 6 pounds in under an hour. For Joe, life is all about passion, whether it's for patient care or a perfectly smoked brisket!

## **James Choate**

Tony currently serves as the TB Nurse Supervisor for the northwest district at the Alabama Department of Public Health. He is responsible for supervising TB nurses and cases in 6 north Alabama counties. He has worked at Public Health since 2006 and has both lived and professional experiences working with individuals who have been impacted by substance use.

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

## **David Clements**

David Clements is the Founder and President of the Kingdom Group Home and serves as the lead minister of Celebrate Recovery at The Word Community Church. He is deeply passionate about recovery and community engagement throughout Tuscaloosa, Northport, and the surrounding areas. The Celebrate Recovery meeting he started in Northport, Alabama, now has a regular attendance of more than seventy-five people and often exceeds one hundred attendees-many of whom would never have stepped foot in a church. He also founded the Kingdom Group Home, a ten-bedroom, faith-based home for men in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Although it has only been open a short time, the impact has been profound, with men regaining custody of their children, becoming husbands, and beginning their careers, creating lasting generational change. One particularly powerful example includes a man David welcomed in who had been diagnosed with liver failure and given only ninety days to live. Once severely ill, this man found a sponsor, maintained six months of sobriety, was placed on the transplant list, and ultimately received a new organ. Just weeks ago, he was able to reunite with his son and spend an entire day together at the zoo.

## **Michelle Crumbly**

Michelle Crumbly is a National Board Certified Counselor and a Licensed Professional Counselor in the states of Alabama and Georgia. She is also a Certified Clinical Trauma Professional, a Certified Clinical Anxiety Professional, and Clinical Advanced Grief Counselor Specialist. She has been a therapist for 29 years. She received her Bachelor of Science in Human Resource Management from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1992 and her Masters in Educational Psychology from Southern Illinois University in 1996. She currently works in her private practice, Michelle Crumbly LPC, LLC located in Auburn, Alabama.

## **David Davis**

David Davis, LMSW is the Director of Tobacco Control Initiatives at CAI and the Project Director for the National Center of Excellence for Tobacco-Free Recovery. David earned his Master of Social Work from the University of Albany - SUNY. He has more than 13 years of experience as social worker providing clinical services to people with behavioral health conditions, and over 8 years of experience in the tobacco field, including leading CAI's Center for Health Systems Improvement Program, a project funded by the New York State Department of Health, and Project BAT (Black People Against Tobacco), a project that is engaging community members to reduce tobacco use in Jackson, MS.

## **Dr. Charles Dent**

Dr. Charles Dent is a nationally respected leader in trauma-informed systems, behavioral health, and student development. As a Peer Support Specialist, Biblical Counselor, educator, and U.S. Marine Corps veteran, he integrates over two decades of experience across counseling, education, nonprofit leadership, and military service into a unique, actionable framework for building resilience. His leadership philosophy-forged in the disciplined, mission-driven environment of the Marines-informs a practical approach to human performance under stress. This background is central to his work in high-stakes settings impacted by trauma, adversity, and accountability. Dr. Dent holds a doctorate in theology and advanced certifications in trauma-informed care, emotional intelligence, and systemic intervention. He specializes in helping institutions understand how trauma shapes behavior, learning, and leadership, while equipping teams with culturally responsive tools for sustainable change. As the founder of MaxOut Coaching, Therapy, and Training Services, he directs clinical, consulting, and professional development initiatives, guided by the core belief that regulated adults create regulated environments where healing and growth can flourish. An accomplished presenter and former senior education leader, Dr. Dent translates neuroscience, counseling theory, and leadership practice into engaging sessions that improve staff capacity, student outcomes, and organizational climate. He is known for seamlessly integrating faith, mental health, and community development into coherent strategies for systemic impact. At ASADS 2026, Dr. Dent brings scholarly depth, field-tested methods, and compelling insight to advance the conversation on trauma-informed professional development, counseling practice, and leadership systems.

## **Janice Johnson Dowd**

Janice V. Johnson Dowd, MSSW, LMSW, is an author, speaker, mother, and recovering alcoholic with over 13 years of sobriety. She is a retired social worker with more than 20 years of experience, specializing in addiction and family therapy. She has combined her personal and professional experiences to write the book "Rebuilding Relationships in Recovery" and maintains the parenting and recovery blog, "Finding Serenity in Sobriety." Janice's platform emphasizes helping families heal and breaking cycles of generational dysfunction. She is a sought-after speaker who has presented at numerous addiction, social work, and 12-Step conferences, workshops, and podcasts.

## **Judd Drake**

Judd Drake is the Chief Operating Officer of the Will Bright Foundation and Restoration Springs and serves as the Executive Operations Director of ACRM. He is a member of the Governor's Opioid Overdose Council and serves on the boards of ARSA and One Mission. Judd is a Certified Recovery Support Specialist (CRSS) through the Alabama Department of Mental Health and has graduated from Levels 1 and 2 of MiMPs. In recognition of his leadership and service, he was named the 2025 Region 3 Journey Worker of the Year by AOA.

## **Tyesha Durr**

Tyesha Durr is a licensed practicing counselor and owner of Broken Crayons Counseling and Consulting, LLC located in the Charles Henderson Child Health Center. She serves The Alabama Department of Mental Health as the State Reflective Practice Coordinator. Tyesha graduated from Troy University with a post-master's certificate in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH), one of the first in the state to receive this certification. She has also completed training in Child and Parent Psychotherapy (CPP). She is among the first licensed mental health clinicians in the state to be qualified to provide this trauma-informed treatment. Tyesha has earned the F5A Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health® as a Clinical Mentor. Tyesha also provides reflective supervision to mental health professionals throughout the state. Tyesha provides state trainings for The Alabama Department of Mental Health, Early Intervention and others.

## **Meta Eatman**

Meta W. Eatman is a retired State of Alabama employee with over 35 years of service as a public servant. She is a graduate of the University of Alabama at Birmingham with a bachelor's in social work and of Alabama A&M University with a master's in social work. She was employed at the listed State of Alabama Departments: Corrections (Correctional Officer II), Human Resources (Social Worker II), Rehabilitation Services (Medical Social Worker II), and Pardons and Paroles (Community Resource Officer/Probation and Paroles, Senior). Meta is a Certified Public Manager, Certified Criminal Justice Addiction Professional, and APOSTC Certified. After leaving state government, Meta served as the Court Advocate for The Dannon Project. She has been a contributing member of various community boards and is passionate about serving people. She is a servant leader in today's marketplace. Meta is married and has two adult children. She is G-Mommy to seven grandchildren. She presently serves as the Police Community Relations Assistant/CPO at the Birmingham Police Department West Precinct.

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

## **Gilbert Brian Eddy**

Colonel (Retired) Gilbert Brian Eddy is the founder and executive director, BondFire Ranch, Clanton, Alabama. BondFire is a 501c3, non-profit, focused on building resiliency within military members (Active Duty, Guard Reserve, Retirees and Veterans); as well as, First Responders, and all their families. The Ranch does this through equine assisted learning and outdoor experiences, like hiking, fishing, camping, crafting, and good old fashion bonfires. Most importantly, these activities are meant for participants to have positive face-to-face conversation and experiences, which will strengthen the bond with their family and friends, without the interference of electronics. Prior to retirement Brian served as the commander, Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations, Dover Air Force Base, Delaware. AFMAO is a Field Operating Agency under Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower, Personnel and Services, Headquarters Air Force. AFMAO has global responsibility for all Air Force mortuary matters for current and past conflicts, operates the nation's sole port mortuary and provides global contingency mortuary response teams in support of Air Force and combatant command requirements. Brian was commissioned through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps Program in May 1992. He served in a variety of assignments to include five squadrons, Major Commands, Headquarters Air Force, NATO and the Defense Commissary Agency, all of which focused on serving members and their families.

## **Constance Fields**

Constance Fields is a Licensed Professional Counselor with a Master's Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. Her experience working with clients navigating everyday life challenges, processing grief and loss, and beginning to heal from trauma, has informed her continued exploration into researching aligned methods of treatment. Constance is trained in offering expressive arts techniques in therapy, as well as Brainspotting, and trauma informed care, to name a few. Utilizing these methods, Constance walks alongside her clients who may be experiencing anxiety, depression, relationship issues, and self-esteem issues. Constance is passionate about guiding people through understanding that they are not tied to unhealthy narratives that they have adopted. Her theoretical approach is grounded in Psychodynamic, Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT), and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT). Constance believes that each person is a fallible human being, and that we are not bound by our past, nor should we allow our past to control our future; thus, we are capable of learning how our past experiences influence our current thoughts and behaviors. Allowing for space to create new patterns in the process. Constance is an LGBTQIA+ ally and is passionate about social justice. She enjoys spending time with her family, acting, listening to music, watching movies (including anything paranormal), and trying to impress her two teenage kids on Tiktok.

## **Edgar Finn**

Dr. Edgar Finn is the Medical Director of the WellStone Emergency Service - Pediatric Unit in Huntsville, Alabama. He is a Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist and is a Diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. After graduation from medical school at the University of South Alabama, he completed Residency and Fellowship training at UAB and Vanderbilt University. He has over 30 years of clinical experience in community mental health, academic medicine, and school consultation, and has practiced Child & Adolescent Psychiatry in Alabama since 1993. He lives in Huntsville, Alabama.

## **David Flounders**

David J. Flounders is a 31 + year Veteran of the United States Military- Navy and Army. He holds a Bachelors in Science in Liberal Arts. He was medically retired in 2014 after a year long struggle with medical and mental health issues to include Post Traumatic Stress and a survived suicide. In 2016, together he and Kathleen created SSSVP- a program designed to provide transitional support to Veterans and Military who struggled with transitioning to civilian life. He is presently 100% VA service connected disabled and in 2022 attended the DLR Mustang Ranch PTSD/Veteran Mustang program. He trained there for 13 weeks- July-October 2022 to learn about gentling wild mustangs and utilizing them at Samson's Strength Sustainable Veterans Project, Inc with Veterans. In addition, Dave has attended the Masterson Method Equine Bodywork training- Weekend seminar and Advanced Training, and in June 2025 he attended an intensive program at the Justin Dunn American Mustang School. Dave and Kathleen presently have 21 equines at Samson's Strength-Mustangs- Until Grace, Samson, Super Moose, Mustang Blaze, Dasani, Argentina, The Goddess Artemis, Pippi Longstocking, and most recently -AnnaBelle. Belgian Draft rescues- Sir Maximus, Sir Orion, Lady Maxine, Gaia and Snow White Donkeys- Whiskey, Tango, Foxtrot, Jenny, Olive Oyl, Shimmer and Shine. During the Spring of 2025 Samson's Strength Sustainable Veterans Project, Inc was chosen to be a part of an International campaign raising the awareness of the mental health benefits of horses for humans- Horses For Mental Health- Seen Through Horses. They received international recognition for their project and they were the second highest fundraiser for 2025 contributing to the over \$1.36 million raised! Dave is the driving force behind the building projects at SSSVP- to include project design, planning, management, volunteer coordination, grant management, construction- ground to roof- of 7 tiny homes- 6 for Veteran transitional living and one for a communal kitchen, 2 barn projects- arena barn and equine experience barn. Dave is actively involved in giving back to his community through his membership with the American Legion, and the countless Veterans he has "taken the call" - shared his experiences of transition and provided hope and connection to many.

## **Marc Fomby**

Marc Fomby is a Certified Prevention Specialist and the founding CEO of FTC Prevention Services, LLC in Pearl, MS. He is a member of the Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition, dedicated to youth life skills and peer education training. Marc is a member of the Recovery School District of New Orleans, a national initiative committed to breaking the cycle of violence and providing support assistance to youth. He is also the conference coordinator of the Mississippi School for Addiction Professionals, the first statewide educational hub for prevention, intervention and treatment specialists in the state of Mississippi as well as the conference coordinator for the annual statewide Juvenile Justice Symposium. He received his Bachelor's degree in business management from Belhaven University. He has also been preaching and teaching the Gospel since 2005. He served as Co-Youth Pastor at Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church in Brandon, MS after being Licensed and Ordained in the Ministry. He now serves as the Dean of Chapel for The Piney Woods School in Braxton, MS. He is in his ninth year as Chaplain where he serves the students and faculty of the school weekly by spreading the Gospel.

## **Crystal Gregory**

Crystal Gregory is a Forensic Interview Specialist with United States Department of Homeland Security - Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). She travels domestically and internationally to conduct forensic interviews of victims regarding on-going federal investigations to include victims of war crimes, human trafficking, traveling sex offenders and child exploitation material. With 20 years of experience in the criminal justice field, Ms. Gregory utilizes the skill set she learned through education and field experience to further investigations involving crimes against Americans and foreign nationals, while utilizing a victim centered approach. Throughout her career, Ms. Gregory has trained thousands of professionals, both foreign and domestic, on roles within criminal investigations and victim advocacy, primarily focusing on forensic interviewing. Prior to her position at HSI, she worked as a Forensic Interview Specialist with the National Children's Advocacy Center and various other children advocacy centers.

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

## **James Harrow**

Dr. Jim Harrow serves as the Medical Director of the Baptist Health Center for Addiction Recovery and the Addiction Medicine Service at Baptist Medical Center South in Montgomery Alabama. Prior to assuming his current position he served as the Medical Director of the Alabama Physician Health Program with the Medical Association of the State of Alabama. Dr. Harrow attended the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg from 1968 to 1982 obtaining Bachelor of Science, Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees. He entered Medical School in 1976 at the same institution and concurrently completed a Postdoctoral Fellowship in cardiovascular physiology from 1976 to 1978 and received his Doctor of Medicine degree in 1980. Dr. Harrow completed two years of general surgery at the Health Sciences Center in Winnipeg. He and his family moved to Alexander City Alabama in 1983 where he opened a solo internal medicine practice and was affiliated with Russell Medical Center until he closed his office in May 2012. In July 2012, Dr. Harrow attended the University of Florida College of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Division of Addiction Medicine and completed a Fellowship in Addiction Medicine in June 2013. He became certified by the American Board of Addiction Medicine in November 2014. Upon his return to Alabama he accepted employment with Bradford Health Services in Warrior Alabama as an attending addiction medicine physician until assuming the position of Medical Director of the Alabama Physician Health Program in April, 2015. Dr. Harrow left his position with the Medical Association to return to clinical practice and joined the medical staff of Baptist Medical Center South in June 2017 and was instrumental in creating and starting the addiction medicine service.

## **Jordon Hillhouse**

Jordon Hillhouse is a Certified Prevention Specialist with over fifteen years of experience in substance use prevention. In the past, he has worked with state agencies targeting the opioid crisis, underage drinking, and mental health awareness efforts. His passion is with alcohol and drug prevention education. He has developed many prevention-related trainings and has had the opportunity to speak to thousands of people across the country. He holds a master's degree in business administration from Alcorn State University and currently works at the Mississippi Public Health Institute as the Workforce Development Manager, where he oversees the Mississippi Behavioral Health Learning Network, providing relevant trainings to state and national mental health professionals.

## **Jessica Hoggle**

Dr. Jessica Hoggle is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker. She received her Doctorate degree in Social Work from the University of Alabama, where her project focused on integrating creative and body-focused modalities into trauma therapy, specifically rhythm and drumming. She is currently a Program Manager for Vital, and provides Mental Health First Aid training to First Responders across Alabama. Her previous experience includes providing trauma-informed therapy to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, as well as training law enforcement on trauma-informed interviewing. She is passionate about enhancing relationships between First Responders and communities, as well as educating First Responders on vicarious trauma and protecting their own mental wellness.

## **Kim Holder**

Kim Holder, MSW, ICADC, CRSS is the Executive Director of Not One More Alabama (NOMA), a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting families and individuals impacted by substance use disorder. As both a social worker and a certified peer support specialist, Kim integrates professional expertise with lived experience to guide families through the challenges of addiction and recovery. Kim is trained in evidence-based models including the Invitation to Change approach and Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT), equipping her to provide practical tools and compassionate support to families. At NOMA, she leads strategic vision, develops programs, facilitates workshops, and oversees family support services, always centering the voices and strengths of those most affected by addiction. Her leadership is grounded in the belief that recovery is possible and that healing begins with connection, compassion, and community. Through her work, Kim continues to advocate for recovery-oriented systems of care that empower families and strengthen communities.

## **David Holloway**

Ofc. David Holloway has been employed by the Montevallo Police Department since 2010 and a sworn officer since 2012. He has worked Patrol, Drone Pilot, Evidence Technician, Traffic Homicide Investigator, assigned to the Compact 2020 task force, and currently is assigned as the Montevallo High School Resource Officer. He has been a lifelong resident of the Shelby County area and holds degrees in Criminal Justice and Paramedicine. He has a passion for students and schools and has become a National SRO Practitioner and continually looks for ways to increase his knowledge and spread awareness in the community. He lives in Helena with his wife and two young boys.

## **Maegan Huffman**

Maegan Huffman is an experienced public health professional specializing in suicide prevention, workforce development, and community engagement. As the Suicide Prevention Coordinator for the Alabama Department of Mental Health, she leads statewide suicide prevention initiatives, manages cross-sector collaborations, and drives public awareness efforts reduce stigma and promote mental health. With a background in program coordination, grant management, and health education, Maegan has successfully partnered with healthcare systems, schools, community organizations, and state agencies to advance prevention strategies and improve access to care. She is passionate about building sustainable, evidence-based programs that save lives and strengthen communities. Maegan's work is informed by a decade of service in public health, including leadership roles in chronic disease prevention and workforce training. She is committed to empowering individuals, organizations, and communities with the tools and knowledge to create a culture of hope and connectedness across Alabama.

## **Susan James-Andrews**

Susan James-Andrews, MS, CHTS, serves as President of James-Andrews & Associates, a training and consulting firm minority woman-owned and based in Mitchellville, MD. With over 25 years of experience, Ms. James-Andrews has partnered with numerous federal agencies, state governments, law enforcement organizations, corrections institutions, and universities across the United States in the areas of prevention, treatment, and criminal justice. Her expertise includes delivering presentations and providing technical assistance in all 50 states, as well as internationally and within several territories. She is dedicated to developing customized services that meet the needs of varied communities, disciplines, and age groups-including seniors, adults, emerging adults, and adolescents-with an emphasis on sustainable intervention strategies. Over the past decade, her efforts have focused on professional and community education regarding the misuse of multiple substances-particularly opioids and stimulants-as well as advocacy for risk reduction, prevention, treatment, suicide prevention, faith-based engagement, and addressing co-occurring conditions. Susan has held positions on multiple boards and councils, including the Thurgood Marshall Action Coalition, Native American Alliance Foundation (NAAF), Executive Board of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP/All Rise), and currently serves as an active Board member at Chainless Change, Inc. in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, a peer-led organization dedicated to supporting individuals who have been formerly or wrongfully incarcerated, as well as their families. She delivers training and technical assistance both nationally and internationally, and is a motivational speaker with expertise in treatment, reentry, advocacy, lived experience, and research initiatives. She currently serves as a consultant for the Opioid Response Network (ORN), JBS International OVC Expert Advisory Panel (EAP), among other organizations. She holds a BS from Mercy College, NY, an MS degree from Memphis State University, TN, and CAC certifications from NY and DC (not active), and is a Certified Historical Trauma Specialist (CHTS). She also works as the Executive Administrator and program director for the Counseling and Treating People of Colour Conference: An International Perspective Annual Conference.

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

## **Jason Johnson**

My name is Jason Johnson, and I am a proud advocate against substance use disorders and a man in long term recovery of 25yrs. I am a 55yr old young man, a husband of 20 yrs. a father of two daughters who both will be college graduates this year. I am a man whose life started early with drugs, alcohol and life in the streets. I am from Newark, N.J. where the street life begins early and not many make it out of that life to live life as I do now. On both sides of my family tree there is a long history of alcohol and drug usage, so it's safe to say I was born into that lifestyle. At eight years old I was a leader among the older guys, I hung out with and was the first of the crew to graduate serving a few days in the youth house. I earned my stripes early and didn't stop jailing until I reached the age of 30. Actually, I am still jailing as I serve in a Florida State prison for NA/AA and my county's jail sharing the Gospel. Heroin and cocaine were my preferred drugs of choice but any drug would fill the void if I couldn't posse them. I am grateful for my Higher Power Jesus Christ for dying for me and redeeming me from the sin and death lifestyle that I was living then. Today I am living a good life in Christ and the freedom of life that only long-term recovery can give. Today I am working in the passion of my life as an on-staff minister and the executive director of the only AARR certified Spiritual living transition program in the southeast region of Alabama. Today I also stand hand in hand with you all, some of God's chosen people here in the Great State of Alabama. Today collectively and individually we are making a difference, so let's continue to live our lives to help others live a lifestyle of freedom from substance use disorder.

## **Nakia Jones**

My name is Nakia Jones and I am an Associate Marriage and Family Therapist. I have worked with families, individuals, and couples in the field since graduating from Auburn University masters program for Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) in 2019. I have provided systems-based therapy modalities to others of various backgrounds and beliefs with a strong emphasis in empowerment. Currently, I service adolescent youth in outpatient substance use treatment for The University of Alabama at Birmingham. It has been thrilling to provide therapeutic services to youth in the surrounding metro-Birmingham area assisting them in transforming their lives through patient-centered and considerate treatment interventions. Along with other graduates from Auburn's MFT program, I serve on the Multicultural Alumni Board providing guidance, insight, and education to current marriage and family therapy students.

## **Savannah Kiesel**

Hi! My name is Savannah Kiesel. I am an LPC working full-time for the University of Alabama in the department of Collegiate Recovery and Intervention Services. I work as a counselor with mostly mandated clients and am the clinical supervisor for our master's level interns. I hold a master of arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and am working on finishing a PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision. In my non-existent free time, I also work as an Adjunct Professor and own a private practice. I teach classes such as Introduction to Counseling, Policy of Addiction, and Lifespan Development. My private practice, Freedom Counseling and Consulting, LLC has been a joyful challenge for me learning how to run a business on my own! Outside of work, I enjoy traveling to see family all over the country as well as reading! Please feel free to introduce yourself, I love meeting new folks in the field and seeing what everyone is up to! If you're in Tuscaloosa, let's meet up and I'll show you around campus, Roll Tide!

## **Corlina Koranda**

Corlina joined READY in August of 2020. She has a BA in Criminal Justice and a MA in Counseling and Educational Psychology from the University of South Dakota. Corlina has four children. She enjoys traveling in the Southeast, watching her children play sports, but admits she dreams of the day when they can take a vacation that doesn't include a ball and a field. Corlina also has a precious rescue pup named Buster.

## **Ronda Lacey**

Ronda is a licensed attorney and pharmacist with extensive health care law experience and am currently employed with The University of Alabama. She serves as the University's HIPAA Privacy Officer. Her responsibilities include oversight of the University's designated HIPAA covered entities, developing training, conducting risk assessments; and assisting with breach responses and complaints.

## **Curt Lindsley**

Curt Lindsley has over 20 years of experience leading nonprofit organizations. In 2004, Curt co-founded the Covington Domestic Violence Task Force in Covington, Washington (official sponsor of Purple Light Nights), and in 2011 he founded Go Purple USA to raise awareness about domestic violence and to engage communities to take a stand against domestic violence and intimate partner violence. Curt has been interviewed nationally by television stations, radio stations and podcasts to talk about this issue. After seeing firsthand how substance use disorder had a devastating effect on family and friends, Curt, his wife Tracy Lindsley and Executive Director Stephanie Jennings, co-founded Best Life Recovery Residences in 2019, an AARR-certified recovery residence program for women in Huntsville, Alabama. Since launching Best Life, Curt helped to lead the effort in 2021 for the Alabama Alliance for Recovery Residences to become accredited by the National Alliance for Recovery Residences in July 2021 to certify recovery residence programs in the state of Alabama based on the NARR Standards, becoming the only such organization in Alabama with that authority. The NARR Standards are recognized by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as an evidence-based best practices model for operating recovery housing programs. Curt is Founder and Director of Alabama Recovery Advocacy Day and Montgomery Recovers (Montgomery), Co-Founder and Co-Chairman for End Addiction Sand Mountain (Rainsville), Co-Founder of the Wiregrass Addiction Coalition (Dothan) and a Founding Member of the Southeast Addiction Council Leadership Team. As a member of the Alabama Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council, Curt serves on the Treatment and Recovery Standing Committee, as well as Chairperson of the Alabama Recovery Housing Initiative Working Group of the Law Enforcement Standing Committee. Curt is a member of the Opioid Response Network for the state of Alabama, a member of the Alabama Reentry Taskforce Behavioral Health and Housing Working Group, and a Board Member of the Alabama School of Alcohol and Drug Studies (ASADS). Curt was the recipient of the first ever Ally of Recovery Award, presented in March 2025 at the 10th Annual Certified Recovery Support Specialist Conference Awards in Gadsden, Alabama. He is a passionate advocate for the difference that quality recovery housing can make in helping to foster long-term recovery. He proactively collaborates with other recovery organizations, stakeholders and state agencies to work on common sense solutions to Alabama's opioid crisis. Curt is available as a guest speaker to talk about recovery-related issues, including presentations entitled Fostering Long-Term Recovery Through The Four Dimensions; Resourcing Recovery; Launching and Leading A Recovery Residence Program That Changes Lives; and Best Practices for Recovery Housing.

## **Zach Ludwig**

Zach Ludwig is a licensed professional counselor with over a decade of experience in behavioral health care. In his role as Vice President of Clinical Services & Accreditation at Bradford Health Services, he oversees accreditation and licensing compliance, clinical quality, and program development across multiple states. Since joining Bradford in 2011, Zach's work has focused on clinical operations, staff training, policy development, and quality improvement. Zach holds a master's degree in Educational Psychology and Counselor Education from Tennessee Technological University and is licensed in Alabama, Tennessee, and Florida. He is a National Certified Counselor and has served previously on the Ethics Committee of the Alabama Counseling Association.

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

## **Tim Lupinacci**

Tim Lupinacci is Chair and CEO of Baker Donelson, one of the nation's 100 largest law firms. He leads 1,400 employees across 25 offices in 15 states, guiding the execution of the firm's five-year BakerVision 2028 strategic plan. With over 34 years of experience, Tim is recognized for his expertise in bankruptcy, restructuring, and financial services, particularly within the healthcare sector. A graduate of the University of Montevallo (B.A., Mass Communication, 1988) and Vanderbilt University School of Law (J.D., 1991), Tim was inducted as a Fellow of The American College of Bankruptcy in 2015. He has been consistently recognized by The Best Lawyers in America and Chambers USA for his work in bankruptcy and restructuring law. In addition to his legal career, Tim founded the non-profit Everybody Leads in 2023, dedicated to providing leadership training to underserved communities. His book *Everybody Leads: How you Lead and Why it Matters* was published by Blue Hat Publishing in 2025. Tim's leadership philosophy is rooted in personal accountability, continuous learning, and the belief that leadership is accessible to everyone, regardless of background or position.

## **Darrell Manning**

Darrell Manning is a Licensed Professional Counselor - Supervisor in private practice since 1985. He received his Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Clinical/Organizational Psychology from the University of South Alabama. His MBA studies were at The University of Alabama-Birmingham. Darrell was born and raised in Mobile, Alabama. After graduating from college, he began his career as a Licensed Professional Counselor and Business Development/Human Resources Specialist working with some of this area's largest companies, including Regions Bank, Alabama Power, and BE&K Construction. He became the Director of the St. Clair County Mental Health Center in 1991, leading a team to develop and provide services including Outpatient Treatment, Crisis Intervention Services, Adult Day Treatment, Intensive Outpatient Programs for substance abuse, Child Day Treatment for 5-9 year olds, and in school and in home programs for adolescents. He has also developed and supervised Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and Partial Hospital Programs for Mental Health and Substance Abuse/Dual Diagnosis. Darrell has been a Supervising LPC for over 35 years, training and supervising Associate Licensed Counselors seeking full licensure. He is a Certified Gambling Addiction Counselor, EAP and Trauma Specialist, and EMDR trained. Darrell is a founding board member of the St. Clair Co. Children's Advocacy Center and has served on numerous other boards. He is a member of the 2009 Class of Leadership Mobile. His hobbies include traveling, reading, backpacking, and kayaking. He enjoys writing and producing music for digital media.

## **Jerria Martin**

Jerria Martin serves as Executive Director of Drug Free Communities of Dallas County and a substance abuse prevention consultant headquartered in historic Selma, AL. As a consultant, Jerria works with a variety of government entities and organizations including the United States Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA), Community Anti Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Opioid Response Network (ORN). As a licensed and ordained minister, her vision, strategies, and communication skills have helped influence public policies with programs that reach out across the cultural divide. With a bachelor's degree in English from Stillman College and a Master of Divinity degree from Princeton, Jerria has preached and presented nationally and internationally, working with a host of world renown leaders. Jerria currently serves as Immediate Past President of the Rotary Club in Selma and Vice President of Leadership Selma. In 2017, she was elected as an honoree of Birmingham Magazine's 30 Women Who Shape Alabama and in 2016, as a Top 20 Under 30 Honoree. In 2018, Jerria was named a National TIAA Difference Maker, securing a \$10,000 award for her coalition. She is a 2020 Graduate of the CADCA Graduate Coalition Academy and a CADCA trainer. In October of 2020, Jerria was recognized by Former First Lady Melania Trump, Former President Trump, and the ONDCP as one of the top drug coalition leaders in the country. As a leader in her community, she hosts three radio shows and serves on several boards, including the Board of Directors for Vaughan Hospital. In 2022, Jerria was appointed by Governor Kay Ivey to serve on the Alabama Public Library Service Executive Board, as the representative for District 7. Most recently Jerria and her coalition received a Blue Ribbon Coalition Award from the White House.

## **Steve Mason**

Steve Mason, LPC-S, ADC is an experienced licensed professional counselor, certified alcohol and drug counselor, and supervising counselor with more than 20 years of experience in the mental health and addiction fields. A graduate of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, he earned his LPC in 2007 and has since dedicated his career to serving adolescents, adults, couples, and families across a wide range of clinical needs. Steve is an experienced presenter, having spoken at state and regional conferences on diverse clinical topics, and regularly provides professional training for businesses, organizations, and non-profits. He previously served as an adjunct faculty member at Alabama A&M University, where he inspired students to pursue their passion for psychology and counseling. He also mentors counseling interns, equipping the next generation of professionals with the skills to succeed. Passionate about both client care and professional development, Steve is committed to helping individuals overcome life's challenges while advancing the counseling profession through education, supervision, and training.

## **Angela McElrath**

Angela McElrath is a graduate of Miles College HBCU. She was inducted into Phi Alpha, National Honor Society of Social Work while at Miles, and graduating Suma Cum Laude received a bachelor's degree in social work. She was accepted into the University of Alabama Master's 1 year program, received a master's degree, and obtained a license to practice in the state of Alabama. Angela has experience working with people with developmental disabilities, eating disorders, mental health and multiple addictions. Experience in these levels has led to her insight and ability to identify and address disparities on micro, mezzo, and macro levels, based on the Person-in-Environment (PIE) Theory. Angela uses her gift of encouragement, her influence and resources to open doors for people to discover their significance and belonging. She is passionate about assisting and encouraging others to discover their strengths and reach their leadership potential.

## **Mike McLemore**

Mike has been a member of the Alabama Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association for the last 20+ years. He has served as a past president and chair of the Education Committee of AADAA. Mike has served as a previous board member of FORMLL, Alabama VOICES for Recovery, AIDS Action Coalition, Voices of Recovery Advocacy Group and Alabama School of Alcohol and Drug Studies. He has obtained numerous certifications in criminal justice and substance use prevention treatment. Mike works with behavioral health providers at the local, state and federal level to assist them with attaining the professional credentials to serve as qualified substance abuse providers in substance use, mental health and criminal justice settings.

## **Rick Meriwether**

Richard "Rick" Meriwether is currently serving as an Independent Health Educator. He had been employed with the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), Department of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases, as a Program Manager/Health Educator/Trainer beginning in 1994. Prior to his employment with UAB, he was employed by the Alabama Department of Public Health, STI/HIV/AIDS Divisions, as a Disease Intervention Specialist in the STI/HIV program. He has worked in several areas of STI/HIV prevention & control, i.e. epidemiology, research, surveillance, education, clinical/medical/community relations, etc. His work has allowed him opportunities for working with several medical entities, as well as community-based organizations in the areas of prevention education on both the individual and community-based levels.

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

## **Anthony Merriweather**

Anthony Merriweather currently serves as the Director for the Division of Sexually Transmitted Diseases at the Alabama Department of Public Health. He has served as Division Director for the last 16 where he is responsible for providing administrative oversight to the prevention, treatment, investigations and tracking of STI services in 67 counties. Anthony is also an Epidemiologist and Chair Elect for the National Coalition of STD Directors. He is responsible for the implementation of Fast Track, PrEP, STD/HIV At Home Testing Initiatives, and STI Outbreak Response with Justice Involved Individuals. Anthony is a retired veteran with 36 years of active service in the United States Army Reserves.

## **Tom Mihokanich**

Tom is recently retired as Business Manager for ASADS where he served in this role for multiple years. Tom has also served in numerous leadership capacities with the Alabama Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association. He has obtained numerous AADAA certifications that equipped him to work with adolescents, individuals with co-occurring disorders and just involved individuals. Tom has worked in the field of prevention, treatment and recovery for the last 40+ years.

## **Contenna Moore**

Contenna Moore is a dedicated mental health professional, CEO, and co-founder of two impactful organizations: Choices, Inc. and MoMc Reentry Services, LLC. A proud graduate of Auburn University, she holds a bachelor's and master's degree in clinical psychology and is currently pursuing her PHD in Clinical Psychology. At Choices Inc., Contenna leads initiatives that mentor youth aged 9 to 25, focusing on the prevention of substance use issues and promoting mental health wellness. Through MoMc Reentry Services, LLC, she provides essential support for young individuals aged 16 to 25, helping them navigate the challenges of reintegration into society. In her role at William E. Donaldson Correctional Facility, a male, maximum-security prison, Contenna serves as a Psychological Associate II, where she delivers psychological services to both inmates and staff. She also represents the facility as an EEO and EAP representative, contributing to the mental well-being of the correctional environment. With a strong commitment to community service, Contenna is actively involved in grant writing and is in the process of becoming a certified mental health provider for the state of Alabama, as well as a certified prevention specialist.

## **Jerry Morris**

Jerry Morris currently serves as the Business Engagement Specialist at Montgomery Job Corps Program. He has worked in numerous capacities to assist transition age youth with developing personal and professional life skills to enter the workforce. Jerry has a background in education where he has taught and mentored students that have experienced different life and social challenges with the goal of preparing them to become productive members of society.

## **Samantha Barfield Morris**

Samantha Barfield Morris is the Program Coordinator for Project FREEDOM. She earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree at the University of Florida and practices as a Consultant Pharmacist. Samantha also holds an advanced alcohol and drug counseling certificate and received a Trauma-Informed Responses national training certification through the SAMHSA GAINS Center. With over fifteen years of experience working with men and women in residential treatment and recovery from substance use disorders, she brings a dual perspective of clinical knowledge and lived experience. Samantha is passionate about raising awareness of the disease of addiction, educating on the risk of death from drug overdose, and supporting families grieving the loss of a loved one to overdose. Her professional interests include substance use disorders, mental health, resiliency, medication management, and improving adherence to medications used in the treatment of substance use disorders and mental illness.

## **Jennifer Nelson**

Jennifer Nelson is a native of Birmingham, AL, and holds the license of LICSW-S in the state of Alabama. Jennifer has been practicing social work for nearly 16 years, and is a graduate of the University of Montevallo and University of Georgia, where she earned her BSW and MSW degrees, respectively. Jennifer is the founder/CEO of Kintsugi Counseling & Consulting, LLC, and currently works in private practice, where she provides counseling to teens, adults, individuals, and couples. Jennifer also provides clinical supervision and has facilitated multiple continuing education/professional development workshops, with a focus on self-care and ethics. Jennifer has an extensive history of working with various at-risk and vulnerable populations, and has a true love for people. Jennifer is married and is the mom to her fur-baby, Sammy.

## **Joshua Nirella**

With more than 20 years of experience in addiction treatment, Joshua has devoted his career to advancing effective, compassionate care for individuals and communities impacted by substance use disorders. Beginning in 2001 working with children affected by parental addiction, he advanced into leadership roles across adolescent and adult treatment settings, earning a Master's in Organizational Leadership and specializing in Medication-Assisted Treatment. Since 2016, Joshua has served as Regional Director at Acadia Healthcare, overseeing seven Opioid Treatment Programs in Western Pennsylvania and leading the development of new OTP sites in Ohio, as well as Pennsylvania's first and only jail-based methadone induction program within the Allegheny County Jail in Pittsburgh, PA. Widely respected for his collaboration with state and federal agencies, legislators, and healthcare systems, he has helped drive regulatory reform and expand access to evidence-based treatment. Joshua also serves as President of the Pennsylvania Association for the Treatment of Opiate Dependence, previously served as a CARF Surveyor, and brings a strong sense of service to his work as an ordained minister, husband, and father of five.

## **Merrill Norton**

Dr. Merrill Norton is an EMMY winning Clinical Associate Professor Emeritus of the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy with his specialty areas to include psychopharmacology and addiction pharmacy. Dr. Norton was just awarded the NAADAC Enlightenment Award, given to an individual who has established outstanding service through a lifetime of consistent contributions to the advancement of NAADAC, the addiction profession, and its professionals. He was also honored by the Georgia Addiction Counselors Association's Board of Directors and Certification Board with being bestowed the first Certified Master Addiction Counselor (CMAC) credential in the state. His recently updated book, *Understanding Substance Use Disorders Pharmacology*, has been used to train thousands of mental health professionals nationally and his latest book, *The Pharmacist's Guide to Opioid Use Disorders* was released in December 2018. Since his recent retirement from UGA, Dr. Norton's primary focus is to provide the latest scientific information to communities, educators, healthcare professionals, prevention specialists, treatment providers, and especially families, on the diseases of substance use disorders.

## **Paige Parish**

Dr. Paige Parish, Ed.D., LCSW, is the Service and Implementation Project Director at VitAL with the University of Alabama. Her work and experience span healthcare, education, and policy, contributing to state-level behavioral health evaluation, education, and implementation initiatives. Dr. Parish integrates clinical insight and systems thinking to promote responsive, compassionate approaches that strengthen individuals, behavioral health systems, communities and the state.

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

## **Angela Powe**

Angela Powe is a Prevention Associate for the Alabama Department of Mental Health- Office of Prevention. She received her Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Alabama State University. Ms. Powe has 17 years of service with the State of Alabama. She previously worked with the Alabama Department of Corrections, where she held positions including Drug Treatment Counselor, Drug Treatment Specialist, ADA Facility Coordinator, EEO Coordinator, and EEO Senior. She began her career in the prevention field in 2023. As a prevention associate, Ms. Powe oversees the Block Grant for all 67 counties in Alabama.

## **Michelle Pruett**

Michelle Pruett has dedicated her career to supporting individuals, children, and families affected by trauma. With a profound commitment to positive outcomes, Michelle has garnered extensive experience in crisis intervention, trauma recovery, and leadership in mental health organizations across Florida, Tennessee, and Alabama. In 2000, Michelle earned her Master's and Specialist's degrees in Counselor Education from the University of Florida and embarked on a journey to make a tangible difference in the lives of those impacted by neglect, abuse, and other traumatic experiences. Michelle's work within various agencies provided her with invaluable insights and expertise in addressing trauma-related challenges and nurturing the resilience of individuals, children, and families. Michelle established Pruett Counseling and Consulting in 2010 as a private practice dedicated to serving as a sanctuary for children, families, and individuals seeking healing and personal growth. Recognizing the profound impact of attachment and trauma on relationship dynamics, Michelle expanded her services to include specialized support for couples to foster their healing and deepen their connections. Michelle firmly believes that everyone faces adversities in life, and she embraces evidence-based approaches to facilitate healing and personal effectiveness. She is trained in Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), and Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI).

## **Jeanna Reed**

Jeanna Reed is a licensed professional counselor specializing in trauma and attachment. She earned her master's degree in mental health counseling from Nyack College and began her career in group practice serving children and families of north Alabama. She later worked with the Crisis Center in Birmingham, supporting survivors of sexual violence through counseling, program management, and community education. In 2022, Jeanna established Evergreen Counseling and Consulting LLC, located in Homewood, Alabama. Her practice offers individual counseling, family and child counseling, parenting support, and professional consultation and training services. Jeanna is trained in eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR), trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT), acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), and play therapy. She is passionate about helping individuals and families heal and thrive. In addition to her clinical work, Jeanna is dedicated to educating and mentoring other professionals, helping them grow through training, professional development, and collaborative consultation.

## **Anthony Reynolds**

Anthony Reynolds is a Licensed Professional Counselor and a Certified Addiction Counselor with over 40 years working in substance use and mental health treatment. During his career he has developed and managed treatment programs while always participating in direct clinical counseling throughout his career. Mr. Reynolds is very passionate about meeting patients where they are and intervening to promote change when needed, especially those suffering from substance use disorders and special populations. He has a very broad and unique knowledge of addiction and mental health having worked with literally thousands of individuals and families. He has direct experience working and managing inpatient, outpatient, hospital, and corrections-based programs. He currently serves the Alabama Department of Mental Health as Crisis Care Project Director. In this role he provides oversight of the implementation of the Alabama Crisis System of Care.

## **Drew Reynolds**

Drew Reynolds, PhD, MSW, MEd is Principal Consultant at Common Good Data, where he provides data and program evaluation services to nonprofits and the public sector. In his consulting work, he advises organizations on how to use data-driven decision-making to design and evaluate effective programs, secure funding, and improve community wellbeing. While he serves organizations across many sectors, Drew - a social worker - has developed an expertise in providing data and program evaluation services for organizations in prevention, mental health, human services, and education. Drew also advises organizations on how to improve data and evaluation activities through a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens that attends to the culturally, linguistically, and racially diverse contexts in which many organizations serve.

## **Ginger Roberts**

Ginger Roberts serves as the Director for the Tuscaloosa County Department of Human Resources. She has been with the Department for 25 years. My entire professional career has been dedicated to child protective services. I am a licensed social worker with a Master of Social Work from the University of Alabama.

## **Antone Robinson, Jr.**

Antone Robinson Jr. has worked at the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) as the Youth Tobacco Program Manager for two years. He manages the youth segment of the tobacco control program grant. The youth tobacco control program aims to protect young people from nicotine initiation, addiction, and secondhand smoke exposure through education, awareness initiatives, and counter-marketing campaigns. Antone also represents ADPH on the Restriction of Youth Access to Tobacco Advisory Board, which is legislatively tasked with helping the Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Board monitor and enforce laws regarding youth access to tobacco and related products. He is also currently a member of the Tobacco-Free Recovery work group, which supports mental health facilities in becoming tobacco-free.

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

## **Kathleen Saucier**

Kathleen began her career in community mental health in 1991 when she volunteered as an on-call crisis counselor and ride along law enforcement advocate at a domestic violence sexual assault center. She completed her Associate degree in legal assistance and criminal justice, Bachelor's degree in criminology and psychology and in 2000 completed a dual Master's degree in community mental health and school counseling- with an extended curriculum focus on students with disabilities. Her Masters thesis research was entitled "Depressive Symptoms and Self-Esteem in Children, Can Horses Help?". Throughout the years while seeking her degrees and since, Kathleen has served her community in for profit, nonprofit and governmental agencies providing counseling and case management to a wide variety of populations and age groups. Since 2009 she has served her local and national community through her work with First Responders, Military members, Veterans and their families. She has extensive background in the field of trauma recovery/suicide prevention/substance use as well as utilizing new innovative healing strategies to include animal assisted therapy, experiential therapy- equine, farm based and outdoor adventure. Kathleen has advised Veteran, Military and First Responder startup organizations in program development to include equine experiential programs, emotional support canine programs and Veteran case management programs. She is Co-Founder of Samson's Strength Sustainable Veterans Project- where she volunteers her time to provide case management to Veterans struggling with homelessness and joblessness. Since 2017, she has provided Telemental Health utilizing her mental health licenses in 4 states, - with a strong focus on working with individuals with depression, anxiety, sleep disorders, trauma recovery and other stress related disorders. She provides care to many diverse populations to include Military, First Responders, Law Enforcement, Medical Providers and the LGBTQ community. She presently provides clinical consultation two days a week at a 12 Step Men's Residential Recovery program in Odenville, AL. Kathleen also holds these certifications - NCC- Nationally Certified Counselor and a Board Certified Telemental Health Counselor. She serves her national, state and local community by serving on the Selective Service District Appeal Board (DAB), the Alabama 310 Mental Health Board- AltaPointe, and the Clay County Children's Policy Council. She is the daughter of a WWII Navy Veteran, mother of a service connected disabled Navy Veteran, and the wife of a disabled, medically retired Navy/Army Veteran. Kathleen is a lifelong horse person- her love of horses started from the minute she experienced them and has continued to grow! She and her husband Dave started Samson's Strength Sustainable Veterans Project, Inc. 501 c 3 in 2016 and began their journey with horses on their farm in 2021. They presently have 21 equines on the property - Mustangs, rescue Belgian Drafts and donkeys! During the Spring of 2025 Samson's Strength Sustainable Veterans Project, Inc was chosen to be a part of an International campaign raising the awareness of the mental health benefits of horses for humans- Horses For Mental Health- Seen Through Horses. They received international recognition for their project and they were the second highest fundraiser for 2025 contributing to the over \$1.36 million raised! In August 2025, Samson's Strength Sustainable Veterans Project joined together with BondFire Ranch to create the H.O.R.S.E. Alliance (Heroes' Organizations for Recovery, Service & Empowerment). The HORSE Alliance is a collaborative, Alabama statewide coalition of nonprofit equine organizations, licensed professionals, and supportive entities dedicated to enhancing the care, recovery, and reintegration of military members, veterans, first responders, and their families through equine-assisted learning and services. The coalition will connect and amplify efforts across Alabama to improve access to services, promote best practices, secure funding, and advocate for sustainable, and long-term impact.

## **Seyram Selase**

Seyram Selase serves as the Executive Director of the Agency for Substance Abuse Prevention (ASAP), where he leads transformative prevention initiatives across Alabama and nationally. Under his leadership, ASAP was awarded the prestigious 2023 Calhoun County Nonprofit of the Year and secured a nationwide grant from the Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts (FORE) in 2025 to expand the Faith-Based Support Specialist (FBSS) program. His work champions evidence-based approaches, cultural responsiveness, and capacity building within communities. Seyram is the visionary behind the Ballers Against Bullets (BAB) and Barbers Against Bullets (BAB) initiatives, which address the intersection of gun violence and substance misuse through culturally resonant outreach. By engaging athletes, barbers, and other trusted community figures, these programs activate grassroots leadership and empower young people as prevention ambassadors. His leadership has positioned ASAP as a trusted statewide and national partner in prevention. A proud product of the Anniston City and Talladega County School systems, Seyram is a graduate of Berea College and a Life Member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated. A former Vice Mayor of the City of Anniston, AL (2012-2016), he remains committed to equity, youth empowerment, and public wellness through every role he holds. Seyram Selase's work is driven by purpose, innovation and a deep commitment to healing communities.

## **Nicole Shine**

Nicole Shine-Hopson, MS, CPM, ICPS, is the Executive Director of READY (Resources, Education, and Advocacy for Drug-Free Youth). She earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Stillman College and her Master's in Health Education and Promotion from Walden University. She is an Internationally Certified Prevention Specialist and a Certified Prevention Manager through the International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium and AADAA. With more than 10 years of experience in prevention, treatment, program development, and community outreach, Nicole has worked extensively with schools, coalitions, and communities across West Alabama. A committed leader, Nicole is a graduate of the Leadership Tuscaloosa Class of 2024. She serves on the board of directors for the Kristen Amerson Youth Foundation, is Chair of the Alabama SPAB, and is a member of AEOW and the Tuscaloosa Nonprofit Policy Council. She has also contributed her expertise on numerous state-level advisory and planning committees.

## **Paula Steele**

Paula Steele is a passionate mental health professional who joined WellStone as an outpatient therapist when she and her family moved to Huntsville in 2017. She transitioned to Acute Care Director in June 2019 and became the Director of WellStone Emergency Services (WES) last February. Paula graduated magna cum laude from the University of Arkansas with a BA in Psychology, and later earned her Master of social work from Fayetteville State University in North Carolina. Before coming to Huntsville, Paula traveled the world over with her husband, Matt, who served in the military for 20 years. During that time, she volunteered with care teams, responding to crisis situations in the military community. She received the Order of St. Joan D'Arc Medallion, the top volunteerism award given by the United States Armor Association, along with the Order of Our Lady of Loreto, which honors individuals who demonstrate outstanding support to the Army Aviation Family and Army Aviation Community. Paula learned to be a servant worker from her parents and that core value significantly influenced her career path. "Working in mental health is a humbling experience as the individuals we serve are so brave and become very vulnerable, sharing their innermost thoughts and problems when seeking help," she said. She and Matt have a full house. Besides three kids, they have two dogs, two cats, a hamster and a snake.

## **Kayla Stephens**

Kayla Stephens is a passionate leader, program manager, and doctoral candidate dedicated to empowering students and communities through prevention, wellness, and education. She currently serves as Program Manager for the HBCU RISE Project at the Council on Substance Abuse (COSA), where she oversees prevention-education and leadership initiatives across Alabama State University, Tuskegee University, and Talladega College. Kayla earned her Bachelor's in Criminal Justice and Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling from Alabama State University. She is currently pursuing her Doctorate in Leadership & Program Evaluation at Walden University, where her research focuses on the lived experiences of public defenders navigating systemic inequities while representing marginalized communities.

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

## **Kendrikka Suddith**

Kendrikka Suddith is an accomplished social work and mental health professional with more than a decade of experience in behavioral health, social services, and prevention program management. She currently serves as a Mental Health Specialist III and Program Manager with the Alabama Department of Mental Health, where she oversees the State Opioid Response (SOR) and Partnership for Success - Marijuana (PFS) grants. In this capacity, she leads statewide prevention initiatives, fosters data-driven community partnerships, and develops strategies to address substance misuse and reduce overdose risks across Alabama. Previously, Kendrikka worked with the Alabama Department of Human Resources as a Social Worker, conducting child welfare investigations, managing foster care placements, and providing family support services for individuals impacted by trauma, mental illness, and substance use. Her frontline experience with families in crisis provided deep insight into the connection between addiction, mental health challenges, and suicide risk. Earlier in her career, she served as a Therapist and Case Manager at East Central Mental Health Center, where she provided crisis intervention, psychosocial assessments, and recovery planning for adults and families coping with depression, substance use, and co-occurring disorders-further reinforcing her commitment to trauma-informed and integrated care practices. Kendrikka holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Social Work from Troy University and is currently pursuing a Master of Business Administration (MBA). She is certified in Trauma-Informed Care, Targeted Case Management, and Community Outreach, equipping her to lead with empathy and evidence-based insight. Through cross-sector collaboration and prevention-focused leadership, Kendrikka remains dedicated to advancing behavioral health, reducing opioid-related harms, and strengthening community resilience across Alabama.

## **Anne Taylor**

Dr. Anne Taylor earned her Ph.D. in Neuroscience from Vanderbilt University, where she studied neurocircuit adaptations driving negative affective behaviors during withdrawal in a preclinical model of alcohol use disorder. She has extensive expertise in behavioral neuroscience and addiction biology, with multiple publications and national presentations. Currently, as the COACH Postdoctoral Fellow at Auburn University's Harrison College of Pharmacy, she works with Dr. Lindsey Hohmann on research and education initiatives, contributing to manuscripts on topics including naloxone training policies in pharmacies, public knowledge of stimulant misuse, and the implementation of COACH's K-12 substance misuse education programs.

## **Patrick Tidwell**

Patrick Tidwell is a licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT) who has worked in for-profit and non-profit agencies throughout the state of Alabama. His main experience has been with substance abuse clients and their families for 18 plus years. He graduated with his bachelor's in 1999 from Faulkner University in ministry/theology. He went onto to complete his master's degree in marriage and family therapy (MFT) in 2002 from Amridge University. He started his career as a counselor/therapist in the same year. After a while, he decided to pursue and complete his Ph D in Marriage and Family Therapy in 2014 from Amridge University. He has been blessed to teach at various conferences since 2012, has wrote articles and has even done helpful radio spots on the Joy FM Alabama. He has also been blessed to teach counseling courses online and in person since 2014 at South University, Faulkner University, Liberty University and Lipscomb University.

## **April Turner**

April B. Turner is currently the State Head Injury Coordinator for the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. She is also the State Traumatic Brain Injury Program Director of the Federal Administration on Community Living TBI Partnership Grants, the AL TBI Navigation System & Statewide TBI Helpline, the State TBI Pre-Vocational Adult Care Coordination Program and Statewide TBI/Spinal Cord Injury Trauma Registry Service Linkage System for the Lead Agency on TBI. Her agency also carries the Alabama Head Injury Task Force & Advisory Council, The Teacher Acute Concussion Tool, and The Alabama Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund. She wrote and was awarded a 5-year Administration on Community Living Federal TBI Grant for systems change in the Behavioral Health area for individuals with TBI and a 2 -year Administration on Community Living Federal Public Health Grant for TBI Systems change in Alabama. Ms. Turner received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Rehabilitation from Troy University and Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling and Vocational Evaluation from Auburn University. She began her work for Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services over 24 years ago and most recent honor included presenting to the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine's Forum on TBI in Washington DC which was published and distributed by the National Institutes of Health.

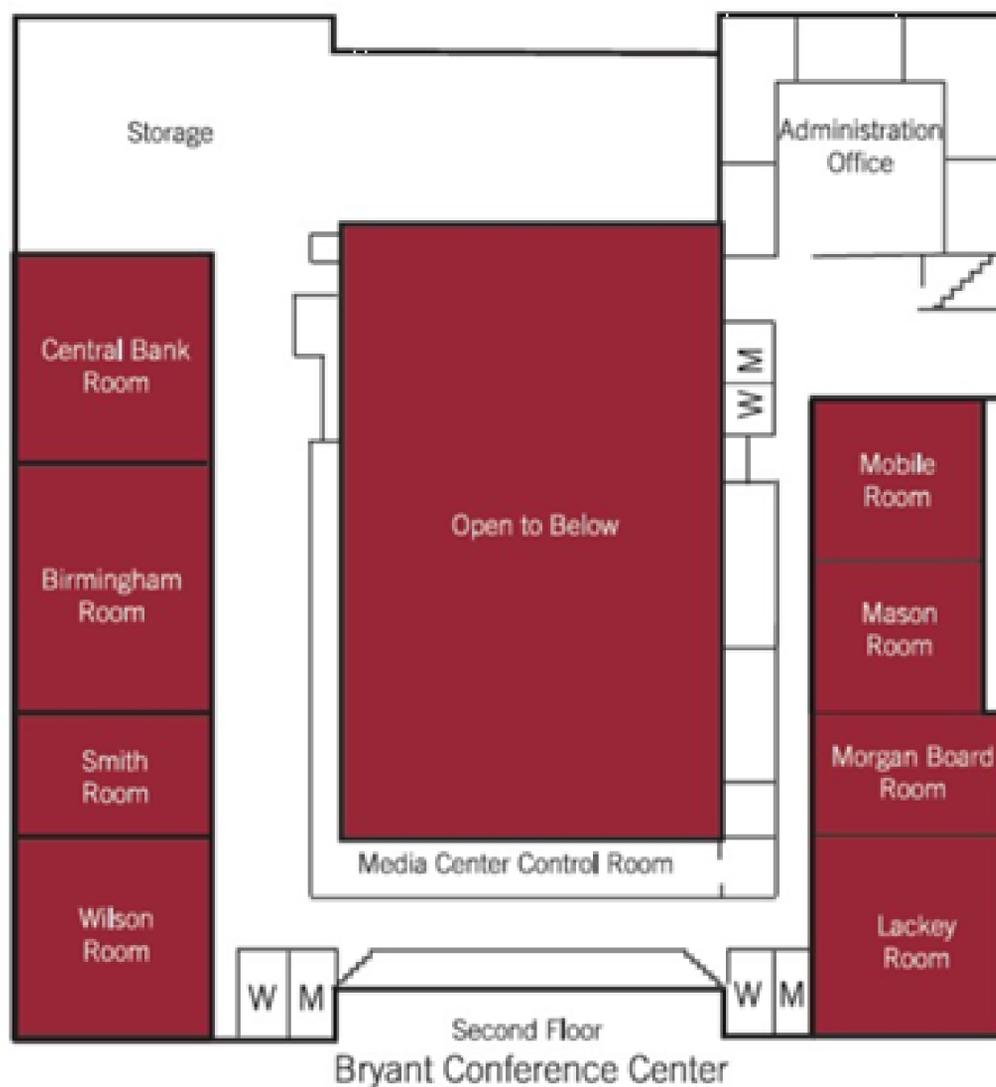
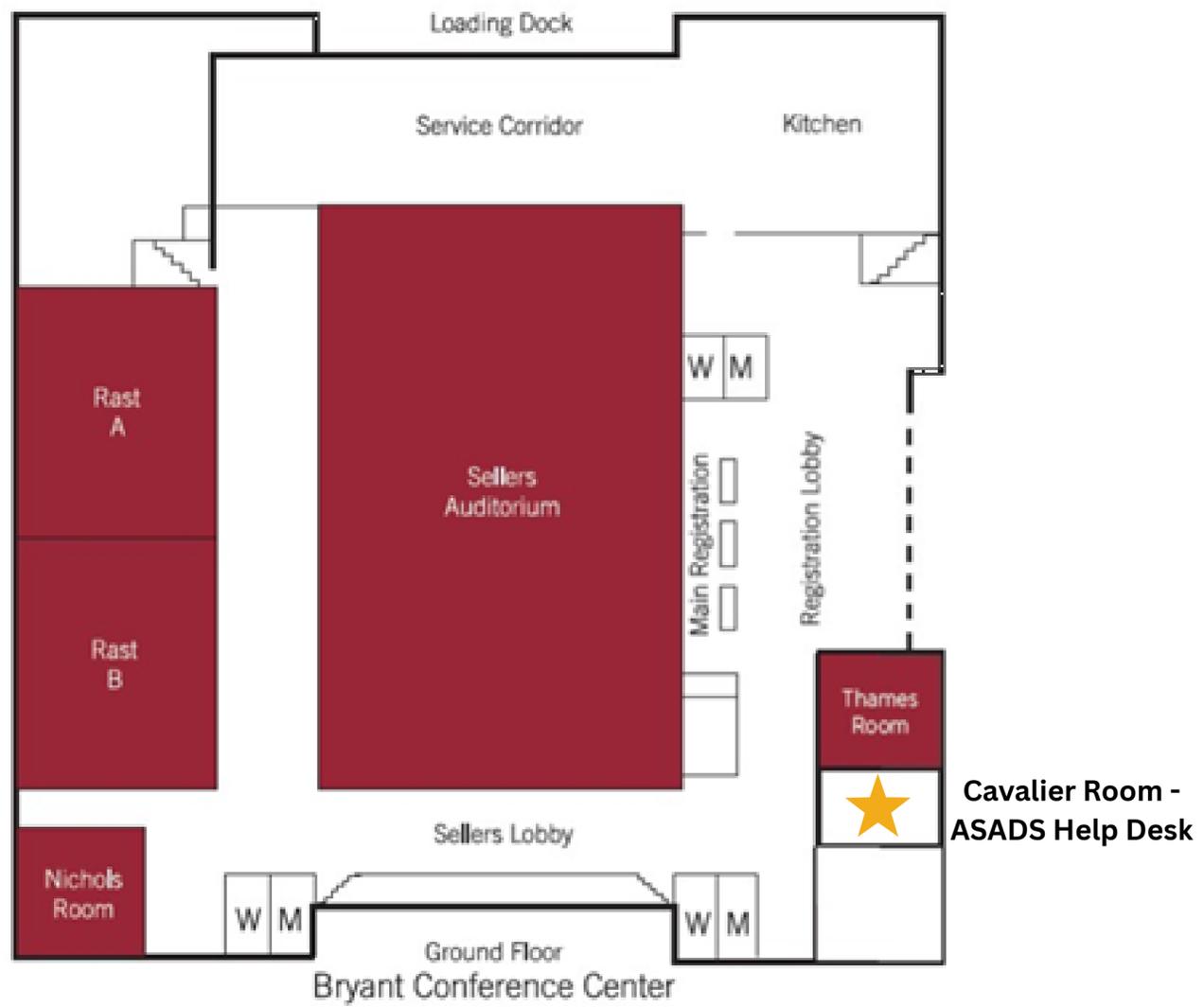
## **Brenae Waters**

Brenae' Waters, MPA, is the Epidemiologist of the Alabama Department of Mental Health, Office of Prevention Services residing in Montgomery, AL. She graduated from the University of Alabama at Birmingham with a bachelor's degree in health sciences and a master's degree in public administration from Auburn University in Montgomery, AL. Mrs. Waters has approximately 14 years of state experience with data collection, analysis and reporting from the Public Health, Medicaid and Mental Health perspectives. While serving as the State's Epidemiologist, Mrs. Waters currently serves as the chairwoman of the Alabama Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (AEOW). She is a member of the following committees: State Prevention Advisory Board (SPAB), Opioid Council - Data Committee, Gulf Coast High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (GC HIDTA), Adolescent Substance Treatment Subcommittee and Youth Tobacco Advisory Committee. Mrs. Waters has received the following certifications: Power BI Training, 2024, Tableau Software Training, 2016, Managing Disruptive Audiences for the prevention professional, Introduction to Substance Abuse Prevention training, Introduction to the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF), Alcohol, Tobacco, and other drugs training.

## **Bertrina West**

Dr. Olivia West, also known as Dr. O, is an International Psychologist, Licensed Professional Counselor, Coach, Diversity Equity and Inclusion advocate and consultant, and Author of From Dyslexia to Doctorate, a guide to achieving success despite life's obstacles. She has traveled the world immersing herself in various countries and cultures, gaining a profound expertise in identifying unresolved trauma and uncovering negative beliefs that impede personal and professional growth. With over 15 years of experience, Dr. O has dedicated her career to social justice, educating and empowering individuals, families, leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals to unlock their full potential by addressing the deep-seated emotional barriers through mental health therapy and mindset shift coaching. Dr. O specializes in trauma resolution rooted in her belief that unresolved trauma can significantly impact one's ability to thrive. She believes the process of transformation achieved by confronting and resolving past traumas can unlock potential and lead more fulfilling lives. However, one must trust the Power of the Process, despite what obstacles may arise. Outside of her professional pursuits, Dr. O is a foodie, and enjoys dancing, and spending quality time with her family.

# Bryant Conference Center Maps



**MARCH**

**15-19**

**2027**



Alabama School of Alcohol and Other Drug Studies

**BRYANT CONFERENCE CENTER**

**SAVE**

**THE**

**DATE**