



School Social Work
Association of America

28th Annual National Conference

Breakout Session Descriptions

DRAFT--Breakout Session Descriptions--DRAFT

Thursday- Saturday, April 10-12, 2025
Pre-Conference- Wednesday, April 9, 2025
Atlanta, GA

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

Thursday, April 10, 2025 (Sessions A & B)

A1 When the ACE is a Losing Hand: Rethinking Why Minorities Don't Seek Mental Health Treatment

Black families and Black boys experience trauma at a higher rate than their White counterparts, yet they seek mental health treatment at a lower rate. Untreated childhood trauma can lead to poor outcomes in adulthood such as mental illnesses, involvement in the criminal justice system, and inability to trust and form healthy relationships. We will examine these potential outcomes and explore the reason Black families do not seek mental health treatment. Finally, I hope to leave the audience with new ways to engage Black families, meet them where they are, and help them get the mental health support they need, especially Black boys. I will also introduce a new clinical tool for clinicians when working with Black families to help with cultural competence.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Advocacy

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will identify 3 potential outcomes of untreated childhood trauma.
2. Participants will describe at least 3 reasons why minorities don't seek mental health treatment.
3. Participants will demonstrate the use and benefits of the Cultural Trauma Questionnaire.

Presenter: Dr. Shericka Smith, DSW (she/her)

A2 Preparing for National Certification: Hands- on Workshop with Nationally Certified School Social Workers

Are you an active SSWAA member with 4 years of post-MSW experience who wants to become an NCSSW candidate? Attend this hands-on session to learn about the certification process from application to competency statement submission and the submission rating process. This session will prompt you to examine how the SSWAA National Practice Model and your practice intersect, test your skills at writing a competency statement, and identify artifacts that you could use to support it. Participants will receive an update on school social workers who have received a pay increase upon earning national certification and any state legislative updates. This session will help you evaluate your readiness to invest time into the national certification process and develop a plan to successfully complete it.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Leadership

Learning Objectives

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

Presenters: Lou Paschall, LPSW, NCSSW (she/her)
Ken Rautiola, LCSW, NCSSW, EdS, MSW (he/him) &
Dr. Michelle Alvarez, EdD, MSW (she/her)

A3 Beyond NAS - A Collaborative Model of Support

This educational session will share current research highlighting the long-term impact of prenatal opioid exposure on children. Many had long term behavioral, physical, educational, and developmental impacts from their prenatal opioid exposure. We will share best practice, from To The Moon and Back, a 501(c)3 that is dedicated to children born with in utero substance exposure and their families. Since 2017 we have been the leader in providing support, education, and advocacy for the children of the opioid epidemic. Some of our current work includes a collaboration with the Plymouth Public Schools (MA) providing integrated care management for children with POE to improve service delivery, improving these children's outcomes academically, behaviorally, and developmentally.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Practice

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will be able to define Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) and recognize its causes and prevalence.
2. Participants will interpret current research overviews both conducted within the United States and Internationally, highlighting best practice and the long-term implications and ongoing needs of children with NAS.
3. Participants will create an action plan they can take back to their schools to support their students with NAS, provided existing collaborative models that have improved the care of children born substance exposed.

Presenter: Theresa Harmon, MSW, LICSW (she/her) &
Maxanne Wordell, MSW, LSSW (she/her)

A4 Empowering Minds: Utilizing an Intersectionality-Based Approach to Address Mental Health Issues in Minority Students

The Empowering Minds workshop aims to equip educators, mental health professionals, and support staff with the tools and knowledge to effectively address mental health challenges faced by minority students using an intersectionality-based approach. By recognizing the unique experiences of students at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and more, this workshop seeks to foster inclusive and culturally sensitive practices that promote mental well-being and academic success.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Practice

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will identify and articulate the concept of intersectionality and explain how it relates to the mental health challenges faced by minority students. This will enable participants to recognize the unique experiences of these students and apply an intersectionality-based approach to their work.
2. Participants will develop a deep understanding of inclusive and culturally sensitive practices that can be applied in educational and mental health settings. Participants will be able to implement these practices effectively to promote the mental well-being and academic success of minority students at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other factors.
3. Participants will discover the knowledge and tools to design and implement strategies and interventions that address mental health challenges specific to minority students. Participants will be able to create a supportive and empathetic environment that acknowledges the diversity of experiences within this student population, ultimately contributing to their overall well-being and academic achievement.

Presenter: Dania Martinez, MSW (she/her)

A5 Supporting the School-Based Play Therapist in Special Education

Balancing the needs and expectations of a school while using play therapy can be difficult. This workshop will help school-based play therapists learn how to support children from preschool to high school by using expressive therapy interventions in individual and group play therapy within a school setting. Participants will also learn how to communicate the effectiveness of play therapy to school staff and administrators, while also exploring how to create play-based universal supports in collaboration with teachers. Additionally, participants will explore play-based interventions and goals that can address common mental health issues in schools including anxiety, depression, ADHD, and more. Special attention will be given to these common issues within the parameters of IEP services.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Practice

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will examine the benefits of play therapy in schools and demonstrate the ability to create 3 play therapy goals that are in alignment with Social Work Counseling services conducted through a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
2. Participants will determine 3 ways to collaborate with teachers to create and implement play-based universal supports for all students.
3. Participants will apply 3 play-based interventions to implement in school settings to address common mental health issues in children of all ages, giving special attention to those issues supported by IEP services.

Presenter: Kira Collins, MSW, LCSW, RPT-S (she/her)

A6 Balancing Act: DBT for Students and Self-Care

In the high-pressure environment of school settings, social workers are continually striving to support the socio-emotional and behavioral needs of their students while also managing their own stress and well-being. This presentation, titled Balancing Act: DBT for Students and Self-Care, offers an in-depth exploration of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and its applications for both student support and social worker self-care. This session will provide actionable insights and practical tools to integrate DBT into daily practice, promoting a balanced and effective approach to well-being.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Practice

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will identify and describe the core components of Dialectical Behavior Therapy, including Mindfulness, Distress Tolerance, Emotional Regulation, and Interpersonal Effectiveness.
2. Participants will demonstrate the ability to implement DBT strategies to support students' socio-emotional and behavioral needs.
3. Participants will demonstrate the ability to utilize DBT techniques for their own self-care and stress reduction, applying skills in Mindfulness, Distress Tolerance, Emotional Regulation, and Interpersonal Effectiveness to manage work-related stress and enhance personal well-being.

Presenter: Janae Ponder, LCSW (she/her)

A7 Advancing School Social Work: Culturally Responsive, Trauma Informed, Tech-Savvy, and Leadership Ready

This session explores the comprehensive NYU Silver's Post-Master's Certificate Program in School Social Work provides. Participants will delve into anti-oppressive and anti-racist practices, advanced crisis intervention strategies, leadership development, and integrating AI and digital tools in school social work. Emphasizing culturally responsive and evidence-based approaches, the session will equip attendees with practical skills and knowledge to create positive, sustainable change in educational settings. The discussion will highlight the program's flexible hybrid format and rigorous curriculum and focus on real-world applications and career enhancement.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Leadership

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will apply anti-oppressive and anti-racist practices within school social work to address structural inequalities.
2. Participants will examine data and emerging technologies to enhance school social work practices and leadership capabilities.
3. Participants will classify and cultivate leadership skills necessary for school social workers to lead within educational settings and promote positive change effectively.

Presenters: Dr. Gabriella McBride, DSW, LCSW, SIFI (she/her)

Dr. Abigail Levites, DSW, LCSW (she/her) &

Dr. Jessica Chock-Goldman, DSW, LCSW (she/her)

B1 A Maine Adventure: The Evolution of a State School Social Work Organization

Come explore the development of a school social work organization in the State of Maine. Many states and regions of the country have a rich heritage of school social work organizations, while Maine and other states have historically lacked this supportive structure. School social work is a complex and dynamic specialty practice that, at times, can become isolating for practitioners. This session will trace the evolution of school social work support in the state of Maine over the past five years. Starting with the identification of a NEED for support, the creation of a statewide school social work committee, inconsistent participation, and leveraging the RIGHT TIME. Celebrate the importance of connecting school social workers to the profession; hear the Maine Adventure and share your story.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Leadership

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will identify 3 benefits of membership in a state school social work organization.
2. Participants will identify the steps necessary for state school social work organizations to become SSWAA affiliates.
3. Participants will identify and establish two personal action steps to strengthen their connection to a state or national school social work organization.

Presenter: Ken Rautiola, LCSW, NCSSW, EdS, MSW (he/him)

B2 The Two Faces of Home Visiting: School Social Workers and Caregivers Shed Light on Home Visiting Practices

The presenters conducted thorough interviews with caretakers (parents/guardians) who recounted their experiences and engagements with a school social worker (SSWer) following a home visit. Additionally, SSWers were interviewed to gather insights into their perspectives on home visits. The findings of this study offer valuable insights for practice, shedding light on families' reactions to SSWer visits and addressing the safety concerns and obstacles that SSWers encounter. Furthermore, it delves into SSWers' perceptions of the efficacy of home visits. These dual perspectives provide a rich foundation for informing best practices in home visiting.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Research

Learning Objectives

4. Participants will discover an enhanced understanding of caregivers' perspectives on home visits.
5. Participants will recognize the diverse forms of home visits facilitated by school social workers.
6. Participants will identify strategies to enhance home-school relationships through conducting impactful, respectful, and safe home visits.

Presenters: Dr. Dee Stalnecker, DSW, LSW, BCBA (she/her)

Dr. Stephanie Ochocki, DSW, MSW, LICSW (she/her) &

Lou Paschall, LAPSW, NCSSW (she/her)

B3 Recognizing and Responding to Human Trafficking: The Role of the School Social Worker and the Interdisciplinary Team

The proposed education session and discussion cover the signs of sex and/or labor trafficking and the role the school social worker may have in identifying victims/survivors, connecting these students with resources, and providing education to prevent trafficking and victimization. The relationship of trafficking to the social determinants of health, economic disparities, disabilities,

racism, and other forms of discrimination will be covered. Cases will be presented, and key elements addressed. Finally, the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and community engagement will be explored, using the case example of the conception, development, and ongoing work of the Bronx Human Trafficking Task Force.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Advocacy

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will identify potential and current victims and survivors of human trafficking and to provide appropriate resources and interventions through increased level of awareness and knowledge about human trafficking in communities where they live, work and spend time.
2. Participants will recognize the connection between social determinants of health, racism, economic disparities, and other forms of discrimination with risks for trafficking and other forms of victimization.
3. Participants will discover methods for addressing human trafficking on both macro and micro levels through interdisciplinary collaboration and community engagement.

**Presenters: Diane Strom, MST (she/her) &
Dr. Peter Sherman, MD, MPH (he/him)**

B4 Emerging Ethical Conundrums in Hostile School Environments

This workshop will provide participants with a framework for tackling ethical conundrums associated with their engagement in anti-racism and anti-oppressive practices and delivering mental health services when working in school environments that are hostile to core social work values. Participants will also examine how to use the Code of Ethics and federal laws when state laws and school district policies conflict with best social work practices in school settings.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Leadership

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will rank an expanded set of ethical values to help them reframe emerging ethical dilemmas.
2. Participants will apply 7 ethical decision-making steps to case studies that illustrate current and anticipated future challenges associated with the delivery of school mental health services and implementing anti-racism and anti-oppressive practices.
3. Participants will examine their own ethical foundation toward the goal of more just, inclusive, and equitable schools.

**Presenters: Dr. M. Annette Clayton, PhD, MSSW, ACSW (she/her) &
Dr. Jim Raines, PhD, LCSW (he/him)**

B5 Engaging in School Social Work Advocacy: Thinking Globally, Acting Locally

To empower school social workers through advocacy, this presentation equips SSW practitioners with skills to advocate effectively across all levels, from school boards to state legislation, and even potentially organizing a state-level SSW Day on the Hill. We will explore SSW practitioners' varied roles in advocacy and developing actionable changes to legislation and policy. Strong collaboration is needed between SSW practitioners, state associations, and SSWAA to better support the needs of individual practitioners in leading advocacy efforts. Participants will develop a unified vision of SSW collaboration and advocacy through candid discussions and real-world

examples. Elevate your advocacy game to create meaningful change for SSW, students, families, schools, and communities.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Policy

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will classify School Social Work roles in advocacy.
2. Participants will identify effective advocacy strategies across multiple levels, from individual student support to state-level policymaking.
3. Participants will identify steps of a collaborative action plan to engage school boards, state associations, and SSWAA in advancing the school social work agenda.

Presenters: Dr. Robert Lucio, PhD, LCSW (he/him)

Emilie Souhrada, LISW (she/her) &

Dr. Brandon Mitchell, PhD, MSW (he/him)

B6 School Social Workers Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance promotes academic equity for students experiencing homelessness within secondary settings. Students experiencing homelessness face a myriad of challenges that can cause difficulty to their academic, social, and emotional functioning. The academic setting may serve as a stable place that builds resiliency with children and youth experiencing homelessness. School social workers are uniquely placed in schools, serving as the liaison between home-school-and community and can serve as a resource for students experiencing homelessness.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Practice

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will identify the academic, social, and emotional challenges students may face as a result of homelessness.
2. Participants will discover research-based strategies and practices for children and youth experiencing homelessness.
3. Participants will distinguish ways to assist in the transition of homeless youth from secondary to post-secondary settings with provided tools.

Presenter: Kennesha Smith, LMSW (she/her)

B7 Embracing Neurodiversity: Creating Sensory-Friendly and Inclusive School Spaces

School social workers will gain practical strategies to create accessible spaces for neurodivergent students and staff in schools. Participants will leave with concrete action steps on implementing accommodations such as sensory-friendly classrooms, group spaces, and offices. By the end of the session, attendees will be equipped with the tools and knowledge to foster inclusivity and support neurodivergent individuals in their school environment.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Advocacy

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will determine personalized action plans to implement sensory-friendly strategies in their classrooms, group spaces, and offices, tailored to the specific needs of neurodivergent individuals.

2. Participants will dramatize, through practice, how to effectively use affirming communication techniques to build positive relationships with neurodivergent students and staff, promoting a more inclusive and supportive school environment.
3. Participants will apply learning, through collaboration with colleagues, to create individualized support plans for neurodivergent individuals, emphasizing the importance of advocacy and accessibility in school settings.

Presenter: Dr. Sara Rodrigues, DSW (she/her)

Friday, April 11, 2025 (Sessions C & D)

C1 Training Ambassadors for Awareness Campaign

In this powerful and transformative session, school social workers will delve into the urgent themes of the SSWAA's Awareness Campaign, exploring new ways to uplift voices, dismantle barriers, and foster unbreakable connections within school communities. As we gather in Atlanta, the cradle of movements that changed history, this session will ignite a renewed sense of purpose and action among participants, empowering each person to stand resiliently in the face of today's most pressing social and educational challenges. Attendees will engage in discussions, skill-building activities, and collaborative planning designed to bring an earth-shaking impact to their practice and communities. We'll dive into strategies that enable school social workers to become even stronger advocates for students, driving equity and transformation within their schools, and reaching the hearts of students, families, and staff alike. Join us for an inspiring 2-hour journey that is bound to leave you recharged, refocused, and ready to create lasting change.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Advocacy

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will identify and implement advanced advocacy strategies aligned with SSWAA's Awareness Campaign goals, enhancing your ability to champion equity, inclusion, and mental wellness.
2. Participants will develop and practice techniques to ensure that students and families are active participants in shaping school policies and support services, recognizing their voices as critical to building a positive, inclusive school culture.
3. Participants will explore resilience-building frameworks and trauma-informed approaches to help social workers strengthen their own well-being, leading to sustained energy and commitment in their work.
4. Participants will collaborate with peers to design effective partnerships with school stakeholders, creating a unified approach to enhancing student success and fostering stronger, more resilient school communities.

**Presenters: Dr. TerriylN Rivers-Cannon, EdD (she/her) &
Rebecca Oliver, LMSW, CSW (she/her)**

C2 Where's my SSWAA Compass? Navigating Social Work Leadership in Schools and Districts

Using SSWAA and NASW standards as our compass, we will learn how to best navigate the waters of being a social work administrator in school systems. We will start with assessing our leadership style and dig deeper into the elements of transformative leadership using a trauma informed cultural humility approach beside professional standards of school social work practice. Participants will learn how to use professional standards, trauma informed practices, and a cultural humility approach to advocate and be a leader for system change. Presentation will be

interactive with activities focusing on self-awareness, case scenarios, and evidence-based practices.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Leadership

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will classify their individual leadership style and identify 2 new skills to implement.
2. Participants will determine 2 examples of how to use professional standards, trauma informed practices, and cultural humility as an advocacy tool for system change.
3. Participants will determine 2 examples of how to apply transformative leadership skills with their stakeholders.

Presenters: Dr. Elaine Swain, DSW, LMSW, BA (she/her) & Alexis Scurry, MSW, BSW (she/her)

C3 Dismantling Systems of Oppression During Suicide Assessments in K-12 Settings.

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

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Practice

Learning Objectives

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

Presenter: Sheri Koller, LCSW, LCSW-C, PPSC, NCSSW (she/her)

C4 Abolitionist Perspectives in School Social Work: A Call for Justice-Oriented Practice

This interactive session will delve into abolitionist perspectives in school social work, emphasizing the need to shift from punitive and deficit-based frameworks to justice-oriented practices. Participants will gain insights into SSW's historical roots and contemporary challenges and explore strategies from abolitionist teaching to reimagine their practice. Through engaging activities, case scenarios, and group discussions, attendees will learn and apply skills for creating inclusive, equitable, and supportive school environments that uplift and heal minoritized youth.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Practice

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will identify the historical and contemporary influences shaping school social work (SSW) practices.
2. Participants will discover and explore abolitionist teaching strategies and their application in SSW to address punitive and deficit-based frameworks.
3. Participants will determine skills for implementing justice-oriented, inclusive, and youth-centered practices in school environments.

Presenters: Dr. Krystal Folk-Nagua, DSW (she/her) & Dr. Brandon Mitchell, PhD (he/him)

C5 AI-Powered School Social Work: Ethical, Equitable, Personalized Solutions

In an era where student mental health needs are increasingly complex, this workshop offers school social workers a look at leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance their practice. Participants will examine AI's application and impact, first exploring ethical and responsible uses of open-source generative AI tools to improve day-to-day efficiency. From there, participants will explore research-backed interventions that provide personalized and culturally responsive student support, while leveraging technology to provide scalable, affordable solutions in communities that have traditionally lacked access to these kinds of resources. Participants will gain hands-on experience with the tools presented and develop a personal plan to experiment further with AI in their practice.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Practice

Learning Objectives

4. Participants will discover best practices and ethics regarding how to leverage generative AI tools to augment their impact and efficacy.
5. Participants will demonstrate AI powered tools to gain hands-on experience with a variety of AI applications and use cases for students and social workers with ethical considerations in mind.
6. Participants will analyze how AI tools can increase equitable access to support services in their community.

Presenter: Dr. Marina Badillo-Diaz, DSW (she/her)

C6 Reclaiming Black Childhood: Engaging Adultified Black Children in Play Therapy

Play therapy with adultified Black children may be challenging, especially gaining buy-in with Black caregivers. Systemic & institutional racism in American Black children often robs them of a childhood. As a result, Black caregivers may also encourage their children to abandon play to prepare them for an unjust world. In turn, they are often denied the ability to fully engage in play, in and out of the playroom. This also may lead to difficulty gaining play therapy buy-in from Black caregivers around certain categories of toys that may be taboo. Using an Ecosystemic Play Therapy approach, this workshop explores how adultification appears in play therapy with Black children and family, including how the grief of the killing of unarmed Black Americans may contribute to parenting practices

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Practice

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will describe 8 play themes that may signal adultification in Black children.

2. Participants will analyze 3 categories of play that may be viewed as problematic in Black families.
3. Participants will identify 12 play therapy interventions to address adultification in Black children.

Presenter: Dr. April Duncan, DSW, LCSW, RPT-S (she/her)

C7 Equity in Mind: Transforming School Mental Health

An engaging and dynamic workshop designed for school social workers, where we delve into over seven years of school and community-based mental health partnerships and program evaluation. This journey, which began as a pilot in one district, has successfully expanded into six school districts, creating a robust and universal mental health system of care. Design Thinking: Engage in problem-solving to enhance interprofessional teams. Interactive Learning: Dive into real-world scenarios from our practice to shape your school's MTSS. Self-Reflection: Explore biases and strengthen critical consciousness through guided activities. Expressive Modalities: Use art, music, and movement to foster self-awareness and team collaboration. Group Collaboration: Collaborate with peers to spark ideas.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Research

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will diagram a collaboratively produced a resource map of their school's mental health support system (MTSS), highlighting at least 3 key resources and 3 significant barriers. They will also develop a proactive problem-solving plan to address these barriers, with clear steps and responsibilities assigned.
2. Participants will dramatize and refine at least 3 communication and advocacy strategies, demonstrated through role-playing and group activities. They will also create a personalized advocacy plan for their school, including specific tactics for engaging stakeholders and promoting holistic student support.
3. Participants will apply expressive strategies to strengthen interdisciplinary team practices and enhance their own critical consciousness, ensuring inclusivity and belonging within their school communities.

Presenter: Dr. Rachel Phelps, DSW (she/her)

D1 Black Girl Magic SEL: Creating Social Emotional Learning Programs for Black Adolescent Females

In this workshop, we will discuss creating SEL Programs for Black Adolescent Females. School social workers will learn about the unique challenges of Black adolescent females in school environments and society, examine the intersectionality of race and gender and its impact on the academic success, emotional well-being and positive social interactions of Black adolescent females, and identify tools and strategies they can use to create and effectively implement SEL programs that are relevant to and support the unique experiences and challenges of Black adolescent females. This interactive session will combine lecture-style learning with small group discussion so participants can explore creating SEL programs tailored to Black adolescent females in their unique school environments.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Advocacy

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will determine the unique challenges of Black adolescent females and how SEL can foster academic success, emotional well-being, and positive social interactions in middle and high school.
2. Participants will examine the intersectionality of race, gender, and other aspects of identity and their impact on middle and high school experiences of Black adolescent females.

3. Participants will identify tools and strategies they can use to create and effectively implement SEL programs that are relevant to and support the unique experiences of Black adolescent females in middle and high school.

Presenter: Dr. Nina Ruffin, DSW, LCSW-R (she/her)

D2 Our School District is Trauma Informed, Isn't that Enough? Elevate Your Trauma Knowledge & Practice.

Join us along the journey from being simply trauma informed to becoming trauma responsive. Examine the step-by-step process begun by the Cherokee County School District and the key roles played by District leadership, behavior specialists, and school social workers. Explore the ways in which you as an individual or member of a school district can leverage community partnerships, free trauma trainings, and more intensive programs including an in-depth look at the Trauma-Based Relational Intervention training from the Karyn Pervis Institute of Child Development. Attendees will learn from certified TBRI Practitioners and take away evidence-based resources, discuss strategic behavioral strategies, and create a template formulating a practical trauma responsive plan for your school district.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Leadership

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will distinguish the differences between trauma informed practices and trauma responsive practices within the educational milieu.
2. Participants will identify their district's current level of trauma responsive practices, examining strengths and opportunities for growth.
3. Participants will describe an outline for increasing their school district's trauma responsive knowledge-base and future direction.

Presenters: Dr. Tara Quinn-Schuldt, PhD, MS, MSW, LMSW (she/her)

Patrick Walker, EdS (he/him) &

Megan Allen, MSW, LCSW (she/her)

D3 Unhoused Youth: One District's Journey to Breaking Barriers and Creating Systemic Change

As our nation's schools continue to grapple with the rising numbers of unhoused youth and families, districts have used outreach, collaboration, and education to decrease stigma and increase access to community services. In this session, we will review McKinney-Vento law, demonstrate how a strong partnership between McKinney-Vento Liaisons and School Social Workers increases opportunities for advocacy, district and community education, access to mental health services, and systemic change. You will learn how a partnership with your local Continuum of Care (CoC) can change the trajectory of a student's life through easier access to services and housing permanency.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Policy

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will deduce a clear understanding of McKinney-Vento law and specific rights pertaining to unaccompanied youth.
2. Participants will identify 3 interventions to utilize to reduce stigma associated with students and families experiencing homelessness.
3. Participants will classify how partnerships with local Continuum of Care and School Social Workers can expand access to services and increase housing stability which lead to higher outcomes for student success.

Presenters: Lori Carmack, MSW (she/her)
Laura Grier, BA, Student master's in counseling (she/her) &
Mackenzie Kelly, MPA (she/her)

D4 Partnering for Animal-Assisted Activities in Schools: Social, Physical, and Academic Impacts

Working in concert with multidisciplinary teams, School Social Workers are uniquely positioned to bring animal-assisted activities into school districts and implement interventions with students and staff. Animal-assisted activities (AAAs) can positively impact student's social, physical, and academic well-being and improve school culture. There are a variety of ways to bring AAAs into a district and many aspects to consider before doing so. Attend this session to learn how one district started a therapy dog program from scratch, reflect on the impact thus far and goals for growth, and have the opportunity to interact with the district therapy dog.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Practice

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will discover the range of animal-assisted activities and the differences in types of working dogs.
2. Participants will summarize research findings regarding the social, physical, and academic benefits of animal-assisted activities in schools.
3. Participants will interpret ways that results of animal-assisted activities align with School Social Work values and intended outcomes for students, families, and staff.

Presenter: Lou Paschall, LPSW, NCSW (she/her)
Leslie Brasfield, RN (she/her) &
Randall Robinson, Ed.S. (he/him)

D5 Evidence-Based Approaches in School Social Work Education: Needs Assessments and Effective Interventions

To effectively and efficiently navigate the complexities of school climates, school social workers must understand the lifecycle of needs assessments and how data-driven and evidence-based interventions can affect positive social change by addressing student and community needs. This panel of faculty and MSW students from Concord University will offer participants an overview of the experiential approach we use to teach the entire lifecycle of assessment initiatives - from planning and dissemination to data collection, evaluation, and communicating findings to stakeholders. We will explore the key areas of our needs assessment: school safety, family outreach and basic needs provision, and mental health and student support services, and students will discuss their findings.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Research

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will name the foundational principles of evidence-based needs assessments in school social work practice.
2. Participants will identify the practical skills required to initiate and lead a comprehensive assessment initiative in their professional environment.
3. Participants will distinguish the effectiveness of evidence-based interventions in addressing identified needs within school communities, drawing connections between research-informed practices and measurable improvements in educational outcomes.

**Presenters: Emily Landseidel, MSW, LCSW, MBA (she/her) &
Dr. Irene Hagarty, DSW, MSW (she/her)**

D6 Supporting Students, Staff, and Ourselves in the Aftermath of Crisis

Crises have the potential to cause short- and long-term effects on the psychological functioning, emotional adjustment, health, and developmental trajectory of children. This session provides practical suggestions on how to identify common adjustment difficulties in children in the aftermath of a crisis and to promote effective coping strategies, including incorporating the principles of psychological first aid. Professionals residing and/or working within a community impacted by a crisis event often experience similar impacts as the children they support throughout the recovery and renewal phases, underscoring the need for professional self-care. The presenter, David J Schonfeld, MD, established and directs the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement at Children's Hospital

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Practice

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will explain why it is important to shift from exclusively a medical model toward a system of universal support to promote resilience as the primary response to major school and community crisis events.
2. Participants will categorize the common adjustment reactions to anticipate among children after a crisis.
3. Participants will describe the importance and challenges of professional self-care in the aftermath of crisis including as it relates to moral injury.

Presenter: Dr. David Schonfeld, MA, FAAP (he/him)

D7 School Social Workers Building Relationships with Immigrant Students: Utilizing a Chicana/Latina Feminist Ethic of Care

Schools function as a primary setting that can support equity for immigrant children, providing education, a link to resources, and the development of positive social identities. School social workers (SSWs) have the potential to promote equity for immigrant students by fostering a welcoming school climate, being a bridge to resources, and challenging policies and practices that exclude immigrant students. However, traditional SSW practice lacks models that disrupt racial inequity. This study seeks to draw from a Chicana feminist critical ethic of care framework to analyze the ways in which SSWs approached their work with immigrant students to foster equity and support their social, emotional and material needs.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Leadership

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will identify and understand the Critical Ethic of Care framework.
2. Participants will analyze how to address racialization that immigrant students face.
3. Participants will determine how their own positionality shapes social work practice.

Presenter: Dr. Leticia Villarreal Sosa, PhD, LCSW (she/her)

Saturday, April 12, 2025 (Sessions E)

E1 Becoming an "Inspired Ally" to LGBTQ+ Youth

Data from The Trevor Project shows that LGBTQ+ students experience more disparities compared to non-LGBTQ+ youth. Some of these disparities include violence, suicide risk, and mental health concerns. Many of these disparities are linked to social disadvantages including a history of exclusion or discrimination. With an increasing number of students identifying as LGBTQ+, it is essential that educators and administrators develop increased competence and confidence in supporting queer youth in their school settings. This workshop will introduce the "Inspired Allies" curriculum and will present concrete and actionable steps for participants to bring back to their teams to create more affirming educational spaces for LGBTQ+ students and more confidently partner with queer youth and families.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Advocacy

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will define the risk factors associated with LGBTQIA+ youth.
2. Participants will identify at least one new attendance intervention for students, staff, and families.
3. Participants will discover ways to engage all stakeholders to address chronic absenteeism from a district level.

Presenter: Christopher McLaughlin, MSW, LCSW (he/him)

E2 Tiered Attendance Interventions: A School District's Experience How They Reduced Chronic Absenteeism Rates

This session will focus on how successful tiered attendance interventions to reduce chronic absenteeism rates across the district. In this presentation, the focus will be on the lessons learned and how to apply interventions to create a culture where attendance matters through exploration of how one school district implemented a district-wide tiered attendance intervention approach that has systematically decreased chronic absenteeism rates in the 2022-2023 and the 2023-24 school years.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Leadership

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will recognize that creating a culture where Attendance Matters takes time and inclusion of all stakeholders by learning from the experience of the school district in their multi-year focus on attendance.
2. Participants will identify at least one new attendance intervention for students, staff, and families.
3. Participants will discover ways to engage all stakeholders to address chronic absenteeism from a district level.

**Presenters: Abby Cobb, LISW-CP (she/her) &
LaVernda Ragins, LMSW (she/her)**

E3 Navigating Student Support: Metro Nashville's Scalable Student Mentorship Program & Its Impact on School Social Work

Metro Nashville Public Schools set an ambitious goal to have "Every student known" and has spent the last several years building out scalable structures to ensure each student has consistent access to a caring adult. This initiative proactively identifies and supports student well-being, and gives social workers and other leaders insights to effectively target support,

while ensuring no student flies under the radar. We will unpack the journey behind the Navigator program, from its pedagogical roots in student belonging & mentorship, to the practical strategies necessary to scale implementation, and how data collected from this program enhances other integrated school social work systems. Participants will ideate ways to implement similar practices and data sources into their communities.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Research

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will identify and unpack the research & pedagogy of student belonging, relationships, and mentorship as a critical foundation of Tier 1 student supports.
2. Participants will interpret and explore scalable classroom practices for incorporating community building and mentorship into the school day, as well as how social workers can facilitate and leverage these systems.
3. Participants will illustrate & ideate how to capture data from relationship-building and mentorship programs, and use that data to inform MTSS, PBIS, and other social worker-led models

Presenters: Dr. Monica Coverson, EdD, MSW, LSSW (she/her) & Kate Coulouras, M.Ed. (she/her)

E4 Empowering Tomorrow's Workforce: Innovations in Internship Programming for Sustainable Development

The Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) has developed an innovative internship program to tackle the shortage of school mental health providers while fostering workforce development in school social work. In collaboration with 12 universities and 15 partner school districts, LACOE offers bachelor and graduate level interns hands-on training and experience providing multi-tiered mental health support in schools throughout Los Angeles County. This innovative project not only aims to bridge the gap between the demand and supply of mental health services in schools but also to promote the profession of school social work while cultivating a skilled workforce capable of addressing the escalating mental health needs of students.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Leadership

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will discover the model, structure, tools, and components of the internship training program developed by the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) to address the shortage of mental health providers and promote workforce development in school mental health.
2. Participants will describe the methods and tools utilized to promote collaboration to support this innovative partnership between LACOE, 12 universities, and 15 partner school districts, to ensure program success.
3. Participants will identify strategies for bridging the gap between the demand and supply of mental health services in schools and cultivate a skilled workforce capable of effectively addressing the escalating mental health needs of students.

Presenters: Kim Griffin Esperon, MSW, LCSW (she/her) & Elsa Garcia-Sanda, MSW, LCSW (she/her)

E5 Change the Anxiety Conversation

Hear strategies for how to make comprehensive changes in addressing student anxiety in your building. Examine some of the most used interventions and why many of these may often do

more harm than good. Discover alternative, more effective strategies using parent book groups and professional development to introduce these concepts to caregivers and school staff. Examine your own levels of and reactions to anxiety and how these cannot only influence the interventions you attempt to use, but also how they impact the students you serve. Walk away with outlines for both parent and educator book studies.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Practice

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will classify School Social Work roles in advocacy.
2. Participants will identify effective advocacy strategies across multiple levels, from individual student support to state-level policymaking.
3. Participants will identify steps of a collaborative action plan to engage school boards, state associations, and SSWAA in advancing the school social work agenda.

**Presenters: LeAnne Hale, MSW, Ed.S (she/her) &
Dr. Cindy Murphy, PhD (she/her)**

E6 Race, Racism and School Social Work: Exploring Perspectives and Experiences from School Social Work Practitioners

The aim of this presentation is to explore findings from focus groups with school social workers (SSWs) about their experiences with race and racism in the school setting. While SSWs have long shown a capacity to address race and racism (ex. punitive discipline and staff hiring), they are often more engaged in micro-interventions (ex. individual counseling) and passive response (ex. addressing community needs), which have limited impact on policies and practices in schools. We gained in-depth understanding of school social worker experiences and found the following: 1) varied school climates and focus on race (via professional development); 2) deficit perspectives from other school staff; 3) limited ability to address race-related concerns; and 4) limited formal learning opportunities.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Research

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will recognize current trends in school social worker practitioners' engagement with race and racism in schools.
2. Participants will interpret and discuss implications of the research study findings through engagement with researchers and practitioners.
3. Participants will give examples of how they can improve their capacity to engage with concerns regarding race and racism in their schools through discussion with peers.

**Presenters: Dr. Kate Phillippo, PhD (she/ella) &
Dr. Jennifer Murphy, PhD, MS, MSW (she/her)**

E7 Using Data to Assess Practice: Aligning with the National Model 2.0 to Advance Sustaining and Equitable Student and School Well-Being Outcomes

The launch of the National Practice Model 2.0 is an opportunity for school social workers to promote sustaining and equitable outcomes and increase the visibility of our work through alignment of our practice. As such, it is imperative for school social workers to collect quantitative data about their use of time in order to assess the impact of their role and delineate appropriate tasks that maximize the use of our professional training and specialized skills. This workshop will provide an overview of a use of time study used by the school social work team at one school district, share data collected and how it informed ongoing practice, and introduce a new tool that social workers can use to measure their work in alignment with the National Practice Model 2.0.

Connection to National Practice Model 2.0: Research

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will analyze data collected from a use of time study completed by a school social work team at one school district.
2. Participants will identify and evaluate specific structures and practices that can be implemented and supported by school social workers to align their practice with the National Model 2.0.
3. Participants will apply key concepts and skills from this workshop to their own practice in the school setting.

Presenter: Faiza Jackson, MSW, LCSW (she/her)

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