



2026 Conference CE Syllabus

LOGISTICS

Event:	California Mental Health Advocates for Children and Youth 2026 Annual Conference
Date:	May 6-8, 2026
Location:	DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Sacramento
Conference Host & Lodging:	www.cmhacy.org
CE hours:	12 hours
CE Fee:	\$149 (does not include event registration)
CE Registration & Payment:	www.training-grounds.net/cmhacy
CE Contact:	James Freeman james@training-grounds.net 805-368-1481 mobile

CE POLICIES

For the most up-to-date Continuing Education Program policies, please visit:
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PROVIDER APPROVALS

Certified Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists (CMPSS)

Training Grounds is an approved continuing education provider for the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists Certification Program. CalMHSA CE Provider # 1023.

California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT)

This conference meets the qualifications for 10 hours of continuing education credit for LMFTs, LCSWs, LPCs, and/or LEPs as required by the California Board of Behavioral

Sciences. Training Grounds LLC is approved by CAMFT to sponsor continuing education for: Licensed Marriage Family Therapists (LMFT), Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW), Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors (LPCC), and Licensed Educational Psychologists (LEP). Training Grounds LLC maintains responsibility for this program and its content. CAMFT Authorized Provider ID 10005971.

CONFERENCE DESCRIPTION

This statewide conference brings together a diverse network of parents, youth, advocates, licensed mental health professionals, educators, and public-sector leaders to advance the social, emotional, and behavioral well-being of children, youth, and families. Grounded in principles of recovery, trauma-informed care, cultural humility, and social justice, the conference offers opportunities for shared learning across disciplines. Sessions emphasize inclusive, high-quality behavioral health services that center lived experience, elevate participant voice, and promote cross-system collaboration.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

The goal of this continuing education program is to enhance participants' ability to apply inclusive, trauma-informed, recovery-oriented, and culturally responsive practices within California's evolving mental and behavioral health system. Grounded in the conference theme, "Mental Health is Everyone's Business: Inclusive Conversations for Changing Times," the program supports professionals in integrating lived experience and cultural humility into policy, practice, and service delivery; examining current challenges affecting youth and families; and strengthening cross-sector collaboration. The ultimate aim is to improve the quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of care for clients and communities.

MEASURABLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this conference, participants will be able to:

1. Describe at least three ways systemic and cultural conditions influence the mental wellness of children, youth, and families, and explain how these insights can support more equitable, client-centered care.
2. Identify at least three benefits of elevating voice, choice, and lived experience within behavioral health systems to strengthen service quality and client engagement.
3. List at least three strategies licensed professionals can use to adjust their practices in response to system changes so that care remains coordinated, relevant, and effective.

4. Describe at least two actionable approaches for creating inclusive environments where youth, families, peers, and advocates can shape mental health policy and system decisions in ways that improve access and client well-being.

KNOWLEDGE BASE CITATIONS

Baldwin, H., Greenburgh, A., Iskander-Reynolds, et.al. (2026). Using theory of change to better address social and economic needs in mental health services. *International Journal of Mental Health Systems*. 20. 10.1186/s13033-025-00693-7.

Debbarma, R. (2026). *Mental health as a human right: Policy and advocacy*. 2297-2303. 10.53555/kuey.v30i2.11506.

Haft, S.& Martinez, W. (2025). The clinician's role in youth peer support services for mental health. *Journal of Health Service Psychology*. 10.1007/s42843-025-00130-w

Hawke, L., Rockburne, F., Hiebert, M., Putterman, C. & Sheikhan, N. (2024). Discussing the gaps in the science and practice of lived experience engagement in mental health and substance use research: Results of knowledge mobilization activities. *Research Involvement and Engagement*, 10. 10.1186/s40900-024-00554-6

Hews-Girard, J., Cullen, E., Dimitropoulos, G. & Iyer, S. (2025). Mental health providers perceptions and experiences of peer support in youth mental health care. *International Journal of Integrated Care*, 25, 407. 10.5334/ijic.ICIC24463

Ladegard, K., Thurstone, C., Keniston, A., Loh, R., O'Leary, S. & Solomon, S. (2026). Bringing Mental health treatment bringing mental health treatment to youth: Integrated school-based health centers in urban schools. *Clinical Journal of Nursing Care and Practice*. 008-015. 10.29328/journal.cjnncp.1001062.

Thompson, A., Arora, K. & Ewart, H. (2026). *Advocating for access: advocacy to secure medicaid funding for partial hospital and intensive outpatient programs*. 10.1080/23794925.2026.2656993.

Tribe, R.I & Amponsah, B. (2024). *Advocacy work within mental health an issue of social justice or an inappropriate challenge to professional neutrality*. 10.4324/9781003351351/351.

CONFERENCE SYLLABUS AND OUTLINE

Total credit hours: 12 hours. Deep dive sessions and meal breaks are not included in continuing education credit hours.

Wednesday, May 6 (3 credit hours)

3:00 - 4:30 pm Session 1

5:00 - 6:30 Plenary

Presenter: Tim Wise offers historical perspective on the rise of reactionary politics, the roots of authoritarian drift, and the narrative warfare reshaping democracy. Through sharp critique and memorable storytelling, he breaks down how everyday people can understand how we got here, and organize, resist, and move forward with clarity and resolve.

Thursday, May 7 (6 credit hours)

9:00 - 10:45 pm Policy Panel

11:15 - 12:45 pm Session 2

2:00 - 3:30 pm Session 3

4:00 - 5:40 pm Session 4

Presenters: Michelle Doty Cabrera is the Executive Director of County Behavioral Health Directors Association of California (CBHDA), a statewide association representing the behavioral health directors from California's 58 counties, in addition to the Tri-City (Cities of Pomona, Claremont and La Verne) and City of Berkeley Mental Health Authorities.

Pete Weldy, CEO of California Alliance of Child and Family Services/Catalyst Center. Pete is the CEO of the California Alliance of Child and Family Services and its Catalyst Center. Pete served as Regional Administrator for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in San Francisco.

Friday, May 8 (3 credit hours)

8:45 - 10:15 am Session 5

10:30 am - 12:00 pm Plenary

Presenter: Matthew Emerzian is Founder and Chief Inspiration Officer of Every Monday Matters (EMM), a not-for-profit organization committed to helping people and organizations understand how much and why they matter. Over the past ten years, Emerzian has traveled the country sharing his unique story and insight on finding purpose. His life-changing message focuses on sustained personal and social change that happens by stepping outside of ourselves and connecting and serving one another.

BREAKOUT SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

See conference schedule for location and time assignments.

Repair Over Removal: Transformative Justice with Youth

What would our programs look like if kicking people out wasn't an option? In youth mental health and housing programs, punitive responses often disconnect young people from critical services, reinforcing cycles of instability. This interactive workshop introduces transformative justice strategies that center accountability, repair, and empowerment. Participants will learn practical tools for fostering safety and inclusion, elevating youth voices, and turning everyday challenges—like interpersonal conflict and unmet needs—into opportunities for growth. Through case studies and collaborative planning, attendees will gain actionable approaches to build stronger, more equitable systems for youth.

Sage Wolf
Integrated Health Director
Redwood Community Services

Who Do I Need to Become?

The workshop is guided by youth voice: emphasizing the development of youth voices as it relates to mental health, social identity, collaboration and partnership in a societal atmosphere that attacks free thinking and diversity.

The workshop will help parents, service providers and other youth shift from simply asking "who am I", to who do I need to become?

Youth and their mentors will share the process they are immersed within that calls them to become what is missing within their family, within their school, community, and society.

Embracing their uniqueness and exploring the benefits across generations.

Michael Baldwin
Founder
Legacy Alliance Outreach

35 Years of Healing: A Legacy of Family, Resilience, and Renewal

At the height of the crack epidemic in South Los Angeles, three visionary women—Dr. Kathryn Icenhower, Dr. Xylina Bean, and Norma Mtume—recognized that families and communities most impacted by addiction, criminalization, and punitive child welfare policies were rarely given the power to define their own paths to healing. In 1991, SHIELDS for Families was founded to respond to that crisis by centering family voice, collective strength, and community-led solutions.

This workshop explores the creation and evolution of SHIELDS' groundbreaking Family-Centered Treatment (FCT) model—a trauma-informed, culturally responsive approach that views the entire family as the client and positions families as active partners in shaping their care. Root

Danielle Lowe
Behavioral Health Services Director
SHIELDS for Families

If You're the Smartest Person in the Room, Find Another Room: And Other Leadership Lessons...

Organizational leaders must create a structure and culture that nurture those "on the ground," face-to-face with clients who need support. Leaders are responsible for the

conditions that affect delivering the right services in the right place and time. This presentation is designed to help leaders strengthen their impact through uncommon leadership lessons learned over 40 years.

Steven Elson
CEO Emeritus, Casa Pacifica
Independent Consultant

Radical Stewardship: Maximizing Provider Power through Intention

Fueling the future of mental health requires more than passion—it requires a sustainable "us." This interactive session reframes self-care from a luxury to a strategic act of Radical Stewardship. We will explore the vital link between caregiver well-being and the empowerment of the youth we serve. Through engaging group activities and reflective exercises, you'll trade "emergency" self-care for proactive energy management. Join us to reclaim your strength, minimize depletion, and maximize the impact you bring to your families and clients. When we thrive, our children rise.

Corinne Brodnicki, MA, LMFT
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
Wellness Together

Mommy, Do You Love Your Phone More Than Me?

The potential impact of a caregiver's device behaviors on attachment security with a child is of emerging discussion across all populations. It was also the basis of two national studies recently completed by the presenters-recognized experts in device behavior psychology, internal family systems, and attachment. In this interactive session they will discuss their research outcomes which both evidenced a significant relationship does exist between caregiver device use and adolescent attachment

security. They will provide attendees with strategies to help their clients/selves identify and heal any existing caregiver device use generated attachment ruptures, and practical skills to help avoid creating any future ones. A Q&A will be offered.

Barbara Nosal
Chief Clinical Officer
Newport Healthcare

Empowerment in Action: Creating PSA's w/ AI & Smart Devices

Empowerment Through PSAs explores how public service announcements can be powerful tools for personal expression, advocacy, and community change. Once requiring large budgets and production teams, PSAs can now be created quickly using AI and everyday smart devices. In this interactive 90-minute workshop, participants will learn a step-by-step process for developing, scripting, storyboarding, and producing impactful PSAs using accessible digital tools. Attendees will leave with practical skills to amplify personal and community voices through social media and digital platforms.

Jeffrey Jamerson
Senior Director of Behavioral Health
All For Kids (formerly Children's Bureau)

Reimagining Student Wellbeing Through Certified Wellness Coaching

This workshop highlights two district-led pilots reimagining student wellbeing through the Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) role. One pilot leverages fee-for-service billing, while the other utilizes one-time grant funding, offering a comparative look at how the same core model can be adapted across different fiscal contexts. Presenters will explore what remains consistent across both pilots, including training, scope, and strengths-based, relationship-centered supports, and what has

been intentionally tailored to expand existing school staff capacity. The session will conclude with an interactive panel and facilitated discussion, questions, share perspectives, and crowdsource ideas for advancing whole-child wellbeing.

Kristen Henry
Vice President of Student Wellness & Innovation
Elevo

Reduce the Risk: Legal Protection Orders Save Lives

California's nine legal protection orders can temporarily remove guns and ammunition from individuals at risk of harming themselves or others. While protection orders can prevent incidents of gun violence, nearly 80% of Californians are concerned about the lack of information surrounding these orders.

To address this, the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) launched Reduce the Risk, an educational campaign to bridge the knowledge gap about protection orders. Our workshop will provide mental health-specific information about protection orders and empower participants to become active in preventing gun violence, thus maximizing their power and defining the future of our state.

Allison Crook
Account Coordinator
Southwest Strategies Group

Words as Medicine: Caregiver Healing Through Storywork

Caring for a child with mental health conditions is stressful. As our child's caregiver, we spend so much time trying to help others understand our child's needs that we forget our own. This workshop focuses on caregiver healing and action. Together, we will engage in healing practices that support caregivers in feeling seen, heard, and respected; guide

participants to the stories they need to tell; and grow their confidence to share those stories. We will collectively work on exercises from the Mothers on the Frontline "Caregiving Healing Journal" that allow participants to discover ways they are uniquely qualified to contribute to systemic change. Participants will receive digital access to our journal.

Angela Riccio
Co-Founder/Co-Director
Mothers on the Frontline

Using Creativity to Unlock our Privilege

This workshop is a personal exploration of the impact of privilege on our work and our lives. Through a combination of experiential activities and discussion, participants will raise their awareness of personal privilege and understand why examining it is essential for effectively supporting the families and clients we serve. This process allows us to further explore system inequalities, acknowledge and better use our advantages as well as foster empathy.

This workshop is designed for all professional levels, as it focuses on how privilege impacts ourselves, our clients, our colleagues/staff, and our families

Pamela Robertson
Director of Training and Professional Development
Stars Behavioral Health Group

Beyond Collaboration: Sustaining Well-Being in Tehama County

An update to Tehama County's collaboration between the Early Learning and School Mental Health and Wellness departments, this session highlights how a shared model has evolved into a sustainable system supporting educator well-being. Over four years, the integration of shared tools, reflective coaching, and

data-informed leadership has strengthened educator capacity and program quality. Participants will explore lessons learned and classroom-based strategies that promote prevention, strengthen adult resilience, and embed wellness practices across departments to sustain responsive, healthy, and resilient learning environments.

JoNell Amacker
Director, School Mental Health and Wellness
Tehama County Department

Take 10: Community Mental Health Support for Boys

Team: Changing Minds (T:CM) is a national mental health response network specializing in reaching young men—who are among the least likely to access support. T:CM reimagines mental health by turning the pastimes boys love—sports and gaming—into spaces of connection and early response. T:CM equips coaches, teammates, mentors, moderators to be the first, trusted touchpoints for loneliness, disconnection, and mental health challenges. They don't replace the vital role of clinicians; they extend support earlier and normalize help-seeking sooner. This workshop cover how practitioners can deploy "Take 10," T:CM's evidence-based micro-learning program that trains "responders" to spot warning signs, start conversations, and connect boys to support.

Andi Otto
Program Specialist Public Education
Campaigns and Programs
Futures Without Violence

Family and Peer Support

This workshop explores how Peer Support services—including Parent Partners, Youth Mentors, and Kinship supports—strengthen youth and family engagement in children's mental health systems by centering lived experience as expertise. Participants will learn

strategies for integrating peers into multidisciplinary teams, supporting system navigation, advocacy, and shared decision-making across mental health, education, child welfare, and juvenile justice systems. Real-world examples highlight strengths-based, culturally responsive approaches that address caregiver burnout, youth disengagement, and system mistrust, demonstrating how peer-led services promote equity, resilience, and sustainable, family-driven outcomes.

Angelica Tello
Parent Partner
Stanislaus County Behavioral Health

Advancing Equity Across Behavioral Health Systems

Participants will learn how the Scaling Evidence-Based and Community-Defined Evidence Practice workstream, through the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative, supported over 465 organizations to move equity from principle to practice in children's behavioral health. Through real-world examples, attendees will explore how structured equity assessments can be used to examine power and decision-making to achieve measurable anti-racist practices across community engagement, hiring, workplace culture, advocacy, clinical care, and outcomes evaluation. The goal is to move beyond "cultural competency" to structural change, provide concrete metrics for quality improvement, and promote proactive, intentional anti-racism in operations.

Antoinette Manuel
Senior Associate
California Institute for Behav

Black, Baptist & Bipolar: Faith, Identity, and Mental Health

This workshop explores the intersection of faith, cultural identity, and mental health through the lived experience of a Black woman navigating Bipolar I disorder in personal, professional, and spiritual spaces. Participants will examine how stigma, family dynamics, and cultural expectations influence help-seeking behaviors and emotional regulation. Using storytelling, reflection, and structured dialogue, the session introduces the Breaks & Doses framework to help individuals better understand emotional crisis points (“Breaks”) and moments of insight (“Doses”). Attendees will gain culturally responsive strategies to support youth, caregivers, and communities while fostering empathy, safety, and wellness-centered conversations.

DaVonne Bey
Founder/CEO
LBELED, LLC

From Threat to Trust: Using SCARF in School Mental Health

Schools can be powerful environments for supporting student's mental health—when we intentionally reduce threat and strengthen engagement across relationships and systems. In this interactive session, participants explore the neuroscience-informed SCARF Model (Status, Certainty, Autonomy, Relatedness, and Fairness) to deepen inclusive conversations, build trust with students and families, and redesign everyday school practices that feel safe and empowering for youth with mental health needs. Participants leave with tools to shift communication, routines, and policies in ways that reduce perceived threat, increase choice, and strengthen belonging and learning. The session aligns with CMHACY's focus on inclusive dialogue and collaboration.

Dev Cuny
Assistant Director of Training & Capacity

Building
Seneca Family of Agencies

Seeing Every Child: Preventing & Responding to Human Trafficking

This session provides educational personnel with the critical knowledge and tools needed to recognize and respond to potential human trafficking within school communities. Participants will learn sub-populations of students to watch, warning signs, best practices, including; proper reporting methods, helpful supports to students, families, and staff, plus resources. Plus, participants will walk away with ideas of who they should be partnering with in their local area in order to combat and help those students impacted by human trafficking.

Jennifer DeAngelo
Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinator
San Joaquin County Office of Education

The Power of Student Voice in Building Community and Student Engagement

This session features high school students sharing how we built student voice in a rural alternative education school serving youth who felt marginalized in traditional settings. In Year 1 of our Community Schools rollout, we launched a Student Wellness Advocate Internship for juniors and seniors. Interns participated in site council, facilitated focus groups and surveys, hosted wellness events, and mentored peers—amplifying voices often unheard in educational systems.

Learn how student-identified needs shaped responsive programming, including small-group wellness sessions, clubs, and expanded learning opportunities. Participants will gain practical strategies for centering student voice to strengthen agency, community, and wellness.

Carrie Moses
Behavioral Health Intervention Specialist
HCOE Court and Community Services

Chatbots & Social Media: Our New Healthcare Experts

5.24 billion people currently engage with social media globally. More than 100 million users are currently estimated to engage with A.I. chatbots. Although evidenced to offer some benefits, increasing and significant concerns surround how engagement with A.I. chatbots, social media, untrained “Influencers,” online echo chambers, and digitally driven “contagion effects” can engender psychosomatic symptoms, false self-diagnoses, and the sharing of inaccurate-and even dangerous-healthcare misinformation. These are robust topics of current discussion among healthcare professionals and the focus of this interactive session. A Q&A will follow the presentation.

Dr. Don Grant
National Advisor of Healthy Device Management
Newport Healthcare

Shared Leadership: Centering Youth and Family Voice

This session explores Shared Leadership as a practical and powerful approach to maximizing collective power in children’s and youth mental health. Participants will examine how intentionally sharing decision-making with youth and families strengthens engagement, improves outcomes, and shapes more responsive systems of care.

Grounded in real-world practice from Stanford Sierra Youth & Families, this workshop highlights how elevating lived experience and shifting traditional power dynamics allows youth, caregivers, advocates, and providers to co-create solutions that reflect community

needs. Participants will leave with concrete strategies and tools to apply Shared Leadership within their own roles.

Cassidy Paige
Family Youth Partnership Manager
Stanford Sierra Youth and Families

Phoney Baloney and the NAMI WLA Children's Mental Health Toolbox

We will do an overview of the NAMI WLA Children's Mental Health Toolbox (a robust resource that covers various topics of youth mental health), followed by a deeper dive into one particular project in the toolbox, Phoney Baloney. We will have an interactive reading of this book that will include mindfulness practice and discussion around cell phones and technology. Participants will have a chance to have supportive and impactful conversations about how to cultivate thriving mental health in the era of our supercomputer telephones. Participants will explore their relationship to technology as we aspire towards wholesome living, alongside cultivating language and tools for how we can support our youth as they navigate these same things.

Oshri Hakak
School Program Coordinator
NAMI Westside Los Angeles

Creating Wellness Spaces for Regulation - Wellness Workshop

This interactive training explores how physical environments directly influence emotional regulation, behavior, and learning. Drawing from neuroscience, trauma-responsive practices, and youth development, Dr. Alicia Williams helps participants understand how elements such as lighting, sensory input, organization, and relational cues shape the nervous system’s sense of safety.

Participants will learn practical strategies for transforming classrooms, offices, and community spaces into environments that promote calm, connection, and engagement.

What makes this training unique is that Dr. Williams does not simply teach the concepts. She also designs and sets up the training environment itself, modeling the principles in real time. Through thoughtful environmental design that may include lighting, natural elements, sensory supports, and intentional layout, participants experience firsthand how a space can support regulation and well-being.

Participants leave with concrete tools to:

- Create calming and regulation-supportive environments
- Reduce environmental stressors that contribute to behavior challenges
- Incorporate sensory and wellness elements into everyday spaces
- Support both youth and adult nervous system regulation

This training is ideal for educators, youth-serving professionals, caregivers, and organizations interested in creating environments that foster safety, belonging, and learning.

Alicia Williams
Coordinator, Youth Development Programs
Sacramento County Office of Education

Healing Together: Supporting Youth & Families in Early Recovery

This presentation explores the unique dynamics of early recovery from substance use disorders (SUD), emphasizing the shared emotional experiences of youth and their families. By integrating insights from the medical model of SUD and anxiety research, we will unveil innovative strategies that foster empathy and connection. We will also address equity and social justice issues, particularly for marginalized populations like the LGBTQ+

community, who face systemic barriers to care. Attendees will gain practical, community-driven approaches to support healing, ultimately empowering families on their transformative journeys toward recovery and resilience.

Lorel Geidt
Clinical Outreach Specialist
Newport Healthcare

Not Just Vibes: Defining What Works in School Mental Health

Explore the need for data driven practices and consistency in school based counseling. While structure is essential, we'll also emphasize balancing structure with individualized, flexible support for students. Participants will understand the importance of defining and building a clear system for counseling. Additionally, participants will learn practical strategies for developing individualized, responsive interventions while ensuring clarity and consistency across the team.

Allison Murphy
Director, Mental Health
Placer County Office of Education

The Role of Peer Support Specialists in Recovery & Healing

Flexible Integrated Treatment (FIT) & Complex Care (CC) programs provide mental & behavioral health services to Medi-CAL eligible youth. Medi-CAL acknowledges peer services as an evidence-based practice. Peer services in FIT & CC align with the peer-centered path Medi-CAL is heading towards. Having seen the positive outcomes in the lives of clients served by peers, our hope is that other providers (adult and children's mental and substance use services), incorporate a similar model within their programs. We also encourage the creation of managerial peer roles, which will be an integral part of mental, behavioral, and

substance use move towards peer-centered services, where voice & choice is an integral part at the policy making table.

Joanna Stockton
Clinical Programs Director
Pacific Clinics - FIT

Certified Wellness Coaches: A New Workforce for Student Mental Health

This session will provide an overview of the Certified Wellness Coach (CWC) role and how they fit into the broader landscape of school-based behavioral health supports and services.

Engaging Youth to Support Mental Wellbeing in Schools

Schools are uniquely positioned to serve as critical hubs for youth mental health support. This session explores innovative, youth-centered strategies to promote mental wellbeing in school settings, with a focus on elevating student voice and leadership. Participants will learn about effective youth engagement approaches, peer-to-peer support models that reduce stigma and foster inclusive environments, and the role of non-clinical supports such as certified wellness coaches and community health workers as accessible, culturally responsive resources. Attendees will leave with practical strategies that center youth as co-creators in building healthier, more resilient school communities.

Amy Blackshaw
Behavioral Health Project Director
California School-Based Health

Culturally Sensitive Trauma Informed Education

This workshop explores how trauma-informed educational practices can be strengthened

through cultural humility, historical awareness, and equity-centered approaches. Participants will examine how trauma intersects with culture, identity, systemic oppression, and community contexts—and how these factors shape learning environments across the lifespan.

Chad Petties
Educationally Related Mental Health Case Manager
Riverside County SELPA