



2025 CONFERENCE CE SYLLABUS

LOGISTICS

Event:	California Mental Health Advocates for Children and Youth 2025 Annual Conference
Date:	June 11-13, 2025
Location:	Asilomar Conference Grounds, Pacific Grove CA
Conference Host & Lodging:	www.cmhacy.org
CE hours:	10 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:
www.training-grounds.net/continuing-education

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 # 1019.

California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT)

This conference meets the qualifications for 10 hours of continuing education credit for LMFTs, LCSWs, LPCCs, 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

Guided by the theme “Come As You Are,” this conference fosters deeper understanding of how lived experience, cultural humility, and authentic engagement shape behavioral health systems. Participants will explore the role of voice and choice in service delivery, examine the current challenges facing youth and families, and consider cross-disciplinary strategies that promote recovery, inclusion, and equity. The learning environment is designed to strengthen trauma-informed, recovery-oriented, and culturally responsive approaches across roles, organizations, and systems.

MEASURABLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

1. Describe three ways systemic and cultural factors influence the mental wellness of children, youth, and families, in order to inform more responsive and equitable care.
2. Identify three benefits of centering voice, choice, and lived experience in behavioral health systems to improve outcomes for those receiving care.
3. List three strategies peer support specialists and licensed professionals can use to collaboratively adapt their practices to system changes, ensuring continuity and relevance of care for clients.
4. Describe two actionable approaches for fostering inclusive environments where youth, families, peers, and advocates can shape mental health policy and systems in ways that directly enhance client-centered support and access.

KNOWLEDGE BASE CITATIONS

Bilač, S., Öztop, F., Kutuk, Y. & Karadag, M. (2024). Cultural narratives and their impact on family mental health. *Journal of Psychosociological Research in Family and Culture*, 2, 18-24. 10.61838/kman.jprfc.2.2.4

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

Smith, K., Acevedo-Duran, R., Lovell, J., Castillo, A. & Cardenas P. (2024). Youth are the experts! Youth participatory action research to address the adolescent mental health crisis. *Healthcare*, 12(5), 592. 10.3390/healthcare12050592

Weems, C., Melby, J., Behrer, C., Wolfe, D. & Scozzafava, M. (2024). Statewide aftercare services program for youth transitioning from foster care: Five-year trends in participation, services, and participant characteristics. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 160. 107551. 10.1016/j.childyouth.2024.107551

CONFERENCE SYLLABUS AND OUTLINE

Total credit hours: 10 hours. Deep dive sessions, meal breaks, and wellness track (although recommended) are not included in continuing education credit hours.

Wednesday, June 11 (1.5 credit hours)

5:00 - 6:30 pm Plenary

Keynote Speaker: Tyler Merritt is an author, activist, and storyteller known for using humor, vulnerability, and lived experience to challenge bias and spark deeper human connection. In this session, he will draw from his personal narrative to explore themes of race, identity, and belonging. Participants will be invited to reflect on the power of voice, the impact of stereotypes, and how authentic connection can foster more inclusive and compassionate systems.

Thursday, June 12 (5 credit hours)

8:00 - 10:00 pm Plenary

10:30 - 12:00 pm Session A

1:30 - 3:00 pm Session B

Keynote Speaker: Tony Hoffman is a former BMX Elite Pro and Olympic coach whose path through addiction, incarceration, and recovery fuels his powerful message of resilience and transformation. In this session, he will share his lived experience with mental health and substance use, offering a candid look at the systemic and personal challenges faced by youth and families. Participants will gain insight into the roots of addiction, the impact of stigma, and practical strategies to support recovery and advocate for second chances.

Friday, June 13 (3.5 credit hours)

8:30 - 10:00 am Session C

10:15 am - 12:15 pm Plenary

Plenary + Session C

This closing session will center themes of lived experience, advocacy, and systems change—offering a forward-looking perspective on how individuals and communities can shape the future of behavioral health for children, youth, and families.

BREAKOUT SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

See conference schedule for location and time assignments.

Allcove Youth Voice: Uplifting Youth Partnership, Inclusion, and Ownership

Presenting Organization: Stanford Center for Youth Mental Health & Wellbeing

Youth advisors from Allcove centers and the statewide Center Youth Collective will share how they are leading efforts to create inclusive, youth-designed mental health services across California. This session includes an overview of Allcove's youth engagement principles followed by a panel highlighting lessons learned in reducing stigma, promoting cultural humility, and building collaborative relationships with staff to create welcoming, judgment-free spaces. Aligned with the focus on voice, choice, and equity, this session offers practical insight into how lived experience and authentic youth partnership can transform

mental health systems.

Integrating Enhanced Care Management (ECM) & Community Support (CS) with Behavioral Health Programs

Presenting Organization: Sycamores

In this session, participants will explore how to integrate Enhanced Care Management (ECM) and Community Supports (CS) into service delivery models that reflect the diverse needs of youth and families. Emphasizing collaboration with Lead Care Managers, the session will highlight strategies for delivering inclusive, person-centered care that respects cultural and individual differences. Attendees will gain practical tools to improve care coordination, maximize resources, and ensure services are accessible, equitable, and aligned

with the values of compassion and respect.

How We Live Beyond: Native and Impacted Youth Insights on California's ACEs and Toxic Stress Awareness Campaign

Presenting Organization: Civilian Agency

In this session, representatives from the Office of the California Surgeon General's Live Beyond campaign will be joined by youth advisors to share how they co-created a trauma-informed awareness campaign grounded in lived experience. Participants will explore strategies for educating youth on ACEs and toxic stress, including how Native youth ambassadors adapted campaign materials to reflect cultural relevance. The session highlights youth-led approaches to healing, education, and community engagement.

Supporting Transitional Age Youth in Navigating Their Health Plan Benefits

Presenting Organization: The Full Circle Health Network

In this session, Full Circle Health Network will lead a panel of young adults—including non-minor dependents and transition age youth—in a conversation about navigating their health and wellness needs. Panelists will share how Enhanced Care Management and Community Health Worker Services have helped them access and understand their Medi-Cal benefits. The discussion will highlight how building self-advocacy and system navigation skills empowers youth to take charge of their physical, mental, and emotional well-being—now and in the future.

Fostering a Culture of Upstream Violence Prevention - a MUST HAVE for Student Outcomes and School Success.

Presenting Organization: Sandy Hook Promise

In this session, participants will learn how California schools are using Know the Signs programs through Project Cal-STOP to strengthen school safety and mental health awareness. Funded by STOP School Violence grants, this initiative trains students and staff to recognize warning signs, intervene early, and support peers at risk. The session will highlight practical strategies for fostering a culture of prevention, connection, and shared responsibility across school communities.

Peer Power: Mental Health Change Through Student-Led Clubs on Campus

Presenting Organization: Bring Change to Mind

In this session, Bring Change to Mind will highlight the transformative impact of student-led mental health advocacy through school-based clubs. Participants will explore how these youth-driven spaces foster connection, reduce stigma, and support healthier coping strategies during critical stages of development. The session will showcase how students are leading cultural change on their campuses and building supportive communities grounded in mental health awareness.

Hope and the Winds of Grief: A Creative Approach to the Effects of Suicide Loss on System-Involved Youth, LGBTQ+, and Care Providers

Presenting Organization: Stars Behavioral Health Group

In this session, participants will explore the impact of grief and loss on clients, youth, and providers—especially within foster care and LGBTQ+ communities at elevated risk for suicide. Through the lens of bibliotherapy and creative expression, the workshop will offer tools for supporting others while honoring our own healing. Attendees will leave with reflective practices to strengthen compassion,

connection, and emotional resilience in their work.

Screenagers: Addressing Youth Mental Health in the Digital Age

Presenting Organization: Screenagers

Dr. Delaney Ruson and her producing partner, Lisa Tabb, will screen *Screenagers Under the Influence: Addressing Vaping, Drugs, and Alcohol in the Digital Age* or *Screenagers: Next Chapter: Addressing Youth Mental Health in the Digital Age*. They will follow the screening with a presentation and Q&A about the current research and practical takeaways from their film.

Creating Safe Spaces of Communication: Parents and LGBTQIA+ Youth

Presenting Organization: LEAF

In this session, participants will explore evidence-based strategies for fostering effective, affirming communication between parents and LGBTQIA+ youth. The workshop offers practical tools for creating safe spaces at home through affirming language, active listening, and cultural sensitivity. Attendees will address common barriers such as generational differences, implicit bias, and fear of societal stigma through guided discussion, role-play, and case examples. The session also highlights the mental health benefits of affirming family environments, empowering parents to support their children with empathy, connection, and confidence.

Building A Generation of Healing: The Merced Story

Presenting Organization: Youth Leadership Institute

This session shares the story behind launching Merced County's first non-clinical youth wellness hub—the Healing Generation

Center—developed through a partnership between Youth Leadership Institute and Merced County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services. Designed to reduce disparities in access to care, the center offers youth ages 14–24 peer support, housing navigation, suicide prevention, and culturally responsive services in a restorative, nonjudgmental setting. Presenters will highlight strategies for inclusive community engagement and share lessons on building systems that center equity, lived experience, and authentic youth leadership.

Level Up: Empowering Youth Mental Health Change Agents

Presenting Organization: Horizons

Discover how the Level Up Train the Trainer program equips underserved youth to become leaders in mental health and wellness advocacy. This session will share practical strategies for engaging system-impacted and BIPOC youth through culturally responsive, trauma-informed education. Featuring insights from youth and caregivers, participants will explore how peer-led approaches, family support, and leadership development can drive sustainable change in communities facing systemic barriers.

A Qualitative Study of the Mechanisms of Students Directing Change

Presenting Organization: Youth Creating Change

This session explores findings from a qualitative study of *Directing Change*, a school-based program that empowers students to create short films on mental health and suicide prevention. Grounded in a youth-centered, stigma-reducing model, the program fosters peer connection and help-seeking through creative expression and school-wide engagement. Participants will hear student and educator perspectives on

how youth voice and storytelling can transform mental health norms and promote inclusion within educational settings.

State Level Landscape

Presenting Organization: Will Lightborne

In this session, Will Lightbourne, former Director of the California Department of Health Care Services, will lead a deep dive into the evolving policy landscape shaping services for children, youth, and families across the state. Participants will explore key initiatives, budget priorities, and legislative developments impacting mental health, child welfare, and cross-sector systems of care. This session will offer valuable insight into the intersections of state leadership, county implementation, and community outcomes—equipping attendees with the clarity and context needed to advocate for meaningful, coordinated change.

Hope Dealing for Justice

Presenting Organization: Legacy Alliance Outreach

In this session, youth and families will share their lived experiences in the Hope Dealing for Justice program—a community-based initiative that disrupts the school-to-prison pipeline by intervening in court cases, supporting families in IEP meetings, and addressing the root causes of destructive behavior. A parent will reflect on how the program helped her understand and reconnect with her sons, while youth will speak to their journeys away from incarceration, suspension, and violence. Participants will gain insight into culturally grounded, family-centered approaches that foster healing, advocacy, and systemic change.

Peer-to-Peer Education: The Youth Mental Health Development Academy

Presenting Organization: San Joaquin County Office of Education

The Youth Mental Health Development Academy (YMHDA) is a peer-led initiative that equips students to lead conversations on mental health, suicide prevention, substance use, and social media in school settings. Through culturally responsive education and stigma-reducing dialogue, youth leaders help shift narratives and expand access to mental health support on their campuses. Aligned with the conference's emphasis on inclusion, advocacy, and lived experience, this session highlights how youth are driving meaningful change in their communities and shaping school-based mental health systems.

All Up In My Business: Balancing Care Coordination Across Multiple Organizations and Client Privacy

Presenting Organization: Social Change Partners

Policy reforms like AB 2083, CCR, CalAIM, and FFPSA aim to expand access to culturally responsive mental health services for system-involved youth and families. This session explores the challenges agencies face in coordinating care and sharing data while honoring family concerns about privacy. Participants will hear youth and caregiver recommendations for balancing effective collaboration with client confidentiality across systems.

The Wellness Center Approach: A Collaborative Prevention and Intervention Initiative

Presenting Organization: Redwood Community Services

Discover how the partnership between a small-town school district and a community-based nonprofit organization led to the development of an on-campus wellness

center and how it has provided thousands of opportunities to intervene and refer students to necessary support services. Join Lakeport Unified School District and Redwood Community Services, Inc. as they share the journey that led to what is now a thriving Wellness Center. This is your opportunity to hear youth and educators' perspectives on their experiences utilizing the center and how it is shaping vulnerable lives for the better through prevention and early intervention on campus.

From Participation to Partnership: Moving Beyond Traditional Family Engagement Models: Analyze the Shift from Mere Participation to Meaningful Partnership in Family Engagement

Presenting Organization: Substance Abuse Prevention Treatment Riverside University Health System

This session explores how placing Parent Partners onsite in substance use treatment programs can improve family reunification outcomes. By offering non-traditional supports—such as parenting education, individualized guidance, childcare, and linkage to services—this model bridges gaps between treatment and real-world support. Participants will learn how collaborative, recovery-oriented approaches can reduce systemic barriers, strengthen provider-client relationships, and improve long-term outcomes for parents and families.

Dogs at Work, Integrating Dogs Into Your Practice

Presenting Organization: Redwood Community Services

Have you ever wondered what is the difference between Emotional Support Dogs, Therapy Dogs, and Service Dogs? This workshop will introduce you to the life of working dogs and how integrating them into

patient care has been a benefit at Redwood Community Services. This training will provide an overview of the types of work dogs do, the legal and ethical considerations of bringing therapy dogs into practice, and their impact on client care and staff morale. Indigo the Therapy Dog will be on site during the presentation.

No Child Lost to Social Media

Presenting Organization: Center for Applied Research Solutions

Social media platforms, while designed for connection, often expose young people to harm—including cyberbullying, exploitation, and unsafe content—without adequate safeguards. This panel, hosted by The Parents' Network, features parents whose families have been directly impacted by social media-related harm. Through personal stories, community-based support strategies, and advocacy efforts, the session will raise awareness and offer tools for prevention, healing, and family-centered change.

Relational Connection and Healing: The Power of Our Child, Family & Cultural-Community Narratives

Presenting Organization: John F. Kennedy University

This interactive session explores how child, family, and community narratives—through stories, photos, and film—can support healing, connection, and relational repair. Participants will reflect on how honoring lived experiences, historical trauma, and cultural identity fosters strength, resilience, and justice in practice. Grounded in cultural humility and social justice, the session offers strategies for deepening connection and allyship with families and communities facing relational and systemic challenges.

Digital Self-Discovery: How Youth Use Online Content to Redefine Mental Health

Presenting Organization: Rachel Ruiz, LCSW

This session examines how youth are reshaping mental health narratives through user-generated digital content. Participants will explore how online identity formation influences help-seeking behaviors and challenges outdated approaches. The session offers practical strategies to support youth in navigating digital content while fostering inclusive, validating conversations that bridge online experiences with real-world mental health support.

Tier 1 Secondary Curriculum: Foundations of Mental Health

Presenting Organization: Sonoma County

As mental health needs grow among youth, classroom-based education is more important than ever. This session introduces Foundations of Mental Health, a curriculum designed to meet SB224 requirements and respond to student, teacher, and parent demand. Topics include wellness, coping skills, stigma reduction, common mental health conditions, and how to access support.

The CA Warm Line: 24/7/365 Peer Support

Presenting Organization: Warm Line Programs at MHASF

This session introduces the California Peer-Run Warm Line, a 24/7 statewide support service led by individuals with lived mental health experience. Unlike crisis services, the Warm Line offers voluntary, self-directed support for challenges such as anxiety, isolation, substance use, and the effects of current events. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of peer-led care and leave equipped to use, share, and advocate for empathetic, non-clinical support rooted in

connection and mutuality.

Creating Our Self-Care Where We Are

Presenting Organization: Silvia Guzman

This workshop invites participants to reconnect with self-care through grounding practices rooted in nature, breath, and presence. Designed as an inclusive space that honors all identities and life experiences, the session explores how herbs, plants, and mindful awareness can support well-being wherever we are. Participants will leave with accessible tools to bring self-care into everyday life—without needing to leave parts of themselves behind.

Where Does Mental Health Fit In Schools?

Presenting Organization: Sonoma County SELPA

This workshop explores how mental health supports are integrated into schools through evidence-based practices and the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) model. Participants will gain insight into the special education referral process and key components of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). The session offers practical guidance for collaborating with educators, supporting families, and advocating for student mental health in educational settings.

Kin First: Building Thriving Families for Stronger Communities

Presenting Organization: Stanford Sierra Youth and Families

This session explores the principles of a kin-first culture, where family bonds and communal care are central to individual and collective well-being. Participants will examine how centering familial connections fosters emotional security, mental health, and intergenerational resilience. The session

highlights strategies to counter isolation, strengthen belonging, and empower families as the foundation of thriving communities.

Education Advocacy for Youth and Parents

Presenting Organization: Office of Family Empowerment at Alameda County Behavioral Health Care

This workshop highlights the power of youth and parent collaboration in the IEP process. A mother-daughter team will share their journey of challenging stigma, understanding rights, and building confidence to speak up in educational settings. Participants will explore strategies to support youth in finding their voice and advocating for their goals—both in school and beyond.

Youth As Influencers for Suicide Prevention Messaging: Lessons From One Year Of CDPH's Never A Bother Campaign

Presenting Organization: California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) Office of Suicide Prevention

Launched in 2024, Never a Bother is California's youth suicide prevention campaign, reaching over 625 million impressions through youth-driven design and community engagement. This session highlights how co-creation with diverse youth has shaped the campaign's reach, relevance, and impact. Participants will learn adaptable strategies for engaging youth in mental health advocacy and tailoring prevention efforts to meet community needs.