



# NASW Vermont 2024 Conference



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

EMPOWERING  
SOCIAL WORKERS!

*Inspiring Action, Leading Change*

November 14 & 15, 2024  
Killington Grand Resort

12 CEs available

# WELCOME!



Your NASW Vermont Chapter is excited to offer another fantastic two day conference for social workers and allied professionals. We have selected speakers and presenters to cover a broad array of clinical and systemic issues that face our clients and communities. We have selected a venue that will relax and rejuvenate us as professionals.

Please join us for what we know will be a special event.  
Your NASW VT Board



# SCHEDULE

*please note that this is tentative and subject to change*

## **Thursday**

- 8:00 Registration – continental breakfast
- 8:45 Welcome
- 9:00 Keynote Speaker
- 10:00 Break
- 10:30 Workshop Block A
- 12:30 Lunch
- 1:00 Plenary Speaker
- 2:00 Break
- 2:15 Workshop Block B (3 hour workshops)
- 3:45 Break
- 4:00 Workshop Block B resumes
- 5:30 Reception - Cash Bar

*Seven (7) hours instructional time  
Continental breakfast and lunch are included in your  
registration fee.*

## **Friday**

- 7:00 Breakfast
- 8:00 Workshop Block D
- 10:00 Break
- 10:30 Workshop Block E
- 12:30 Lunch
- 1:00 Updates from the Chapter
- 1:30 Closing Speaker
- 2:30 Wrap-up and raffle drawing
- 2:45 Conference End

*Five (5) hours instructional time  
Full breakfast and lunch are included in your  
registration fee*

**12 CEs available for relicensure approved by  
NASW VT**

**NASW Vermont Chapter is recognized by the New  
York State Education Department's State Board for  
Social Work as an approved provider of continuing  
education for licensed social workers #SW-0683.**

# THURSDAY WORKSHOPS - BLOCK A

## ***Addressing The Dog In The Room: Service Dogs, ESAs, and Pets - What You Should Know***

*Lynne Schmidt & Kai Sullivan*

*Service Dogs are not pets, and have been highly trained for specific tasks for their humans. They are allowed everywhere their human is with incredibly limited exceptions. However, people have been confusing emotion support animals with service dogs. And though every dog is a good dog, this workshop will explore the legalities around service dogs, emotion support animals (ESAs), and pets.*

## ***Integrated care for pregnant and parenting women with substance use disorders***

*Lucy Pilcher & Teri LaRock*

*This workshop will consider an integrated care model for people who are pregnant or parenting and have substance use disorders. The workshop will consider the unique experience of identifying as female and a parent in the SUD treatment works and how systems and individuals contribute to stigma and barriers to care for this population. The workshop will explore a holistic model of care where treatment for SUD is just one aspect of treatment in an integrated model. The potential benefits of integrated care and how this model can decrease barriers, increase engagement and support healthy and safe parenting will be discussed. The workshop will close with exploration of ways to bring integrated care models to other settings where clients may be experiencing SUD's, mental health disorders, poverty, resource insecurity, unsafe relationships and other psychosocial stressors. The ethics of integrated care and information sharing will also be discussed.*

## ***Befriending my Inner Critic: An Introduction to Internal Family Systems (IFS)***

*Tammy Sollenberger*

*This workshop will teach the components of the IFS model and the beginning protocol (the F's) to start working with their own parts and with their clients' parts. We all have been of two minds about something. For example, you may have thought, "A part of me wants kale, another part wants brownies." IFS says we are all multiple and have inner voices who relate to one another like members of a family. All our parts, even the most critical and harmful ones have good intentions. When we befriend them with our Authentic Self, they can soften, and we can heal. The Self is our internal natural leader who, when in the driver's seat, helps us feel calm, connected, confident. In Self, we have clarity to reach goals and compassion for vulnerable parts of us. You will walk away with practical tools to begin implementing the model and, most importantly, you will have an opportunity to get to know your own internal family, especially your inner critic.*

# THURSDAY WORKSHOPS - BLOCK A

## ***Medical Aid in Dying: Addressing Ethical Concerns***

*Ann Duckless, MA*

*In 2013, Vermont became the 4th state to legalize Medical Aid in Dying (MAiD), also known as Death with Dignity, through Act 39: Patient Choice and Control at the End of Life. Since then, there has been extensive state and national dialogue about whether or not individuals with terminal illness should be legally able to seek help in ending their lives. This is a complex issue with multiple perspectives for clinicians, health care providers, and suicide prevention advocates. Outlining a sociological, historical and legal perspective, and weaving in related ethical principles and considerations, this workshop will present key components of MAiD and include discussion of the ethical issues such as dignity and worth of the individual, self-determination and the individual's involvement in end-of-life decisions. Through case scenarios and group discussion, participants will be encouraged to be more cognizant of how their own values, experiences and belief system impact their clinical work.*

## ***Black Children of Incarcerated Parents: Understanding Challenges, Recognizing Resilience Factors***

*Tonisha Taylor*

*This workshop will examine the challenges associated with Black children of incarcerated parents while also recognizing resilience factors that mitigate negative potential outcomes. Due to racial disparities within mass incarceration, Black children are 7.5 times more likely than White children to have a parent in prison. Parental incarceration is considered an adverse childhood experience (ACE), which can lead to potentially negative outcomes such as social stigma, development of behavioral and mental health challenges, substance abuse and future involvement in the penal system. During this workshop, participants will be challenged to consider the resilience factors present within Black children who seemingly thrive while experiencing parental incarceration. In this way, social workers can utilize best practices when providing services to these children and their families.*

# THURSDAY WORKSHOPS - BLOCK B

## **Solution Focused Therapy: "Exceptions" lead to Change**

Susan Lee Tohn

During this interactive workshop, participants will learn the concept of Solution Focused exceptions and how to direct these conversations to facilitate change talk and action with clients. We will review the structure of an exception conversation and watch video demonstrations and practice. Participants will be able to integrate this clinical tool immediately into their clinical or supervisory practice.

## **Embracing Neurodiversity: Culturally Competent Strategies for Inclusive Employment**

Sara Rodrigues & Allison Curry

This workshop aims to educate participants about neurodiversity and provide practical strategies for creating a more inclusive and supportive workplace environment. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of neurodivergence, including identifications such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and sensory sensitivities. They will also learn how to implement accommodations, promote mental health and well-being, and foster a culture of inclusivity and allyship.

## **Harm Reduction in Social Work: Principles, Practice, and Policy**

Lauren Porter

Harm reduction is a comprehensive public health approach that accepts the presence of substance use in society and aims to minimize negative consequences by prioritizing individual and community well-being over abstinence. This workshop equips social workers with the knowledge and skills to integrate harm reduction principles into their clinical practice. The workshop emphasizes a nonjudgmental and non-coercive approach, focusing on core principles, assessments, and developing harm reduction plans with clients. Motivational interviewing and harm reduction psychotherapy techniques are taught as primary interventions. Participants will also explore the broader implications of harm reduction, including its impact on drug policy, the intersection with social justice issues arising from the War on Drugs, and the charge for the development of policies rooted in public health.

# THURSDAY WORKSHOPS - BLOCK B

## **Navigating the Ethical Landscape: Exploring the Intersection of Ethics and Culture**

Erik X. Alonso, Psy.D., LICSW-C & Samuel Rosario, LICSW

Join us for an engaging workshop that explores the dynamic relationship between ethics and culture. Through interactive discussions and case studies, participants will gain insights into how cultural norms and values shape ethical decision-making. Together, we will navigate the complexities of cross-cultural ethics and discover strategies to foster a more inclusive and ethically conscious society. Come be a part of this transformative journey towards cultivating a deeper understanding of the intersection between ethics and culture.

## **Suicide Prevention in Older Adult Population**

Ann Duckless, MA

Suicide is a concern for all age groups. Local data (including Vermont and New Hampshire) as well as national data indicates that the rates are particularly high in the 65+ population. Incorporating content from the NAMI NH Connect Suicide Prevention Program, an approved program on the Suicide Prevention Resource Center's national Best Practices Registry, this workshop is tailored to address the myriad of risk factors and outline protective factors that are specific to the older adult population. Content of the workshop includes: State (VT and NH) and US data (why this is important); Social-Ecological Model for Suicide; Stigma; Risk and Protective Factors; Warning Signs; Safe Messaging; Lethal Means Reduction; Case Scenario (discuss and apply key concepts); Effective Communication; Community Resources; Q&A/further discussion.

# FRIDAY WORKSHOPS - BLOCK C

## **Should I Stay or Should I Go? The Ethics of Engagement**

Christine Powers

How much and how long do you attempt to engage an individual when they are seemingly ambivalent about working with you or your team? This workshop helps participants balance the various engagement options and decisions, while considering a spectrum from client self-determination to possible abandonment. This training discusses the culture of engagement and supports participants in facilitating diverse engagement strategies, including specific EBPs. This workshop helps participants resolve engagement dilemmas by considering the ethics in engagement. This workshop is interactive, includes skills practice, and provides engagement tools.

## **Connecting the Dots: Supporting Rural Opioid-Affected Individuals and Families**

Alison Mitchell

Best practices for treating opioid use disorder is well known. The combination of replacement medications (MOUD) and psychotherapy is widely accepted as the gold standard approach. Yet addressing opioid use in rural areas remains challenging. Through this workshop, participants will gain understanding of biopsychosocial factors - social determinants of health - that promote or impede treatment outcomes for adults receiving treatment for opioid use disorder in a rural state, based on findings from a recent research study. In addition, participants will be invited to discuss workforce implications and potential social work roles to facilitate treatment access for rural opioid-affected populations.

## **Finding Joy in Social Work Through the Years**

Kira Krier

Exploration on how the field inspires us and challenges us through the years and how to sustain our joy in the ever changing field. Exploring Self Compassion and Trauma Stewardship as a way to stay energized and passionate about the field of social work. Releasing the years of vicarious trauma and stepping back into your own power.

# FRIDAY WORKSHOPS - BLOCK C

## **Clinicians and Service Providers as Survivors of Suicide Loss**

Kenneth Norton

A topic that is rarely discussed in undergraduate or graduate programs, as well as in work settings is how to effectively respond to the suicide death of a client or person you are working with. Similarly the suicide death of a family member or loved one can impact on a clinician's confidence in assessing risk or responding to individuals with suicidal ideation. Postvention response to client deaths can present numerous ethical challenges for providers and organizations. The workshop will review research on these topics and will feature a panel discussion of social workers relating their personal experience with suicide loss.

## **Advancing Affirming Care for Neurodivergent Individuals**

Sara Rodrigues & Allison Curry

This workshop challenges traditional care models, guiding social workers to embrace neurodiversity-affirming practices. Engaging with the autistic community's voices, participants gain insights into diverse perspectives, sensory needs, and communication styles. The session actively addresses power dynamics, privileges, and biases, aligning with NASW's commitment to social justice. With a focus on equity and inclusion, social workers leave equipped with practical tools for tailored interventions and collaborative approaches, fostering a more just and respectful environment for neurodivergent individuals. Participants depart not just informed but energized, prepared to advocate for a future that champions inclusivity.

# FRIDAY WORKSHOPS - BLOCK D

## **Mindful Self Compassion woven with expressive arts group work transforms hardships**

Poa Mutino

In this participatory workshop, participants will learn the fundamentals of mindful self compassion (MSC) as well as contemplative expressive arts (EXA) and a combined program called Cross Cultural Conversations. Case examples will be given from the facilitators history of working primarily with trans, non binary, BIPOC, social work MSW and DSW students in 6-8 week groups as well as drop-in ongoing groups.

## **Diving Into the Grey: Ethics and Related Considerations**

Dr. Judith Josiah-Martin

Ethical behavior is conduct that is beyond reproach and is in accordance with the laid down standards of a society, institution or organization. It may not always be easy to adhere to these higher standards, especially in difficult situations. It takes courage, moral integrity, and a keen sense of commitment to ethical standards to make the right decisions. One condition that weakens and impacts the practitioner's vigilance on ethical situations is the subjective experience with compassion fatigue. During these extraordinary times, it is critical for practitioners to understand this phenomenon, compassion fatigue, and have clear, achievable pathways to maintain balance and compassion satisfaction in pursuit of ethical care delivery.

## **Working with Mandated Populations**

Molly McGraw, MSW & Cassie Leendertse

Many Social Work practitioners work with populations who are either mandated or under some amount from pressure from outside forces to engage in services. However, in our experience, much of social work education and continuing education focuses on methods of engagement which cater to voluntary service users. This presentation will include a description of what we perceive to be a gap in social work discourse, a brief overview of available literature on this topic, and strategies for engagement with mandated service users.

# FRIDAY WORKSHOPS - BLOCK D

## **From Burnout to Engagement: Exploring Self-Care Strategies for Social Workers and Organizations**

Michelle Lavallee

This workshop is designed to provide an overview into the causes of stress and burnout as a result work performed within social service organizations, and provides methods and strategies that help to build support and engagement within individuals and organizations. We will also be engaging in some hands on practice of mindfulness in this workshop. Mindfulness meditation is one of the effective tools that social workers can use for developing and sustaining a self-care practice.

## **Disabilities and Social Work**

John W. Richards, MSW, LICSW

In this workshop, participants will gain an understanding of the types of disabilities, both visible and hidden; physical , cognitive, and mental illness, with an overview of stigma and ableism effects that clients may experience. We will discuss ambiguous loss and its impact on the lives of people who have experienced disability. We will also discuss language to use or not use. Chronic sorrow will be discussed as an element of ongoing treatment.

We will turn to specific strategies in working with folks who have experienced disabilities, noting most importantly that people with disabilities bring with them the same kinds of anxieties, depressions, life difficulties, and behavioral health challenges as the nondisabled population, perhaps even more frequently in some regards.

# REGISTRATION

NASW MEMBER PRICE - \$249

NON-MEMBER PRICE - \$349

ONE-DAY AND STUDENT PRICING AVAILABLE

If you would rather pay by check, please email Emryn at [elessie.naswnh@socialworkers.org](mailto:elessie.naswnh@socialworkers.org)

Please note, for the NASW Member discounted price, you must be an NASW Member at the time of registration and the time of the conference. If you would like information on becoming an NASW member go [HERE](#).

If you have questions about the conference that aren't addressed here or on the website, please email Lynn - [Istanley.naswvt@socialworkers.org](mailto:Istanley.naswvt@socialworkers.org)

We are looking forward to seeing you!

**REGISTER**



We are committed to providing information and resources to help all social workers in their professional lives. We are able to do this because of NASW Members - membership dues are a major part of our Chapter's budget. If you are not a member, please consider becoming one today. When you become a member of NASW, you automatically become a member of your Chapter and help support our work.

# OUR PRESENTERS

**Erik X. Alonso, Psy.D., LICSW-C**

**Allison Curry, MSW**

**Ann Duckless, MA** recently retired from her full-time position as a Community Educator and Prevention Specialist at the NAMI New Hampshire (National Alliance on Mental Illness), but continues to provide some trainings for the organization on a part time basis. She brings more than 20 years of experience in substance use prevention and treatment to the Connect Suicide Prevention Program. Her work experiences include teaching elementary through college grade levels, inpatient and outpatient counseling for substance use-addictions, non-profit statewide community work in youth prevention programming, and extensive training expertise in suicide prevention, intervention and postvention focusing on all ages. Ms. Duckless also embraces and promotes cultural sensitivity to issues of gender, race, ethnicity, language, religion, disability, and sexual orientation/ gender identity.

**Judith Josiah-Martin, PHD, ACSW, CADC**, has been a part of the University of Maine community for the past 16 years, as School of Social Work faculty and as the Director of Multicultural Student Life. Her alma maters are Smith College School of Social Work for a PhD in 2018 in Clinical Social Work, and Washington University-St. Louis for a MSW degree emphases in Social Welfare, Administration and Community Development. Dr. Josiah-Martin was the 2021 President's Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award Recipient for the University of Maine. Dr. Josiah-Martin has spent 38+ years working in the field of social work in many roles across clinical, community advocacy and development, and research arenas. Her areas of specialization include clinical practice with individuals, groups and families, substance use and trauma related disorders; and practice interventions with underrepresented populations. She is an avid reader, a musician, and a world traveler who enjoys outdoor adventures.

# OUR PRESENTERS

**Kira Krier, LICSW** has been a practicing licensed clinical social worker in Burlington, VT for the last 18 years. She is a certified EMDR therapist and consultant recognized by the EMDR International Association. She is a certified trauma informed yoga instructor. She uses yoga and breath work with survivors to aid in their healing. She specializes in the treatment of trauma, grief, loss, sexual assault, domestic violence, human trafficking, depression and anxiety. Ms. Krier is committed to ending violence through education, outreach and advocacy. She is also a consultant for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. She was recognized by NCMEC in 2021, for her commitment and dedication working with sexually exploited children and their families. Early in her career (2002) she was recognized for her commitment to survivors of crime by the Vermont Center for Crime Victims. MSW UVM 2002 LICSW 2004

**Cassie Leendertse, LICSW**

**Teri LaRock**

**Michelle Lavalley, MSW** has over 30 years of leadership, clinical, and operational experience in healthcare and human services in hospital settings, the public sector, and now in the field of management consulting. My diverse work experience includes being a clinical social worker in several NYC teaching hospitals, working with people with HIV/AIDS to directing social services for a forensic psychiatric hospital in Arizona. I am a passionate advocate for self-care and know how important it is for clinicians to take time out for themselves to rest and restore. I have been a practitioner of mindfulness for several decades and offer weekly mindfulness sessions at my current place of work. Columbia University School of Social Work, Master of Science, Social Work, 1992

# OUR PRESENTERS

**Molly McGraw, MSW** has spent her career working with mandated populations. She graduated from the UVM MSW Program in 2012 as a Title IV-E program participant. She then went on to work for the DCF Family Services Division from 2012-2022 in various direct services roles. In 2022, she left DCF to become a Psychiatric Social Worker at the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital which is overseen by the VT Department of Mental Health. Molly is currently working toward licensure and will likely be licensed prior to the NASW conference.

**John W. Richards, MSW, LICSW** is a lifelong resident of New Hampshire who has worked in human services for over 30 years; most of which have been involved in supporting people with a variety of disabilities. He has a Master's degree in Social Work from Simmons College and a Master's in Business Administration from the University of Massachusetts. He has worked with a variety of people ranging from "multi-problemmed" families to children, teens and adults with developmental disabilities, brain injuries, and neurological illnesses. He has worked in community mental health and in roles from clinical social worker to human service management and administration.

## **Samuel Rosario, LICSW**

**Lynne Schmidt, LMSW-cc** is the queer, neurodivergent grandchild of a Holocaust survivor, and a therapist with a focus in trauma and healing. They obtained their MSW in 2020 from UNE with Trauma Informed and EFT-1 Certificates. They are the author of *The Unaccounted for* (Circles of Hell), *SexyTime*, which was a winner of the 2021 The Poetry Question Chapbook Contest, *Dead Dog Poems* was the 2020 New Women's Voices Contest, and *Gravity*, which has been listed as One of the Best Breakup Books of All Time by Book Authority. When given the choice, Lynne prefers her pack of dogs and one cat to humans.

# OUR PRESENTERS

**Alison Smith Mitchell, PhD, LICSW** is an Assistant Professor in Social Work at Plymouth State University. She earned her PhD in clinical social work from the Smith College School for Social Work in 2020 and completed an MSW at the University of Maine School of Social Work in 2014. Dr. Mitchell's research focuses on factors supporting or impeding treatment and recovery in the intersecting areas of mental health, opioid use disorder, trauma, and rurality, combining practical experience with research expertise. She is a board member for the NASW-NH chapter, and was a Court Appointed Special Advocates for children (CASA) volunteer guardian ad litem for children in protection cases in Maine for over a decade. Dr. Mitchell is an independently licensed clinical social worker in New Hampshire and Maine. Outside of the classroom, she enjoys hiking, skiing, and playing with her dogs.

**Kai Sullivan** is a teacher in the Oxford School District in Maine. Their service dog, Tank, was a graduate from Mission Working Dogs for PTSD.

## **Poa Mutino, MSW**

**Lauren Porter** has a bachelor's degree in social work (2019) and a postgraduate certificate in nonprofit management (2021) from the University of Southern Maine. She studied social policy abroad (2024) before her graduate studies in clinical social work at the University of Kentucky (2025) where she focuses on drug policy frameworks and outcomes on public health. She is licensed in Maine as a certified alcohol and drug counselor, peer support specialist, recovery coach, and MHRT/C. She supervises a reentry casework services program and previously worked with individuals experiencing homelessness and actively using drugs. She has provided harm reduction education for the last six years, advocates for drug policy reform, and believes that people who use drugs have the right to make their own decisions about their use.

# OUR PRESENTERS

**Christine Powers, LICSW, MLADC** is a dually licensed independent clinical social worker (LICSW) and Master Alcohol and Drug Counselor (MLADC) whose focus is consultation & training for evidence-based practices (EBPs). Christine earned a Bachelors degree in Psychology from Southern NH University in 2005 & a Master of Social Work degree from the University of NH in 2009. Christine has experience in inpatient, private, & community mental health settings. Christine owns a small private practice, as well is a national Assertive Community Treatment trainer for the SPIRIT Lab of the University of Washington. She provides training & consultation for ACT teams across the US, focusing on related EBPs - Enhanced Illness Management & Recovery, Supported Employment's Individual Placement and Support, Motivational Interviewing, & Dual Disorder Treatment. Christine is also trained in and utilizes CBT, EMDR, & TF-CBT, as well is a member of Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT).

**Sara Rodrigues, DSW** (she/her) is the dedicated founder and Executive Director of Balanced Learning Center, a neurodiversity-affirming non-profit. With a DSW from Simmons University and over 20 years of experience, she works at the intersection of academia, advocacy, and direct practice. Sara emphasizes wraparound principles, recognizing families as experts. Through her national speaking and consulting roles, she guides families to navigate systems effectively. Sara's integrated team approach, combining natural and professional supports, ensures sustainable goal achievement. Described as creative and sensitive, she is committed to tailoring approaches to meet the unique needs of each family in various clinical and educational settings.

**Tonisha Taylor, MSW** is currently the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at Passaic County Community College. I am enrolled in the Doctor of Social Work program at Monmouth University. I earned my MSW from Hunter College/CUNY in 2008 and I'm a licensed social worker in NJ. Additionally, I have an MA in Language and Literacy from City College/CUNY (2014) and an Ed. S in Adult Education from Walden University (2017). I've taught various undergraduate courses including Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, English, and Developmental English at many different colleges in the NY/NJ region. I'm a contributing author to *Gender Oppression and Globalization: Challenges for Social Work* (CSWE Press, 2013), and *Social Revolution: Black Children of Incarcerated Parents Speak Truth to Power* (Routledge Press, 2023).

# OUR PRESENTERS

**Susan Lee Tohn, MSW** from Boston University: May 1988 Trainer in Solution Focused Therapy for over 30 years. Published and co-authored “Crossing The Bridge: Integrating Solution Focused Treatment into Clinical Practice”. 25 years of teaching graduate level social workers. Over 30 years of supervision and private practice.