

8:00 a.m. – Registration Opens & Poster Set-up

8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. - Welcome

8:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. – Keynote Presentation (CE credit – 1.25)

- *“Incorporating Race and Anti-Racism in Clinical Training and Practice... Yes ,we can and Must!!” by Alex Pieterse, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Director of the Institute for the Study of Race and Culture at Boston College*

10:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. – Concurrent Sessions (CE credit – 1.25)

<i>75 minute presentation</i>	<i>75 minute presentation</i>	<i>15 minute presentation blitz</i>
What About the Babies? Training Clinicians in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health	A Competency-Based Framework for Training Psychologists in the Use of AI in Clinical Practice	Developing Interpersonal Awareness in Trainees: Using Therapeutic Performativity to Improve Alliance and Outcome
		Reflective Practice for Trauma Therapists
		MindStylz II: How Stylists and Barbers Can Address Mental Health Issues in Communities of Color
		Using A.I Before A.I Uses Us: A Proactive Approach to Integrating A.I Into Practice

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. – Lunch

12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. – Plenary Symposium (CE credit - 1.25)

<i>Presentation 1</i>	<i>Presentation 2</i>	<i>Presentation 3</i>
An Overview of the Training Guidelines in Clinical Child Adolescent and Pediatric Psychology	The Messy Middle: Treating and Supervising a “Ghosted” Developmental Phase	Training Across the Lifespan: Geropsychology

2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. – Concurrent Sessions (CE credit - 1.25)

<i>75 minute presentation</i>	<i>75 minute presentation</i>	<i>25 minute presentations</i>
Best Practices in Clinical Supervision: Providing Culturally Competent Supervision	Innovations in Psychology Education: What can be learned from medical education literature?	Benefits and Barriers of Innovative and Digital Approaches to Mental Healthcare Services for Underserved Senior Ethnic Community
		From Emergency Adoption to Enduring Practice: Training

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		Considerations for Online Psychotherapy
		The Identity Mapping Board Game: A Vehicle for Gender, Sexual, and Reproductive Identity Exploration in Emerging Adults

3:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. – Concurrent Sessions (CE credit – 1.25)

<i>75 minute presentation</i>	<i>75 minute presentation</i>	<i>75 minute critical conversations</i>
Scaffolding Students Engage in Comprehensive Autism Spectrum Assessments for young adults	Culturally Responsive Supervision, Clinical Intervention and Training in Supporting Transgender Youth and Adults	COMMAND: Training Students to Counter Health Related Mis, Mal & Disinformation
		Different Degrees, Shared Mission: Psychologists Strengthening Physician Training & Patient Care
		Giving Voice to Intangible, Non-Death Grief: Naming Losses Related to AI Utilization in Psychology Training and Education

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. – Social Hour & Poster Session, Foyer Area

8:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. – Keynote Presentation (CE credit – 1.25)

Title: Incorporating Race and Anti-Racism in Clinical Training and Practice...Yes ,we can and Must!!

Presenter: Alex Pieterse (he/him), Ph.D.

Abstract: Current events in our country have highlighted the ongoing and urgent need to attend to racial and cultural oppression within our training and practice. At the same time there is developing momentum in psychology to incorporate liberatory, anti-racist and decolonial approaches more consistently in our work. As such, this presentation will review the meaning of liberatory approaches in a time of state sanctioned attacks and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and will present anti-racism as a value stance and praxis for psychology educators and practitioners.

Presenter bio: Dr. Alex L. Pieterse is an Associate Professor and Director of the Institute for the Study of Race and Culture at Boston College. He received his Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University, his master's in counseling from New York University and has Bachelor of Health Science (Nursing) from the Australian Catholic University. Dr. Pieterse's scholarship focuses on psychosocial aspects of race and racism, racial trauma, and anti-racism training and advocacy. Dr. Pieterse is a fellow of the American Psychological Association and current Editor of The Counseling Psychologist. His most recent book co-authored with Robert T. Carter and Jessica Forsyth is titled Black Americans' Strength-Based Cultural Practices: Tools for Clinicians to Promote Psychological Well-Being. Dr. Pieterse is also a licensed psychologist and maintains an independent psychotherapy practice working with individual and couples.

10:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. – Concurrent Session (CE credit – 1.25)

75 minute presentation

Title: What About the Babies? Training Clinicians in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Presenter(s): Carlita Elias (she/her), Psy.D.

Abstract: Clinical work in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) requires clinicians to think developmentally, culturally, and systemically. It requires the integration of early developmental knowledge, an approach to assessment and treatment using a relational lens, and engaging in systems navigation in ways that differ from work with older children and adults. Yet many trainees and supervisors report that they have limited preparation for working with infants, toddlers, and their caregivers. In the infant and early childhood population, clinical problems are shaped by the caregiving context, structural inequities, cultural contexts, and multi-systemic factors. This training offers a developmentally grounded overview for understanding assessment and psychotherapy in IECMH, which is mindful of emerging training needs in this growing area of specialization.

The presentation will center on the core premise that in IECMH, assessment is inherently relational and functions as an intervention. Participants will be introduced to key domains of clinical attention, including regulation, attachment, caregiver capacity, culture, and contextual stressors. It is essential to understand how these domains inform dyadic and caregiver-focused psychotherapy. Through a case vignette, the presenter will demonstrate how culturally responsive assessment and awareness of systems of care (e.g., early intervention, pediatric practice, child welfare) directly shape treatment planning and therapeutic stance.

Special attention will be given to training and supervision considerations. Common trainee challenges will be discussed, such as over-pathologizing normative developmental behavior, discomfort with observational and nonverbal assessment, and navigating power dynamics across systems. The presentation will also discuss the necessity of reflective supervision that supports equity-informed clinical thinking. The session will be designed for trainees, supervisors, and faculty and will highlight workforce development in IECMH.

Participants will leave with an initial framework for teaching and learning IECMH assessment and psychotherapy that centers relationships, honors cultural and contextual diversity, and prepares clinicians to work effectively within complex systems of care.

Presenter bios: Dr. Carlita Elias, Psy.D., is an Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of Hartford, Graduate Institute of Professional Psychology, and a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice in Manchester, Connecticut. She serves on the Board of Directors for the Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health. Her career has centered on infant and early childhood mental health, with a longstanding commitment to advocating for infants, young children, and their families across Connecticut.

Dr. Elias has held clinical and leadership roles at Wheeler Clinic, including clinician with Child First, Head Start Mental Health Consultant, and program manager for a trauma-informed

therapeutic childcare program. She is a registered facilitator for Circle of Security Parenting and Circle of Security–Classroom, a certified FLIP IT trainer, and a registered provider of Child-Parent Psychotherapy. She provides training and consultation on early childhood mental health, challenging behaviors, and culturally responsive, anti-racist practice.

Her professional interests include Black maternal mental health, intergenerational trauma, attachment-based interventions, and reflective supervision. She holds national endorsements as an Infant Mental Health Specialist and Reflective Supervisor.

75 minute presentation

Title: A Competency-Based Framework for Training Psychologists in the Use of AI in Clinical Practice

Presenter(s): Elizabeth Austin (she/her), Psy.D. & Ashley Hart (she/her), Ph.D.

Session Abstract: Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are rapidly entering clinical practice, with psychologists increasingly encountering AI-supported documentation, assessment aids, clinical decision support, and patient-facing conversational systems. While these technologies offer opportunities to improve efficiency, access, quality, and continuity of care, there are significant safety, ethical, and professional risks when AI is used without appropriate training and governance. This presentation synthesizes empirical, ethical, and policy literature to propose a competency-based framework for training psychologists in the safe use of AI in psychotherapy. Drawing on scientific research, ethics analyses, and professional guidance, we identify four recurring risk domains: (1) clinical risk, including hallucinated or biased outputs and poor handling of high-acuity presentations; (2) relational risk, such as erosion of therapeutic boundaries, over-reliance on AI, and misperceptions of AI as a therapist; (3) data governance risk, including confidentiality breaches and unclear data retention or secondary use; and (4) implementation risk, arising from rapid model updates, limited validation, and unclear accountability. The literature converges on the principle that AI should augment, not replace, clinical judgment, with psychologists retaining responsibility for all therapeutic decisions. These findings are translated into a structured training model for psychologists, organized around core competencies: AI literacy (understanding capabilities, limitations, and failure modes), ethical and legal proficiency (informed consent, privacy, and professional standards), clinical oversight skills (detecting unsafe outputs and managing escalation), and equity-focused practice (bias recognition and cultural responsiveness). We outline modular training components—including foundational instruction, ethics workshops, case-based simulations, and crisis-management exercises—designed for clinical training and continuing professional development. By emphasizing risk-stratified use, human-in-the-loop oversight, and ongoing monitoring, this framework supports psychologists in integrating AI tools responsibly while safeguarding client welfare and the integrity of the therapeutic relationship. We conclude with practical recommendations for educators, supervisors, and professional bodies seeking to embed AI safety competencies into contemporary psychotherapy training.

Presenter(s) bios: Elizabeth (Betsy) Austin, Psy.D. is a licensed clinical psychologist with training and expertise in health psychology. She received her MA in Applied Psychology at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada and completed her doctoral program at the University

of Denver's GSPP. Her internship at the Cleveland VA Medical Center was followed by a fellowship in Behavioral Medicine at Harvard Medical School/Cambridge Hospital. She has worked in many capacities at UMass for over 20 years, joining the staff at the Student Counseling Center in 2019. She maintains a private practice in the community and has served on the Board of the Massachusetts Psychological Association since 2019, most recently as President. Dr. Austin has experience in using CBT for clients coping with acute and chronic medical conditions, depression, and anxiety as well as neurological conditions and neurodiversity. She has supervised psychology graduate students and psychiatry residents for 20 years and has found this to be a rich and rewarding experience.

Ashley Hart, Ph.D. (she/her) is a licensed clinical psychologist and graduate of Binghamton University's doctoral program as well as VA Boston Healthcare System's psychology internship and postdoctoral fellowship programs. Dr. Hart has been a clinician in SCS since 2013 and became the SCS Training Director in 2021. She has expertise in cognitive-behavioral therapy (including Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) for anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder (i.e., exposure and response prevention), body-focused repetitive behavior conditions such as hair pulling disorder and skin picking disorder, and PTSD (i.e., prolonged exposure therapy and cognitive processing therapy). For over a decade, she has enjoyed providing clinical supervision and didactics in cognitive-behavioral therapy for students at various levels of training, including predoctoral practicum students, psychology interns, psychology postdoctoral fellows, and psychiatry residents and fellows. She maintains a private practice in which she provides cognitive-behavioral therapy to youth, families and adults. "

15 minute presentation blitzes

Presentation 1

Title: Developing Interpersonal Awareness in Trainees: Using Therapeutic Performativity to Improve Alliance and Outcome

Presenter(s): Chris Defosse (he/him), Psy.D.

Session Abstract: This paper explores how clinical training can be improved by more explicitly providing opportunities for students to practice and demonstrate skills in “therapeutic performance.” Broadly defined, the perspective of therapeutic performativity argues that psychotherapy’s function is inherently artistic in nature (Noe, 2015), and dependent upon “performative” skills of the therapist, whether they be verbal, non-verbal, or symbolic. This perspective, which recontextualizes the therapeutic act as a mutually consented to, re-organizing social construction, reflects current research findings on psychotherapy effectiveness and therapist skill more completely than perspectives which privilege clinical expertise, common factors, or best practices alone (See, Anderson et al, 2009; 2016, 2020; Del Re et. al, 2021, Wolfer et. al, 2021). Such literature suggests that positive therapeutic change is a function of interpersonal effectiveness. Put another way: the way a therapist chooses to present themselves to a patient (perform therapy) is a primary driver of therapeutic outcome.

While graduate training includes discussion on the person of the therapist and ethical behavior, there is a current paucity of explicit scaffolding given to trainees in developing these performative skills which research indicates will lead to improved patient outcomes. By

amending clinical training such that therapeutic treatments are understood within the interpersonal contexts that make them effective, trainees will better understand the weightier measures of the psychotherapeutic work they perform. This paper argues that training which implies that the theoretical constructs used in case conceptualization are “real” misses the essential transformative components of psychotherapeutic change, which scholarship suggests are performatively driven. Rather, it is necessary for students to understand that, whether they learn about maladaptive schema, conditions of worth, or unconscious defense mechanisms, the true work of psychotherapy requires a genuine connection with the patient and effective interpersonal performance.

Keywords: Therapeutic Performativity, Social Construction, Clinical Training, Psychotherapy

Presenter(s) bios: Chris Defossez, PsyD, is currently an Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of South Carolina, Sumter. He received his BA in Music from Brandeis University, his MS in Clinical Psychology from Antioch University New England, and his Doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Antioch University New England. His research interests include the therapeutic alliance, with a focus on how the interpersonal behavior of psychotherapists in session can increase or decrease the efficacy of psychotherapy. He has received clinical training in neuropsychological assessment, college counseling, and community mental health, and completed his predoctoral internship at the University of South Carolina Counseling and Psychiatry Center in 2021. Currently, he teaches Introduction to Psychology in addition to courses in Developmental Psychology, Theories of Personality, and Behavioral and Mental Disorders to undergraduate students at the University of South Carolina, Sumter.

Presentation 2

Title: Reflective Practice for Trauma Therapists

Presenter(s): Michelle Loris (she/her), LMFT

Session Abstract: Reflection is a cornerstone skill for effective clinical practice, especially for trauma therapists. Reflective competence enhances the therapist's empathy and skill development, and the therapist's own well being and resilience which are necessary for work with trauma clients. Reflection helps therapists understand their role and responsibility as a trauma therapist. This 15 minute blitz will offer brief research on the practice of reflection and strategies for developing the competency of reflection in one's daily practice with trauma patients.

Presenter(s) bios: Michelle Loris is an LMFT and a licensed clinical psychologist PsyD. She received her PsyD from Antioch University New England. Her area of specialization is PTSD. She completed her work in trauma at the West Haven VA and Yale Psychiatric Institute. She has peer reviewed articles and presentations on trauma. She received training from Edna Foa, Francine Shapiro, Marsha Linehan. She has been in private practice for 25 years.

Presentation 3

Title: MindStylz II: How Stylists and Barbers Can Address Mental Health Issues in Communities of Color

Presenter(s): Lena Stefano (she/her), B.A., & Andrew VanOrden (he/him)

Session Abstract: Hair salons and barbershops serve as vital social institutions within communities of color, functioning as informal mental health spaces where trusted relationships develop over time (Boehme et al., 2022). However, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color face disproportionate barriers to accessing formal mental health treatment, including limited access to culturally competent providers (Ajluni & Michalopoulou, 2025), economic constraints (Williams et al., 2016), and healthcare bias (Macias-Konstantopoulos et al., 2023). The MindStylz Initiative, developed by the Ethnic Diversity Task Force of the Connecticut Psychological Association, addresses these inequities through a culturally responsive, community-based educational intervention.

This pilot study employed a three-part workshop structure with five participants from local barbershops and salons in Montgomery County, Maryland. The intervention aimed to increase knowledge of depression, anxiety, and mental illness recognition; enhance awareness of and referrals to mental health resources; and encourage "gentle referrals" to professional support while establishing appropriate emotional boundaries.

Participants completed pre- and post-evaluation forms assessing baseline knowledge, comfort levels, and perceptions of mental health issues. Results demonstrated significant improvements across all measured domains. Post-test responses showed increased recognition of depression and anxiety symptoms, with comfort levels discussing mental health shifting from "somewhat uncomfortable" to "very comfortable." Participants reported greater confidence in making referrals and maintaining professional boundaries. Notably, perceptions of client mental health needs revealed modest increases in estimated rates of depression and anxiety among their clientele. Program satisfaction ratings were uniformly excellent, with participants expressing strong engagement and perceived value in the training.

These findings suggest that brief, targeted educational interventions can significantly enhance mental health literacy among community workers, supporting MindStylz's goal of strengthening community-based mental health advocacy in culturally grounded spaces.

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Presentation 4

Title: Using A.I Before A.I Uses Us: A Proactive Approach to Integrating A.I Into Practice

Presenter(s): Justin Sandler (he/him), B.A., & Vincent Pignatiello (he/him), Psy.D.

Session Abstract: Since the launch of ChatGPT in 2022, the role that Artificial Intelligence (AI) can and should play in our lives has been a topic of heated debate. Fields such as graphic design and computer science have been some of the first to be fundamentally upended, but there is a looming sense that these are only the first jostles of an incoming tidal wave. While clinical psychology is more insulated than most fields, it is far from immune. We have already seen companies develop AI-assisted psychological assessment tools. Moreover, psychologists use AI to write session notes, students use AI to either write or assist with writing their papers, and patients use AI chatbots as an adjunct or replacement for psychotherapy. Psychologists must take a proactive approach regarding AI usage, ensuring that it is used effectively and ethically. To accomplish this, psychologists will be encouraged to consider the following: (a) Analyze and work through their biases towards AI; (b) Gain a better understanding of how AI works, including its strengths and weaknesses; (c) Create a clear set of standards regarding the usage of AI; (d) Maintain open-mindedness and agility as AI continues to evolve; and (e) The purpose of this presentation is to explore these tenets of the effective and ethical use of AI as well as promote the human aspects of this next technological advance. We discuss the implications for trainees, faculty, and clinicians, and patients.

Presenter(s) bios: Justin Sandler: Justin is a 2nd Year PsyD student at Antioch University of New England and is the head of the psychoanalytic interest group at the university.

Vincent Pignatiello, PsyD. Vince is the chair of the Clinical Psychology department at Antioch University of New England, and director of the Psychological Services Clinic. In his professional life, I have fully immersed myself in the multiple roles that I was trained to fill, including supervision, assessment, psychotherapy, consultation, and administration. In each of these roles,

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he brings a psychoanalytically informed approach to develop an understanding of process, unconscious motivation, and outcome.

12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. - Plenary Symposium (CE credit – 1.25)

Presentation 1

Title: An Overview of the Training Guidelines in Clinical Child Adolescent and Pediatric Psychology

Presenter(s): Rachel Schein (she/her), Psy.D. & Kelly Weber (she/her), Psy.D.

Session Abstract: In 2022, as a charge from the Clinical Child Adolescent and Pediatric Psychology Training Council, DIV 53, DIV 54, and ABBCAP, a task force was established aimed to create training guidelines in Clinical Child and Adolescent and Pediatric Psychology. This workshop will provide participants with an overview of the history and process of creating the guidelines, barriers that have occurred, inclusive of challenges with the socio-political environment, as well as a discussion of the content of the guidelines. Presenters, both of whom participated in the task force, will review competencies established by the task force across multiple levels of training, including doctoral, internship and post-doctoral. Discussion will also focus the implications of the development of guidelines for enhancing the workforce of child, adolescent and pediatric psychologists, as well as the barriers that contribute to workforce shortages and specialization mandates. The workshop will also touch on the contributions of child, adolescent, and pediatric psychologists across continuum of career development, including students, ECPs, mid-career and senior psychologists, as well as those working in a variety of settings.

Presenter(s) bios: Dr. Rachel Schein is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, who's clinical work focuses primarily on training and empowering professionals to provide exemplary, evidence-based services to others. Dr. Schein currently serves as the Director of Internship Training at Devereux Massachusetts & Rhode Island, and as a consulting psychologist for the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

As the Director of Internship Training at Devereux Massachusetts, Dr. Schein serves as the Director of the APA accredited doctoral internship program, as well as the practicum and internship programs for other clinical disciplines. Dr. Schein's specialties are in training on trauma informed care, DBT, psychological assessment, and clinical supervision.

Dr. Schein also serves on the board of the Northeast Regional Psychology Conferences, DIV53's Acute Inpatient and Residential Services special interest group, the APA Continuing Education Committee, the APPIC Internship Membership and Review Committee, as a site visit chair for APA's Commission on Accreditation, and on the Board of the Clinical Child and Pediatric Psychology Training Counsel.

Kelly Weber is a Clinical Professor of Psychology and the former Associate Director of the Graduate Institute of Professional Psychology (PsyD) at the University of Hartford where she served for 8 years as the Coordinator of Practicum Training.

Kelly Weber is a clinical/applied faculty member and a Licensed Clinical Psychologist who maintains a solo psychotherapy practice in West Hartford and she is a Senior Project Manager

with Strategic Psychotherapeutics www.strategicpsychotherapeutics.com For the past three years she has served as a member of the Task Force for Training Guidelines in Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology and from 2019-2025 she served as one of several Principal Investigators for the Health Resources Services Administration- Graduate Psychology Education (HRSA-GPE) grant. She was previously employed in clinical positions at Connecticut Children's Medical Center and Clifford Beers Child Guidance Clinic.

Presentation 2

Title: The Messy Middle: Treating and Supervising a “Ghosted” Developmental Phase

Presenter(s): Kate Patterson, Psy.D.

Session Abstract: Midlife is a developmental period that remains underrepresented in psychological theory, training, and supervision. While adolescence and older adulthood receive significant scholarly and clinical attention, the middle decades can be known for a “midlife crisis,” or being a member of the “sandwich generation,” leaving many of the complex developmental tasks of this stage insufficiently conceptualized. This presentation reframes midlife as “the messy middle,” a psychologically dense period marked by role compression, cumulative life experiences, and evolving personal and social identities.

Adults in midlife often navigate overlapping responsibilities that include parenting adolescents or launching young adults, caring for aging parents, negotiating career shifts or plateauing trajectories, managing health concerns, and reassessing long-standing relational and identity commitments. These simultaneous demands frequently generate heightened stress while also prompting reflection on meaning, purpose, and legacy. Research on meaning-making suggests that midlife can serve as a period of narrative integration in which earlier experiences, including trauma or unresolved developmental conflicts, are revisited and reorganized within a broader life story.

This presentation will review emerging research on midlife development and identify common clinical themes that arise in treatment with midlife adults, including existential questioning, burnout, relational changes, grief, and identity consolidation. Particular attention will be given to gendered experiences of midlife and the ways cultural narratives about productivity, aging, and menopause intersect with psychological functioning.

Implications for clinical supervision and professional training will be emphasized. Both the trainees and supervisors' stage of development contribute to the interpretation of midlife struggles, the potential for difficulty with tolerating existential material, or limited recognition of the broader developmental context shaping clients' experiences. Supervisors play a key role in helping trainees conceptualize midlife within a developmental framework, recognize countertransference related to generational differences, and support therapeutic approaches that emphasize narrative integration, values clarification, and meaning-making.

By highlighting midlife as a dynamic period of developmental recalibration, this presentation encourages greater attention to this “ghosted” stage within both clinical work and the training of future psychologists.

Presenter(s) bios: Kate A. Patterson, Psy.D., is a licensed clinical psychologist and organizational leader with extensive experience in clinical training, supervision, and behavioral health administration. She earned her Psy.D. and M.S. from Antioch University New England and a B.A. in Psychology from Central Connecticut State University. Dr. Patterson currently serves as President of the Connecticut Psychological Association, where she provides strategic leadership and oversees governance and policy initiatives for the organization.

For over a decade at Community Health Center, Inc., she held multiple leadership roles including Clinical Director of the Lillian Reba Moses Child Guidance Clinic and On Site Behavioral Health Director for the Middletown and Clinton sites, overseeing multidisciplinary teams and behavioral health service delivery within a federally qualified health center. Dr. Patterson developed and held key roles in the psychology training programs at CHC, provided supervision to trainees and licensed clinicians, and contributes to the development of evidence-based training initiatives. She also maintains a private practice in Cheshire, Connecticut, providing psychotherapy to children, adults, couples, and families.

Presentation 3

Title: Training Across the Lifespan: Geropsychology

Presenter(s): Tessa Lundquist (she/her), Ph.D.

Session Abstract: This presentation will review the topic of psychology training in geropsychology, including the gold standard of utilization of the Pikes Peak model. The presentation will review the unique facets of geropsychology practice that need to be considered in training and common issues that arise in practice. These issues include being familiar with our own biases and attitudes towards older adults, stage of life issues common to this population, how to communicate about mental health concerns and treatment, risk issues unique to older adults such as duty to report and suicidality in later life, and knowledge of memory and cognition in older adults. Finally, the presentation will conclude with discussion of ethical considerations when working with older adults that are crucial to include in training.

Presenter(s) bios: Dr. Lundquist is a psychologist at Hebrew Senior Life. Dr. Lundquist completed her clinical psychology doctoral degree at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She completed her predoctoral internship at the Albany Psychology Internship Consortium and her postdoctoral fellowship at VA Maine. She was previously at VA Boston where she worked in Geriatric Mental Health as well as Primary Care Behavioral Health. Dr. Lundquist's research has focused on attitudes among older adults about aging and dementia, including anxiety about memory disorders. She is also interested in ageism and program development to improve healthcare options and support for older adults and integrated care.

2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. – Concurrent Session (CE credit – 1.25)

75 minute presentation

Title: Best Practices in Clinical Supervision: Providing Culturally Competent Supervision

Presenter(s): Monica Roy (she/her), Ph.D., David Topor (he/him), Ph.D., & Christopher AhnAllen (he/him), Ph.D.

Session Abstract: This presentation will introduce and focus on the new APA Guidelines for Clinical Supervision in Health Service Psychology, specifically, Domain B, Multicultural Orientation (APA, 2025). Interactive, experiential learning activities will be implemented to engage participants to reflect on their supervisory practices.

The presenters will present the new APA supervision guidelines and attendees will be asked to complete a brief self-assessment. Presenters will encourage participants to reflect on their current knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet these Guidelines.

Presenters will then provide an overview of different models and frameworks, including the ADDRESSING formulation (Hays, 2022) and 2023 APA Inclusive Language Guidelines, to intentionally integrate cultural humility and anti-racism approaches within supervision to help participants meet Guidelines in Domain B (Diversity). Strategies to integrate these frameworks into participants' current supervision practice will be discussed. The anti-racism movements will be integrated into this section and supervisors will identify ways to meet the needs of all trainees and addressing cultural considerations. Applications of an anti-racist stance in supervision will be discussed, with suggestions for how to enact this culture within the supervisory dyad. Case vignettes will be used to teach and practice these strategies.

Presenter(s) bios: "Dr. Monica Roy is the Section Chief for Substance Use Services at VA Boston Healthcare System. She is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Boston University School of Medicine and serves as a clinical supervisor for psychology practicum students, interns, and postdoctoral fellows focusing on clinical treatment, research, and program development for substance use disorders. Dr. Roy is a member of a research team that has studied the efficacy of web- and mobile-based applications for alcohol misuse and posttraumatic stress disorder and is one of the primary developers of a new mobile application currently being disseminated throughout VA. She has served in leadership positions in Division 18 (Psychologists in Public Service) of the American Psychological Association, including as Program Chair and VA Section Chair (2015-2017). Dr. Roy completed her undergraduate work at Boston University and received her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Nova Southeastern University.

Dr. David Topor is the Associate Chief of Staff for Education and a Clinical Psychologist at VA Boston Healthcare System. He is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Topor's research interests are in the development, dissemination, and evaluation of learning theory and educational practices in interprofessional health professions education. These interests include didactic curriculum development and evaluation, assessment of learning, and interprofessional faculty development.

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Christopher AhnAllen PhD ABSMIP is a Board-certified clinical psychologist and serves as Interim Director of Psychology and Director of Psychology Training at Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH). He is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. He is the inaugural training director of the HMS/BWH Clinical Psychology Internship Training Program and led the efforts to include a Gender-Affirming Care Track in 2025. He developed and directs the Gender Diversity Clinic at BWH and collaborates with endocrinology and surgery departments to provide psychotherapy and surgical evaluation services within the Center for Transgender Health. He has previously served on the APA Continuing Education Committee (2022-2024) and served as Chair in 2024."

75 minute presentation

Title: Innovations in Psychology Education: What can be learned from medical education literature?

Presenter(s): Stephanie Towns (she/her), Psy.D.

Session Abstract: The field of medicine has a robust literature around educational optimization and has much to offer psychology in educational innovation, particularly with regard to increasing diversity and promoting experiential learning in the training population. The presentation will review evidence based medical education concepts that can be applied to psychology and examples of the use of these concepts in a current training program. Strategies such as holistic review, use of simulation and AI in training, and evidence based educational models will be described.

Presenter(s) bios: Dr. Towns is an Associate Professor of Neurology and Neuropsychology Division Training Director at Yale School of Medicine. Dr. Towns earned her doctorate in psychology from Antioch University New England and completed her predoctoral internship at the James A Haley VA Hospital in Tampa, FL. Dr. Towns went on to complete a postdoctoral fellowship in neuropsychology and brain imaging research at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, NH and earned her ABPP board certification in clinical neuropsychology just one year later. Dr. Towns' has published numerous articles and presented at national conferences about issues in clinical training, beginning during her postdoctoral fellowship. She completed Yale School of Medicine's Medical Education Fellowship and has implemented a number of innovative practices in the Neuropsychology training program at Yale SOM.

25 minute presentations

Presentation 1

Title: Benefits and Barriers of Innovative and Digital Approaches to Mental Healthcare Services for Underserved Senior Ethnic Community

Presenter(s): Sukanya Ray (she/her), Psy.D., Sophia Naim, & Connor Dugan

Session Abstract: The current focus on integrated healthcare and inter-professional collaboration seems effective for healthcare providers and consumers today. Various professionals working in a multidisciplinary team have acknowledged the benefits in terms of coordination of healthcare services (APA, 2014b; Nash et al., 2012) and patient care. Moreover,

the scholars and practitioners have indicated the benefits of integrated healthcare and the use of digital approaches in optimizing healthcare practices and reducing specific barriers across cultures and contexts. This presentation intends to highlight both the theoretical framework and recent research findings to illustrate the benefits of innovative mental healthcare practices for marginalized communities and specific cultural contexts. The presenter will share information about three major projects concerning the importance of interprofessional collaboration and related health outcomes, the impact of community empowerment outreach programs, and finally, the pilot study on feedback from the community of caregivers, providers, and consumers concerning the development of a user-friendly mobile APP for seniors. The author will provide preliminary findings on information collected from various sources to highlight themes on challenges, needs, and the plan for using a consumer-friendly Mobile APP (nimai) for South Asian groups of seniors. This will include information concerning the impact of wholistic and interdisciplinary approaches and collaboration (medical/psychological/technological) strategies that facilitate better insight into cultural contexts of healthcare needs, prevention, and treatment outcomes among elderly clients receiving care and their caregivers across settings. This session will share our plan for a culturally responsive Mobile App for educators, caregivers, and neurodiverse learners in South Asian communities. This session will share our future plan for a culturally responsive Mobile App for educators, caregivers, and consumers in South Asian communities. Finally, presenters will offer a possible framework for best healthcare practice to reduce barriers, promote empowerment, and well-being through innovative user-friendly mobile technology and community connections.

Presenter(s) bios: Sukanya Ray, Ph.D., is a native of India and has been trained and worked in India, Australia, and the USA. She is a tenured associate professor in Psychology at Suffolk University, Boston. She is a registered psychologist in Australia and has been trained at clinical sites in the USA. She has been a community consultant, researcher, and educator in multicultural issues, health disparities, and well-being areas. Her research interests include Loss, Trauma/Post-Traumatic Growth, Positive Psychology/Well-being, Asian mental health risks/barriers to care, Utilization of alternative healthcare/healing practices, and international students' adjustment/well-being areas. Her recent project includes AI/Mobile APP usage in healthcare and the applied field of Psychology. She has supervised more than 25 master's and doctoral research projects. She has supervised Master's/Doctoral dissertations for Universities in India, Australia, and the USA. She is Co-Chair of the Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs and a Board Member of the Massachusetts Psychological Association.

Presentation 2

Title: From Emergency Adoption to Enduring Practice: Training Considerations for Online Psychotherapy

Presenter(s): Elda Zeko (she/her), Ph.D.

Session Abstract: The rapid shift to virtual psychotherapy during the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way mental health care is delivered and highlighted important questions about how future clinicians are trained. What started as a temporary solution quickly became an ongoing part of clinical practice, bringing both new possibilities and real challenges that training programs can no longer overlook. Common concerns include limited privacy in clients' homes,

increased distractions, and the legal and ethical complexities of working across state or regional boundaries. These realities call for clinicians to be more flexible, thoughtful, and intentional in how they provide care online.

At the same time, virtual therapy has increased access for many people. Online care can make mental health services more accessible, reduce stigma, and offer flexibility for those juggling school, work, caregiving responsibilities, or physical limitations. It has been especially helpful for students, individuals with disabilities, and those who feel safer or more comfortable engaging in therapy from their own homes. Still, the virtual setting comes with limitations, such as fewer nonverbal cues, challenges in assessing safety and risk, and differences in engagement across age groups and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Research shows that while building relationships online may take more effort, strong therapeutic connections and meaningful peer interactions are still possible. Clear communication, intentional structure, and tools like breakout rooms can help foster connection and collaboration. Clinicians, however, also experience strain, including heavier workloads, blurred boundaries, and ongoing screen fatigue. Effective training emphasizes protecting privacy, boosting engagement, adapting interventions thoughtfully, and considering hybrid models that respect client choice while expanding access to care.

Presenter(s) bios: Dr. Zeko is a psychologist with Student Counseling Services at UMass Chan Medical School and holds a doctoral degree in Counseling Psychology from Northeastern University in Boston.

With more than twenty years in the field, including six years of telehealth work, her career has been shaped by a deep commitment to equity, advocacy, and encouraging voices that too often go unheard. Her background includes integrated primary care and counseling veterans, students with disabilities, and refugees. She supports people navigating systemic barriers while fostering confidence, meaningful change, empowering women towards self-advocacy, and authentic self-expression across diverse life contexts.

Her counseling approach integrates health psychology and ACT principles to support both physical and emotional well-being. Beyond SCS, she teaches psychology to nontraditional students, guiding them through pivotal academic and career decisions.

Outside of her professional roles, Dr. Zeko enjoys tackling home renovation projects and is currently challenging herself by learning German—her newest language goal.

Presentation 3

Title: The Identity Mapping Board Game: A Vehicle for Gender, Sexual, and Reproductive Identity Exploration in Emerging Adults

Presenter(s): Lily Rousseau (she/her), B.S., Lindsey Broadhurst (she/her), B.S., & Shannon McIntyre (she/her), Ph.D.

Session Abstract: Gender, sexual, and reproductive (GSR) identity development is a crucial component of adolescent and emerging adulthood development. GSR identity formation shapes how individuals understand themselves, relate to others, and make decisions about intimacy and family. Although extensive literature has documented the importance of GSR identity within whole-person identity development, ongoing misunderstandings and stigma surrounding these concepts impede adequate exploration. Given the weight these decisions carry throughout a person's life, it is important to explore GSR during identity-formative years. To facilitate said exploration, the Identity Mapping Board Game was created to provide individuals with a safe space to learn about their own identities. The game was developed in accordance with Erikson's and Marcia's identity frameworks, which stated the importance of identity exploration and commitment in these formative years. Evidence-based identity exploration practices were incorporated into the game design to promote productive development. These considerations are crucial for cultivating a mindset around GSR identity that supports identity achievement.

The Identity Mapping Board Game was designed to facilitate this productive exploration through experiential learning. The Identity Mapping Board Game has players roll dice to move their pawns around the board. As players land in different spots, they draw the square's corresponding card with a reflective, discussion-based prompt related to GSR, or draw a "wild card" that has GSR identity facts, derived from recent research and publications. Players can respond to discussion questions aloud or privately, depending on their comfort level. These discussions allow players to safely examine their beliefs and attitudes related to personal experiences with gender and sexuality. Group play also promotes engagement with others' perspectives in discussing topics related to GSR. Through evidence-based design and reflective gameplay, the Identity Mapping Board Game can serve as an educational and therapeutic tool for fostering exploration of GSR identity.

Key Terms: Gender, Sexual, and Reproductive (GSR) Identity, Emerging Adulthood, and Game Play

Presenter(s) bios: Lily Rousseau is a second-year PsyD student at Antioch University New England. At Antioch, she is currently engaged in a general and holistic education in clinical psychology for practitioners. Her current practicum placement is at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, in the Department of Pediatric Neuropsychology, where she works as part of an interdisciplinary team to administer, score, and interpret neuropsychological tests. Before beginning my doctoral education in psychology, she served in the United States Army and taught Music Education K-12. Her life experiences have fueled her passion for working with adolescent and emerging adult populations, as well as service members. Through clinical education and training, she has found herself interested in practices and orientations that integrate neurodevelopment, neuropsychology, and mindfulness-based therapies. As she specializes her education and clinical interests, she plans to explore military psychology, health psychology, and pediatric neuropsychology as future training opportunities and potential career paths.

Lindsey Broadhurst is a second-year PsyD student at Antioch University New England. She is currently engaged in a general and holistic education in clinical psychology for practitioners. Her current practicum placement is at Lifestance Health, where she administers, scores, and interprets neuropsychological tests; writes comprehensive neuropsychological testing reports;

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and conducts intake interviews and feedback sessions. Thus far in her education and training, she has found herself interested in practices and orientations that integrate developmental psychology, neuropsychology, and interpersonal perspectives, such as interpersonal neurobiology. As she specializes her education and clinical interests, she plans to explore health psychology, integrated practice, medical psychology, and neuropsychology as future career tracks.

3:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. – Concurrent Session (CE credit – 1.25)

75 minute presentation

Title: Scaffolding Students to Engage in Comprehensive Autism Spectrum Assessments for young adults

Presenter(s): Cynthia Palmisano (she/her), Psy.D. & Jessica Plouffe (she/her), Psy.D.

Session Abstract: There have been increased demands for psychologists and trainees to become skilled at identifying autism. Both referral and diagnosis rates have increased in recent years. Practitioners will encounter individuals with Autism in all settings and benefit from additional training and awareness. This presentation will focus on training students in developing core competencies in autism assessment through didactic instruction, supervised clinical practice, and applied case integration. Training content will cover current diagnostic frameworks (DSM-5-TR), developmental and neuropsychological models of autism, and the appropriate selection and interpretation of gold-standard and commonly used assessment instruments (e.g., ADOS-2, MIGDAS, cognitive, adaptive, language, executive functioning, and socio-emotional measures). Special emphasis will be placed on assessing diverse and often under-identified presentations of autism, including females, young adults without prior diagnosis, individuals with co-occurring psychiatric or intellectual disabilities, and culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

Through intensive supervision in case conceptualization, report writing, and feedback delivery, trainees will learn to translate assessment findings into developmentally appropriate, strengths-based recommendations for intervention, educational and workplace accommodations, and transitional supports. By strengthening doctoral students' clinical judgment and assessment competence, this program aims to improve the quality and accuracy of autism evaluations for young adults and other underserved populations, reduce misdiagnosis and diagnostic overshadowing, and prepare future psychologists to meet growing community needs with rigor, sensitivity, and clinical acumen.

Presenter(s) bios: Dr. Palmisano is a licensed forensic and clinical psychologist with over 25 years of experience. Her expertise involves psychological testing and evaluation. She has worked extensively with at risk and underserved populations including homeless mentally ill, incarcerated, dually diagnosed and transgender individuals. Her practice serves as a training site for students of all levels and serves individuals throughout the lifespan. She also is doctoral level faculty at Saybrook University and speaks regularly on neurodiversity and psychological assessment.

Dr. Plouffe worked at Apex during her clinical training and returned as a postdoc in 2024 following the completion of her degree. During her training, she also worked in community health and post-secondary educational settings and completed her pre-doctoral internship at Brattleboro Retreat. Jessie specializes in evaluations of autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, learning disabilities, and differential diagnosis of mental health conditions, striving for a strengths-based and validating experience. She serves as a clinical supervisor for students in various stages of training.

75 minute presentation

Title: Culturally Responsive Supervision, Clinical Intervention and Training in Supporting Transgender Youth and Adults

Presenter(s): Sharon Horne (she/they), Ph.D., Adrien Blanshei (they/them), M.S., Marjola Daja (she/her), B.S., Kensie Faldoski (she/her), M.Ed., M.A., Klover E. Haynes (she/they), M.A., Meredith R. Maroney (she/her), Ph.D., Kelsey A. Kehoe (they/them), M.A., Heidi M. Levitt (she/her), Ph.D., Julie Shapiro, B.S., & Carmelo Sievers

Session Abstract: Clinicians increasingly seek guidance on how to more effectively support transgender and nonbinary (TNB) youth and adults in therapeutic settings. This presentation by a team of researchers examines pathways and barriers to gender-affirming care across New England; challenges prevailing myths and assumptions about TNB communities; and incorporates client perspectives to highlight factors that shape meaningful therapeutic engagement. Drawing upon the findings of research exploring the use of online interventions with LGBTQ+ individuals, we aim to underscore the need to adapt psychological treatment methods to better address TNB individuals' distinct concerns.

In addition, we call attention to the variability in state and federal legislative policies affecting the well-being of TNB people, and outline recommendations for supervisors carrying out ethical, culturally responsive training practices. The presentation amplifies the voices of TNB study participants whose responses offer insight into intersectional clinical implications and best practices for providers working with this population.

Presenter(s) bios: We are a group of LGBTQ+ faculty, doctoral students, and undergraduate collaborators in counseling and clinical psychology at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Our team represents the ongoing collaboration between several research labs at UMB which have varying foci within the LGBTQ+ population, who come together as a collective to advocate for trans/LGBTQIA issues. Under the direction of Sharon G. Horne, PhD, Heidi M. Levitt, PhD, and Meredith R. Maroney, PhD, our work explores issues related to transnational LGBTQ+ psychology, the intersection of LGBTQ+ and autistic identities, and expressive writing interventions for healing from experiences of heterosexism and transphobia.

75 minute critical conversations

Conversation 1

Title: COMMAND: Training Students to Counter Health Related Mis, Mal & Disinformation

Presenter(s): Dave Castro-Blanco (he/him), Ph.D.

Session Abstract: One of the primary responsibilities and challenges facing trainers and educators in psychology is ensuring that students utilize, incorporate and disseminate evidence-based information. This is especially true when health and healthcare questions are involved. Misinformation, disinformation and malinformation all involve the distortion of evidence and factual information, deliberately or inadvertently. Marginalized people are particularly vulnerable to the effects of distorted health information, and are subject to harmful individual

and public health consequences as a result. This presentation outlines not only the concern but a pilot program to counter mischaracterized information in the training curriculum. COMMAND: Countering Mis, Mal and Disinformation is designed to be employed sequentially and progressively throughout the training curriculum. Training students to discern evidence-based from suspect information and sources, emphasizing scientific reasoning in clinical decision-making and communicating evidence-based information in an understandable manner are all components of the COMMAND model. Particular attention will be paid to efforts to promote science and evidence-based reasoning in the face of anti-science sentiment in the public and official policy-making entities. Emphasis will be placed on particularly challenging aspects of countering health misinformation, including rampant self-diagnosis, commentary and misinformation on social media, vaccination skepticism and denial, communication with non-psychologist colleagues and professionals and encouraging greater public respect for informed, evidence-based information and the scientific approach necessary to that process. COMMAND offers a promising approach to progressively and sequentially training psychology students for the challenges they will face during their educations and careers. Its portability and ability to be integrated into other professional training models offer great promise and potential.

Presenter(s) bios: Dave Castro-Blanco received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from St. John's University, in New York. He received a NIMH-supported post-doctoral fellowship at New York State Psychiatric Institute/Columbia University Medical Center, focused on adolescent suicide prevention, from 1991-1994, and is Board Certified in Clinical Psychology (ABPP) since 1999. Dr. Castro-Blanco is currently an Associate Professor and Program Director of the Clinical Psychology doctoral program at D'Youville University, in Buffalo, NY. His teaching interests include psychopathology, evidence-based intervention, clinical supervision and consultation and program evaluation. Dr. Castro-Blanco serves as Chair of the Research and Evaluation Committee of the National Association of Schools and Programs in Professional Psychology (NCSPP), and his current research interests focus on clinical engagement of adolescents and young adults and countering health-related mis, dis and malinformation, an area in which he has written and presented extensively at state, regional and national meetings.

Conversation 2

Title: Different Degrees, Shared Mission: Psychologists Strengthening Physician Training & Patient Care

Presenter(s): Cassandra Holinka (she/her), Psy.D., Jessica Silverman (she/her), Psy.D., Danielle Kaplan (she/her), Psy.D., Kimberly Santora (she/her), Ph.D., & Brian Padilla (he/him), Ph.D.

Session Abstract: Psychologists are increasingly serving as supervisors, educators, and consultants within teaching hospitals, residency programs, and medical schools. Interdisciplinary training has been shown to improve medical providers' confidence with collaborative and integrated models of care. Further, these models improve patient outcomes. Despite these benefits, implementing interdisciplinary training presents structural, cultural, and logistical challenges, particularly in larger health systems.

This critical conversation features five psychologists representing two health systems. The moderated discussion will draw from theory, recent empirical literature, and professional

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experience to examine challenges and facilitators to training medical colleagues such as residents. Panelists will highlight practical strategies for effective cross-disciplinary education, consultation, and supervision. Through audience engagement, participants will be able to 1) identify at least three strategies to enhance interdisciplinary education and training within residency programs or medical departments, and 2) recognize at least three core psychological competencies that can be leveraged to improve cross-disciplinary teaching and consultation.

Dr. Holinka, a clinical psychologist, will moderate the conversation and discuss advocating for evidence-based care and supervisory models within psychiatry residency training. Dr. Silverman, a clinical and sport psychologist, will address the use of evidence-based care to optimize performance outcomes and describe strategies for expanding psychological training and presence across medical departments (e.g., sports medicine, orthopedics, psychiatry). Dr. Kaplan, a neuropsychologist, will focus on case-based interdisciplinary consultation and training residents to translate psychological and neuropsychological data into individualized, patient-centered care. Dr. Santora, a clinical and counseling psychologist, will discuss supporting psychiatry residents' development of psychologically-informed, culturally responsive care. Finally, Dr. Padilla, a counseling psychologist, will address enhancing cultural competence and patient outcomes through integrative psychotherapy grounded in common factors.

Presenter(s) bios: Dr. Holinka is a clinical psychologist at UConn Health and an Associate Professor of psychiatry at UConn School of Medicine. She is currently the Clinical Director of the Mood & Anxiety Disorders Clinic, and the Director of Outpatient Addictions Psychotherapy Services. She has clinical expertise in treating substance use disorders and posttraumatic stress disorder. In addition to providing evidence-based direct care, she supervises psychology graduate students, medical students, and psychiatry residents. Dr. Holinka enjoys teaching psychotherapy and assessment to cross-disciplinary learners to encourage collaborative and comprehensive patient care. She has also served on several education-related committees including the psychiatry residency psychotherapy planning committee, and the School of Medicine admissions committee. Dr. Holinka came to UConn after graduating from the University of Hartford with her Doctor of Psychology and completing a postdoctoral fellowship at the Yale School of Medicine, Forensic Drug Diversion Clinic.

Dr. Silverman received her graduate training from Teacher's College, Columbia University and The University of Hartford. In NYC, she worked as a research assistant at multiple academic medical centers. During her doctoral training, she trained and worked at numerous sites including college counseling centers, a military base, a forensic inpatient unit, an academic medical center, partial hospitalization and intensive outpatient programs, and private practice. These opportunities strengthened her areas of interest, including elite and high-performing athletes and eating psychopathology. At present, she works to enhance sports research to improve overall holistic care for athletes and provide supervision to trainees.

Dr. Kaplan completed her predoctoral internship at the VA in St. Louis, MO and a two-year neuropsychology fellowship at the University of Virginia School of Medicine. She is currently a Neuropsychologist at Hartford Hospital. Clinical interests include TBI, epilepsy, and neurodegenerative disorders. Dr. Kaplan is a member of several committees through the Sports Neuropsychology Society (SNS), serves as the Secretary for the Connecticut Psychological

Association (CPA) Neuropsychology Division, and is a member of the Multisite Didactic Initiative/Education Committee through the Association of Postdoctoral Programs in Clinical Neuropsychology (APPCN). She is passionate about increasing access to education regarding brain health.

Kimberly Santora, PhD is a licensed psychologist and Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at UConn Health, providing outpatient psychotherapy to adults in hospital clinics and to medical, dental, and PhD students. At UConn she commonly works with themes of identity, adjustment, mood and anxiety, trauma recovery, relationships, and meaningful behavior change. Dr. Santora also has experience assessing, stabilizing, and treating eating disorders, suicidality, and self-harm across multiple levels of care. She has experience in higher education, providing clinical care and administrative leadership as Assistant Director and Director of a university counseling center. Across settings, she is involved in training through program development, teaching, and psychotherapy supervision.

Brian Padilla is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at UConn School of Medicine and the founder and co-director of the Department of Psychiatry's Latinx Clinic. He earned his Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, a master's degree in Community Mental Health from the University of Georgia, and a bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Colorado Boulder. Dr. Padilla's career has been shaped by his Mexican heritage and his service as a United States Peace Corps Volunteer, experiences that inform his interests in Latinx psychology, and refugee, immigrant, and global mental health. Dr. Padilla served for six years as Behavioral Health Director at Fair Haven Community Health Care, a federally qualified health center serving a primarily Spanish-speaking Latino community in New Haven, Connecticut. He developed strong interests in the intersection of medical and mental illness, as well as a passion for teaching and supervision.

Conversation 3

Title: Giving Voice to Intangible, Non-Death Grief: Naming Losses Related to AI Utilization in Psychology Training and Education

Presenter(s): Katherine Russell (she/her), Ph.D.

Session Abstract: Psychology training and education in 2026 is a different landscape than it was just a few years ago. The growing utilization of AI is just one of the tangible changes that has lasting impacts on the training, supervision, education, and practice of psychology. Intangible, non-death losses and sorrow related to these changes are less voiced, however.

What are the ways in which AI utilization in the field may have shifted a sense of dreams, identity, hope in humanity or the system, and connections to others? How do these losses impact us in different and similar ways depending on our roles within psychology (e.g., student, professor, supervisor)? How may different generations experience these losses differently? How do we give such intangible, non-death grief a voice? How do we make meaning of these changes?

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This presentation aims to allow space for a consideration of the unique ways that non-death loss and grief related to AI utilization may be experienced within psychology at this time. It will begin with a brief overview of various concepts and experiences related to non-death loss and grief. Following a consideration of how changes associated with AI use may be creating experiences of intangible loss will be an open discussion in which participants will explore this topic further. Lastly, participants will be invited to write a short poem or piece of expressive writing to share with the group, if they would like.

Presenter(s) bios: Dr. Katherine Russell is a professor at the Antioch University New England PsyD program. Before AUNE, Dr. Russell was a professor of psychology at Rhode Island School of Design, where she developed a course on Quietening and Reflection. Her research includes exploring how different ways of languaging medical experiences may enhance the sense of voice and integration of the medical experience. This research heavily focused on the power of metaphor as a mechanism to understand that which is ambiguous and difficult to articulate.

Dr. Russell takes an integrative approach to psychotherapy and incorporates a variety of orientations, including humanistic-existential, third-wave cognitive behavioral, relational-cultural, and psychodynamic. She also has training in mindfulness, polyvagal theory in therapy, and EMDR. Dr. Russell is licensed in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York and works clinically within a group private practice.

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. – Poster Session and Social Hour

Poster 1

Title: Examining Ethics Education in Geropsychology within Graduate Psychology Training

Presenter(s): Shannon Brown (she/her), Psy.D. & Marisa Moorhouse (she/her), B.A.

Poster Abstract: The growing older adult population presents a critical need for competent geropsychology professionals. However, the current literature suggests that ethics-focused training specific to the older adult population in doctoral psychology programs remains limited and inconsistently applied. For instance, ethical challenges in geropsychology, such as consent, autonomy, capacity, and confidentiality (Amaral, et al., 2022) prove to be complex, yet graduate curricula often inadequately prepare students to navigate these issues. Further, existing research highlights that geropsychology training is frequently optional and variable across programs (Bosco et al., 2024), workforce pressures demand improved preparation for both specialists and generalist providers (Woodhead et al., 2013), and teaching quality and ethics-focused instruction remain underdeveloped despite interest among faculty (Carpenter et al., 2015). This study aims to systematically review existing literature on the incorporation of ethics training and geropsychology in doctoral psychology programs. Specific objectives include examining the content, structure, and accessibility of ethics education, and identifying barriers to implementation (Bosco et al., 2024, Woodhead et al. 2013). We anticipate that this study's results will inform curricular recommendations for integrating ethics and aging into doctoral training with an emphasis on fostering ethical competence. Ultimately, this project seeks to clarify the current landscape of ethics education in geropsychology within doctoral psychology programs and identify opportunities for enhancing preparation of future psychologists to meet the behavioral health needs of older adults.

Poster 2

Title: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Heart Rate Variability Biofeedback Coherence Training with Tai Chi on Cognitive Functions and Pain Management

Presenter(s): Paul Gunser (he/him), Psy.D.

Poster Abstract: "Cognitive Outcomes - HRV (Heart Rate Variability) Coherence Training Group/Tai Chi Participants demonstrated the following results. Subject # 3's Verbal Memory scores showed: Immediate Memory: +2 SD improvement. His Distractor List Memory: increased 2 SD. His Retention of the original 5 words and Delayed Memory remained the same at +1 SD and + 2 SD respectively. His Verbal Fluency remained the same (50th percentile). His Complex Figure Copy remained the same (+1 SD). Likewise, his Delayed memory for the Complex Figure remained the same (+2 SD). Trail Making Part B improved from 57 seconds to 53 seconds for completion of the task. His mean average temperature for his frontal lobe declined from 92.0 degrees to 91.76 degrees (Hemoencephalographic data). His HRV RMSSD (a measure of the parasympathetic NS) increased from the relaxed state (104.9) to 143.4 during the planning of an activity state). This is what would be expected.

Subject # 7's RAVLT Immediate Memory increased by 1 SD from +3 SD to +4 SD from April to August). His recall of the Distractor List remained at +3 SD. However, his Retention of the first list after the distractor list rose from 0 SD to 5 SD. His Delayed Memory increased from +1 SD to +3 SD. This subject's Verbal Fluency increased from the 65th percentile to the 90th percentile. His Complex Figure Copy improved from -1 SD to +1 SD and his delayed memory for it rose from +1SD to +3 SD.

Subject # 10's RAVLT Immediate Memory remained at 0 SD from 04/2025 to 10/2025. Her recall of the Distractor List increased from -1 SD to 0 SD. Her retention of the first list remained at 0 SD and her Delayed memory for the first list also remained at 0 SD. Verbal Fluency remained below the 10th percentile. Her Copy of the Complex Figure remained at 0 SD as did her delayed recall of that figure. However, her Trail making Part B improved from 10th percentile to the 70th percentile. Her resting HRV RMSSD improved from 57.4 to 68.2 degrees. Her deep breathing RMSSD rose from 98.1 to 130.3 degrees.

*RMSSD (Root Mean Square of Successive Differences) results unfortunately were not generated for all subjects (computer malfunction). One subject who only engaged in tai chi demonstrated a significant improvement from 8.2 to 29.1 scores.

Another subject demonstrated an improvement from 57.4 to 68.2 during a relaxed state and 98.1 to 130.3 during the deep breathing state comparing scores from April 2025 to August 2025. This subject demonstrated improvement over the time period for both relaxed breathing states and deep breathing states. Higher scores in RMSSD are suggestive of better HRV (inter-beat intervals, i.e. time intervals between heart beats). RMSSD is a measure of parasympathetic activity and therefore an indicator of one's ability to obtain a "rest and digest state." It is particularly noteworthy that lower numbers are reflective of higher stress levels.

Poster 3

Title: Future Directions of Providing Developmentally Appropriate Feedback in Pediatric Assessment.

Presenter(s): Teresa Girard (she/her), M.A. & Jennifer Frechette (she/her), Ph.D.

Poster Abstract: With increased access to technology, children are becoming more aware of psychological and neuropsychological conditions, leading to greater curiosity about their own evaluations. Current trends in the field typically support psychologists giving feedback initially to the parents or guardians and then providing the family guidance in how to communicate the results and any diagnoses to their child. However, this cultural shift in increase of awareness of conditions highlights the need for psychologists to adopt a more proactive role in supporting parents and guardians as they explain evaluation results to children. An emerging method of doing so is providing feedback to the child directly in a subsequent feedback session. Communicating these findings in a developmentally appropriate, strengths-based manner is essential to preserve children's self-concept and foster self-efficacy. Despite this emerging alternative method, there is limited research examining effective methods for providing feedback from evaluations directly to children. This poster presentation is representative of a literature review examining the impact of delivering feedback to children following neuropsychological or

psychological evaluations, with an emphasis on alternative and culturally responsive methods that align with current trends in the field of psychology. The goal is to inform and enhance best practices for feedback that supports children's overall well-being.

Poster 4

Title: Navigating Social Media–Driven Diagnostic Questions in Clinical Practice

Presenter(s): Zach Pessia (he/him), M.A.

Poster Abstract: Adolescents and young adults are increasingly seeking information to better understand themselves and their mental health through new and readily accessible avenues. Common alternatives to traditional help-seeking include searching Google or ChatGPT and engaging with social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook. In clinical practice, there appears to be a growing number of young people presenting with highly specific diagnostic questions—most commonly related to autism spectrum disorder or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder—based on information gathered from these platforms (Yeung, Ng, & Abi-Jaoude, 2022).

Notably, much of the mental health–related content targeted toward adolescents and young adults is created by individuals who are not medical professionals and may include oversimplified or misleading information (Armstrong et al., 2025; Yeung et al., 2022). When individuals began to identify with certain labels or diagnoses, it can shape their self-concept, perceived support, future planning, behaviors, and treatment expectations (Sims, Michaleff, Glasziou & Thomas, 2021). At the same time, receiving or pursuing a diagnosis may serve important functions, including validation of lived experience, access to community, and facilitating understanding by others (Armstrong et al., 2025).

Neuropsychological & psychological evaluations may play a critical role in supporting diagnostic clarity for these individuals, particularly given that DSM-5-TR diagnostic criteria rely heavily on subjective reports of symptoms and behaviors and may not fully capture underlying neuropsychological processes. The goal of this presentation is to equip psychologists with tools to support adolescents and young adults in their pursuit of self-understanding while also helping them critically navigate the pervasive misinformation present across social media platforms.

Poster 5

Title: Navigating Social Media–Driven Diagnostic Questions in Clinical Practice

Presenter(s): Roselyn Peterson, Ph.D., Robert Dvorak, Ph.D., Fiona Marques, & Jessica Cabrera Chacon

Poster Abstract: Across four studies, a new measure of dating and sexual protective behavioral strategies (PBS) called the Sexual and Negative Dating Inventory (SANDI) was developed and psychometrically evaluated. Examinations were conducted to assess the relationship between SANDI and sexual violence, alcohol use, and alcohol-related harms among college students, including sexual and gender minority (SGM) individuals. Methods and results across the four studies included: Study 1 (N = 1,298; follow-up n = 336) used Exploratory Structural Equation

Modeling and identified a 24-item measure with a five-factor structure that showed strong model fit and satisfactory test-retest reliability ($r = .74$). Study 2 ($n = 313$; follow-up $n = 95$) demonstrated measurement invariance for SGM students, who reported greater use of protective strategies across factors. Within study 2, higher SANDI scores linked to a lower history of sexual risk and likely predicted fewer sexual risk behaviors and fewer experiences of regretted sex, however they were not associated with sexual violence. Study 3 ($n = 15$) involved qualitative interviews exploring contextual factors influencing PBS use. Participants described themes including trust, recognizing high-risk situations, differences between public and private environments, and prioritizing safety and comfort. Study 4 ($N = 324$) showed that although dating and sexual PBS did not predict weekly alcohol consumption beyond alcohol-specific PBS, they were related to fewer alcohol-related consequences, especially among individuals with low to moderate drinking levels. Overall, results indicate that the SANDI is a reliable and valid instrument for measuring dating and sexual protective strategies in diverse college populations and underscores the importance of context-sensitive preventative approaches.

Poster 6

Title: Hope as resilience? The impacts of hopefulness on moral injury, psychological well-being, and sustained advocacy behavior among psychologists and psychology trainees

Presenter(s): Emily Padilla, Psy.D. (she/her)

Poster Abstract: Social justice advocacy aims to “decrease human suffering and to promote human values of equality and justice” (Vasquez, 2012, p. 337). Psychologists, who are often trained as both scientists and clinical practitioners, are uniquely positioned to address and respond to the social issues impacting our society. With the increased public attention to systemic inequities and the recent federal policies limiting basic human rights, many psychologists feel called to action (Lantz, et al., 2016). At the same time, in today’s sociopolitical climate, science, scientific inquiry, and health care delivery have been challenged, suppressed, and negatively impacted through policy and funding cuts. As a result, health professionals may be left experiencing an immense sense of uncertainty, fear, and anxiety, leading to feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and stress. Furthermore, there is concern for the development of functionally impairing moral injuries, which can arise from personal victimization or witnessing inhumane circumstances (Litz & Walker, 2025). As a result, psychologists and social scientists are likely driven toward inaction, learned helplessness, and ultimately burnout. On the other hand, research has long established the positive impacts of hope on psychological well-being. Research has identified that hopefulness has led to improved physical and mental health outcomes overall and increased proactive behaviors (Dufo 2012; Reichard et al. 2013; Flechtner 2014; Lybbert and Wydick 2018; Graham and Pinto 2019; O’Connor and Graham 2019). This poster will discuss the research to date on the impacts of hope on psychological well-being and resilience, and will propose ways in which intentional hopefulness can buffer against moral injury and sustain advocacy-related behaviors among psychologists and psychology trainees.