



## Annual Conference, October 22, 2021

### Session Descriptions and Speaker Bios

#### **KEYNOTE:**

***Permission to Feel: Strategies for Healthy Emotion Regulation During Uncertain Times***

**Marc Brackett, Ph.D.**

Educators - have you been riding a roller coaster of emotions lately? You aren't alone. In this live presentation, Dr. Marc Brackett, director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and author of *Permission To Feel*, will share strategies that can help make the ride a little smoother. You will also learn research-based strategies to support your own and your student's well-being, healthy decision making, relationship quality, and performance.

During these unprecedented times, children are experiencing a range of unpleasant emotions, including anxiety, frustration, and boredom. As the adults in their lives, it's critical to make space for their feelings and support them in managing them. Don't miss this interactive session where you will learn a 4-step process to both support adults in being culturally responsive and emotionally intelligent role models for children and teach children key strategies to support healthy emotion regulation strategies and support their well-being and academic success.

Bio:

**Marc Brackett, Ph.D.**, is the founding director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and a professor in the Child Study Center at Yale University. His research focuses on the role of emotional intelligence in learning, decision making, creativity, relationships, health, and performance. Marc is the lead developer of RULER, an evidence-based approach to social and emotional learning that has been adopted by over 3,000 schools across the globe. He also is the author of *Permission to Feel: Unlocking the Power of Emotions to Help our Kids, Ourselves, and our Society Thrive*. Website: [www.marcbrackett.com](http://www.marcbrackett.com)

#### **BREAKOUT SESSION I: 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

##### **I A. Youth Vaping: Understanding the Risks**

*Presenter: Victoria Adams, M.Ed, NCTTP, is the Tobacco Prevention Coordinator at Southern Connecticut State University.*

This presentation will describe the risks associated with youth electronic nicotine delivery systems and ways to address nicotine prevention for this age group.

Bio:

Victoria Adams, M.Ed, NCTTP, is the Tobacco Prevention Coordinator at Southern Connecticut State University. She holds a National Certificate in Tobacco Treatment Practice and is a trained tobacco treatment specialist trainer from the University of Massachusetts Medical School's Center for Tobacco Treatment Research and Training. She provides tobacco prevention, cessation and policy work to

community organizations, schools and colleges throughout the state. She coordinates a Youth MATCH Coalition group which aims to reduce tobacco use among youth in the state. In addition, she provides tobacco cessation care to all members at SCSU.

### **I B. The Opioid Crisis and Emerging Drug Trends You Need to Know**

*Presenter: Robert F. Lawlor, Jr., Connecticut Drug Intelligence Officer, Office of National Drug Control Policy*  
In this session Robert Lawlor will be presenting information concerning the current and emerging trends contributing to illicit drug trafficking and the opioid crisis. In addition, we will discuss the types of drugs making their way into the US such as synthetic pressed pills and the extreme danger these drugs pose to our communities.

**Bio:**

Robert F Lawlor Jr. is the Connecticut Drug Intelligence Officer for the Office of National Drug Control Policy's HIDTA (High Intensity Drug Trafficking) program as well as the Connecticut Public Safety Liaison for the HIDTA/CDC Overdose Response Strategy, an unprecedented public health/public safety collaboration. Robert's expertise is in all aspects of the illicit drug market in Connecticut, New England and the Tristate area as well as its implications on the health and safety of our communities. Robert's passion is creating and facilitating innovative ideas on how to address substance use issues in our communities through Public Health/Public Safety partnerships. Robert holds a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice and prior to this position, Robert was a supervisor with the New Haven Police Department for over twenty years where he held such positions as a member with the Connecticut State Police Statewide Narcotics Task Force, Shift Commander, Commander of the Robbery/Burglary Unit, and Commander of the Homicide/Cold Case Unit.

### **I C. Social Skills: A Pro-neurodiversity Paradigm**

*Presenter: Julie Roberts, MS, CCC-SLP is the Founder of Therapist Neurodiversity Collective*  
Social Skills Training from a neurodiversity perspective. This presentation will include current, relevant research that should shape both school and clinical therapy practices to be evidence-based and research-driven. Topics will include important terminology, neurodivergent client perspectives, and a deep dive into contemporary diversity in social intelligence, the double empathy problem, autistic masking research.

**Bio:**

Julie Roberts, MS, CCC-SLP is the Founder of Therapist Neurodiversity Collective. Julie has been a practicing speech-language pathologist since 1999. Throughout her career, she has served in various healthcare settings with both pediatric and adult populations and has held key healthcare leadership positions, including National Field Director of Corporate Compliance, and Multi-state Regional Clinical Director for the nation's largest provider of rehab post-acute care. Julie is a frequent blogger and writes articles on disability rights, empathetic therapy practices, and advocacy efforts. Julie is a passionate and tireless patient/client/student rights advocate and activist. <https://therapistndc.org/leadership/>

### **I D. The Community Resiliency Model**

*Presenters: Allison Abramson, MPA, Executive Director, Tri-Town Youth Services, and Bonnie Daley, Diversion Coordinator, Middletown Youth Services Bureau*

The Community Resiliency Model (CRM)® trains community members to not only help themselves but to help others within their wider social network. The primary focus of this skills-based, stabilization program is to re-set the natural balance of the nervous system. CRM's goal is to help to create "trauma-informed" and "resiliency-focused" communities that share a common understanding of the impact of trauma and chronic

stress on the nervous system and how resiliency can be restored or increased using this skills-based approach.

Bios:

Allison Abramson, M.P.A. is the Executive Director of Tri-Town Youth Services and a Community Resiliency Model teacher through the Trauma Resource Institute. Allison brings over 20 years of Nonprofit Management and Fund Development experience to Tri-Town YSB. She is passionate about empowering youth and families and promoting trauma-informed and resiliency-building practices across sectors and in all domains of life, work and school. A long-time student of yoga and mindfulness, she completed her 200-hour yoga teacher training with Coral Brown in 2020. Bonnie Daley, LMSW is a clinical social worker and a Community Resiliency Model teacher through the Trauma Resource Institute.

Bonnie Daley is currently the Diversion Coordinator at Middletown Youth Services Bureau. Bonnie graduated from UCONN with an undergraduate degree in human development and family studies and from Boston University with a master's degree in social work. Bonnie's areas of expertise include youth diversion; therapeutic individual, family, and group support; Cognitive Behavioral Therapy; Motivational Interviewing; various group evidence-based practices; restorative practices; trauma-informed and trauma-responsive practices; the impact of stress and toxic stress on the body and brain; and holistic wellness."

#### I E. The COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION™

*Presenters: Malik Champlin, Nitza M. Diaz & Nicole M. Vitale, Educational Consultants, SERC*

"The COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION™ protocol is used as a strategy to eliminate racial achievement disparities through safe, authentic and effective cross-racial dialogue. Courageous conversations are dialogues in which participants commit to engage each other with honesty, open-mindedness, and vulnerability; to listen deeply to better understand each other's perspective; and to "sustain the conversation when it gets uncomfortable or diverted".

In this session, participants will be introduced to the Compass, they will have the opportunity to racialize their voice, and will have an opportunity to practice and navigate using the Compass in a safe space. For the purposes of creating a culture within each YSB that embraces differences, intentionally analyzing policies, practices, and procedures are crucial to build meaningful connections with youth of color.

Bios:

Malik Champlain, Education Consultant, SERC

Malik Champlain came to SERC with a variety of experiences in racial equity and social justice initiatives. In his previous role, Malik served as a Peace Officer for the State of Connecticut focusing on Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Effective Practices in Community Supervision. Malik also has experience in the K-12 school system as a Special Education Teacher in Massachusetts and as a behavior technician in Hartford Public Schools.

For over a decade, Malik has been working with children, families, and school districts as an inspirational speaker motivating them to live with his motto "Passion, Hunger, and Drive." He has presented his message on multiple platforms such as NBC, FOX News, and Tedx Speakers in Hartford, CT. Malik has been recognized as one of the Hartford Business Journal's 40 under 40 and has been acknowledged for his community service efforts with the Martin Luther King Legacy Award by the Norwich, CT NAACP and the Connecticut 100 Men of Color award. Malik resides in the Greater Hartford area with his wife Rosalyn Champlain and three children.

**Nitza M. Diaz, Education Consultant, SERC**

Nitza M. Diaz has served as an education consultant with the State Education Resource Center and the CT Parent Information and Resource Center run by SERC. Through training, coaching, and technical assistance, Nitza provides and designs professional development for educators, families, community organizations, and faith-based leaders. As a Latina/Puerto Rican, parent, and educator, she draws from her own experience to help others understand how systemic racism, poverty, and inequities impact schools and communities.

**Nicole M. Vitale, Education Consultant, SERC**

Nicole M. Vitale has always been passionate about equity and her work with youth. Soon after starting college, Nicole became a mentor with Children's Community Programs (CCP) to work with kids who were under the care of the Department of Children and Families (DCF). She later went on to coordinate the College and Career Readiness Program at CCP to help students gain the skills they need for postsecondary success. Soon afterward, Nicole developed a mentoring program for Klingberg Family Services in New Britain, CT. She was also an afterschool coordinator in Farmington Public Schools and a preschool teacher at the Boys and Girls Club. After graduating from Central Connecticut State University, Nicole began her career at SERC as an Education Services Specialist, where she coordinated events for the Initiative on Diversity in Education and developed a youth leadership program designed to help students develop strong, effective leadership skills in order to make positive changes in their school and community. She then became an education consultant, coordinating the Special Education Youth Advisory Council and facilitating professional learning for students, staff, and family members on cultural responsiveness, equity, leadership, and student voice. Nicole also previously managed the Parent Leadership/Parent Trust Fund Grant that supports parents from across the state to gain and enhance skills needed to advocate on behalf of Connecticut's children.

**BREAKOUT SESSION II: 12:45 to 1:45 p.m.**

**II A. The COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION™**

*Presenters: Malik Champlin, Nitza M. Diaz & Nicole M. Vitale, Educational Consultants, SERC*

**See above (session I E)**

**II B. Making Your School No Place for Hate**

*Presenter: Michelle Pincince, Education Director, Anti-Defamation League*

Learn how ADL's No Place for Hate Initiative provides PK-12 schools with a framework to organize school-wide initiatives that empower staff, students and their families to take a stand against all forms of hate and communicate that all students have a place where they belong. Students will be featured in this interactive presentation.

**Bio:**

Michelle Pincince is the Education Director for the Connecticut office of ADL. She has facilitated anti-bias workshops for thousands of students and educators across Connecticut and loves working with and learning from students.

### **III C. Connecting in a Distant Reality**

Presenter: Heather Wlochowski, MS, Director, Manchester Youth Services

We are all Zoom exhausted! Heather will be sharing ways that she was able to engage young people and families in a circle experience online. This will be an interactive workshop so come ready to engage!

Bio:

Heather Wlochowski, M.S. has over 30 years of group work and experiential education experience, 20 years with the Manchester Youth Service Bureau as a Youth Service Coordinator. She was recently promoted to Director. During the COVID shut down, like many of us, she struggled to figure out how to engage youth and families in the virtual world, though not perfect, she came up with some great options.

### **III D. The New Marijuana, CT's Law and You**

*Presenters: John Daviau, MACP, CPS and Melissa McGarry, Project Director, Trumbull Prevention Partnership*

Participants in this presentation will understand why today's marijuana is different from the marijuana of yesterday and what current research tells about the harms for today's youth. Participants will receive an overview of CT's new, complex and 300-page adult use, commercial marijuana law and some of the impacts on YSB's and other municipal departments and organizations. Finally, participants will engage in a discussion on implications for YSB's response, including prevention and advocacy opportunities.

Bios:

Since 2010, Melissa McGarry has served as the Project Director of TPAUD, Trumbull's Prevention Partnership, a local prevention coalition who strives to prevent underage drinking/drug use and promote social and emotional wellness through education, outreach, enforcement, and public policy. Previously, Melissa worked as a public health consultant performing program evaluation, strategic planning, needs assessment, and grant-writing services for local non-profits, municipalities, and state agencies. Melissa holds a BA from the University of Notre Dame.

John Daviau, MACP, CPS is a Community Psychologist and Certified Dialogue Education Practitioner with over 30 years of leadership, training, facilitation and consulting experience in non-profit organizations and schools. John has focused his work on coalition and organizational development, substance abuse and violence prevention, school safety initiatives and prevention workforce development.

A natural collaborator and networker, John has significant experience in supporting communities, organizations and schools with systems change issues; utilizing the Strategic Prevention Framework as a community-wide prevention model; implementing best practices and evidence-based programs; organizational development; and problem-solving issues including barriers to effective prevention practice. John is a passionate leader in the field of prevention, and has held leadership position in Connecticut Association of Prevention Professionals, CT's chapter of Smart Approaches to Marijuana, and the Connecticut Coalition to Stop Underage Drinking

### **III E. Getting the Word Out!**

*Presenters: Tressa Giordano, Executive Director AHM Youth Services, and Deborah Walls, Design & Marketing Specialist, AHM Youth Services*

Are you looking for ways to spread the word about your YSB? Come learn ways of using social media, e-newsletters, YouTube, Canva and Hootsuite to market all the great work your organization is doing.

Bios:

Tressa Giordano is the Executive Director at AHM Youth & Family Services. AHM serves as the Youth Service Bureau for the town of Andover, Hebron, Marlborough and Columbia. Tressa and her team provide various services such as Positive Youth Development, Clinical Outpatient Therapy, a Family Resource Center & Preschool, and oversee the region's Juvenile Review Board.

Deborah Walls is the Design & Marketing Specialist for AHM Youth & Family Services, Inc. Deborah utilizes a multi-channel communication strategy at AHM to ensure our donors and community members are continually engaged, participating in our programs, and are inspired to make a difference during our fundraisers!

**BREAKOUT SESSION III: 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.**

**III. A. Queer Youth Programming**

*Presenter: Ala Ochumare, LGBTQ+ Youth Program Officer, New Haven Pride Center*

This session is an overview of the programs and culture of New Haven Pride Center's youth support and mentor spaces. Fee free to reach out to [toyouth@newhavenpridecenter.org](mailto:toyouth@newhavenpridecenter.org) for more information or with any questions.

Bio:

Ala Ochumare Ala (she/her) has spent that past thirteen years working for a variety of organizations and advocating for various minority communities and systematically oppressed groups. Ala is one of the founding members of #BlackLivesMatter New Haven and one of the facilitators of the Marsha P. Johnson Summer Camp for LGBTQ+ Black and Brown Youth organized by a group of community organizations including City Wide Youth Coalition. In addition to her work at the New Haven Pride Center, Ala works as a Community Recovery Assistant in Crisis and Respite and Long-Term Services programs for Continuum of Care INC. in New Haven. Ala recently completed a year-long fellowship for community organizers through CEIO, is a CT Core Organize Now! New Haven Chapter leader, and was recently accepted to the Yale University and Southern Connecticut State University CARE New Haven Health Leader program.

**III B. Successful YSB Programs During Covid**

*Panelists: Kelley Edwards (Clinton), Tressa Giordano (AHM), Sarah Maffiolini (Windsor), Lori Stanczyc (Rocky Hill), Jason Stankowski (Glastonbury).*

This session will highlight five YSBs' youth programs offered during the pandemic. Learn how these YSBs kept youth programming alive during Covid, and helped youth to stay engaged. Hear about their challenges, successes, and lessons learned.

Bios:

Kelley Edwards, MFT has served as the Prevention Coordinator for the town of Clinton for 11 years. She is a Certified Prevention Specialist with a masters in Marriage and Family Therapy, so she uses a systems lens in all she does. Clinton's prevention focuses on youth empowerment and community involvement to change cultural norms in the school and town. Prior to Clinton Kelley also worked as a clinician for Wethersfield Youth Services and was the Youth Services Coordinator in Ellington. Kelley has a certified therapy dog which she works alongside to promote mental wellness and suicide prevention with teens. Kelley is a QPR trainer, softball coach and mom of 2 teenagers!

Tressa Giordano is the Executive Director at AHM Youth & Family Services. AHM serves as the Youth Service Bureau for the town of Andover, Hebron, Marlborough and Columbia. Tressa and her team provide various services such as Positive Youth Development, Clinical Outpatient Therapy, a Family Resource Center & Preschool, and oversee the region's Juvenile Review Board.

Sarah Maffiolini has been involved with the Youth Services Bureau since she was in high school and participated in the Leaders in Training after school and summer program in her hometown. She quickly found a passion for helping others, youth enrichment, and community engagement. =

After graduating from high school Sarah worked part time at the Windsor YSB while earning her Bachelors in Psychology from Central Connecticut State University in 2012. She was then hired as the YSB Director in Windsor Locks where she co-chaired the Windsor Locks Wellness Coalition with the goal of reducing underage drinking in the community. She spent three wonderful years there serving the community before coming back to the Windsor YSB in June 2016.

Sarah supervises all areas of the Windsor YSB including needs assessments, program supervision, and budget. The summer the busiest time at the Windsor YSB with the Summer Teen Employment Program, Windsor Community Block Party Series, and the Summer Youth in Action program for high school students. Sarah lives in Manchester and loves to spend time with her rescue dog Smurf!

Lori Stanczyc, M.Ed., LPC began working for the Town of Rocky Hill in September of 1990. She was a part-time therapist for several years before taking on the full-time position of YSB Coordinator in 1997. She earned a B.A. from Skidmore College and M.Ed. in counseling psychology from Boston University. She became a licensed professional counselor in July 1999. Previously a certified elementary school teacher, Lori loves working with children of any age. Lori has been a member of the CYSA Board (on and off) since 1997, and was a member of the CASAC Board from 2000 through 2008.

Jason Stankowski holds an undergraduate degree in Puppetry from the University of Connecticut. He worked for several years as a sous chef in fine dining, as well as a paraprofessional in public education before joining the staff at Glastonbury Youth and Family Services in the role of Assistant Program Coordinator for Creative Experiences. Since mid-2015 Jason has had honor of serving as the Youth Program Supervisor. Jason is an avid gardener, culinary experimenter, and all around fan of the creative arts. He lives on the Mt. Hope River in Ashford CT with his wife Stephanie and rescue dog June.

### **III C. Resiliency Programs to Empower Youth!**

*Presenter: Haley Brown, Program Coordinator, Jordan Porco Foundation*

The Jordan Porco Foundation (JPF) offers uplifting and affordable mental health programming for schools and other youth-serving organizations. This session will provide participants with a comprehensive overview of JPF's two newest programs designed for high school and middle school aged youth: **4 What's Next**, and **Check In**.

4 What's Next is a module based primary prevention program that builds resilience in students by giving them the tools to handle stress and distress now and in their future. Check In is an uplifting mental health event that includes interactive expo booths, community resources, and prize incentives, creating an approachable atmosphere that fosters dialogue about mental health with a focus on fun! Learn why mental health programming is more important than ever, despite the obstacles created by the COVID-19 pandemic and how your community can successfully implement these programs. This session will cover both

prevention programs, allow time for questions and answers, and leave you with testimonials from those who have implemented these programs.

Bio:

Haley Brown has over ten years experience in the field of substance misuse prevention, suicide awareness, and mental health promotion. Haley first started out as a Prevention Assistant and then was promoted to Prevention Coordinator for ERASE (East of the River Action for Substance- Abuse Elimination, Inc.). She has also worked as the Prevention Coordinator for Durham Middlefield Youth and Family Services, and currently as the Project Director for Wolcott CASA (Citizens Against Substance Abuse) and a Program Coordinator for the Jordan Porco Foundation. Haley has over five years experience writing and managing local, state-wide, and federal grant applications. In addition, she has experience coordinating and implementing grants on the local and regional level. Haley serves as the President to the Connecticut Association of Prevention Professionals, and has previously served on the Board of the Connecticut Association of Addiction Professionals

#### **III D. Stepping Out of the Way for Youth Leadership**

*Presenters: Rashanda McCollum, JD, Executive Director and Beanie N'Sumbu, Program Manager, Students for Educational Justice*

During this interactive workshop we will build a better understanding of the ways in which adults internalize and externalize conceptions of young people's inadequacy and inferiority. By challenging notions of adultism, participants will learn to center youth voices and recognize that young people are competent and capable decision makers who can, and should be encouraged, to take the lead in classrooms and within organizations.

Bios:

Rashanda McCollum was born and raised in New Haven, CT. A first generation college graduate, Rashanda has devoted her life's work to educational advocacy on behalf of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and other people of color) students and those in other historically marginalized communities. To that end, Rashanda has worked for over a decade developing innovative programs that promote equity in educational opportunity and advance fundamental human rights protections. She earned a Bachelors Degree in Communication from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a Juris Doctor from the University of Miami School of Law. She currently serves as the Executive Director of Students for Educational Justice.

Beanie N'Sumbu is the Program Manager at Students for Educational Justice. She has been a part of Students for Educational Justice since 2017. Benie wanted to get involved with SEJ because she believes that all students should learn the full, honest history of the United States which includes the history of race and racism. She hopes that through SEJ, anti-racist and student-centered pedagogy will be imbedded in school curricula across Connecticut and even the country.

#### **III E. Incarcerated Communities**

*Presenter: Alycia Gay, BLOC Program Coordinator, Katal Center for Equity, Health, and Justice.*

presentation on Katal's methods of social change that includes a harm reduction lens. There will be an exercise to simulate how former and current criminal justice policies impact the most vulnerable communities. Following, Alycia will discuss [Katal's Building Leadership and Organizing Capacity\(BLOC program\)](#) and how folks, particularly black women, women of color, young people and LGBTQIA+ folks can

learn and practice community organizing.

Bio:

Alycia Gay came to Katal with eight years of experience with non-profit organizations in the Greater Springfield and Holyoke regions of Western Massachusetts, working with diverse hard-to-reach clients through case management, outreach, and programming.

Prior to joining Katal, Alycia worked as a youth worker and program coordinator at Roca Inc. in Springfield. There, she did outreach and facilitated financial literacy and cognitive behavioral therapy classes for the young men and young women's programs. She was introduced to organizing in 2014 in Baltimore after Michael Brown's murder by the police. Alycia is an advocate for social justice, racial equity, and connecting with the community.

Alycia holds a bachelor's degree in ethnic and gender studies and is studying in the master's of social work program at Westfield State University. She spends her free time with her daughter and dog, and enjoys watching reruns of her favorite shows while eating ice cream sandwiches.

**Final Session 3:15 to 4:00 p.m.**

Directors Roundtable

*Facilitator, Cephus Nolen, Jr., LCSW, Director, East Hartford Youth Services*

Seasoned YSB directors will answer your questions and lead a discussion about YSB needs and challenges. This is an invaluable opportunity for brainstorming and problem solving from the experts!