

COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO CHILD ABUSE CONFERENCE



**26th Annual
Community Response to Child Abuse Conference**

**October 8, 2026
Sioux Falls Convention Center
SDCPCM.com/Conference**

OVERVIEW

Welcome to the 26th Annual Community Response to Child Abuse Conference. This conference includes national and regional speakers that will address a wide variety of topics in order to help professionals and the general public better understand child abuse prevention and response efforts.

Who Should Attend?

Join the effort to end child maltreatment. This conference is ideal for:

Medical Providers
Nurses
Legal Community

Behavioral Health
Social Workers
Law Enforcement

Business Community
Educators
Counselors

Community Advocates
Dental Professionals
Students

Event Details

Thursday, October 8 | 8:00 am - 5:15 pm (7:30am check-in)

Breakfast, lunch, and snacks provided

Sioux Falls Convention Center | 1201 N West Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD 57104

Conference Highlights

- 15+ unique breakout sessions.
- 3 general sessions feature local and national experts and current best-practices.
- 7+ hours of continuing education credits. Approved CEUs will be listed at SDCPCM.com/Conference/CEUs.
- In 2025, 500 participants attended from 40 South Dakota communities.

Visit the Exhibits

Thursday, October 8 - 7:30am to 3:00pm

Door prize drawing entry cards can be completed by visiting our exhibitors. Place completed cards in the drop box in the Exhibitor area by 3:00pm to be entered into the door prize drawings to be held leading up to and during the Closing General Session.

Outstanding Service

The Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment annually presents the Outstanding Service Award during the Community Response to Child Abuse Conference. This award is presented to an individual who has made a great impact in the response to or prevention of child abuse in South Dakota.

Certificate of Attendance

For those participants requiring a self-reported, general certificate of attendance (not for CEU purposes), please pick this up at the registration table at any time.

Technology

To access wifi, select Midco, no password needed. Two charging stations are located in the concourse. Share conference participation online using the hashtags #CRCAC26 and #KnowRespondPrevent.

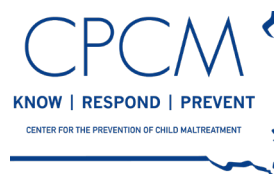
Quiet Room

Room is intended for those who may need to step away from the heavy content and not be used as a work room. Attendees are encouraged to dial 988 to speak anonymously with a trained behavioral health professional, if needed.

Nursing Pod

A Sanford Nursing Pod is available near the Arena doors.

CONFERENCE HOSTS



SPONSORS



EXHIBITORS

Center for the Prevention of Child
Maltreatment

Child's Voice - Sanford Health

SD Department of Social Services
Strong Bridge and Stronger Families

University of South Dakota, School of Health
Sciences

Abbott House

Call to Freedom

SD Department of Education

National Center for Adoption Competent
Mental Health Services

SD Kids Belong

University of South Dakota, Graduate
Admissions

The Gathering Well

All About U Adoptions

SD Department of Social Services, Behavioral
Health

Sioux Falls Area CASA Program

LSS of SD's Kinship Care/Kinship Navigator

LSS of SD

Helpline Center

Foster 605

University of South Dakota, Center for
Disabilities

Solace

Southeast Technical College

SD Voices for Peace

Avera

Augustana University, Harriet Emily Scott
Social Work Program

Sanford Children's CHILD Services

SD Network Against Family Violence and
Sexual Assault

SD SAVIN

Community Health Workers of SD

SD Parent Connection

SD Department of Health

Rising Hope Counseling, LLC

Boys Town

Children's Home Society Shelter for Family
Safety

Baxter the Cat Books LLC

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

7:30 to 8:00	Check-In: Breakfast, Exhibitors												
8:00 to 9:45	Opening General Session: Exhibit Hall 2 - Chief Justice Welcome Message - Drum Group and Dance Sharing; Inyan Hocoka Singers from the Rosebud Sioux Tribe - First Lady Sandy Rhoden Remarks <i>Resilience and Redemption: The Power of Determination and the Spirit of a Child</i>; Derek Clark												
9:45 to 10:00	Break: Exhibitors in Ballroom A												
10:00 to 11:00	Breakout Sessions: <table><tr><td>Room 7</td><td><i>Lakota Oyate Wakanyeja Owicakiyapi Inc</i>; Emily Iron Cloud-Koenen; Richard Moves Camp; and Russ Conti</td></tr><tr><td>Room 10</td><td><i>Trauma and Stressor Disorders 101: Diagnosis, Screening, and Treatment Foundations</i>; Nikki Eining and Aimee Deliramich</td></tr><tr><td>Room 12</td><td><i>The Stories We Believe: How Self-Worth Drives Behavior and Healing</i>; Cara DeHaan</td></tr><tr><td>Room 13</td><td><i>Connection Before Direction: Building Trust to Improve Victim Outcomes</i>; Tifanie Petro and Jessica Broullire</td></tr><tr><td>Ballroom B</td><td><i>MDT 101 Panel</i>; Darin Sinner, Alaina Wellnitz, Abby Howard, Mickey Devine, Alison Trauba, and Dr. Brooke Jones</td></tr></table>			Room 7	<i>Lakota Oyate Wakanyeja Owicakiyapi Inc</i> ; Emily Iron Cloud-Koenen; Richard Moves Camp; and Russ Conti	Room 10	<i>Trauma and Stressor Disorders 101: Diagnosis, Screening, and Treatment Foundations</i> ; Nikki Eining and Aimee Deliramich	Room 12	<i>The Stories We Believe: How Self-Worth Drives Behavior and Healing</i> ; Cara DeHaan	Room 13	<i>Connection Before Direction: Building Trust to Improve Victim Outcomes</i> ; Tifanie Petro and Jessica Broullire	Ballroom B	<i>MDT 101 Panel</i> ; Darin Sinner, Alaina Wellnitz, Abby Howard, Mickey Devine, Alison Trauba, and Dr. Brooke Jones
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12:15 to 1:30	General Session: Exhibit Hall 2 - Lunch and Outstanding Service Award Presentation <i>Post Traumatic Growth, What the Dolphins Taught Me</i>; Frank Grijalva												
1:30 to 1:45	Break: Exhibitors in Ballroom A												
1:45 to 2:45	Breakout Sessions: <table><tr><td>Room 7</td><td><i>Advocacy That Works: Building Strategic, Mutually Beneficial Legislative Relationships</i>; Tony Burke, Senator Tim Reed, Representative Nicole Uhre-Balk</td></tr><tr><td>Room 12</td><td><i>Circle of Secuerity Parenting</i>; Alexa Gauer</td></tr><tr><td>Room 13</td><td><i>Beyond Social Media: Developmental and Emotional Impact of Screens Throughout Childhood</i>; Dr. Nancy Free</td></tr><tr><td>Ballroom B</td><td><i>Everything is Connected: Understanding How the Early Childhood Environment Shapes the Central Nervous System</i>; Frank Grijalva</td></tr></table>		Room 7	<i>Advocacy That Works: Building Strategic, Mutually Beneficial Legislative Relationships</i> ; Tony Burke, Senator Tim Reed, Representative Nicole Uhre-Balk	Room 12	<i>Circle of Secuerity Parenting</i> ; Alexa Gauer	Room 13	<i>Beyond Social Media: Developmental and Emotional Impact of Screens Throughout Childhood</i> ; Dr. Nancy Free	Ballroom B	<i>Everything is Connected: Understanding How the Early Childhood Environment Shapes the Central Nervous System</i> ; Frank Grijalva	Room 10: Luke & Lorelai’s Story: The Cliff Effect Max of 30 Registrants 1:45 to 3:15 Morgan Van Haden curriculum by Black Hills Special Services		
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3:45 to 5:15	General Session: Exhibit Hall 2 <i>Resilience and Adaptability: Strategies to Thrive Through Change</i>; Mike Kutzke - Doorprize Drawings												

WELCOME REMARKS

Opening Session Welcome Message

Chief Justice Steven R. Jensen



Chief Justice Jensen was appointed to the Supreme Court by Governor Dennis Daugaard. He was sworn in on November 3, 2017. Chief Justice Jensen was selected by his colleagues on the Court to serve as Chief Justice beginning in January, 2021. He was reelected to a second, four-year term as Chief Justice beginning Jan. 6, 2025. Chief Justice Jensen represents the Fourth Supreme Court District consisting of Union, Clay, Yankton, Hutchinson, Hanson, Davison, Bon Homme, Douglas, Aurora, Charles Mix, Gregory, McCook, Turner and Lincoln Counties. Justice Jensen grew up on a farm near Wakonda, South Dakota. He received his undergraduate degree from Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1985 and his Juris Doctor from the University of South Dakota School of Law in 1988. He clerked for Justice Richard W. Sabers on the South Dakota Supreme Court before entering private practice in 1989. In 2003, Chief Justice Jensen was appointed as a First Judicial Circuit Judge by former Governor Mike Rounds. He became the Presiding Judge of the First Judicial Circuit in 2011. Chief Justice Jensen served as chair of the Unified Judicial System's Presiding Judges Council, president of the SD Judges Association, and has served on other boards and commissions. In 2009, Chief Justice Jensen was appointed as a Judicial Fellow to the Advanced Science and Technology Adjudication Resource Center in Washington D.C. Justice Jensen and his wife, Sue, have three children and three grandchildren.

GENERAL SESSIONS

Resilience and Redemption: The Power of Determination and the Spirit of a Child

Derek Clark

Derek shares his personal journey, emphasizing the resilience that allowed him to overcome brutal trauma. The keynote takes the audience on a rollercoaster of emotions, from the depths of despair to the heights of triumph, illustrating the transformative power of redemption.



Derek's keynote speeches and professional training draw from research, best practices and his own life experiences. He offers strategies for fostering resilience and achieving positive outcomes for children, youth and society, particularly those who have faced childhood trauma, PTSD and mental health needs.

Drawing from his personal experiences, Derek, who holds the highest trauma ACE score of 10, is recognized as an international expert. He shares his inspiring story to illustrate how hope, determination and resilience can transform the lives of children and youth. Recently, Derek had his brain scanned at Dr. Amen's Clinic, a leading neuropsychiatrist. The results provide a profound insight into the impact of childhood trauma and mental health on the brain.

Derek Clark is considered one of the most inspiring motivational speakers for conference keynotes, employee morale and retention, foster care, adoption, social work, abuse and neglect prevention, nonprofits, child protective services, child welfare, department of children and family services, mental health and many more organizations.

He is the author of seven inspirational books including *Never Limit Your Life* and the critically acclaimed *I Will Never Give Up* book series which details his experiences and mental tools that he used to beat the odds while growing up in the foster care system.

Post Traumatic Growth, What the Dolphins Taught Me

Frank Grijalva

Highly adaptive, impulsive and reactive until I was 23 years old I began to awaken to the real world when I was assigned to the Marine Mammal program of the US Navy. Working with dolphins I began to learn about trust, attachment, behavior modification, nonverbal communication and ultimately myself. This seminar will look at personal growth through the lessons of my teachers Blue, Otto and Mauka.



Frank came through the California system as a child adopted into a family challenged with mental health and substance abuse issues. Raised in the East Bay area of Northern California Frank attended 9 different schools in his first 9 years. Raised in a challenging home in a challenging environment both geographically and historically, Frank has a unique perspective that translates for many of our most traumatized communities, families and children. Frank negotiated his way into the military and his first professional training was as a special warfare diver attached to the Marine Mammal program of the United States Navy where he spent 8 years honing behavior modification skills, stress management and understanding the dynamics of nonverbal communication. Later, as a stay at home dad for 2 kids and a student of psychology he became aware of and struggled with development, his own trauma exposure, and behavioral progressions and sequencing. This led to a journey of self-exploration and an academic focus on psychological trauma.

As director of the Midwest Trauma Services Network and senior vice president of programming for the International Trauma Center, Frank has spent the last several years introducing and training selected trauma-informed evidence-based practices as well as designing and implementing innovations specific to people from at-risk environments through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). Frank has a BS in disaster psychology with an emphasis on mental health, an MS in Public Health with a focus on child mental health and an MS in clinical counseling with trauma theory as the primary theoretical framework.

Resilience and Adaptability: Strategies to Thrive Through Change

Mike Kutzke

This session is designed to help professionals strengthen their ability to adapt, stay focused, and remain effective in today's fast-paced and constantly changing work environment. As funding pressures, shifting priorities, technology changes, and rising expectations continue to reshape the workplace, this session helps participants enhance their ability to respond constructively to ongoing challenges rather than feeling overwhelmed by them.



Mike Kutzke is a keynote speaker, trainer and lifelong learner who helps organizations make sense of change. He specializes in AI literacy, workplace resilience and helping teams adapt to what's next.

With more than 25 years of professional training and teaching experience, Mike brings a unique perspective shaped by 17 years in law enforcement, including patrol, investigations, and administration, and decades of helping professionals develop practical skills they can use immediately.

His "Stay Curious" framework encourages continuous learning without the overwhelm, making complex topics like artificial intelligence accessible and actionable for any audience. Mike is known for blending humor, research-based insights and adult learning principles to deliver presentations that are both engaging and impactful.

TOPICS & PRESENTERS

Breakout Session 1: Thursday, 10:00 to 11:00

MDT 101 Panel

Darin Sinner, Supervisory Special Agent, SD Division of Criminal Investigation

Abby Howard, Family Services Specialist, SD Department of Social Services, Child Protection Services

Mickey Devine, Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, Child Protection Services

Dr. Brooke Jones, Child's Voice-Sanford Health

Alison Trauba, Codington County State's Attorney, Codington County State's Attorney's Office

Effective multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) are essential to responding to child abuse, neglect, exploitation, and human trafficking cases in South Dakota. This panel discussion will explore how professionals from different agencies and disciplines work together to improve investigations, strengthen victim support, reduce duplication of interviews, and promote coordinated decision-making throughout complex cases.

Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of the value of multidisciplinary coordination, the importance of trust and communication among partner agencies, and practical approaches to building effective team relationships that support both accountability and survivor-centered outcomes.



Darin Sinner has served as a law enforcement officer in South Dakota since 2007. He began his career as a city/tribal police officer with the Flandreau Police Department before joining the Brookings Police Department as a patrol officer. He also served as a school resource officer, detective, and SWAT team member. In 2017, Sinner was appointed as a Special Agent with the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI), where he investigated major felony crimes throughout Northeast South Dakota. In 2022, he was promoted to Supervisory Special Agent and currently supervises the Major Crimes Unit for Northeast South Dakota. In this role, he oversees a team of five Special Agents and one Victim/Witness Specialist responsible for investigating major crimes across a 20-county region. Sinner joined the REACH Team in 2018 and has completed specialized training in child maltreatment investigations and multidisciplinary response. He has developed expertise in conducting complex investigations involving crimes against children and serves as a specialist in fire and origin-and-cause investigations.



Abby Howard is a Family Services Specialist based in Watertown, South Dakota. Abby has worked with the Department for 3 years and has been an Initial Family Assessment worker and a part of MDT for 2 years. In working with the Department Abby partners closely with families, colleagues, and community organizations to build safety, stability, and long term support systems.



Dr. Jones is a Child Abuse Pediatrician employed by Sanford Medical Center at Child's Voice. She completed her medical training at the University of Kansas School of Medicine in 2011. She went to the University of Louisville to complete her residency training and became board certified in Pediatrics in 2014. She stayed at the University of Louisville for her fellowship training with the Kosair Charities Division of Pediatric Forensic Medicine. During fellowship, Dr. Jones received her master's degree in Clinical Investigation Sciences at the University of Louisville. Dr. Jones is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine.

Alison was born and raised in Watertown, South Dakota. Following graduation from high school, she attended Southwest Minnesota State University earning degrees in Justice Administration, Political Science, and Philosophy. She thereafter earned her Juris Doctorate degree from the University of South Dakota School of Law. Following law school, Alison practiced as a criminal defense attorney in Sioux Falls at the Public Defender's Office. Thereafter she became the Codington County Deputy State's Attorney. Alison's practice of law was heavily focused on litigation related to crimes involving minors. For a short while, Alison left the State's Attorney's Office to practice civil litigation and represent plaintiffs throughout the South Dakota court system. In 2024, she had a successful campaign run bringing her back to the State's Attorney's Office to serve as the State's Attorney. Her passion is prosecuting crimes against children and our community's most vulnerable.

Trauma and Stressor Disorders 101: Diagnosis, Screening, and Treatment Foundations

Nikki Eining CSW-PIP QMHP, USD Center for Disabilities

Aimee Deliramich, PhD, USD Center for Disabilities

This session introduces trauma and stressor-related disorders in children and youth, highlighting how symptoms present across developmental stages. Participants will review age-appropriate, best practice screening tools to support early identification in clinical, school, and community settings. Foundational treatment approaches will be outlined, with emphasis on caregiver involvement and resilience-building. Participants will leave with practical knowledge to support early identification and trauma-informed care across systems.



Nikki Eining is a private independent practice licensed social worker who serves as the Statewide Pediatric Mental Health Care Access Program Coordinator for The University of South Dakota, Sanford School of Medicine, and owns Grace Grit Growth Counseling LLC in Brookings. Nikki brings diverse experiences and passions spending over 18 years working in the behavioral health field. Her previous experience has focused on supporting youth and families in office, school, and community settings. She has professional experience in clinical mental health, education, research design, non-profit, program development, and trauma-informed care practices.



Aimee Deliramich, PhD Dr. Deliramich is a licensed clinical psychologist and an assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics at University of South Dakota, Center for Disabilities, in Sioux Falls, SD. In her role at the Center for Disabilities, Dr. Deliramich evaluates children and adults as part of an interdisciplinary diagnostic team within the Autism Spectrum Disorder Clinic and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Clinic. These training clinics allow LEND (Leadership, Education, and Excellence in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities) graduate students across 12 disciplines to observe and participate under the direction, supervision, and mentorship of Dr. Deliramich. As a member of the LEND clinical faculty, Dr. Deliramich teaches courses related to mental health and disabilities, evidence-based treatments, and community resources.

Connection Before Direction: Building Trust to Improve Victim Outcomes

Tifanie Petro, Victim Services Director, Pennington County State's Attorney's Office

Jessica Broullire, Assistant Director, Children's Home Child Advocacy Center

Early engagement can shape the entire trajectory of a case. This session examines how intentional rapport-building from the first intake call through forensic interviews, law enforcement investigation, and prosecution directly impacts victim engagement, resilience, and case outcomes.

Presented from both system-based and community-based advocacy perspectives, this session moves beyond theory to provide practical, field-tested strategies that apply across disciplines. Participants will explore how to reduce barriers to services, strengthen coordination between agencies, and more effectively leverage multidisciplinary teams. Presenters will highlight how to use existing case staffings, or develop new collaboration points, to close gaps in communication and support, ensuring victims have consistent access to both justice and healing resources.



Tifanie Petro, MS, serves as the Victim Services Director at the Pennington County State's Attorney's Office. Tifanie collaborates with partners across the state by serving on boards, task forces, leading legislative advocacy efforts, and facilitating community partner meetings. Tifanie delivers prevention and awareness trainings to professionals, community agencies, and the general public in the areas of serving victims of crime and trauma related topics at local, state, national, and international speaking engagements. Tifanie believes that by empowering children, families, and individuals that we can create self-healing communities. Tifanie received her BS degree in Psychology from Black Hills State University, her MS in Public Health from Capella University, Minnesota and her MS in Human Services from Capella University, Minnesota.



Jessica Broullire serves as the Assistant Director at Children's Home Child Advocacy Center. She provides trauma informed education to parents and professionals across the region and presents at local, state, and international events. In addition to her educational work, Jessica supports children and their caregivers seeking services related to allegations of child maltreatment. She has dedicated her entire career to advocating for the wellbeing of children and firmly believes that keeping children safe is a shared community responsibility.

The Stories We Believe: How Self-Worth Drives Behavior and Healing

Cara DeHaan, M Ed, TBRI® Practitioner, Executive Director, The Gathering Well

Children impacted by trauma often internalize harmful beliefs about their worth, which drive behavior, relationships, and long-term outcomes. This session integrates Attachment Theory, TBRI®, and the work of Howard Bath to explore how self-worth is formed, disrupted, and restored. Participants will gain practical strategies to cultivate self-worth in children, caregivers, and themselves, while learning how relational connection, felt safety, and caregiver self-awareness can interrupt cycles of trauma and promote lasting healing.



Cara DeHaan, M Education, TBRI® Practitioner, is a trainer and advocate dedicated to equipping caregivers and professionals to support children impacted by trauma. Co-founder of The Gathering Well, she specializes in Trust-Based Relational Intervention®, attachment theory, and practical, relationship-centered strategies. Cara is passionate about cultivating self-worth in both children and adults, helping families and communities build connection, resilience, and hope!

Lakota Oyate Wakanyeja Owicakiyapi Inc.

Emily Iron Cloud-Koenen, Community Advocate and Consultant

Richard Moves Camp

Russ Conti (via Zoom), LCSW-PIP, QMHP

Topics include history and development of a tribal child welfare culture-based entity known as Lakota Oyate Wakanyeja Owicakiyapi Inc. (LOWO). Topics may include Visioning and Creating a collaborative foundation for revitalization of Lakota lifeways that produce healthy children and families. We will share information on how a tribal child welfare agency was created from the ground up.



Russ dedicated his career to social work, spending the majority of it serving on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation with Casey Family Programs and Lakota Oyate Wakanyeja Owicakiyapi (LOWO) and later working as a social work consultant with Black Hills Dialysis and Behavior Management Systems as a crisis care clinician. Nationally, Russ has worked towards meaningful change through anti-racism facilitation and as a consultant with the National Resource Center for Tribes

TOPICS & PRESENTERS

Breakout Session 2: Thursday, 11:15 to 12:15

Advancing Towards Permanency – Adoption Competent Practice: A National Collaboration between SD Department of Social Services and National Center for Adoption Competent Mental Health Services

Sheila Corrigan, TA Director, National Center For Adoption Competent MH Services

Kassy Dunn, Juvenile Services Program Manager, SD Department of Social Services, Behavioral Health

Due to traumatic life events and challenging early circumstances, children and adolescents who have been involved in the child welfare system face heightened risks of developmental, health, emotional, and behavioral difficulties. These experiences significantly impact their well-being and family stability. The American Academy of Pediatrics has identified mental health issues as the greatest unmet need of children in foster care. Up to 80% of children in foster care have significant mental health issues, compared to approximately 18-22% of the general population. We also know that the mental health of caregivers and parents is inextricably linked to the children's well-being. Adoptive families seek mental health services at a 3 to 5 times higher rate than the general population. This is why children and families need improved access to child welfare competent mental health services. The National Center is focused on providing support to the behavioral health workforce to effectively meet the needs of all families especially those who have historically been underserved. It is crucial to address the inequities for youth of color, and the institutional racism and discrimination that negatively affects the experiences of youth and families seeking support from Child Welfare and Mental Health systems.

As a nation, we must move services upstream and leverage all care pathways - schools, integrated health care and creative community opportunities. Because there are nationwide shortages of mental health professionals and services, our approach to improving accessibility to permanency-adoption competent mental health services requires a two-fold approach—expanding the general mental health workforce and training professionals in child welfare competence. The MH workforce is being redefined to meet shortages. Community health workers, peer support specialists, behavioral techs and bachelor's level providers are key leverage points - as well as integrated healthcare providers.

This presentation will highlight the need for permanency-adoption focused workforce in mental health and child welfare and discuss how the partnership between SD DSS and the National Center have established goals to build awareness around the need for permanency-adoption competent workforce, create cross systems collaborations, and establish strategies for increased accessibility for families statewide. Most importantly, the presenters will address how to incorporate children and families with lived experience throughout all of these efforts.



Kassy Dunn is a Licensed Addictions Counselor in the state of South Dakota. She currently works at the Division of Behavioral Health as the Juvenile Services Program Manager overseeing mental health and substance use services for youth across the state. Kassy began her career in behavioral health services as an outpatient substance use counselor in 2012 and has worked in various levels of care with both adults and juveniles. She also has experience as a supervisor of a substance use disorder services program. Kassy earned both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Addiction Studies from the University of South Dakota.

Identifying Concerning Cutaneous Injuries From Child Physical Abuse

Dr. Brooke Jones, Sanford Health-Child's Voice

This session will describe the various types of physical abuse and explain how to identify normal bruising patterns in children versus abusive bruising. Participants will discuss the TEN-4 FACESp screening tool, mimics of bruising, burns, and accidental vs inflicted patterns.



Dr. Jones is a Child Abuse Pediatrician employed by Sanford Medical Center at Child's Voice. She completed her medical training at the University of Kansas School of Medicine in 2011. She went to the University of Louisville to complete her residency training and became board certified in Pediatrics in 2014. She stayed at the University of Louisville for her fellowship training with the Kosair Charities Division of Pediatric Forensic Medicine. During fellowship, Dr. Jones received her master's degree in Clinical Investigation Sciences at the University of Louisville. Dr. Jones is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine.

Regulation and Co-regulation through Enlightened Witness and Golden Message

Audra Kelley Fullerton, LCSW, CSW with Lake House Consulting

'Enlightened Witness' is a term coined by Alice Miller in her work understanding the impacts of child abuse and violence. Enlightened Witness describes a person who supports us unconditionally, and through a particularly difficult period in our (usually young) lives. As helping professionals, we have the opportunity to be an Enlightened Witness to those we work with. This session will explore what it means to show up in this way, and how to apply this concept in our work.



Audra Kelley Fullerton, LMSW, CSW is a licensed social worker, trained musician, and teacher who specializes in the neurobiology of emotional health. In her work with incarcerated women and gender-diverse people. She helped to develop a unique, evidence-based, and experiential approach to addressing trauma and developing healthy relationships. This work has been published as a curriculum and workbook, and used in a variety of settings including correctional facilities, university athletic departments, community corrections, alternative middle and high schools, and K-8 school-based counseling.

Audra recently moved with her family to Brookings, SD, where she continues to offer workshop facilitation, professional development, and coaching on emotional health in working and learning spaces.



A&N Case Overview Roles and Responsibilities

Judge Rachel R. Rasmussen, Second Judicial Circuit Court

Carrie Mees, Deputy State's Attorney, Minnehaha County

Nicole Laughlin, Laughlin Law

Kristie Jones, Dakota Law Firm

This session provides a practical overview of South Dakota abuse and neglect proceedings, focusing on the roles, responsibilities, and collaboration required to protect children and support families throughout the court process. Attendees will gain insight into how key professionals work together from initial report and investigation through adjudication, permanency planning, and case closure.

Participants will leave with a clearer understanding of each discipline's role, practical strategies for effective multidisciplinary collaboration, and a broader perspective on how abuse and neglect cases impact children, families, and communities.



Judge Rachel Rasmussen serves as a Circuit Court Judge in the Second Judicial Circuit of South Dakota. She earned her B.A. from the University of South Dakota before obtaining her J.D. from the University of Minnesota School of Law. Judge Rasmussen began her legal career as a Deputy State's Attorney for Lincoln County, South Dakota, and later became a partner at Peterson & Stuart, Prof. LLC. She was appointed as a Magistrate Judge in the Second Circuit in 2018 and elevated to the Circuit Court bench in 2019. She was an inaugural member of the Second Circuit Mental Health Court, reflecting her commitment to addressing complex legal and social issues. Judge Rasmussen handles a balanced docket of criminal and civil cases, including abuse and neglect cases. She has been a member of the UJS Court Improvement Committee since 2023.



Carrie Mees graduated from USD Law School in 2004 after being born and raised in South Dakota. In her last year of law school, while working at Volunteers of America as a Youth Supervisor, Carrie developed a passion for at risk youth leading to a career in prosecuting Child Abuse and Neglect cases. Carrie was hired by the Minnehaha County State's Attorney's Office (MCSAO) as a Deputy State's Attorney in January 2005 and has worked for the MCSAO since that time. In 2006, she transitioned from prosecuting primarily misdemeanor criminal cases to the Juvenile Division, primarily representing Child Protection Services and the County/State of South Dakota in Child Abuse and Neglect cases when children are removed from the home. In 2017, she was promoted to a Senior Trial Attorney/Supervising Attorney, leading the Child Abuse and Neglect Division for the MCSAO. In 2019, Carrie was appointed by the Chief Justice of the South Dakota Supreme Court to the Court Improvement Committee for Child Abuse and Neglect Cases.



Nicole Laughlin graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of South Dakota in 2002. During her undergraduate studies, she was a double major in English and Criminal Justice. Nicole was active in campus life in Vermillion and participated in several organizations, including Kappa Alpha Theta and Mortar Board National Honor Society. Nicole received her Juris Doctor from the University of South Dakota School of Law in 2006. While in law school, Nicole excelled academically and served as both a staff writer and Lead Articles Editor of the South Dakota Law Review. She is the author of two published law review articles and Nicole was the recipient of numerous scholarships during her academic schooling. Nicole has also taught as an adjunct professor at the University of South Dakota, teaching courses for Criminal Procedure and Legal Research and Writing.



Kristi Jones is a Columbus, Nebraska native. Kristi came to South Dakota to attend the University of Sioux Falls where she earned two Bachelors of Arts degrees in Communication Studies, and Social Sciences, as well as a Master of Education. Kristi earned her Juris Doctorate degree from the University of South Dakota, School of Law. Kristi was a clerk for the Sixth Judicial Circuit, South Dakota, where she was exposed to all areas of the legal system. She also worked at the Public Advocates Office, Minnehaha County, Sioux Falls, South Dakota where she gained extensive experience in criminal defense, juvenile, and abuse and neglect cases. Kristi also has worked in private practice where she discovered a passion for helping clients with adoptions, small businesses, and appellate work.

Tribal CAC Development with Cultural Healing Approach

Lawrence Swalley, Case Manager/Forensic Interviewer/Cultural Specialist, Oglala Lakota Children's Justice Center

The Oglala Lakota Children's Justice Center in Pine Ridge, SD has been working along-side Tribal Programs in coordination with Tribal Ordinance 2007 Child and Families Code which mandates every program that works with Tribal Youth, to "Enhance Culture" in their programming protocols. The OL-CJC Program has developed a program manual and implementation guide in its efforts to assist Tribal Social Service programs across Indian Country as a model of providing Advocacy from the point of trauma throughout healing using their Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Ceremonies in the development of Tribal Youth. A slide show presentation will be provided that highlights the programs services as well as the Lakota Creation Story and how it reinforces identity and purpose for Indigenous youth to include Legends and Song.

Lawrence Swalley was born and raised in the townships of Wanblee and Pine Ridge on the Pine Ridge Reservation, and Rosebud, SD on the Rosebud Reservation is southwestern South Dakota. He is son to Alexander Swalley and Alma Ann Winters Swalley.

Lawrence "Larry" graduated from Todd County High School in Mission, SD (1980) and went on to possess a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from Dakota Wesleyan University, Mitchell, SD (1984). He then enlisted in the US Navy and possess an equivalent AA Degree in Broadcast Engineer Electronics (1987-1990). He earned honors as the best in his military class as Iron Man, and was recommended for Commission to Officer by his Commanding Officers while obtaining 1st Class Petty Officer (E-6). He has maintained employment since 15 yrs of age to work as a box boy, cashier, butcher, book keeper, radio program manager, disc jockey, marketing manager, maintenance director, and attended para military as a Law Enforcement Officer for the Oglala Sioux Tribe and graduating from the Artesia, NM Indian Police Academy (1997). He has spent the last 16 years in the Social Work field as a case manager, supervisor, and family developer. He is descended from Ite Sica (Bad Face), Brule (Lower Brule), and Sicangu (Rosebud) Sioux lineage and has spent much of his life re-acculturating himself to the Origins of his people with the seven sacred ceremonies of the Lakota.

He currently is employed with the Oglala Lakota Children's Justice Center since 2009 in Pine Ridge as a Case Manager, Forensic Interviewer, and Cultural Specialist, where he works with adolescents who have been traumatized by severe Physical and Sexual Abuse. He has been trained as a Train the Trainer in Traditional Indian Parenting, Court Room Testimony, and Forensic Interviewing.

AFTERNOON BLOCK

Max 30 registrants: Thursday, 1:45 to 3:15

Luke & Lorelai's Story: The Cliff Effect

Morgan Van Haden

Experience the frustrations of the "cliff effect," where increased income can result in the sudden loss of essential benefits—trapping families in financial uncertainty. Geared toward HR professionals, hiring managers, businesses, and nonprofits, this experience sheds light on workforce development challenges and offers insight into supporting financial stability in your community.



Morgan VonHaden is a nonprofit leader, strategist, and community catalyst with more than 20 years of experience working alongside families, schools, and organizations in high-poverty, high-needs communities. Holding a Master of Science in Strategic Leadership, Morgan has built her career on a foundational belief that strong families form the foundation of strong communities — and that empowering people at every level is how missions get elevated and sustained.

Morgan's strengths — Woo, Communication, Positivity, Activator, and Ideation — are not just a list on a page; they are the engine behind how she builds relationships, sparks momentum, and keeps people moving toward what matters. She guides her personal and professional life by the phrase: "You're never lost as long as there's a road in front of you."

In her free time, Morgan loves hiking, fishing, and playing board games with her husband Matt and their family.

TOPICS & PRESENTERS

Breakout Session 3: Thursday, 1:45 to 2:45

Advocacy That Works: Building Strategic, Mutually Beneficial Legislative Relationships

Tony Burke, BA, ACMP, Government Relations Director/Regional Team Lead, American Heart Association

Senator Tim Reed

Representative Nicole Uhre-Balk

This presentation outlines the American Heart Association's approach to advocacy, emphasizing its role in influencing public policy to improve health outcomes. Advocacy is defined as a strategic process to inform and influence decision-makers, while lobbying specifically involves efforts to influence legislation.

The presentation highlights the power of grassroots engagement, noting that even minimal constituent outreach can significantly impact lawmakers. It also identifies multiple avenues for involvement, from contacting legislators to participating in public campaigns. Additionally, it underscores the importance of effective communication and sustained effort, framing advocacy as a long-term process essential for addressing broader social determinants of health and advancing equitable policy solutions.

Finally, learn from the legislators' seat the importance of when, where, how and what to make your approach to an elected legislator mutually beneficial.



Tony is an inspirational senior executive with over 25 years of facilitative leadership experience, who is a proactive, collaborative, community-focused visionary bridge walker with expertise in organizational and community change management. As a Certified Change Management Practitioner (CCMPTM), he leads with the values of accountability and kindness by leaning into his certified strengths of strategic, belief, achieve, responsibility, and connectedness.

After serving almost 20 years in the fire service, including a 4-year appointment in Washington DC with the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Burn Foundation leading over 300,000 members in the field of burn prevention, advocacy, and survivor support, he committed himself to non-profit work. After spending time in the disaster response and recovery sectors, (Public and Private) a complex health care startup, the food bank industry, he joined the American Heart Association in April 2022 with the focus to increase heart and brain health, and health equity, through collective community change efforts and trusted relationship building.



Senator Tim Reed represents District 7 in the South Dakota State Senate and is a lifelong resident of Brookings. He chairs the Senate Local Government Committee and serves on the Health and Human Services Committee, where he is active in shaping legislation that impacts families and communities. Senator Reed has been a leader in advancing child care policy, chairing the statewide Child Care Task Force to improve access, affordability, and workforce sustainability. He also serves as chair of the Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment (CPCM) Advisory Board and is a strong advocate for prevention efforts statewide. In 2020, he received the Visionary Award from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center for his work on victim-centered legislation, and in 2024, he was honored with the Law & Order Legislative Leadership Award by the South Dakota State's Attorneys Association for his commitment to public safety and justice.

Beyond Social Media: Developmental and Emotional Impact of Screens throughout Childhood

Dr. Nancy Free, Sanford Health-Child's Voice

In this session, participants will gain understanding of social emotional development/mental health in childhood, the impact of screens on brain development for each developmental stage (infancy through adolescence), impact related to parents/caregivers phone use, and accentuating the positive and minimizing the negative regarding children and screens.



Nancy Free, DO, is the Medical Director of Child's Voice Sanford USD Medical Center in Sioux Falls and Avera St. Mary's Central South Dakota Child Assessment Center in Pierre. Dr. Free is a Clinical Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine. She lives in Sioux Falls and enjoys spending time with her family.

The Cliff Effect Escape Room

Note: This session will take place from 1:45 to 3:15 and is limited to 30 registered attendees.

Morgan Van Haden with curriculum by Black Hills Special Service

Discover the frustrations of the "cliff effect," where rising incomes unexpectedly lead to losing essential benefits, trapping families in financial uncertainty. Learn how to address workforce development challenges and support financial stability in your community.



Morgan VonHaden is a nonprofit leader, strategist, and community catalyst with more than 20 years of experience working alongside families, schools, and organizations in high-poverty, high-needs communities. Holding a Master of Science in Strategic Leadership, Morgan has built her career on a foundational belief that strong families form the foundation of strong communities — and that empowering people at every level is how missions get elevated and sustained.

Morgan's strengths — Woo, Communication, Positivity, Activator, and Ideation — are not just a list on a page; they are the engine behind how she builds relationships, sparks momentum, and keeps people moving toward what matters. She guides her personal and professional life by the phrase: "You're never lost as long as there's a road in front of you."

In her free time, Morgan loves hiking, fishing, and playing board games with her husband Matt and their family.



Everything is Connected: Understanding How the Early Childhood Environment Shapes the Central Nervous System

Frank Grijalva

We are meant to be masterful, when a child endures a home environment of unpredictability and danger the brain gets built in fear and anger. Some children present outwardly and some children go inward. How do we shape that tension in a society that is conditioned to suppress it? This seminar will look at shaping anti-social behavior into social accepted behavior that satisfies the demands of a central nervous system addicted to tension.



Frank came through the California system as a child adopted into a family challenged with mental health and substance abuse issues. Raised in the East Bay area of Northern California Frank attended 9 different schools in his first 9 years. Raised in a challenging home in a challenging environment both geographically and historically, Frank has a unique perspective that translates for many of our most traumatized communities, families and children. Frank negotiated his way into the military and his first professional training was as a special warfare diver attached to the Marine Mammal program of the United States Navy where he spent 8 years honing behavior modification skills, stress management and understanding the dynamics of nonverbal communication. Later, as a stay at home dad for 2 kids and a student of psychology he became aware of and struggled with development, his own trauma exposure, and behavioral progressions and sequencing. This led to a journey of self-exploration and an academic focus on psychological trauma.

As director of the Midwest Trauma Services Network and senior vice president of programming for the International Trauma Center, Frank has spent the last several years introducing and training selected trauma-informed evidence-based practices as well as designing and implementing innovations specific to people from at-risk environments through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). Frank has a BS in disaster psychology with an emphasis on mental health, an MS in Public Health with a focus on child mental health and an MS in clinical counseling with trauma theory as the primary theoretical framework.

Circle of Security Parenting

Alexa Gauer, MSW, LCSW-PIP, RPT-S™, Instructor, University of South Dakota, Department of Social Work

This session overviews how Circle of Security Parenting (COSP) helps caregivers of children ages 6 months–6 years better understand their child's emotional needs and provides a practical roadmap for building secure parent-child relationships. A secure caregiver-child relationship is predictive of improved mental health and social functioning throughout the lifespan. COSP has been widely implemented in many places across the world, including the state of Nebraska. This provides a strong example of the impact this program can have in communities in our region. An evaluation of Nebraska's implementation identified many positive outcomes for participating families.



Alexa Gauer, MSW, LCSW-PIP, RPT-S™, is a Lecturer in the Bachelor of Social Work program at the University of South Dakota and a practicing clinician and co-owner of Meridian Counseling & Family Services in Yankton, South Dakota. She has practiced social work since 2012, with professional experience spanning child welfare, substance use treatment, inpatient psychiatric care, college counseling, and outpatient mental health services. Her clinical work primarily focuses on children, adolescents, and families.

Alexa became a trained Circle of Security Parenting (COSP) facilitator in 2013. She is currently completing her Doctor of Social Work degree at the University at Buffalo, where her doctoral work focuses on implementation science and increasing access to evidence-informed parenting supports in rural communities. Her current doctoral project centers on implementing COSP within a rural private practice setting and examining its feasibility, acceptability, and sustainability.

Across her clinical, teaching, and doctoral work, Alexa is particularly interested in strengthening caregiver-child relationships and increasing access to practical, relationship-based supports for children and families.

TOPICS & PRESENTERS

Breakout Session 4: Thursday, 3:00 to 3:45

How to Be a Good Witness

Alexis Tracy, Assistant Attorney General, SD Attorney General Office

Learn practical tips for testifying effectively as a witness, including what to expect during a criminal trial process and how to prepare for testimony. This session will focus on helping you present clear, credible, and confident testimony while supporting a successful courtroom experience.



Alexis Tracy, SD Assistant Attorney General. For nearly twenty years Alexis Tracy has served as a prosecuting attorney in the State of South Dakota. Alexis currently works for the South Dakota Attorney General's Office as an Assistant Attorney General in the Criminal Litigation Division where she prosecutes a wide range of criminal offenses, primarily in the southeast region of the state, including: homicides, sex offenses, and drug case. She also serves as staff counsel of the South Dakota Board of Medical and Osteopathic Examiners.

Alexis previously served as the Clay County State's Attorney and worked as a Deputy State's Attorney in Union and Turner Counties. She served two terms as President of the South Dakota State's Attorneys Association and served on the Association's legislative committee. She has instructed prosecutors, law enforcement and victim's advocates as a part of a multidisciplinary team with the SD Network Against Sexual Assault and Family Violence on best practices for response to domestic violence and sexual assault cases in South Dakota.

Alexis received her Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and her Juris Doctor degree both from the University of South Dakota. She has served as a volunteer for the Judiciary Branch for SD Girl's State, as a guest lecturer for courses at USD, and taught Junior Achievement's Excellence in Ethics to middle and high school students in Vermillion, SD where she lives with her husband Gerry.

Using the 3 R's During Difficult Moments

Audra Kelley Fullerton, LCSW, CSW with Lake House Consulting

Dr. Bruce Perry, psychiatrist and senior fellow at the Child Trauma Center, developed a unique way of navigating difficult moments with his high-trauma clients called the 3 R's, which are Regulate, Relate, and Reason. In this session, we'll review the science behind the 3 R's and explore applicable strategies that can be used in a variety of high-stress settings.

Audra Kelley Fullerton, LMSW, is a licensed social worker, trained musician, and teacher who specializes in the neurobiology of emotional health. In her work with incarcerated women and gender-diverse people, she helped to develop a unique, evidence-based, and experiential approach to addressing trauma and developing healthy relationships. This work has been published as a curriculum and workbook, and used in a variety of settings including correctional facilities, university athletic departments, community corrections, alternative middle and high schools, and K-8 school-based counseling.



Audra is a master trainer in the Family Peace Initiative's Internal-Focused Dialogue and has presented and facilitated workshops nationally and internationally. Audra recently moved with her family to Brookings, SD, where she continues to offer workshop facilitation, professional development, and coaching on emotional health in working and learning spaces.

Beyond Compliance: Engaging High-Risk Individuals Through Trust, Trauma-Informed Practice, and Relational Accountability

Terry Liggins, MPA, CHW, CMM, Hurdle Life Coach Foundation

Traditional systems often rely on compliance-based models to manage high-risk individuals and families. While necessary in certain contexts, these approaches frequently fall short in creating sustained behavior change, particularly for individuals impacted by trauma, system distrust, and complex life circumstances.

This session explores a relational, trauma-informed engagement model that moves beyond compliance toward connection, trust-building, and accountability through relationship.

Drawing from real-world implementation with justice-impacted adults, at-risk youth, and families navigating crisis, participants will learn how to increase engagement, improve retention, and foster meaningful behavior change; even among individuals historically labeled as “hard to reach.”

This session is especially relevant for professionals working at the intersection of child welfare, behavioral health, and justice systems.



Terry Liggins is a nationally recognized trauma-informed facilitator, community health worker, and systems builder based in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. As Executive Director of Hurdle Life Coach Foundation and CEO of TLC Services, he leads initiatives focused on youth diversion, reentry support, and workforce development for justice-impacted individuals.

A South Dakota ACEs & Resilience Master Trainer and LEAP Scholar (Justice Community Overdose Innovation Network), Terry integrates lived experience, public health frameworks, and cross-sector collaboration to advance community-based solutions that improve outcomes for individuals and families.

He has presented at national conferences including the National Returning Citizens Conference and All Rise Conference, and works with organizations across sectors to build trauma-informed cultures and systems.

Indigenous Approach to Addiction Healing and Mental Health Management

Gene Tyon, Director, Oaye Luta Okolakiciye

Learn about the Oaye Luta Okolakiciye's Indigenous approach to addiction healing and mental health management. A brief description of the 12-week curriculum and 6-protocol healing ceremonies. Address acculturation as we do in our healing session orientation to ceremony, then provide solutions to history and inter-generational conditioned behavior.



Gene Tyon is a member of the Oglala Lakota Tribe and founder and executive director of Lakota-led nonprofit Oaye Luta Okolakiciye – (Moving Forward in a Sacred Way) based in Rapid City, SD, within our spiritual homeland of the Hé Sapa (Black Hills), that serves a wide catchment area in western SD including the surrounding Tribal Reservations. Gene has a master's in administration, specializing in alcohol and drug studies and possesses decades of experience in culturally grounded programming, community organizing, nonprofit organization and management. Gene's passion to promote Oaye Luta Okolakiciye is not only a testament, but also to navigate the multitude of barriers for sustaining nonprofits and collaborating with both western and Indigenous partners within an area contextualized by both high trauma and deeply rooted systemic racism. Gene's leadership role within the community displays an advocate, mentor, and front runner of individual and community Indigenous health and wellness through culture.

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