

# EMPOWERING FUTURES

NJJA | Nebraska Juvenile  
Justice Association

2024 NJJA CONFERENCE  
KEARNEY, NEBRASKA | YOUNES CONFERENCE CENTER

MAY 1-3, 2024

Nurturing Hope, Resilience and Positive Outcomes

Wednesday, May 1

Registration — 9:00 - 10:00 am

Welcome & Opening Remarks — 10:00 - 10:15 am

Keynote — 10:15-11:45am



**Be the Difference** — Gaelin Elmore: The youth on the receiving end of your work need many things, but most importantly, they need adults committed to meeting their belonging needs. Simply put, they need adults in their life that CARE. CARE relationships are the only thing that allow youth to go from surviving to thriving. Sometimes, the best solutions to the most complex problems are right in front of us. That was true for Gaelin and his life. And that is true for the young people you are privileged to serve. Are you ready to be the difference?

Lunch — 12:00-1:00 pm: UNO Juvenile Justice Certificate Program Presentation, Monica Miles-Steffens, MPA, Anne Hobbs, JD, PhD

Break — 1:00-1:15 pm — Exhibits Open/Networking

Breakout A — 1:15-2:30 pm

**Erase the Belonging Gap Workshop** — Gaelin Elmore: Belonging is an innate and fundamental need that we all have. Whether we realize it or not, it influences many of our decisions daily. Research and experts have shown the exponential impact of genuine and authentic experiences of belonging and how it can increase motivation, problem-solving, emotional, mental, and physical health, and even resiliency. Family, school, and community are widely discussed as the top three ways for youth to develop, experience, and feel belonging. Unfortunately, we also know that if a youth has experienced childhood adversity of any sort, their relationship with family, school, or community is often destroyed in the process; and sometimes all three. Adversity and trauma directly impact and sometimes eliminate experiences of belonging. This is why we see such significant gaps and vicious cycles in youth and adult populations who have experienced childhood adversity and trauma. Backed by research and lived experience, this workshop is about how you can begin to erase the belonging gap, and how belonging is the difference in the lives of the youth you serve. You will be informed, challenged, and inspired to continue the life-changing work, but with a different perspective and intention.

**The Impact of Brain Injury on Justice-Involved Youth** — Peggy Reisher, Dennis Marks: Youth with disabilities are almost 3x more likely to be arrested than their nondisabled peers. Youth with brain injury may be more vulnerable to involvement in the juvenile justice system when poorly developed reasoning ability, inappropriate affect, and inattention are misinterpreted by professionals as hostility, lack of cooperation, and other inappropriate responses. Presenters will discuss ways to identify and support youth with brain injury.

**Dual-System Youth: How We "Role" Together for Youth and Families** — Amy Latshaw, KaCee Zimmerman: In 2018, the Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation and the Department of Health and Human Services-Division of Children and Family Services, implemented an innovative, collaborative policy to positively impact youth involved in both systems. Join us to hear from local teams on the important work happening near you, learn the latest in evidence-based approaches with this unique population, and participate in activities to experience how all stakeholders can play a role in a youth and family's success.

All sessions have been pre-approved for continuing legal education (MCLEs) for attorneys and Juvenile Criminogenic (All qualifying sessions total 12.25 hours available to earn.) The State of Nebraska does not pre-approve continuing education hours for other licenses, such as Certified Master Social Worker, Licensed Mental Health Practitioner, Licensed Independent Mental Health Practitioner, etc. It is the responsibility of the licensee to identify continuing education hours that apply for your license. Proof of attendance is available for all sessions.

**Project Review: Tribal Response and Resources for Human Trafficking Victims in Nebraska — Kirby**

**Williams:** Review of findings and offer recommendations and resources for addressing human trafficking in tribal communities in Nebraska, as part of an OVC subaward project with Nebraska DHHS and NCFE. The presentation will include: summary of tribal listening session report; identifying indicators for human trafficking in adults and youth; present screening tool options for community agency implementation/use; introduction to tribal trafficking response checklist; and tribal and statewide resources for assisting human trafficking survivors.

**Building Pathways for Families of High-Risk Youth to Reach Their Full Potential — Alisa Parmer, Nick Julia-**

**no, Ph.D, MBA:** Families of youth in the juvenile justice system have complex needs and require innovative approaches to support their long-term success. This session will highlight one organization's experience developing and implementing an innovative family approach at a residential facility. The program development and implementation experience will be shared along with case examples, lessons learned, early evaluation results, and next steps.

**Break — 2:30-3:00pm - Exhibitors Open/Networking****Breakout B — 3:00-4:15pm****Addressing Chronic Absenteeism through Restorative Practices — Nicole Britten, Brian Welch, Shirley Var-**

**gas:** Learn about the use of Chronic Absenteeism Conferencing, a restorative practice, to address chronic absenteeism. This interactive session will discuss the benefits of addressing student absences at an early stage as well as the importance of getting to the root cause and underlying reason behind a student's absences to create a unique plan for the student with family and school support.

**Connecting Through Conflict — Miranda Stoll, LIMHP, LADC:** In today's society where conflict can be something overwhelming that we handle, we examine what it takes to attune to our values and bring awareness to the perception of the various situations. Through the exploration of the nervous system and its patterns, exploring perception through the brain, and understanding just what values are and how to utilize them you will be able to connect to yourself through conflict that may arise and be that leader that changes things for the future.

**A Balancing Act: Engaging Parents and Caregivers while Supporting Youth — Brianna Mumm, LCSW, LMHP, Kim Teegerstrom:** This presentation will discuss how service providers can reduce the likelihood of burn out when making efforts to balance caregiver engagement and youth autonomy while providing a variety of services. We know that positive caregiver engagement leads to improved outcomes for youth. We also acknowledge the challenges it imposes on the service provider. We explore various strategies of initial and ongoing caregiver engagement while incorporating self-care tactics to maintain quality services.

**Skills and Techniques in School Truancy Reduction — Steve Snodgrass:** Student engagement, driven by student attitude towards school, is the #1 predictor of student attendance. This instructor training session provides an overview of an innovative 3-5 session 1:1 intervention model designed to activate student attitude for 6th-11th grade youth experiencing chronic school absenteeism/school refusal. The model can be performed by JJ practitioners and combines evidence-based research from Motivational Interviewing, Solution-Focused Brief Therapy, Narrative Therapy, and Goal Setting theory.

**Centering Youth Voice in Youth Justice Spaces — Monica Miles-Steffens, MPA, Mark Kiepke, KaCee Zimmerman, Shayla Trausch, LaDonna Strong:** Centering youth voice in programs and systems that serve them is no longer a novelty, but foundational to best practice. Over the past year, UNO Juvenile Justice Certificate Program participants have developed approaches to engage youth voice across their youth serving spaces. This session will demonstrate how to tailor youth engagement strategies in policy work, facilities, and community-based programs. Join us to hear their lessons learned and how to apply these approaches in your community.

**Diversion Meeting — 4:30-6:00pm**

**Registration — 8:00 - 8:30 am - Exhibitors Open/Networking**

**Welcome & Opening Remarks — 8:30 - 8:45 am**

**Youth Day (Youth only) Registration / Orientation — 8:30 - 10:00 am**



**Keynote — 8:45-10:15am**

**Online Safety in a Modern World Through the Eyes of a Survivor — Alicia Kozak**

In these interactive presentations, audiences will learn how to better protect themselves and their children online, initiate those sensitive conversations with their children, and to understand the technology-driven world children and teens live in. Alicia will also discuss the importance of cyber security, and how to safely use computers, mobile devices, social media, gaming systems, and apps. Additionally, she will share the importance of effective child safety legislation, such as her namesake, Alicia's Law, as a means of combating online predatory crime. She also covers topics such as, online predators, grooming, the growing threat of AI, sextortion, cyberbullying, "sexting," sexual assault, child exploitation, and human-trafficking. Alicia has the unique ability to address these sensitive subjects in an informative, inspirational, and occasionally humorous, manner.

**Break — 10:15-10:30 am - Exhibitors Open/Networking**

**Breakout C — 10:30-11:45 am**

**Lessons Learned from 10-Years of a Crossover Youth Practice Model Site through an Implementation Science Lens — Shawne Johnson, Nick Juliano, Ph.D, MBA, Ryan Spohn:** Adopting principles from Implementation Science to assess the operation of an initiative across all stages of implementation provides lessons for taking programs to scale and replicating successful programs in new jurisdictions. Our presentation describes the maturation of a Crossover Youth Practice Model implementation in Omaha known as Youth Impact! Our team highlights lessons learned from the first ten years of the initiative and provides recommendations for new or emerging crossover youth sites.

**Inspiring Hope in Justice Involved Individuals – Case Management Strategies for Decreasing Suicide Risk — Lindsay Meyer, Erin Curran:** Providing case management to individuals in the justice system who are at risk for suicide can be daunting and uncomfortable to some. However, our roles as case managers and interventionists are vital to ensuring safety and long-term well-being of the individuals we serve. While suicide risk can present as a short-term crisis; the long term impact cannot be forgotten. In this session, participants will learn how risk factors for suicide can present in case management of justice involved individuals. Strategies in case management will be presented to decrease suicide risk as well as incorporation of evidenced based interventions. Lastly, capturing your work through documentation is an important component of case management and participants will learn when and how to do this best.

**Call me Nanny McPhee! — Crystal Rush Cardenas:** Unveiling the Nanny McPhee Approach: Lessons for Empowering Families and Professionals Inspired by the timeless lessons encapsulated in the film "Nanny McPhee," my presentation aims to illuminate the parallels between parenthood and the responsibilities of caseworkers. In our roles as advocates for children and families, the parallels between the challenges faced by the characters in "Nanny McPhee" and the complexities of our work are evident. This presentation explores key insights from personal experiences, emphasizing the significance of imparting self-sufficiency, fostering understanding, and creating lasting connections with those we serve.

**Prevalence and Trends Observed in Youth Data — Betty Jean Usher-Tate, Ph.D:** Behavioral Health services in Nebraska is an umbrella term for Mental Health, Substance Use, and Dual (combination) diagnoses. This presentation will illuminate some prevalence and trends regarding various elements of demographics and types of youth trauma reported. Data sources include Nebraska Behavioral Health System, the DBH Annual Consumer Survey, and other national surveys.

**Implementation Science and Leadership to Support Juvenile Justice Change— Amoreena Brady:** Have you ever tried to implement something new and weren't successful? Or have you been met with challenges about why a change will not work? Implementation Science is a growing field of knowledge and practical application within the human services field. Participants will walk away from this session with basic concepts and knowledge regarding Implementation Science, along with practical application tools. Implementation Science recognizes leadership is not always associated with a title, everyone within an organization has leadership potential. Growth of leadership through an Implementation Science lens directly impact outcomes for youth and families that experience the juvenile justice system.

**Awards Luncheon — 12:00 - 1:00 pm**

During lunch service, the 2024 NJJA awards will be presented. These awards are: the Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association Scholarship Award, the Evelyn E. Labode Service to Youth Award, the NJJA Commitment to Excellence in Leadership Award, and the Spirit of Youth Award.

**Break — 1:00 - 1:15 pm Exhibitors Open/Networking**

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**Breakout D — 1:15-2:30 pm**

**Support for LGBTQ youth in Nebraska High Schools** — Christina Sogar, Ph.D, Martonia Gaskill: A student's sense of safety and acceptance plays a crucial role in their level of success. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) youth are more frequently victimized at school than their heterosexual peers. Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) clubs encourage an inclusive and accepting school environment for LGBTQ youth. This study examined the general school climate and supports for LGBTQ youth, including availability of GSA groups, in Nebraska high schools.

**Moving to With: How Restorative Practice can Transform Relationships** — Anne Hobbs, JD, Ph.D, Monica Miles-Steffens, MPA: Nelson Mandela said "People respond in accordance to how you relate to them." Have you ever wondered why you connect with some people better than others? Or regretted how you responded to someone in a moment of anger or stress? Developing connections with others first requires us to understand how we relate and why. In this session, participants will be introduced to foundational restorative practice concepts that can positively influence personal and professional relationships.

**Supporting and Maintaining the Innocence of Children of Color** — LeLynda Briggs-Linstadt, Teffany Ulrich: In juvenile justice settings (court, placement, therapy, etc.), it is important for those that serve in these capacities to recognize how the American education and justice systems have impacted and continues to impact children and their families. To do this work, stakeholders need to explore their own identity markers which will increase awareness of ways to honor the identities of children, families, and communities of color that they serve.

**Using Hope to Drive Positive Outcomes for Youth and Families** — Jonathan Davis, Liz Bartels: Over 2,000 research studies have shown that hope is the #1 predictor of future well-being yet fewer than half of our nation's young people are hopeful. Learn how we can infuse hope into our work with youth and families to drive positive outcomes for all stakeholders.

**Mentoring in New Dimensions (MIND): The Potential Impact of a Culturally Relevant Approach to Mentoring Program Design** — Kris Whisenhunt, BSW, MPA, Lawrence Chatters, PhD, KB Mensah: The MIND program brings mentorship and counseling to underrepresented youth in a culturally relevant and inclusive barbershop environment. This design and the recruitment of barber mentors and licensed therapists from underrepresented cultures creates a space where young people of color can feel comfortable to be themselves, be challenged, and be heard. After one year of implementation, representatives from Visionary Youth will share the impact and lessons learned from the application of this innovative approach.

**Break — 2:30-3:00 pm - Exhibitors Open/Networking****Breakout E — 3:00-4:15 pm**

**Expectation: Attendance is Mandatory. Reality: Life happens. Data and Youth perspectives on chronic absenteeism and truancy petitions in Nebraska** — Katie Nungesser: School can bring up varied emotions for individuals, especially young people. Efforts to ensure attendance are important but must focus on resolving obstacles to attendance for young people in a supportive manner. Voices for Children will share data and youth experiences that led to chronic absenteeism and youth proposals on what can be done to ensure children and families are supported.

**Lead the Change You Want to See: Turning Ideas into Practice** — Monica Miles-Steffens, MPA, Maeve Hemmer, Verla Little, Latasha Ellis: Have you ever had an idea that you really wanted to try but didn't know where to start? Don't let your idea get left behind! Join UNO Juvenile Justice Certificate Program participants to learn key elements of implementation science and project management that will help you move your idea to reality. This team has been using these strategies to elevate projects in mediation, education, detention alternatives, and restorative justice awareness.

**Serving Street Gang Involved Youth** — Diante Jones: Educate youth service professionals on the contextual realities contributing to the statistical outcomes of frontline gang intervention efforts. This presentation grapples with the tools, tricks and gems of street-gang intervention, allowing youth service providers to gleam and be inspired in sharpening their program's approach to serving street gang involved youth.

**The Youth Perspective** — Lincoln Arneal, Chloe Mcshannon, Karolina Yoder, Rowan Thompson: Members of the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation will provide youth perspective on juvenile justice and how their lives are impacted long after they leave the system.

**Wellbeing at Work** — Nicole Deere-Andersen, Cassandra Dittmer: Many workplaces emphasize employee wellness. What would happen if you and your organization focused on employee wellbeing instead? In this session participants will learn the difference between wellness and wellbeing and how an emphasis on wellbeing transforms individuals, organizations, and communities. Tools for implementation and a case study of the Wellbeing Committee of KVC Nebraska will be provided.

**Youth Call to Action — 3:00-4:30 pm (Youth Only)****Networking Reception — 4:30-6:00 pm**

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**Opening Remarks / Youth Kick Off— 8:15 - 8:45 am**

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**Keynote — 8:45 - 9:45am**

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**Trafficking, Trauma, Resiliency and Evidence-based Hope — Judge Robert Lung**

This presentation provides a Human Trafficking 101 level on the basic concepts of human trafficking – regarding the definition (and the more refined definition) as well as an understanding of the who/what/where/how of human trafficking. The presentation primarily focuses on sex trafficking, though there is a general recognition that there are some basic concepts of trafficking that is shared or universal between victims of labor and sex trafficking. The presentation also addresses the reality that the public’s understanding of human trafficking is based on flawed misrepresentations of what is and is not human trafficking and the presentation aims to correct some of these misunderstandings as well as to broaden the perspective and scope of the problem. The presentation will then define and redefine trauma and then address the multi-faceted impact of trauma. The presentation will identify how trauma impacts individuals and how that may manifest. The presentation regards a case study that involved severe child abuse, human trafficking and torture and regards the demographics of the child in the case study which emphasizes the misunderstandings both about human trafficking and the impact of trauma when effective treatment services are enabled. The presentation concludes with encouragement to the audience about the difference they can make on trauma impacted individuals.

**Break — 9:45-10:00 am**

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**Keynote (continued) — Practical Practices to be Trauma-Informed — 10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

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This presentation is focused on educating and encouraging the audience, especially those engaging juvenile system-involved individuals about trafficking, trauma and practical practices to making a difference. The presentation will revisit the definition of human trafficking with a focus on how to counter the methods of traffickers by becoming trauma-informed and creating trauma-informed spaces and practices. Additionally, this presentation will regard alternatives to ‘problem-solving’ courts and encourage the audience to call to action a systemic response to trauma and trauma-impacted individuals. The presenter will share examples of problem-solving practices utilized in his own jurisdiction which came from failures and mistakes along the way. The presenter will regard the need to lead and then let go rather than control.

**Closing — 12:00 - 12:15 pm**

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