Practical Strategies to Address the Behavioral Health Needs of Children and Families in Rural America

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Renaissance Glendale Hotel

Featured Presenters

Gary Blau, Ph.D.
Chief, Child, Adolescent, and Family Branch, SAMHSA

Gary Blau, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist and Chief of the Child, Adolescent and Family Branch of the federal Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. In this role, he provides national leadership for children's mental health and for creating systems of care across the country.

Lark Huang, Ph.D.
Senior Advisor on Children, SAMHSA

Larke Nahme Huang, Ph.D., a licensed clinical-community psychologist, was appointed the Senior Advisor on Children, Office of the Administrator, in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in April 2006. In this position she provides leadership on federal national policy pertaining to mental health and substance use issues for children, adolescents and families. She is also the agency lead on cultural competence and eliminating disparities.
Kay Jankowski, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Dartmouth School of Medicine

Kay Jankowski, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in the Dartmouth Medical School, Department of Psychiatry and a member of Dartmouth Trauma Interventions Research Center. As an experienced child psychologist, she has worked with and treated traumatized children, adolescents and their families for many years. She has given numerous presentations to community and professional organizations on trauma and PTSD, and published articles on trauma and its effects. She also has extensive experience with project direction, having managed many previous studies at the National Center for PTSD and the Trauma Research Center. Jankowski is currently serving as project director for the SAMHSA funded NH Bridge Project and in this capacity works across multiple child serving systems in NH, including child welfare, juvenile justice and the family courts, to bring a more trauma-informed approach to care and services for children, youth and families. She also has trained clinicians from all over the State in best practices for children and adolescents with trauma, including treatments such as Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Child-Parent Psychotherapy.

DENNIS G. JOHNSON, MPA
Executive Vice President / Policy & Advocacy

Dennis Johnson is Executive Vice President for Government Affairs at the Children's Health Fund, a non-profit organization that initiates and supports innovative pediatric programs designed to meet the complex health care needs of medically underserved, homeless and economically-disadvantaged children. Mr. Johnson is also the Deputy Director for Government Affairs, National Center for Disaster Preparedness, Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University, where he acts as a liaison between the University and policymakers and elected officials at the state and federal levels.

Mr. Johnson directs the Fund's public policy, government affairs and advocacy agendas and coordinates the Fund's relationship with a broad spectrum of public officials, public and private sector entities, advocacy groups and health provider organizations.
Dr. Susan Keys is the Special Advisor on Mental Health at the Inspire USA Foundation, a nonprofit focused on the use of technology to promote the mental health of young people aged 16 – 25 and to prevent suicide. Prior to joining Inspire USA, Dr. Keys was Chief of the Prevention Initiatives and Priority Programs Development Branch in the Center for Mental Health Services, at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), a Division of the Department of Health and Human Services. In this position she oversaw youth violence prevention and suicide prevention initiatives and provided leadership for an interagency national initiative on young child wellness. Before joining SAMHSA, Dr. Keys was an Associate Professor and Department Chair of the Counseling and Human Services Department at Johns Hopkins University, and held a joint appointment in the Department of Mental Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Dr. Keys also served as the Associate Director of Education for the Johns Hopkins Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence.

Dennis Mohatt is Vice President for Behavioral Health for the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), and directs its mental health program. Before coming to WICHE, Dennis served as Deputy Director for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services from 1996-1999. In that position, he was designated the state’s Commissioner of Mental Health, as well as providing leadership in the areas of public assistance, rural health, primary care, disabilities, and child welfare. He has over a decade of experience in community mental health, and provided executive leadership to a very successful CMHC in Michigan’s rural Upper Peninsula, and the successful integration of community mental health services with primary care in two rural family medicine practices.

Dr. Novins, a member of the research team at the National Center for American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research (NCAIANMHR), conducts research critical for improving the mental health of American Indian children and adolescents. These include ongoing and completed studies in the areas of psychiatric epidemiology, developmental psychobiology, and mental health services research. Research opportunities include participation in every stage of the research cycle: 1) articulating and prioritizing research questions; 2) study design; 3) study implementation; 4) data analysis; and 5) information dissemination.
Michael R. Rosmann, Ph.D., Executive Director

Mike Rosmann is a clinical psychologist who manages the family farm near Harlan, Iowa. Previously he was a professor at the University of Virginia and the founding director of Prairie Rose Mental Health Center in Harlan. In addition to working with AgriWellness and the Sowing the Seeds of Hope group, Dr. Rosmann is an adjunct faculty member of the College of Public Health at the University of Iowa. He is known nationally as an advocate and spokesperson for better behavioral healthcare for agricultural producers. Mike and his wife, Marilyn, are the parents of two grown children.

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Sandra Spencer, Executive Director

Sandra Spencer is executive director of the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, which is dedicated exclusively to helping children in the United States with mental health needs and their families achieve a better quality of life. Ms. Spencer has served in numerous advocacy roles including leading the first grassroots family-run organization in Eastern North Carolina that advocates for families and children with mental health challenges.

Steve C. Trout, Director of Program Development

Mr. Trout has a 35 year career in child and family services and for 21 years served as the founding and executive director of the Southern Consortium for Children (SCC), a regional 10 county planning, development, and fundraising regional council of governments serving children and families with behavioral health needs. Mr. Trout has provided leadership in the regional development of children's behavioral health case management, treatment foster care, emergency crisis and planned respite care, supported employment and job development for youth, early childhood mental health services (a partnership with community mental health providers and regional Head Start programs), advanced practice nursing (in support of child psychiatry), a regional telecommunications network featuring telepsychiatry, telepsychotherapy, and regional workforce development through interactive videoconferencing. Mr. Trout has been active in national, state and local policy development for children and families and has presented at numerous national conferences and forums across the United States.
Stephen Wessler, Executive Director, Center for Preventing Hate

Steve Wessler is the founding director of the Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence at the University of Southern Maine. A graduate of Harvard College and Boston University School of Law, as an attorney he practiced law both in the Maine Attorney General’s office and in private practice for over 22 years. At the Maine Department of the Attorney General, Wessler developed and directed the civil rights enforcement effort from 1992 to 1999 before creating the Center in 1999. He has received recognitions or awards for his work from a number of civil rights and professional organizations. He is also the author of The Respectful School and a number of articles, reports and other publications focusing on hate crimes and prevention. He is also a member of the faculty at the University of Southern Maine and has received recognitions or awards for his work in civil rights from GLAD (Gay & Lesbian Advocates and Defenders) (1999), the Maine Education Association (1997), the Maine Children’s Alliance (1997), the Maine Civil Liberties Union (1996), the Portland Branch of the NAACP (1994), the Jewish Federation of Southern Maine (1994), and the Maine Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance (1993).

James Wotring, Director, Georgetown University National TA Center for Children’s Mental Health

Jim Wotring is Director of the National Technical Assistance Center for Children’s Mental Health at Georgetown University. In this role he consults with states and communities on a variety of topics and directs a staff of 20 full- and part-time faculty and staff who provide training and technical assistance throughout the country. Prior to this position he served as the Director of Programs for Children with a Serious Emotional Disturbance with the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH). He has consulted both nationally and internationally on such topics as wraparound, financing systems of care and more recently on outcome management and change management related to dissemination of evidence based practices. Before joining the MDCH in December 1994, he was the Child and Adolescent Service System (CASSP) Program Director for Michigan. He has worked with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, the mental health system, and has worked for community mental health centers in both urban and rural areas.