



Naomi Ruth Cohen

Institute for Mental Health Education
at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology

21st Annual Community Mental Health Conference



Untying the Human Knot: Managing Stress and Anxiety in Today's World

Breakout Session 1 (Choose 1)
11:30am – 12:30pm

Presenter Name(s)	Session Title	Session Description
Ana Belmonte, Psy.D.	When Stress Becomes a Crisis: Preventing Mass Violence in America	According to the Gun Violence Archive, there were 647 mass shootings in the United States in 2022. Research indicates that the majority of mass shooters and other perpetrators of violence are not motivated by symptoms of mental illness, but rather as a result of hate, fame-seeking, or experiencing crises in their lives. In this presentation, we will discuss the warning signs and behaviors of future violence and indicators that a person may be experiencing a crisis warranting intervention. Additionally, we will discuss intervention points, both at an individual and community level, to reduce and prevent mass violence.
Craig Scalise Daniel Maigler LCSW (Paws for Patrick)	Connecting Emotional Support Animals to the people who need them	Learn about the research behind the power of emotional support animals to help people and discuss the process and the legal requirements of how to get one. (There will be no animals present)

Presenter Name(s)	Session Title	Session Description
Eric W Homer, MSW	Anxiety in Today's Social Media World	We will discuss social media and emerging improvements that help prevent/reduce social media related distress/anxiety.
Andrea O'Morrow, Joe Zuzich, LCSW	Stress Less: Resilience for Success	Stress Less: Resilience for Success is an interactive presentation designed to teach participants how to identify causes of stress and develop stress management techniques. Recent surveys suggest that stress in America is at an all-time high due to economic and political turmoil, concern for the future, global health concerns, and social unrest. Stress Less participants will learn to recognize various types of stress, as well as the physical and emotional responses that may arise from it. Stress Less introduces various techniques for alleviating and managing stress as well as building resilience and practicing mindfulness. Mindfulness not only reduces stress and anxiety in individuals but leads to better work performance and overall well-being.
Ellen Blum Barish	Writing for Wellness - The Healing Power of Personal Narrative	You understand the power of personal stories because you listen to them in a deep way. But what about the stories from people's lives that are put on the page? Writing about stressful and anxiety-causing experiences can help people organize their thoughts, regulate their emotions, encourage them to ask for support and find meaning in those experiences. We'll talk about how writing adds another layer of discovery. Using short sections of personal essays and memoirs, we will explore elements of personal narrative and allow time for reflective writing and discussion.
Greta Nielsen, MA, LCPC, NCC	Managing Stress for a healthy family; increasing resiliency in our youth	With the rising mental health crisis for youth, it is imperative that we learn ways to equip families with the skills needed to manage and tolerate the stressors they face. This presentation will focus on ways to build resiliency in youth and provide strategies for parents/mental health counselors to recognize risk factors and how to create more protective factors within their children/clients.

Presenter Name(s)	Session Title	Session Description
Mike Bushman	Finding Hope	As the largest private funder of suicide prevention research in the United States, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention invests extensively in studying methods of reducing suicidal ideation, behaviors and losses. In Finding Hope, we share important, research-derived concepts essential to saving lives.
Sarah Tolan-Mee, RSMT	Somatic Interventions	The word somatic comes from the ancient Greek work soma, or body. Somatic therapy includes a huge range of practices that use the mind-body connection for healing from physical and psychological wounds, and through healing into resonance and growth. For thousands of years, people around the world have been using embodied practices to address the incredibly rigorous physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual demands of being human. In this session, we will explore the current neurobiological research that illuminates some of the reasons why somatic interventions are effective, and, most importantly, we will explore some stress-regulation activities including breathwork, gentle movement, visualization, intentional language, and sensorimotor mindfulness. All are welcome!
Susan Swanson, LCSW	When to Worry about Anxiety in Older Adults	Contrary to popular belief, older adults suffer from anxiety more than depression. Symptoms of anxiety and depression often occur together and are more difficult to differentiate in older adults. Anxiety is the most common mental health disorder among older adults affecting 10%-20% of this population. Anxiety disorders are highly treatable yet very few seek treatment. Older adults often conceal their anxiety and tend to minimize symptoms. Often, symptoms of anxiety manifest as physical symptoms. As a result, anxiety is under reported and often goes undiagnosed.

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Breakout Session 2 (Choose 1)

1:15pm – 2:15pm

Presenter Name(s)	Session Title	Session Description
Barbara Sarasin, MSW, CMC Audrey Thompson, LMSW	Hoarding - Its impact and interventions	Hoarding can impact up to 3 percent of the population, with rates higher for those over 60 years of age. Hoarding can affect a person's daily life, ability to function, and health. This presentation will address hoarding led by two professionals that have assisted individuals with hoarding issues.
Billy Kaplan, LCSW	From PTSD to PTSR: Traumatic Stress and the Pandemic Generation	The earliest days of the Pandemic were a trauma that for some people was traumatic. This presentation will explore the distinction between trauma and traumatic, examining the unique experiences and symptoms of Pandemic-related traumatic responses. It will suggest practical approaches for helping the young people of the Pandemic Generation to heal from those responses. The presentation will propose shifting our thinking of PTSD from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder to Pandemic Traumatic-Stress Response (PTSR).
Gabriela Diaz	Erasing The Distance: The Power of Personal Narrative	The goal for this session is to demonstrate the way imagery and metaphor can enhance an individuals' understanding of personal narrative and function as a technique to help uncover a deeper insight into lived experience.
Galina Lipkin LCPC, MA, NCC	Round and Round it Goes: Helping Parents, Caregivers, and Therapists Break the Cycle of Anxiety	Learn about the anxiety cycle and the role that parents, caregivers, and therapists play in reinforcing it or breaking it. Knowing how to identify accommodations that strengthen the anxiety cycle and how to remove them can help create long-term success in decreasing anxiety symptoms and regaining control over the home. This presentation will teach techniques to provide support to those affected by anxiety without participating in, accommodating, or reassuring anxious thoughts and behaviors.

Presenter Name(s)	Session Title	Session Description
Larry Stoler, MSSA, PhD Jenny Merdinger	Stress: A Gateway to Health. A holistic approach to well-being in a stressful world	Who today is free from stress? External sources of stress are constant and everywhere. Stressful situations produce intense emotions that your body is required to process. In this workshop, you'll see how applying Yin and Yang principles and other components of the Chinese Medicine framework can use powerful emotions to promote health and personal growth. You will learn practical Qigong energy exercises that support your body's natural healing abilities. You'll leave with an appreciation of how the integration of Chinese Medicine and psychology offers an exciting, and hopeful way to transform stress into well-being.
Monica Morris, LPC	Visual Harm Reduction: The impact of facility design on emotional well-being	Have you ever sat in a clinic waiting room, but felt like you were at the DMV? The chairs, colors, and overhead lighting feel cold and generic, but familiar. In this presentation, we will look at the architecture and design of substance use treatment facilities. We will discuss how, and why, these facilities look and feel like other kinds of institutions such as schools, hospitals and prisons, and the impact this has on our emotional wellness. Lastly, we will explore how art therapy can shift the atmosphere in these settings, from one that is clinical or stigmatizing, towards a welcoming, community-centered environment. Examples from an adult medication-assisted therapy program will be provided.
Roxana Villatoro, MSW	Que Nervios: A Discussion on Anxiety and Mental Health in the Latinx Community	In this presentation, we will be discussing how the importance of Latinx culture in managing anxiety lies in the unique cultural values and beliefs that can impact mental health. It is important to understand and address various cultural factors in order to know how to provide effective support and treatment for Latinx individuals with anxiety.
Serena Wadhwa Psy.D, LCPC, CADC, CCTP	The Stress Experience: breaking the whole into manageable pieces	This session explores strategies to prevent, reduce, and manage stress at a physical, emotional, mental, sensation-sense, behavioral, environmental and spiritual (values, purpose, meaning) level. We explore each level, possible experiences and tools to process and bring back some balance. Care packages are provided which includes tangible tools for use.

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Breakout Session 3 (Choose 1)

2:30pm – 3:30pm

Presenter Name(s)	Session Title	Session Description
Addie Van Zwohl, MJ, MSW, LCSW	Interventions and Strategies to Address School Anxiety & School Refusal	Have you noticed an increase in anxiety symptoms in the young people in your lives? Research suggests that as many as 1 in 5 youth are experiencing clinically elevated anxiety symptoms. As a result, young people require additional mental health support in schools. Many students struggle to come to and stay in school due to their anxiety-related symptoms. School avoidance has become an increasing concern. This presentation will allow participants to explore case studies, learn new strategies to help young people cope with their symptoms of anxiety, and discuss approaches in working with schools to best support students.
Eric J. Proescher, PsyD, MPH	Whole Health; A Magick Informed Approach to Health and Wellness	Medical Science has its limits in addressing matters connected to transcendence of human suffering, traditionally addressed in spiritual contexts. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has been working on implementing the Whole Health System (WHS) of Care, an approach to health care that focuses on what matters most to patients to empower and equip them to take charge of their health and wellbeing. The VA's Whole Health (WH) approach is the key to increasing positive mental health outcomes via engagement with the most important questions of life. Dr. Proescher will guide a discussion about mental health recovery and wellness via Whole Health principles.
Erin Tegge, AM, LSW	Substance Use as a Self-Coping Mechanism for Teens: Understanding the Relationship Between Teen Mental Health and Substance Use	This presentation will look at the relationship between mental health challenges and substance use among teens. We will dive into various substance use trends among teens, motivations for use and non-use and how mental health adds complexity in understanding, preventing, and treating youth substance use.

Presenter Name(s)	Session Title	Session Description
Jenny Arrington	Updating Your Operating System: The Five Dials Approach To Managing How You Act, Think, and Feel in Real Time	You have more control over how you act, think, and feel than you may think. There are ways to create real-time shifts in your physiology that change how you feel and think. This is very different than using cognitive techniques that are often ineffective when someone is dysregulated.
Patti Vick, MFA; Maira Egan, MACAT, ATR-P; Rob Lentz, MFA	Art & Renewal	Art & Renewal is a unique Open Studio Project workshop that is designed to support anyone whose work is emotionally demanding and prone to burn-out. Participants will develop a sustainable creative practice as a simple and effective way to release stress, restore empathy, and approach greater balance within their personal and professional life. This workshop invites participants to engage in the Open Studio Process of intuitive art making and writing within a supportive small group format.
Rabbi Andrea London	Spiritual Practices for Stress Management	In order to manage the stress in our lives, we need different tools that we can use. Sometimes one technique will work, but, at other times, another practice is what's needed. In this workshop, we will explore different spiritual practices, grounded in Jewish tradition, to help us work with our stress.
Sylvia Corcoran, LCSW, MCEd	The Use of Essential Oils to Reduce Stress & Anxiety	In this breakout group, participants will learn about the healing properties of essential oils and ways to integrate the use of essential oils into their daily lives.
Thomas Golebiewski Ph.D.; L.C.S.W.	Principles and Practices for Cultivating Emotional Balance	Cultivating Emotional Balance training emerged from the Destructive Emotions Dialogue held by behavioral scientists and the Dalai Lama at the Mind Life Institute held in 2000. Daniel Goleman in his book, Destructive Emotions chronicles the event. This experiential workshop will focus upon emotional awareness and the development of practical emotional skills, techniques, strategies and tools that can cultivate emotional balance (CEB). Drawing from the CEB curriculum, neuroscience and mindfulness based practices, the session will explore a framework that supports emotional health and wellbeing. An emotional episode timeline based upon the discreet model of emotion and the role and function that it serves in our lives, along with mindfulness practices, focusing techniques and strategies will be explored.