

56th Annual NYSSSWA School Social Work Conference
“Bridging the Gap: Meeting the Needs of Our Students in the New Decade”

Conference Program

Thursday, March 4, 2021

8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Registration/sign in

9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Welcome -- Conference Chair, NYSSSWA President. Board Introductions

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Opening Keynote (2 Contact Hours)

"Using Trauma Informed Strategies in Response to the 2020 Pandemic" by Laura Belanger, LCSW-R, Kelli Cookfair, LMSW, & Tina Houston McCrea, LMSW

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted all of us. Learn how to identify children and adults experiencing trauma and /or anxiety as a result of the pandemic. A panel of School Social Workers and a trauma therapist will then share some of their experiences regarding how students, educators and parents have been impacted as well as interventions and strategies that can be implemented at various grade levels to assist those needing support. Lessons learned during the pandemic will be discussed as well as how to apply them going forward.

12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. Lunch

Presentation of *“Ruth Schwartz School Social Worker of the Year Award”*

1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Breakout Session A (2.0 Contact Hours) (Choose one)

A1: **“Music Makers Make a Difference”** by Sheila Conners

This session will examine the use of music as an intervention to promote engagement, communication, and emotional expression in school settings with students in both regular and special needs (autism, learning disabilities, behavioral/social disorders) classrooms. Attendees will be able to implement individual and group modalities that will enhance students’ outcomes and success with behavioral, social, and emotional learning.

A2: **"A Grief Like No Other: Helping Families Cope with Suicide"** by Day Cummings, LCSW, RN

Children and families impacted by suicide represent a growing number as the rates of suicide increase. Much effort in recent past has focused on suicide prevention but there is often a lack of support and guidance for those who have lost someone to suicide. This workshop will focus on understanding the unique characteristics of those impacted by suicide and therapeutic interventions.

A3: **“Human Trafficking 101”** by Amy Fleischauer, LMSW, Detective Theresa Neitzel, Emma Buckthal, Esq., & Patricia Calleri

The Western District of New York Human Trafficking Task Force is a multi-disciplinary team that addresses human trafficking utilizing a trauma informed and victim centered approach. Service provider and law enforcement task force members will provide guidance on how youth trafficking can be identified in schools. The speakers will also address the necessary steps to engage victims for services and the process for referrals to law enforcement.

Thursday, March 4, 2021 (Cont.)

3:45 p.m. – 5:45 p.m. Breakout Session B: (2.0 Contact hours) (Choose one)

B1: “Preventive Classroom and Behavior Management Techniques” by Tim Zgliczynski, Ph.D.

The goal of this workshop will be to disseminate best practices for classroom and behavior management that allow classroom teachers to be proactive in preventing negative behaviors in the classroom. Workshop content will cover a wide array of classroom and behavior management techniques designed to serve at Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions for general and special education classrooms at the elementary level. All discussed interventions are aligned with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to promote improved access to classroom content and instruction for all students, not just those with behavioral needs. Specific interventions designed for high-risk students and high incidence students with disabilities will be discussed. The workshop will engage all attendees through a series of hands-on activities that will engage simulate many of the strategies being presented. All attendees will leave the workshop with resources capable of being implemented immediately in the workplace.

B2: “Project Songbird: Mental Health Training for Student Awareness and Intervention” by Joan Conti, LCSW-R & Marissa Sullivan

Project Songbird is a strength based program that focuses on reducing stigma, understanding mental health, being a positive influence, providing information and referrals. This program is a student driven/student facilitated program designed to decrease stigma and increase mental health awareness. Students share signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety, ideas for intervention, what to say/what not to say when a peer or friend is struggling, when to involve an adult, how to be a good listener as well as coping skills, self-care and resources.

B3: “Transgender and Gender Expansive Students: K-12 Best Practices in the Age of DASA” by Sue Donavan, LCSW-R & Mel LeMay, LMSW

This workshop will discuss best practices for addressing gender identity and expression among students in K-12 schools, including terminology and language; typical gender development in children; gender transitions at all ages; the applicability of state and federal laws (DASA, GENDA, Title IX); and resources for working with teachers, administrators, and families, and will feature a panel Q&A session with transgender and gender expansive youth.

6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Informal Gathering

6:00 p.m. - ? Want to Visit Niagra Falls?

Here is your opportunity to visit one of the wonders of the natural world-Niagara Falls! Seeped in history for it's beauty, mystical powers, and attraction to daredevils from all over the world, Niagara Falls never ceases to amaze visitors. You will be provided with a casual, Buffalo themed, dinner at the hotel and a round trip bus ride (in a comfortable coach style bus) to and from Niagara Falls. You do not want to miss this! Seats are limited, so sign up right away.



When you register, select "Niagra Scenic" bus tour @ \$35 a person.

Please note that if there is not a minimum of registrants for this event, we will need to cancel.

Friday, March 5, 2021

7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. Registration/sign in & Buffet

Breakfast 8:15 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

General Session (2.0 Contact hours)

“Mental Health in Schools in the 21st Century” by Dr. David Hamilton ,LMSW. Executive Secretary, State Board for Social Work, New York State Education Department--Office of Professions

School social workers provide a range of essential services to students in elementary, middle and high schools throughout New York, including clinical social work and psychotherapy services. The COVID-19 pandemic and resultant job losses affect students, as well as families, social workers and other educators. While the most significant event in decades, students were already faced with the use and effects of school violence, substance use, suicide and mental health conditions. This session will identify and address the role of school social workers in addressing these challenges in the 21st Century.

10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Breakout Sessions C (2.0 Contact hours) (Choose one)

C1: **"Practical Self Care Techniques for Educators & Students"** by Tina Lamendola, LCSW

This is a hands on, experiential workshop that will help you expand your clinical tool-kit while having fun. You'll learn easy, ready to use techniques that you can start using right away on yourself and with your students. Participants will learn coping strategies which can be adapted to any age group. These skills can be applied in group settings and/or during individual sessions. Skills taught will include deep breathing, meditation, mindfulness techniques, fun & highly engaging CBT activities, and ice breakers.

C2: **“ Kids Escaping Drugs: Face2Face”** by John Bennett

"Even if [families] don't have something going on in their family, they most certainly know someone who does." Attendees will learn current trends and consequences of adolescent substance use and addiction as well as a stigma proof way to educate families and community members regarding the prevalence and harmful effects of alcohol and drug experimentation, use, and dependence among adolescents. The panel will also share strategies to encourage healthy choices among youth at risk for experimentation and addiction.

C3: **“Child Welfare Matters for School Social Workers: A Peek Through the Doors of Family Court”** by Judith Gerber, Esq.

This interactive workshop will introduce participants to the complex legal framework of the child welfare and family court systems and identify “touchpoints” of intersection with schools. It will trace the “path” of a child neglect matter, with a special focus on the perspective of the child. It will examine child welfare principles embedded in the law, including “family first,” “permanency,” safety, and well-being, and social service practices. This workshop will offer practical strategies for school social workers to use both in and outside of school to address the needs of at-risk children and families.

12:45 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Buffet Luncheon

Friday, March 5, 2021 (Cont.)

1:45 p.m. - 3:45 p.m. Closing Keynote Speaker (2.0 Contact hours)

"The Power of Laughter: A Bridge to Personal and Classroom Well-Being" by Caren Kolerski

This session will provide an overview of Laughter Wellness and Laughter Yoga as best practices for complete well-being; designed to spark laughter, positive energies and feelings, engage the playful, Inner Child while improving the quality of life. Benefits of Laughter Yoga –physical, emotional, mental, social – will be discussed as prevention strategies for student and staff mind, body, spirit wellness. All participants will be engaged in a fun, full Laughter Wellness session to experience the flow and power of its components. In summary, these benefits will support and supplement interventions for K-12 students.

3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Ending Announcements & Adjourn

5:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Board meeting/Dinner