

2025 Child and School Counseling Summit Sessions



Day 1 | Saturday February 22

SESSION 1

Neurodiversity and Neuro-Affirming Counseling for Youth: Strategies for Counselors

🕒 9am - 10am (EST)



Dr. Emily Goodman-Scott & Aaron Albright

Did you know that individuals with disabilities (or “differing abilities”) make up the largest historically marginalized group in the U.S.? Disability scholars and advocates are moving from a deficit-focused lens often found in the medical model to a more strength-based, diversity-centered conceptualizations of disability. Attend this session to learn more about the asset-based perspective of the neurodiversity movement. Gain practical neuro-affirming strategies counselors can use in school and clinical settings to serve children and adolescents. By the end of the presentation, attendees will be able to (1) Understand brief historical and demographic information on disability-related trends in the U.S. (2) Understand background information on the neurodiversity movement (3) Understand practical neuro-affirming strategies counselors can use in school and clinical settings to serve children and adolescents. The session will conclude with a short Q&A with Dr. Goodman-Scott and Aaron Albright.

SESSION 2

Adolescent Substance Use: What School Counselors Need to Know

🕒 10.30am - 11.30pm (EST)



Dr. Amanda Giordano

Substance use often begins during adolescence and school counselors are in prime positions to engage in both preventative work and early intervention strategies. The aim of this presentation is to provide current information about substance use among adolescents, with an emphasis on vaping, alcohol use, cannabis use, and prescription stimulant misuse. Participants will learn to recognize the potential signs of substance use among youth, the effects of substance use on adolescent brain development, and core tenets of prevention and intervention efforts for youth in schools. By the end of the presentation, attendees will be able to (1) Describe the features, prevalence rates, and potential negative consequences of substance use among adolescents (with an emphasis on vaping, alcohol use, cannabis use, and prescription stimulant misuse) (2) Explain the stage of brain development that occurs during adolescence, and the impact of substance use on adolescent functioning and development (3) Discuss the signs and symptoms of substance use among youth and the core tenets of prevention and intervention efforts that are applicable to the school setting. The session will conclude with a short Q&A with Dr. Giordano.

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SESSION 3

Neurodiversity Fundamentals for Mental Health Practitioners

🕒 12.30pm - 1.30pm (EST)



Elaine Taylor-Klaus

Understanding neurodiversity is crucial for mental health professionals aiming to provide inclusive, effective care for all clients. This session will introduce core concepts of neurodiversity, clarify key distinctions between neurodivergence and neurodiversity, and explore how these traits manifest both personally and professionally.

Participants will gain a foundational understanding of how neurodivergence impacts daily functioning, including challenges with executive function, motivation, and information processing. Drawing on real-world examples and evidence-based frameworks, the session will provide practical strategies to help professionals recognize and support neurodiverse individuals, regardless of whether they have a formal diagnosis.

Designed for mental health practitioners of all backgrounds, this session will focus on building awareness and essential skills for navigating neurodiversity confidently and ethically. While it is not intended to train specialists in specific diagnoses, it will equip participants with the knowledge and tools needed to better understand and advocate for neurodiverse clients, fostering more inclusive and effective therapeutic relationships. By the end of the presentation, attendees will be able to (1) Understanding Neurodiversity by gaining a comprehensive understanding of neurodiversity, its foundational principles, and the implications for mental health practice, enabling you to approach neurodivergent clients with greater awareness and sensitivity (2) Recognize common patterns of neurodivergence, including challenges related to executive function, motivation, and information processing, and develop practical strategies for supporting clients in overcoming these barriers (3) Explore ethical considerations in working with neurodiverse clients, including setting clear boundaries, knowing when to collaborate with other professionals, and recognizing the importance of multidisciplinary support (4) Discover practical tools, frameworks, and techniques designed to address the unique needs of neurodiverse individuals, empowering you to enhance their growth, resilience, and overall well-being in therapy. The session will conclude with a short Q&A with Elaine Taylor-Klaus.

SESSION 4

Village Key-ple: Effective Counseling in School Communities

🕒 2pm - 3pm (EST)



John Nwosu &
Chanelle Joseph-Nwosu

"It takes a village to raise a child" (African proverb). There are various social, emotional, and mental health providers who serve as key village people for students, clients, and families. While the roles of school counselors and mental health service providers often overlap, there are key differences that must be embraced for optimal outcomes. School counselors collaborate with students and adults to deliver a comprehensive school counseling program that supports the social, emotional, career, and academic development needs of all students. Mental health service providers regularly work with students, families, and community members who need support beyond the scope of the school setting. Embracing the purpose and role of school counselors and mental health service providers empowers us to raise healthier children, stronger villages, and develop systemic change in school communities. By the end of the presentation, attendees will be able to (1) Compare the role of school counselors and mental health providers (2) Frame effective, student-centered interventions for school settings (3) Discuss a model for cultivating systemic change. The session will conclude with a short Q&A with John Nwosu and Chanelle Joseph-Nwosu.



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SESSION 5

Understanding and Addressing Youth Suicide Risk in Schools: Best Practices for School Counselors

🕒 3.30pm - 4.30pm (EST)



Dr. Jonathan Singer

Youth suicide is a critical issue facing schools today, and school counselors play a pivotal role in prevention and intervention efforts. This webinar equips school counselors with the knowledge and tools necessary to navigate the complexities of youth suicide risk. Attendees will gain clarity on essential terminology, deepen their understanding of risk factors and warning signs, and explore the collaborative roles of school mental health professionals in creating a supportive environment for students. Drawing on the school counseling literature and the Suicide in Schools model of prevention, assessment, intervention and postvention, this webinar will empower school counselors to enhance their confidence and competence in addressing youth suicide, fostering a safer and more supportive school environment. Whether you're new to this work or seeking a refresher, join us for this engaging and informative session designed to inspire actionable change in your school. By the end of the presentation, attendees will be able to (1) Distinguish between preferred and problematic terms for suicidal thoughts and behaviors (2) Identify risk factors and warning signs of suicide in students (3) Discuss the role of different school mental health professionals in address youth suicide risk in schools. The session will conclude with a short Q&A with Dr. Singer.



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Day 2 | Sunday February 22

SESSION 1

🕒 9am - 10am (EST)

Trauma-Focused School Counseling: Strategies to Foster Resilience and Growth



Dr. Brandee Appling

In this session, participants will explore trauma-informed approaches and practical strategies to support students who have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) or other forms of trauma. Grounded in research and best practices, this session will focus on creating safe and supportive school environments that foster resilience and enhance academic success for students. Attendees will gain insight into the psychological and behavioral impacts of trauma, identify different types of trauma exposure and the various types of trauma, learn how to apply trauma-sensitive interventions, and develop skills to promote healing and growth in their school communities. In addition, they will have a better understanding of how to support students with a trauma history through a strengths-based perspective and develop support plans that are resilience-focused. By the end of the presentation, attendees will be able to (1) Understand the Impact of Trauma on Student Development (2) Identify Key Elements of Trauma-Informed Practices (3) Implement Trauma-Sensitive Interventions (4) Foster Resilience and Post-Traumatic Growth (5) Collaborate and Advocate Within the School System. The session will conclude with a short Q&A with Dr. Appling.

SESSION 2

🕒 10.30am - 11.30pm (EST)

Channeling the Potential of AI: Designing and Evaluating School Counseling Programs



Dr. Carol Dahir

Generative AI and General AI are supposed to make our professional lives easier. These tools can help us design a survey, an exit ticket for school counseling lessons, and gathering and interpreting data. How can AI also help us design and/or revise our comprehensive school counseling program based on the American School Counselor Association National Model (2019) or the International School Counselor Association Model (2022)?

Researchers (Fulmer, 2023; Minor, & Duchac, 2023; Sabella, 2024) propose the potential of AI to enhance school counselor effectiveness and efficiency to support students. As AI is used more extensively by principals and teachers to develop programs and enhance curriculum, where does school counseling fit in?

Let's explore how to channel the power of AI to ensure ethical applications in our work with students and better address school needs with fidelity and integrity. By the end of the presentation, attendees will be able to (1) Share perceptions and familiarity around the use of an array of AI systems and AI tools (2) Explore how to utilize AI to best serve every student equitably (3) Utilize AI to improve and/or design a comprehensive school counseling program (4) Identify the many ways school counselors can use AI to advantage student opportunities (5) Discuss current applications of the use of AI in school counseling, exchange ideas, process concerns, and debate ethical and legal implications. The session will conclude with a short Q&A with Dr. Dahir.



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SESSION 3

Utilizing a Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domain System of Supports to Equitably Support All Students

🕒 12.30pm - 1.30pm (EST)



Dr. Danielle Duarte

As a school-based student service provider, you've likely heard of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) but have you heard of Multi-Tiered MULTI-DOMAN System of Supports (MTMDSS)? This comprehensive framework aligns to the work of school counselors in three domains – academic, college and career, and social/emotional – to provide core instruction and data-driven interventions to equitably address every student's diverse needs. In addition to school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, school-based mental health professionals, and other student service providers can coordinate their services by using this model to identify and differentiate various roles. This interactive presentation will help participants evaluate their student service programs within a MTMDSS and consider how to share the results of the positive impacts on students through comprehensive program implementation. By the end of the presentation, attendees will be able to (1) Explain their specific student-service provider role within the context of a Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domain System of Supports (2) Evaluate strengths and areas of opportunity within the current counseling program delivery model at each tier of MTMDSS (3) Describe ways to share results of the positive impacts on students through comprehensive program implementation. The session will conclude with a short Q&A with Dr. Duarte.

SESSION 4

Permission To Feel: The Power of Emotional Intelligence to Transform Lives

🕒 2pm - 3pm (EST)



Dr. Marc Brackett

The fields of emotional intelligence, positive psychology, and social and emotional learning have been around for over 35 years, yet the mental health of children and adults remains alarmingly poor. In this interactive keynote, Dr. Brackett will share insights from his book, *Permission to Feel*, and discuss two decades of research from his Center on how we can equip current and future generations with the emotion skills needed to navigate our complex world. He will also introduce RULER, an evidence-based approach to SEL developed at Yale, which is now implemented in 5,000 schools worldwide. Participants will gain practical strategies and tools to enhance their own emotion skills and those of the children they serve. By the end of the presentation, attendees will be able to (1) Understand the science behind emotional intelligence (2) Learn the 5 key skills of emotional intelligence (3) Learn practical tools to build emotional intelligence. The session will conclude with a short Q&A with Dr. Brackett.



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SESSION 5

5 Key Steps in Addressing Infant & Maternal Mental Health

🕒 3.30pm - 4.30pm (EST)



Cirecie West-Olatunji

Although recent scholarship in infant mental health has suggested that an environmental perspective is necessary to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the presentation of trauma symptomology among young children, it is essential to incorporate a culture-centered approach when utilizing a trauma-informed lens. In this session, Dr. Cirecie West-Olatunji will provide a new application of an ecological framework that emphasizes prevention, cultural relevance, advocacy, and empowerment. Dr. West-Olatunji will offer 5 key steps to address infant and maternal mental health. By the end of the presentation, attendees will be able to (1) Examine self-awareness about biases toward culturally and socially marginalized patients (2) Understand systemic oppression and intergenerational trauma (3) Identify specific social justice and advocacy interventions to minimize the impact of intergenerational trauma on BIPOC mothers, in particular. The session will conclude with a short Q&A with Dr. West-Olatunji.



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