



ACACI Spring Newsletter August 2020

Helping Children and Adolescents Thrive!

Greetings ACACI members!

I would like to thank each of you for being a part of the counseling community and a valued part of our division. The work you do with youth is healing and sends ripples into the future that improve the world we live in. We are living in a time when healing is greatly needed.

The start of a new school year fast approaches, and there is a lot of work to be done by counselors who are supporting children, family, and teachers through the stress of rapidly changing plans and new ways of learning and teaching. We hope ACACI can be a resource for you to support you in this work.

Our Website <https://www.acacillinois.com/> has tabs with resources available on the **pandemic** and **social justice** as it relates to children and families. We appreciate any resources sent our way if you have one to share contact Acaci.site@gmail.com. You can also find information on the website about our division and committees, and we invite you to become more involved.

Upcoming events shared in the newsletter:

- September Online ACACI Networking Event
- ICA Online Conference, November 2020
- ACACI Conference in March 2021

Know someone who deserves to be celebrated? ACACI is accepting nomination for multiple awards. More information is in the newsletter.

Warmly,

Your ACACI Board

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Website: <https://www.acacillinois.com>

Twitter: @Children Thrive

FB Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ACACinIllinois>

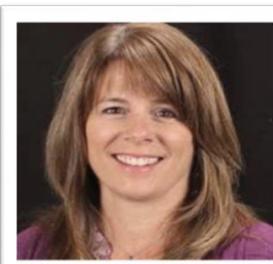
FB Page: <https://www.facebook.com/ACACinIllinois/>

2019-2021 ACACI Board



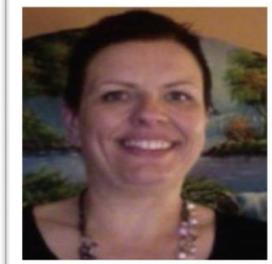
Leslie Contos, President

Leslie Contos, LCPC, NCC, CCMHC is counselor and counselor educator who looks forward to providing service to ACACI members and support for her amazing fellow board members



Greta Nielsen, President-Elect

Greta Nielsen, LCPC, NCC, MBSR, is clinical director at Clinical Care Consultants in Inverness, with over 25 years' experience working with youth in a variety of settings.



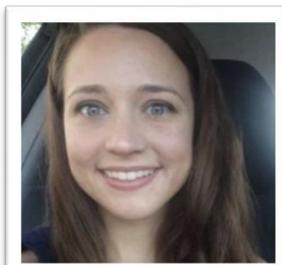
Karolina Hogueisson, President Elect-Elect

Karolina Hogueisson, LCPC, NCC, CCATP, has over 15 years of experience providing services from Early Interventions to Correctional Facilities and is now in private practice.



Marcia James, Social Media Committee Chair

Marcia James, LPC, NCC has over a decade of experience as a school counselor in District 215 and a doctoral candidate in counselor education at Governors State University.



Melissa Paluck, Treasurer

Melissa Paluck, LCPC, NCC is a bilingual (Spanish) therapist at Dynamic Direction Counseling where she works with children and adolescents and their families.



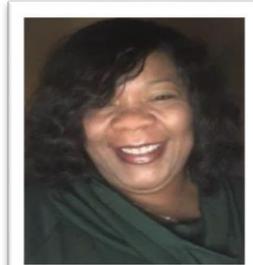
Sarah Silva, Literature Committee Chair

Sarah Silva, LCPC, NCC owns is founder and CEO of a group practice in Chicago where she works collaboratively with clients, and she is also a PhD candidate at Walden University.



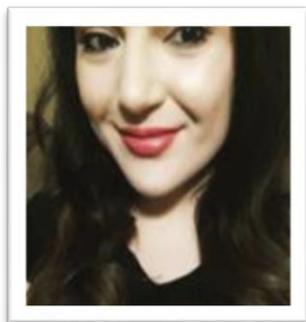
Christine Vinci, Secretary, Newsletter Editor

Christine Vinci, LCPC, NCC, CCTP, a therapist at Pillars Community Health, has experience working with children, adolescents, adults, families, and groups in a variety of settings.



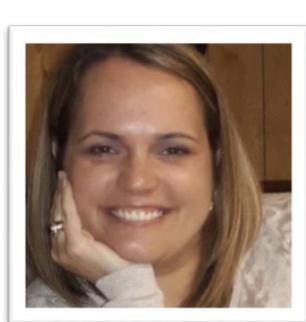
Christine Brown, Social Justice Committee Chair

Christine Brown, LCPC, NCC, EdD, is an assistant professor at National Louis University who brings over a decade of experience counseling and supervising at Metropolitan Family Services into her classrooms.



Karina Breezer, Grad Student Committee Chair

Karina Breezer is a graduate student in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at Concordia University who expects to work with children and adolescents in her career and hopes to seek a PhD.



Elizabeth House, Membership Committee Chair

Elizabeth House is a Master of Science in Counseling student at National Louis University. Her experiences as an English Language Learning teacher led her to want to work with refugee and immigrant families.



Peggy Mayfield, Past President 2017-2019

Peggy Mayfield, PHD, LCPC, NCC, CCMHC, DCMHS, works with at-risk youth and families. As ACACI president she created the Emerging Leaders program and the first ACACI conference.

ACACI Working Committees 2019-2021

We would love you to join us!

Read the committee descriptions and sign up here: <https://tinyurl.com/acaci-committee>

Newsletter Committee: Gather newsletter articles and photos and edit newsletter.

Chair: Christine Vinci christine.vinci2@gmail.com

Leslie Contos lesliecontos@gmail.com

Ammarah Hussain

Ammarahhussain12@gmail.com

Emerging Leaders Committee: cultivate leadership in students & new counselors.

Chair: Peggy Mayfield

mayfield.peggy@gmail.com

Leslie Contos lesliecontos@gmail.com

Christine Brown cbrown87@nl.edu

Networking/Outreach Committee: Create networking events for counselors working with youth and provide online resources for counselors working with youth.

Chair: Greta Nielsen

GretaN@clinicalcareconsultants.com

Leslie Contos lesliecontos@gmail.com

Sarah Silva sarah.silva@waldenu.edu

Professional Development Committee: Create training opportunities (conference in odd years, and workshops and webinars in even years) for counselors working with youth.

Chair: Karolina Hogueisson

portabletherapy@gmail.com

Leslie Contos lesliecontos@gmail.com

Megan Sandos msandos@adler.edu

Karina Breezer karinabreezer@gmail.com

Christine Vinci christine.vinci2@gmail.com

Elizabeth House Houseelizabeths@gmail.com

Social Media Committee: Post articles related to counseling children & adolescents to ACACI Facebook page on regular basis.

Chair: Marcia James msjames74@yahoo.com

Leslie Contos lesliecontos@gmail.com

Graduate Student Committee: Create information on the structure of counseling professional societies for students and create mentor opportunities for students.

Chair: Karina Breezer karinabreezer@gmail.com

Leslie Contos lesliecontos@gmail.com

Elizabeth House Houseelizabeths@gmail.com

Christine Vinci christine.vinci2@gmail.com

April Harman harman.april@gmail.com

Membership Committee: Send emails to new and renewal members to help them stay connected; and reach out to agencies, universities, etc. to speak about ACACI.

Chair: Elizabeth House

Houseelizabeths@gmail.com

Leslie Contos lesliecontos@gmail.com

Karina Breezer karinabreezer@gmail.com

Social Justice Committee: Advocacy to give youth a voice.

Chair: Christine Brown cbrown87@nl.edu

Leslie Contos lesliecontos@gmail.com

Elizabeth House Houseelizabeths@gmail.com

Karina Breezer karinabreezer@gmail.com

Greta Nielsen

GretaN@clinicalcareconsultants.com

Christine Vinci christine.vinci2@gmail.com

April Harman harman.april@gmail.com

Literature Committee: Update ACACI literature and create publishing opportunities for counselors working with children.

Chair: Sarah Silva sarah.silva@waldenu.edu

Leslie Contos lesliecontos@gmail.com

*Join us in servant
leadership!*

Reframing Your Reactions: A Group for 9th Grade Girls

By: Alyssa Rathan

As a queer woman of color, I struggled in high school. There were times when I did not feel like I fit in with my family and some of my peers. There were unhealthy behaviors that I had picked up from my loved ones and secondhand traumas that I inevitably experienced. I often doubted myself and I engaged in self-harming behaviors. I wonder how different high school could have been if I felt connected to a trusted adult at school. I wonder how different my young adulthood would be now, if I was able to start my therapeutic journey at an earlier age. I am invested in helping students heal throughout high school and helping students make meaningful connections with their peers. I believe this group can help with both.

My goal is to reach ninth graders so that we can work through some of their trauma(s) early on in high school. I have worked as a Special Education Classroom Assistant (SECA) for the last four years and I have seen firsthand how some administrators and teachers have a tendency to harshly punish students who engage in violent behavior at school. As a school counselor, I hope to work with teachers, administrators, and students to come up with consequences that have a basis in restorative justice. More importantly, I hope to create a positive relationship with each student I encounter--one that is rooted in constructive reflection and empathy. When students understand that they have an adult in their corner at school, it can change their perception of relationships and help them with their trust issues.

Group Formation and Goals

- Quarter One: Collaborate with teachers at the beginning of the school year in order to plan lessons that can educate students about bullying and violence in schools.
- Quarter Two: Work with teachers to identify girls who are perpetuating violence in school and facilitate healing groups. (Girls who have encountered ACEs might face trust issues with the opposite gender and this group needs to be a safe space).
- Goal: skills learned in the group will be translated into interactions in everyday life.

Group Structure, Evolution, and Interventions

An ideal group would have six members so that students can partner-up to share their stories with one another and to roleplay. In order to maintain the safe space, do not put students that have been identified as “bullies” in a group with students that have been bullied at the start. The topic of this group will be “Reframing Your Reactions.” Students should know that you understand and empathize with their anger. However, they need to learn positive coping skills if they are going to have a successful academic career.

- The group will take place biweekly and last for 30 minutes. It will start at the beginning of the second quarter and go on until the end of the school year.
- Start each group off with five to seven minutes of journaling. Students can journal about any incidents of violence that happened during the week. Students can begin to process their emotions and hold themselves accountable for the behavior associated with them.
- After journaling, the space will be open for students to share with the group. Students may have feelings of shame about their emotions. Corey et al. (2018) says, “adolescents will

sometimes be reluctant to participate because they may wonder about the purpose of such exercises or they may worry about being embarrassed and appearing silly” (p. 347).

- You can help students push past this shame by educating them about ACEs. Alexander (2019) says, “traumatized youth are often neurologically set up to quickly respond in the face of even mild perceptions of stress with downstairs brain reactions; these low-stress situations are perceived as dangerous so input doesn’t pass to the prefrontal cortex as it would for youth who haven’t experienced trauma” (p. 13). You can play a video for students so that they have a visual representation of what is happening in their brain when they “lose their cool,” such as Dan Siegel’s hand model of the brain (Mo Mindful, 2018). This can help them work through the bodily reactions that they are experiencing due to their stress and/or trauma.

You can then get students thinking about alternate responses. They might feel guilty about how they reacted to something during the week. Now, they have an opportunity to make a different choice. You can model this for students. Yalom (2015) says, “group therapists influence the communicational patterns in their groups by modeling certain behaviors” (p. 17). Counselor and co-leader can roleplay to show students a bad reaction to a problem vs. a good one. Then, students can partner up and practice their alternate responses to their own issues over the past couple of weeks. This activity allows students to model after our example roleplay. They can apply it to their individual situations and take ownership for their actions.

Students might make a joke of these activities at first as a defense mechanism. They might even get into arguments during the roleplay or they might not want to participate at all. However, this is a part of the process and it will give them an opportunity to work through alternate reactions in the here-and-now. The goal is for students to reframe the way they view conflicts and to become comfortable with differences in opinion so that each member will learn to communicate productively. They might even build friendships that go beyond these sessions.

Group Therapeutic Factors

During weeks when there are minimal or no incidents of violence, you can work with students on their positive self-talk. If members of this group have experienced trauma, they likely have a skewed (negative) perception of themselves. Students need to understand that what they say to themselves will impact their self-esteem and motivation at school. They can start telling themselves “I am good enough. I am smart enough. I am capable of being a good friend.” If students practice positive self-talk on a daily basis, they can rewire their brains and help themselves heal (Badenoch, 2008). Over time, group members may even be inclined to use this positive language towards one another. Students may originally come to the group expecting only to heal from their own trauma. After spending time with each other and learning about their commonalities, they will likely develop empathy for one another inside and outside of the group.

Group Leadership

When choosing a co-leader, you should look for a supportive stakeholder, such as a patient and multiculturally competent teacher or community member (a leader from after school programs dealing with social/emotional learning, mindfulness, yoga, etc.). If the stakeholder has a background in yoga, meditation, or mindfulness practices, you can incorporate those strategies into the group. A bonus is if your co-leader has skills that you do not have and vice versa so that you can each bring unique perspectives to the table. You can meet during prep-periods to discuss lesson plans and

previous notes, to prepare activities for the upcoming session, and to go over reminders. You can also meet after sessions to process what went well and to provide constructive criticism.

Ethical and Cultural Considerations

- Collaborate with school personnel to make sure that you are forming a group that will facilitate healing and minimize harm.
- Establish norms within the group. These norms must include confidentiality. However, students must understand that you are a mandated reporter.
- When ending the group, make sure that students have access to outside resources for counseling if they exhibit the need.

Marginalized students may need extra support in group sessions. Corey et al. (2018) says, “in some cultures, individuals are discouraged from expressing their feelings openly, talking about their personal problems with people they do not know well, or telling others how they perceive or react to them” (p. 177). For example, you might notice that black or brown students feel on edge or suspicious around their white peers. If they express themselves in a way that their white counterparts are not used to, they could be seen as “angry” or “violent,” even if that is not the case. However difficult, these dynamics could give students the opportunity to explore how intersectionality plays a role in their social interaction. You can discuss topics such as classism and institutional racism. Discussing this can build trust amongst members if individuals realize that their peers are not against them but are willing to stand with them and defend them.



Abyssa Rathan is a Northeastern Illinois University student working towards completing her Masters in School Counseling with a Certificate in Family and Marriage Therapy. She has been a Special Education Classroom Assistant for the Chicago Public Schools for the past four years. She is Puerto Rican and Black and has loved growing, learning, and working in diverse communities over the course of her 27 years of life. She hopes to use her platform as a school counselor to advocate for marginalized students and to help kids work through trauma so that they can succeed academically. In the future she also hopes to open up her own practice that serves as a safe space for all, regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. She shares that she is humbled by the opportunity to present her ideas on this platform. Thank you.

Share Your Story!

Please consider sharing your story or an article on your counseling expertise or experience with ACACI members. If you are interested in contributing to the next newsletter, please contact christine.vinci2@gmail.com

Accepting Award Nominations



Deadline for nominations is September 15th.

Only ACACI members may make nominations but anyone can receive a nomination. Self-nominations are encouraged.

- **ACACI Counselor of the Year Award:** honoring a counselor exhibiting a commitment to serving children and adolescents in Illinois with best practices and exemplary standards.
- **ACACI Counselor Educator of the Year Award:** honoring an Illinois counselor educator, supervisor, or trainer who has exhibited an exemplary record of educating counselors to work with children and adolescents.
- **ACACI Advocate of the Year Award:** honoring an Illinois resident who has advocated for youth to create sustainable positive change for children, adolescents, and their systems.
- **ACACI Emerging Leader of the Year Award:** honoring an ACACI member, new professional, or graduate student who has made notable contributions to ACACI and has demonstrated transformative leadership skills, unconditional positive regard, and integrity
- **ACACI Research Award:** honoring an Illinois research project which has the potential to enrich the scope of counseling practice with youth
- **ACACI Organizational Award:** honoring an Illinois organization making a difference through commitment to programs providing counseling services to youth in Illinois.
- **ACACI Youth Award:** honoring an individual youth or group of youths in Illinois who have exhibited passion in advocacy reflecting the values of the counseling profession.

Complete nomination packet will be sent to ACACI.SITE@GMAIL.COM and must include:

- Nominator's name, email, phone
- Name of award category
- Nominee's name, email phone
- Photo of nominee
- Description indicating how they embody the award category guidelines

Timeline

- **September 15:** submission deadline
- **October 1:** notification to nominees
- **November:** Awards presented



**THURSDAY
OCT. 8TH
9:00 AM - 2:30 PM**

CONVERSATIONS SUMMIT 2020

BREAKING THE SILENCE ON MENTAL HEALTH TOGETHER

BUILDING A NETWORK FOR CHANGE

This year's Summit will be a digital experience empowering youth to raise their voices and take action to positively impact mental health in their communities. The Summit will feature interactive sessions for learning, dialogue, and activism.

AT THE CONVERSATIONS SUMMIT, ATTENDEES WILL ENGAGE WITH....

- Speakers to educate and inspire mental health activism
- Breakout sessions via Zoom to interact with a diverse peer-to-peer environment
- Opportunities to craft and workshop activism initiatives
- Guests will receive digital tool kits to realize followup beyond the summit!

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Kevin Hines
Mental Health & Wellness Champion,
Suicide Survivor, Filmmaker, Activist.

FREE WITH RSVP
This event is appropriate
for High School & College
age persons

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT, CONVERSATIONSSUMMIT.COM





CONVERSATIONS SUMMIT 2020

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FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT, CONVERSATIONSSUMMIT.COM

Schultz Foundation



for *ADVANCING* Counseling

Empowering Professionals...Enriching Lives

Multiple Illinois Counselors earn these grants each year for professional development, projects, and research related to counseling in Illinois. Have a training or project which could make a big impact but need funding? Consider looking over the grant applications and moving forward.

You could be one of the next grant recipients!

Merlin W. Schultz Professional Development Grant
Up to \$1,000 for individuals and up to \$1,500 for groups

Melanie E. Rawlins Research Grant
Up to \$1,000 for individuals

Toni R. Tollerud School Counselor Grant
Up to \$1,000 for individuals

Robert J. Nejedlo Social Emphasis Grant
Provides funding for larger projects, see application for details

Application Deadline November 01, 2020
<https://www.advancingcounseling.org/grants>



The Professional Development Committee is hard at work creating training opportunities to deliver quality educational programs to our members and friends.

Our 2021 Conference, themed “Resilience,” is scheduled for March 5, 2021.

Given the situation with COVID-19, we are considering all options, including a blended format of in-person and remote program delivery.

Please be on a lookout for a call-for-proposals to arrive in your mailbox in September.

Please consider submitting a proposal and sharing your expertise with your fellow ACACI members and colleagues.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns
portabletherapy@gmail.com

~ Karolina



August 2020 Newsletter Resource Section

Please use the following links to get access to resources, download tool-kits, and be advocates for mental health and physical health with our children, youth, and their families.

One out of every five children in America has a diagnosable mental health disorder.

COVID-19 Support for Children, Youth, and Families

The Wayside Youth & Family Support Network offers virtual support groups via Zoom for children, youth, and caregivers. All support groups are free!

<https://www.waysideyouth.org/covid/support/>

[Family Education Classes through NAMI](#)

[Resources for Parents and Teens](#)

[How Teens Can Protect Their Mental Health During COVID-19](#)

[Helping Children Cope With COVID](#)

Books for Kids About COVID-19

[Masked Ninja](#)

[Wearing a Face Mask is Fun](#)

[Lucy's Mask](#)

[When Virona the Corona Came to Town](#)

[The Social Distance King](#)

Back to School

Children and teens are going back to school, virtually, hybrid, or in person! Check out the Mental Health America's Back to School kit for free resources, tools, and tips in anticipation of the new school year. <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/back-school>

[Back to School Planning](#)

[Set Up Virtual Playdates](#)

Games to Play With Kids Remotely

National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

NAMI <https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Suicide-Prevention-Awareness-Month>

Lifeline <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/promote-national-suicide-prevention-month/>

AFSP (2018) <https://afsp.org/campaigns/national-suicide-prevention-week-2018/>

World Suicide Prevention Day, Sept. 10th

IASP <https://iasp.info/wspd2019/>

WHO http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/wspd/en/

Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

ACCO: <https://www.acco.org/childhood-cancer-awareness-month/>

Children's Cancer: <https://childrenscancer.org/childhood-cancer-awareness-month/>

Facts about childhood cancer: <https://www.alexlemonade.org/blog/2017/09/childhood-cancer-awareness-month-ten-facts-you-need-know>

National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month

One in 5 children in the United States are obese. Childhood obesity puts kids at risk for health problems that were once seen only in adults, like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/features/childhoodobesity/index.html>

We hope to create a list of on-line resources and tools that help our members provide quality care to our clients.

*You can forward any recommended resources to Greta Nielsen, MA, NCC, LCPC
GretaN@clinicalcareconsultants.com or Sarah Silva, PhD, LCPC, NCC
ssilva@acceptingtherapy.com*