



JAMES RIVER

— COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE —

JRCC 9th Annual Summer Training Conference

June 12, 2026 - 8:30 AM

Amherst County High School
139 Lancer Lane
Amherst, VA 24521

AGENDA

8:30AM

Registration, Breakfast, Vendor Visits

9:00AM

Welcome

9:15AM

Session 1

10:30AM

Break, Vendor Visits

10:45AM

Session 2

12:00PM

Lunch, Vendor Visits & Food Trucks

1:30PM

Session 3

2:45PM

Break

3:00PM

Closing Remarks, Prize Drawings

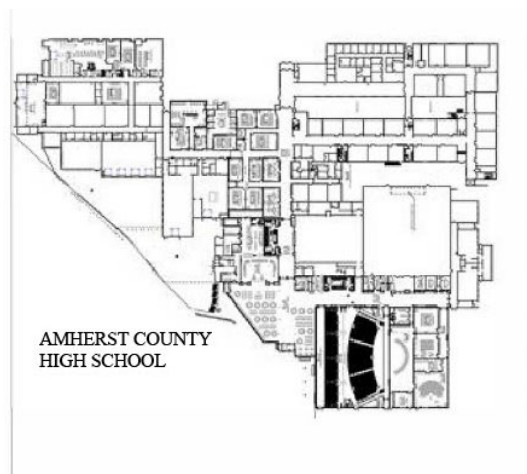
JRCC MISSION

The James River Community Collaborative is a diverse group of professionals and community members passionate about providing opportunities for community resource sharing, networking, and training.

Amy Wallen and Paul Baldwin Memorial Scholarship Fund

Amy Wallen was a founding member of JRCC and served as the CSA Coordinator in Appomattox for two years. Amy was passionate about getting children and families the services they need to be successful. Amy tragically lost her battle with cancer in 2019. In her memory, JRCC created the Amy Wallen Memorial Fund with a mission of developing a professional community of compassionate and accomplished providers to serve children and families.

Paul Baldwin was also a founding member of JRCC and served as the CSA Coordinator in Bedford County for seven years. Paul was a great advocate for families, and worked hard to adapt and dismantle the system to better serve the community. Paul tragically lost his battle with cancer in 2022. In memory of his spirit, JRCC added Paul to the already existing Scholarship Fund with the continued mission of developing a professional community.



SESSION 1 - 9:15 AM

ROOM 125: Get Ready Folks: Cychlorphine is Here! – Mary Vandergrift

Description: Come learn how Cychlorphine is emerging in our communities and causing fatal overdoses. Learn What is Cychlorphine, how is it detected, who is at risk, and how we can prevent overdoses.	Mary Vandergrift, PA-C, MBA, graduated from Jefferson College of Health Sciences in 2003 and again in 2005 earning her BS in Biomedical Sciences and Physician Assistant Studies. She later received her Master's in Business Administration from Averett University. Mary has been working in the field of psychiatric and addiction medicine since 2006. She believes in offering patients an integrated approach to care, looking at the who person not just the illness. Over the course of her career, she has been able to build medical and counseling practices to successfully service high risk populations. She is currently employed as the Vice President of Medical Services for Health Connect America.
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ROOM 126: Stronger Together: A Community Approach to Kinship Care– Bobbie Armstrong

Description: Kinship Caregivers- Grandparents, relatives, and close family friends-often step in during times of crisis to provide stability and care for children. While these families bring strength and connection, they also face unique challenges that can go unseen and unsupported. This interactive session explores how professionals across child welfare, education, mental health, and community services can work together to better support kinship families. Through real-life scenarios, practical strategies, and shared discussion, participants will gain a deeper understanding of the kinship experience and leave with concrete tools to strengthen collaboration and improve outcomes for children and their families.	Bobbie Armstrong is a Family Services Supervisor with Lynchburg Human Services, where she leads a dedicated team of Resource Home Coordinators and Kinship Coordinators. Together, they work to support foster and kinship caregivers who step up to care for children in times of need. The team is passionate about family engagement and strives to build strong, collaborative partnerships that empower caregivers and promote positive outcomes for children and families.
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ROOM 127: Problem Gambling: The Hidden Addiction – Tyler Thorogood

Description: As gambling becomes more widespread through online platforms, sports betting, and casinos, more people are exposed and at risk of harm. Gambling addiction affects over 7.5 million Americans, including more than 400,00 Virginians, and is a growing public health concern. Youth, young adults, older adults, and individuals with mental health challenges are especially vulnerable. This presentation highlights the	Tyler “Ty” Thorogood is a Prevention Specialist at Horizon Behavioral Health. His work primarily focuses on substance use prevention and problem gambling within the community. He also works closely with the youth through the Healthy Young Powerful and Energized (HYPE) Club and Too Good for Drugs initiatives. Ty is originally from Norfolk, VA, and a graduate from Liberty University. Ty is dedicated to making sure
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risks and the need for greater awareness as gambling becomes more common in our communities.	that all communities are educated and provide the proper resources for their mental health.
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ROOM 128: Hidden in Plain Sight – Teegan Deuso & Tylis Johnson (Repeats in Session 2)

Description: The everyday life, challenges, risks, and pressures of being a teenager are changing everyday. It is important that the adults that love, have the responsibility of protecting, and helping young people to successfully navigate the world are well equipped to do so. Participants will learn the latest drug trends, common items found in a teen's bedroom or in a teen's possession that may indicate risky behaviors, signs of mental health challenges, technology risks, available resources, and how to get help..	Teegan Deuso is the Coalition Coordinator for the Central Virginia Addiction and Recovery Resources coalition. She holds a Master of Education and has a background in school counseling and substance use prevention. Her work focuses on bringing people together across the community to better understand substance use trends and strengthen prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts. Teegan works closely with schools, healthcare partners, and community leaders to implement data-informed, evidence-based prevention strategies and lead community education efforts. Her work centers on helping communities better understand what's happening locally and how to respond in ways that truly support and protect young people and their families. Tylis Johnson is the State Opioid Response Coordinator at Horizon Behavioral Health. Last year, she completed her Master of Public Health at Virginia Tech with the goal of promoting community health and policy development. She currently works as a Prevention Specialist helping initiate programs that will allow our community to make healthier choices and provide a safer environment for everyone
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ROOM 129: Homeless Response in Central Virginia – Jessica Polzin

Description: Homeless response services in Central Virginia such as homeless prevention, emergency shelter, rapid re-housing and supportive housing are all coordinated to ensure that resources are targeted to the most vulnerable of those experiencing homelessness. Learn more about the homeless response system; its coordination and prioritization process to better understand how individuals and families experiencing homelessness are served in this community. Learn a better understanding of the homeless response system in Central Virginia.	Jessica Polzin is the Homeless System Specialist at Miriam's House, where she supports the coordination and effectiveness of the region's homeless response system, the Central Virginia Continuum of Care (CoC). Since joining the organization in 2024, she has played a key role in strengthening system flow and ensuring households are connected to housing resources as efficiently as possible. Her work includes facilitating collaboration across community partners, supporting coordinated entry processes, and advancing system-wide initiatives. Jessica holds a Bachelor of Social Work from Florida Atlantic University and a Master of Social Work from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Her boarder social work experience includes working with at-risk youth, adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and foster children and families, providing her with a well-rounded perspective in her current role.
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ROOM 151: Grant Writing 102: Advanced Strategies for Competitive Proposals – Jennifer Smith Ramey & Joe Girandola

(CONTINUES in Session 2)

Description: This session builds on foundational grant writing concepts and focuses on strategies that strengthen competitiveness in today's funding environment. Participants will learn how to move beyond basic proposal development to craft compelling, data-informed narratives aligned with funder priorities. The training will cover advanced approaches to needs statements, project design, evaluation planning, partnership development, and sustainability. Real-world examples from funded projects will be used to illustrate how successful proposals align community need, evidence-based practices, and measurable outcomes. Participants will leave with practical tools and strategies to increase the likelihood of funding success. Learn how to: 1) develop stronger, data-driven needs statements that demonstrate community impact and urgency; 2) align project design with funder priorities, evidence-based practices, and measurable outcomes; 3) incorporate evaluation and sustainability strategies that strengthen proposal competitiveness.	Jennifer Smith Ramey, Ph.D., LPC, is a grants strategist, evaluator, and counselor educator. She is the Director of Grants and Programs at Horizon Behavioral Health. Dr. Smith Ramey has led the development of numerous federal and state grants focused on behavioral health, justice systems, and rural health initiatives. She also serves as a Professor in counselor education and frequently trains organizations on grant writing and evaluation strategies. Joe Girandola, M.A., is the Project Director for the Grants to Benefit Homeless Individuals (GBHI) grant at Horizon Behavioral Health, serving youth aged 12 to 25 in Central Virginia. Joe has co-authored multiple state and federal proposals, including a recently funded multi-year federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant to expand treatment services to rural residents.
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ROOM 152: Working with Domestic Violence Victims: How Organizations Can Hurt and Help – Alison Pulliam

Description: As many as 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men experience severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. Participants will learn how to recognize elements of power and control found in abusive relationships. We will discuss ways to intervene with survivors and resources that are available. We will also explore ways in which organizations may perpetuate trauma for survivors by using elements of power and control in their services. Learn: 1) Understand elements of power and control within domestic violence, 2) Develop intervention strategies for victims on your caseload, 3) Understand community resources available for victims, 4) Identify ways organizations may use elements of power and control.	Alison Pulliam, LCSW, is the Case Manager and Counselor at Bedford Domestic Violence Services. In addition to working individually with clients, Alison has been able to provide trainings on domestic violence to staff, local faith communities, and other community organizations. Alison has her Master's in Social Work from Virginia Commonwealth University and is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. When she is not advocating and educating, Alison can be found spending time outside with her dogs.
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ROOM 153: Understanding Developmental Disabilities Waivers - Carrie Phillips & Anne Simmons

(Repeats in Session 2)

Description: This session will do an overview of the intellectual and developmental disabilities waivers to include the process for	Carrie Phillips is a Screener for the Developmental Disabilities Waivers at Horizon Behavioral Health. She has over 6 years of
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screening, prioritization, and services. There will be time for Q&A.	experience working with children/adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities, as well as multiple years working in special education where she was responsible for creating and implementing Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Anne Simmons, LCSW, is the Program Manager for Developmental Disabilities Case Management. She has almost 30 years of experience working in the behavioral health field to include counseling, early intervention, case management, and assessments.
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ROOM 154: Eating Disorder Guidelines for Providers – Trish McCoy Kessler
(Repeats in Session 2)

Description: Over 9% of the population will experience an eating disorder during their lifetime. In addition, eating disorders have the second highest mortality rate of any mental illness. It is imperative for providers to understand the vast complexities of diagnosing and treating eating disorders. Within the counseling and mental health field overall, there is a shortage in treating disorders due to lack of knowledge and the fear of treating this mental health disorder, which involves medical complications. This workshop intends to educate and to introduce the rewarding work of treating disordered eating with patients, along with treating co-occurring disorders. Participants will be able to: 1)learn the criteria, symptoms, and the eating disorder mind for diagnosing eating disorders, 2)assess, while understanding the “why” in the development of eating disorders, 3)begin to acquire the skills to treat Eating Disorders and possible co-occurring disorders, 4)learn how to become a certified Eating Disorder Specialist.	Trish McCoy Kessler, LPC, CEDS-C, RYT 200, is a Licensed Professional Counselor and a Certified Eating Disorder Specialist & Consultant through the International Association of Eating Disorder Professionals. She also serves as an Approved Consultant for providers pursuing CEDS certification. Her clinical expertise includes working with children, adolescents, and adults in both individual and group settings. Her approach to therapy includes an integrated evidence-based approach with holistic practices, including yoga and EMDR, to support healing and growth. In addition to counseling, she is a certified yoga instructor and often incorporates mindfulness and movement into sessions for enhanced outcomes. For over a decade, Trish has owned and operated Empower Counseling, PC, where she has learned what it takes to build and sustain a successful private practice. Today, she is passionate about sharing her knowledge through supervision for eating disorder specialization, speaking engagements and private practice development through her new venture The Counseling Entrepreneur, LLC.
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ROOM 155: Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) – Kristy Ayers & Jason Masching

Description: Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) is an attachment-based, trauma-informed, whole-child, and evidence-based intervention for children and youth who have experienced relational trauma. This session will provide an overview of TBRI's 3 Core Principals of Connection, Empowerment, and Correction and describe its use with at-risk youth. Learn the understanding Principals of Trust Based Relational Intervention; gain knowledge of the use of TBRI across various	Kristy Ayers, LCSW, is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with a dedicated focus on supporting at-risk children and adolescents. She currently serves as the Outpatient Supervisor & Clinical Coordinator at Hopetree Family Services (HTFS), where she provides individual, family and group psychotherapy. In 2023, Kristy became a certified Trust-Based Relational Intervention (BRI) Practitioner and has since played a key role in implementing TBRI practices across multiple HTFS
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programs for at-risk youth in academic, foster care, and residential setting	programs, including Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC), Therapeutic Group Homes (TGH), Hopetree Academy, and Family Centered Treatment. Kristy holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Liberty University. She also earned a Master of Arts in Human Services with a concentration in Marriage and Family from Liberty University and a Master of Social Work from Radford University. Jason Masching, is the Foster Parent Trainer for Foster Care West with Hopetree Family Services. He worked with youth and teens in outdoor education, collegiate ministry, residential programming, and over 10 years with Hopetree as direct care and supporting foster parents. He enjoys empowering parents to change a child's life forever by helping them to use playful engagement and teachable moments utilizing Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI). He became a Certified TBRI Practitioner and Camp Facilitator in 2024.
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ROOM AUD: Understanding and Experiencing Acudetox/5-Needle Protocol – Shiloh Martin & Christina Ferrell
(Repeats in Session 2 & 3)

Description: Providing education relating with mindfulness through use of the specific tool of 5NP (5-Needle Protocol). Participants can engage in mindfulness practice for their own wellness. Learn the benefits of the use of mindfulness in personal and professional life.	Shiloh Martin, LPC, is the Project Link Director at Horizon Behavioral Health, and she is a Licensed Professional Counselor. She has training in women specific related issues, mindfulness, and trauma informed treatment. Christina Ferrell, LCSW, is an Outpatient Program Manager at Horizon Behavioral Health. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). She has additional training on trauma informed treatment, mindfulness, helping the helpers, and provides related education within our community.
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ROOM C109: Community Crisis Response: No Wrong Door – Michele Bauman

Description: The presentation will review the components of the crisis continuum in Virginia – someone to call, someone to respond, and somewhere to go. We will discuss how to access crisis care, programs currently available in our area for crisis response and how these programs work toward reducing law enforcement interventions for behavioral health needs. Learn a better understanding of the local mental health crisis continuum, to include: 988, mobile crisis response, co-response, outreach and engagement, and the new crisis care center at Horizon.	Michele Bauman, LPC, is the Program Manager for Community Crisis Response Teams at Horizon Behavioral Health, and has over 30 years of experience working in community behavioral health services. Michele values trauma-informed approaches that recognize the importance of walking alongside individuals while offering respect and dignity. She also sees crisis as a challenge that may present opportunities for growth and an improved future.
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ROOM C112: Prioritizing Prevention through Evidenced Based Practices (EBP's) – Ashley Sandman

Description: This session will provide an overview on many of the evidence-based programs in Virginia, and will highlight how those programs can work to keep kids and families together. Additionally, attendees will have an opportunity to explore local data and learn how system behaviors impact outcomes for child welfare. Learn about evidence, and why it matters while also taking in key differences between available EBPs in this region.	Ashley Sandman is the Partner Engagement Director for the Center for Evidence-Based Partnerships of Virginia. Following receiving her Bachelor's degree in Social Work from Longwood University, Ashley worked for 15 years to connect families to resources by fighting to reduce barriers and streamline access to services. Historically, Ashley served her community as Children's Services Act Director, where she had the opportunity to support providers in their efforts to deliver evidence-based services, while also working to connect families to those services. Her primary interests continue to be reducing systematic barriers that individuals and families face regarding access to mental health wellness, in addition to improving outcomes for children within the child welfare system.
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SESSION 2 - 10:45 AM

ROOM 125: What is Family Check Up? – Darrius Bethel, Ashley Slaydon & Davione Green

Description: Session will provide an overview of Family Check-up (FCU), an evidence-based, strengths-based service designed to improve parenting practices, strengthen family functioning, and reduce youth behavioral concerns through caregiver engagement and support. The presentation will discuss how FCU focuses heavily on empowering caregivers through assessment, feedback, and practical everyday parenting strategies that can create long-term change within the home. The session will also highlight how FCU benefits the community by providing early intervention and preventative support for families before challenges escalate into higher levels of care. Discussion will include how FCU can improve communication, supervision, accountability, emotional regulation, and overall family stability. Special emphasis will be on the two major components of FCU: the Assessment Component and the Everyday Parenting Component. The assessment component focuses on gathering information regarding family functioning, parenting practices, and youth behavior, followed by a structured	Darrius Bethel, LPC, MBA, is the owner of Storms Assessments and Counseling Services. As a Licensed Professional Counselor, he specializes in working with youth and families across home, community and systems-based settings. Darrius is trained in multiple evidence-based modes, including Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), High Fidelity Wraparound Intensive Care Coordination (ICC), Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT), and Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). Through Storms, he has built a program that offers a range of evidence-based services designed to meet families where they are and provide effective, outcome-driven support. Ashley Slaydon is a dedicated and compassionate Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) with both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Social Work. With nearly a decade of experience working within the school system, Ashley has devoted her career to supporting children, adolescents, and families through some of life's most challenging moments. As a key leader at
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feedback session to identify strengths and areas of growth. The everyday parenting component focuses on helping caregivers apply practical parenting skills in daily life, including supervision, discipline, communication, positive reinforcement, and consistency within the home	Storms Counseling Services, Ashley has played a tremendous role in the agency's growth and development. She initially lead and supervised the Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) program, where she focused on strengthening family relationships, improving parenting strategies and creating healthier family dynamics through evidenced-based interventions. Due to her leadership, clinical knowledge, and commitment to quality care, Ashley also expanded her role into supervising the Family Check-Up FCU) process, making her responsible for overseeing two highly respected evidence-based programs. Davione Green, LMHP-R, is the owner of Youth Elevation, LLC< a mental health agency focused on equipping youth and families with the skills and support needed for long-term success and stability. Through his Independent Living (IL) Program, Davione works closely with youth transitioning into adulthood, helping them develop life skills related to employment, financial responsibility, emotional regulation, independence, and decision-making. Youth Elevation also provides Seeking Safety and Family Check-Up (FCU) services, supporting families through evidence based interventions focused on strengthening communication, improving family functioning, and addressing behavioral and emotional challenges.
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ROOM 126: Play Therapy for Teens – Jo Anne Miller & Anna Baucum

Description: Participants will take part in active games and role play to learn what, why, and how behind this alternative group therapy and how it helps achieve breakthroughs with challenging teens. Take Aways for Play Therapy: 1)Must develop a warm and friendly relationship with the teens, 2)Accepts the teen as she or he is, 3)Establishes a feeling of permission in the relationship so that the teens feel free to express his or her feelings completely, 4)Is alert to recognize the feelings the teen is expressing and reflects these feelings back in such a manner that the child gains insight into his/her behavior, 5)Maintains a deep respect for the teens ability to solve his/her problems and gives the child the opportunity to do so. The responsibility to make choices and to institute change is the teen, 6)Does not attempt to direct the child's actions or conversations in any manner. The teen leads the way, the Therapist follows, 7)Does not hurry the therapy along. It is a gradual process and must be recognized as such by the Therapist, 8)Anchors the therapy to the world of reality and to make the teens aware of his/her responsibility in the relationship.	Jo Anne Miller is the Executive Director of Brook Hill Farm and is retired Professor of Equine Science at Randolph College and co-created the Equine Curriculum for the state of Virginia. Her passion is education, specifically behavior, working with at-risk teens that have failed in traditional programs. She has published research on working with teens in alternative therapist to build resilience. Jo Anne presents nationally and internationally on equine wellbeing and alternative behavioral and academic approaches that help teens heal from trauma Anna Baucum currently works at Brook Hill Farm as a Supervisor, Vet Tech, and holds a certification through Path International as an Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning. She graduated with a degree in Psychology that she uses with the at-risk youth at the farm. She has spoken at both the national and regional conferences as well as the Temple Grandin Center and has a proven track record working with at-risk teens, helping them turn their life around
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ROOM 128: Hidden in Plain Sight – Teegan Deuso & Tylis Johnson
(Presented in Session 1 & Session 2)

Description: The everyday life, challenges, risks, and pressures of being a teenager are changing everyday. It is important that the adults that love, have the responsibility of protecting, and helping young people to successfully navigate the world are well equipped to do so. Participants will learn the latest drug trends, common items found in a teen's bedroom or in a teen's possession that may indicate risky behaviors, signs of mental health challenges, technology risks, available resources, and how to get help..	Teegan Deuso is the Coalition Coordinator for the Central Virginia Addiction and Recovery Resources coalition. She holds a Master of Education and has a background in school counseling and substance use prevention. Her work focuses on bringing people together across the community to better understand substance use trends and strengthen prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts. Teegan works closely with schools, healthcare partners, and community leaders to implement data-informed, evidence-based prevention strategies and lead community education efforts. Her work centers on helping communities better understand what's happening locally and how to respond in ways that truly support and protect young people and their families. Tylis Johnson is the State Opioid Response Coordinator at Horizon Behavioral Health. Last year, she completed her Master of Public Health at Virginia Tech with the goal of promoting community health and policy development. She currently works as a Prevention Specialist helping initiate programs that will allow our community to make healthier choices and provide a safer environment for everyone
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ROOM 129: Family Shelter: A Strategic Intervention for our Community's Most Vulnerable – Alison Hardy

Description: Miriam's House is a local non-profit offering solutions to homelessness to families, youth and other vulnerable populations. In this session, we will discuss the unique barriers families face when they become homeless and how Miriam's House's new Family Shelter provides low barrier access to this vital resource. Attendees will leave with a better understanding of: the scope of family homelessness in our community and trends over recent years, the causes of family homelessness, and best practices to address housing instability for households with children.	Alison Hardy serves as Assistant Director of Housing Services at Miriam's House, where she leads efforts to end family homelessness through strategic program oversight and direct service delivery. She manages Miriam's House's newest program, the Family Shelter, where she provides operational oversight, case management, connections to resources, and housing location services. With a Bachelor's degree in Developmental Disabilities, she developed expertise in providing individualized and person-centered care. Combining administrative leadership with hands-on practice, Alison brings both systemic and frontline perspectives to developing effective strategies for addressing family homelessness in her community.
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ROOM 151: Grant Writing 102: Advanced Strategies for Competitive Proposals – Jennifer Smith Ramey & Joe Girandola
(CONTINUED from Session 1)

Description: This session builds on foundational grant writing concepts and focuses on strategies that strengthen competitiveness in today's funding environment. Participants will learn how to move beyond basic proposal development to craft compelling, data-informed narratives aligned with funder priorities. The training will cover advanced approaches to needs statements, project design, evaluation planning, partnership development, and sustainability. Real-world examples from funded projects will be used to illustrate how successful proposals align community need, evidence-based practices, and measurable outcomes. Participants will leave with practical tools and strategies to increase the likelihood of funding success. Learn how to: 1) develop stronger, data-driven needs statements that demonstrate community impact and urgency; 2) align project design with funder priorities, evidence-based practices, and measurable outcomes; 3) incorporate evaluation and sustainability strategies that strengthen proposal competitiveness.	Jennifer Smith Ramey, Ph.D., LPC, is a grants strategist, evaluator, and counselor educator. She is the Director of Grants and Programs at Horizon Behavioral Health. Dr. Smith Ramey has led the development of numerous federal and state grants focused on behavioral health, justice systems, and rural health initiatives. She also serves as a Professor in counselor education and frequently trains organizations on grant writing and evaluation strategies. Joe Girandola, M.A., is the Project Director for the Grants to Benefit Homeless Individuals (GBHI) grant at Horizon Behavioral Health, serving youth aged 12 to 25 in Central Virginia. Joe has co-authored multiple state and federal proposals, including a recently funded multi-year federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant to expand treatment services to rural residents.
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ROOM 152: Basic Gang Identification – Brendan Bartley
(Repeats in Session 3)

Description: The purpose of this presentation is to provide a basic understanding of what a criminal street gang is and the dangers they present to the youths in our communities. Attendees will: 1) Understand what legal criteria constitutes a criminal street gang in Virginia, 2) Recognize signs of gang like behavior.	Special Agent Brendan Bartley has been a member of law enforcement for twenty-eight years, serving with the Newport News Police Department for twenty-four years, before joining the Department of Juvenile Justice. During his time with the Newport News Police Department, he was a Gang Investigator with the Gang Enforcement Unit and with the FBI Safe Streets Task Force.
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ROOM 153: Understanding Developmental Disabilities Waivers - Carrie Phillips & Anne Simmons
(Presented in Session 1 & Session 2)

Description: This session will do an overview of the intellectual and developmental disabilities waivers to include the process for screening, prioritization, and services. There will be time for Q&A.	Carrie Phillips is a Screener for the Developmental Disabilities Waivers at Horizon Behavioral Health. She has over 6 years of experience working with children/adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities, as well as multiple years working in special education where she was responsible for
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	creating and implementing Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Anne Simmons, LCSW, is the Program Manager for Developmental Disabilities Case Management. She has almost 30 years of experience working in the behavioral health field to include counseling, early intervention, case management, and assessments.
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ROOM 155: Trauma and Therapeutic Interventions – Kelly Cummings-Karkenny & Haley Ross

(Repeats in Session 3)

Description: This presentation will focus on ways trauma symptoms present in children, and how secondary trauma in caregivers impacts families. The goal of this presentation is to better recognize trauma responses in children, and to teach skills and interventions to utilize when working with families to reduce trauma responses and reduce risk of secondary trauma in caregivers. This presentation will include ways addresses trauma during services and provide interventions that can be easily utilized by	Kelly Cummins-Karkenny is an LPC with 12 years of experience working with youth and families. She is passionate about working with trauma diagnosis and developing skills to reduce symptoms. Haley Ross is a QMHP with over 3 years' experience in FCT. She continues to develop her FCT skills and is a Level 2 Trainer in FCT. She is passionate about working with families, and with difficult situations.
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other providers. The goal of the session is to recognize trauma symptoms and responses in children/adolescents and to learn skills/interventions to use. This includes addressing secondary trauma in caregivers and ways to reduce.	
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ROOM AUD: Understanding and Experiencing Acudetox/5-Needle Protocol – Shiloh Martin & Christina Ferrell

(Presented in Session 1, Session 2 & Session 3)

Description: Providing education relating with mindfulness through use of the specific tool of 5NP (5-Needle Protocol). Participants can engage in mindfulness practice for their own wellness. Learn the benefits of the use of mindfulness in personal and professional life.	Shiloh Martin, LPC, is the Project Link Director at Horizon Behavioral Health, and she is a Licensed Professional Counselor. She has training in women specific related issues, mindfulness, and trauma informed treatment. Christina Ferrell, LCSW, is an Outpatient Program Manager at Horizon Behavioral Health. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). She has additional training on trauma informed treatment, mindfulness, helping the helpers, and provides related education within our community.
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ROOM C109: Internet Crimes Against Children and Online Safety – Caileigh Witcher

(Repeats in Session 3)

Description: The session will be a brief overview of the Southern Virginia Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (SOVA-ICAC) and types of cases worked. Resources and best practices as a trusted adult will be reviewed. The session will cover the scope of the problem, the risks & threats, the types of sexual predators, methods used by predators, domestic minor sex trafficking, resources, and social med in 101.	Caileigh Witcher has seven years of law enforcement experience with 3.5 years being with the SOVA-ICAC Task Force. She specializes in investigations regarding online child sexual exploitation.
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ROOM C112: Inside Virginia's Behavioral Health Redesign – Dr. Marie Petrone

(Repeats in Session 3)

Description: You've probably heard about Virginia's behavioral health redesign, but do you know how it will impact you and the families you work with? In this presentation, we will review changes to Case Management, introduce you to the new Community Psychiatric Support and Treatment service that will replace IIHS, TDT, and MHSB, and	Dr. Marie Petrone is an advocate for children, families and individuals impacted by behavioral health challenges or marginalization. She is passionate about social change, program design and building community among individuals. Marie earned her doctoral degree in Social Work from the University of Southern California and master's
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explain where Clubhouse and Coordinated Specialty Care fit into the future service array. We will also explore the training requirements for providers, provide resources for supporting families in navigating this new system, and answer all of your questions about the transition and implementation of the redesigned services.	degrees in public administration and counseling. She is a former Case Manager, and direct services clinician as well as a local leader in education and community services. Currently, Marie is focused on impacting state systems through her work with the Center for Evidence-Based Partnerships (CEP-VA).
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ROOM C113: Getting Back to the Heart: A Self-Care Speed Meet for Helping Professionals – Chelsee Houze

(Repeats in Session 3)

Description: Helping professionals often enter the field with passion, purpose, and a commitment to supporting others. Over time, increasing demands, system pressures, compassion fatigue, and constant change can leave even the most dedicated professionals feeling drained, disconnected, or jaded. This interactive workshop invites participants to reconnect with the heart of their work by reflecting on why they entered the helping field, exploring what pulls them away from that sense of purpose, and identifying realistic self-care strategies that help sustain engagement over time. Using a fast-paced “self-care speed meet” format, participants will rotate through guided reflection and practical strategy stations designed to help them reconnect to their values, balance client needs with agency expectations, and build a more sustainable way of showing up for both others and themselves. Participants will be able to: 1. Identify common factors that contribute to burnout, cynicism, and disconnection in helping professions. 2. Reflect on and reconnect with the personal values, motivation, and purpose that brought them into the field. 3. Develop a realistic, individualized self-care plan that supports sustainability while balancing client needs, agency demands, and personal well-being.	Chelsee Houze is a Resident in Counseling and Certified Substance Abuse Counselor (CSAC) who serves as a Therapeutic Group Homes Clinical Liaison at Hopetree Family Services, where she provides individual and group therapy to youth in residential care. She also partners with staff to provide clinical recommendations and interventions to support youth with behavioral, emotional, and trauma-related needs. She brings extensive experience working with children, adolescents, and families across child welfare, school-based, substance use, and therapeutic residential settings. Chelsee holds a Bachelor's degree in Child Development and a Master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Her work is grounded in trauma-informed care, with a focus on building strong therapeutic relationships, supporting behavioral change, and helping individuals and families navigate complex challenges. She is passionate about empowering others through teaching, collaboration, and skill development.
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SESSION 3 - 1:30 PM

ROOM 125: Reframing Heroes and Villains Through a Mental Health Lens – Darrius Bethel

Description: This presentation challenges traditional perspectives of “good” and “evil” by exploring characters from Disney and DreamWorks films through a mental health	Darrius Bethel, LPC, MBA, is the owner of Storms Assessments and Counseling Services. As a Licensed Professional Counselor, he specializes in working with
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and trauma-informed lens. Rather than accepting surface-level narratives, participants are encouraged to look deeper into the emotional, psychological, and environmental factors that shape both heroes and villains. Using familiar characters, we examine how behaviors often labeled as “evil” may actually reflect unresolved trauma, grief, rejection, identify struggles, or maladaptive coping strategies. For example, characters who display control, anger, isolation, or manipulation may be exhibiting symptoms consistent with conditions such as trauma-related disorders, depression, anxiety, attachment disruptions, or personality based struggles. At the same time, we will explore how some “heroes” may demonstrate impulsivity, avoidance, aggression, or poor decision-making that is often overlooked or justified because of their role in the story. This presentation does not aim to diagnose characters definitely, but instead uses them as a tool to: build empathy and critical thinking, understand how life experiences influence behavior and recognize that behavior is often a form of communication.	youth and families across home, community and systems-based settings. Darrius is trained in multiple evidence-based modes, including Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), High Fidelity Wraparound Intensive Care Coordination (ICC), Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT), and Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). Through Storms, he has built a program that offers a range of evidence-based services designed to meet families where they are and provide effective, outcome-driven support.
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ROOM 126: Supporting Those Who Care: Building Strong TFC Homes Together – Jennifer Anderson, Michelle Cooley & Twanda Lee Braxton

Description: Participants will learn how foster parents are screened and supported, hear firsthand from an experienced foster parent, and explore practical strategies for effective communication and teamwork. Through Discussion and interactive activities, the session highlights how strong partnerships and well-prepared caregivers directly improve stability and outcomes for children in care. Session objectives: Overview of Treatment Foster Care (TFC), Learn how treatment foster parents are screened and prepared, hear from a veteran foster parent about day to day realities, strengthen DSS-TFC provider partnerships, and understand why this matters for children in TFC homes.	Jennifer Anderson is the Regional Foster Care Supervisor at DePaul. Michelle Cooley is a Foster Care Specialist and Home Finder at DePaul. Twanda Lee Braxton has over 20 years of experience as a foster parent with DePaul and is an Enhanced Treatment Foster Care Provider.
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ROOM 127: HOMEBUILDERS: An Intensive, Evidenced-Based In-home Model to Prevent Placement and Support Family Stability – Christopher Wirt

Description: This session provides an in-depth overview of HOMEBUILDERS, an intensive, evidence based in-home, crisis intervention and family treatment program designed to prevent unnecessary out of home placement and support safe reunification. Participants will learn how the HOMEBUILDERS model	Christopher Wirt, LCSW-C, is the Executive Branch Director with Bethany Christian Services where he oversees this organization's efforts to serve children and families in Virginia and Maryland. In this role, he oversees Virginia's Homebuilder's program as well as programs working with children who
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addresses safety, mental health, substance use, domestic violence, and complex family stressors through short-term, high intensity services delivered in the family's natural environment. The presentation will review the core values, program structure standards, and intervention activities that drive successful outcomes, including engagement and motivation enhancement, comprehensive assessment, skill development, and concrete supports. Real world feedback from families and referring professionals will be shared to demonstrate the model's effectiveness and relevance for system of care professionals working with high-risk children and families.	are unaccompanied refugee migrants, infant adoption, and foster care adoption services. He has extensive experience as an educator and trainer of Motivational Interviewing (MI) and has been a member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT), an international organization committed to promoting excellence in training of Motivational Interviewing (MI) since 2018. Mr. Wirt's direct practice experience includes sixteen years of working with children and families involved in the child welfare system, primarily in foster care and adoption services. He currently teaches a graduate level MI course at Virginia Commonwealth University.
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ROOM 128: Human Trafficking 101 – Loukia Ameyaw

Description: Human Trafficking 101 is an in-person or live online session facilitated by a Freedom 4/24 staff member, intended for adult audiences seeking a comprehensive overview of the globally growing crime of human trafficking. This training clarifies common misconceptions about the various forms of human trafficking, identifies factors that put individuals at risk, and shares data regarding the vulnerabilities targeted by traffickers. By the end of this training, participants will be able to recognize the tactics used by traffickers and respond effectively to help keep their community safe.	Loukia Ameyaw is a professional advocate and a vibrant educator. She joined Freedom 4/24 in the fight to end human trafficking after years in shelter and crisis services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Loukia now assists survivors of human trafficking by connecting them with the resources necessary to exit exploitation and experience new lives full of beauty and happiness. Loukia also supports law enforcement, healthcare professionals, and direct service providers through creating tools for the identification and care of trafficking survivors. When she is not advocating and educating, Loukia can be found in the gym, attending a dance class, or working on one of the several books she has begun but never finished writing.
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ROOM 129: CHIA: Connecting to Housing Resources & Next Steps – Lindsay Sharman

Description: This interactive session introduces CHIA as a primary pathway to housing support and focuses on how providers can assist clients who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Through discussion and real-world scenarios, participants will explore access points, available resources, and the next best steps to support clients effectively. Participants will leave with practical tools and greater confidence accessing the homeless response system.	Lindsay Sharman serves as the Coordinated Entry Specialist at Miriam's House where she helps individuals and families facing a housing crisis by focusing on their needs, connecting to resources, and making referrals to the next best steps to stability. Having worked in higher education for 10 years, Lindsay brings her expertise in problem solving, de-escalation, communication, and crisis intervention to the homeless response system. Since joining Miriam's House in 2024, Lindsay has transformed the homeless information line-CHIA-to improve timeliness, access, equity, and coordination by working collaboratively with partners and community members to ensure equitable service delivery. Lindsay holds a Bachelors' degrees in Psychology and Criminal Justice from Brevard
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	College as well as a Master's degree in Higher Education Administration from the University of Mississippi.
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ROOM 151: Who Makes a Good Independent Living Client and How to Prepare a Client for Independent Living - Davione Green, Kentayven Howard-Vaughan & Jen Peters

Description: This presentation will focus on identifying which clients are best suited for Independent Living (IL) programs and the necessary steps to prepare them for success. Attendees will learn how to assess readiness, develop transitional skill-building plans, and apply trauma-informed, youth-centered approaches to support emerging adults in gaining life skills, independence, and personal accountability. adults in gaining life skills, independence, and personal accountability.	Davione Green is the Founder and Executive Director of Youth Elevation LLC, a community-based organization in Lynchburg, Virginia, providing therapeutic and independent living services to youth and young adults. With a background in trauma-informed care and adolescent development, Davione specializes in guiding at-risk populations through transitional phases such as recovery, stabilization, and independent living. As a member of Lynchburg City and Amherst County FAPT teams, he collaborates closely with local DSS, community service boards, court service units, and school systems to promote long-term success for youth through structured support systems and evidence-based practices
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**ROOM 152: Basic Gang Identification – Brendan Bartley
(Presented in Session 2 & Session 3)**

Description: Description: The purpose of this presentation is to provide a basic understanding of what a criminal street gang is and the dangers they present to the youths in our communities. Attendees will: 1)Understand what legal criteria constitutes a criminal street gang in Virginia, 2)Recognize signs of gang like behavior.	Special Agent Brendan Bartley has been a member of law enforcement for twenty-eight years, serving with the Newport News Police Department for twenty-four years, before joining the Department of Juvenile Justice. During his time with the Newport News Police Department, he was a Gang Investigator with the Gang Enforcement Unit and with the FBI Safe Streets Task Force.
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ROOM 153: What is DARS? - Sallie Carson & Katherine Prater

Description: The training will provide an overview of the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). You will learn about the services provided and how to access.	Sallie Carson, M.Ed, is a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor that works with both adults and students in the private day settings; Former Special Education Teacher with over 23 years of experience including teaching at the secondary level and principal's designee at E.C. Glass High School. Sallie has been a VRC with DARS since October of 2022. Katherine Prater - Katherine's current role with DARS is as a Vocational Rehab Counselor for
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	PreEts services covering all of Campbell and Bedford County Schools and one alternative placement school. In the last 6 years Katherine has worked closely with the schools to provide pre-employment services two students with disabilities and their families and help prepare students for their journey after High School. Katherine has built a close partnership with the schools and vendors to provide job readiness skills, social work Readiness classes, and other services to help students with transition from school. Katherine holds a masters degree in the mental health field and has over 20 years working with adults, children, and families whether it be in crisis work, counseling, or planning. Katherine has worked in the educational settings as an assistant teacher and as a therapeutic day treatment counselor. One of Katherine's greatest career accomplishment is receiving the CINCH award from Department of Medicaid Assistance for going Beyond the Call of Duty for helping a family with a pregnant mother obtain much needed medical coverage for her pregnancy. Katherine's greatest passion is working with students and their families, advocating and teaching as they take this journey from high school to adulthood.
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ROOM 154: Comprehensive Harm Reduction: A Pathway to Recovery – Dr. Heather Keyes & James Orr

Description: Comprehensive Harm Reduction has been presented as controversial despite the research showing otherwise. Why? What makes us uncomfortable about meeting people where they are? This presentation will seek to define comprehension harm reduction, how it works and why it leads people to recovery.	Dr. Heather Williams Keyes is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and holds a Doctorate in Executive Healthcare Leadership from the University of Lynchburg. She has over 20 years of experience as a social worker working with individuals across the life span. Heather graduated from Longwood University with a bachelor's degree in social work. She then went on to receive her master's in social work at Radford University. She has worked in a variety of settings during her career to include outpatient, inpatient, emergency services, substance use treatment, foster care, healthcare facilities. She is currently in the role of Director of Behavioral Health at Community Access Network, a Federally Qualified Health Center look-a-like in Lynchburg, Virginia. She is passionate about holistic care and supporting patients to see the connection between their brain and their body. She is the Trauma Informed Champion at Community Access Network. In this capacity, she has helped leadership develop trauma informed practices in the clinic. She is also the owner of Resiliency Counseling and Consulting, LLC where she works with individuals, families, students and local businesses to address burnout, undermotivation, emotional and physical health to be successful in living a resilient life. James Orr is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker Supervisee (LCSW-S) and the Clinical
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	Coordinator for the Comprehensive Harm Reduction (CHR) program at Community Access Network: The Hope Initiative in Lynchburg, Virginia. In his role, James provides clinical leadership and oversight for one of the region's newest and most forward-thinking harm reduction initiatives. The program is committed to meeting people who use substances where they are, without judgment, and connecting them to life-saving services and care.
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ROOM 155: Trauma and Therapeutic Interventions – Kelly Cummings-Karkenny
(Presented in Session 2 & Session 3)

Description: This presentation will focus on ways trauma symptoms present in children, and how secondary trauma in caregivers impacts families. The goal of this presentation is to better recognize trauma responses in children, and to teach skills and interventions to utilize when working with families to reduce trauma responses and reduce risk of secondary trauma in caregivers. This presentation will include ways addresses trauma during services and provide interventions that can be easily utilized by other providers. The goal of the session is to recognize trauma symptoms and responses in children/adolescents and to learn skills/interventions to use. This includes addressing secondary trauma in caregivers and ways to reduce.	Kelly Cummins-Karkenny is an LPC with 12 years of experience working with youth and families. She is passionate about working with trauma diagnosis and developing skills to reduce symptoms. Haley Ross is a QMHP with over 3 years' experience in FCT. She continues to develop her FCT skills and is a Level 2 Trainer in FCT. She is passionate about working with families, and with difficult situations.
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ROOM AUD: Understanding and Experiencing Acudetox/5-Needle Protocol – Shiloh Martin & Christina Ferrell
(Presented in Session 1, Session 2 & Session 3)

Description: Providing education relating with mindfulness through use of the specific tool of 5NP (5-Needle Protocol). Participates can engage in mindfulness practice for their own wellness. Learn the benefits of the use of mindfulness in personal and professional life.	Shiloh Martin, LPC, is the Project Link Director at Horizon Behavioral Health, and she is a Licensed Professional Counselor. She has training in women specific related issues, mindfulness, and trauma informed treatment. Christina Ferrell, LCSW, is an Outpatient Program Manager at Horizon Behavioral Health. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). She has additional training on trauma informed treatment, mindfulness, helping the helpers, and provides related education within our community.
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**ROOM C109: Internet Crimes Against Children and Online Safety –
Caileigh Witcher**
(Presented in Session 2 & Session 3)

Description: The session will be a brief overview of the Southern Virginia Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (SOVA-ICAC) and types of cases worked. Resources and best practices as a trusted adult will be reviewed. The session will cover the scope of the problem, the risks & threats, the types of sexual predators, methods used by predators, domestic minor sex trafficking, resources, and social med in 101.	Caileigh Witcher has seven years of law enforcement experience with 3.5 years being with the SOVA-ICAC Task Force. She specializes in investigations regarding online child sexual exploitation.
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ROOM C112: Inside Virginia's Behavioral Health Redesign – Dr. Marie Petrone
(Presented in Session 2 & Session 3)

Description: You've probably heard about Virginia's behavioral health redesign, but do you know how it will impact you and the families you work with? In this presentation, we will review changes to Case Management, introduce you to the new Community Psychiatric Support and Treatment service that will replace IHHS, TDT, and MHSB, and explain where Clubhouse and Coordinated Specialty Care fit into the future service array. We will also explore the training requirements for providers, provide resources for supporting families in navigating this new system, and answer all of your questions about the transition and implementation of the redesigned services.	Dr. Marie Petrone is an advocate for children, families and individuals impacted by behavioral health challenges or marginalization. She is passionate about social change, program design and building community among individuals. Marie earned her doctoral degree in Social Work from the University of Southern California and master's degrees in public administration and counseling. She is a former Case Manager, and direct services clinician as well as a local leader in education and community services. Currently, Marie is focused on impacting state systems through her work with the Center for Evidence-Based Partnerships (CEP-VA).
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