



Children Come First Conference

Hosted by:



Wisconsin
Family Ties

Children Come First Conference Monday, November 6, 2023 – Agenda with Session Descriptions

Registration 7:00am - 8:30am

Location: Africa West

Breakfast Buffet featuring the Oneida Nation Smoke Dancers 7:00am – 8:15am

Location: Africa West

Opening Remarks 8:15am – 8:45am

Location: Africa West

Keynote 8:45am - 10:15am

Stories are Good Medicine

Speaker: Angeline Bouley

Location: Africa West

In Anishinaabek (Indigenous) communities, traditional firekeepers not only strike and tend fires at ceremonies and other events, but they also provide cultural teachings through stories shared around the fire. Storytelling is how we share what it means to be human. Representation in literature provides opportunities to see Indigenous children and teens as complex and nuanced individuals living dynamic lives. Author Angeline Bouley will share her 38-year-long path to publication.

Session A: 10:30 am – 11:45 am

1. Emotional Intelligence Made Practical and Simple

Speaker: Bill Stierle

Location: Africa 10

Imagine your schools and classrooms as safe and caring communities, fostering understanding, mutual respect and collaboration. Learn how to support students and teachers' re-socialization back into the classrooms effectively.

2. *Supporting Parents Holistically*

Speaker: Holly Stoner

Location: Africa 10

During this workshop we will explore how we can support and empower parents and care givers by introducing them to eight areas of wellness that lead to a stronger holistic family life. We will discuss how this approach can also be used to build much needed communities of support for parents and their families.

3. *Options for Community-Based Housing and Support Systems*

Speaker: Patti Becker, Mary Haase, Jenn Bertram, and Julie Burish

Location: Africa 30

Let's discuss community-based housing options: What are the current offerings? Are they economically viable and easily accessible? Do such options even exist within your community? How can we identify and establish robust support systems that ensure the preservation of health and safety, while also providing opportunities for a fulfilling life within a community where your loved ones feel valued and connected? These are issues confronting numerous families across the state and the nation. Let's discuss strategies to effect change and foster improved and more comprehensive community-based housing alternatives.

4. *Can You See Me Now?*

Speaker: Dr KayLa N. Allen

Location: Africa 40

Understanding the core identity of yourself and your loved ones of diverse and multicultural backgrounds can mean the difference between doubtfulness and success. In this workshop we will explore diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and the value of including children in conversations centered around DEI. Participants will learn about using tools like positive intelligence and identity coaching to improve outcomes.

5. *Igniting the Power of Storytelling - Because Your Story Matters!*

Speakers: Ronna Tablonski, Anthony Alvarado, and Nadine Machkovech

Location: Africa 50

SAFE Project and partners from RISE TOGETHER will lead workshop participants through personal journeys of active addiction and mental health challenges. We will use storytelling to walk the group through the inspiring journey of a life of recovery.

6. *The Magic of the Woot Woot Wagon: Building Staff Morale to Create a Strength Based Environment*

Speakers: Tracey Chugg and Katlyn Graebner

Location: Africa 60

Staff turnover is the worst! Join us to share budget-friendly ideas and develop a plan to increase employee morale and build positive connections between staff. We will also discuss how the mindset of bringing out the best in one another translates into our work with clients and creating a positive and strength-based environment.

7. *Self-Compassion and Supportive Relationships*

Speaker: Jamie Lynn Tatera

Location: Africa 70

Supportive relationships are highly correlated with mental and emotional well-being. Often caregivers teach children to have empathy for others, but healthy relationships require both empathy for others and self-empathy. Participants will learn how self-compassion can provide a foundation for healthy relationships and how they can help children develop this vital skill.

8. Title TBA

Eddie from Bikers Against Child Abuse (BACA)

Location: Africa 80

Lunch Buffet with music by Jeremy Bryan and Dee Jay Doc 11:30am – 12:30pm

Location: Africa West

Session B: 12:45 pm – 2:00 pm

1. *Rites of Passage: How to MC Your Philosophy*

Speaker: Jeremy Bryan

Location: Africa West

This workshop will help you name your desire for this season of your vocation through a hip-hop songwriting exercise. It is an amazing practice to remix your mission for your life and say it out loud in a safe, creative space. With the help of Dee Jay Doc and Quill the Messenger (who have facilitated this process with over 10,000 students, educators and artists) you will articulate your core philosophy and distill it into a short hip-hop inspired verse that will help you integrate your desires and goals as you launch the next iteration of yourself and your work.

2. *Empowered Parents: Creating Strong Resilience and Growth for Children with Mental Health Challenges*

Speaker: Jennifer Bluske

Location: Africa 10

In this presentation we will explore how to parent from YOUR values. Parents are children's first teachers, first regulators and their constant. The parent's impact on their autistic child's development and sense of self is profound. We explore the use of the parent-child relationship to support regulation and learning in the context of raising a child. We break down the "wins" and "challenges" within the relationship and support you to understand and respond differently to your child. You will leave with a renewed understanding of your impact on your child as well as tips for how to navigate your daily life as a parent.

3. Your Voice Matters - Becoming a Family Leader

Speaker: Danielle Tolzmann

Location: Africa 20

Parents are natural advocates for their own families. In this workshop you will learn how to take the next step and become an advocate for **all** families in your community impacting programs and services for all children. We'll talk about ways families can make a difference, including supporting another parent, serving on advisory groups, and communicating with policymakers.

4. True Love Lost Forever - A Mother's Journey

Speaker: Kerrie Wallenfang-Hirte

Location: Africa 30

A mother shares her poignant journey of the loss of her beloved daughter in the hopes of effecting change in the mental health and justice systems of Wisconsin. This mother's only child, Cilivea, had a promising future ahead of her, with a passion for singing, cooking, and spending time with her family. Cilivea was a bright individual with numerous opportunities awaiting her. However, her lifelong struggle with mental health issues ultimately led to the untimely loss of her life while in custody at the Milwaukee County Jail. Her mother, Kerrie, hopes that her story will draw attention to the pressing need for improvements in the treatment and support of individuals with mental health challenges within the Wisconsin system. Her ultimate objective is to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future and to ensure that those grappling with mental health issues receive the care and support they rightfully deserve.

5. Building a Resilient Home

Speaker: Jennifer Schultz

Location: Africa 40

Resilience is a frequently discussed topic, but the process by which it is achieved remains unclear. This presentation aims to elucidate the fundamental components necessary for fostering resilience in children, thereby enabling them to flourish. Attendees will have the opportunity to devise strategies for implementing these building blocks within their own households, and ample time will be allotted for questions and answers.

6. Mental Health Screening Model in School-Aged Youth

Speaker: Amy D'Addario and Jen Parsons

Location: Africa 50

During this presentation, you will be provided with information regarding the Wellness Screen program offered by Samaritan in Menasha, WI. The primary objective of the Wellness Screen is to proactively address the issue of suicide and identify unmet mental health needs among the youth in the region. This program launched in 2012 and is currently accessible to more than 50 school sites. The team employs a screening tool that is grounded in evidence-based practices, ensuring its validity and reliability. This tool enables us to identify students who are grappling with mental health challenges and/or contemplating suicide.

7. *FCT & YJ: Let's Keep the Kids at Home*

Speaker: Tiffany Long

Location: Africa 60

This presentation will explore and promote the use of Family Centered Treatment (FCT) in families with children who are also involved with Youth Justice (YJ). We will define and explain both FCT and YJ as well as the trauma informed approach to service delivery for each model. We will share outcome data from various counties throughout the state who have implemented FCT to support stabilization of kids at home as well as successful reunification back into the family home.

8. *Building Partnerships with Foster and Adoptive Parents as a Key to Healing Children*

Speaker: Jane Mose

Location: Africa 70

An adoptive mother, Certified Parent Peer Specialist, and TBRI® Practitioner will show why parent involvement is especially crucial in the treatment of foster and adoptive children. Participants will put themselves "in the shoes" of the parents and discuss effective ways to work with them to support their children's healing.

9. *Neurodiversity and Autistic Intelligence*

Speaker: Doug Maynard

Location: Africa 80

The term "neurodiversity" has become important and prominent the world of autism. However, with its emphasis on "neuro," the focus is on the brain and cognition, rather than on actual behavior and social interaction. Drawing from my own recent co-authored book, *Autistic Intelligence: Interaction, Individuality, and the Challenges of Diagnosis* (University of Chicago Press, 2022), the presentation will focus on the following themes.

Session C: 2:15 pm - 3:30 pm

1. *Transitioning from Teen to Independence*

Speakers: Dr Robyn F. Hardt Schultz PH.D and Sarah Kuehn

Location: Africa 10

If you don't know where you are going, you probably won't get there. Where are our youth with mental health challenges going in life? Do they know what they want for their future? Do you? How can you help youth create the life of their dreams? Many of our youth simply want freedom and independence. Is that viable for your youth?

If individuals lack a clear sense of direction, it is highly unlikely that they will successfully reach their intended destination. Consequently, it is imperative to consider the trajectory of young individuals grappling with mental health challenges. Are they aware of their aspirations for the future? Are you? Moreover, how can one assist young individuals in manifesting the life they envision? A significant number of our youth yearn for autonomy and self-reliance. Is this a feasible objective for the young individuals under your care?

2. Youth Justice and Mindfulness Intersect in Manitowoc County

Speakers: Stacy Ledvina and Jessica Dirkman

Location: Africa 20

Manitowoc County will present their experience of incorporating mindfulness into their repertoire of evidence-based strategies to tackle the risks and needs of young individuals, with the aim of mitigating recidivism. Attendees will gain insights into the application of mindfulness in one-on-one sessions, group settings, and family contexts.

3. How to Help Everyone Feel Welcome

Speaker: Jesse Benash

Location: Africa 30

Facilitating inclusivity within a group or classroom can be a challenging task. It is imperative to acquire the skills necessary to communicate effectively with individuals of diverse backgrounds and to provide support to young individuals during the process. Additionally, it is crucial to have a plan in place in the event that someone begins to exhibit escalating behavior. Implementing strategies to ensure that everyone feels welcome is essential. Participants will be able to ask questions at the end to get help addressing concerns related to interacting with individuals with disabilities.

4. Autism: Beyond the Male Phenotype

Speaker: Dr Glenis Benson

Location: Africa 40

It has been widely believed that the number of males diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is significantly higher than that of females. However, recent research suggests that this may not be entirely accurate, as a considerable number of females with ASD may be going undiagnosed. The failure to diagnose or misdiagnose females and non-binary individuals with ASD can have significant consequences. We will discuss how the male-to-female ratio in ASD cases appears to be lower than previously estimated.

5. Don't Make Waves: Navigating Child/Parent Boundaries

Speakers: Heather Hawes and Patricia Teixeira

Location: Africa 50

This presentation will help caregivers and providers gain insight into the child's experience and the role of parents in helping to set and maintain boundaries that foster healthy relationships. In addition, the presenters will be utilizing self-disclosure to share the impacts that unhealthy parenting boundaries have on children and how it can carry on into adulthood. This presentation is designed to challenge your thought process and explore how we can expand our thinking and more effectively work on improving child and family well-being.

6. *Parent/Therapy Partnership and the Power of Time*

Speaker: Deb Erdman

Location: Africa 60

How do we work collaboratively to help students who need a closed circle to keep them accountable and focused on their goals? This parent/therapist presentation will show one model that was successful.

7. *Family Team Meetings - Using Wraparound to Achieve Family Preservation/Support in CPS*

Speakers: Ellie Kohn, Robin Gleason, and Jessica Maskewit

Location: Africa 70

Understand how the wraparound approach is used in Family Team Meetings, specifically with CPS cases.

Session D - 3:45pm - 5:00 pm

1. *Uncovering The Voice*

Speakers: Christy Smith and Tamara Hill Duff

Location: Africa 10

A personal journey of isolation and vulnerability, shedding light on the challenges our family faced in seeking assistance for my son. Raising children with neurodiverse conditions requires a parenting approach that deviates from the norm, making it exceedingly challenging to find individuals who truly comprehend the intricacies involved. It is a common inclination for parents to strive towards "fixing" their children, but the true solution lies in acceptance and adapting ourselves to meet the specific needs of our children.

2. *Strengthening Connections*

Speakers: Amber McKelvey and Hilary Sahr

Location: Africa 20

Participants will engage in a comprehensive discussion regarding the pivotal significance of relationships and interpersonal connections in fostering optimal development. Emphasis will be placed on the notion that individuals, both children and adults, undergo development, growth, and healing within the context of relationships. Moreover, the participants will acquire the skills to effectively incorporate various concepts, including the utilization of a trauma lens, to evaluate the influence of their past experiences on their present relationships.

3. *The Art of Relationships*

Speakers: Conner Tiggerus and Barb Ann

Location: Africa 30

"The Art of Relationships" aims to delve into the intricate dynamics of human connections, shedding light on how our internal relationship with ourselves intertwines with our external relationships, particularly those involving children. This comprehensive exploration will illuminate the profound influence our self-perception has on the quality of our interactions, both with others and with ourselves.

4. *Movement: The Foundation to Academic Success*

Speaker: Shauna Wallace

Location: Africa 40

The Hayward Community School District will share its experiences implementing evidence-based active learning strategies and programming in grades 4K-2. The emphasis on self-regulation through gross motor and fine motor skill development is an essential building block in academic readiness. Listen to our story and replicate our success!

5. *Effective Strategies for Working with Escalated Children*

Speaker: Eric Becker

Location: Africa 50

Discover effective strategies for engaging dysregulated children and successfully re-engaging them in desired activities.

6. *Culturally Sensitive Approaches to Working on Attachment with Children, Families, and Adults*

Speaker: Daniela Guerrero

Location: Africa 60

Attachment affects a person's development from infancy to adulthood. Working with diverse populations can bring additional considerations that are important to create positive change and healing. This presentation aims to bring culturally sensitive considerations supplemented by skills and techniques to help direct-care workers in their work with culturally diverse individuals.

7. *Learn How to Navigate Special Education for Students with Behavior Challenges*

Speakers: Amy Polsin and Phyllis Greenberg

Location: Africa 70

Cash bar, snack bar and live music 5:00pm – 6:30pm

Location: Africa West

Tuesday, November 7, 2023 – Keynotes and Workshop Sessions

Breakfast Buffet 7:30am – 8:30am

Location: Africa West

Opening Remarks 8:30am – 8:45am

Location: Africa West

Keynote 8:45 am – 10:00 am

Learning from the Past to Do Better in the Future: Paying Attention to What Matters Most in Wraparound Implementation

Speaker: Pat Miles

Location: Africa West

Wraparound was designed as an innovation rather than a replication. As more and more communities implemented Wraparound, the focus shifted to building accountability. These accountability efforts often focused on replication, leaving innovation in the dust. This often results in families being disappointed. That disappointment is frequently shared with the Wraparound workforce. This session will focus on how we got here and how to refocus our efforts to creating the next generation of Wraparound innovation.

Session E: 10:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

1. Bringing You to Life

Speaker: Tim Markle

Location: Africa 10

In order for the most effective parenting techniques, classroom strategies, and behavioral innovations to thrive, a crucial element is required: you. Your ability to perform at your highest level is essential to achieving success. This presentation will focus on teaching participants about the benefits of working together to overcome past obstacles to be your best self consistently.

2. Breathwork for Anxious Kids

Speaker: Stephanie Essar

Location: Africa 20

Learn the science of breathing & the connection between breathing and anxiety. We breathe over 20,000 times a day, but many of us do it in a way that fuels stress. The breathing and stress connection is why we need to pay attention to HOW we breathe. Help children use their breath to feel safe and calm anytime and anywhere.

3. *Parent Panel*

Speakers: Nicole Kirkpatrick and Elisabet Mata-Perez

Location: Africa 30

This is an interactive session with two parents talking about their journey with county programs including CST, CPS and Youth Justice. What worked and what did not. Join them for a raw discussion with questions and answers, and a surprise guest!

4. *LGBTQ+ Best Practices for Adolescents in Behavioral Health Care*

Speaker: Amanda Anderson

Location: Africa 40

Learn unique risk factors that are associated with inpatient care including, special considerations for safety, affirming care practices, gender-positive policies, staff training and programming and discharge planning and other special considerations

5. *Unperfect Your Parenting: A Home Where Everybody Listens, Communicates and Cooperates*

Speaker: Christine Bright

Location: Africa 50

Unperfect Your Parenting: A home where everybody listens, cooperates, and communicates. Do you feel guilty that you secretly don't like your child right now? It doesn't have to be this way, but nobody told you what really works...until now. This workshop is for you if: You are a parent of a child with challenging behaviors, ineffective communication, or strained relationships. This talk will help you discover how you can be the most powerful influencer in your child's life, even if they are a teenager.

6. *FUNDamentals of being your Best Caregiver*

Speaker: Ken Dombrowski

Location: Africa 60

Learn to better enjoy your special relationship through: Playtime Bonding, Turn learning into FUN, Quiet time together for synergy. Acknowledge the value in taking care of yourself to better care for others.

7. *Recognizing, Understanding & Treating the Authoritarian Family*

Speaker: Patricia Teixeira

Location: Africa 70

Authoritarian families are often viewed as families whose primary focus is on maintaining control, compliance, obedience, and discipline more willingly than fostering healthy and nurturing relationships. This presentation will provide a framework for understanding the family's function, the caregiver's role, and the types of challenges typically encountered with children who are raised in authoritarian households. In addition, the presenter will be utilizing self-disclosure from an individual who grew up in an Authoritarian household. The purpose of this presentation is to stimulate critical thinking and delve into strategies for enhancing child and family well-being. It aims to encourage a broader perspective on the ways in which we can effectively address and improve the welfare of children and families.

8. Title TBA

Speaker: Connie Persike

Location: Africa 80

Lunch Buffet 11:30am – 12:30pm

Location: Africa West

Keynote 12:45pm - 2:00pm

Untying the Knot - Can Race Be Reconciled for a Better Future?

Speaker: Dr Ron Watson

Location: Africa West

Nearly 160 years after the end of the first U.S. Civil War, the issues of enslavement, racism and their legacies remain bitter points of contention across American society. Past and present actions by American politicians and institutions suggest that greater imagination, reflection and courage are essential to move society forward. In this interactive discussion, we will discuss past and present barriers to finding a road forward, and actively consider together what we can and must do to transform our fate.

Session F: 2:15 - 3:30 p.m.

1. *Navigating Barriers to Mental Health Services*

Speakers: Adam Nowak and Joshua Schroeder

Location: Africa 10

This workshop will offer potential solutions to address a range of obstacles that hinder families from accessing mental health care services effectively. These barriers may include administrative paperwork, transportation limitations, difficulties in establishing contact, challenges in conducting home visits, and the utilization of school-based service models. Our primary objective is to streamline the referral process and collaborate closely with families.

2. Title TBA

Speaker: Dr. Robyn Hardt-Schultz

Location: Africa 20

3. *Think Differently! To Appreciate What Works*

Speaker: Jennifer Townsend

Location: Africa 30

Think Differently! After what we've go through daily... this just makes sense. Together we will explore ways to notice what's working and dig into the 3i's of engagement by sharing ideas to enhance and appreciate ourselves. These past few years have been different and the focus of this session is to discover what is working, dream about what might be, design what could be and deliver what will be, all while valuing ourselves. I hope you choose to think differently and join me in this session.

4. *Turn That Down! Heavy Metal and Autism*

Speakers: Tim and Hunter Markle

Location: Africa 40

Hunter Markle is Autistic and is challenged by Anxiety and Depression. One way he deals with being neurodiverse in a world not ready for him is to calm down with Heavy Metal. Weird huh? Turns out other kids and young adults feel the same way. Join Hunter and his dad and fellow lover of music, Tim, as they talk about the positive impact Heavy Metal has on being able to cope.

5. *Reptiles and Therapy*

Speaker: Bill Stewart

Location: Africa West

I am a clinical director in Kenosha, and a professional reptile keeper. Reptiles are fascinating and misunderstood animals and can be excellent tools to engage clients and promote positive therapeutic change. This presentation will explore the implications of reptiles as effective therapy tools for children.

6. *Planning Ahead Brings Peace of Mind (Highlight Supported Decision Making)*

Speaker: Howard Mulloy

Location: Africa 50

Planning brings peace. When at peace with the big stuff, we can concentrate on the small things. If we know our needs, wishes and values, we can plan for our future. We'll discuss decision-making and other current and future planning as we consider life changes and needs along the way.

7. Title TBA

Speaker: Ann Kelley-Kuehmichel

Location: Africa 60

8. *Living with Rubies*

Speaker: Deborah Jean Smith

Location: Africa 70

I invite you to view the world through my eyes as I recount my personal journey of growing up in an abusive household, where I was overlooked and disregarded by society. Despite the challenges, I persevered and developed resilience. I also faced the loss of my spouse due to mental illness, but through recovery, I learned to navigate life as a single parent. Raising a daughter with significant mental illness, cognitive impairment, and Autism presented its own set of obstacles, but I learned to adapt and find stability amidst the chaos.