

# Speaker information for June 4 & 5, 2024 Conference

## M. Elizabeth Bowman, PhD, LICSW, LCSW-C



**M. Elizabeth Bowman** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Work at Gallaudet University. She is also a minor domestic sex trafficking survivor, anti-trafficking advocate, mother of two teens, researcher, clinician, and speaker. In her clinical practice she works with trafficking survivors using trauma-informed yoga group therapy and also has a clinical practice supporting children and adolescents with anxiety and other challenges. She holds clinical social work licensure in DC, VA, FL, and Maryland and is a Registered Yoga Teacher, RYT-200. Her research areas include the intersection of child welfare and sex trafficking, organizational culture and supervision in child welfare, and special population's issues in trafficking including LGBT, foster youth, and Deaf youth. She is the founder and executive director of the Restoring Ivy Collective in Washington, D.C., a survivor led organization which provides supportive services to survivors of sex trafficking with a focus on intentional community.

### **Keynote:**

#### ***Trauma informed and empowerment based work with survivors of human trafficking***

We all carry the weight of our experiences with us into our work. For many, this means managing trauma in a high stress and often triggering environment. Organizations which are trauma-informed promote functionality for client outcomes and well-being for staff by ensuring transparency, trust and

genuine relationships, and consideration for diverse backgrounds and experiences. In considering the whole person approach to staff development and support, human services organizations can engage ethically with staff and improve operations via staff retention. The current session will review what organizational culture means in practice, how to be more trauma-informed and functional as an organization, and what comprehensive wellness initiatives look like as well as how to use them to improve organizational practice. Drawing from both the practice, research, and lived experience of Dr. Elizabeth Bowman, this session will aim to deconstruct what organizational culture is, how to make it more trauma informed, and what place wellness has in the workplace.

### **Learning Objectives**

1. Understand the significance of organizational culture in human services including its impact on staff well-being, client outcomes, and overall program evaluation.
2. Apply trauma-informed principles to create a more transparent, trust-based, and empowering organizational culture that promotes staff functionality and ethical engagement.
3. Explore the "whole person" approach to staff development and retention, including the role of comprehensive wellness initiatives in improving organizational practices.
4. Develop actionable strategies for implementing trauma-informed practices and comprehensive wellness initiatives within human service organizations, recognizing their ethical and operational advantages.

### **Breakout:**

#### ***Pregnancy, Parenting, and Trauma: Supporting Survivors***

In this presentation, Dr. Bowman will discuss challenges faced by survivors who are parents and/or pregnant, resiliency factors of survivors, and how to best support them as service providers. For survivors of sex trafficking, pregnancy and parenting come with additional challenges of trauma, economic hardships, support deficits, and social stigma, in addition to maternal health inequities. Pregnancy is often a catalyst for leaving the life or finding means of escaping exploitation, but social support is necessary for success in finding a life after trafficking.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Comprehend the multifaceted challenges confronted by survivors of sex trafficking who are parents and pregnant, including trauma, economic hardships, and social stigma.
2. Analyze the resiliency factors and pivotal role of pregnancy/parenting in survivors' journeys toward leaving the life of exploitation, emphasizing the importance of social support.
3. Evaluate effective strategies and best practices for service providers, emphasizing Trauma-informed care and collaboration across healthcare and social services.
4. Advocate for destigmatizing survivor experiences, addressing maternal health inequities, and creating supportive environments, while equipping participants with practical tools and resources for assisting survivors effectively.

## Kristin Henning, JD



**Kristin Henning** is a nationally recognized advocate, author, trainer, and consultant on the intersection of race, adolescence, and policing in communities of color. She is the Blume Professor of Law and Director of the Juvenile Justice Clinic and Initiative at the Georgetown University Law Center and was previously the Lead Attorney of the Juvenile Unit of the D.C. Public Defender Service. Kris has been representing youth accused of crime for more than twenty-six years and is the co-founder of a number of initiatives to combat racial inequities in the juvenile and criminal legal systems, including the Ambassadors for Racial Justice program and a Racial Justice Toolkit for defenders. Kris also trains state actors across the country on the impact of racial bias in the courts and the traumatic effects of police contact and surveillance.

Professor Henning has received many awards including a 2023 Embracing the Legacy Award from the RFK Community Alliance, a 2022 Women of Distinction Award from the American Association of University Women, and the 2021 Juvenile Leadership Prize from the Juvenile Law Center. She has published many articles advocating for reform in the juvenile legal system, and her recent book, *The Rage of Innocence: How America Criminalizes Black Youth* (Penguin Random House), was featured on the front page of the New York Times Book Review and received rave reviews in the Washington Post. The book was awarded a 2022 Media for a Just Society Award by Evident Change and the 2022 Social Justice Advocacy Award from the In the Margins Book Awards Committee.

### **Keynote:**

#### **Race, Adolescence, and the Criminalization of Youth of Color**

Weaving together powerful narratives and persuasive data, Professor Henning explores the criminalization of normal adolescence and makes a compelling case that racial disparities in our nation's juvenile and criminal courts are rooted in America's unfounded and exaggerated fears of youth of color. Unlike white youth, who are afforded the freedom to test boundaries and figure out who they are and who they want to be, youth of color are seen as a threat and denied the privileges of healthy adolescent play and experimentation. Professor Henning will examine the long-term consequences of bias and trauma that arise from the hyper-surveillance and discriminatory "policing" of Black and Latinx

youth. She will offer practical insights for serving youth of color in various youth-serving systems (e.g., health, school, courts) and for transforming systems that harm young people.

**Learning Objectives:**

Participants will:

1. Review the key features of adolescence that persist across race, class, and geography;
2. Understand how racial bias distorts perceptions of adolescence and “innocence” among youth of color;
3. Identify the psychological and emotional trauma caused by the over-“policing” and hyper-surveillance of youth of color;
4. Discuss strategies for supporting and affirming youth of color; and
5. Identify non-law enforcement strategies for youth safety

**Breakout:**

**See Something, Say Something: Strategies for Interrupting Bias in Youth-Serving System**

In this interactive workshop, Professor Henning will examine racial bias as a real and lived experience for youth and families of color in youth-serving systems. Professor Henning will help participants recognize their own biases and develop strategies to counter them. Participants will identify dehumanizing language and attitudes that traumatize system-involved youth and develop concrete skills to interrupt bias as it occurs. Professor Henning will walk through a series of interactive exercises, including the “Language Game,” Third-Party Interrupters, and Check Our Bias worksheets.

**Learning Objectives:**

Participants will:

1. Become familiar with research on the nature and scope of unconscious racial bias in youth-serving systems;
2. Identify dehumanizing language, attitudes, and other examples of unconscious bias that impact youth of color;
3. Recognize their own biases and develop strategies to counter them;
4. Develop strategies for interrupting bias when they see it throughout various youth-serving systems.

## Cirecie West-Olantunji Ph. D.



**Cirecie A. West-Olantunji** is the Melba Fortuné Martinez Endowed Professor in the counselor education program and director of the Center for Equity, Justice, and the Human Spirit at Xavier University of Louisiana. She is a past president of the American Counseling Association (ACA) and the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD). In addition, she has served as editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* (JMCD). Nationally, Dr. West-Olantunji has initiated several clinical research projects that focus on culture-centered community collaborations designed to address issues rooted in systemic oppression, such as transgenerational trauma and traumatic stress. Cirecie West-Olantunji has conducted commissioned research under the auspices of the National Science Foundation, ACA Foundation, Kellogg Foundation, federal Witness Assistance Program, Spencer Foundation, American Educational Research Association, and African American Success Foundation. Her publications include two co-authored books, numerous book chapters, and over 60 articles in peer-reviewed journals. In addition to national presentations, Dr. West-Olantunji has delivered research papers in Eastern and Western Europe, the Pacific Rim, Africa, and the Americas. Additionally, she provided consultation in a PBS initiative to create a children's television show focusing on diversity through KCET-TV in Los Angeles, CA ("Puzzle Place"). Dr. West-Olantunji has also provided consultation to the Center for American Education in Singapore and the Buraku Liberation Organization in Japan to enhance their early childhood and counseling initiatives. In 2018, Dr. Cirecie West-Olantunji was recognized as an ACA Fellow.

**Keynote:****Title: *Five Historical Trauma Factors Impacting Adjudicated Youth: Looking Back to Go Forward***

In this presentation, Dr. Cirecie West-Olatunji will offer an overview of the research supporting the link between historical trauma and psychological well-being for culturally and socially marginalized youth. She will also include a review of evidence-based, culture-centered, trauma-informed interventions that have been shown to be effective with this population and highlight the role of advocacy in minimizing the impact of structural forces on minoritized populations.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Increase knowledge about historical trauma and its impact on the health and well-being of culturally and socially marginalized youth.
2. Augment awareness of the role of bias in the assessment, treatment, and evaluation of minoritized children and adolescents.
3. Enhance professionals' ability to advocate for youth from disenfranchised communities and identify ways to take social action to minimize the impact of structural forces that serve as obstacles to child development.

**Breakout:****Title: *Addressing the Unique Needs of LGBTQ+ Minoritized Youth.***

**Description:** The presenter, Dr. Cirecie West-Olatunji will share current research findings on the relationship between intersectionality of identity (race, class, gender, & sexual orientation) and race-based stress for youth of color and other minoritized youth. She will focus on evidence-based practices that incorporate culture-centered frameworks and interventions that move away from conventional methods that may further aggravate the distress experienced by this population.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Increase knowledge about intersectionality of identity and race-based stress and its impact on the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ youth of color.
2. Augment awareness of the role of cultural bias in the assessment, treatment, and evaluation of LGBTQ+ youth of color.
3. Enhance professionals' ability to take social action in support of LGBTQ+ youth of color to minimize the impact of structural racism that serves as a barrier to the psychological and emotional wellbeing of LGBTQ+ youth of color

## Jessica Wozniak PsyD and Jessica Griffin PsyD



**Jessica Wozniak, PsyD** is a clinical psychologist and the Clinical Research and Development Manager at Baystate Medical Center’s Department of Psychiatry in Springfield, MA, and an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Massachusetts Medical School-Baystate (UMMS). In her role she oversees community-based projects, clinical research, and training including oversight of all projects funded by SAMHSA/NCTSN. She is the Director of the Child Advocacy Training and Support Center, a national training and consultation center for Children’s Advocacy Centers. Additionally, Dr. Wozniak oversaw the development of the One Mission Project which provides coordinated services to child trafficking victims. She is also a leader of the Hampden County Coalition to Identify and Prevent the Sexual Exploitation of Children. Dr. Wozniak is a nationally recognized trainer in Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, the most rigorously tested treatment for trauma in children. Additionally, she conducts trainings for community organizations as well as presenting at national and international conferences on topics related to trauma informed practices, vicarious trauma, trauma-informed multidisciplinary teams and sexual exploitation of children.

**Jessica Griffin, PsyD** is an Associate Professor of Psychiatry & Pediatrics; Executive Director, Lifeline For Kids; Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics; Executive Director, Lifeline For Kids; Executive Director, Resilience Through Relationships Center; Executive Director, Child Trauma Training Center. She is a clinical and forensic psychologist with specialties in childhood trauma, resilience, and relationships. Dr. Griffin is a nationally recognized expert in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), trauma, resilience, and relationships. She developed the UMass Child Trauma Training Center (now known as Lifeline For Kids) which has trained over 200,000 professionals in trauma, trauma-informed care, and trauma sensitive practices. She is a highly sought-after public speaker and go-to expert for national media and is a regular contributor on news outlets. She is a co-author of a book by the American Academy of Pediatrics, [Childhood Trauma and Resilience, A Practical Guide](#), a go-to resource on childhood trauma for pediatrics. Recently, Dr. Griffin also authored a book for couples in romantic relationships, [Relationship Rx: Prescriptions for Lasting Love and Deeper Connection](#).

## **Keynote:**

### **Part I: From Devastation to Denial: Moving from Mandated Reporting to Meaningful Supporting - Engaging Parents and other Caregivers**

After a child has experienced trauma or had a disclosure of child abuse, caregivers have a wide range of reactions and responses from denial, minimization, and disbelief to devastation, fear, self-blame and overprotection. Engaging parents or other caregivers (e.g., such as foster parents or kinship parents) is one of the most common struggles facing professionals working in child trauma and child maltreatment. There are also times in which caregiving has been disrupted and the parent-child relationship has been negatively impacted by the parents' experience whether it be parental substance misuse, parent mental health difficulties or their own trauma history. Yet, we cannot effectively reach children without engaging those who are caring for them. While there may be a large focus on mandated reporting in our professional roles, less is available for professionals in how to shift the focus to *meaningful supporting* of caregivers and how to develop or restore safe, stable nurturing caregiver-child relationships. This presentation will review the various thoughts and feelings parents (or other caregivers) may have after their child discloses abuse or has experienced trauma and how these thoughts and feelings may lead to reactions and behaviors they exhibit when they present in professional settings, their homes and communities. Factors that influence the caregiver's initial response will also be reviewed to help professionals build empathy and determine the best trauma-informed course of action for caregiver engagement based on their professional role(s).

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Participants will be able to name 3 factors that influence a caregivers' response to when their child experiences trauma.
2. Participants will be able to describe common reactions caregivers have when their child has experienced trauma.
3. Participants will be able to describe cultural engagement strategies when working with parents and other caregivers.

### **Part II: Moving from Mandated Reporting to Meaningful Supporting: Practical Tools and Strategies To Engage Caregivers**

In Part II of Engaging Caregivers, Participants will learn practical techniques for engaging caregivers from the first meeting and beyond. Techniques to support and align with caregivers such as use of psychoeducation about trauma and particular types of abuse, social network mapping, and other ways to enhance resiliency and wellbeing within the family system will be demonstrated. Participants will learn about the affiliate response to stress as a way to understand the impact of trauma through a relational lens as well as to increase caregiver engagement and also promote healing in parent-child relationships and recovery after trauma. Methods to support the affiliate response in caregivers will be reviewed including practical tools caregivers can use to build connection and promote safe, stable, nurturing relationships with their children after trauma. Lastly, complicated caregiving situations, such as when the caregiver is unsupportive or does not believe that the child was exposed to a trauma, will be discussed. In this highly interactive workshop, ways in which to align, even with these challenging



dynamics, will be demonstrated through the use of role plays. Tools, fact sheets, and other resources will be provided that participants can immediately begin using with families regardless of their professional role.

**Learning Objectives:**

Part II:

1. Participants will be able to identify psychoeducational tools and resources they can share with caregivers.
2. Participants will learn practical techniques they can use with caregivers to support the parent-child relationship.
3. Participants will identify ways to engage parents in the midst of complicated caregiver situations.