

**2017 Georgia CASA Conference**  
**April 22, 2017**  
**Atlanta Evergreen Marriott Conference Resort**  
**Stone Mountain, GA**

**WORKSHOP BLOCK I: 10:30 – 11:45**

**A1. Talking to Children Who Have Experienced Abuse**

Kari Viola-Brooke, M.Ed., LPC, NCC, CAC Director, Child Enrichment, Inc.

This workshop will discuss ways to build rapport with the children for whom you work. It will discuss direct and indirect ways children disclose abuse as well as appropriate, non-leading ways to react when a child discloses. This workshop will also cover important steps to take after a disclosure is made.

**A2. Improving Court Outcomes for Children: Systemic Challenges and Opportunities**

Tom Rawlings, J.D., CWLS, Director, Georgia Office of the Child Advocate

In this workshop, the Director of Georgia's Office of the Child Advocate will discuss how important good representation and procedure in juvenile court are to obtaining stability and permanency for children. Tom will review current challenges facing child advocates and discuss opportunities to improve representation for children, transparency, and court procedure.

**A3. Georgia's P.o.r.c.h. and the Public Conversations Project**

Cynthia L. Doss, LPC, LMSW, Georgia's P.o.r.c.h.

Jamie D. Swain, LMSW, Georgia's P.o.r.c.h.

Georgia's P.o.r.c.h. initiated the use of the Public Conversations Project to provide needed structure in family members' dialogues regarding thoughts and emotions related to victimization. Sharing this technique's effectiveness with sister agencies became a goal of Georgia's P.o.r.c.h. The process of the Public Conversations Project involves structuring dialogue to create an atmosphere in which participants have the opportunity to share their viewpoints and/or concerns in cooperative patterns. In this support of conversations, the Public Conversations Project is "omni-partial—on every side."

**A4. Cultural Competency**

Natalece Robinson, J.D., CWLS, Director of Operations/Staff Attorney, Fulton County CASA

This workshop will discuss (1) One's own awareness, (2) attitudes towards persons of different cultures (race, gender, age, gender identity, ethnicity, linguistic background, experience, etc.), (3) biases/implicit biases, (4) stereotypes, (5) institutional/structural racism, (6) and most importantly, how to challenge ourselves to be better, i.e. more culturally competent individuals!

**A5. Cold Case Project: Lessons from the Frontline**

Ashley Willcott, J.D., CWLS, Consultant, Juvenile Court Judge & Trial Attorney

Come learn what legal barriers exist on the front line that complicate permanency for children identified as languishing in foster care. Why are TPRs not being filed in some cases? Why is it so hard to find an appropriate placement for children with difficult behaviors? What are the trends in child welfare affecting these children? How can you help improve a child's situation and increase a caretaker's capacity to care for a child?

### **A6. Your Money, Your Goals**

Yatecca Lofton, IDA Coordinator, MAAC

Dyonne Miles, Training Coordinator, MAAC

In a society dominated by materialism, how we spend our money can quickly shape how well we are able to navigate through a life filled with limitless obstacles. As steadfast supporters for our youth, we want to ensure that we are educating them in all areas crucial to their transition into adulthood and beyond. Financial literacy is one of those areas. The purpose of this workshop is to provide you with an orientation to Your Money, Your Goals, a financial empowerment toolkit, as well as the tools, knowledge, and confidence to use the toolkit in your day-to-day work with your youth. This workshop will also increase your knowledge of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB).

### **A7. Understanding and Engaging Latinos: Are You Ready?**

Belisa M. Urbina, Executive Director, Ser Familia, Inc.

Latinos are the fastest growing demographic segment in Georgia. They are a young and very diverse group coming from 26 countries. Even if Latino kids are born in the US and speak mainly English, cultural traits play a heavy influence in how they need to be served. Are you ready to provide culturally appropriate services to these children and families?

### **A8. Help to REDUCE Employment Law Risks**

Lori Shapiro, Employment Counsel, Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta

This session will assist your organization to reduce its potential liability when faced with three of the most challenging employment law risks for nonprofit employers. It will examine the pitfalls associated with (1) misclassification of employees, independent contractors, volunteers and interns; (2) claims of harassment, discrimination and retaliation; and (3) requests for accommodation and leave. It will provide practical advice in the form of a model designed to help you take steps in your workplace that will reduce these risks.

### **A9. Community Collaboration**

The Hon. Sherri Roberts, Newton County Juvenile Court

Lindsay Tyner, Executive Director, Alcovy CASA

A judge and a local CASA director will discuss various ways to involve the community and build positive working relationships among the court, agencies, and stakeholders.

## **WORKSHOP BLOCK II: 1:45 – 3:00**

### **B1. Ask the Judges**

The Hon. Linda Bratton Haynes, Chief Judge, DeKalb County Juvenile Court

The Hon. Sherri Roberts, Newton County Juvenile Court

The Hon. Steven Teske, Clayton County Juvenile Court

The Hon. Peggy Walker, Douglas County Juvenile Court

Moderator: Tom Rawlings, Executive Director, Office of the Child Advocate

This interactive workshop will give CASA volunteers the opportunity to engage in dialogue with a panel of judges on issues of the law, process, procedure and the philosophy of child welfare. Come prepared to ask questions about how decisions are made, the importance of volunteer advocacy, how the CASA volunteers' reports and recommendations are used, how the law is interpreted, what changes they wish to see in child welfare, and how we can work together to ensure children and youth have safe, permanent homes. Please note that no specific cases can be discussed.

## **B2. Parental Incarceration: Research, Resources and Community Involvement**

Dr. Christina Semple, Hospice Manager, Gentiva Hospice

In this workshop, we will review current research regarding the impact of parental incarceration on children and families. As advocates, participants will explore valuable and applicable resources to support their work with children who have a parent in jail or prison. Through the use of video, brief discussion and real world examples, attendees will gain an understanding of the emotional, social and psychological impacts children experience when a parent is incarcerated and more importantly, what they can do to help.

## **B3. What's Trauma Got to Do with It?**

Debra Ross, MSW, Child Welfare Training Collaborative, Georgia State University School of Social Work Professional Excellence Program

Join us for this interactive workshop that will help you understand child trauma and the impact it has on brain development and a child's behavior. This workshop will define key terms, discuss the types of experiences that constitute child trauma, and explore the individual's role in responding to traumatic stress when working with children.

## **B4. Helping Your Youth Thrive, Not Just Survive**

Victoria Salzman, Program Director, Georgia Youth Opportunities Initiative, MAAC

Shaquita Ogletree, Policy and Youth Advocacy Coordinator, Georgia Youth Opportunities Initiative, MAAC

The Youth Thrive Framework, out of the Center for the Study of Social Policy, provides a lens to approach work for adolescents in foster care, lifting promotive and protective factors that help them overcome trauma and thrive. Learn about best practice and hands-on tools that can be used in your own interactions with young people and the science behind it. Participants will acquire skills and tools to be able to approach their work through a Youth Thrive Framework and better support their youth on their journey to thriving.

## **B5. The Educational Programming, Assessment & Consultation (EPAC) Program Academy**

Dmetria C. Gibson, J.D., M.Ed., EPAC Program Director, DFCS

The Georgia DFCS EPAC Program is in the midst of implementing a series of programmatic adjustments to better serve youth ages 5-17. Participants will have an opportunity to learn about the new modifications as well as strategies to effectively advocate for youth in care.

## **B6. The Impact of Maternal Substance Abuse on Child Development**

Dr. Karen Kuehn Howell, Assistant Professor, Emory University, Center for Maternal Substance Abuse and Child Development

This workshop will discuss the impact that maternal substance abuse and prenatal exposure have on a young child. We will review the impact of prenatal exposure to alcohol, tobacco, prescription drugs and illegal drugs, such as marijuana and cocaine, on a child's ultimate developmental outcomes. We will also discuss the conditions that maternal substance abuse may be associated with, including disease, prematurity, sub-optimal caretaking, poverty, exposure to violence, neglect and maternal psychopathology. Finally, interventions and resources for children impacted by maternal substance abuse will be shared.

### **B7. It's Not Who I Am, It's What Happened to Me**

Suamhirs Piraino-Guzman, QMHP, US Advisory Council on Human Trafficking

This workshop highlights trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, and trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy. The presenter will share new and innovative ways of engagement with youth who have experienced trauma, specifically the trauma of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC). This training will also challenge attendees to think outside the box when advocating for services for children survivors of CSEC.

### **B8. The Opioid Epidemic**

Dr. James Craig, Craig Wellness and Recovery

Many families involved in the child welfare system are affected by parental substance use. Meeting the complex needs of parents with substance use disorders and those of their children can be challenging. Dr. Craig will share how the treatment system has responded to the rise in opioid use, the chemical impact on brain functioning, genetic predisposition to substance abuse, and our community response.

### **B9. Permanency at the Front Door**

Deborah Burrus, Permanency Director, DFCS

This workshop will discuss the critical issues and decisions made upon a child's entry into foster care and how it impacts permanency. This workshop will also address how the CASA program can work with the Department to help resolve front door permanency issues. Lastly, this workshop will discuss appropriate permanency planning, including a discussion on guardianship.

## **WORKSHOP BLOCK III: 3:15 – 4:30**

### **C1. Resource Toolkit for Child Advocates**

Terrence Wilson, Robin Nash Postgraduate Fellow in Law, Barton Child Law and Policy Center at Emory School of Law

Knowing where to look for reliable information is the key to effective advocacy for services to meet children's needs. A "toolkit" of web-based resources for child advocates will be presented, along with a demonstration of how to access those resources, and a discussion of the underlying policy, practice and legal considerations. Subjects to be addressed include education, mental health and medications, court and legal resources, and DFCS policy, among others.

### **C2. EmpowerMENT Through Our Eyes: Here Are My Rights**

Anthony Stover, Court Improvement Coordinator, MAAC/Georgia EmpowerMENT

This workshop was created by current and former foster youth to help educate their peers on the rights of youth as they enter and exit foster care. Hear from EmpowerMENT advocates as they share their personal experience through an interactive and engaging presentation. Come and understand the importance of the policies, laws and practices that makes a difference in the lives of the young people for whom you advocate.

### **C3. Talking to Children About Safety from Sexual Abuse**

Nikki Berger, Prevention Program Manager, Georgia Center for Child Advocacy

Having age-appropriate, open conversations about our bodies, sex and boundaries is an important step in protecting children. People who sexually abuse children specifically target children who don't have the skills to talk about it. They use this lack of knowledge to keep them silent, shamed and compliant. This course teaches you how to talk with and listen to children about sexual abuse and personal safety. This mini course is a supplement to Stewards of Children, a two hour, evidence-based course on preventing, recognizing and reacting responsibly to child sexual abuse.

#### **C4. Education Advocacy for Youth with Special Needs**

Julia Searl Rusert, MSW, Ph.D., Juvenile Court of Cobb County/CASA Volunteer

CASA volunteers will learn about the services that support children from birth to age 21 who have delays, learning differences and disabilities. Attendees will learn the steps taken for school-age students to receive an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan, including evaluations, eligibility, developing goals and progress monitoring.

#### **C5. Introduction to Participatory Evaluation**

Janet E. Rechtman, Ph.D., Senior Fellow, UGA/J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development

The combination of diverse (and often unaligned) stakeholders interacting via independent (and interdependent) processes complicates the work of evaluating the CASA program. So how do we know when we are making a difference? And exactly what difference(s) do we make? Participants in this interactive workshop will learn the basic concepts of participatory evaluation and explore the role of participatory evaluation in the work of CASA.

#### **C6. Trauma and Childhood Brain Development**

Melissa Graves, Director of Training, CHRIS 180

Many youth involved with the child welfare system have experienced trauma as a result of maltreatment and victimization. Because of this trauma, most abused or neglected children have difficulty developing healthy relationships, have trouble controlling and expressing emotions, are more vulnerable to stress, and may react aggressively to situations. The Trauma STARs workshop will provide attendees with an understanding of trauma, the impact of trauma on childhood brain development and behavior, and steps they can take to foster recovery in children and families.

#### **C7. Foster to College: Embark and Education and Training Vouchers (ETV)**

David Meyers & Jason Bedgood, Public Service Professionals, UGA/J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development

Young people who turn 18 in the Georgia foster care system have educational options available to them throughout the state. Attend this workshop to learn about statewide assistance, both social/emotional supports and financial supports. Embark Georgia is a statewide network of post-secondary institutions, both technical and four year colleges, with distinct support contacts for youth experiencing foster care and homelessness. ETV financial assistance is available to young people in foster care. Come increase your knowledge on these crucial supports.

#### **C8. Georgia Families 360°SM Program: An Overview of Georgia's Health Care System for Children in Care**

Amber Hammontree, MA LPC, Clinical Trainer, Amerigroup Community Care – Georgia Families 360°Program

This training will provide an overview of the Georgia Families 360°SM program. Topics include eligibility benefits, additional programs and services for GF360° members, and the different ways to access the care coordination team.

#### **C9. Mobilizing Everyday Heroes: Volunteer Recruitment Strategies**

Moderator: Omar Nelson, Fulton County CASA

Maria Rodriguez-Curtis, CASA of Paulding County

Tami Anton, Piedmont CASA

Amy Blanton, CASA Cherokee

More than 2,000 everyday heroes advocate for children each day in Georgia. The shared goal to train more than 1,000 volunteers annually is only attainable with the enlistment of CASA staff, volunteers, board members and supporters. Ongoing, consistent recruitment strategies are the key to tapping new volunteers and can be easily incorporated across CASA teams. Learn how four CASA programs have re-envisioned their recruitment efforts and have realized increased inquiries, training class sizes and sworn-in volunteers.