
CULTIVATING CARE:
Healthy Professionals
Thriving Youth
OCTOBER
14-16, 2026
MJJA
2026
Fall Conference
Margaritaville Lake Resort
• 494 Tan Tar A Drive
Osage Beach, MO 65065
MJJA
Missouri Juvenile Justice Association

MJJA's Fall Conference is being held at

Margaritaville Lake Resort, Osage Beach, MO

494 Tan Tara Estate, Osage Beach, MO

1-800-826-8272

Course Credit Information:

- The courses are MO Bar accredited for CLEs—13.2 total hours including 10.8 Ethics hours and 4.5 Elimination of Bias hours
- University of MO, Columbia—School of Social Work CEUs—11.0 Clock Hours and 1.1 Continuing Education Units
- Post Hours—if approved are noted on plenary and workshop descriptions

Thank you to our Conference Supporters:

Dept. of Public Safety and the

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OSCA—Fostering Court Improvement Project

Missouri Task Force on Children's Justice

Cultivating Care:

Healthy Professionals, Thriving Youth





Josh Varner, M.S. Ed
Thrive: Building a Life You Don't Need to Escape From



Geoff Sidoli, LCSW
Providing Psychological Safety and Support to Staff to Mitigate the Impacts of Secondary Trauma

October 14-16, 2026



D'Markus Thomas-Brown
Violence Prevention Administrator
Building Safer Communities Through Collaboration and Innovation



And



Edward L. Palmer, Sr.
Pastor, Certified Diversity Trainer, Juvenile Justice Advocate

Rachel Bingham
Consultant

Identifying and Addressing...It!

Workshop Topics:

- Effectively Identifying the Root Causes of Youth Violence
- Providing Trauma Responsive Services for Youth with Problematic Sexual Behavior
- Holding Certified Youth Pending Trial
- Statewide 2025 RED Data and JDTA Revalidation Study
- Parental Culpability
- Courtroom Skills Jeopardy
- Family Engaged Case Planning Strategies

And more!

For more info and to register, please visit www.mjja.org



Josh Varner M.S. Ed. Is a trauma informed speaker and author with a PASSION for helping individuals and schools to support students who have been impacted by childhood trauma. Varner has presented over 400 high energy, informative, interactive presentations to audiences all over the country. Aong with speaking Varner has been a mental health professional, school counselor and coordinated an at-risk student program. Varner has experience in the classroom working with traumatized students and know what will work for educators.

Varner has worked with the top names in education. NASSP, MOASSP, MAESP, WASA etc. He's also started to move into the health care markets with my works with the Missouri Hospital Association.

Josh Varner, M.S. Ed

Plenary: ***Thrive: Building a Life You Don't Need to Escape From***

In this inspiring and practical keynote, speaker, author, and mental health advocate Josh Varner explores why so many individuals, families, and organizations are struggling—and what we can do about it. Drawing from neuroscience, trauma-informed practices, positive psychology, and real-life experiences, Josh introduces the THRIVE Framework, a simple yet powerful roadmap for moving beyond survival and creating a life filled with purpose, connection, and resilience.

Participants will learn how chronic stress impacts the brain and body, why human connection is essential for healing, and practical strategies to cultivate healthier habits, stronger relationships, and greater emotional well-being. ***POST Approved for 1.25 Interpersonal Hours/1.5 total CLE Hours including 0.6 Ethics Hours***

Workshop: Be Their Hero: Trauma-Informed Care

Two out of every three children in the United States experience a traumatic event that can deeply affect their emotional well-being, behavior, and development. For the adults in their lives—parents, caregivers, mentors, and educators—understanding trauma is key to helping children feel safe, supported, and resilient.

This powerful and practical training provides the knowledge and tools needed to support children who have experienced trauma. Participants will learn how trauma affects the brain and body, how to recognize the signs in children, and how to create safe, nurturing environments where healing and growth can happen.
POST Approved for 1.25 Interpersonal Hours/1.8 total CLE Hours including 1.2 Ethics Hours



Geoff Sidoli, LCSW, is the current National Training Fellow and past Coordinator for the National Children's Alliance Institute for Better Mental Health Outcomes. He assists CACs around the country developing, implementing, and sustaining mental health services including ones for children and youth exhibiting problematic sexual behavior (PSB). Geoff co-developed and trains an enhancement of TF-CBT for PSB with adolescents and with young children. He is a clinical member of the Association for the Prevention and Treatment Sexual Abuse (ATSA) as well as a Fellow. He sits on ATSA's child and adolescent committee as well as the ethic's committee. Geoff is also NCA's Training and Technical Advisor for PSB and facilitates NCA's youth with problematic sexual behaviors national work group. He continues to treat youth and families for trauma and PSB at the CAC he founded in Asheville, NC

Geoff Sidoli, LCSW

Plenary: ***Providing Psychological Safety and Support to Staff to Mitigate the Impacts of Secondary Trauma***
Services providers that work with child welfare and mental health face some of the highest burnout and turnover rates in the helping professions — staff routinely absorb secondary traumatic stress while working within under-resourced systems. Leadership philosophy and organizational psychology generally arrive at the same conclusion; people stay when the work feels worth it, the organization protects them, and someone notices them doing it well. Sustainable retention requires a multi-layered response that addresses culture, communication, and implementing change. This discussion will address how leadership can improve staff satisfaction/retention, psychological safety, and organizational culture. Approaches will focus on developing a blueprint for change, implementation strategies, and creating a plan for sustainability. ***POST Approved for 1.25 Interpersonal Hours/1.5 total CLE Hours including 1.5 Ethics Hours***

Workshop: ***Providing Trauma Responsive Services for Youth with Problematic Sexual Behavior***
Participants will explore the neurobiological and psychological pathways through which trauma — including sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, exposure to domestic violence, and complex developmental trauma — can manifest as problematic sexual behavior. Training will address how dysregulation, hypersexualization, reenactment, and impaired attachment all contribute to PSB presentations, and why behavior-focused interventions alone are insufficient when trauma remains unaddressed. Participants will develop skills to conceptualize PSB through a trauma-informed lens, moving beyond punitive or risk-management frameworks toward an understanding of sexual behavior as a potential symptom of unresolved trauma. Emphasis is placed on thorough, individualized assessment to address the unique clinical and developmental needs of this population. ***POST Approved for 1.5 Interpersonal Hours/1.8 total CLE Hours Including 1.8 Ethics Hours***



D'Markus is currently the Administrator for the Office of Violence Prevention at the City of Columbia. He previously served as the Managing Director for in2Action and as the Director of the Recovery Support & Reentry Opportunity Center (ROC) in Columbia, MO. He currently serves with the Boone County Overdose Response Coalition, the Central Missouri Recovery Coalition (CMRC), and the Mid-Missouri CIT Council. He is a Certified Peer Specialist (CPS) and a Harm Reduction Trainer with the Missouri Credentialing Board (MCB). He graduated from Columbia College with his Master's in Business Administration (MBA). He is an ordained minister who also serves as a Co-founding pastor of Confluence Church. He is married and has 2 young children who keep him on his toes.

D'Markus Thomas-Brown

Plenary: ***Building Safer Communities Through Collaboration and Innovation***

This presentation explores recent events and conversations surrounding youth violence. 'It takes the whole village' has been a major thread in community involvement and support of children, but we now understand the importance of the 'village being healthy, wholesome, and unified' for the welfare of its youth. What, if any, impact has the national climate had on youth temperament? What might be systems to help to counteract and/or prevent violence enacted by and suffered by youth?

Attendees will identify root causes and stressors to patterns of youth violence.

Presenter will introduce proven interventions and collaborative initiatives to support "the village" and interrupt cyclical patterns of violence. Presenter will give concrete examples of each element within the various ecosystems and a jurisdiction adequately applying them to their juvenile court system.

Attendees will be familiarized with the various ecosystems of violence intervention, prevention, and community transformation. Presenter will give concrete examples of each element within the various ecosystems and a jurisdiction. ***POST Approved for 1.25 Interpersonal Hours/1.5 total CLE Hours including 0.6 Ethics Hours***

Workshop: ***Effectively Identifying the Root Causes of Youth Violence***

This workshop will explore the root causes of youth violence by exposing attendees to a community violence exposé with music and news articles. Attendees will be asked to identify root causes and evidence based, trauma informed intervention strategies to enhance community violence intervention and youth diversion.

POST Approved for 1.5 Interpersonal Hours/1.8 total CLE Hours including 0.6 Ethics Hours and 0.6 Elimination of Bias Hours



Edward L. Palmer, Sr.

Pastor Edward L. Palmer Sr. is the visionary, senior pastor, and co-pastor with his wife Elizabeth (Angie) Palmer for The Sign of The Dove Church International located in Radcliff, Kentucky. He is a Certified Diversity Trainer and works to eliminate disproportionate minority contact within the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Pastor Palmer is also a Disabled U.S. Army Veteran.

In 2017, Pastor Palmer was the recipient of the Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership Award winner presented by Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin as well as the Courage for Kids Award present by Kentucky Youth Advocates. In May of 2019, he was awarded the Thurgood Marshall Social Justice Impact Award presented by the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., and in May of 2025 he was presented with the Champion of Diversity in Justice Award presented by the Kentucky Justice Association.

Pastor is Former Chair of the State Inner-Agency Council's Diversity Standing Committee and past Chair of the National Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ), and a member of The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. He is a certified Racial and Ethnic Disparities Capstone Project Fellow through the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University, and a certified Maxwell Leadership coach, speaker, and trainer. In the Spring 2021 Juvenile Justice Update, Pastor Palmer co-authored the article "Don't Hate the Player, Hate the Game: The Importance of Systemic Change to Address Racial and Ethnic Disparities."

Pastor has served the citizens of his city for five terms as a Radcliff City councilman and is currently serving as a Certified Police Chaplin. He has shared his passion for racial equality from Washington State to Washington D.C., to Princeton University, and many other locations across the nation. His implicit bias training was involved in a process of evaluation with John Hopkins University and proven to be effective. Pastor Palmer operates with undeniable vision and unyielding passion for the purposeful course on which God has set him, running his race with patience, diligence, vigilance, and effectiveness.

And



Rachel Bingham

For over 28 years, Rachel Bingham has been powerful state and a national voice around child welfare, juvenile justice, and judicial system efforts to improve outcomes for children and families. Mrs. Bingham was directly involved with 2012 Task Force on the Unified Juvenile Code around SB 200 policy development and, in 2014, was responsible for the effective implementation of the statutory requirements impacting the Kentucky Court Designated Worker Program as well as the statewide judges, clerks, and partnering agencies.

In August of 2024, Mrs. Bingham retired from the Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts as the director of the Office of Statewide Programs which includes Family and Juvenile Services, Pretrial Services, and Specialty Courts. Currently, Mrs. Bingham is a consultant with The National Center for State Courts as well as The Messenger, LLC (focusing on racial equity, policy review, and practice transformation). She works directly with state leaders and stakeholders to identify, develop, and/or implement effective child welfare, juvenile justice, and/or judicial initiatives.

Some of Mrs. Bingham's notable achievements include:

· Publication: Palmer Sr., Edward L. & Bingham, Rachel (2021). "Don't Hate the Player, Hate the Game: The Importance of Systemic Change to Address Racial and Ethnic Disparities." Juvenile Justice Update, Spring 2021, 7-14

· Publication: Kentucky Court of Justices' A Guide for Identifying, Addressing and Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities.www.kycourts.gov, 2020

· 2023 Bluegrass Black PRIDE, Inc.'s Ally Award

· 2024 Coalition for Juvenile Justice's A.L. Carlisle Award

· 2024 Omicron Nu Lambda Education Foundation's Thurgood Marshall Social Justice Impact Award

· 2024 Kentucky Court of Justice's Racial Equity Visionary AwardJustice Impact Award

· 2024 Kentucky Court of Justice's Racial Equity Visionary Award

Plenary: Identifying and Addressing...It!

This session will explore racial and ethnic disparities through the lens of system collaboration, stakeholders and leadership engagement, policy development and celebrating successes. ***POST Approved for 1.25 Interpersonal Hours/1.5 total CLE Hours including 1.5 Ethics Hours and 1.5 Elimination of Bias Hours***

Workshop: Building a Team through a Collaborative Approach

This session will provide a detailed explanation on implementing an achievable RED framework to reduce disparite outcomes for system involved youth through team collaboration, community engagement, and resource development. ***POST Approved for 1.5 Interpersonal Hours/1.8 total CLE Hours including 1.8 Ethics Hours and 1.8 Elimination of Bias Hours***

AGENDA

Wednesday, October 14

11:30 a.m. Registration Opens—Paradise Foyer

1 p.m. Opening Remarks—Paradise A

1:30—2:45 p.m. Plenary—Paradise A
Thrive: Building a Life You Don't Need to Escape From

2:45—3 p.m. Refreshment Break—Paradise Foyer

3—4:30 p.m. WORKSHOPS
Be Their Hero: Trauma-Informed Care—*Leeward 75/75*
Certified Pending Trial...From Juvenile Detention to Adult Jail and Beyond—*Nautical Wheeler*
Accountability: The Dilemma of Parental Culpability—*Windward 70/71*
Family Engaged Case Planning Strategies—*Windgate 61*

6 p.m. Strikes for Success

Thursday, October 15

7—7:45 a.m. Morning Yoga—Windward 72/73

7:30—8:45 a.m. Breakfast—Paradise A

8:45—9 a.m. Morning Welcome—Paradise A

9—10:15 a.m. Plenary—Paradise A
Identifying and Addressing...It!

10:15—10:30 a.m. Refreshment Break—Paradise Foyer

10:30—12 p.m. WORKSHOPS
Building a Team Through a Collaborative Approach—*Windgate 61*
Using AI S.A.F.E.R.: Practical Guardrails for Juvenile Service Professionals—*Nautical Wheeler*
Foster Kid Fierce: Life-Changing Advocacy—*Windward 70/71*
Exploring Racial and Ethnic Disparity in Delinquency Cases: A Challenge and an Opportunity—*Leeward 74/75*

12—1:30 p.m. Lunch

AGENDA Continued

1:30—2:45 p.m. Plenary—Paradise A
Building Safer Communities Through Collaboration and Innovation

2:45—3 p.m. Refreshment Break—Paradise Foyer

3—4:30 p.m. WORKSHOPS
Effectively Identifying the Root Causes of Youth Violence—*Nautical Wheeler*
2025 Missouri RED Data, data trends, and JDTA Revalidation Study—*Windgate 60*
Case Law and Juvenile Justice Program Updates—*Leeward 74/75*
Digital Danger Zone: The Risks Youth Are Facing Online—*Windward 70/71*

6 p.m. Presidents Reception - Sponsored by FCC

Friday, October 16

7:15—7:45 a.m. Morning Chair Yoga—Windward 72/73

7:30—8:45 a.m. Breakfast—Paradise A

8:45—10 a.m. Plenary—Paradise A
Providing Psychological Safety and Support to Staff to Mitigate the Impacts of Secondary Trauma

10—10:15 a.m. Break - on your own

10:15—11:45 a.m. WORKSHOPS
Providing Trauma Responsive Services for Youth with Problematic Sexual Behavior—*Nautical Wheeler*
Trial-by-Trivia—*Windgate 60*
From Awareness to Action: Building Suicide-Safer Rural Communities—*Leeward 74/75*
What You Should Know about THC and Other Cannabinoids—*Windward 70/71*

11:45a.m. Conference Adjourns

Workshops:

Certified Pending Trial…From Juvenile Detention to Adult Jail and Beyond
In December 2018, the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act was reauthorized. The JJDP Act, as amended, made significant changes to how juveniles are held pending trial. Physically transferring a juvenile to a jail or lockup for adults following certification is no longer automatic. Now, certified juveniles are to remain placed in secure juvenile facilities pending the outcome of their criminal trial. However, there is a statutory process for the criminal court to transfer a certified juvenile to an adult jail when it is in the "interest of justice." This presentation will review the initial transfer process, the subsequent required hearings, and the documentation necessary to ensure the state's compliance.

In addition, this presentation will also provide attendees with an overview of Dual Jurisdiction sentencing as authorized under RSMo 211.073, Missouri's blended sentencing statute, and the Dual Jurisdiction (DJ) Program administered by the Division of Youth Services (DYS). The session will focus on the statutory framework and legislative intent of RSMo 211.073, which permits certified youth to receive a dual sentence to the Division of Youth Services and the Department of Corrections (DOC). Attendees will receive education on how the DYS' Dual Jurisdiction Program functions within the statutory structure, including eligibility considerations and the assessment process. This session is designed to support a clear, consistent understanding of RSMo 211.073 and the role of the Division of Youth Services Dual Jurisdiction Program within Missouri's blended sentencing framework. ***Post Approved for 1 Legal Studies Hours and 0.5 Interpersonal Hours/1.8 total CLE Hours including 1.2 Ethics Hours***
Faculty: Chris Yeager, Compliance Monitor, MO Department of Public Safety, and Amy Sax, Senior Program Administrator, MO Division of Youth Services

Chris Yeager has worked in the field of juvenile justice for over 27 years. For the last 18, he has served as Missouri's Compliance Monitor for the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Act at the Missouri Department of Public Safety. Chris also serves as a consultant for Lexora, LLC. and the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrator, Inc. He has also been a consultant and provided technical assistance for the Center for Coordinated Assistance to States at the American Institutes for Research.

Prior to his current role, Chris worked 10 years for the Missouri Division of Youth Services; first as a Youth Specialist in a group home, and then as a Service Coordinator supporting youth and their families during the treatment process.

Chris graduated from Truman State University in 1998 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice and a Minor in Political Science focusing on public administration.

Outside of work, Chris, spends most of his time with family. An Eagle Scout himself, Chris is an active member of his local Scouting America troop with his family. Chris also enjoys attending his kids' athletic and extracurricular events.

Amy Sax holds a Bachelor of Arts in Government and History from Columbia College and has been with the Missouri Department of Social Services, Division of Youth Services (DYS) for over 21 years. She began her career as a Youth Specialist, providing treatment services to youth in DYS facilities, and later served as a Service Coordinator, supporting youth transitioning back into the community. She currently serves as Senior Program Administrator in Central Office in Jefferson City, where she oversees Dual Jurisdiction, supports Interstate Compact for Juveniles, serves as the Division's Privacy Officer and Custodian of Records, and acts as a liaison between DYS and the Division of Legal Services.

Using AI S.A.F.E.R.: Practical Guardrails for Juvenile Service Professionals
Artificial intelligence tools are already being used in juvenile justice and youth-serving settings — sometimes formally, often informally. Many professionals are experimenting with AI to assist with summaries, training materials, and policy interpretation, yet uncertainty about privacy, liability, and agency policy creates real risk. One of the most common misconceptions is treating AI like traditional internal software, assuming built-in privacy protections that may not exist.

This session takes a practical, pragmatic look at how AI is intersecting with youth-serving work. Participants will explore the real risks, the most common misunderstandings, and the guardrails that help protect both young people and agencies. Using a straightforward framework, the session highlights responsible, lower-risk use cases relevant to practitioners — including documentation support, training development, and policy analysis. This is not a technology sales pitch; it is a risk-informed conversation about how to think clearly and act responsibly in an environment where AI use is already happening. ***POST Approved for 1 Interpersonal Hours and 0.5 Legal Studies Hours/1.8 total CLE Hours including 1.2 Ethics Hours***
Faculty: Caleb Asbridge, Project Director, The Moss Group

Caleb Asbridge is a Project Director with The Moss Group, bringing more than 25 years of experience in organizational leadership, training, compliance, and project management across the justice system. He began his career in juvenile justice, serving as a superintendent of multiple juvenile correctional facilities and as Assistant Director of Program Services for the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice, and later as a director for a private foster care agency.

At The Moss Group, Caleb leads PREA implementation and audit-readiness work, training and curriculum development, and organizational assessments for justice and youth-serving agencies nationwide. His recent work focuses on helping agencies responsibly leverage emerging technologies — including artificial intelligence — while maintaining accountability and human oversight.

Caleb holds a Master of Public Administration and a Bachelor of Arts from Western Kentucky University.

Workshops:

Family Engaged Case Planning Strategies
Family-Engaged Case Planning is a collaborative approach that places youth and families at the center of the case planning process. This interactive workshop will explore the principles and practices of Family-Engaged Case Planning and how professionals can move from a traditional approach, to one that actively values the voice, strengths, goals, and expertise of youth and families.

Participants will learn practical strategies for building authentic partnerships, identifying strengths and needs, developing meaningful and achievable goals, and engaging families as active partners in decision-making. The workshop will also examine how effective engagement can strengthen relationships, improve case outcomes, increase youth and family ownership of the case plan, and support positive behavior change. ***1.8 total CLE Hours including 0.6 Ethics Hours and 0.6 Elimination of Bias Hours***
Faculty: Tymesha Buckner-Dobynes, Director of Delinquency Services, St. Louis County Juvenile Office, and Farrakahn Seggog, President/CEO of Youth Voices with Action

Tymesha Buckner-Dobynes serves as the Director of Delinquency Services for the St. Louis County Juvenile Office. She provides oversight, planning, and development of departmental functions. These include assessment and screening, diversion, informal/ voluntary services, supervision/probationary services, and coordination of supportive services for youth and families. Tymesha also oversees the Juvenile Officer-operated educational program for youth and she has been employed with the Juvenile Office for seventeen years.

Tymesha is extremely passionate about serving youth and is committed to improving outcomes for children and families. Her role at the Juvenile Office involves significant community engagement. She enjoys collaborating and building effective partnerships with community members to enhance resources and opportunities for youth and families.

Farrakhan Shegog serves at the President/CEO of Young Voices with Action. He has been in in this role since 2012, serving over 200 youth by providing leadership training, civic training, wealth building, health, and geopolitics. In addition, he serves as the Director of the Federation of Block Units with Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, working with residents to improve the quality of life of their own neighborhoods.

Foster Kid Fierce: Life Changing Advocacy
Step into a deeper conversation with Theresa Collins as she shines a spotlight on the extraordinary role foster youth serving organizations play in the lives of foster children. Drawing from her lived experience and years of advocacy, Theresa will explore how a single committed person can change the entire trajectory of a child's life.

This session will dig into the heart of advocating for foster kids—showing up with dedication, authenticity, and belief in a child's worth. You'll discover how to help children recognize their own "tool bag" of strengths built from resilience, resourcefulness, and heritage, and how to guide them toward pride in both themselves and their families. Through practical insights and heartfelt story-telling, Theresa will reveal how your support can help a child realize their true potential, sparking the belief that they can be the next leader, creator, or world changer rather than being defined by limitations.

You'll leave this session with concrete strategies for empowering the children you serve: making them feel special, helping them embrace their strengths, and showing them that while they may not control their circumstances, they can always control how they rise above them. Whether you are a staff member, volunteer, or foster child champion, this session will reignite your passion for your organization's mission and equip you to be the person who makes all the difference. ***POST Approved for 1.5 Interpersonal Hours/1.8 total CLE Hours***
Faculty: Theresa Collins, Founder & Principal Strategist, Beacon Organizational Consulting, LLC

Theresa Collins is the Founder and Principal Strategist of Beacon Organizational Consulting. She brings two decades of experience in the nonprofit and organizational development industries. She holds a Master's degree in Management & Organizational Development with a Training emphasis and a double Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Social Change & Development with a Law & Justice emphasis. After growing up in foster care from age 7, and then aging out of the system, Theresa has dedicated her life to making the world a better place for foster kids.

She has extensive professional and personal experience in the areas of child abuse and neglect, foster care resources, youth services, homelessness, mental health clubhouses, community action programs, and philanthropic foundations. She has raised millions of dollars to fund community projects, events, and services across the country.

Community service and involvement are key values for Theresa. She has been a CASA volunteer of 8 years, a national and chapter member of the Grant Professionals Association and the Association of Fundraising Professionals, a board member of Foster Families & Friends, founding board member with the Boys & Girls Club of Manitowoc County, a mayor›appointed member of the Citizen Advisory Council for the city of Manitowoc, a Future 15 Award recipient of the Chamber's Young Professionals, and has also served on the boards of a mental health clubhouse, social justice organizations, and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), among others. Theresa coined the term and lives the life of #FosterKidFierce.

Workshops:

Case Law and Juvenile Justice Program Updates
This session will give attendees an overview of the year's most significant cases and statutory changes impacting juvenile law practice. There will also be an opportunity for discussion of recent developments in regulatory, statutory and case law and their expected impact upon practice for Juvenile Officers, Children's Division workers and attorneys. Discussion will address SB 888, interim updates to Missouri's Child-Centered Benefits Management Program & Other Foster Care Updates, MO CA/N Response Team, Section 210.160, RSMo., and Executive Order 26-17 establishing the statewide Child Welfare Task Force. Programmatic updates will also be discussed with the Children's Division, Juvenile Officers and other updates. ***POST Approved for 1.5 Legal Studies Hours/1.8 total CLE Hours***
Faculty: Ellen Haynes, Deputy Chief Special Counsel, Division of Legal Services, DSS, Marcia Hazelhorst, Deputy Director, MO CA/N Response Team, DSS-Children's Division, Kate Watson, Deputy Division Director, Foster Care & Permanency, DSS-Children's Division, and Bill Prince, CJO and Court Administrator - Greene County

Ellen Haynes has worked in and around juvenile justice, the courts, and child welfare since 1986, beginning as a program aide at the Robert L Perry Juvenile Justice Center and earning her BSW from Mizzou. Additionally, Ellen has served as a Deputy Juvenile Officer and an Adult Court Services Officer, including several stints as the JO liaison with Children's Division. Her last job with the Juvenile Officer prior to reducing her hours to part-time employment in order to attend law school was serving as the Juvenile Drug Court Coordinator. Ellen graduated from MU Law in 2004 and has since worked as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, A/JO, Litigation and Managing Attorney for the Division of Legal Services, Legal Aspects Trainer, Special Counsel for the Children's Division, and now acts as the Litigation Training and Development Coordinator as a Deputy Chief Special Counsel. Ellen lives and works in Columbia MO, has two adult daughters, a dog, and one amazing grandson who is 10 years old.

Accountability: The Dilemma of Parental Culpability
In recent years, the United States has experienced a significant shift toward holding parents legally accountable for their children's criminal behavior, particularly in cases involving youth violence and mass shootings.
(Obj: #2) High-profile prosecutions, such as the Crumbley case, have expanded the scope of parental criminal liability by emphasizing factors like failure to act on warning signs and allowing access to firearms. This trend reflects a broader movement toward increased accountability not only for parents, but also for school officials and institutions.
(Obj: #1) Parental responsibility laws fall into three main categories: civil liability (financial responsibility), status offenses (e.g., truancy), and criminal liability (rare but increasing in serious cases). While these laws aim to deter juvenile delinquency and promote responsible parenting, their effectiveness remains uncertain. Research shows no clear evidence that such laws reduce youth offending, and many parents are unaware of their legal responsibilities.
(Obj: #4) A key concern is that these laws often oversimplify the causes of juvenile delinquency. Youth behavior is influenced by multiple factors beyond parenting, including peer pressure, socioeconomic conditions, mental health, and environmental influences. Although parental monitoring and safe firearm storage can reduce risks, they are not solely determinative.
{Obj: #3) The expansion of parental liability raises significant ethical and legal concerns. Critics argue that these laws may violate due process, particularly when strict liability standards presume parental guilt without proof of intent or negligence.
(Obj: #6) Additionally, enforcement disproportionately impacts marginalized communities, including Black, low-income, and single-parent households, exacerbating existing inequalities. Gender bias is also evident, with mothers often facing greater scrutiny and blame. From the perspective of juveniles, most do not believe their parents are responsible for their actions, though many acknowledge that the possibility of parental punishment could deter their behavior. This highlights a tension between perceptions of accountability and the potential deterrent effect of these laws.
(Obj: #5) The broader juvenile justice system has also shifted from a rehabilitative model toward a more punitive approach, influenced in part by exaggerated fears of youth violence, such as the "super-predator" myth. Evidence suggests that harsher measures, including transferring juveniles to adult courts, may increase recidivism rather than reduce it.
Given these challenges, many experts advocate for alternative approaches that emphasize prevention and support rather than punishment. These include restorative justice programs, family-based interventions, mental health services, and expanded roles for juvenile or family courts that involve parents without criminalizing them.
Overall, while parental responsibility laws aim to enhance accountability and public safety, their long-term effectiveness is unclear, and they risk unintended consequences such as family instability and systemic inequality. Future policy efforts should focus on balanced, evidence-based strategies that address the root causes of youth offending while promoting fairness and rehabilitation.
Post Approved 0.5 hours Legal Studies Hours and 1 Interpersonal Hours/1.8 total CLE Hours
Faculty: Chief Gary Hill, Vice President of Campus Culture and Founder and Director of the Lincoln University Law Enforcement Training Academy

Workshops:

Chief Gary Hill has been with the Lincoln University Police Department since December 1, 2016. He currently serves as the Vice President of Campus Culture and Founder and Director of the Lincoln University Law Enforcement Training Academy. Lincoln University Law Enforcement Training Academy gained attention for becoming the first Historically Black College or University (HBCU) to have a basic Law Enforcement Academy on its campus. Chief Hill has been featured on ABC News, Good Morning America, The Today Show as well as the PBS documentary series "Road Trip Nation". Chief Hill was interviewed by the New York Times (First Person) in addition to several Missouri media outlets. Chief Hill started his Criminal Justice career as a Corrections Officer at the Jefferson City Correctional Center (The Walls) in 1996. He joined the Cole County Sheriff' s Office in 1998. He was promoted through the ranks from Deputy to Sergeant in 2002, Sergeant to Lieutenant in 2005 and served as the Patrol Division Commander until November 2016. Chief Hill came to Jefferson City from Muskogee Oklahoma to attend Lincoln University where he graduated in 2001 with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice. He went on to receive his Master' s Degree in Administration of Criminal Justice Agencies from Columbia College in 2006, and his Doctorate in Criminal Justice from National University in 2024. Chief Hill is a graduate of the Federal Bureau of Investigations 239th National Academy class Quantico, Virginia (2009). Chief Hill is a Task Force Officer on the FBI's JTTF (Joint Terrorism Task Force). Chief Hill served on the Cole County Sheriffs Office SWAT Team from 2001 to 2016 (Commander from 2005 until 2016). He also played an intricate role in establishing the Central Missouri Tactical Officers Association (C.M.T.O.A) and served as Vice President from 2013 to 2016. Chief Hill was awarded the Law Enforcement Commendation Medal from the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. Chief Hill was appointed to the Missouri POST Commission by Governor Parson in 2020.

2025 Missouri RED Data, data trends, and JDTA Revalidation Study
This presentation will provide an overview of the racial and ethnic disparity statistics for 2025, with a focus on key findings that emerged throughout the year. We will examine what the data tell us about disparities within the juvenile justice system and consider areas that may warrant further attention or continued monitoring.

We will also review trends identified in the 2025 Juvenile Annual Report. These trends will provide an opportunity to consider their potential implications for system practices, decision-making, and ongoing efforts to address racial and ethnic disparities.

In addition, the presentation will cover the JDTA revalidation process, including an overview of the process, the results, and key takeaways. We will discuss what the revalidation findings tell us about the quality and reliability of the data and how these findings may inform future reporting and analysis.

Finally, we will discuss the challenges associated with implementing the new data collection process for race and ethnicity. These changes may affect how data are reported and analyzed and could have implications for our ability to consistently monitor racial and ethnic disparities and identify meaningful trends over time. We will consider the anticipated impact of these changes and emphasize the importance of maintaining reliable and consistent data to support informed decision-making, effective system monitoring, and continued efforts to advance equity within the juvenile justice system. ***POST Approved for 1 Interpersonal Hours and 0.5 Legal Studies Hours/1.8 total CLE Hours including 0.6 Ethics Hours***
Faculty: Dr. Mark Ritchey, Research Manager, Office of State Courts Administrator

Dr. Mark Ritchey received his PhD. in Political Science from the University of Missouri. His primary research interest was law enforcement impact on public policy. Dr. Ritchey went on to work for the Missouri State Highway Patrol and served as their Statistical Analysis Center Director for six years. In this role, he led several research projects from traffic safety to crime control. Currently, Dr. Ritchey serves as the Research Manager at OSCA. Dr. Ritchey manages several research programs and provides expertise in data analytics to the executive staff and Missouri's Supreme Court.

Exploring Racial and Ethnic Disparity in Delinquency Cases: A Challenge and an Opportunity
Daniel Feldman and Tim Honse from the Missouri State Public Defender will educate participants on the historical cross section of race and delinquency laws, and how that informs our work in the delinquency system today. We will also take a look at alarming Racial and Ethnic Disparity (RED) data in Missouri over the last few years to understand how Missouri is doing Statewide. Finally, we hope to have an interactive and creative discussion with participants about the challenges and opportunities presented by the data.
POST Approved for 1 Legal Studies Hours and 0.5 Interpersonal Hours/1.8 total CLE Hours including 1.8 Ethics Hours and 1.8 Elimination of Bias Hours
Faculty: Daniel Feldman and Tim Honse, Missouri State Public Defender

Workshops:

Daniel Feldman is the District Defender of the Missouri State Public Defender Children's Defense Team in Columbia. The Children's Defense Team represents children in delinquency cases, certification hearings, and adult courts throughout Missouri. Daniel has defended children and adults for the Missouri State Public Defender in Kansas City and St. Louis. Before becoming a public defender, Daniel worked for Missouri Children's Division as an Alternative Care Worker in Clay County. Daniel lives in Columbia with his wife, daughter, and rescue dog Iggy. He has coached high school baseball, and he loves to kayak.

Tim Honse is District Defender for the Rural Children's Defense Team at Missouri State Public Defender (MSPD). Tim coordinates Children's Defense Specialist attorneys throughout the State who represent children in juvenile court as well as those who have been transferred to adult court. Tim has been with MSPD for 11 and has appeared in more than 30 counties around the State, as well as the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court. Tim is a graduate of William Jewell College and UMKC School of Law. Tim lives in rural Perry County with his wife and four children. Tim's favorite thing to do is cook and share food with friends and family. Tim and his family enjoy camping, biking, and all things Marvel and Star Trek.

Digital Danger Zone: The Risks Youth are Facing Online
Exploitation of children online is on the rise through enticement, grooming, sextortion, and cyberbullying.

This session will provide attendees with educational information on types of online predatory behaviors, as well as tips and and recommended resources for professionals to help keep children safe.

Participants will explore current trends in online grooming, sextortion, AI generated content, and social media and gaming, and resources available to help prevent and respond to online abuse. ***POST Approved for 1.5 Interpersonal Hours/1.8 total CLE Hours***
Faculty: Randi Hemme, Prevention and Outreach Program Specialist, Missouri Network Against Child Abuse

Randi Hemme joined Missouri Network Against Child Abuse in January 2022 as the SAFE-CARE Program Manager before assuming her role as Prevention and Outreach Program Specialist in 2025. As the Prevention and Outreach Program Specialist, Randi supports MO-NACA's primary child abuse prevention programming and outreach efforts including leading the statewide network of child sexual abuse prevention facilitators and coordinating all MO-NACA communications.

Prior to coming to Missouri Network Against Child Abuse, Randi worked in the nonprofit field for seven years as the Awareness and Volunteer Coordinator for her local domestic and sexual assault shelter. Randi is passionate about ending the cycle of abuse for all. Randi also spent time working on the ambulance as an Emergency Medical Technician throughout college, and has witnessed firsthand the traumatic effects of multiple forms of abuse. Randi attended Drury University for Business Marketing.

Trial-by-Trivia
This training will give supervisory staff a solid framework for helping frontline workers prepare for court at every stage of an abuse and neglect case, all the way through the permanency hearing. Instead of a traditional lecture format, the content will be presented through a gamified trivia experience, where participants play rounds of courtroom-focused questions. During gameplay, we will explain and discuss the legal rules that apply at each point in a child's case, highlight how expectations shift across hearings, and introduce practical tools supervisors can use before and after each hearing to ensure frontline staff confidently represent themselves and their agency in court. Although the training is designed to support supervisors in building their teams' courtroom skills, the interactive trivia format will also be engaging and informative for anyone looking to strengthen their effectiveness in court.
POST Approved for 1.5 Legal Studies Hours/1.8 total CLE Hours including 1.8 Ethics Hours
Faculty: Karen Bickel, Legal Aspects Trainer, Kelley McCadden Winkler, Legal Aspects Trainer, MO Department of Social Services, Children's Division

Karen Bickel is an attorney and yoga teacher living in Hannibal, Missouri. She began her legal career in 2008 with the Missouri Division of Legal Services, representing child welfare workers in northeast Missouri. After the birth of her first child, Karen transitioned to her own practice where she represented children and families involved in the child welfare system. In 2016, Karen began representing the Juvenile Officer for Missouri's 14th Judicial Circuit. Since 2020, she has developed and delivered legal training to child welfare professionals as a special counsel and legal aspects trainer for Children's Division. Karen has taught yoga for seven years, offering slow flow classes focused on accessible movement, strength, flexibility, breath to movement connection, and building bodily awareness. Karen is an avid nature lover and enjoys life with her partner, Jocelyn, her children—Evelyn, Elise, and Eleanor—and their pets Stella, Roger, and Blackberry.

Kelley McCadden Winkler began her career in child welfare in 2006 as a child advocacy attorney at Voices for Children, which is now CASA of St. Louis. As a child advocacy attorney, Kelley served as a guardian ad litem for children in foster care in St. Louis City and supported CASA volunteers in their advocacy. Kelley also taught preservice and in service training for CASA volunteers. In 2016, Kelley joined the St. Louis City Juvenile Office as a staff attorney where she specialized in termination of parental rights and abuse/neglect cases. Kelley has also served on planning committees for multidisciplinary trainings sponsored by the St. Louis City Juvenile Office and St. Louis City Children's Division. Kelley earned her J.D. from Saint Louis University. Outside of work, Kelley enjoys spending time with her two sons and her husband of 22 years.

Workshops:

From Awareness to Action: Building Suicide-Safer Rural Communities
In rural communities, creating meaningful change requires more than raising awareness, it requires trusted relationships, practical tools, and the courage to take action. Drawing from the work of Shelby County Cares, this session explores how one rural community is building a locally driven approach to suicide prevention by meeting people where they are, reducing barriers to support, and equipping everyday community members to recognize risk and respond. Participants will examine the important role juvenile justice professionals and other trusted messengers can play in identifying warning signs, starting difficult conversations, connecting youth and families with help, and strengthening a community-wide safety net. Attendees will leave with realistic, adaptable strategies they can use to help move their own communities from awareness to action. ***POST Approved for 1.5 Interpersonal Hours/1.8 total CLE Hours including 1.8 Ethics Hours***
Faculty: Jolie Foreman, Executive Director, Shelby County Cares

Jolie Foreman is the Executive Director of Shelby County Cares, a grassroots nonprofit dedicated to strengthening mental health and suicide prevention resources in rural Missouri. A lifelong rural Missourian, farmer, and mother of three, Jolie brings both lived experience and a deep understanding of the unique challenges facing agricultural and rural communities. Under her leadership, Shelby County Cares has grown from a local effort to address gaps in mental health care into an organization advancing innovative, community-driven approaches to suicide prevention, access to counseling, youth and family support, and rural resilience. Her work centers on meeting people where they are and building solutions around the strengths, relationships, and trusted voices already present in rural communities.

Jolie is a certified Mental Health First Aid, QPR, and Counseling on Access to Lethal Means instructor and has presented her work at state and national conferences. In 2026, she received the Missouri Behavioral Health Council's Suicide Prevention Innovation Award for her work advancing suicide prevention in rural Missouri.

At the heart of Jolie's work is a simple belief: where someone lives should never determine whether they have access to hope, connection, and support.

What you should know about THC and other cannabinoids
This presentation will provide an overview of cannabis and related products. The talk will cover what is known about: rates of use and changes in use in youth, the acute and chronic impact of cannabis on both brain and behavior, factors that influence both use of cannabis and consequences from use, and what we know about prevention and intervention in youth. In addition, the talk will cover what is currently known about related products (e.g., K2, kratom, 7-OH, delta-8 THC). ***POST Approved for 1.5 Interpersonal Hours/1.8 total CLE Hours including 1.8 Ethics Hours***
Faculty: Dr. Denis McCarthy, Professor, University of Missouri and Sydney Shoemaker, Univ. of MO Dept. of Psychological Science

Dr. Denis M. McCarthy is a Professor of Psychology and the Associate Chair for Research in the Department of Psychological Sciences at the University of Missouri. He received his BA in Psychology and Philosophy from the University of Notre Dame, his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Kentucky, and did his Clinical Internship and Post-doctoral work at the University of California San Diego. His research has focused on identifying predictors of alcohol-related negative consequences, with a particular emphasis on risk for driving while impaired by alcohol or cannabis. His work has been consistently funded by NIH/NIAAA since 2002. He is the Director of MU's Addiction Training group, funded by NIAAA training grants (T32 and R25) that supports 18 undergraduate, pre- and post-doctoral training per year. He is also the Director of the Missouri Center for Addiction Research and Engagement at the University of Missouri, which provides support to addiction-related research and training activities across the University of Missouri system.

Sydney Shoemaker is a fourth-year doctoral student in clinical psychology at the University of Missouri. She graduated from Missouri State University in 2021 with a master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. She has worked with individuals involved in the criminal justice system through a clinical internship at the Greene County Justice Center. As a graduate student in the Health Intervention and Treatment (HIT) Research Lab, she conducted a needs assessment among youth currently in Missouri's Division of Youth Services (DYS) residential care to evaluate their priorities for mental health treatment. Her research aims to investigate novel prevention and intervention methods that reduce substance-related harm among vulnerable populations, including justice-involved youth.



Thursday and Friday Morning Yoga

Karen Bickel

Karen Bickel is an attorney and yoga teacher living in Hannibal, Missouri. She has taught yoga since 2019, focusing on slow flow classes that emphasize accessible movement, strength-building, flexibility, and matching breath with movement to increase bodily awareness and mindfulness.

Karen uses her law degree and experience in child welfare and juvenile justice to develop and teach legal curriculum for child welfare professionals. She is also a mother and enjoys life with her partner, Jocelyn, her children—Evelyn, Elise, and Eleanor—and their pets Stella, Roger, and Blackberry.

Thursday morning, 7-7:45am—Bring your yoga mat with you.
Friday morning, 7:15-7:45am—Chair Yoga—Chair yoga is a gentle form of yoga practiced while sitting on a chair or using one for support during standing poses.

Benefits:

* Improves flexibility and muscle strength.
* Enhances balance and posture.
* Reduces stress and relieves joint tension.
* Lowers the risk of falling compared to traditional floor yoga

Vinyasa flow yoga is a dynamic style of exercise where you link physical yoga postures together into a continuous sequence using your breath.

Key Principles:

* Breath and Movement: You inhale for one movement and exhale for the next, which keeps your mind focused and steady.
* Continuous Flow: Unlike traditional Hatha yoga—where you rest and hold individual poses for a long time—Vinyasa moves smoothly from one posture to the next.

Variety: Instructors change the sequences each class, meaning no two classes are ever exactly alike. [1, 2]

Common Benefits:

* Builds Strength: Holding planks, lunges, and balancing poses tones your upper body, core, and legs.
* Improves Flexibility: Flowing through stretches lengthens tight muscles and increases joint mobility.
* Reduces Stress: Focusing deeply on your breathing calms your nervous system.



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