

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FOR INSTRUCTORS: Fall 2023

HEATHER CLINGER, MA, is a Program Manager for Wheeler Clinic with oversight of grants utilizing evidenced-based practices focused on the reduction of underage and high-risk drinking, mental health promotion, and opioid and stimulant education. She is a member of the CT Suicide Advisory Board. She is a certified instructor of Mental Health First Aid, Youth Mental Health First Aid, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, Talk Saves Lives, and Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) for suicide prevention.

SKYE COLLINS, (they/them) is the state coordinator for the Connecticut branch of the Hearing Voices Network. Skye graduated from UConn with a degree in journalism, and uses their passion for writing, research, and interviewing to change perceptions around voice-hearing. As a Recovery Support Specialist and a certified HVN facilitator, they have advocated more effective support systems for people who hear voices, see visions, and have other alternate experiences. Their work emphasizes the impact of language and word choice within mental health care, as well as the critical role cultural stigma or acceptance play in individual outcomes.

ANTHONY CRETELLA, R.N., is a Registered Nurse who has worked as a Medical / Surgical Nurse since 2010 in the state's largest hospital systems. Before coming to Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services he worked in Connecticut's Department of Corrections as a Nurse and Facility Staff Educator. While with CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services he has functioned as a Nurse Consultant and Clinical Educator.

MICHAELA FISSEL, MA, is a Breathwork Practitioner, Meditation Facilitator, 200-Hour Wild Essence Yoga Teacher, and works in the role of Executive Director at Advocacy Unlimited, Inc. Michaela has studied recovery for nearly 16 years, and recently completed a graduate degree in Conscious Studies where she explored breathwork as a method for supporting recovery from trauma. Through an integrative approach, Michaela invites a new way of perceiving and responding to distress from a place of empowered present awareness.

MARY FITZGERALD graduated with her Masters in Social Work in 2020 from Southern CT State University. Mary is currently a Licensed Master of Social Work in the state of CT and has been in her role as Family Care Plan Coordinator for SEPI-CT (Substance Exposed Pregnancy Initiative of CT) for 1.5 years. Before this position, Mary was the Program Director for Waterbury Youth Service's Youth and Family Emergency Services. She provided clinical counseling services and resources to youth ages 18-24 who were homeless or unstably housed as well as their families. Mary also has experience counseling individuals who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community. Mary has returned to her roots doing work at the systems and policy level with SEPI-CT. SEPI-CT aims to strengthen capacity at the community, provider, and systems levels to improve the health and well-being of infants born substance exposed through supporting the recovery of pregnant people and their families.

DAVID HOWE, L.C.S.W., has over 40 years of experience in the mental health and addiction recovery field as an administrator, psychiatric clinician, consultant, and trainer. He served as Director of Recovery Services and Consumer Affairs Director from 2007-2014 at Connecticut Valley Hospital. During that time, he was twice honored with the State of CT Distinguished Managerial Services Award for his administrative oversight, research and implementation of Person-Centered Recovery-Oriented Services. Known for his ability to effectively improve systems through creative problem solving, he pioneered a collaborative patient/staff committee that implemented significant reduction in the use of restraint and seclusion on inpatient units. He has developed and implemented a variety of innovative recovery-oriented initiatives that have ongoing influence on services and culture at CVH and the surrounding state mental health and addiction community. David is Clinical Director of the St Vincent DePaul Mission of Waterbury and is a member of the adjunct faculty in Psychiatry at the Yale School of Medicine.

SAMIA HUSSEIN, M.P.H., currently serves as a Trainer at the Office of Multicultural Health Equity with the Office of the Commissioner. She received her Master's in Public Health from the University of Connecticut and her Undergraduate degree from Central CT State University. She has experience developing training curriculum and facilitating workshops in various settings and has worked with diverse populations.

BOB JOPE, LMHC, has been a member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers since 2010. He teaches Motivational Interviewing (MI) as an adjunct faculty member at Salve Regina University, Rhode Island College, and University of Massachusetts; he is also a consultant with the Addiction Technology Transfer Center at Brown University and works as an MI coder for a nationally recognized coding lab. Bob is the lead trainer for Jope Consulting Services, has taught MI at agencies all over New England, and consults internationally on teaching and coding the method. Holding a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology, Bob has worked in the mental health, child welfare, and substance abuse fields for the past twenty-five years. He was originally trained in MI by Stephen Andrew in 2007, and has since trained with Ali Hall, Alan Lyme, Bill Miller, and Terri Moyers. Bob has also developed and taught program-specific MI training applications and has trained thousands of people in various levels of Motivational Interviewing.

PAM MULREADY is a licensed professional counselor and a licensed alcohol and drug counselor who has extensive experience providing clinical services for individuals with substance use disorder and/or mental health conditions. She specializes in trauma-informed care and has additional training in medication assisted treatment, recovery supports, and substance use prevention. She has clinically supervised teams of licensed behavioral health clinicians providing partial hospital, intensive outpatient, and outpatient programming in multiple nonprofit settings in Connecticut. She is a SMART Recovery and SMART Recovery Family and Friends Program facilitator trainer as well as a Recovery Support Specialist.

MARGARET O'HAGAN-LYNCH, M.S., L.P.C., is the Director of the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Office of Workforce Development. She maintains a private practice in Wallingford, CT and is an adjunct faculty member of Bay Path University, the New England Institute of Addiction Studies and the Addiction Technology Transfer Center at Brown University. She has worked in the behavioral health field for over 35 years and is known for her expertise in working with people who have co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders. She has vast experience in both the public and private non-profit sectors in program design/implementation, staff development, training/consultation, and community networking while remaining active in addressing treatment needs on both a local and statewide level.

MARY-K O'SULLIVAN, LMFT, LADC, LPC, has been working as a Clinical Manager and Clinical Trainer for over 30 years. She has worked in both the private and public sectors in the fields of criminal justice, substance use disorders, co-occurring disorders, and clinical supervision in both inpatient and outpatient programs. She has worked as a trainer for the Department of Corrections, the Judicial Department, the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Social Services, UCONN Medical School, the Department of Education, and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services in the State of Connecticut as well as working as a Clinical Preceptor for the SARP program at the Groton Naval Submarine Base. She has trained both Nationally and Internationally including spending 10 years training with David Powell, PhD. and spending time in Singapore assisting their treatment system leaders in developing skills in co-occurring disorders treatment. She currently provides training and/or clinical supervision and oversight to Private Non-profits, DOC staff, DCF staff, DOL staff, CSSD staff including adult and juvenile probation officers, parole officers, juvenile residential services staff, bail staff, women's and family matters staff, clinicians, case managers, and medical staff.

MANUEL PARIS, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the Yale University School of Medicine and Deputy Director of Hispanic Services for the Connecticut Mental Health Center. He also serves as Director of Training for the Latinx Track of the Yale Psychology Pre- and Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program at the Hispanic Clinic. His professional contributions focus on the evaluation of cultural/linguistic adaptations of evidence-based interventions, multisite training and fidelity monitoring, workforce development, and public policy advocacy.

ED RENAUD, L.C.S.W, Ph.D., began his career at the Veterans Administration and has worked with survivors of trauma for over twenty years. He has published on the topics of attachment characteristics in combat veterans and working with trauma survivors in forensic settings. He is currently the Director of Social Work and Multicultural Services at Connecticut Valley Hospital.

HILLARY RUDENAUER is a Reiki Master Teacher, Postpartum Doula, 500-Hour Kripalu Yoga Teacher, and owner of The Mindful Mama. Hilary has completed additional training and certifications in peer support, trauma-informed practices, nervous system health, spiritual counseling, lactation, perinatal mental health, birth support, prenatal yoga, sound healing, Ayurveda, Qigong, mindfulness, breathwork, and LifeForce Yoga for Anxiety and Depression. She combines her lived experience as a trauma survivor with her professional expertise in the areas of mental health, maternal care, and holistic healing to create transformational experiences where people feel seen, safe, nurtured, and empowered.

DONALD SCHERLING, Psy.D., L.A.D.C., is a Senior Clinical Consultant, Health Educator, Behavioral Health Wellness Coach, assistant in the Care for Caregivers Yoga program, & a Clinical Faculty member in the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield, MA. Dr. Scherling is a certified trainer for the Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR Institute), the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC), and a Senior Clinical Consultant and Trainer with the Connecticut Dept. of Mental Health & Addiction Services, the CT Women's Consortium, and other regional and state-wide agencies in the Northeast.

SHANE SCOTT is a licensed clinical social worker and a Connecticut native. Shane received his Master's Degree from University of Connecticut School of Social Work in 2012. He believes that compassion, understanding, and fostering a holistic approach are an integral part of the healing process. As a dynamic and skilled social worker, Shane brings a vast array of experience beginning in 2005, where he began his career with working in with youth and families across the life span and in a variety of settings, including schools and communities. In addition, Shane has experience working with individuals that are experiencing depression, anxiety, trauma, and substance abuse conditions. Shane also has a strong passion and skill in working with individuals experiencing gender and sexual identity issues. Shane also has a talent with facilitating trainings, workshops, and coaching other professionals. Shane has a strong passion for personal and professional growth and has a strong passion as being a Social Worker. Shane also enjoys music, movies, and traveling, and physical exercise.

RAYMOND TAFRATE, Ph.D., is an associate professor and clinical psychologist at Central Connecticut State University, as well as a fellow and supervisor at the Albert Ellis Institute for Behavior Therapy. He is also an author, consultant, and trainer.

JENNIFER TIRADO was certified as a Recovery Support Specialist by Advocacy Unlimited in 2016. Shortly after, she became trained as a Hearing Voices Network Facilitator. Jennifer has worked in a variety of settings, including social clubs, employment and residential programs, clinical crisis intervention teams, and community support programs. Through her journey, Jennifer's focus has been promoting alternatives that focus on choice and seeing the person served as the expert of their own experience. She has a wide breadth of experience facilitating a wellness, creative and other support groups. Jennifer began to work for the Wildflower Alliance in 2021 and began coordinating Connecticut's Alternatives to Suicide Network through Advocacy Unlimited in early 2022. Through her effort, Jennifer has successfully established Alt2u groups in all five DMHAS regions in CT.

AVIVA VINCENT, Ph.D., L.M.S.W., V.S.M., earned her doctoral degree from Case Western Reserve University, Veterinary Social Work Certificate from the University of Tennessee, a fellowship with Animals in Society, and trained at The Institute for Interdisciplinary Salivary Bioscience Research, "spit camp". She is an instructor in the Veterinary Social Work and Veterinary Human Support Certificate Program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Her research interest includes exploring the physiological impact of the human-animal bond; specifically, the potential animal support to reduce fear and anxiety in stressful situations. She is co-founder and owner of Healing Paws LLC, the only VSW practice in Northeast Ohio. Dr. Vincent is on the advisory board of the Center for Human Animal Education Research and Education at Ohio State University, board of directors for the International Association of Veterinary Social Workers, and is founder of the human-animal interactions workgroup with the National Association of Social Workers-Ohio chapter. Dr. Vincent is a contributor to the forthcoming volume The Comprehensive Guide to Interdisciplinary Veterinary Social Work, and Career Paths in Human-Animal Interaction for Social and Behavioral Scientists.

JEREMY WAMPLER, L.C.S.W., ICGC-II, BACC, L.A.D.C. is the Program Director for the State of Connecticut, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Problem Gambling Services. Jeremy earned his Master in Social Work from Southern Connecticut State University, and he has been practicing in the field of problem gambling for over a decade. He is a board member on the International Gambling Counselor Certification Board, as well as the Association of Problem Gambling Services Administrators. Jeremy is a licensed clinical social worker, internationally certified gambling counselor, licensed alcohol, and drug counselor, as well as a board approved clinical consultant, through the IGCCB.

STEPHANIE WANKER-RIVERA is a Behavioral Health Clinical Manager with the State of Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Young Adult Services with the Office of the Commissioner. In addition, Director of the Young Parents Program for DMHAS YAS and the liaison to the Department of Corrections. I represent DMHAS on several statewide committees including: Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children, Reaching Home Campaign's Youth and Young Adult Homeless Work Group, Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee's Incarceration and also Racial and Ethnic Disparities Work Groups, Human Anti-Trafficking Response Team Statewide Committee, Department of Children and Families Region 5 Regional Advisory Committee, and a Board Member of the CT Association of Infant Mental Health, as well as a member of CT's Disaster Behavioral Health Response Team. She is a Certified Trainer in Introduction to Child Trafficking as well as Sequential Intercept Mapping. She has worked in the field of Mental Health for 32 years in various settings including outpatient, inpatient, adolescent residential treatment, adult Dual Diagnosis IOP, medical hospital, as well as with state agencies. I am a Licensed Professional Counselor in CT. Prior to DMHAS, I was a Social Work Supervisor and then Program Manager with the CT Department of Children and Families.

ELSA WARD, MS, CAC, is the Director of Recovery and Community Affairs, for Connecticut's Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). She represents DMHAS in national organizations and events as well as helping to ensure meaningful contact, input, and dialogue with diverse representatives of the recovery community throughout Connecticut. Prior to coming to DMHAS, Ms. Ward held a variety of roles over the past 22 years in the private non-profit world, primarily focused on helping those with co-occurring disorders. This has included more traditional settings such as residential, intensive outpatient and detox, then branching out into homeless outreach and engagement programs, supportive housing, peer recovery support and then designing and implementing a paid work apprentice program for people with barriers preventing them from competitive employment. Ms. Ward has an Associate degree in Drug and Alcohol Counseling and is a Certified Addictions Counselor (CAC) and Bachelor and Master Degrees in Human Services. Ms. Ward brings with her the very essence of empowering people with MH/SUD/COD towards change.

DR. ELLEN WHALEN is the Supervising Psychologist at DMHAS Waterbury Young Adult Services. For the past 15 years, she worked at DCF in their Central Office as well as the Albert J. Solnit Children's Center Hospital and Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility in Middletown, CT. She is a Certified Trainer in Introduction to Child Sex Trafficking in Connecticut and in Implicit Bias. Dr. Whelan received full certification as a clinician and supervisor in Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach (ACRA) and is intensively trained in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). At both DCF and DMHAS, she has served as representative of their respective diversity committees and earned a certificate in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace from the University of South Florida. She received her Doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida where she aided and facilitated research studies related to intersections of race and health. Currently, she is an adjunct professor for Nova Southeastern University's College of Psychology graduate programs and the Doctoral program in Speech and Language Pathology. Prior to transitioning to DMHAS, she held a Community Faculty Appointment of Clinical Assistant Professor at Yale University's Child Study Center and served as adjunct professor at the University of Bridgeport and Naugatuck Valley Community College undergraduate programs. Dr. Whelan is the Supervising Psychologist at the Albert J. Solnit Center's Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility in Middletown, CT. She serves as the Solnit Center South Campus representative for DCF's Statewide Racial Justice Committee as well as the representative for the Community Collaborative subcommittee. Additionally, she is the Diversity Action Team Co-facilitator and representative for the Solnit Center South Campus.

LISA WIBORG, L.I.S.W-S, V.S.W., completed her graduate degree in Social Work at The Ohio State University and her post-graduate certification in veterinary social work from the University of Tennessee. She has worked in direct clinical settings such as hospital social work, hospice care, and private adoption. Lisa is currently implementing her expertise on the human-animal bond in her current work in hospice. She has also developed a private practice, Healing Paws LLC which focuses on providing social work support into veterinary clinics in Northeast Ohio. Together with her Clinical Scholars Team, she will be implementing an evidenced based program to reduce compassion fatigue and burnout in veterinary medicine and promote the utilization of mental health services in the field. Lisa is currently the lead medical social worker for her hospice agency and continues to focus on education and support in the veterinary social work field with Healing Paws, LLC.

LAURA ZEPPIERI is a licensed professional counselor and licensed alcohol and drug counselor, advanced alcohol and drug counselor, international co-occurring gambling specialist and grief counselor--certified. She specializes in codependency in her work with loved ones and family members of people with alcohol and substance use and/or co-occurring mental health disorders. Laura's care is trauma-informed and she has over 26 years of experience in the field of alcohol and substance use disorders working with children, adolescents, young adults, and adults in varied levels of outpatient care: Pre-Trial Alcohol Education programs, DUI multiple-offender programs, partial hospital, intensive outpatient, relapse prevention, and individual counseling comprising also unresolved grief and gambling disorder. Laura facilitates mental health support groups for special populations and has been involved in local and regional prevention efforts for over 15 years. She is a founding member of the mental health ministry at her parish church. Laura is a SMART Recovery and SMART Recovery Family and Friends Program facilitator trainer.

LISA ZUROLO, LCSW, is a Behavioral Health Clinical Supervisor for the State of Connecticut, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. She has over 30 years of experience working with individuals from adolescence through later adulthood who have mental health or co-occurring disorders. Mrs. Zurolo has worked in a variety of settings in both the private and public sector including community hospital inpatient and outpatient programs, crisis service, state-operated local mental health authority outpatient program, as well as a state psychiatric hospital. For the past 23 years, Mrs. Zurolo has worked in managerial and supervisory capacities within the State of Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and has provided oversight of different state programs within the Office of Commissioner Young Adult Services Program, Connecticut Valley Hospital General Psychiatric Division, and most recently, with the Office of Commissioner Evidenced-Based Practices and Grants Division. She has also facilitated and co-facilitated numerous trainings on a variety of topics including specific diagnoses/treatment modalities, Risking Connection Trauma Curriculum, Sequential Intercept Model/Mapping, and is a Certified Trainer in Introduction to Human Trafficking. Mrs. Zurolo obtained her B.A. in Psychology from Fairfield University, M.A. in Community Psychology from the University of New Haven and M.S.W. from Fordham University. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in the State of Connecticut.