

## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FOR INSTRUCTORS: Winter 2025**

**CHRISTINE SAARI, MA, E-RYT 200, C-IAYT**, navigating her own path through anxiety and trauma has instilled in Christine a deep seated passion for helping others find their way. As a co-founder of Yoga Therapy Associates, Christine specializes in aiding those with anxiety and trauma, emphasizing practices that are both empowering and approachable. Her strength lies in her ability to listen and adapt, individualizing yoga therapy to resonate with each person's unique needs and preferences. Offering online and in-person sessions in Madison and New Haven, Christine's approach is a blend of empathy, expertise, and genuine desire to guide others towards healing.

**SARA MERRICK-ALBANO E-RYT 500, C-IAYT**, is dedicated to guiding those facing chronic pain and psychosomatic pain disorders. As a co-founder of Yoga Therapy Associates, her vision is clear: to make the healing essence of yoga accessible and resonant. With a tailored approach that draws from traditional yoga practices infused with contemporary neuroscience insights, Sara offers specialized online yoga therapy. She also sees clients in person in Watertown and Trumbull. Her commitment is to each individual's journey, ensuring that every session is a step towards holistic wellness.

**RACHEL BOUCHER, LCSW** is currently the Clinical Director at Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Prior to working in the Domestic Violence field, she worked as a clinician, supervisor and program director for 10 years providing mental health and substance use treatment to a variety of age groups in both outpatient and residential settings. Rachel has worked with survivors of violence as well as people who use violence in behavioral health settings. Rachel is passionate about providing training on domestic violence to behavioral health professionals as there is minimal available training on this topic despite its relevance and frequency. In all areas of her work her goal is to support people in obtaining resources, tools, and information to be more competent and feel more confident in their role.

**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.

**CATHERINE EWING, L.C.S.W., MDiv**, founder of Sacred Heart Alchemy, is a Transformational Life Coach, spiritually focused psychotherapist, EFT Practitioner, Minister of Spiritual Peacemaking, and energy healing practitioner. A student of the mind/body/spirit connection for over 25 years, Catherine is also a TEDx speaker. She loves training mental health professionals in the use of alternative modalities in psychotherapy and offers classes, workshops and retreats on a variety of topics related to the mind/body/spirit connection, spiritual awakening and women's transformation at midlife. Prior to her work as a coach, psychotherapist and healer, Catherine worked in the areas of sexual assault, domestic violence, child protective services, women's reproductive rights and school social work. She served as the Ct. Coordinator of the Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children and was a volunteer with the Trauma Relief Program in Newtown, CT following the school shootings in Sandy Hook. A life-long learner and spiritual seeker, Catherine brings a broad understanding of spiritual and metaphysical principles and a wide variety of practical tools and resources into her work and trainings.

**DR. BRIAN FUEHRLEIN** graduated from the M.D. Ph.D. program at the University of Florida in 2008, adult psychiatry residency program at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in 2012 and addiction psychiatry fellowship at Yale University in 2013. He is currently an Associate Professor and the director of the psychiatric emergency room at the VA Connecticut. Dr. Fuehrlein has a strong interest in medical student and resident education, particularly surrounding addiction psychiatry and serves on multiple local and national committees in this role. In 2017 he was awarded the Irma Bland award for excellency in psychiatry resident education through the APA. In 2018 he was awarded the Clerkship Faculty Teaching Award for Outstanding Medical Student Educator and Role Model. He is also passionate about emergency psychiatry and substance use disorders and has presented and published his work surrounding opioid use disorder in the emergency room setting. In 2019 he was inducted into the American College of Psychiatrists, an organization that recognizes excellence in clinical practice, research, academic leadership, or teaching.

**KELSEY HUST, LMSW, CPS**, is a Social Worker, Certified Prevention Specialist, and is a trained Tobacco Treatment Specialist. Kelsey has formal education in Community Organizing. She has worked in various programs focusing on mental health and substance use work in Adult Outpatient and EAP, to managing a youth substance prevention program, and building an adult outpatient tobacco treatment program. Kelsey is committed to DEI work and has co-chaired a Diversity, Health Equity, and Inclusion Committee and is a trained facilitator in Courageous Conversations. Kelsey passionately pursues her work of supporting individuals and communities through empathy and combining macro and micro approaches in her work.

**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.

**RUTA MAZELIS** was the editor of *The Cutting Edge: A Newsletter for People Living with Self-Inflicted Violence*, an internationally distributed quarterly on the topic of self-injury, founded in 1990. Ms. Mazelis has provided presentations and publications on this topic, as well as others such as trauma and trauma-informed systems of care, to a variety of audiences. A survivor of trauma herself, she has experience in providing services in mental health and substance abuse programs as well as in service and policy development, and research. Now working privately, she was on the staff of the Mental Health Empowerment Project and the Sidran Institute, serves on the board of the National Trauma Consortium, was a program manager for the National Center for Trauma-Informed Care, and serves as a consultant to various projects at local, federal, and international levels.

**CORINA PARKMOND, M.S., C-IAYT** leads with her knowledge and love of yoga by offering a practical approach to yoga therapy through client-centered care. Her approach is evidence-based and inclusive of the client's experience on their healing journey. Corina believes that the ancient teachings found in yoga offer an individualized route to experience optimal health and well-being. She focuses on supporting clients with pain, mental health conditions, through pregnancy, and those suffering emotional and spiritual disconnect. With a background in kinesiology, Corina holds a Master of Science degree in Yoga Therapy.

**RUTH PEARLMAN, LCSW, LICSW, M.ED.**, earned her MSW at the Smith College School for Social Work. She is a psychotherapist in private practice in Northampton, Mass. Ms. Pearlman's clinical specialties include veterans experiencing PTSD, college-aged students, familial survivors of suicide or homicide, adoption issues, ADD and ADHD, autism and bereavement. She is certified in Bereavement Facilitation and Accelerated Resolution Therapy. Prior to establishing her private practice, Ruth was a school-based clinician in Holyoke, Mass. Ruth teaches for the UConn SSW and offers specialized trainings for students, faculty, staff, and social work professionals.

**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.

**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.

**SHAYLA RANMAL-SUPPIES**, is a Public Health Educator with 10 plus years experience in community outreach and program management specializing in maternal, infant, and child health.

**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.

**DAVID TOLIN, Ph.D.**, is the Founder and Director of the Anxiety Disorders Center at the Institute of Living, and an Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry at Yale University School of Medicine. He was the 2014 President of the Clinical Psychology Division of the American Psychological Association, and a principal investigator for the National Institutes of Health. He received the Award for Lifetime Contribution to Psychology from the Connecticut Psychological Association. Dr. Tolin is the author of over 150 scientific journal articles, as well as the books *Doing CBT: A Comprehensive Guide to Working with Behaviors, Thoughts, and Emotions* and *Face Your Fears: A Proven Plan to Beat Anxiety, Panic, Phobias, and Obsessions*. Dr. Tolin has been featured on the reality TV series *Hoarders*, *The OCD Project*, and *My Shopping Addiction*, and has been a recurrent guest on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *The Dr. Oz Show*, and *Anderson Live!*

**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.

**BRENDA WESTBERRY** is the President and Founder of Westberry Consulting where she has been involved in providing training and workshops for community organizations and agencies throughout the country. She is a retired Adult Probation Chief from the Connecticut Judicial Branch with over 34 years of experience in working with the criminal justice population, substance abuse treatment agencies, the addicted client population and recovery organizations. Brenda is a 21-year veteran professor in the Sociology, Anthropology, Criminology, and Social Work, Department at Eastern Connecticut State University, A faculty member and Instructor for the NE-ATTC, at Brown University, The New England School of Addiction Studies and the New England School of Best Practices. Brenda is a consultant for the Black Addiction Counselor Education (BACE) program through ADCARE where she provides training for addiction professionals. Brenda is an active member of the NAAP, NACSW.

**LAURA ZEPPIERI** is a licensed professional counselor and licensed alcohol and drug counselor, advanced alcohol and drug counselor, international co-occurring gambling specialist. 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 28 years of experience in the field of alcohol and substance use and co-occurring disorders working with children, adolescents, young adults, adults and families 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 issues 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 and has been recently named the SMART Recovery Regional Coordinator for Connecticut.

**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.