

Speaker Bios



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NARMH
National Association for
Rural Mental Health

Emerging from COVID-19:
Lessons Learned and Future Directions for Rural Mental Health

Erin Briley, MS, NCSP



Erin Briley works for WICHE's Behavioral Health Program as a Research and Technical Assistant Associate as well as a Technical Trainer for the Mountain Plains MHTTC. Ms. Briley's work with the WICHE Behavioral Health Program includes a variety of behavioral health projects, but her primary roles involve assisting the creation and implementation of Psychology Internship Consortiums in rural western states as well as providing training and supports for school behavioral health. Prior to coming to WICHE, Ms. Briley worked for 20 years in the schools, serving primarily as a school psychologist and providing educational and behavioral health direct and indirect supports for children ages 3 through 22 of all developmental levels in California, Hawaii, and Colorado. During that timeframe, Erin also had opportunities to serve as a special education administrator, program manager for a School Based Behavioral Health program for Hawaii's Department of Education, as well as trained and supervised paraprofessionals providing individualized supports to children with special needs. She earned her Bachelor's in Human Development and Family Studies at Colorado State University, her Master's in Counseling/School Psychology and a Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis at California State University Los Angeles and is working on her PhD (ABD) in Clinical Psychology. Ms. Briley is a Nationally Certified School Psychologist. She has completed certificates in Grant Writing and is working towards her Credential in Public Leadership.

Marc S. Condojani, LCSW, CAS

Marc Condojani is a licensed clinical social worker and a certified addictions specialist in Colorado. He has been working in the behavioral health field for 29 years, during which time he has held a variety of positions including clinician, manager, educator and administrator. Marc is the Director of Adult Treatment and Recovery for the Division of Community Behavioral Health, Office of Behavioral Health within the Colorado Department of Human Services. His team contracts for behavioral health services in Colorado, with oversight responsibilities for the treatment and recovery services funded by the SAMHSA behavioral health block grants, numerous discretionary grants, and State general and cash funds. He has served on a number of Colorado interagency committees, including as Vice Chair for Treatment of the Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force that is chaired by the State Attorney General. He represented Colorado on the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD) as the Vice President of the National Treatment Network. He is the Project Director for three SAMHSA grants awarded to Colorado focused on the opiate crisis.



Sarah Davidon, Ed.D.
Davidon Consulting

Since 1998 Dr. Sarah Davidon has lived and worked in Colorado, while also consulting nationally, providing technical assistance, delivering keynote addresses and presentations, and authoring publications, all designed to help organizations identify and commit to effective children's mental health policy and program investment. She is the founder and principal consultant with Davidon Consulting, where she serves as a nationally recognized expert in both early childhood and school-age mental health system design and strategy, working with organizations in Colorado and across the country to improve how children's mental health is understood and addressed. Dr. Davidon developed pioneering School Mental Health and Early Childhood Mental Health Toolkits, identifying best practices and strategies to promote children's mental health. She served as a Governor's appointee to the Children's Mental Health Subcommittee of the Colorado Behavioral Health Task Force, serves on the Board of Directors of Healthy Child Care Colorado, has held appointments to the Douglas County Commissioners' Mental Health Committee, Jefferson County School Safety and Security Task Force, and Colorado's Behavioral Health Transformation Council, and is past-president of the Colorado Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. Dr. Davidon is a graduate of Bryn Mawr College and the Harvard University Graduate School of Education and received her doctorate from the University of Colorado School of Education and Human Development in educational equity, and holds assistant professor appointments at both the University of Colorado School of Medicine and Georgetown University.

Amey Dettmer, CPS

Amey Dettmer is a person with lifelong lived experience with mental health challenges. In 2011 she graduated from a Peer Specialist Certification Training, and began offering Medicaid billable and community-based peer support services in Pennsylvania. By 2014, she was introduced to the role of a peer support supervisor, and by 2016 started working with the Copeland Center for Wellness and Recovery. At the Copeland Center she works as the Program Manager of the SAMHSA-funded National Consumer Technical Assistance Center; Doors to Wellbeing. In this role, she supports the organizing of various statewide and national peer workgroups and committees, develops peer support and recovery training curriculums, conducts research, and provides technical assistance and peer support education to peer communities and organizations throughout the United States. Amey's work focuses specifically on peer specialists, youth leadership development, and peer-led recovery education. In December 2018, her devoted efforts resulted in recognition by the National Association of Peer Supporters (N.A.P.S.) as she received the "Disruptive Innovator Award" highlighting her work in youth peer leadership and honoring her as a young adult who has made a significant transformative contribution to the field of Peer Support through leadership, programming, and activism. In September 2019, Amey became a N.A.P.S. Board Member and is currently working alongside international peer support leaders to strengthen the peer workforce globally. Amey is a nationally recognized Advanced Level WRAP Facilitator and holds her Certified Peer Specialist Certification through the Pennsylvania Certification Board although she currently resides in rural central Vermont.

John Draper, PhD

Executive Vice President, National Networks, Vibrant Emotional Health

Dr. John Draper has over 30 years of experience in crisis intervention and suicide prevention work, and is considered an international expert in crisis contact center practices (hotline, online chat, text services, etc.). Since 2004, Dr. Draper has been the Executive Director of the SAMHSA-funded National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-TALK, now also the 988 service), overseeing all aspects of this service—including its subnetwork, the Disaster Distress Helpline—and the Lifeline’s partnership with the VA in administering the Veteran’s Crisis Line. As an expert in crisis services, Dr. Draper has regularly engaged with print, broadcast and web-based media for over 20 years. Dr. Draper has been quoted in *The New York Times*, *ABC News*, *The New York Post*, and *TIME* among others.

Jordan Gulley, Senior Associate
TAC

Jordan Gulley, LICSW, has ten years of experience managing and administering programs providing direct services to people with behavioral health conditions and those experiencing homelessness. Prior to joining TAC, she was the Site Coordinator/Clinical Director of the DC Department of Behavioral Health's Community Response Team (CRT) a 24-hour crisis response and behavioral health outreach team; a program she supported with the design, creation, implementation and data mapping. Her work has concentrated on enhancing cross-system efforts to improve crisis response services through collaboration with law enforcement, first responders, and the 911-dispatch system (PSAPS). Her efforts enhanced co-response services for individuals with behavioral health issues, diverted individuals with low-level offenses from the justice system into intensive behavioral health services, and assisted in the creation of a pilot 9-1-1 call diversion program. She served on the key stakeholder task force to evaluate the District's commitment and implementation laws and recommend modifications to promote autonomy and promote trauma-informed care. Mrs. Gulley served as a co-chair of the Washington, D.C. Interagency Council on Homelessness, provided police officers with Crisis Intervention Training on behavioral health services and crisis response, and she currently teaches fourth-year psychiatric residents how to enhance comprehensive psychiatric care for individuals experiencing homelessness. At TAC, she works on PEW-funded initiative supporting states in planning for the implementation of the new national 988 mental health crisis hotline and a California Health Care Foundation project to assist states in utilizing American Rescue Plan Medicaid expansion funding strategies to create a more robust, streamlined, and comprehensive crisis response system.

Ciara Hansen, Ph.D.

Ciara.hansen@ihs.gov



Dr. Hansen is a clinical psychologist in the ‘Iina Counseling Services department at Northern Navajo Medical Center located at the Indian Health Service Hospital in Shiprock, NM. Dr. Hansen earned her Ph.D. from the University of Montana as a member of the Indians into Psychology (INPSYCH) program. She completed her pre-doctoral internship and her post-doc fellowship at Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center, located on the leeward coast of Oahu, serving primarily a Native Hawaiian population. Dr. Hansen’s clinical work has focused on using evidence-based treatments to meet the psychological needs of underserved minority communities. She uses a cognitive-behavioral theoretical orientation situated within a multicultural/intersectional framework to conceptualize client symptomology and often uses third-wave therapies to address client concerns. Dr. Hansen’s research has aligned with her clinical goals to address health disparities and build capacity within American Indian communities. Dr. Hansen’s dissertation project focused on identifying unique risk and resiliency factors for Tribal members involved in the justice system in Montana. In her current role, Dr. Hansen has recently collaborated with the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education and two other rural mental health hospitals/clinics to develop a pre-doctoral internship training consortium focused on providing competent psychological services in rural settings.

Rebecca Helfand received her PhD in Psychology with a doctoral minor in statistics from Baylor University before moving to Colorado as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Colorado's Institute for Behavioral Genetics. Prior to joining the American Psychological Association as the Senior Director for Scientific Knowledge and Expertise, she worked for the WICHE Behavioral Health Program team where she conducted a variety of research projects and oversaw teams of evidence-based practice fidelity reviewers in several states. Before that Rebecca worked for the Office of Behavioral Health in the State of Colorado Department of Human Services. In her four years with OBH, she worked on a variety of projects with other state agencies, namely the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Department of Healthcare Policy, and Financing. Rebecca served as the Director of the Data and Evaluation unit within OBH where she supervised a team of twelve people, affording her the opportunity to work on projects throughout the OBH office.



Bio 2021

René Keet is practicing psychiatrist and director at the community mental health service GGZ-Noord-Holland-Noord, The Netherlands. He leads the FIT Academy (Flexible, Innovative Top-ambulatory <https://bit.ly/2xfeRBy>, that provides training, e-learning, service evaluation and support to international reform projects of community mental health care.

He is chair of the European Community Mental Health Services network (EUCOMS, <https://www.eucoms.net>). The aim of this network is to learn from each other in international exchange and support human rights in mental health care. It is a community of practice, based upon a shared vision on community mental health. This vision is described in the consensus document that you can download from the website: <https://bit.ly/2V6dGxl>. He describes the 6 principles in 15 minutes in <https://vimeo.com/256413380>

He is an international expert in mental health reform projects MENSANA in Moldova (<http://trimbos.md/?lang=en>) and other projects, mainly in Central and Eastern Europe. Currently he is involved in a training of workforce in community mental health centres in Turkey, a project co-financed by the European Union and the WHO. He is a member of the Council Clinical Leaders of the International Initiative Mental Health Leadership (IIMHL) <https://www.iimhl.com/>.

**Nancy Kirchner
Brief Bio**

Nancy Kirchner currently works for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in the Division of Benefits and Coverage, working on Medicaid state plan benefits, a position she has held since March of 2012. Prior to that position she worked in CMS for four years as a health insurance specialist focusing on home and community based services, including 1915 (c) waivers, optional Medicaid state plan services, the Money Follows the Person program and employment policy. Prior to her position at CMS, Ms. Kirchner worked at several executive level positions at the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration over a period of eleven years. She worked in several non profit agencies providing supports and services to people with developmental disabilities for fourteen years prior to that time. Ms. Kirchner has a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Franklin and Marshall College and a Masters Degree in Social Work from the University of Maryland School of Social Work and Community Planning.

Kathy Langlois
Brief Bio

Kathy Langlois, MPA, works toward providing opportunities for leadership development and rapid knowledge exchange in mental health, addictions and disability through her work as the North America Regional Lead for the International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership (IIMHL) and the International Initiative for Disability Leadership (IIDL).

Kathy is passionate about improving mental health, addictions and suicide prevention outcomes, including working in partnership with Indigenous peoples. Kathy has a background of 35 years in public service at the federal and provincial government levels in Canada. Since 2014, she has been consulting on mental health and addictions leadership and policy, including internationally.

Kathy supports IIMHL's Rural Behavioral Health Collaborative, which convenes leaders who work in or are interested in rural mental health, as part of a global initiative to rapidly share knowledge and promising practices.

Kevin Martone, NARMH President
Executive Director, Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC)

Kevin Martone is Executive Director of the Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC) and President of the National Association for Rural Mental Health (NARMH). Kevin has provided consultation to numerous federal, state and local agencies on a range of issues related to behavioral health systems, including Olmstead and community integration, crisis services, Medicaid financing, homelessness, and supportive housing. Prior to TAC, Kevin spent six years at the New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS) as the state mental health commissioner. During this time, he was on the NASMHPD Board for four years, including a year as Board President. Earlier in his career, he was CEO of a supportive housing agency and spent several years working in community mental health. He has taught courses at the Rutgers University School of Social Work and Tufts University School of Medicine. Kevin is currently president-elect for the National Association for Rural Mental Health.

Monica McConkey has 25 years of experience in the behavioral health field as a counselor, program supervisor and administrator. She has a Masters Degree in Counseling and is a Licensed Professional Counselor in the state of Minnesota. Her focus throughout her career has been to increase access to, and remove the stigma often attached to mental health services in rural areas. She currently works as one of two Rural Mental Health Specialists in Minnesota providing support to farmers and their families through a contract with the MN Ag Centers of Excellence and Farm Business Management. Monica also provides education and training on mental health and resilience through her business Eyes on the Horizon Consulting, LLC.

Megan Meacham, MPH
HRSA
Director, Rural Strategic Initiatives Division
Federal Office of Rural Health Policy

Megan Meacham is Director of the Rural Strategic Initiatives Division (RSID) within the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP), where she leads the team that manages a number of high-priority rural health grant programs, including the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program. Prior to becoming Director of RSID, she served as a Senior Advisor in FORHP where she worked on a variety of rural program and policy issue areas, and was a key member involved in the creation of the RCORP Initiative. She has also worked as a Project Officer in FORHP's Hospital State Division where she coordinated a national quality improvement initiative and managed a number of state-based grant programs.

Megan attended Vanderbilt University for her undergraduate degree in Sociology and then returned back to her home state of Minnesota to attend the University of Minnesota School of Public Health where she got her MPH. She worked at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center as a Pandemic Influenza Planner prior to joining HRSA.

Kurt Michael, Aeschleman Distinguished Professor, Appalachian State University

Dr. Kurt Michael is the Stanley R. Aeschleman Distinguished Professor of Psychology at Appalachian State University (ASU). He was trained at the University of Colorado – Boulder (B.A., cum laude), Utah State University (M.S., Ph.D.), and Duke University Medical Center (Clinical Psychology Internship). Dr. Michael teaches at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and his primary areas of research and clinical practice are adolescent suicide assessment and prevention, school mental health, depression, rural healthcare, substance abuse disorders, and conduct disorders.

Dr. Michael's empirical work has appeared in scientific journals such as: *Clinical Psychology Review*, *the Journal of Rural Mental Health*, *Cognitive Behaviour Therapy*, *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *BMJ Open*, *Teaching of Psychology*, *Children and Youth Services Review*, *Evidence-Based Mental Health*, *World Psychiatry*, *Behavior Therapy*, *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, *the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, and *The Lancet*.

Dr. Michael currently serves as an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Rural Mental Health* and is the Editor (JP Jameson, Co-Editor) of the first edition of *The Handbook of Rural School Mental Health* (Springer). He also served as an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Child and Family Studies* for 13 years.

In addition to Dr. Michael's teaching and research interests, he is a practicing Licensed Psychologist and in 2006, developed and implemented interdisciplinary school mental health partnerships titled the Assessment, Support, and Counseling (ASC) Centers in rural western North Carolina. The ASC Center was designed to serve children and families in North Carolina while at the same time, provide pre-professional and professional workforce development, which aligns well with ASU's strategic mission to improve the health of North Carolinians and to have a sustained impact on the region, both economically and culturally.



Under Dr. Michael's leadership, The ASC Centers have been awarded over 3 million dollars in federal grants and local contracts to support their operations over the past 10 years. In 2014, Dr. Michael was honored for his long-term service to North Carolina as the Board of Governors recipient of the James E. Holshouser Jr. Award for Excellence in Public Service <http://video.unctv.org/video/2365355746/>.

Dr. Michael consults with agencies and facilities on a national level regarding the development of suicide prevention protocols for K-12 schools and other systems of care. Dr. Michael is a national consultant for the Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS) Program and has considerable clinical experience working with adjudicated youth in inpatient, residential, and correctional settings dating back to the late 80's.

Professor David Perkins

Director

Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health

Orange, NSW

Professor David Perkins is the Director and Professor of Rural Health Research at the University of Newcastle's [Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health](https://doi.org/10.1111/ajr.12560), based in Orange, New South Wales. He has extensive research experience in Mental Health Services, Rural Suicide Prevention, Public Health, Rural Health and Primary Health Care. David's career spans senior management and health service research roles in both the United Kingdom and Australia. David has been awarded more than \$22 million in grant income in the last five years. He has published in a variety of journals including Medical Journal of Australia, BMC Health Services Research, the International Journal of Integrated Care, Aging and Mental Health, BMC Psychiatry and the Australian Journal of Rural Health. He is the coordinator of the Orange Declaration on Rural Mental Health (<https://doi.org/10.1111/ajr.12560>) and was previously Editor in Chief of the Australian Journal of Rural Health.



Debbie Plotnick Bio Sketch

Debbie F. Plotnick, MSS, MLSP is the Senior Vice President for State and Federal Advocacy at Mental Health America (MHA). Debbie is recognized as a national thought leader contributing expertise on a wide range of topics in behavioral health to local, state and federal policy makers, works with national legislator groups as topic expert, serves on task forces, provides background for investigative reporting, and is regularly interviewed by the media.

In her role at Mental Health America, Debbie provides leadership for grassroots and legislative advocacy across the MHA affiliate network and to national legislator groups. She coordinates the efforts of the Regional Policy Council (RPC), which focuses on state-level initiatives for equal access to behavioral health care, a full continuum of treatment and services, criminal justice diversion and deflection, and the value of prevention and early intervention. Her most recent projects include working with the firearm owning community to promote mental health screening and training in suicide prevention for adolescents and adults.

Debbie holds three degrees from Bryn Mawr College: an AB in political science; dual master's degrees in Social Service (MSS) and Law and Social Policy (MLSP). Informing her perspective and her passion, are the people she works with and for, her own lived experience with depression, as a family member to those with mental health challenges, and her dedication to mental health systems advocacy.

100 words:

Debbie F. Plotnick, MSS, MLSP is the Senior Vice President for State and Federal Advocacy at Mental Health America (MHA). Recognized as a national thought leader on a wide range of topics in behavioral health, she provides leadership for grassroots and legislative advocacy across the MHA affiliate network, and coordinates the Regional Policy Council (RPC), which focuses on state-level initiatives. Her most recent projects include working with the firearm industry to promote mental health screening and training in suicide prevention. Informing her perspective and her passion, are her own lived experience, and her dedication to mental health systems advocacy.



Charles H. Smith, PhD, MA

Regional Administrator

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – Region VIII

(Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming, and 33 Tribal Nations)

Dr. Smith is the Regional Administrator for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Region VIII. Dr. Smith is the former Director of the Colorado Division of Behavioral Health and Deputy Commissioner of Mental Health and Substance Abuse for the State of Colorado. He is a Licensed Psychologist with over 30 years of experience in fields of forensic psychology, addiction psychology, crisis intervention, integrated care and behavioral health policy and administration. Dr. Smith holds a PhD in Counseling Psychology from the University of Denver, a MA in Rehabilitation Counseling from New York University, and a BS in Psychology from Allegheny College.

Bio Gerard Vaughan, M Soc Sci (Hons)

Since 2012 Gerard has worked independently helping organisations design social good programmes. A highlight has been creating Farmstrong, a wellbeing programme for farmers.

Prior to this Gerard has worked in NZ, Australia and the UK in a range of not for profit and government agencies in the areas of community development, health promotion, communications and social marketing.

Previous roles have included, five years as CEO of the Alcohol Advisory Council of NZ with a mission to reduce harms from alcohol, and five years leading NZ's national mental health campaign Like Minds, including a year establishing the National Depression Initiative featuring John Kirwan - a well known NZ rugby player.

Gerard was born in Wellington, comes from a large extended family and has a daughter and a son who keep him grounded as they navigate their way through early adulthood.

Bio for Paula Verrett:

Paula Verrett has a particular interest in mental health. She has been involved with NAMI Fox Valley located in Appleton, Wisconsin since 1997, first as a participant of peer support programs and then as a peer support group facilitator as a volunteer. She became a Certified Peer Specialist in 2010. Paula was hired by NAMI Fox Valley in 2012 as the Recovery Specialist. Her work in peer support gave her the confidence to return to school to earn her MSW from UW-Oshkosh in 2014. Paula was promoted to Iris Place Peer Run Respite Program Director in 2017. She has found healing through her work as the director of the Iris Place Program.

Stefanie Winfield, MSW

Stefanie Winfield is a Research and Technical Assistance Associate with the Behavioral Health Program. Her work at WICHE focuses on the Mental Health Technical Transfers Center's work providing intensive technical assistance and training to elementary schools. Stefanie comes to WICHE with extensive experience working in schools promoting youth sexual health, conflict and angry management, behavioral health education, and school-based health care. With over 17 years of experience working with nonprofits and community organizations, Stefanie has done everything from grant management and implementation, to program and outcome evaluation, training and facilitation. Stefanie received her BSW from Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, NY and her MSW from the University of Denver. She has also completed certificates in the Advanced Study of Program Evaluation, Accelerated Learning, E-learning Design and Organization Development.