





# ARCA VIRTUAL LEARNING INSTITUTE 2026

Counseling in Action:  
Practical Tools and  
Professional Growth

 Live through May 2026

 Recordings through July 15

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(<https://arcaweb.org/conferences/>)

## THE SPEAKER LINE-UP

**May 7**

4:00 pm EDT; 3:00 pm CDT;  
2:00 pm MDT; 1:00 pm PDT



**Dr. Toni Saia**

Associate Professor and  
Director of the Rehabilitation  
Technology Certificate at San  
Diego State University



**Dr. Emily Vogel**

Associate Teaching Professor  
and Assistant Chair of  
Curriculum and Assessment  
at Northern Arizona University

### **“We need a world we can operate in”: What Counselors Need to Know About Societal Stigma and Depression among Wheelchair Users**

This presentation examines how societal stigma contributes to depression among wheelchair users, intentionally using a broad definition including both manual and power wheelchair users. It will explore the impact of ableism on mental health outcomes. Attendees will gain concrete, actionable strategies to more effectively support wheelchair users to combat ableism in their everyday lives. Additionally, the presentation will trace the journey from initial concept to publication, offering insight into the research and dissemination process.

#### Learning Outcomes:

1. Audience members will be able to define societal ableism
2. Audience members will be able to identify strategies to support wheelchair users experiencing societal stigma as counselors, educators, and community members.
3. Audience members will be able to identify strategies to support the publication process.

**May 13**

1:00 pm EDT; 12:00 pm CDT;  
11:00 am MDT; 10:00 am PDT



**Dr. Danita H. Stapleton**

Associate Professor and Chair of the  
Department of Rehabilitation Studies at  
Alabama State University

## **Applied Rehabilitation Counseling: Multi-Setting Approaches**

Rehabilitation counseling is a specialized discipline focused on promoting the independence, employment, and overall quality of life of individuals with disabilities through evidence-based, person-centered practices. This presentation provides practice-based information that integrates theoretical frameworks, disability-informed approaches, and emerging technologies to support counseling practice across vocational rehabilitation, clinical mental health, private practice, and community agency settings. Also highlighted is the role of assistive and telehealth technologies in enhancing service delivery and expanding access to care, particularly in underserved and rural communities. Practical strategies are presented to support functional outcomes, including employment readiness, psychosocial adjustment, and community integration. By bridging theory and practice, this session equips rehabilitation counselors and related professionals with actionable tools to improve client outcomes across diverse service environments.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Apply evidence-based counseling strategies across diverse practice settings.
2. Integrate disability-informed approaches into counseling practice.
3. Utilize technology to enhance client engagement and outcomes.
4. Adapt theoretical frameworks to real-world service delivery.
5. Implement interventions to improve client functioning and independence.

**May 14**

4:00 pm EDT; 3:00 pm CDT;  
2:00 pm MDT; 1:00 pm PDT



**Dr. Michael Walsh**

Associate Clinical Professor and  
Director of the Psychiatric Rehabilitation  
Certificate of Graduate Study at the  
University of South Carolina, School  
Medicine - Columbia

## **Motivational Interviewing in Practice: Supporting Recovery and Community Engagement in Psychiatric Disabilities**

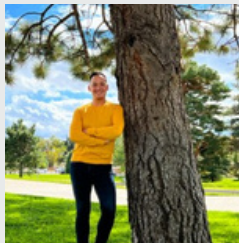
This session provides an overview of Motivational Interviewing (MI) as an effective, person-centered approach for supporting individuals experiencing psychiatric disabilities. Participants will explore the unique needs and lived experiences of this population, with an emphasis on fostering empathy and engagement. The training will introduce the Stages of Change as both a framework and practical tool for promoting meaningful community participation, and will highlight the Four Fundamental Processes of MI and their role in supporting recovery. Through guided discussion and skill-building activities, participants will strengthen their ability to apply MI strategies in real-world settings.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Better understand the unique needs and lived experiences of people experiencing psychiatric disabilities
2. Overview of Motivational Interviewing for use in working with people experiencing psychiatric disabilities.
3. Using the Stages of Change as a metric and a tool in moving towards enhanced community engagement
4. Identify the Four Fundamental Processes in MI and their role in recovery from psychiatric disabilities
5. Enhance Skill Building in MI

**May 14**

6:00 pm EDT; 5:00 pm CDT; 4:00 pm MDT; 3:00 pm PDT



## Dr. Joey Tapia

Assistant Professor and Associate  
Department Chair in the Department  
of Counseling and Human Services at  
the University of Colorado, Colorado  
Springs



## Brynn Adamson, PhD

Assistant Professor, UCCS Beth-El  
College of Nursing and Health Science



## Kazzandra Medellin

Graduate Student in the Counseling:  
Clinical Mental Health program at the  
University of Colorado, Colorado Springs

### **Confronting Self: Addressing Ableism in Therapeutic Settings**

Therapeutic spaces are often positioned as sites of healing, yet they can unintentionally reproduce ableist assumptions about normalcy, independence, and productivity. This presentation invites clinicians and trainees to engage in critical self-reflection about how internalized and systemic ableism may shape clinical judgment, diagnostic practices, and treatment goals. Drawing on disability justice frameworks and clinical ethics, the session examines power dynamics, language, and implicit bias in therapeutic relationships. Participants will gain strategies for cultivating disability-affirming practice, strengthening cultural humility, and centering client autonomy and lived experience within therapeutic work.

#### Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify ways internalized and structural ableism can influence clinical judgment, diagnostic practices, and treatment planning.
2. Analyze the impact of language and implicit bias on client experience and therapeutic outcomes.
3. Demonstrate strategies for adapting interventions to better align with client values, access needs, and lived experience.

**May 15**

2:00 pm EDT; 1:00 pm CDT; 12:00 pm MDT;  
11:00 am PDT



## Dr. K. Lynn Pierce

Assistant Professor and PhD  
Coordinator at Mercer University



## Kaz Sortino, LPC, NCC

Doctoral Student and Researcher at  
Mercer University

### **Applying Disability Identity Models in Counseling Practice**

Disability has historically been viewed through the medical model in counseling and counselor education, emphasizing diagnosis and impairment. While research has begun to shift this perspective, a gap remains in counselors' ability to recognize disability as a part of a client's cultural identity shaped through lived experience. This session will assist clinicians in understanding disability as not merely something that impacts a person, but as a dynamic aspect of identity. Participants will be introduced to several disability identity models and how these models can inform clinical conceptualization and guide interventions in counseling practice.

#### Learning Outcomes:

1. Participants will be able to explain key disability identity models relevant to counseling practice
2. Participants will be able to describe clinical strategies and skills that support exploration and integration of disability identity
3. Participants will be able to conceptualize disability as an aspect of cultural identity rather than a medical condition or impairment

**May 19**

12:00 pm EDT; 11:00 am CDT;  
10:00 am MDT; 9:00 am PDT



**Dr. Melissa Franzen**

Assistant Professor, Fort Hays State  
University

## **Clinical Strategies for Supporting Families with Neurodivergent Needs**

Counseling parents of children with neurodivergent needs (Autism, ADHD, SPD, etc.) requires a shift from traditional behavioral management to a systems-based, neurodiversity-affirming approach. This session equips clinicians with evidence-based frameworks to support the family unit as a whole, with a focus on the intersection of parental mental health and child development.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Identify and address the clinical markers of non-finite grief to reduce caregiver burnout and improve long-term family treatment compliance.
2. Facilitate Psychological Flexibility by implementing values-based interventions to help caregivers transition from reactive crisis management toward purposeful, identity-driven parenting.
3. Utilize non-punitive, collaborative frameworks to reframe "challenging behaviors" as clinical indicators of environmental stressors and lagging cognitive skills.
4. Identify grounding techniques that can be taught to caregivers to enhance their physiological capacity for sustained co-regulation.
5. Identify and address the clinical markers of non-finite grief to reduce caregiver burnout and improve long-term family treatment compliance.

## **How to Join ARCA**

1. If you are already a member of ACA, you can add a division to your membership. Please contact Member Services at 703-823-9800 or 800-298-2276. Member Services, Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. ET.
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## May 20

1:00 pm EDT; 12:00 pm CDT; 11:00 am MDT;  
10:00 am PDT



### Emily Walsh, LPC-A

Autistic Adult and Licensed  
Professional Counselor Associate in  
South Carolina

## Neuroaffirming Practices in Mental Health Counseling: Practical Skills for Working with Autistic Clients

This presentation introduces rehabilitative mental health counselors to neuroaffirming approaches when working with autistic clients, emphasizing respect for neurodiversity and the rejection of deficit-based models. Participants will explore how traditional counseling practices can be adapted to better support autistic ways of thinking, communicating, and experiencing the world. The session focuses on practical, in-session skills including communication adjustments, sensory considerations, emotional regulation support, and collaborative goal setting. Counselors will leave with concrete tools to create safer, more effective therapeutic environments that honor autistic identity and promote client autonomy.

### Learning Outcomes:

1. Define neuroaffirming practice and distinguish it from a deficit-based approach.
2. Identify common barriers autistic clients may face in traditional counseling settings.
3. Demonstrate at least three in-session strategies to support communication, emotional regulation, and client autonomy.
4. Modify therapeutic techniques to align with autistic cognitive and sensory styles.

## May 21

4:00 pm EDT; 3:00 pm CDT; 2:00 pm MDT; 1:00 pm PDT



### Dr. Daniel Balva

Staff Psychologist in the Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences Clinic at the VA West Palm Beach Medical Center



### Dr. Daniel T. Page

Founder and CEO of Psyche Innovations, a digital mental health company

## Disability Advocacy in Counseling Practice: Cross-Cultural and Ethical Perspectives on Implementation and Interventions

This presentation explores opportunities for disability advocacy within counselling practice, encouraging attendees to consider how advocacy may take shape in their work. It examines key considerations for counselors, including ethical responsibility (e.g., CRCC and ACA), cultural responsiveness, power dynamics, and systemic barriers affecting access to care. Drawing on cross-cultural comparisons between the United States and South Africa, the presenters highlight how advocacy differs across individual, community, and policy levels, showing how sociopolitical contexts, resources, and history shape strategies and outcomes. The session also explores how evidence-based interventions and technology-enabled service delivery can ethically support disability advocacy by expanding access to psychoeducation, skills training, and support in underserved contexts.

### Learning Outcomes:

1. Describe ethical, cultural, and contextual factors in disability advocacy in counseling.
2. Compare how context, resources, and history shape advocacy and ethics across settings.
3. Identify how evidence-based and technology-enabled approaches support advocacy.
4. Discuss person-centered, strengths-based frameworks in advocacy-informed practice.
5. Reflect on integrating ethics and advocacy into professional work and client care.

**May 22**

4:00 pm EDT; 3:00 pm CDT;  
2:00 pm MDT; 1:00 pm PDT



**Melanie J. Poe**

Doctoral Student in the Disability Disciplines (Rehabilitation Counseling and Supervision), Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling at Utah State University



**Dr. Trenton Landon**

Associate Professor, Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling at Utah State University.

### **Turnover In State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies - Insights and Trends**

This presentation will focus on qualitative and quantitative research examining the turnover of rehabilitation counselors working in state vocational rehabilitation agencies. Trends and insights from a recent study using an appreciative inquiry lens will be shared along with recommendations for state VR agencies to consider as they implement retention efforts.

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Participants will articulate the primary reasons rehabilitation counselors leave employment with state VR agencies;
2. Participants will understand the factors that facilitate retention of rehabilitation counselors; and,
3. Participants will identify strategies for facilitating retention.

**May 26**

12:00 pm EDT; 11:00 am CDT; 10:00 am MDT;  
9:00 am PDT



**Dr. Allison Levine**

Assistant Professor, Counselor Education and Supervision, University of Iowa



**Dr. Vilia Tarvydas**

Professor Emerita, University of Iowa

### **Ethical Decision-Making in Counselor Education: A Justice-Oriented Perspective for Socio-politically Challenging Times**

While the ethical values of counselor educators have remained consistent over time, the ways in which ethical decision-making takes place can look differently dependent upon the sociopolitical landscape of the time. Not only do educators face challenges with feeling supported and autonomous in difficult circumstances, they now are also often subject to a broader, political force that shapes interactions with students, creates fear of retaliation, and an overall sense of uncertainty. In this presentation, we will discuss ways that counselor educators can use the Tarvydas Integrated Decision-Making Model through the lens of the applied participatory ethics paradigm, and the significance of remaining values-drive in the current climate.

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Participants will understand the use of ethical decision-making models for counselor educators
2. Participants will discuss common ethical dilemmas in counselor education
3. Participants will analyze the impact of the sociopolitical landscape on ethical dilemmas in counselor education programs
4. Participants will apply the Tarvydas Integrated Decision-Making Model through the lens of applied participatory ethics to current ethical dilemmas

**May 27**

1:00 pm EDT; 12:00 pm CDT; 11:00 am MDT;  
10:00 am PDT



## Dr. Jamar Booth

Counselor Educator, Adjunct  
Professor with Counseling and  
Rehabilitation at the University of  
South Carolina

### **From Barriers to Breakthroughs: Applying the ICF Model to Improve Quality of Life in Rehabilitation Counseling Practice**

Rehabilitation counseling professionals are increasingly called to address the complex interplay of medical, psychosocial, and environmental factors that influence client outcomes. However, many practitioners lack structured, evidence-based frameworks to translate these multidimensional factors into effective interventions. This webinar presents a practical application of the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) model to improve quality of life (QOL) outcomes among individuals with chronic health conditions. Drawing on empirical findings identifying key predictors of QOL—including social stigma, discrimination, hope, coping, resilience, activity limitations, and community integration—this session will demonstrate how counselors can move beyond symptom-focused approaches toward holistic, biopsychosocial interventions.

#### Learning Outcomes:

1. Apply the ICF model in rehabilitation and mental health case conceptualization.
2. Identify key biopsychosocial factors affecting quality of life (e.g., stigma, coping, community integration).
3. Implement evidence-based interventions to build hope, resilience, and adaptive coping in chronic conditions.
4. Address the effects of stigma and discrimination on functioning and treatment engagement.
5. Develop practical strategies for clients.

**May 28**

4:00 pm EDT; 3:00 pm CDT; 2:00 pm MDT;  
1:00 pm PDT



## Dr. Andrea Nerlich

Professor and Chairperson of the  
Counseling and Mental Health  
Professions at Hofstra University



## Dr. Allison Fleming

Associate Professor of Rehabilitation  
Counseling at Penn State University

### **Building Authentic Partnerships: Community-Engaged Participatory Action Research**

Practitioners and counselor educators can meaningfully engage communities in participatory projects to facilitate social change. But, how? Grounded in principles of equity, inclusion, and shared power, the session will focus on developing authentic partnerships that center the voices, needs, and expertise of community members and organizations, particularly those historically underrepresented or marginalized, including the disability community. Through real-world examples and reflective activities, attendees will learn how to move beyond transactional engagement toward sustained, community-driven collaboration.

#### Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify key principles and practices of participatory action research that promote inclusive and equitable community engagement.
2. Apply strategies for incorporating the needs, priorities, and knowledge of diverse community stakeholders into project design and implementation.
3. Develop approaches for fostering authentic, reciprocal partnerships that share power, build trust, and support long-term collaboration.

# Virtual Learning Institute Continuing Education Process

Attend live webinar presentations as scheduled to earn NBCC and CRC/CVE continuing education (CE) credit (no quiz).

All sessions will be recorded and available for on-demand viewing through July 15 with a passing quiz score for CRC/CVE (only) CEs.

- **Registration Deadline:** May 22
- One (1) CRC/CVE CE per session whether it viewed Live or Recorded.

## Registration Rates

Student ARCA Members – \$5

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ARCA membership gives you ongoing access to reduced-rate and/or free CE opportunities year-round.

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# Presenter Bios

**Dr. Toni Saia** is an Associate Professor, Certified Rehabilitation Counselor and Director of the Rehabilitation Technology Certificate at San Diego State University within the Department of Administration, Rehabilitation, and Postsecondary. Dr. Saia earned her M.A. in Rehabilitation Counseling and her Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision. Her professional work history has involved advocating for a progressive understanding of disability within the applied fields, with a shift from diagnosis to disability as a culture and identity. She has secured over \$1 million in external funding dedicated to dismantling societal barriers for disabled people. Dr. Saia is one of the originators of the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association's Disability-Related Counseling Competencies, which guide the work of over 55,000 counselors nationwide.

**Dr. Emily Vogel** holds a doctorate in psychology with an emphasis in development and cognition and neural systems. She also serves as an associate teaching professor and assistant chair of curriculum and assessment in the Department of Psychological Sciences at Northern Arizona University. With more than a decade of experience in higher education, she is dedicated to helping students connect developmental science to health and wellbeing through courses such as Developmental Psychology for Health Professionals. Her research explores how early life experiences shape mental and physical health, with recent projects focusing on maternal–fetal health, women's needs after miscarriage, and the effects of stigma on wheelchair users. Across her work, she integrates evolutionary and developmental perspectives with real-world health challenges. Dr. Vogel has published in peer reviewed journals and books on topics spanning human sexuality, maternal–child health, and child development.

**Danita H. Stapleton, EdD, LPC-S, CRC, NCC, BC-TMH**, is a native of North Florida and currently serves as Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Rehabilitation Studies at Alabama State University. She also coordinates the Online Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling program. She is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, National Certified Counselor, Licensed Professional Counselor-Supervisor, and Board-Certified Telemental Health Provider. She brings more than 30 years of professional experience across diverse rehabilitation settings, including corrections, forensic rehabilitation, inpatient and outpatient substance use treatment centers, adoption and foster care services, and intermediate care facilities for adults with intellectual disabilities. Additionally, she has provided mental health services to older adults in skilled nursing facilities.

**Dr. Michael Walsh** is an Associate Professor of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science in the University of South Carolina's Rehabilitation Counseling program. Mike studied Motivational Interviewing with Master Motivational Interviewing Instructor Alan Lyme and continues his learning whenever he can. Mike designs and delivers professional trainings in Motivational Interviewing on a regular basis and remains an avid student of the approach. In addition to his work in counselor education, Mike spent 14 years running a small mental health agency that specialized in psychiatric rehabilitation as the Executive and Clinical Director. Mike is a Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner (CPRP) and currently serves on the Board of the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (PRA), the PRA Certification Commission, and the CPRP and CFRP Exam Revision Task Force. Mike has authored and delivered well over 100 local and national presentations and trainings in areas as diverse as Professional Skill Development, MI, Adult Learning and Training Design, Psychiatric Rehabilitation and many more.

**Jose "Joey" Tapia, PhD, LPC, CRC, RPT, NCC, CCPT-S Trainer, CPRT-S Trainer (he/him)** is an Assistant Professor and Associate Department Chair in the Department of Counseling and Human Services at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs. He owns and operates Vanda Counseling Collaborative where he provides and supervises clinical services across the lifespan. He provides play, individual, relationship, and family therapy in English, Spanish, and American Sign Language. Dr. Tapia's research focuses on ableism in mental health and the development of disability-responsive practices. He has spent his career focused on serving the disability community in a variety of roles over the last 15 years. He currently serves as President of Deaf Overcoming Violence Through Empowerment (DOVE), a non-profit supporting survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault who are Deaf/DeafBlind/DeafDisabled/Hard-of-Hearing. In 2021, he was awarded the ACA Arthur A. Hitchcock Distinguished Professional Service Award for his service at the local, state, regional, and national level in counseling, rehabilitation counseling, and counselor education.

**Brynn Adamson, PhD**, received her PhD in Kinesiology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Sciences at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs. She focuses on long-term exercise participation among adults with disabilities, with particular interest in the ways we communicate about exercise and ways to increase accessibility and inclusivity of community-based physical activity. She has worked with a large interdisciplinary team that includes researchers, community-members, and

recreation facility staff to develop and implement the Inclusive Community Exercise Training (ICET). This training addresses a major known barrier to physical activity participation among people with disabilities. Students, researchers, and community members living with disability were integrally involved in the development of this training. Dr. Adamson also facilitates peer-developed and peer-delivered exercise programs for individuals with multiple sclerosis and works on other research projects related to disability, mental health, physical activity, and competency training.

**Kazzandra Medellin (she, her)** is a graduate student in the Counseling: Clinical Mental Health program at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, and is currently offering individual counseling services to teens and adults. Kazzandra has a background in research and evaluation across different topics such as Mexican-American Resilience in South Texas and healthy equity programmatic efforts. This background helped inform her work as a graduate research assistant on research focusing ableism in therapeutic settings. Through this research, Kazzandra is able to utilize her passion for social justice and intersectionality to think about the different ways peoples' identities impact their daily experiences and the changes needed in training to provide inclusive care.

**Dr. Lynn Pierce, LPC, CRC, ACS**, is an Assistant Professor and PhD Coordinator at Mercer University. She has worked with clients and students with many disability presentations in higher education disability services and other rehabilitation-focused settings in addition to career counseling and private practice. Pierce uses a disability culture and identity model that is trauma-informed and grounded in disability justice. As a disabled academic, her advocacy work focuses on the normalization and recognition of disability identity to support cross-disability collective liberation.

**Kaz Sortino** is an LPC who has multiple years of experience in both community mental health and private practice settings. Kaz Sortino has held identity in the disability space, having been diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Kaz has experienced the impact of the lack of disability competence in the profession, both as a client and a professional. Kaz has on multiple occasions had cases professionally referred to him due to the lack of comfort on the topic of disabilities from other counselors, and he looks forward to assisting in closing this gap as a PhD student and researcher.

**Emily Walsh** is an Autistic adult and Licensed Professional Counselor Associate in South Carolina. She specializes in mental health therapy for Autistic and otherwise neurodivergent adults. Additionally, she runs The Autism Social Spectrum of Columbia, a monthly social hangout group for Autistic adults. She has worked in the Autism community since 2013, teaching Autistic individuals life skills, presenting across the country at conferences on her experience as an Autistic adult and topics related to Autism and independent living, and participated in multiple committees and councils advocating for the needs of the disability community.

**Melissa J. Franzen, Ph.D., LCPC, BCTP-I, CGP, CCTP** brings over 20 years of clinical experience to an ever-deepening commitment to practitioner wellness, engagement, and neuro-physiologically informed practice. A Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (IL), her background spans social services, foster care, residential and detention facilities, and private practice environments, shaping her focus on the intersection of human biology and professional sustainability. Dr. Franzen's current scholarship includes two distinct, emergent lines of inquiry. She is the co-developer of the Applied Polyvagal Model (APM) of Clinical Supervision, which integrates autonomic safety and co-regulation into the supervisory relationship. Independently, she developed the ABOUND Framework, a conceptual scaffold for neuro-informed practices designed to cultivate grounded, durable presence and ethically responsible relational growth.

A recognized international speaker, Dr. Franzen will be traveling to Munich, Germany, to present work on applying her ABOUND framework to the counselor education classroom, where she explored the "Biopedagogy of Real-Time Engagement", an autoethnographic inquiry into how neuro-physiological awareness supports both educator well-being and student success. Dr. Franzen was also the keynote for the 2025 Arkansas Counseling Association conference and continues to advocate for training models where both the professional and the client can thrive through physiological awareness.

**Dr. Daniel Balva** is a Licensed Psychologist, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, National Certified Counselor, and Certified Rehabilitation Counselor. He is a Staff Psychologist in the Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences Clinic at the VA West Palm Beach Medical Center in Florida. Daniel earned his PhD in Counseling Psychology from the University of Georgia and his Master's degrees in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and Rehabilitation Counseling from Florida

International University. He is a Past-President of the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA) and a Past-President of the Florida Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (FAMCD). Most recently, Daniel was selected as a Council Member for the Voice of the People (VoP) Global Cohort under the leadership of Israel's President, Isaac Herzog. In this role, he collaborates with international leaders from Jewish communities across six continents to address complex communal challenges, emphasizing advocacy, equity, and access across diverse global Jewish communities. He is passionate about disability education and awareness, global mental health, and capacity building, which inform his research, clinical work, and leadership involvement.

**Dr. Daniel Page** is the Founder and CEO of Psyche Innovations, a digital mental health company that delivers evidence-based app platforms, live training sessions, workplace workshops, and counselling services to organizations ranging from 10 to over 10,000 staff. The Psyche Mental Health app is used in more than 90 countries. Daniel holds a PhD in Psychology from the University of Queensland, with 14 peer-reviewed publications in journals including BMC Public Health and BMC Medical Education. His research has contributed directly to WHO and UNICEF clinical guidelines on adolescent mental health. He was selected as an Emerging Global Leader by the American Psychological Association and has served as a panelist for the South African Medical Research Council and the NBCC Foundation. He also founded the Positive Youth Development Foundation, securing international grant funding from Australian and Japanese funders to deliver youth mental health programs in low-resource South African communities.

**Melanie J. Poe, MA**, is a doctoral student in the Disability Disciplines (Rehabilitation Counseling and Supervision), Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling at Utah State University. Her professional background includes work as a vocational rehabilitation counselor, Guardian ad Litem in superior court, and advocate for children and families navigating complex legal and service systems. Her research centers on workforce retention in state vocational rehabilitation agencies, with a particular focus on the interplay between counselor identity, organizational context, and long-term sustainability in the field. She is especially interested in how systems can better support practitioners serving individuals with disabilities across the lifespan, including youth involved in foster care and transition services.

**Dr. Trenton Landon** is an associate professor in the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling at Utah State University. He completed his master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling at USU in 2005 and worked for a state VR agency until 2012. He then completed his PhD studies at Michigan State University in Rehabilitation Counselor Education in 2016. Dr. Landon has been a certified rehabilitation counselor since 2005 and presently serves clients with chronic illness and disability in a campus based mental health clinic. Dr. Landon has been at USU since the fall of 2016 and his primary areas of research focus on clinical supervision, professional identity and clinical skill development, ethics, and rural rehabilitation service delivery.

**Dr. Allison Levine** joined the Department of Counselor Education in Fall 2021 and is the Program Coordinator of the nationally ranked Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling program at Iowa. Dr. Levine is a rehabilitation counselor, a nationally certified counselor, and temporarily licensed mental health counselor in Iowa. As a counselor educator, Dr. Levine has expertise in teaching culturally competent practice, multicultural and social justice counseling competencies, and disability justice informed counseling practices at the masters and doctoral levels. Dr. Levine conducts social justice oriented research, examining disability biases in the helping professions, equitable student assessment in counselor education, and systemic barriers to postsecondary success for transition-age youth with disabilities. She is the Director of the Council on Research and Knowledge with the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association, and the Chair of the Iowa Mental Health Counselors Legislative and Public Policy Committee. Dr. Levine incorporates advocacy into her research, teaching, and service, seeking to understand difference, inform policy, and improve counseling services for people with disabilities and mental health disorders. Dr. Levine is the PI currently for two national grants which expand training and best practices for professionals working with disabled youth.

**Vilia Tarvydas, Ph.D., CRC (Ret.)**, is a Professor Emerita, former Chair of the Rehabilitation and Counselor Education Department at The University of Iowa, and Founding Director of the Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Ethics (I-DARE). Vilia has served as President of the National Council on Rehabilitation Education, the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association, and the

American Association of State Counseling Boards. In that latter capacity she was a member of the ACA/AASCB 20/20 Initiative Oversight Committee. She completed a 5 year term on the Board of Directors of CACREP in 2019 and served as its Vice-Chair during that time.

She has published and presented extensively on ethics, ethical decision-making, and professional governance and standards. Her most recent textbooks are Counseling Ethics and Decision Making and The Profession and Practice of Rehabilitation Counseling. The 4th Edition of the latter text will be published in 2027. Vilia has extensive experience in ethics governance and leadership and has chaired the Iowa Board of Behavioral Science and its Disciplinary Committee, as well as the ACA and CRCC Ethics Committees. She also chaired the CRCC Code Revision Taskforce that wrote the 2010 CRCC Code of Professional Ethics. She also was a member of the ACA Code Revision Task Force that wrote the 2005 ACA Code of Ethics, and has been a member of the ACA Ethics Appeals Committee. For 7 years, she has produced an annual ethics webinar continuing education series that was jointly sponsored by I-DARE and CRCC. She currently is Senior Editor in Ethics for the CRCC e-University. She was the senior Co-Editor of a special 2010 joint edition on the new Code for three professional journals in rehabilitation counseling - Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling, Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin, and The Rehabilitation Professional that provided insights into the origins and innovations in this groundbreaking Code.

**Dr. Jamar Booth** is a counselor educator with training in rehabilitation and clinical mental health counseling. He earned his Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision from the University of Iowa and has experience preparing students and practitioners for work in vocational rehabilitation, behavioral health, and community-based settings. Booth's work focuses on the intersection of chronic illness, disability, and psychosocial functioning, with particular attention to how contextual barriers impact quality of life. Drawing on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) model, he emphasizes practical, culturally responsive strategies help counselors move from identifying barriers to supporting meaningful client outcomes.

**Dr. Andrea Perkins Nerlich** is the Graduate Director of the Rehabilitation Counseling Programs and Chairperson of the Counseling and Mental Health Professions at Hofstra University. She serves on the national board of the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA) and serves as the Co-Editor-in-Chief of the Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Journal. She is currently appointed to a 3-year term on the Advocacy and Marketing Council for the Commission on the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). In 2017, she was inducted into the inaugural "40 Under 40" class at her alma mater, Springfield College (MA), as well receiving the "President's Award" from both the National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE) and the Vocational Evaluation and Work Adjustment Association (VEWAA) for service to the organizations and profession. In 2020, she was honored as "Rehabilitation Educator of the Year" by NCRE. She served as the 2024-2025 Faculty Fellow for Graduate Studies in the Provost's Office. She holds a BS in Rehabilitation Services, MS in Rehabilitation Counseling from Springfield College and PhD in Rehabilitation Counselor Education from Michigan State University.

**Allison R. Fleming, Ph.D., CRC**, is an Associate Professor at Penn State University. She has a background in rehabilitation counseling, holding a master's degree from Springfield College and maintaining certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor. Before entering academia, Allison worked as a vocational rehabilitation counselor in Massachusetts and provided education on employment services through the Institute for Community Inclusion in projects across New England. She earned her Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Counselor Education from Michigan State University and has taught at the University of Kentucky and Penn State. Allison's research focuses on disability and employment, post-secondary education, and transition services. She is involved in various funded projects, including the Transition Readiness Toolkit which is now implemented in six State VR agencies and the Map My Transition project in Colorado. Allison serves on the research advisory board at Eskinaze Health.