



SHOULDER TO SHOULDER VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

Strengthening Children and Families

October 24 & 25, 2022

Shoulder to Shoulder is a collaborative partnership between community agencies to provide quality training and networking opportunities to those who work with, support and care for children and families who have been connected to Child Welfare. We rely on community partners and collaborations to operate. Conference funding was made possible by federal grant funds from the Juvenile Court Improvement Program, and the scholarship funds from Oregon Resource Family Alliance. Contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the grantors.

2022 Conference Planning Committee



**Boys &
Girls Aid**

Boys & Girls Aid



CASA for Children
(Clackamas County)



**Oregon Department
of Human Services**

Child Welfare
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Morrison Child &
Family Services



Native American Youth
and Family Center



Oregon Resource
Family Alliance
(formerly OFPA - Oregon Foster
Parent Association)



Oregon Post Adoption
Resource Center
A Program of NW Resource Associates



Portland State
UNIVERSITY
Child Welfare Partnership Training Unit



School
of Social Work
PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Child Welfare Partnership Training Unit



2022 Shoulder to Shoulder Virtual Conference speaker line-up

October 24th

11 AM

Implicit Bias:
Impact on
Decision Making



Dr. Rita Cameron Wedding

October 25th

9 AM

Strengthening Families
Using a Racial Equity Lens



Dr. Jessica Pryce

12:15 PM

Weaving a Resilient
Basket of Hope...
Families, Providers and
Community Together



Suzie Kuerschner

10:15 AM

Aligning Families and
Child Welfare Providers
using Collaborative
Problem Solving



Dr. Stuart Ablon

1:30 PM

Kindred Matters,
Kinship Matters,
Siblings Matter!



**Lynn Price &
Karyn Schimmels**

11:30 AM

Motivating Change with
Three Little Words



Ashley Rhodes-Courter

register at www.stsconference.com



2022 Shoulder to Shoulder Speakers & Presentations



DAY 1: MON, OCT 24, 2022 11:00 AM - 2:30 PM (Pacific)

Implicit Bias: Impact on Decision-Making

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

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Implicit Bias: Impact on Decision-Making is designed to explore how racial biases contribute to the differential application of policies and practices that contribute to disparities related to the removal and reunification rates of children.

This presentation will explain how implicit bias works and discuss strategies that have the potential to mitigate biases. This training is designed for professionals across disciplines including child welfare, juvenile justice, law enforcement, K-12 education, community colleges, and universities.

Speaker(s): Rita Cameron Wedding, Ph.D.

Earned her Ph.D. in Education from the University of Santa Barbara in 1992. She served as the Chair of the Women's Studies Department at Sacramento State University for 23 years. Currently she is Faculty Emeritus in the departments of Women's and Ethnic Studies at Sacramento State University. Dr. Cameron Wedding's curriculum *Implicit Bias: Impact on Decision-Making*, was one of the first national implicit bias trainings for judges, and practitioners in child welfare and juvenile justice beginning in 2005.

As a faculty for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), she has trained judges at court improvement initiatives in over 40 states. She was a consultant for the Annie E. Casey Foundation, one of the largest child advocacy foundations in the U.S., from 2007-2009. In 2013, in response to the U.S. Department of Justice's 3-year investigation and findings of civil rights violations, Dr. Cameron Wedding led a training team of 5 experts to provide implicit bias training to the entire Shelby County Juvenile Court in Memphis TN. In 2009-11, she was awarded a grant by California's Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) to develop and lead an implicit bias training program designed to mitigate the effects of the *School to Prison Pipeline* by identifying practices contributing to negative school outcomes that place students of color at increased risk of juvenile justice involvement. Dr. Cameron Wedding provided expert testimony before the U.S. Commission on Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities under President Obama (2015). As a Fulbright Scholar Dr. Cameron Wedding conducted research in Tanzania and South Africa. She conducted implicit bias *Train the Trainer* Institutes, webinars, keynotes and curriculum development in numerous agencies and states throughout the country.

Weaving a Resilient Basket Of Hope...Families Providers and Community Together

12:15 PM - 1:15 PM

[View Handout](#)

The purpose and invited outcome of this presentation are to lay the landscape and to create a strength-based... multi-generational... culturally congruent approach in which delivery, referral, and resource use are understood as collaboratively embedded within the inherent assets of community traditional practice and relational reciprocity... framing the scope of holistically successful methodology.

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Speaker(s): Suzie Kuerschner, M.Ed.

Ms. Kuerschner is a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Consultant, and a Child Development Specialist, child and family program developer with intensive training and experience. Ms. Kuerschner's work includes program development, assessment, intervention, parent training, and the design of learning environments for over 45 years.

Ms. Kuerschner has been an Early Intervention Specialist, special education coordinator, and program developer for schools, state, tribal and county programs, clinics and public and private agencies. She has developed numerous Early Childhood Education Centers, Early Intervention, Inter-agency and Family Resource programs within the context of state, count, tribal and community schools and treatment settings; integrating Federal, State, County and Tribal services.

Her experience includes development and delivery of community-based prenatal prevention programs using a Mentoring Mother's Model. She has worked with Juvenile Justice and Adult Corrections in cognitively re-tailoring strategies and services within those settings as well as providing court and judicial assistance in designing appropriate sentencing for individuals with an F.A.S.D. She also developed a demonstration model inter-agency education-based program for adolescents and young adults involved in Juvenile Justice and Corrections which is sustainable and replicated. She is currently involved in developing a project, Red Lodge Transitions, for incarcerated adults transitioning back into community settings. She is also currently involved in providing both training and technical assistance to national and regional Head Start Programs developing environments and strategies for children with behavioral and processing difficulties associated with an F.A.S.D.

Kindred Matters, Kinship Matters, Siblings Matter!

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

[View Handout](#)

The youth we serve have faced hardship. Experiencing maltreatment and trauma, and being removed from the only family they have known, are traumatic experiences. So often, the situation is exasperated because the removal results in separation from their siblings. In their hearts and heads, their siblings are some, if not the most significant and valuable people in their lives. Separating children from their siblings is another layer of trauma they have to continue to face.

We invite anyone working with or involved with families, and/or youth in our child welfare system to have compassion for sibling separation. Why should you care? The power of a sibling relationships can be life-changing in positive ways and healing for children in many ways. Having a sibling provides a lifelong peer partner and a source of continuity during challenging times and/or traumatic times. Sibling relationships provide positive support and improved outcomes for children. It is critical to support children's well-being by making diligent efforts to preserve their connections.

The solution to hardships in children is never a new form of adversity. Help them remove the barriers so they can continue to grow and strengthen their sibling relationships and secure a meaningful connection through their journey to adulthood.

In this training, participants will engage in a learning about the importance of sibling relationships, defining a sibling relationship, and discuss some of the challenges that resource families and caseworkers face when trying to keep

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siblings together. Participants will also gain new understanding about the relevant research, strategies, and resources in best and promising practices to maintain sibling connections. Preserving family is important for these youth now and for their future because Sibli

Speaker(s): Lynn S. Price and Karyn Schimmels

Lynn Price is a renowned, international speaker, author and social entrepreneur. Her deep concern for relational health was one of the motivations for publishing two books: *Vision For A Change, A Social Entrepreneur's Insights From the Heart* and *Real Belonging, Give Siblings Their Right to Reunite*.

As a former youth in foster care, she set her sights on learning the system from which she came serving along the way as a CASA, shelter volunteer, foster parent, adoptive parent and founder of Camp To Belong. As an Ashoka Fellow, she is one of only a several hundred in the US recognized as a global social entrepreneur who tackles society's greatest challenges with system changing solutions.

Lynn continues to advocate for successful relationships in her current role as Project Director for Ready2Relate, a project of The Center for Relationship Education. She also continues to contribute as a thought-leader to Camp To Belong and the journey of siblings who are separated through foster care.

Karyn Schimmels has lived and worked in Oregon for over 30 years. Karyn has been recognized locally and nationally as a subject matter expert in Sibling Issues in child welfare and fought tirelessly to raise awareness about this often-overlooked topic. She has testified as an expert witness in Oregon and other states about sibling separation and was instrumental in the development of Oregon's sibling policy and sibling bill of rights that exists in Oregon today. She is the original author of the sibling curriculum taught to all Oregon caseworkers.

She is most often described as a passionate and dedicated service/servant leader. She retired from state service and is a consultant, educator, and writer. She and her husband Charley are the Founders of a non-profit organization in Oregon called Kinship Matters.

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DAY 2: TUES, OCT 25, 2022 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM (Pacific)

☐ **Strengthening Families Using a Racial Equity Lens** 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

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Major events in our country have created an unprecedented sociopolitical context in which systemic racism has become a subject of mainstream public discourse. There seems to be a global awakening toward racial justice. This context requires a reckoning of how the problems of racism, marginalization, and injustice routinely manifest in our systems of care. In this keynote, Dr. Pryce makes a compelling argument that to change systems, we all must look inward. She implores the audience to identify their own personal philosophies, mindsets and values and how shifting those towards anti-racism will lead to true systemic change. She includes a discussion on evolutionary versus revolutionary efforts and offers strategies that lead to profound revolutionary change. There will be an emphasis on how child welfare professionals, social workers, and community partners, GAL/CASA volunteers can share power with families and meaningfully partner and co-design a path forward. Dr. Pryce has spent the past year interviewing courageous leaders who have been able to create positive and enduring change, and she will present on findings from key stakeholders on the best and most effective route to building an anti-racist community and child welfare system. The presenter will end by discussing motivation versus momentum. The presence of motivation to create equitable systems is clear, but it is paramount that momentum is sustained so the impact will reach the most systematically disadvantaged families. Audiences consistently leave this keynote with knowledge that they can begin using right away, and with a renewed sense of connection to the nationwide movement to transform how we care for the most vulnerable.

Speaker(s): Jessica Pryce, Ph.D

Dr. Pryce is an Assistant Professor at Florida State University. For over 10 years, she has been involved at multiple angles of child welfare (direct practice, teaching + training & policy and research). She has published on child welfare related topics, such as, training and education, racial disparity, and anti-poverty practices.

She has presented her research at 100+ conferences both nationally and internationally. She is the author of several op-eds focused on racial disparity and effective strategies to impact racial disproportionality within child welfare. Her TED Talk on Implicit Racial Bias in Decision Making has since been viewed over 1.3 million times. Dr. Pryce has worked on the frontlines of child welfare, conducted primary research, been a policy advisor to Florida's legislature and taught graduate level courses in child welfare. In 2019, she received a 5- year appointment to the Advisory Board of the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute, where she consults and advises on leadership and workforce interventions around the country. She currently sits on the Florida Dependency Court Improvement Panel, alongside judges and advocates who are working towards a more trauma informed approach within the judicial system. She has maintained and cultivated a commitment to the wellbeing of vulnerable children and families, the sustainability of the child welfare workforce, and effectively addressing inequity. Her paramount goal includes rebuilding and leading a child welfare system that focuses on strengthening families instead of pulling them apart.

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Aligning Families and Child Welfare Providers using Collaborative Problem Solving

10:15 AM - 11:15 AM

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Children in the child welfare system suffer chronic, overwhelming stress and trauma that impacts their development, learning and behavior. Caretakers, educators and providers strive to collaborate in a trauma-informed way. Yet, we often still struggle to understand the impact of trauma on brain development in a concrete and tangible way, and we all long for concrete strategies that help us work together to meet the needs of children. Dr. Stuart Ablon explains the impact of chronic stress, adversity and trauma on development, makes complicated neurodevelopmental concepts accessible, and provides a practical, evidence-based process for trauma-informed care that everyone can follow together. The Collaborative Problem Solving approach operationalizes the ideals of trauma-informed practices, reflects the latest neuroscience, can be applied by all adults, and has demonstrated effectiveness across settings.

Speaker(s): Stuart Ablon, Ph.D.

Stuart Ablon, Ph.D., is Founder and Director of Think:Kids in the Department of Psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital. An award-winning psychologist, Dr. Ablon is Associate Professor and the Thomas G. Stemberg Endowed Chair in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. He is the author of three books: *Changeable*, *The School Discipline Fix*, and *Treating Explosive Kids: The Collaborative Problem Solving Approach*.

Dr. Ablon received his doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of California at Berkeley and completed his training at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School. One of the world's top-rated thought-leaders and keynote speakers, Dr. Ablon teaches educators, parents, clinicians, managers, and leaders a very different approach to understanding and addressing challenging behavior of all types and in all people. Dr. Ablon has helped hundreds of organizations throughout the world implement the Collaborative Problem Solving approach.

About Me: I'm Stuart (he/him/his), and I'm the father of three kids who make me feel very proud to be their dad. I was born and raised in Boston and have spent most of my life here, except for a few wonderful years in California for graduate school. I'm an athlete and a big Boston sports fan. Both my parents are mental health professionals, so becoming a psychologist was not a big stretch in my family! I spent the early part of my career helping kids with behavioral challenges and researching why different forms of therapy are effective. I learned that a lot of it comes down to how well we create helping relationships. For more than 30 years now, I've tried to teach people how to create helping relationships with kids in situations when it's especially hard to do so.

Motivating Change in Three Little Words

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

(Based on her award-winning International and New York Times Bestselling memoir, Three Little Words)

Born in 1985 to a single teen mother Ashley was placed in foster care at the age of 3. Most of her 14 placements were abusive and overcrowded. In one home, 16 people lived in a small trailer where the children were regularly beaten, neglected, verbally assaulted, and starved. Another foster parent became a convicted pedophile. At one point, she was also placed with an alcoholic relative that was shot twice in front of her.

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After spending almost ten years in the system, Ashley was finally adopted from a group home when she was twelve. Instead of seeing herself as a victim, Ashley has used her experience to find the strength to accomplish incredible things. She became a New York Times Bestselling author by age 22, holds a Master's Degree in Social Work, ran for Florida State Senate at age 26, created and heads a non-profit organization, and she has been a foster parent to more than 20 children. In this inspiring keynote, Ashley will show audiences how to overcome their own personal and professional challenges to accomplish more than they ever thought possible. She delivers her story with humor and grace, and attendees will leave energized and ready to take on the world!

Speaker(s): Ashley Rhodes-Courter, LCSW, BC-TMH, CBHCM, RBT

Since her first National Keynote at age 14, Ashley Rhodes-Courter has shared her story with thousands in the United States and in over 7 countries.

After spending almost a decade in the foster care system as a child, Ashley Rhodes-Courter has transcended all odds to become an inspiring advocate, social worker, parent, and executive. In her own community, Ashley has served as Guardian ad Litem (CASA) volunteer, foster parent, and adoptive parent.

By the age of 22, Ashley became a New York Times Bestselling Author, with her first book, *Three Little Words*. Her second book, *Three More Words* debuted at #1 on Amazon Bestseller list. Her most recent book and first children's picture book was recently published, "Sam is My Sister."

Ashley has a Master's Degree in Social Work and has a passion for children, families, education, and mentorship. As a foster parent herself, she and her husband have cared for more than 25 children who were victims of extreme abuse and neglect. She is also dedicated to her own non-profit, [The Foundation for Sustainable Families](#).

Her work, story, education, and personal experiences give Ashley a unique expertise on how to improve outcomes for individuals, children, families, and youth; and how we can be more productive in our personal and professional pursuits despite obstacles.