2020 Real Voices, Real Choices
VIRTUAL Conference

AUGUST 31 - SEPTEMBER 4, 2020

A NETWORK
OF CONNECTION

Like us on Facebook: Missouri Real-Voices-Real-Choices
Follow us on Twitter: @MentalHealthMO
Visit Our Websites:
Missouri Mental Health Foundation RVRC
Missouri Department of Mental Health RVRC
Debuting in 1979, the Director’s Creativity Showcase has become a favorite with consumers, families, and staff. The annual art contest is an opportunity for individuals served by the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) to display their creative talents. The artwork is created not only for the Showcase but is sometimes used as a means of therapy. This therapy provides an outlet for the artist to express his or her feelings – feelings they may not be able to verbally communicate. The Showcase has encouraged many individuals to try something they may previously have never considered possible, only to find they have a true creative talent.

All entries are judged in one of the following categories: Mental Illness (MI), Developmental Disabilities (DD), Substance Use Disorders (SUD), Professional (Best of Show) and Photography. Cash awards are provided for each of the categories. In addition, opportunities are provided for the artist to sell their artwork.

Please visit the Missouri Mental Health Foundation website to view the 2020 Director’s Creativity Showcase!
GENERAL INFORMATION

Welcome to the 2020 Real Voices, Real Choices VIRTUAL Conference!

A NETWORK OF CONNECTION

Although we had to cancel the in-person event due to COVID-19, we are very excited to offer the very FIRST virtual RVRC Consumer Conference! All conference activities will occur online via the following:

- Missouri Real Voices, Real Choices Consumer Conference Facebook page
- Missouri Department of Mental Health – RVRC website
- Missouri Mental Health Foundation RVRC website
- Missouri Mental Health Foundation Facebook page
- Missouri Mental Health Foundation YouTube channel

We have a wonderful lineup of virtual sessions, both live and pre-recorded, that are exciting, powerful, and chalked full of information to use in your life! There will be a variety of sessions offered all week. We would encourage you to look at the descriptions and choose which one is best for you to attend.

Individuals in professions falling under the DMH Division of Behavioral Health will have the opportunity to earn continuing education units (CEUs) this year! In order to receive a CEU certificate following the event, participants must have completed the RSVP form prior to the conference and indicated which CEU eligible sessions they will attend – SORRY NO EXCEPTIONS!

We strongly encourage you to actively participate in ALL sessions and be sure to like, love, and share the information!

Be sure to join us for an evening of virtual fun on Tuesday, September 1st from 6:00-8:00pm. This event will feature videos from some very talented individuals and a dance party hosted by a small group of RVRC staff and volunteers. As always, there will be a prize drawing at the closing session with some wonderful gifts up for grabs!

Technical issues may occur as we deliver live-stream sessions and activities, so we ask for your patience and understanding.

On behalf of the Missouri Department of Mental Health, Missouri Mental Health Foundation, RVRC Planning Committee, and all of our virtual presenters, we ask all participants to be respectful while commenting on live sessions. Please remember words are a very powerful tool, so please use them wisely. We strongly urge everyone to be kind and encouraging when participating in this event!
Founded in 2008, the Missouri Mental Health Foundation (MMHF) is a non-profit organization established to provide a singular focus on raising awareness and public understanding of the many issues impacting individuals and families living with mental illness, developmental disabilities and substance use disorders.

Our efforts battle stigma and discrimination, promote care and treatment, and foster inclusion in the community and workforce. The Foundation is governed by a Board of Directors and managed by an Executive Director.

The Foundation collaborates with the Missouri Department of Mental Health, as well as other organizations, in providing broad-based public education, awareness and stigma reduction services. Such services may include providing resource/educational materials, assisting the general public in understanding and navigating the public mental health system, creating and distributing positive media communications, marketing to the general public, coordinating/hosting trainings, conferences or special events, and providing technical assistance in many other areas.

Increasing public awareness and understanding of mental health disorders will help dissolve prejudice and discrimination, and open doors to treatment and equal opportunity for participation in schools, communities and the workforce.

Without the partnership with the Foundation, the Real Voices Real Choices Conference would not be possible. Supporting the Missouri Mental Health Foundation is your opportunity to make a difference in Changing Attitudes and Building Hope for some of Missouri’s most vulnerable citizens.

To learn more about the Missouri Mental Health Foundation, please visit the Foundation’s website:

https://www.missourimhf.org
Thank you for joining us for a week of presentations, workshops, panel discussions, and activities. Our focus continues to be empowering you to learn something new and enhance your life from this conference. We encourage you to take back information to share with your family and friends. Like you, we are real people too, we are consumers of mental health services and we come from a variety of backgrounds. We may have a mental illness, we may be in recovery or we may have a developmental disability. Our speakers and presenters are like you too! We have carefully selected outstanding presenters who reflect who we are and what we are about. We believe you will find them interesting and informative. So take it all in and learn something new. This conference is about real voices and real choices…and that is you and that is each of our committee members.

Tim Boyd
Bruce Charles
Sarah Earll
Stacey Gilkey
Kaytlyn Hardwick
Jacqueline Hudson
Jeff Johnson
Patricia Johnson
Toni Jordan

Teresa Kuss
Hollie Marcille
Lonnie Meyer
Lorie Perdieu
Barbara Scheidegger
David Stoecker
James Taylor
Kat Walters

A very special thank you to the Missouri Mental Health Foundation for their generous support of the conference and donation of the flat screen television and tablets, given away at the end of the conference.

Be sure to stick around Friday until the end of the conference for a chance to win!
The 2020 Real Voices Real Choices Conference Planning Committee would like to express its gratitude and appreciation to the following organizations and sponsors for their dedicated support:

- Missouri Department of Mental Health
- Division of Behavioral Health
- Division of Developmental Disabilities
- Missouri Mental Health Foundation
- Care By Clark
- Teresa Kuss Health & Lifestyle Coaching

Changing Attitudes, Building Hope
MONDAY, AUGUST 31

Real Voices Real Choices Crew - **RECORDED**
Welcome .................................................................................................................................................. 9:00-9:30am

Elizabeth Obrey & Angie Perryman - **LIVE** *CEU Eligible 1.00 Hour
Digital Citizenship the Safe and Responsible Way!.................................................................................. 9:30-10:30am
  • Developmental Disabilities Presentation
Technology is the great equalizer for people all over the world. If we know how to use it we can increase personal independence and success. Understanding the basics of how the internet works and how to keep ourselves and personal information safe is vital.

BREAK.................................................................................................................................................. 10:30-10:40am

Real Voices Real Choices Crew - **LIVE** *CEU Eligible 1.00 Hour
RVRC Committee Panel Discussion ............................................................................................................ 10:40-11:40am
  • General Information Presentation
A small group of RVRC Planning Committee members will gather and answer questions regarding their experience serving on the committee, attending the conference over the years, and various other topics.

LUNCH & BREAK..................................................................................................................................... 11:40am-1:30pm

Monica Sigmund & Brenda Saxe - **RECORDED** *CEU Eligible 1.00 Hour
Help Me! .................................................................................................................................................. 1:30-2:30pm
  • Mental Health Presentation
We generally start the presentation with an activity using blindfolds and sections of rope. Those who wish to participate in this activity are blindfolded and assisted around the room; however, since this will be presented virtually this year, we will demonstrate on camera how this activity works. The rope is tied to various objects in the room and those with a blindfold on are directed to a rope and told to find the end. They are instructed to “ask for help if they need it”. The catch is the rope never ends. At some point, hopefully, everyone will ask for help. It is interesting to see how long it takes people to ask for help and to hear why they asked for help when they did. The demonstration will be followed by a discussion on how it makes people feel to ask for help. Do they see others who ask for help as weak? What are the differences in men asking for help and women asking?

Please note: This year the presentations are color-coded according to the targeted audience they are intended for in the conference schedule available on the event website and RVRC Facebook page. Everyone is welcome to each session, but details are provided for those interested.

TARGETED PRESENTATION TOPICS:
  • Developmental Disabilities (DD – color coded light purple on schedule): specific to developmental disabilities such as intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, head injuries, autism, epilepsy, and various learning disabilities.
  • Mental Health (MH – color coded orange on schedule): information related to behavioral or psychological conditions that may impair a person’s ability to function (bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety, etc.).
  • Substance Use Disorder (SUD – color coded yellow on schedule): information on the effects of drugs and alcohol on a person with substance use disorder and how to overcome addiction and gain long-term recovery.
  • Family and Youth (Family/Youth – color coded red on schedule): information on all of the topics above and the impact on family and youth.
  • General (color coded green on schedule): these presentations will cover a variety of topics related to all of the targeted presentation topics listed above.
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

Real Voices Real Choices Crew - RECORDED

Welcome .................................................................................................................................................. 9:00-9:30am

Michael Bodine - LIVE *CEU Eligible 1.00 Hour

Zoom Into Recovery .............................................................................................................................. 9:30-10:30am

• Substance Use Disorder Presentation

With the advances in technology, recovery has become more available than ever before. Although the recovery communities are growing worldwide there are still areas where meetings are not available and people have to travel several hours in order to attend a meeting. With the Zoom application we are able to take recovery meetings to these people. We believe that everyone with an addiction needs access to meetings. The importance of fellowship and helping one another is without parallel. This presentation will give you the knowledge and tools to continue to share recovery and connect worldwide.

BREAK.................................................................................................................................................. 10:30-10:40am

Carol Johnson, Cher Caudel, Karen Digh-Allen, and Steve Farmer - LIVE *CEU Eligible 1.00 Hour

Public Administrators 101 .................................................................................................................. 10:40-11:40am

• General Information Presentation

Public Administrator 101 - Guardians today - will explain the duties and responsibilities of our elected office. We will relate how we work with multiple agencies to help our wards be as independent as possible while providing protective oversight to help shield them from harm.

LUNCH & BREAK........................................................................................................................... 11:40am-1:30pm

Jenni Hickerson, Luke Barber, & Tyler Hannegan - LIVE *CEU Eligible 1.00 Hour

The Trio of Self-Empowerment .............................................................................................................. 1:30-2:30pm

• Developmental Disabilities Presentation

Too many times, when people have conversations about Self-Determination, they confuse or exchange this term with Self-Advocacy or even Self-Awareness. Though closely related, the words are vastly different in meaning and not interchangeable as they are freely used. In this seminar, we will discuss, the journey of how a person grows and is empowered as an individual through a process called, “The Trio of Self-Empowerment”. Rooted on three main growth points, Self-Awareness, Self-Determination, and Self-Advocacy. Each will be defined and discussed in how they together are a part of opening hearts and minds to social change; especially in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities, individuals with developmental disabilities, and autism.

BREAK.................................................................................................................................................... 2:30-2:40pm

Sarah Earll - RECORDED *CEU Eligible 1.00 Hour

It’s My Money, I’ll Spend If I Want To – Basics of Budgeting .......................................................... 2:40-3:40pm

• Family & Youth Presentation

This presentation will teach individuals about basic budgeting and personal finance. It is the goal of the workshop to help people understand how to create a basic budget. With a basic budget individuals can understand how much money they have and where they want to spend it!
DINNER & BREAK.................................................................................................................................................. 3:40-6:00pm

Real Voices Real Choices Crew - *RECORDED
Virtual Karaoke & Dance Party .......................................................................................................................... 6:00-8:00pm
Come enjoy some virtual fun and entertainment. This event will feature a selection of videos from some of our talented attendees singing along to their favorite songs, as well as, a dance party and line dance lesson hosted by a small group of RVRC staff and volunteers!

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

Real Voices Real Choices Crew - *RECORDED
Welcome .................................................................................................................................................. 9:00-9:30am

Jim Marshall - LIVE *CEU Eligible 1.00 Hour
The Struggle Epidemic .......................................................................................................................... 9:30-10:30am
• Family & Youth Presentation
The Struggle Epidemic is a look at the syndemic (aggregation of several epidemics feeding off each other) of Mental Health issues, substance use issues and suicide. The goal is to be able to tie all three together and understand how they all affect each other. None of these will get better without the other two getting better. We will discuss the epidemiology of all three and what can be done to improve all these areas.

BREAK.................................................................................................................................................. 10:30-10:40am

Hosts: Michelle Gerstner, Sharon Acree-Frausto
Respect Speakers: Sue Casteneda, Gay Madison, and James Preston - LIVE *CEU Eligible 1.00 Hour
RESPECT Institute of Missouri ............................................................................................................. 10:40-11:40am
• Mental Health Presentation
This will be a discussion about lived experience from three individuals who live with a mental illness. The presenters will all share their personal stories regarding their diagnoses and journeys they have taken through life to overcome obstacles and persevere. All three presenters have overcome incredible adversity and are now thriving. You will not want to miss this powerful discussion!

LUNCH & BREAK............................................................................................................................................. 11:40am-1:30pm
Robin Fry - *RECORDED*  *CEU Eligible 1.00 Hour*

**What’s Up? How to Stay Positive & Proactive**

1:30-2:30pm

- General Information Presentation

Having a positive and proactive attitude makes a difference not only in how you see yourself, but in how others see you and treat you. Presenter, artist, writer, and self-advocate Robin Fry puts it all together with an interactive presentation and practice time allowing participants to practice and learn about dealing with situations in a positive and proactive way with tips using the word “UP”.

**BREAK**

2:30-2:40pm

Katie Ellison -  *RECORDED*  *CEU Eligible 1.00 Hour*

**Conversations on Access to Lethal Means**

2:40-3:40pm

- Family & Youth Presentation

Missourians are more likely to intentionally kill themselves with a gun than they are to be killed by a gun in a mass shooting or homicide. Six out of ten suicide deaths in Missouri are by firearm. Conversations on Access to Lethal Means (CALM) is a 1-hour adaptation of Counseling on Access to Lethal Means, which promotes the evidence-based strategy of reducing access to lethal means to prevent suicide. CALM is the next-step in suicide prevention that everyone can learn to do to prevent suicide. Upon completion of a CALM workshop, participants will be able to identify risk factors and warnings for suicide, understand the concept of lethal means reduction and why it works, as well as tips for how to have the conversation about reducing access to lethal methods used in a suicide by encouraging safer storage of lethal means.

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**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3**

Real Voices Real Choices Crew - *RECORDED*

**Welcome**

9:00-9:30am

Sheila Mihalick -  *LIVE*  *CEU Eligible 1.00 Hour*

**Opioid Overdose Education & Narcan Training**

9:30-10:30am

- Substance Use Disorder Presentation

This presentation provides an introduction to opioids, opioid use disorder, & the opioid crisis. We will review tips for harm reduction and important opioid-related laws in Missouri. We will also discuss what happens in the body to cause an opioid overdose, the signs & symptoms of an opioid overdose, and how to reverse an opioid overdose using Narcan (naloxone).

**BREAK**

10:30-10:40am
Jeff Johnson - **RECORDED** *CEU Eligible 1.00 Hour*

**Self-Advocacy at the Local Level** ................................................................. 10:40-11:40am

- Developmental Disabilities Presentation

This presentation will introduce and discuss the history and meaning of the self-advocacy movement for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Information will be given regarding People First of Missouri, and one of its local chapters, People First of Boone County. Examples of how the local chapter participates in the self-advocacy movement will also be discussed. The purpose of the presentation is to share ideas about how to participate in the movement, encourage others who don’t have a People First chapter to consider forming one, and to hear from others about how they participate in self-advocacy.

**LUNCH & BREAK** ........................................................................................................... 11:40am-1:30pm

Jean Harris-Sokora - **LIVE** *CEU Eligible 1.00 Hour*

**Sorry Seems to be the Hardest Word** ................................................................. 1:30-2:30pm

- Family & Youth Presentation

This workshop will focus on the gift of forgiveness. What forgiveness is and how we can find it for ourselves and others.

**BREAK** ..................................................................................................................................................... 2:30-2:40pm

Toni Jordan - **RECORDED** *CEU Eligible 1.00 Hour*

**Moving On Up!** ........................................................................................................ 2:40-3:40pm

- Substance Use Disorder Presentation

This presentation will explore the topic of motivation. Participants will be asked to think about ways to define motivation. Information on what motivates us as humans will be provided. The presentation will conclude with the 4 elements of motivation and how to grab ahold of motivation in recovery.

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**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4**

Real Voices Real Choices Crew - **RECORDED** *CEU Eligible 1.00 Hour*

**Welcome** .................................................................................................................................................. 9:00-9:30am

Barb Scheidegger - **RECORDED** *CEU Eligible 1.00 Hour*

**Rerouting the Pipeline** ........................................................................................................ 9:30-10:30am

- Family & Youth Presentation

This presentation will explore the issue of the school-to-prison pipeline. The presenter will talk about what the school-to-prison pipeline is, how the cycle begins in a young person’s life, the impact it has on young people, families, communities, school officials, etc., and ways to prevent children from ever entering this cycle. Information will include what communities are currently doing, what they can do, and also what individuals can do to make a difference in rerouting this pipeline.
BREAK & LUNCH........................................................................................................................................10:30am-1:30pm

Caroline Cooper - **RECORDED  *CEU Eligible 1.00 Hour**

**Battling Depression from Inside the Ring**...................................................................................................1:30-2:30pm

- Mental Health Presentation

Using the analogy of a boxing match, Caroline Cooper will present a unique approach for confronting depression and other mental health conditions. The presentation contains three ‘rounds,’ containing different themes for the fight. Round 1-Facing the Opposition will help attendees understand the importance of knowing who they are and what they bring to the fight. In Round 2-Get Out of the Clinch, the focus shifts from examining one’s self to engaging in the fight. Boxing terminology defines different techniques for confronting depression. This is a powerful illustration for individuals who may feel helpless in addressing the symptoms of their disease. Finally, Round 3-A Knockdown Punch, offers hope and encouragement for addressing symptoms of depression or other conditions using defensive strategies on the way to victory. Storytelling and lecture will be used. Attendees will have an opportunity to practice some of the suggested proactive and defensive suggestions for confronting depression.

BREAK........................................................................................................................................................2:30-2:40pm

**Real Voices Real Choices Crew & Missouri Mental Health Foundation Team - LIVE**

**Conference Closing Session & Prize Drawing**........................................................................................2:40-3:40pm

During this session, there will be a brief summary of the conference, door prizes, and concluding remarks. Prizes will be mailed to winners following the conference.

*CEU = Continuing Education Unit; CEU certificates will ONLY be issued to participants who completed this RSVP form prior to the event and indicated which session/s they will attend – SORRY NO EXCEPTIONS.
Angie Perryman
Angie worked as a Parent Educator for twenty plus years specializing in disability resources. At The Arc of the Ozarks, Angie worked in the autism residential program as a direct care staff and as a supervisor. Ms. Perryman is currently a Family Advocate, her work includes teaching the self-advocacy class, Project STIR. She oversees the formation of the group People Educating and Empowering People (PEEP’s). She is also a Co-Founder of Ozarks Inclusion Partnership, which was recently given the Collaboration of the Year award from Southwest Center for Independent Living.

Barb Scheidegger
Barb has been active in Children's Mental Health for close to thirty years starting with her own lived experience as a parent. She has served on a variety of committees from local to national to now being the Executive Director of Missouri Families 4 Families, which is a statewide organization which provides supports and trainings for parents and caregivers who have children and youth with social emotional and behavioral health experiences.

Brenda Saxe
Brenda is a certified Christian mental health and wellness life coach. She and her husband have an unwavering love and devotion to their family and are committed to making their community a better place. Brenda is also a peer counselor with the CWM and is the author of the book HOPE-Hold On Pain Ends being released in August on Amazon and Barnes and Noble. This publication is an interactive workbook to support those who are survivors of suicide loss and attempt survivors.

Carol Johnson
Carol has been the Dallas County Public Administrator since 2009, is the current Missouri Association of Public Administrators (MAPA) President, and has served as Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and past Legislative Committee Chair for MAPA. Carol was also a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator for twenty years and is a lifelong native of Southwest Missouri.

Caroline S. Cooper
Caroline is a certified peer specialist. She is a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) training facilitator and is certified in Mental Health First Aid. Caroline serves as the Executive Director of In God’s Corner Ministry: Where Mental Health and Faith Connect. This nonprofit educates and encourages people impacted by mental illness, especially family members and friends of individuals with mental health challenges. The nonprofit is based in the Lee's Summit/Kansas City area. Caroline is also an award-winning author whose books include “In This Corner: Battling Depression from Inside the Ring” and “Essays on Mental Illness: Real People, Real Life, Real Hope.” Caroline is passionate about bringing hope and encouragement to others and is grateful for this opportunity to present to her peers.

Cher Caudel
Cher has been the Moniteau County Public Administrator since 2003. Cher was awarded the MAPA Public Administrator (PA) of the Year award in 2019 and also currently serves as the Treasurer for the MAPA. Cher has served on the MAPA Legislative Committee since 2005 and Department of Mental Health (DMH) Liaison Committee since 2006. She is Co-Chair of the newly formed Standards of Practice Task Force for MAPA. Cher has also served as the Missouri Association of Counties (MAC) Board District Representative since 2010, is a member of Missouri’s Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders (MO-WINGS), and a lifelong resident of Moniteau County.
David Stoecker
David Stoecker is a person in long-term recovery. For him that means he has not used alcohol or other drugs since January 31st of 2009 and because of that he now has a positive impact on his community. He is the Executive Director of the non-profit Better Life in Recovery and co-founder of the Springfield Recovery Community Center. He was the 2017 Missouri Mental Health Champion for recovery and a 2018 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Voice Award winner. He loves organizing pro-social family friendly sober events, educating people about addiction/recovery and spending time with his amazing wife and two incredible kids.

Elizabeth Obrey
Elizabeth is a Family Advocate and Community Resource Specialist which allows her to not only keep current on resources and technology, but also on the needs of people and families looking for supports. Working directly to help overcome barriers to success she works to evaluate the situation and bring tools, information and direct support to overcome these barriers. Currently, she works as a family advocate, disability trainer, and author on autism. The Family Advocacy’s Assistive Technology Lab uses a hands-on approach with the most current assistive technology to discover tools that help a person be as independent as possible.

Gay Madison
Gay was a person that became whatever people needed, and some of the actions were not good. She has been a drug counselor and one who needed counseling. Ms. Madison has been a RESPECT Speaker since 2014 in the Kansas City area.

James Preston
A resident of Columbia, Missouri, James Preston has been a patient in the field of mental health for twenty years. He loves his wife, his cat, fishing, reading, writing and spending time with family. He attributes much of his growth and recovery to the wonderful doctors, therapists, and support workers that have worked with him over the years. He believes strongly that “it helps to help” and does his best to keep that mantra in mind as he lives in recovery.

Jean Harris-Sokora
Jean is a person in long-term recovery as well as a professional in the field of mental health. Jean has been working with people affected by mental health challenges for forty years. Jean specializes in substance use and co-occurring disorders. She has experience with adolescents, adults, and families. Jean enjoys her three children and three dogs in her free time.

Jeff Johnson
Jeff lives in Columbia, Missouri, and has been married to his beautiful wife, Tonette Johnson, for twenty-one years. They have four wonderful children and nine beautiful grandkids. Jeff has worked at the Central Missouri Regional Office as one of the Advocacy Specialists for the Department of Mental Health for twelve wonderful years advocating for consumers and their families. He has also served on the planning committee for the Real Voices, Real Choices Conference since it all begin back in 2008.

Jenni Hickerson
Jenni joined the staff at Easterseals Midwest last year after serving twenty-two years as an officer in the United States Army, where she specialized in Psychological Operations and Counter-Terrorism Operations as well as serving as a leadership instructor. Jenni’s passion for advocacy began at an early age simply when she witnessed the marginalization of a friend who had a disability. It was then she formed her belief that “everyone has a story… everyone has value… and everyone has something to contribute.” Since that day, Jenni has been committed to advocacy and the promotion of people as well as standing in the gap for those who do not have a voice to stand for themselves.
Jim Marshall, BS
Jim is a thirty-eight year educator who has a Bachelor of Science in Education (mainly counseling education). Jim has eight years of experience as a speaker in partnership with Council for Drug Free Youth and has done approximately 506 presentations. Jim was awarded Educator of the Year in 2014 and formed Cody’s Gift in 2011.

Karen Digh-Allen
Karen has been the Callaway County Public Administrator since 1997 after working in Jefferson City nine years as an attorney for various state agencies. She earned her National Certified Guardian status in 2005 and was the recipient of the National Certified Guardian Excellence Award in 2016. She is a member of MO-WINGS and also serves as a Regional Vice President for MAPA. Karen lives in Callaway County with her husband, Eugene, a retired Certified Public Accountant (CPA) who is a brain injury survivor.

Katie Ellison, MA
Katie is the Project Director for the Safer Homes Collaborative at the Missouri Institute of Mental Health (MIMH). She has over twenty years of experience in suicide prevention; working in research and program implementation; prevention policy and programming in K-12 public education; as well as adult and youth corrections. Ms. Ellison developed the Suicide Lifeguard training at MIMH, a training for professionals on suicide prevention, intervention, assessment and management training for licensure in the State of Missouri. She is a member of the St. Louis Regional Suicide Prevention Coalition and American Association of Suicidology.

Luke Barber
Luke joined Easterseals Midwest in June 2020 as a Self-Determination Instructor, and is pursuing a degree in Social Work and Public Policy. He is the founder of the “Able” Partnership for people with disabilities at University of Missouri at St. Louis, and is currently running for office as a Missouri State Representative representing District 89 in St. Louis, Missouri. Luke’s passion for advocacy began as a student in middle school when he witnessed the difference in treatment for students with disabilities compared to students without disabilities.

Michael Bodine
Michael has been in long-term recovery for five years. He has been a member of Narcotics Anonymous since August 8, 2015. He is the father of three daughters and two sons. He has held a position within the recovery community as Activities Chair for his home group, We Do Recovery, for two years. He is passionate about recovery and enjoys finding new ways to give back what was so freely given to him.

Monica Sigmund
Monica is a wonderfully made woman who is a wife, mother, and friend. She is a relatively new believer in Christ and has a deep passion for helping others. She facilitates peer to peer workshops for suicide loss and attempt survivors and facilitates trainings on social emotional health.

Robin Fry
Self-advocate, writer, artist/photographer, substitute teacher, and presenter Robin Fry first attended a Real Voices, Real Choices conference in 2009 and has been moving forward ever since! She is active in her community as Secretary and Board Member at the Walsworth Community Center and as a member of the North Missouri Art Council (NOMO). She lives in Marceline, Missouri, with her dog, Trini, and five outdoor cats.
Sarah Earll, BA, MFA
Sarah Earll is the Executive Director of the St. Louis Empowerment Center, a peer-run drop-in and Recovery Community Center. She became a Certified Peer Specialist in 2009 and has been a trainer for the Peer Specialist program since 2011. She is also a Certified WRAP ® (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) Facilitator and a Certified WHAM (Whole Health Action Management) Facilitator. She was awarded the 2016 Missouri Mental Health Champion Award for Mental Health. Sarah holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas and a Masters of Fine Arts from Western Illinois University in Macomb, Illinois.

Sheila Mihalick, Ph.D, CPS
Sheila is the Program Director for the St. Louis Empowerment Center’s Recovery Community Center. She earned Missouri’s Certified Peer Specialist credential in 2017, and has been a CPS trainer since 2019. She is also a HUB Team member for the University of Missouri’s Telehealth Network SHOW-ME ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) for Certified Peer Specialists, and sits on the Advisory Council for the MO-HOPE (Missouri Opioid-Heroin Overdose Prevention and Education) Project. Sheila received her Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology in 1997, and serves as an Adjunct Professor for Webster University.

Stacey Gilkey, CPS
Stacey is a mother of two children living with Autism among other things. She has worked at a Community Mental Health Center as a Family Support Provider Supervisor for the last eight years. Stacey is also a Certified Peer Specialist. She loves helping with the Real Voices, Real Choices conference and has served on the planning committee for three years representing the DMH Division of Behavioral Health – Family & Youth and Mental Health.

Steve Farmer
Steve is in his second term as Jefferson County Public Administrator. Steve is a Southern Illinois native and a retired twenty-one year veteran of the Navy/Navy Reserve. He is grateful for the opportunity to improve the lives of those dealing with intellectual and developmental disabilities in his community! Steve is a professional with life experience having a daughter with myotonic dystrophy & fetal alcohol syndrome.

Sue Casteneda
Growing up in the 1950’s and 60’s was different for Sue. As the child of a white woman and black man, she struggled with anger, depression, rage and isolation. The need to be a high achiever added even more pressure and she was an alcoholic by age 16. Sue shares her story of life with bipolar disorder; a journey including psychiatric hospital stays, losing her job and family, living in public housing, and finally, the struggle to reach sobriety. Join Sue to hear how she rebuilt those relationships, learned to live with mental illness, and remained sober for the past twenty years.

Toni Jordan, CPS, MAADC II.
Toni is a native of St Louis, Missouri and a charismatic leader in the peer world. She is a recipient of multiple awards since being in recovery. She is authentic and genuine to her peers. She has been a proud trainer for peers in recovery for about eight years. Toni is a phenomenal presenter, motivational speaker, mother, and grandmother. Toni is well known in the arena of behavioral health, a CPS trainer and credential holder of CPS; Toni has been in recovery for sixteen years from co-occurring disorders and loves to motivate others to move along in the recovery process.

Tyler Hannegan
Tyler joined Easterseals Midwest in June 2020 serving as a Self-Determination Instructor. He is a student at St. Louis Community College at Meramec with hopes of someday serving as a coach to young athletes with disabilities. This passion began after taking part as an athlete in the Special Olympics playing basketball, bowling, volleyball, and flag football. One thing that he always states is that even though he lives with Autism, he knows he will not allow his life to be defined by it.
SPECIAL THANK YOU

From Consumer Conference Coordinator & Co-Chair

For all the individuals that attended and participated by sharing their strength, experiences and hope with others to learn, grow and make their lives better by living them the way they desire.

To all the administrative staff and employees of the Missouri Mental Health Foundation and the Missouri Department of Mental Health; we are truly grateful and appreciate all your dedication, support, hard work and loyalty in ensuring that we have the opportunity to continue to learn, grow and improve our lives.

For all the wonderful presentations put together and delivered with such passion and creativity from a wonderful, enthusiastic group of speakers and presenters. We had so many outstanding, informational presentations submitted it was tough to choose.

For all the Committee Members; thank you for all the valuable time you volunteer and the personal professional contacts you utilize to help pull together this one of a kind event to share with all individuals state wide.

To all the rest who have helped support this conference in many different ways: by donations, e-blasts and carrying the messages back into your communities and organizations we appreciate you. We would not have been able to continue to grow without you. We are very appreciative for all that you do for this conference and the individuals that attended and will be able to attend in the future because of you.

We would like to thank you all again for the opportunity to be able to interact with so many caring, kind, passionate, and creative individuals. We were able to be taught by some of the most understanding and heartfelt individuals. This is all about our voices being real, so let them be heard and help spread the word about this unique conference with the mission to erase stigma! We hope to see you again next year with new experiences to share.

Sincerely,

Kristina Cannon, Coordinator
Amber Kellison, Co-Chair
Changing Attitudes, Building Hope

www.MissouriMHF.org

The Missouri Mental Health Foundation (MMHF) raises awareness and public understanding of the many issues impacting individuals and families living with mental illness, developmental disabilities, and substance use disorders.

BE A FRIEND

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

MMHF provides broad-based public education, awareness, and stigma-reduction services:

- Positive Media Communications
- Public Service Announcements
- Marketing to the General Public
- Mental Health Resources
- Trainings, conferences, and other special events
- Technical Assistance with Mental Health Educational Programs

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Thank you for participating in the 2020 Real Voices, Real Choices Virtual Conference!