13th Annual

Montana Conference on Suicide Prevention

Montana Conference on Suicide Prevention

Navigating Adversity:
Supporting Individuals While Nurturing Personal Resilience

2025

Missoula, MT

Conference PROGRAM

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

Montana

Welcome!

A Message from the Conference Committee

Welcome to the 13th Annual Montana Conference on Suicide Prevention! We're so glad you're here.

This year's theme, "Navigating Adversity: Supporting Individuals While Nurturing Personal Resilience," highlights the growing impact of technology on our interconnected lives and the increased exposure healthcare providers and caretakers have to secondary and tertiary trauma.

The AFSP Montana Chapter is a passionate team of volunteers, working tirelessly outside our regular jobs to bring you this conference and numerous other suicide prevention initiatives throughout Montana. Please stop by our booth to learn more and discover how you can get involved.

We're also incredibly grateful to our generous sponsors. Their support makes it possible for us to feature renowned speakers without at a very minimal cost to attendees. We encourage you to visit the exhibitor area and thank them for their contributions.

Together, through education, advocacy, and support, we can truly make a difference. Thank you for being a vital part of the solution; your presence offers hope to all those affected by suicide.

WITH HOPE,

Montana Conference on Suicide Prevention Planning Committee

CONFERENCE GOAL

The Montana Conference on Suicide Prevention (COSP) is a live, educational conference activity focused on addressing the significant behavioral and public health issue of suicide in Montana and developing evidence-based, best practice skills for suicide prevention across multiple disciplines. Hosted by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Montana Chapter, this conference brings together advocates and professionals in learning about suicide prevention strategies in the state and across the nation and equips attendees with strategies for preventing suicide.

We strive to provide clinicians and citizen attendees alike with the latest evidence-based tools and best practices on suicide prevention. Provide an open dialog to allow stakeholders to identify gaps in the state and learn together better ways to address these gaps.

UPON COMPLETION OF THE CONFERENCE: At least 80% of the participants will show evidence of gained knowledge by stating at least one new strategy related to self-care and resiliency strategies for caregivers impacted by suicidal crisis, however regularly they encounter affected patients.

CONTINUING EDUCATION: In order to earn the certificate for CEUs or Renewal Units, each attendee will be required to:

- attend the conference on 7/25/2025
- complete the post-conference survey to assess that conference objectives have been met
- ensure that the email address and details entered on the conference survey match those which were used when registering for the conference

Once the data has been cross-referenced and verified, a printed & signed certificate for requested Continuing Education type will be emailed within 2 weeks.

POST:

- For POST CEs, please locate the sign-in sheet for the morning session and for each afternoon session you attend, as we will need to submit this separately.

Conference planning is done by dedicated volunteers in the interest of educating as many Montanans as possible regarding suicide prevention, best practices, and new & emerging information.
Conference sponsors are listed in the Conference Program and are also listed on the conference website montanacosp.org.

What's Inside!

Full Day Block Agenda & Map.....14 & 15

Morning Plenary.....4

Afternoon Breakouts

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Need Continuing Education?

A CHECKLIST TO ENSURE A SMOOTH CE EXPERIENCE

- ☐ Check in at the main desk.
  Virtual Attendees: make sure your Zoom name matches your registration name so you are checked in.
- ☐ Complete the post-conference survey using the SAME EMAIL address you registered with.
- ☐ Accurately track & report which sessions you attend!
  Your certificate will be generated based on the attendance YOU self-report.
- ☐ Need POST? You must ALSO sign the check-in form for each breakout/session.
- ☐ Make Note of Session Abstracts & Learning Objectives
  The survey requests details about whether the sessions met these objectives, and what you have learned from each session you attend.

Text us your questions!

406 518 1725

Scan this QR code to start the text message for you

Please include your name & to whom you are addressing the question.

Sessions AND

MORNING PLENARY

8:00 a.m. • 10 min

Opening Remarks

Welcome & Intros
Housekeeping

8:10 a.m. • 45 min

.75 CEUs • .75 Renewal Units

Suicide Prevention in Montana: Analyzing Preliminary Data to Inform Targeted Efforts

Dr. Jessica Gerthe, PhD. NCC, LCPC



Dr. Jessica Gerthe is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Counseling at Montana State University. She earned her Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision from Pennsylvania State University, where her research focused on suicide gatekeeper trainings through qualitative content analysis. A Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) and Approved Clinical Supervisor in Montana, Dr. Gerthe brings over 15 years of experience working with adolescents and young adults in clinical, school, and community-based settings. Her scholarship centers on suicide prevention, self-harm, digital mental health concerns, and training best practices for counselor education. Dr. Gerthe has extensive experience developing and delivering suicide prevention initiatives, training school personnel in crisis response, and supervising emerging counselors. Through her research and teaching, she is committed to enhancing counselor preparation and advancing evidence-based strategies for working with at-risk populations.

Elise Meldahl



Elise Meldahl holds a B.A. in Elementary Education from Montana State University and is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling at MSU. Her passion for supporting young people extends to her role as a graduate research assistant, where her clinical work is specifically focused on the critical area of suicidality among children and teens.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACT

Suicide rates in Montana consistently rank among the highest in the nation, yet risk is not evenly distributed across populations. Previous research has identified several factors associated with higher suicide death rates, including military service, specific occupations, geographic location, and elevation. This presentation shares preliminary findings from an ongoing interdisciplinary research project analyzing all suicide deaths in Montana from 2012-2024 using data from the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (MT DPHHS). The study explores how the intersection of multiple high-risk factors may compound suicide risk, providing insight into which populations face the greatest vulnerabilities.

Through a frequency analysis of key demographic and contextual variables—including town/city of residence, industry, occupation, relationship status, sex, birth state, and veteran status—this study identifies patterns that can inform targeted, context-responsive prevention strategies. Findings suggest that individuals who belong to multiple high-risk categories may have disproportionately higher rates of suicide, underscoring the need for tailored prevention approaches. As this research is ongoing, discussion will include considerations for future analyses and interdisciplinary collaboration. Attendees will

gain a deeper understanding of suicide risk in Montana and discuss potential implications for policy, community intervention, and resource allocation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify key demographic, occupational, and geographic factors associated with increased suicide risk in Montana.
2. Analyze the compounded impact of multiple high-risk factors on suicide death rates.
3. Discuss context-responsive prevention strategies based on preliminary findings, with implications for policy and community-based interventions.

NOTE-TAKING SPACE

8:55 a.m. • 45 min

.75 CEUs • .75 Renewal Units

Breaking Barriers, Savings Lives:

The Power of Telepsychiatry in Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Care

Dr. Eric R. Arzubi, MD



Dr. Eric Arzubi is a child and adolescent psychiatrist, healthcare entrepreneur, and advocate for mental health reform in rural America. As CEO and co-founder of Frontier Psychiatry, he is committed to expanding access to high-quality psychiatric care through telehealth, ensuring that underserved communities receive the care they need.

Dr. Arzubi is an Assistant Clinical Professor at the Yale Child Study Center, where he teaches and mentors child psychiatry fellows. Previously, he served as Chair of Psychiatry at Billings Clinic, Montana's largest health system, where he led the creation of Montana's first psychiatry residency program and the state's first dedicated psychiatric stabilization unit.

A former Wall Street bond trader, Dr. Arzubi transitioned to medicine, driven by a deep passion for mental health advocacy. His leadership is guided by the Quintuple Aim, emphasizing exceptional patient care, clinician well-being, population health, cost reduction, and health equity. He is a strong proponent of value-based care and innovative solutions that challenge the status quo in psychiatric treatment.

A sought-after speaker and thought leader, Dr. Arzubi regularly shares insights on rural mental health, telepsychiatry, and healthcare leadership. He is currently writing a book on the urgent need for mental health reform, highlighting grassroots advocates driving systemic change.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACT

Timely access to psychiatric care can mean the difference between crisis and stability, yet many individuals—especially those on Medicaid—struggle to find care when they need it most. In this presentation, we share findings from our recent study on the impact of outpatient telepsychiatry, demonstrating its role in reducing hospitalizations and emergency department visits for patients with serious mental illness. Our research found that patients receiving care through Frontier Psychiatry had a 38% lower rate of inpatient hospitalization and 17.9% fewer emergency department admissions

compared to matched controls, while overall costs to Medicaid remained similar. These results challenge the assumption that high-quality psychiatric care must come at a high cost and provide evidence that early intervention through telepsychiatry can prevent crises and improve outcomes. With a focus on suicide prevention, we will discuss how expanding access to psychiatric care—particularly in rural and underserved areas—can save lives. Our goal is to inspire a conversation about the urgent need for systemic change in mental health care delivery and highlight how telepsychiatry can be a powerful tool in building a more accessible, effective, and compassionate system for individuals, families, and communities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the impact of telepsychiatry on crisis prevention.
2. Recognize the role of telepsychiatry in suicide prevention.
3. Explore the implications for policy and practice.

NOTE-TAKING SPACE

9:40 a.m. • 15 min

Break

9:55 a.m. • 45 min

.75 CEUs • .75 Renewal Units

KEYNOTE

The Wildfire of Secondary Trauma and the Transformative Power of Resilience

Andrew Laue, LCSW



Andrew R. Laue, LCSW is a psychotherapist in private practice in Missoula and Polson, Montana. In addition to the clinical work he does with individuals, couples and families, he supervises 30 psychotherapists in the Western Montana region. He is the chief trainer for the National Association of Social Workers Montana Chapter's course in Clinical Supervision. In 2017, he won a National County Association award for his Secondary Trauma Group work with the Missoula County Attorney's office. He is passionate about creating sustainability for human service professionals through the process of identifying secondary trauma that occurs from the intensity of human service work. He consults with many agencies about the delivery and complexity of mental health practice. These include First Step Missoula at St. Patrick's Hospital, Partnership for Children, Inter Mountain Mental Health Center, Partnership Health Center, and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Social Services Department.

A leader in the LGBT community in Montana, Andrew has developed cutting edge interventions for diverse groups including his HIV prevention work with the MSM and IDU population, for which he won the Governor's Award for HIV Prevention in 2003. A decade ago he was part of the development of the award-winning documentary film, Red Without Blue (2007) which has become a founding document in the search for the equitable treatment of transgender people. He resides on the Flathead Reservation in rural Montana, and is passionate in his commitment to serve the Native American population in this region.

Speakers

PRESENTATION ABSTRACT

This session will focus on the nervous system and the bodies of practitioners, teaching practical skills that create immediate relief and build strength.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the reality of secondary and its impact on the mind, body, and nervous system of trauma engaged workers.
2. Learn about the key concepts from trauma and attachment theory, interpersonal neurobiology, and embodiment practices that assist workers in recognizing secondary trauma in their own self systems.
3. Practice the alchemical formula that allows workers and the team cultures they work within to transform secondary trauma into powerful resilience.

NOTE-TAKING SPACE

10:40a.m. • 75 min

1.25 CEUs • 1.25 Renewal Units

Panel Q&A

Dr. Jennifer Preble, DSW, LCSW

MODERATOR



Dr. Jennifer Preble holds a Bachelor of Science from Montana Tech of The University of Montana, and both a Master's and Doctorate in Social Work from Walla Walla University. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Montana and has a pending Social Worker Independent Clinical License in Washington.

Dr. Preble's career is marked by dedicated advocacy for suicide prevention, including nine years' service on the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Montana Chapter Board, and two terms on the AFSP National Public Policy Council.

She recently transitioned to full-time academia, now serving as an Associate Professor of Social Work and Sociology at Walla Walla University, where she focuses on educating future social workers.

PANELISTS



• Andrew Laue, LCSW • Dr. Eric Arzubi
• Dr. Jessica Gerthe, PhD. NCC, LCPC
• Karl Rosston, LCSW

11:55 p.m. • 65 min

Break - Lunch on your own

Sessions &

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT TRACK A

In-Person Attendees Only • Limited to 100 attendees

1:00 p.m. • 4 hours

4 CEUs • 4 Renewal Units

STAR-T: Secondary Trauma Activates Resilience Training

Basic Skills Training: Learn the Concepts and Practice the Skills That Can Transform Secondary Trauma Into Power

Andrew Laue, LCSW



Andrew R. Laue, LCSW is a psychotherapist in private practice in Missoula and Polson, Montana. In addition to the clinical work he does with individuals, couples and families, he supervises 30 psychotherapists in the Western Montana region. He is the chief trainer for the National Association of Social Workers Montana Chapter's course in Clinical Supervision.

SEE PAGE 7 / KEYNOTE FOR FULL BIO.

Lee Starck, M.Ed., NCC, LCPC



Lee Starck's journey began in Wisconsin, leading him to Montana where he earned a Master's degree in School Counseling from MSU. He furthered his expertise with an Education Specialist Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from the University of Montana, and holds certifications as a Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC) and a Licensed Professional Counselor (LCPC). His dedication to the field was recognized when the Montana School Counselors' Association named him 2016 Montana School Counselor of the Year.

For over 16 years, Lee has dedicated his career to supporting children, adolescents, and families through significant challenges, including trauma, relationship dynamics, and life transitions. As a school counselor and now a practicing therapist in Stevensville, he has been deeply involved in helping vulnerable populations. In recent years, Lee has expanded his focus to empower providers and caregivers in the helping professions, recognizing the critical role they play. His commitment is further demonstrated through his service on the board of Emma's House, a Nationally Accredited Children's Advocacy Center.

He and his wife, Adrianna, reside in the Bitterroot Valley with their two young sons, Henry and Sawyer, where they enjoy exploring Montana's mountains and rivers.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACT

Andrew works with both an experiential and a content-driven training process to build resiliency in professionals at risk of experiencing secondary trauma. The training integrates trauma theory, attachment theory, neurobiology, and embodiment work as it applies to the secondary trauma we are exposed to through work in traumatic work environments. Andrew creates safety in any experiential process and encourages participants to track the impact of these training strategies on their whole system.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Grow a deeper understanding of the theory behind the STAR-T model and how to communicate these ideas simply into your work environment.
2. Practice three awareness skills and three connection skills from the STAR-T curricula that can immediately transform secondary trauma in your own life or team culture.
3. Learn about the four forms of secondary trauma and their unique impact on worker functioning.

Speakers

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT TRACK B

In Person / Virtual Attendees

1:00 p.m. • 100 min

1.75 CEUs • 1.75 Renewal Units

The Harder Side of Helping

Daniel Champer, LCPC



Daniel currently serves as the Director of Clinical and Residential Services for Florence Crittenton Family Services. A farm kid from Ohio, Daniel believes in hard work partnered with care and nurture. He has worked for over 15 years in the mental health field and has served as a direct care staff, therapist, clinical supervisor, and clinical director in programs specializing in lockdown residential treatment, sex offender treatment, group home care, school-based services, and outpatient services. He earned his Masters of Arts in Counseling from Waynesburg University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Daniel specializes in childhood development and complex trauma work throughout the life stages. He is passionate about digging in and coming alongside the tough and complicated situations that so many experience. He and his wife stay busy after work chasing seven children and a variety of farm animals in an attempt to live simply but fully.

Daniel has spent the past decade traveling around Montana training audiences from many professional disciplines as well as interested community members and stakeholders. He enjoys teaching through storytelling gained from his experience in a variety of professional roles as well as lessons learned as a farm kid and a mistake-prone human.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACT

Interacting with individuals whose lives have been affected by trauma often has unintended consequences for the individual trying to help. The concepts of "big T" and "little t" trauma, attachment and human development will be explored. These ideas will be used to explain the concept of secondary trauma and why it affects us as helpers. The four types of secondary trauma will be introduced in order to better understand the specific ways that helping can impact our lives outside of our work. This training also includes an introduction of reciprocal restoration and resilience building as an alternative framework for the imperfect term "self-care." Participants will learn to develop an R&R plan that is individualized and addresses the affects of secondary trauma in a fluid and holistic manner.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Participants will learn and understand the concept of "behavior as communication" as it relates to trauma, attachment and neuroscience.
2. Participants will define the four types of secondary trauma and understand how each condition has unique symptomology that affects us all in different ways.
3. Participants will be introduced to reciprocal restoration as an alternative framework for the term self-care and will learn to develop an individualized resilience building plan.

NOTE-TAKING SPACE

2:40 p.m. • 10 min

Break

2:50 p.m. • 30 min

.5 CEUs • .5 Renewal Units

Using Standardized Mental Health Patient Simulations to Improve Patient Outcomes, Build Partnerships, and Bridge Gaps

Susanne Hill



Susanne was born and raised on a five-generation Angus cattle ranch in rural Montana. She graduated from Montana State University with a degree in community health, and through a career rich in sales and management has developed an excellent ability to foster strong relationships and partnerships.

Susanne has owned several businesses and her professional experience has spanned multiple industries such as vocational rehabilitation, healthcare, real estate, hospitality and journalism.

For the past 15 years, Susanne has owned/published several community newspapers, where she's gained a thorough understanding of strong communities — and the role healthcare systems play within them. Since 2021, as Strategic Initiatives Director with SIM-MT, she's been enjoying working toward ensuring that health organizations have the support they need to sustainably care for the communities they serve and their own teams.

Carolyn Lam



Carolyn holds Bachelors of Arts degrees in both Political Science and Public Administration with a minor in Classical Studies from Carroll College in Helena. She is a fund development professional with over 20 years' experience in the philanthropy space, particularly in major gift procurement and leadership. Throughout her career she has served in many sectors including: politics, religion, the arts, human services, land conservation and healthcare.

Presently she is the Development Director for SIM-MT and is laser-focused on organizational sustainability via individual, corporate, and foundational fundraising. Carolyn is excited to serve SIM-MT and hopes her experience in philanthropy will help buoy and advance this extraordinary mission!

PRESENTATION ABSTRACT

Simulation in Motion - Montana (SIM-MT) was started in 2015 through a partnership between DPHHS and Helmsley Charitable Trust. The initial goal was to bring mobile, high-fidelity simulation and training equity to rural Montana's healthcare providers, facilities and teams. We've since trained in all 56 counties, seven indigenous communities, every critical access hospital, and many colleges and universities in Montana.

SIM-MT's leadership and founding partners understood the power of simulation training and they accurately predicted it would improve job satisfaction, patient outcomes and team dynamics. What they didn't expect: through the delivery of simulation excellence, SIM-MT would create a movement, knitting together Montana's healthcare community and facilitating courageous conversations, creative solutions and revolutionary programs.

We'll discuss SIM-MT's evolution, most specifically, how partners are using standardized mental health patient simulations to improve providers' skills and patient care; test mental health patient flow across agencies and handoffs; and to enhance team dynamics and mental

health crisis outcomes. We'll also discuss why our "patient" is also a provider, whose crisis not only effectively tests many pieces of each healthcare community, but also encourages participants to deeply consider their own wellness and that of their team and community members.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. How simulation with a standardized patient can be used to improve outcomes for patients in mental health crisis.
2. How systems, relationships, communication can create friction that may hinder excellence and how to address this through facilitated debriefing
3. Why consideration of community-wide systems can provide invaluable insight and awareness of gaps that may be hindering progress.

NOTE-TAKING SPACE

3:20 p.m. • 30 min

.5 CEUs • .5 Renewal Units

Connected But Alone:

How the Internet Fuels Suicide Risk

Molly Hutchinson, SWLC



Molly Hutchinson is a Social Work Licensure Candidate based in Kalispell, specializing in working with individuals who experience suicidality. She founded Healing Roots Counseling, where client-centered therapy is provided to support those in crisis.

Her professional background includes experience at a crisis intervention center and the 988 suicide prevention hotline, offering exposure to suicide prevention efforts in the digital age. Through this work, Molly has gained an understanding of the challenges people face during moments of emotional distress and the importance of timely, supportive intervention. She aims to help clients build resilience and manage their mental health challenges using evidence-based strategies.

In addition to clinical work, Molly focuses on promoting digital resources for suicide prevention, such as 988, crisis chat, and text lines. These tools are essential in providing immediate support and can contribute to improving accessibility and safety for those in crisis. Her objective is to assist individuals in navigating these resources to ensure they receive the necessary care and support.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACT

In today's interconnected world, technology plays a significant role in shaping suicide risk, particularly through its impact on impulsivity and the exposure to unsafe suicide-related content. Social media platforms, while intended to connect individuals, often lack sufficient safeguards, allowing harmful material — such as graphic depictions of suicide or dangerous advice—to circulate freely. For vulnerable individuals, this unfiltered access can trigger impulsive actions, leading to a higher risk of acting on suicidal thoughts without time or support for intervention. The instantaneous nature of online interactions and the anonymity of the internet further amplify feelings of isolation, hopelessness, and despair. Additionally, the curated nature of online spaces fosters

unhealthy comparisons and a diminished sense of self-worth. While digital platforms can provide valuable mental health resources, the absence of consistent safety measures around suicide-related content presents a significant risk. Addressing this issue requires stricter regulations, improved platform moderation, and a focus on promoting healthier, safer online environments for those at risk of suicide. Understanding the complex intersection of technology and suicide is crucial to developing effective strategies to protect vulnerable individuals and reduce the impact of the digital age on suicide rates.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Examine the impact of technology and digital communication on suicide risk, focusing on impulsivity, unsafe exposure to suicide-related content, and the amplification of emotional distress.
2. Compare the role of oxytocin and dopamine in online versus in-person social interactions, exploring how digital communication affects emotional well-being, feelings of connection, impulsivity, and the release of these neurochemicals in the context of suicide risk.
3. Develop strategies for guiding individuals in safely navigating digital spaces designed for discussing suicide, such as 988 and crisis chat/text lines, ensuring that these resources provide effective support, promote safety, and reduce the risk of harm.

NOTE-TAKING SPACE

4 p.m. • 60 min

1 CEUs • 1 Renewal Units

Considering Self-Care and Recovery For Those Who Help

Jerry Girard, LCPC, LAC



Jerry Girard is the Student Health Services Director at Montana State University Billings (MSUB) and the co-owner of Girard Consulting and Education. Jerry is an MT Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor as well as a Licensed Addiction Counselor with thirteen years of counseling experience at two Montana universities – MSUB and Montana Western. Prior to becoming a clinical counselor, Jerry was a high school teacher and coach for thirteen years, having taught at Outlook Schools, Judith Gap Schools, and Beaverhead County High School. In addition to providing counseling, outreach, and adjunct teaching at MSUB, Jerry is passionate about providing mental health and stigma reduction programming and trainings such as Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and QPR Gatekeeper Training to all who are interested. Jerry is also available to host empathy-oriented conference presentations, guest lectures, and coalition building workshops. Jerry currently lives in Billings with Sherri, his wife of 33 years, and has three amazing adult children, two wonderful granddaughters, and a grandson on the way.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACT

For those of us who are innate helpers, heavy interactions with others regarding mental health and suicide seem to find us often professionally and personally. Although we can experience a great deal of meaning and purpose from these interactions, they can also take a toll on our well-being if we aren't mindful of our own need to be

intentional in our own self-care and recovery from them.

Having worked in the helping professions as a teacher and now a therapist since 1992 and also having hosted numerous Mental Health First Aid and QPR Gatekeeper trainings, I have noticed, more and more, the need to encourage helpers to address their own well-being for the purpose of growing resilience and raising capacity to help. This presentation speaks directly to those of who help others professionally and in their personal lives. The idea of this presentation is to reframe the importance of recovery as well as self-care. As we sometimes have to do medically, it can be helpful to pause and be intentional with our recovery from helpful, but intense, interactions with others..

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Consider the importance of mental health recovery as well as self-care.
2. Conceptualize a mental health recovery plan.
3. Understand the importance of intentional recovery in enhancing resilience and growing one's capacity to help other.

NOTE-TAKING SPACE



2025 Conference

THIRD FLOOR



Colors in the schedule correspond with th

Morning Plenary

7:30 AM — Check-In & Badge Pickup

8 AM — **Welcome**
Opening Remarks

8:10 AM (45 min, .75 CEU) — Suicide Prevention in Montana: Analyzing Preliminary Data to Inform Targeted Efforts
Dr. Jessica Gerthe, PhD. NCC, LCPC & Elise Meldahl

8:55 AM (45 min, .75 CEU) — Breaking Barriers, Savings Lives: The Power of Telepsychiatry in Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Care
Dr. Eric R. Arzubi, MD

9:40 AM — 15 min break

9:55 AM (45 min, .75 CEU) — The Wildfire of Secondary Trauma and the Transformative Power of Resilience
Andrew Laue, LCSW

10:40 AM (75 min, 1.25 CEU) — Panel Discussion moderated by
Dr. Jennifer Preble, DSW, LCSW

11:55 AM (65 min) — Lunch on Your Own

After

Breakout A
In-Person Only

1 PM (4 hours, 4 CEU)

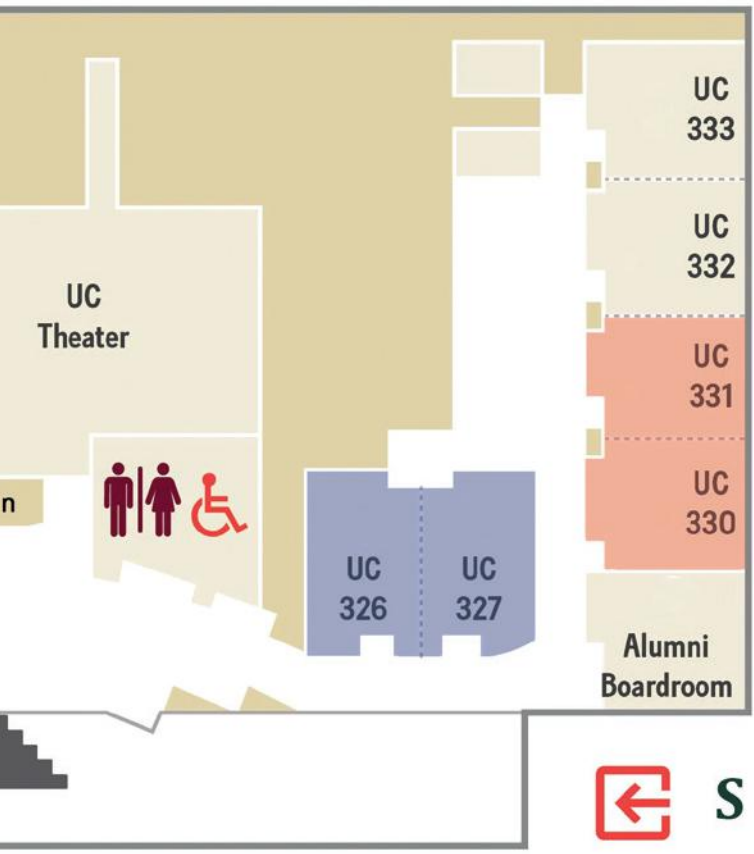
STAR-T: Secondary Trauma Activates Resilience Training

Andrew Laue, LCSW & Lee Starck, M.Ed., NCC, LCPC

Basic Skills Training: Learn the Concepts and Practice the Skills That Can Transform Secondary Trauma Into Power

LIMITED TO 100 ATTENDEES

Schedule



e room assignments in the diagram above.

noon Breakouts

	Breakout B Hybrid	Breakout C Hybrid
1 PM 100 min 1.75 CEU	The Harder Side of Helping **Daniel Champer, LCPC**	**1 PM** 100 min 1.75 CEU We Get Tired Too **Shauna Green, CDVC, LCPC**
2:40 PM	10 min break	
2:50 PM 30 min .5 CEU	Using Standardized Mental Health Patient Simulations to Improve Patient Outcomes, Build Partnerships, and Bridge Gaps **Susanne Hill & Carolyn Lam**	**2:50 PM** 60 min 1 CEU Resiliency and the Importance of Self-Care **Dennis Nyland**
3:20 PM 30 min .5 CEU	Connected But Alone: How the Internet Fuels Suicide Risk **Molly Hutchinson, SWLC**	
2:40 PM	10 min break	
4 PM 60 min 1 CEU	Considering Self-Care and Recovery For Those Who Help **Jerry Girard, LCPC, LAC**	**4 PM** 60 min 1 CEU Lowering the Risk of Adolescent Suicide by Addressing Protective Factors **Dr. Emily Sallee, PhD & Dr. Lillian Martz, PhD**

Sessions &

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT TRACK C

In Person / Virtual Attendees

1:00 p.m. • 100 min

1.75 CEUs • 1.75 Renewal Units

We Get Tired Too

Shauna Green, CDVC, LCPC



Shauna Green, CDVC, LCPC, embodies a blend of professional expertise and personal resilience. With eight years of experience, Shauna is a force for positive change. Shauna is the owner of Green Apple Counseling and Rocky Mountain Interventions, with offices serving in both Great Falls and Bozeman. She actively contributes to the adult drug treatment team in Great Falls, serves on the Domestic Violence Task force in Great Falls and Bozeman and works with court-appointed cases, demonstrating her dedication to community well-being.

Shauna finds motivation in supervising staff, interns and candidates, shaping the future of counseling. Her expertise has garnered national recognition, highlighted by her presentation on Self Care and Secondary Trauma at the National Drug Court Convention in Houston. Furthermore, she has received awards two years in a row, recognizing her success in business ownership.

Her commitment is deeply rooted in her own journey of transformation. After enduring 25 years of sexual abuse within her marriage, Shauna transformed her experience into a powerful foundation for empowering others, fueling her empathy, deepening her client connections, and highlighting the critical role of self-care. Blessed with four daughters, three sons-in-law, and a grandbaby, she is now remarried, focused on making a lasting difference. Shauna's life and work exemplify the power of resilience, compassion, and a steadfast dedication to empowering individuals and communities.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACT

Helping professionals face significant risk for secondary trauma (vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue) due to their exposure to others' trauma. This presentation defines secondary trauma, outlines its impact on personal and professional well-being, and provides practical self-care strategies for building resilience. We will explore common symptoms, differentiate it from burnout, and emphasize the importance of both individual and organizational support in fostering a culture of well-being. Participants will gain tools to develop personalized self-care plans, enabling them to protect their own well-being while continuing to provide effective and compassionate care.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Participants will be able to define secondary trauma (vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue) and differentiate it from burnout, understanding the distinct characteristics and impacts of each.
2. Participants will be able to identify common symptoms of secondary trauma and apply practical self-care strategies across multiple dimensions (physical, emotional, social, spiritual, professional) to develop a personalized self-care plan.
3. Recognize Impact and Advocate for Support: Participants will be able to recognize the impact of secondary trauma on personal and professional well-being, as well as the importance of organizational support in fostering a culture of well-being.

NOTE-TAKING SPACE

Speakers

2:40 p.m. • 10 min

Break

2:50 p.m. • 60 min

1 CEU • 1 Renewal Unit

Resiliency and the Importance of Self-Care

Dennis Nyland



Dennis was born and raised, and has lived most of his life, in Helena, Montana. He served in the U.S. Navy in the Naval Submarine Force, as an Electronic Technician, for over 8 years. He has been an EMT for over 33 years and just retired from his local ambulance service, where he served for over 30 years.

Dennis was in law enforcement for almost 15 years, working his way through the ranks to investigator, and training as a forensic interviewer, working some of the most difficult cases: child and sexual abuse. He was also part of the SWAT Team, working as the Medic Team Leader, the Assistant Team Leader, and the Team Leader, responsible for the team when they were called out to handle crisis situations.

After his career in law enforcement, Dennis spent the next ten and a half years as the Mental Health Ombudsman for the State of Montana. As the Ombudsman, he helped individuals find resources and navigate through the mental health system. Dennis has a passion to break the stigma on mental illness, help individuals be better equipped to de-escalate crisis situations, and champion suicide prevention.

Dennis recently started a new position as the CIT Montana Executive Director. Dennis was instrumental in bringing the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training to the State of Montana in 2005, assisting in training law enforcement, first responders, mental health professionals, and the general public regarding mental illness and in the de-escalating skills required in crisis situations. Dennis is excited to begin this new role, and he feels as he has come full circle doing what he loves to do.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACT

In today's demanding world, cultivating resilience and prioritizing self-care are essential for personal and professional well-being. This presentation will explore resiliency's impact on mental, emotional, and physical health, particularly in the face of personal stressors. Attendees will reflect on past challenges and the consequences of neglecting self-care. The session will then shift to actionable strategies, demonstrating how resilience can be strengthened through self-awareness, positive relationships, and adaptive thinking. Practical self-care techniques, including mindfulness, boundaries, and healthy routines, will be explored as integral pillars.

Finally, the presentation will emphasize the crucial role of collaborative efforts within communities and with state stakeholders. Participants will gain insights into developing effective advocacy strategies to foster a supportive environment for self-care and resilience initiatives. This session aims to equip attendees with a deeper understanding of resilience and practical tools to integrate self-care into their lives, promoting a more robust sense of well-being.

Resiliency and the Importance of Self-Care (continued)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand resiliency and its role in personal and professional well-being. Identify personal stressors and describe how they impact mental, emotional, and physical health.
2. Reflect on past challenges, the consequences of neglecting self-care, and identify how resiliency played a role in overcoming them.
3. Learn how resiliency can be strengthened through self-awareness, positive relationships, and adaptive thinking including exploring practical self-care strategies that support resiliency.
4. Understand the importance of collaboration within your communities, and with state stakeholders, to develop strategies to advocate and have support for self-care and resiliency.

NOTE-TAKING SPACE

4 p.m. • 60 min

1 CEU • 1 Renewal Unit

Lowering the Risk of Adolescent Suicide by Addressing Protective Factors

Dr. Emily Sallee, PhD



Emily Sallee is an Associate Professor of Counseling at the University of Montana as well as the Executive Director of the Montana Safe Schools Center housed at UM. Emily's experiences as a professional school counselor led to her drive in training future school and clinical counselors in the higher education setting.

Emily engages in professional advocacy by serving on the Board of Directors for the Montana School Counselor Association and in various other roles throughout the state, as well as current President of the Rocky Mountain Association for Counselor Educators and Supervisors. Her research interests include adolescent suicidality and non-suicidal self-injury, school violence and prevention, and advocacy for the role of professional school counselors. Emily is also the part-time school counselor at a K-8 frontier school and has a small clinical practice working with youth. While other people's kiddos tend to be easier to work with, Emily has three of her own to wrangle, in addition to a growing menagerie and ever-increasing lists of books to read, foods to eat, and trails to run.

Dr. Lillian Martz, PhD, PCLC



Lillian C Martz, PhD, PCLC, is an assistant professor in the Counselor Education Department at Portland State University. She received her PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision from The University of Montana in 2024, with a concentration in school counseling.

She is currently licensed as a school counselor in Montana and has previously been licensed and employed as a school counselor in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington State.

Dr. Martz's research interests include school counseling, suicidality and crisis counseling, group counseling, equity in college and career readiness, positive psychology and wellbeing for adolescents and educators, and multicultural issues in the counseling and counselor education fields. She is a past board member with the Montana School Counselor Association (MSCA) having served as the co-chair of the conference committee and chair of the professional development committee. She is currently serving as an editorial assistant for the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) Teaching Practice Briefs publication.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACT

Youth suicide rates have remained high over the past decade or more, and the recent pandemic has goaded this potentially fatal issue to the surface of various professional conversations, particularly educators and mental health providers serving this population. The presenters will share their findings on a recent study utilizing Joiner's Interpersonal Theory of Suicide (IPTS) to reframe the interpersonal risk factors of perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness that allowed the researchers to examine the protective factors of youth not experiencing suicidal ideation and behaviors. The findings from this study suggest that educators and mental health providers serving the youth population can decrease risk of suicidality by addressing protective factors to increase perceptions of value and belonging (inverse to the IPTS constructs of perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness). Participants will benefit from the opportunity to learn about this specific theory of suicide for conceptualization of suicidal behaviors in adolescents and will walk away from this session with new, research-informed interventions and techniques for addressing suicidality in adolescents.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Participants will be able to understand Joiner's Interpersonal Theory of Suicide (IPTS) for the conceptualization of suicidal behaviors in adolescents.
2. Participants will be able to identify protective factors related to perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belonging, with the purpose of increasing these factors as part of an intervention plan.
3. Participants will be able to apply research-informed interventions and techniques for addressing suicidality in adolescents.

NOTE-TAKING SPACE

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WALK WITH US TO PREVENT SUICIDE

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Five Valleys Walk	Missoula	9/8/25
Eastern Montana Walk	Sidney	9/20/25
Yellowstone Valley Walk	Billings	9/21/25
Flathead Valley Walk	Kalispell	9/28/25

afsp.org/mtwalks

Healing Conversations

Personal support for suicide loss

Healing Conversations is a one-time visit (phone, virtual, in-person) that connects those who have lost someone to suicide with trained volunteers who are also survivors of suicide loss themselves.

Learn more at
afsp.org/HealingConversations

International Survivors *of* Suicide Loss Day

November 22, 2025

A day of connection and hope for survivors of suicide loss.

afsp.org/SurvivorDay

Become a Field Advocate for Suicide Prevention

Discover the policies and programs impacting suicide prevention.

Advocate on important issues through the AFSP Action Center.

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988

SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

Montana 988 Suicide Prevention & Mental Health Crisis Lifeline

The Lifeline provides free & confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress, 24/7 across Montana. The Lifeline is an effective, life-saving safety net for those experiencing a crisis, especially those with nowhere else to turn.

Connect

All calls to 988 in Montana are answered by trained crisis workers at 3 regional call centers around the state. All Montana crisis centers are accredited, providing training for counselors, and disseminate best practices. Local counselors at crisis centers are familiar with community mental health resources that are part of the Montana 211 referral network.

Resources

For more information on how the MT 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline can help you or someone you know who is in crisis, or to find out how to spread the word on 988 in your community:

dphhs.mt.gov/suicideprevention

Montana Conference on Suicide Prevention

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