

Workshop Title:

We Are Beacons of Light Amid Uncertainty: Social Work Leadership Skills

Workshop Presenters: Joshua Englefield , ,

Workshop Abstract: We are called to be beacons of light amid uncertainty. Social work leadership skills have aided this presenter in bringing together six congregations into one community. The presenter will highlight the key social work leadership and community organizing skills that have made this integration possible.

Learning Objectives:

- 1: Apply the social work code of ethics to organizational change.
- 2: Learn and apply concepts and skills of community organizing and development.
- 3: Learn and apply skills of shared leadership that are not mere tokenism, but actual meaningful participation in the integration and change process.

Level of Presentation: Intermediate (MSW Level)

Target Audience: Social Workers, Church Leaders, Educators

Workshop Description: We are called to be beacons of light amid uncertainty. Social work leadership skills have aided this presenter in bringing together six congregations into one community. The presenter will highlight the key social work leadership and community organizing skills that have made this integration possible. In 2022, post COVID, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati began a process known as Beacons of Light to reduce the number of individual parishes from over 200 to 57. This process would require collaboration between clergy and lay leadership within the church. One of the key leadership positions that was envisioned by the Beacons of Light leadership team was the creation of Directors of Evangelization and Christian Formation to serve at each of the 57 newly formed Families of Parishes. This presenter was one of the first to be named a Director of Evangelization. He moved from the clinical social work world where he served as a Clinical Director of an outpatient mental health center and the school based mental health program which spanned from Cincinnati to Dayton and Springfield, Ohio. The call to partner with the Archdiocese of Cincinnati to help lead through the massive transition from single church communities to families of parishes would require the skill and grit that a social worker has ingrained in them through study, internship, and field work. The presentation will consider lessons learned and a vision forward as this social worker continues to help integrate, not obliterate, six distinct church communities.

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<https://catholicaoc.org/beacons-of-light>

Presenter Bio (s):

1: Dr. Joshua Englefield is a Licensed Independent Social Worker in Ohio. Currently, he serves as the Director of Evangelization and Christian Formation for the Northeast 3 Family of Parishes in Greene, County Ohio. Additionally, he serves as a clinical social worker in Dayton, Ohio working primarily with adults and married couples. Most of his experience has been working with children, youth, adults, and families in a variety of mental health and church settings. In 2010, he earned his Master of Science in Social Administration from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. Dr. Englefield successfully defended his dissertation and graduated in May of 2021 with his Doctorate in Social Work (DSW) through the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota.

2:

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Workshop Title:

Macro Social Work and the Legacy of Whitney Young

Workshop Presenters: Dorrance Kennedy, ,

Workshop Abstract: Whitney Young was a social worker and civil rights leader who gained prominence in the 1960s for transforming the National Urban League into a vibrant civil rights organization. Young was the Dean of the School of Social Work at Atlanta University and the president of the National Association of Social Workers. rights, and urban renewal.

Learning Objectives:

- 1: understand the historic debate between micro versus macro and current challenges in the profession.
- 2: understand public perceptions of social workers.
- 3: understand the public policy legacy of Whitney Young,

Level of Presentation: Intermediate (MSW Level)

Target Audience: Social Workers, Educators, Students

Workshop Description: In 1915, educator Abraham Flexner declared that social work was not a profession. As a result, the profession of social work has primarily focused on micro and mezzo level practice. Social work has focused on developing a distinct body of knowledge as it relates to engaging, assessing, and treating individuals and families (Carten, 2021).

Consequently, social work has had a limited impact on broad, community empowerment. Many graduate

programs of social work have focused on developing psychotherapists who focus on private clinical practice. Whitney Young urged the social work profession to not abandon its historic mission to serve the poor and remain vigorous advocates for social justice and catalysts for comprehensive societal change. The career of Whitney Young concentrated on macro level change in social work education, civil rights, and racial justice.

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Weiss, N. (2014). Whitney M. Young, Jr. and the struggle for civil rights Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Presenter Bio (s):

1:Dr. Dorrance Kennedy is a native of New Orleans, Louisiana. He is a graduate of Hampton University. Dr. Kennedy received his Master of Social Work from Southern University, a Master of Theological Studies degree from Covenant Seminary, and a Doctor of Education degree (2015) from Fayetteville State University. He is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and ordained minister who was employed for several years as a public school social worker in Louisiana, Illinois, and Missouri. Dr. Kennedy is an Associate Professor of Social Work at Fayetteville State University.

2:

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Workshop Title:

Jesus Leads the Brokenhearted Towards Healing

Workshop Presenters: Charles Lorbeer, ,

Workshop Abstract: Strategies and illustrations related to integrating faith and spirituality in the social work curriculum. The presentation will depict Jesus leading the brokenhearted towards healing. Goal is to discuss the integration of Christianity into social work education and into our professional identity as social workers.

Learning Objectives:

1: Understand student's responsibility to demonstrate "biblical integration" into college courses.

2: Redefine the atheistic social work profession's view of social work, and introduce Jesus as the first social worker.

3: Encourage students to integrate what is taught from the Bible into their coursework.

Level of Presentation: Basic (Students and BSW Level), Intermediate (MSW Level), Advanced (LCSW or LICSW level)

Target Audience: Social Workers, Church Leaders, Educators, Students

Workshop Description: The presentation will depict Jesus leading the brokenhearted towards healing. Goal is to discuss the integration of Christianity into social work education and into our professional identity as social workers. It is no exaggeration to say that Jesus was the first social worker. No other person had ever made it a lifestyle and vocation to live among the poor, the sick, the needy and exclusively work among them. He also operated the first school of social work as he trained 12 would be social workers to see the poor and needy the same way he did. Participants will learn the historical roots of charity and will be empowered to change the narrative of the incompatibility of Christianity and social work. Participants minds are transformed to see the significance of their healing work as social workers. An application of this connection will be shown with addictions treatment and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

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Presenter Bio (s):

1:Dr. Charles Lorbeer founded the social work department at Capella University after teaching at El Quds University, Jerusalem, and Salem State University. His areas of social work practice range from health care services, addictions, administration, international social work, and clinical services. He has championed the integration of "Jesus as the first social worker" into social work classes at Liberty University.

2:

3:

Workshop Title:

Reconciliation of Love and Cultural Conflict

Workshop Presenters: Jessie Pablo

Workshop Abstract: This presentation focuses on the reconciliation of love and cultural conflict. We have a Biblical mandate to love our neighbors but are met with the challenge that often they are hard to love due to cultural conflict in the intersection of faith and justice. Therefore, we must exhibit cultural humility.

Learning Objectives:

- 1: understand and utilize their potential to restore changes, build trust, form relationships, evidence mercy, and seek justice and peace
- 2: Evaluate my role as a Christians in implementing the initiatives of reconciliation in society through intentional action steps.
- 3: Articulate how to uphold the values and ethics of the profession as we work through conflict.

Level of Presentation: Basic (Students and BSW Level), Intermediate (MSW Level)

Target Audience: Social Workers, Educators, Students

Workshop Description: As both social workers and Christians, we face an increasing number of situations and culture shifts that challenge our morals and values. These may result in divisions based upon race, theology, sexuality, human rights, politics, etc. Christ commands us to love others and we should also uphold the value of the dignity and worth of all people. It can be difficult to reconcile these demands when we face cultural conflict, including differences in views. In society there has been a breakdown in relationships that result in enmity and fragmentation, leading to social problem clusters; through reconciliation we can move towards fellowship and even healing with those whom we face differences. We must remember that the Kingdom of God awaits for all believers. As Christian social workers, we want to be known by our love and not merely our values and beliefs, while working to restore justice in our communities. In this presentation we will dissect the Biblical mandates to love others, particularly the role of reconciliation when cultural conflict leads to discord. A focus on moving from cultural competence to cultural humility will be shared to aid in reconciliation through evidence based practice. We will answer questions such as: How can we love others well when they offend us? What are tangible action steps we can take towards cultural humility? This presentation comes from the perspective of presenters who are involved in both social work higher education and Christian ministry and is based upon research in DEI, cultural competence, Biblical love and cultural conflict in a post-covid world.

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2) Burrell, L. T. (2021). Be bold: How to prepare your heart and mind for racial reconciliation. High Bridge Books.

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- 4) Hardimon, M. O. (2017). *The project of reconciliation: Hegel's social philosophy*. In *GWF Hegel*. Routledge.
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- 10) Jones, P. (2010). Responding to the ecological crisis: Transformative pathways for social work education. *The Journal of Social Work Education*, 46 (1): 67-84. Doi: 10.5175/JSWE.2010.200800073.

Presenter Bio (s):

1: Jessie Pablo, MSW, LSW is Faculty for the BSW Online Program at Indiana Wesleyan University where she also serves in the role of Field Director. She has 8 years of experience in distance education. Jessie is enrolled to start the DSW program at UKY in June with a concentration in Administrative Leadership. She holds her social work license in Indiana. Prior to social work higher education, her practice experience focused on children and families, with experience in parenting education, child welfare and prevention, community services, and case management. She is passionate about empowering the marginalized, breaking the chains of generational cycles, eradicating injustices, mitigating the impact of ACEs, creating equality in food security, and developing relationships with her neighbors.

Workshop Title:

The Restorative Justice Framework & the Healing Power of Relationships

Workshop Presenters: Sylvia Bekele, Kimberly Bass,

Workshop Abstract: Community building is based on a sense of belonging. As agents of social change we have the ability to create environments in which people feel safe and that they belong. The Restorative Justice Framework is a tool to help build community while also creating safe spaces to encounter the healing power of relationships.

Learning Objectives:

- 1: Participants will be able to define Restorative Justice and have an understanding of the historical evolution of the Restorative Justice Approach.
- 2: Participants will be able to relate the fundamental principles of Restorative Justice to at least two examples of how Christ built relationships with others.
- 3: Participants will be able to facilitate circles to build communities or respond to conflict.

Level of Presentation: Basic (Students and BSW Level), Intermediate (MSW Level)

Target Audience: Social Workers, Church Leaders, Educators, Students

Workshop

Description: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eDqhNG12SHFHjh5VzTNNg8Q7FqEqn7Gc/view?usp=sharing>

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Sedillo-Hamann, D. (2022). Trauma-Informed Restorative Justice Practices in Schools: An Opportunity for School Social Workers. *Children and Schools*, 2(44), 98–106.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdac004>

Presenter Bio (s):

1:Dr. Sylvia Bekele is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at Eastern University. Dr. Bekele is a licensed social worker with over 10 years of experience in child welfare, foster care and adoption, trauma informed practices, equine assisted therapeutic techniques, social work in international contexts, and social work in urban schools. She has earned a Human Services Management Certificate from The Network for Social Work Management and a School Social Work, Educational Specialist Certificate through the PA Department of Education. Dr. Bekele has a passion for coming alongside social work students as they develop their professional identities as social workers and a strong belief in the healing power of relationships.

2:This is to be submitted. This presenter had a death in the family, and Sylvia is submitting what they had prepared together. We can submit a bio for her soon, but did not want to miss the May 1 deadline. Thank you for your grace!

3:

Workshop Title:

Christian Nationalism and the Christian Social Worker

Workshop Presenters: Heather Deal, Gaynor Yancey,

Workshop Abstract: This workshop examines Christian Nationalism's rise and impact on social work practice and faith. It distinguishes between Christian Nationalism and Christianity, evaluates Christian Nationalism through ethical and theological lenses, identifies its tenets and myths, and explores social workers' role in addressing it.

Learning Objectives:

- 1: define and explain the concept of Christian Nationalism and how it differs from Christianity.
- 2: understand the history and development of Christian Nationalism in the United States and its impact on social work practice.
- 3: explore the role of social workers in addressing Christian Nationalism in their practice and advocacy work.

Level of Presentation: Intermediate (MSW Level)

Target Audience: Social Workers, Church Leaders, Educators

Workshop Description: This workshop explores the rise of Christian Nationalism and its implications for Christian social work practice and faith. The workshop will introduce Christian Nationalism (15 minutes), explore the history of Christian Nationalism in the United States (20 minutes), outline the present state of Christian Nationalism (20 minutes), provide implications for social work practice and faith (20 minutes) and conclude with questions and answers (15 minutes).

This workshop will differentiate between Christian Nationalism and Christian faith. It will evaluate Christian Nationalism through an ethical lens while also unpacking the theological implications as well. This workshop will help Christian social work practitioners identify the tenets and myths of Christian Nationalism, how Christian Nationalism rose to popularity within the United States. Finally, it will explore the role of social workers in addressing Christian Nationalism with individuals, families, communities, and in policy.

Christian Nationalism is a political and cultural ideology that seeks to fuse Christianity with American civic life and asserts that the United States is and should remain a "Christian nation" (Gorski & Perry, 2022). It promotes the idea that the country's identity, history, symbols, values, and public policies should be distinctly "Christian," and that Christian morality and principles should guide all aspects of society, including the government, education, and culture (Davis & Perry, 2021). Christian Nationalism often involves the belief that the United States has a divine purpose or destiny and is under threat from internal or external forces that seek to undermine its Christian character (Gorski & Perry, 2022). It may also be associated with nativism, white supremacy, authoritarianism, and other forms of discrimination and exclusion (Perry, Davis, Grubbs, 2022).

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Perry, S., Whitehead, A., & Grubbs, J. B. (2021). “I don’t want everybody to vote”: Christian nationalism and restricting voter access in the united states. *Sociological Forum*, 37(1), 4-26.

Whitehead, A., & Perry, S. (2023, January 19). Save the economy, liberty, and yourself: Christian nationalism and Americans’ views on government COVID-19 restrictions. *Sociology of Religion*, 82(4), 426-446.

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<http://www.doi.org/10.1177/0731121415577724>

Whitehead, A., Schnabel, L., & Perry, S. (2018). Gun control in the crosshairs: Christian nationalism and opposition to stricter gun laws. *Socius*, 4.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023118790189>

Presenter Bio (s):

1: Heather Deal is the Director of Development for Baptist Women in Ministry and is a doctoral candidate at Baylor University’s Diana R. Garland School of Social Work. In 2009, she earned her MSW from the Garland School of Social Work and her M.Div. from Baylor University’s George W. Truett Theological Seminary. She earned her BA in English Education from Campbellsville University in 2004. Ms. Deal has previously presented at the 13th Annual Bridge

Conference in Washington, DC and has published in the area of congregational social justice engagement.

2:Dr. Gaynor Yancey serves as professor at Baylor University's Diana R. Garland School of Social Work and George W. Truett Theological Seminary. She also serves as the Director of The Center for Church and Community Impact (C3i) at the Garland School. C3i exists to strengthen congregations as they engage with their communities at the intersection of faithful witness and community transformation. Her area of expertise is social welfare policy, congregational and community-based organization and development, poverty and congregation-based delivery of social services to those populations who are marginalized and at-risk. In 2016, Dr. Yancey was named a Baylor Master Teacher, and in 2017, she was appointed as a Faculty Regent on Baylor's Board of Regents.

3:

Workshop Title:

Health Equity and Social Work: Teaching Strategies to Promote Social Good

Workshop Presenters: Cayce Watson, ,

Workshop Abstract: Health inequities are tied to the social determinants within one's environment; people of color are exceedingly vulnerable to these factors. This workshop will explore health equity from a faith and justice framework and the integration of health advocacy and project-based learning for community impact into social work curricula.

Learning Objectives:

- 1: Describe the social determinants of health from an ecological perspective and a faith and justice lens.
- 2: Explore the integration of Health Equity into social work curricula and competencies.
- 3: Identify examples of teaching resources and project-based learning for community impact.

Level of Presentation: Basic (Students and BSW Level), Intermediate (MSW Level)

Target Audience: Social Workers, Educators, Students

Workshop Description: One of the Grand Challenges for Social Work is addressing the health gap through primary prevention, a comprehensive understanding of the social, economic, and political factors that shape health outcomes, and collaborative practice across disciplines (Spencer et al., 2018). Health disparities are not naturally occurring phenomenon and are driven by factors beyond access to medical care (CDC, 2022). Health inequities are a type of health inequality which are tied to the social determinants within one's environment (Spencer et al., 2018). The social determinants of health include several overlapping and non-medical variables such as socioeconomic hardship, fair wages, racial discrimination, access to green spaces and healthy food options, geographic locale, and exposure to community violence (CDC, 2022). People of color are exceedingly vulnerable to social determinants; as such, they experience increased mortality rates and poorer health outcomes across the life span (Hernandez & Sparks, 2020; Spencer et al., 2018). To achieve health equity and ensure that all individuals have the fundamental right to healthy living, social work advocates must challenge unjust systemic factors and promote public policies that uphold universal basic rights and eradicate racial and gender discrimination (Hernandez & Sparks, 2020). Fish and Karban (2013) purport that social workers are paramount in both downstream and upstream intervention strategies to address health inequality. However, moving advocates upstream involves efforts geared toward primary prevention rather than tertiary prevention, respectively. This workshop will introduce the social determinants of health through an ecological framework and explore their relationship to health equity. Health equity will be examined through a faith-based and social justice lens including challenging the underlying beliefs and values that drive both the definitions and solutions to complex social problems. Prior and Quinn (2012) found that spirituality strongly influenced social work students' participation in social justice advocacy; however, this was primarily at the individual level rather than the collective. Concepts such as social empathy vs. interpersonal

empathy and the movement from individual charity to social justice are central to upholding social work values and align with the intersection of faith and practice. Inclusion of health equity in social work education provides opportunities for students to engage with policy and practice at the micro and macro level. Moreover, it fits within the domain of anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice as well a critical reflection of positionality, privilege, and power structures. Each of these concepts are of critical importance to professional development and culturally sensitive practice. Lastly, examples of teaching resources and student projects for community impact will be shared amongst workshop attendees.

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United Health Foundation. (2022). America's health rankings: 2022 annual report. <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/learn/reports/2022-annual-report>

Presenter Bio (s):

1:Dr. Cayce Metzgar Watson is a Licensed Advanced Practice Social Worker in Tennessee and has been a professional social work practitioner for over 20 years. She earned a B.S. in Social Work from Lipscomb University, an MSW in Clinical Social Work from The University of Tennessee College of Social Work, and a Doctorate of Social Work Practice in Organizational Leadership from the University of Alabama. She currently serves as an Associate Professor at Lipscomb University. Her research interests and areas of expertise include professional wellness in social work field education, substance use and misuse among pregnant women, trauma-informed practice, and public health and policy.

Workshop Title:

Applying the Integration of Faith and Practice in a Community Setting

Workshop Presenters: Mark Harden, ,

Workshop Abstract: Practitioners seeking to integrate faith and practice will discover a methodology that works in individual or group settings. Participants will engage using a framework that helps them apply the discipline of theological reflection and action. Practices are understood in the context of human development, virtues, and a missional outlook.

Learning Objectives:

- 1: Identify action theory components of practice for theological integration.
- 2: Formulate a biblical theological perspective for the integration of faith and practical action.
- 3: Use components to identify the human developmental elements of an integrated practice.

Level of Presentation: Basic (Students and BSW Level), Intermediate (MSW Level), Advanced (LCSW or LICSW level)

Target Audience: Social Workers, Church Leaders, Educators

Workshop Description: Applying the Integration of Faith and Practice in a Community Setting is about intentional collective action by individuals designed to address spiritual and human needs. Key topics include logical frameworks that facilitate integration, an integrated methodology for practical action, the role of theories in human development, and an integration blueprint for collective formation. Social workers help others engage in performance improvement planning and evaluation in the field as insiders and outsiders. Methods for assisting individuals and groups are limited and one dimensional. Meta-theories can provide a multidimensional approach to examine a multi-faceted human activity. The session is based on research involving ninety faith-based organizations in complex settings. These organizations sought to address multicultural issues by improving practices toward achieving mission-related goals. The results helped to validate the theoretical models and integrated framework used for the workshop. This session will illuminate how they can deal with the needs of Christians while improving performance at the organizational and individual levels. The session is based on performance analytics regarding participant and organizational needs. Empirically established universal structures and mechanisms are the underlying conditions applied for achieving developmental goals. Participatory strategies are foundational for inclusivity in a diverse or monocultural environment. The session covers personal resilience and responsiveness issues between individuals and groups interacting across differences. While the focus is on integration, the framework guides the process to ensure that social competence and sensitivity support the Christian virtues of ethical practice.

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Presenter Bio (s):

1: Dr. Mark G. Harden is the Director of Church Engagement for the Gospel Initiative at Denver Seminary. Dr. Harden earned a PhD in 2002 at Michigan State University in Family and Child Ecology and is a 1997 graduate of Northern Seminary, Chicago, IL. Dr. Harden has presented on topics in theological education including community development, contextual and practical theology, culture and ministry, the urban church, spiritual formation, African American religion, and issues of generational poverty and program evaluation. He has over 25 years experience as a practitioner, seminary professor, academic dean, CEO, and president in theological education.

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3:

Workshop Title:

The Impact of Negative Spiritual Beliefs on Health Status

Workshop Presenters: Dong Yoon, ,

Workshop Abstract: Negative spiritual beliefs are associated with worse health outcomes and appear to influence health to a greater degree than positive spiritual beliefs. The need exists to investigate the impact of both positive and negative spiritual beliefs on health outcomes, and to develop interventions to specifically address negative beliefs.

Learning Objectives:

- 1: overview the findings of previous studies on relationships between negative spirituality and health status.
- 2: explain the significance of conducting research linking negative spirituality to health status among diverse populations.
- 3: suggest possible spiritual interventions for people with physical/mental health problems.

Level of Presentation: Intermediate (MSW Level)

Target Audience: Social Workers, Church Leaders, Educators

Workshop Description: The presenter will explain the purpose and rationale for this study: The existing studies evaluating negative spirituality and health generally conclude that while positive spiritual beliefs contribute to positive health outcomes, negative spiritual beliefs are associated with negative health outcomes (Hubert et al., 2009; Johnstone & Cohen, 2019; Pargament et al., 1998; Smith et al., 2021; Yoon et al., 2022). The aim of the study was to determine if individuals with any degree of negative spiritual beliefs reported worse health outcomes than individuals without any degree of negative spiritual beliefs.

The presenter will describe the methods: One-hundred ninety-nine individuals (199) were recruited for the original study, and included individuals from five different groups: cancer (n = 25), spinal cord injury (SCI; n = 25), traumatic brain injury (TBI; n = 61), stroke (n = 32), a primary care sample (i.e., medical control; n = 25), and a healthy control sample (n = 31). Individuals ranged in age from 18 to 93 (M = 47.03, SD = 17.42), and were predominantly female, married, and employed, had a higher income, and had earned at least a high school education.

The presenter will discuss the results of the study and explain major findings: For each significant difference, the Negative Spirituality group endorsed significantly lower/less positive levels of the trait (i.e., less positive spirituality, more negative spirituality, less frequent religious practices, lower level of forgiveness) relative to the No Negative Spirituality group. Negative Spiritual Experiences was significantly correlated with Bodily Pain, General Health Perception,

and General Mental Health, such that more negative spiritual beliefs were associated with more pain, worse physical health, and worse mental health. Additionally, increased positive spirituality was significantly associated with better mental health. The results also indicated that worse physical functioning was significantly associated with greater forgiveness.

The presenter will suggest future implications: Future research based on the present findings could potentially take several forms. First, the results indicate the need to differentiate between positive and negative spiritual beliefs in health outcomes research. Future research can then determine the efficacy of interventions targeting negative spiritual beliefs in terms of both modifying negative spiritual beliefs and improving health outcomes. Additionally, evaluating the relative impact that interventions designed to bolster positive spirituality versus those that improve negative spirituality have on health would be beneficial. It remains to be seen if interventions would afford such a distinct impact or if, for example, interventions aiming to bolster positive spirituality evidence a subsequent reduction in negative spiritual beliefs and vice versa.

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Presenter Bio (s):

1: I am Dong Pil Yoon who is Associate Professor at University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri and I've been working here at Mizzou for 20 years. I've earned my PhD from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1997. I primarily teach classes for undergraduate students now and I've been doing research on religiosity/spirituality for 17 years.

My research interests have centered on religiosity and spirituality and how they affect both physical and mental health among diverse populations. I explore the impact of religiosity/spirituality on quality of life among people with HIV/AIDS, cancer, and disabilities such as spinal cord injury and traumatic brain injury. The overall findings of my research support a growing body of literature documenting a positive relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and mental/physical health.

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Workshop Title:

Bridging Differences with Congregational Social Justice Engagement

Workshop Presenters: Amanda Wilson Harper, Aynsley Scheffert,

Workshop Abstract: Congregations are uniquely navigating US divided culture and partisan context. Research indicates that clergy see a shift in congregational culture and it has impacted how they engage their congregations around social justice issues. We explore clergy experiences with navigating controversial topics and bridging divides in their congregation.

Learning Objectives:

1: understand the unique perspective of US clergy navigating social justice issues within their congregations.

2: understand the potential impact social workers could have in helping churches navigate social justice engagement.

3: identify areas to support congregations as they navigate social justice issues

Level of Presentation: Basic (Students and BSW Level), Intermediate (MSW Level), Advanced (LCSW or LICSW level)

Target Audience: Social Workers, Church Leaders

Workshop Description: This paper presents the experiences of clergy engagement concerning social justice issues since the US election. This impacts social workers as congregations are still one of the largest contexts for voluntary involvement in U.S. culture. This study looks through the lens of seeing both clients and congregations as potential clients. Congregations are navigating unique aspects of the United States' current divided culture and partisan context. Research indicates that given our current politically-charged society, some clergy frequently avoid discussion and engagement in social justice issues because they are often seen as partisan or potentially divisive. This qualitative study, using in-depth semi-structured interviews and a demographic and short-answer survey conducted with clergy, representing 10 Disciples of Christ churches in three midcentral states indicates that they have seen a shift in congregational culture since the US election. This has impacted how they preach and engage their congregations in healthy conversation around social justice issues. We explore the anxieties of clergy in engagement with social justice issues since during election years, and their experiences with navigating controversial topics and building bridges within their congregations.

Key words: social justice, congregations, clergy members, church culture, US election, divisive, social justice engagement

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Presenter Bio (s):

1:Dr. Amanda Wilson Harper is a native of Fort Worth, Texas where she currently resides with her partner and her five year old daughter. She is an assistant professor at Tarleton State University and is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and holds her Master of Divinity as well. She is passionate about the intersection of social justice issues, faith, and politics. She enjoys traveling, good podcasts, and reality tv.

2:Dr. Aynsley Scheffert is the BSW program director and an assistant professor at Bethel University in Saint Paul Minnesota. She is licensed as a Licensed Independent Clinical Social worker and has practiced since 2015.

3:

Workshop Title:

"Lord, Help My Unbelief: A Conversation on Mental Health and Ministry."

Workshop Presenters: Kan'Dace Brock , ,

Workshop Abstract: Mental Health and Faith can be two polarizing topics when forced to pick one. As leaders and organizations it is important to understand how mental health and faith compliment one another.

Learning Objectives:

- 1: understand the impact faith and/or spirituality has on one's mental health.
- 2: understand the importance of recognizing one's faith, both personally and in practice and understand the two can co-exist and don't have to be separate.
- 3: Understand resources are available to assist within the mental health journey for both practitioners and participate in mental health and faith communities.

Level of Presentation: Basic (Students and BSW Level), Intermediate (MSW Level), Advanced (LCSW or LICSW level)

Target Audience: Social Workers, Church Leaders, Educators

Workshop Description: In this workshop, participants will discuss mental health, faith/spirituality, and how one's understanding or the lack thereof can impact themselves and the community they serve. This session will be discussed through the impact faith has in practice, the current statics of individuals dealing with mental illness, and how faith can be viewed as a protective factor, particularly when working within the BIPOC community.

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<https://oxfordre.com/socialwork/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199975839.001.0001/acrefore-9780199975839-e-623?print=pdf>. Last update March 26, 2019

Presenter Bio (s):

1: Dr. Kan'Dace L. Brock, LMSW currently serves as lead pastor of The Message Church in San Antonio, Texas. In addition to pastoring, she serves as the Associate Vice President of Student and Community Engagement at Jesse C. Fletcher Seminary in San Antonio, Texas. Dr. Brock received an earned Doctorate of Ministry from United Theological Seminary (Dayton, OH) in December 2021. In addition to her DMin, she holds a Masters of Clinical Social Work from Norfolk State University (Norfolk, VA) May 2010, a BSW in Social Work and a BA in Sociology from The University of Texas at Arlington, May 2007. Dr. Brock currently holds a Licensed Master Social Work Licensure in Texas. Dr. Brock has presented all over the Nation at various churches, in addition to preaching and teaching at Seminaries and mental health conferences. Prior to her shift to the Academy, Dr. Brock worked as mental health specialist.

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Workshop Title:

Resiliency Unmasked

Workshop Presenters: Kiana Battle, ,

Workshop Abstract: This presentation will explore the "resiliency myth" in relation to youth impacted by grief, trauma, and other adverse childhood experiences with a focus on youth living in rural communities.

Learning Objectives:

- 1: 1- Participants will be able to identify key components of trauma-informed practice
- 2: 2- Participants will be able to identify key elements in constructing grief counseling support groups.
- 3: 3- Participants will be able to identify ways to engage with community stakeholders to advocate for supportive services for youth.

Level of Presentation: Intermediate (MSW Level)

Target Audience: Social Workers, Church Leaders, Educators

Workshop Description: This presentation will explore the "resiliency myth" in relation to youth impacted by grief, trauma, and other adverse childhood experiences with a focus on youth living in rural communities. The presentation will also highlight the inequities in the availability of comprehensive service delivery networks for this population. Participants will be provided with best-practice interventions through the lens of trauma-informed practice and stakeholder collaboration. The presentation will also highlight the positive role that faith-based organizations can have in underserved rural communities in the form of community assets, to support rural youth impacted by traumatic life events.

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Perry, D., N. & Winfrey, O. (2021) *What happened to you? Conversations on trauma, resilience, and healing*. Flatiron Books

Presenter Bio (s):

1: Dr. Kiana Battle is a licensed master social worker with 20 years of social work practice experience. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and a Master of Social Work degree in Social Welfare from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. She also earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Social Work Policy Planning and Administration from Clark Atlanta University. Dr. Battle is social work professor at Chamberlain University and a professional consultant. Dr. Battle also serves in ministry with her husband, Pastor Keith Battle Senior Pastor at Antioch Baptist Church.

2:

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Workshop Title:

Preparing Students for the Changing Nature of Social Work Practice

Workshop Presenters: Jessica Felix-Jager Weaver, Melanie Bergeron,

Workshop Abstract: Provides an overview of the changing landscape in social work practice settings post-COVID-19. Explores challenges while placing and managing practicums before, during, and post-COVID-19. Discusses field preparedness resulting in post-graduation employment. Provides anecdotal experiences from current field instructors addressing practice readiness.

Learning Objectives:

- 1: Recognize the changing landscape in the social work practice settings
- 2: Gain and employ strategies to better prepare Master-level Social Work students for field readiness and placement
- 3: Gain and employ field seminar/classroom techniques designed to promote work readiness and post-graduation employment

Level of Presentation: Intermediate (MSW Level)

Target Audience: Social Workers, Educators

Workshop Description: In social work higher education, it is well recognized that field education is the signature pedagogy for social work (CSWE, 2022). Per the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE), 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), field education programs articulate how they maintain or enhance their student's access to high-quality field practicum experiences while responding to the changing nature of the practice world, student demographics and characteristics (2022, p. 20). During the COVID-19 global pandemic, many universities needed to create and incorporate innovative ideas and activities to ensure student success in practicum settings. According to Morris and Everett (2022), "the sudden loss of practicum-based learning opportunities due to the pandemic further pushed social work educators to revisit the kind of learning that occurs pre-practicum to prepare students for demanding practice environments and eventual early-career employment" (p.2). Disruptions to field placements were inevitable during the height of the global pandemic. According to Davis and Mirick (2021), "not only did the pandemic change the context in which practice occurred, it also affected the context in which social work students trained" (p. 122).

This workshop provides an overview of the changing landscape in social work practice settings post-COVID-19 and the impact on field practicum training and field preparedness. This workshop offers social work educators and service providers methods and strategies to help mitigate placement disruptions and promote field readiness. Research regarding the emerging concerns impacting post-graduation workforce retention will be incorporated. Issues linked to burnout/self-care, professionalism, the dynamics of navigating stressed systems during and after COVID-19, and adapting to multimodal service delivery will be incorporated. Field seminar

learning activities such as processing, role plays, and professionalism panels designed to promote work readiness will be shared. Lastly, anecdotal experiences, strategies, and testimonials from current field instructors and supervisors will be incorporated into the workshop presentation.

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Presenter Bio (s):

1:Dr. Jessica Félix-Jäger de Weaver is an Associate Professor and Director of the Master of Social Work program at Southeastern University (SEU). Her research centers on the intersection of social innovation, community response, and workforce development. She earned her Master of Social Work from the University of Central Florida and her Doctor of Social Work from the University of Southern California.

Prior to SEU, she compiled nearly 10 years of experience in the field of social work, predominately in child welfare. She has worked in adoption, foster care, foster care licensing, and with traumatic brain injury survivors.

2:Dr. Melanie Bergeron is an Associate Professor and Field Director of the Master of Social Work (MSW) program at Southeastern University (SEU). Dr. Bergeron is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. She earned her Master of Social Work from the University of Central Florida and

her Ph.D. in Health and Public Affairs- Social Work from the University of Central Florida. Her doctoral research centered on the disparities within the kidney transplant waitlist process.

Prior to SEU, Dr. Bergeron has over 15 years of experience in the field of social work. This experience began with working as a behavioral specialist with children dealing with behavioral issues which lead to the development of classrooms to help meet the needs of these students. She also spent 8 years of experience as a NICU social worker providing support to families as well as to the medical team.

3:

Workshop Title:

The Use of Cloud-Based Technology in Social Work Practice

Workshop Presenters: Philip Breitenbucher , Catherine Leach ,

Workshop Abstract: Participants will learn what cloud-based technology is and the needs it serves in social services. Participants will enhance their understanding of the barriers and benefits of using technology in social work practice and will gain insight into the role of leadership in the acquisition, training, and utilization of cloud-based technology.

Learning Objectives:

- 1: Identify the need for Cloud-Based Technology in Social Work.
- 2: Identify the barriers and benefits of using technology in administering social service programs.
- 3: Identify the role of leadership in the acquisition, training, and utilization of Cloud-Based Technology.

Level of Presentation: Basic (Students and BSW Level), Intermediate (MSW Level), Advanced (LCSW or LICSW level)

Target Audience: Social Workers, Educators, Students

Workshop Description: A. Introduction (15 mins)

1. Scenario
2. What is Cloud-Based Technology?
3. The need for Cloud-Based Technology in Social Work

B. Barriers and benefits of using technology in social work. (15 mins)

1. Historical relationship of social work and technology
2. Benefits of Cloud based technology in social work practice.
3. NASW Standards

C. Roles of leadership in the acquisition, training, and utilization of cloud-based Technology (15 mins)

1. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)
2. Access to large-scale technology-based solutions
3. Training & Development

D. Discussion/Activity (15 mins)

1. What benefits and drawbacks exist in your use of cloud-based technology?
2. What suggestions & ideas do you have for the implementation of technology in social service programs?

Presentation Informed by Social Work Literature

The presentation is informed by literature such as Bullock, A.N., & Colvin, A.D. and their use of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). This model discusses historical and current challenges for social workers with technology integration in social work practice.

In addition, the National Association of Social Work Practice, Standards, Guidelines for Technology Use in Social Work Practice inform this presentation. Specifically, Section 4: Social Work Education and Supervision. Standard 4.01: Use of Technology in Social Work Education, and Standard 4.02: Training Social Workers about the Use of Technology in Social Work Practice.

Biblical Literature/ Faith, Religion & Spirituality Component

A Faith & Religion component will be presented through Sterns, R. in his book, Lead Like it Matters to God. Sterns discusses a Leadership Principle- Create a vision for a different and better future and a belief it can be achieved. He uses a Key Scripture: Matthew 5:1-10 “Now when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on a mountainside and set down. His Disciples came to him, and he began to teach them...”

Consistency with Evidence Based and Culturally Competent Ethical Practice

The NASW Code of Ethics speaks of culturally competent ethical practice in Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice. In particular, Standard 1. Ethics and Values, Standard 8. Professional Education and Standard 10 Leadership to Advance Cultural Competence.

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Presenter Bio (s):

1:Dr. Breitenbucher earned an Master of Social Work from California State University, San Bernardino, and a Doctorate of Education with a focus on organizational leadership. He has over 20 years of progressively responsible experience managing public child welfare and community-based prevention services. As the Director of the Office of Field Education, Dr. Breitenbucher brings to the role extensive administrative social work experience that includes non-profit social service management, grant development, administration, and evaluation of federal, state, and local grants and contracts, including the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services and U. S. Department of Justice. As the Director of the Office of Field Education he supports the MSW and BSW programs and active collaboration with community-based agencies including child welfare, corrections, hospitals, non-profits, and schools.

2:Dr. Catherine Leach holds a Master's degree in Sociology and a Doctorate of Education in Organizational Leadership. She has worked in the field of social welfare for 17 years. Her career began at the Los Angeles County Department of Children's Services as a social worker. She has also worked for social welfare agencies as supervisor, intake and placement supervisor, and social welfare administrator. She served as a Foster Care Education Consultant for the Foster Care Kinship Education Program (FCKE) at Rio Hondo College and assisted in the development of the Introduction to Social Work course at El Camino College. Her research interests include ethical decision making, leadership and management, case management and child abuse and prevention. As an Assistant Professor of Social Work Dr. Leach instructs graduate and undergraduate courses and serves as a faculty advisor to DSW students.

3:

Workshop Title:

Importance of Community Needs Assessments and Engagement: Breaking Stigma

Workshop Presenters: James Armour, ,

Workshop Abstract: Learn the importance of community needs assessments and engagement while breaking through barriers such as stigma. Learn how to conduct a community needs assessment, how to engage the community when there is stigma, and how to work with marginalized communities such as the lgbtq and unhoused as a Christian social workers using macro practices.

Learning Objectives:

- 1: Conduct a community needs assessment.
- 2: How to harbor community engagement, and how to break stigma.
- 3: Best practices for macro work with the lgbtq and the unhoused.

Level of Presentation: Intermediate (MSW Level)

Target Audience: Social Workers, Church Leaders, Educators, Students

Workshop Description: Community Needs Assessments and Engagement, breaking stigma from the community towards the LGBTQAI and the Unhoused using macro practices, and why faith ties it all together. I will teach how to incorporate scripture and faith into macro practices for the community and evidence-based practices for Community needs assessments, engagement, and breaking stigma.

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Presenter Bio (s):

1: My name is James armor I am currently a therapist for Renewing Hope Strategies and the CEO and Founder of Inland compassion. I currently an MSW graduate from Cal Baptist University and I received my degree in April, 2023. I am also a speaker for the District Attorney's Office of Riverside California advocating at different facilities such as schools about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Previously, I have worked as an ABA Therapist, and interned at the Moreno Valley Unified School District and Hemet Hospital.

2:

3:

Workshop Title:

Using Technology to Bring Awareness about Diversity & Social Justice

Workshop Presenters: Kizzy Lopez, Jon Clark , Patricia Salas

Workshop Abstract: This presentation offers an overview of Fresno Pacific University social work department virtual Learn at Lunch series. This series serves as a resource for community on a wide range of diversity and social justice issues and to consider the intersections of social work education and practice with a faith perspective.

Learning Objectives:

- 1: Participants will learn about why Fresno Pacific University started the Virtual Learn at Lunch Series
- 2: Participants will learn about the values of Fresno Pacific University that guide the Virtual Learn at Lunch Series
- 3: Participants will learn about the Virtual Learn at Lunch budget, funding, outcomes and future growth

Level of Presentation: Intermediate (MSW Level)

Target Audience: Social Workers, Educators, Students

Workshop Description: Fresno Pacific University (FPU) Social Work department hosts a monthly virtual Learn at Lunch series. Attendance to the Learn at Lunch is free and open to students, campus staff and faculty, and the community at large. We have a range of diversity and social justice topics which include topics like environmental justice, intersection of race and foster care, mental health and cultural diversity, immigrant issues, child abuse prevention awareness, and many other topics.

The purpose of the virtual Learn at Lunch is to bring education, training, and awareness to social issues that impact our community through a social work lens and Christian commitment. Our goal is to use these virtual presentations. The intended impact of the virtual Learn at Lunch series is presentations to serve as a learning resource for the university and community at large on diversity and social justice issues and to consider the intersections of social work education and practice with a faith perspective. The series provides an opportunity for FPU to be engaged and serve our region. Almost 90% of the Central Valley region is comprised of rural communities. Providing these learning opportunities through Zoom allows FPU to serve and engage parts of community that we cannot easily reach. For some community members, the Learn at Lunch series also provides free professional development opportunities for social work professionals and social worker students. We also record the virtual presentations and upload the recording on Vimeo so campus and community members can access the videos as a free resource on various issues related to diversity and social justice.

Presentation Outline and Timeline:

- Introduction (5 minutes)
- Guiding Values for Learn at Lunch (3 minutes)
- Components and Logistics of the series (22 minutes)
- Outcomes and Future Growth (10 minutes)
- Q & A (10 minutes)
- Participant Activity (10 minutes)

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Presenter Bio (s):

1:Dr. Kizzy Lopez is an Assistant Professor in Social Work at Fresno Pacific University. She has worked in higher education for 17 years in academic and student affairs as a champion for educational equity for underserved students, particularly those who have experienced foster care or homelessness. As a practitioner, Dr. Lopez led the effort to create a campus support program for students from foster care at Fresno State and Fresno Pacific University. These programs are designed to increase college access and graduation rates for students from foster care attending the university. As a scholar, Dr. Lopez is a speaker on educational equity and foster care. She is a TEDx speaker on the topic, The Trauma of Being Black in Foster Care and she has co-authored publications focused on strategies to support college-going foster youth.

2:Dr. Jon Clark is an Associate Professor in Social Work at Fresno Pacific University and the BSW Program Director at FPU. He has been at FPU since 2014 and teaches in areas surrounding policy, cultural competency, community organizing, and family practice. Dr. Clark completed his dissertation on foster youth in higher education. He has presented professionally on degree completion modalities, community change projects, and faith integration in higher education. He has also presented social work ethics and values at a regional children's hospital symposium. Prior to his time at FPU, Dr. Clark worked for the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for 15 years, serving as an adoption social worker, counseling those affected by sexual abuse, and serving as a church liaison to help churches open family visitation centers.

3:Patricia Salas is a clinical assistant professor in Social Work at Fresno Pacific University and the program Field Director. She has been a part of the FPU field team since 2018 where she has been instrumental in establishing community partners to enhance students' field experience. She has worked in the social work field for over twenty years in the areas of child welfare, school counseling, and adoptions. Supporting at risk youth has been a guiding factor throughout her employment journey. As a social work educator, she is able to guide future social workers on how to be a person who chooses empowerment, empathy, and equality as a foundation of their social work practice.

Workshop Title:

Mental Health & Aging: What Social Workers Need to Know

Workshop Presenters: Dr. Natalee Oliver, ,

Workshop Abstract: Our society is aging, and the social work profession will be impacted. Social workers need a basic understanding of leading mental health conditions affecting older adults (and their families) as well as skills on how to help them during these times. Learn what to look for and how you can help older adults living with mental illness.

Learning Objectives:

- 1: identify leading mental health conditions affecting older adults.
- 2: know how to identify signs and symptoms of leading mental health conditions in older adults
- 3: explain available resources and services for older adults living with mental illness

Level of Presentation: Basic (Students and BSW Level), Intermediate (MSW Level), Advanced (LCSW or LICSW level)

Target Audience: Social Workers, Church Leaders, Students

Workshop Description: As Christian social workers it is our duty and calling to view clients holistically. When working with older adults and their families, it is necessary to understand some of the leading mental health conditions they face and to be able to recognize signs and symptoms they may experience. Additionally, practicing social workers need to know what resources and services are available for older adults experiencing mental illness and how one's faith can positively impact those suffering. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 56 million adults ages 65 and older live in the United States and by 2030, it is projected to reach over 70 million. Whether working directly with older adults or not, social workers will be impacted by our aging society and need to be equipped in being able to assess basic mental health needs in the older adult population.

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Many more will be on PowerPoint I provide.

Presenter Bio (s):

1:

Natalee is the Program Director for the Long-Term Care Administration Program at McLennan Community College. She earned her Doctorate in Social Work (DSW) from Tulane University in 2021, LCSW in 2017, LMSW in 2013 from Baylor, Master's in Gerontology (MSG) in 2000 from Baylor, and Bachelor's in Business Administration (BBA) in 1999 from Baylor. She also earned her Licensed Nursing Facility Administrator (LNFA) in 2001.

Natalee has had the opportunity to present at the On Aging (American Society on Aging) Conference in New Orleans (April 2022), Love Me Do Alzheimer's Association's Mini Caregiver Self-Care Conference in Waco, TX (May 2022), Quality in Long-Term Care Conference (Aug 2022) in Austin, TX, virtually for the NASW TX Annual Conference (pre-recorded September 2022), and at the Texas Assisted Living Association (TALA) Annual Conference (April 2023) in Round Rock, TX.

2:

3:

Workshop Title:

Supporting Students from Foster Care in Christian Higher Education

Workshop Presenters: Kizzy Lopez, Sara Gamez,

Workshop Abstract: Current literature on students from foster care focuses on secular education. Almost no attention is given to faith-based institutions. This presentation focuses on the stories and findings from a study that examined the lived experiences of college students from foster care and recommendations for social workers and Christian higher education.

Learning Objectives:

- 1: ..will gain insight about the educational outcomes and experiences of college-going foster youth.

- 2: ..will learn about the institutional assumptions of family privilege embedded within university structures that create barriers for students from foster care.

- 3: ...will learn recommendations for social workers and Christian higher education professionals who want to serve college-going foster youth in faith-based colleges.

Level of Presentation: Intermediate (MSW Level)

Target Audience: Social Workers, Church Leaders, Educators, Students

Workshop Description: This presentation will provide an overview of a recent study on the lived experiences of students with foster care histories who are attending Christian colleges and universities. In the U.S. there are 3,982 colleges and universities (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.), nearly 1,000 are religious based institutions (Encyclopedia of Education, 2019), and 150 campuses are part of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) in the United States and Canada (Council of Christian Colleges and Universities, n.d.). However, little to no attention has been given to the experiences of students with foster care histories attending Christian universities. In-depth interviews were conducted with seven participants attending three Christian universities in two states. Four themes emerged from the study that include identifying the factors that influenced students' decision to attend a Christian university, the impact of trauma and how it impacted their relationship with God and the Christian faith, their foster care experience and how it shared their identity development

while in college, and the emotional navigation students undergo with familial relationships. The presentation will include recommendations and implications for social workers and Christian higher education professionals.

This study is informed by the family privilege which was introduced by John Seita in 2001. Seita (2001) defines family privilege as, “an invisible package of assets and pathways that provide us with a sense of belonging, safety, and unconditional love and spiritual values (p. 131). During the interviews, we learned about the institutional assumptions of family privilege built into Christian universities and the barriers and challenges it can cause for students from foster care. Our work is also informed by scripture such as Deuteronomy 24:19-21; Deuteronomy 10:17-18; James 1:27; Psalm 82:3 which calls us to care for the orphan. In our work, we use the definition of orphan as, “a child may be considered an orphan because of the death or disappearance of, abandonment or desertion by, or separation or loss from, both parents.” (Legal definitions, n.d.).

Session Timeline:

- Introduction: (5 minutes)
- Background of foster youth in college (10 minutes)
- Overview of the study (5 minutes)
- Methods (3 minutes)
- Findings (17 minutes)
- Discussion and implication for practice (10 minutes)
- Q & A (10 minutes)

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Presenter Bio (s):

1:Dr. Kizzy Lopez is an Assistant Professor in Social Work at Fresno Pacific University. She has worked in higher education for 17 years in academic and student affairs as a champion for educational equity for underserved students. As a practitioner, Dr. Lopez led the effort to create a campus-based program for foster and homeless youth at Fresno State known as the Renaissance Scholars Program (RSP). This program was designed to increase college access and graduation rates for foster and homeless youth attending the university. She was the founding coordinator and served in this role for 10 years. As a scholar, Dr. Lopez is a speaker on educational equity and foster care. She is a TEDx speaker on the topic, The Trauma of Being Black in Foster Care. Dr. Lopez has co-authored publications focused on strategies to support college-going foster youth.

2:Dr. Sara Gamez is the Director for Student Support & Equity Programs at Cal Poly Pomona, leading the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), Renaissance Scholars (RS), and Undocumented Students Services (USS). She is an immigrant with lived-experience in foster care and a first-generation college graduate. She has over 18 years as a student affairs professional providing direct service, advocating for access and equity, and serving in various leadership roles on and off campus. Dr. Gamez currently serves as the chair for the Southern California Higher Education Foster Youth Consortium (SCHEFYC). Dr. Gamez' research interests and contributions to the field are primarily focused on the experiences of foster youth in college and creating a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive campus community for underserved student populations.

3: