

BOARD ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES (BCYF)
**WORKSHOP: The Science of Engaging Youth Lived Experience in Health Research,
Practice, and Policy**
Speaker Biographical Sketches



Leslie R. Walker-Harding, MD and Forum Co-Chair (*she/her*) is the Ford/Morgan Endowed Professor and Chair of the Department of Pediatrics and Associate Dean at the University of Washington and the Chief Academic Officer and Senior Vice President of Seattle Children's Hospital. Prior to returning to Seattle Dr. Walker-Harding was Chair of the Department of Pediatrics and Medical Director of Penn State Children's Hospital. From 2007 to 2016, she was the Division Chief of Adolescent Medicine and Vice Chair of Faculty Development in Pediatrics at the University of Washington. Dr. Walker-Harding serves on a number of national boards and committees including the Council of the American Pediatric Society (APS). She currently is chair of the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (CODI) in the APS. She serves on the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Substance Use and Prevention (COSUP), and she is a past President of the Society of Adolescent Health and Medicine. She has served on a number of committees at the National Academies of Medicine focused on adolescent and young adult health. Her research has been focused on prevention of adolescent risk behaviors spanning adolescent and young adult substance abuse and ADHD to adolescent pregnancy prevention. Diversity and inclusion in the workforce of health providers as a way of creating excellence in academic medicine and eliminating health disparities has also been a national focus of hers. She has publications both in adolescent and young adult health, and improving excellence in health care and research by increasing workforce diversity and inclusion.



David Willis, MD and Forum Co-Chair (*he/him*) is a senior fellow at the Center for the Study of Social Policy. He leads a national initiative to advance early relational health for child health and communities. A board-certified, developmental-behavioral pediatrician, Dr. Willis was a clinician in Oregon for more than 30 years with a practice focused on early childhood development and family therapy. Most recently, he was the first executive director of the Perigee Fund, a Seattle-based philanthropy focused on strengthening of the social and emotional development of all babies and toddlers, and on advancing the workforce to do so. From 2012-2018, he served as director of the Division of Home Visiting and Early Childhood Services at the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Maternal Child Health Bureau, in Washington DC, and continues to be thought leader in home visiting and early childhood systems. During his career, Dr. Willis has also been a Harris Mid-Career Fellow with childhood development nonprofit ZERO TO THREE; the past president of the Oregon Pediatric Society; an executive member of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Section on Early Education and Child Care;

and chair of the AAP's Board's Early Brain & Child Development Strategic Initiative. Dr. Willis has been a national lecturer, advisor to early childhood national policy and visionary for the transformation of child health care in coordination with early childhood communities and focused on the advancement of early relational health and young children's social-emotional and developmental well-being. Dr. Willis received his M.D. from Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University.



Michelle Abraczinskas, PhD (*she/her*) received her PhD in Clinical-Community Psychology from the University of South Carolina in 2018. She completed a post-doctoral T32 NIDA funded fellowship in 2020 focused on prevention and implementation science. Michelle has been an Assistant Professor of Youth Development and Prevention Science in the Family, Youth, and Community Sciences Department at the University of Florida since August 2020. Michelle's research centers community-university partnerships. She values all youth engagement methods but specializes in youth participatory action research (YPAR) in which youth choose a topic, research it, and take transformative action to change systems to better serve them. Michelle is the academic lead

on an American Institutes for Research funded YPAR project in which young people with lived experience designed a study around the strengths and support needs of youth who have experienced parental incarceration. She is also Co-PI on a grant funded by the Life Course Intervention Network to pilot an online YPAR network for post-pandemic and racial justice healing. She is a co-investigator (PI, Emily Ozer) on a WT Grant Foundation Use of Research Evidence grant examining when adult stakeholders use youth generated research. She is Co-I on a rural opioid use prevention grant funded by USDA.



Leonard Burton (*he/him*) is the President of the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP). In this role, he brings more than three decades of leading anti-racist, intersectional social justice work including executive leadership in public social service systems, philanthropy, community change, faith-based programs, and youth development. Previously, Mr. Burton was a Senior Fellow at CSSP, working on the Systems Change and Public Policy teams and focusing on promoting healthy development and well-being for young people involved in intervening public systems. Mr. Burton is also a co-developer of the upEND Movement which focuses on abolishing family policing and reimagining and creating better means of care for children and families.

Mr. Burton serves on the Boards of Building Bridges Initiative, as well as leading research organization WestED. He is also a national advisor and consultant to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network at Northwestern University supporting youth engagement and anti-racist practices in the context of child welfare and juvenile justice. Mr. Burton holds a Bachelors' degree in Public Administration from Austin Peay State University and a Masters' Degree in Education-Administration and Supervision from Tennessee State University.



Tammy Chang, MD (*she/her*) is a health services researcher and practicing family physician with a passion for adolescent health, specifically, breaking the cycle of poverty and poor health among adolescent mothers and their children via community-engaged research.

Her NIH-sponsored research is focused on improving access to reproductive health care and promoting healthy pregnancy weight gain among at-risk adolescents using text messaging. She is also the founding director of MyVoice (www.hearmyvoicenow.org) a national text-message poll of youth age 14-24 years. MyVoice engages youth and communities typically invisible to researchers, and uses mixed methods to inform local and national policies in real-time.



April Joy Damian, PhD (*she/her*) is Vice President and Director of the Weitzman Institute, and Senior Scholar for Health Systems and Equity at AcademyHealth, with faculty appointments in the Department of Mental Health at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Department of Pediatrics at UConn School of Medicine, and Science in Society Program at Wesleyan University. At the Weitzman Institute, she leads research, education, and policy efforts centered on social determinants of health (SDOH), health systems transformation, and workforce development in the context of

primary care safety-net practices. As a psychiatric epidemiologist, health services researcher, and classically trained public health professional, Dr. Damian has applied her scholarship to elevate the voices, lived experiences, and psychosocial well-being of marginalized youth and families for over two decades.



Fred Dillon (*he/him*) is the Head of Advisory Services at Hopelab and has nearly two decades of experience leading staff and external partners to develop technology solutions that improve the health and well-being of adolescents and young adults. Fred scopes and leads advising engagements that lend Hopelab's expertise in research, design, product development and youth co-creation to Hopelab Ventures portfolio companies, Hopelab grantees, and other mission-aligned organizations. Fred oversees a team of talented and interdisciplinary designers, strategists, product managers, and user researchers that help Hopelab partners build efficacious and scalable

digital products to support the mental and emotional health of teens and young adults, especially youth of color and LGBTQ+ youth. Before working at Hopelab, Fred worked for over a decade at the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, ultimately serving as the Deputy Director for Public Policy and Communications, where he led the agency's advocacy efforts to support those living with HIV/AIDS and those at risk for HIV infection. Fred has a B.A. in Social Welfare from the University of California, Berkeley.



Kathleen Ethier PhD (*she/her*) is a social psychologist and the Director of CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health in the National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention. She has served as a leader at CDC in adolescent health as well as other capacities since 1999. Prior to joining CDC, Dr. Ethier spent six years on the research faculty at Yale University studying HIV, STDs, and unplanned pregnancy prevention among women and adolescents. Her research has primarily focused on psychosocial, behavioral, and environmental factors related to adolescent mental and physical health. Dr. Ethier earned her PhD in social psychology from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.



Marjorie Freeman (*she/her*) combines creative strategy and business analysis to build processes to make community collaboration easier. She is currently supporting the development of a brand new EA practice within Danaher. In her prior role, she nurtured a Red Hat technical publishing community, Enable Architect, designed for enterprise architects and other IT leaders who contribute to enterprise architecture. Marjorie loves to support people in building their personal brands and the technology industry has allowed her to grow into that affinity. In her free time, she enjoys creative writing and discovering new movies.

James Gaither (*he/him*) is a graphic designer with the small business Central Creativity, and a youth leader with HeartSmiles MD.



Marsha Judkins (*she/her*) is currently an adjunct professor in the Quantitative and Mathematical Reasoning Department at Utah Valley University and serving as an elected Representative in the Utah State House. Prior to being elected, she worked extensively as a volunteer in her community and neighborhood schools. Marsha has a bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in math, and a master's degree in Public Administration. She raised seven children and elected to be a stay at home mom. She has always been an active volunteer, giving her time to PTA, coaching, community building, and nonprofits, and also worked part time as a children's librarian and as a substitute teacher. In 2012, she was elected to the Provo School Board. Seeing first-hand the

State legislature's power over education and feeling that the legislature needed a wider variety of perspectives, she ran for and was elected to the Utah State House in 2018. Marsha is currently serving her third term and represents House District 61 (west Provo and southwest Orem), where she has lived in a working class neighborhood for the past 34 years. She is dedicated to being a strong voice for families and for those who are most vulnerable while serving on the Social Services Appropriations, Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, Revenue and Taxation, and Health and Human Services Committees.

Jessica Makin



Maygan Martinez (*she/her*) is the co-founder of the 1999 Collective in Utah. She is dedicated to learning and making youth voices loud and heard throughout the world. Her aspirations for the 1999 Collective is to serve youth in every aspect that they can throughout the years of the system, and to create a model of what reality looks like when live expertise is included in positions of power and decision-making. She is currently working towards a Bachelor's degree in Political Science at Salt Lake Community College, and looks to transfer to the University of Utah.



Grace Minakowski (*she/her*), is a Junior at Huntingtown High School in Calvert County, MD and Chair of the Maryland Youth Advisory Council (MYAC). Through her work with MYAC, she engages with lawmakers in the Maryland General Assembly and community stakeholders to lobby for youth-related bills. Her policy interests include secondary education, curriculum reform, mental health, and addressing class-based disparities. In addition to her work with MYAC, Grace currently serves as the Deputy Director of the Special Issues Department for the Maryland Association of Student Councils.



Minhal Nazeer (*she/her*) is a senior at the Kentucky Country Day School in Louisville, KY. She first joined the Kentucky Student Voice Team (KSVT) in November of 2021, joining on as a project member facilitating the development of the Race to Learn Report. This report was aimed to gauge how students felt about conversations surrounding race and ethnicity in their schools, and it elicited 10,725 responses from 114 of Kentucky's 120 counties. It later went on to be presented to the Kentucky Board of Education, University of Kentucky's Civil Rights Institute, the National Center for Families and Learning, and more.

Now, Minhal serves as a Co-Cross Organizational Coordinator and Research Lead at the KSVT, as well as an Editor for their journalism platform, the New Edu. Their newest research report serves as a followup to Race to Learn, exploring student stories on racial and ethnic exclusion in their schools. With the New Edu, Minhal has authored 5 articles while editing and mentoring other student pieces along the way. Beyond KSVT, she serves as a Founder and Leader of her school's first Social Justice Club. In her downtime, she loves exploring neighboring parks with her dad, attending local concerts with her friends, and FaceTiming her two older sisters.



Terrinieka W. Powell, PhD (*she/her*) is a trained Community Psychologist committed to improving adolescent health outcomes, with an extensive history of using community-engaged approaches and working with community partners (e.g., churches, libraries, and youth-oriented CBOs) to conduct research. She has expertise in adolescent health, qualitative methods, intervention development, and implementation science. She has collaborated with institutions across the country to promote educational attainment as well as prevent teen pregnancy, HIV, and substance use among adolescents. She has over 40 publications and has been PI or Co-I on several externally funded grants that seek to improve the lives of vulnerable young people.



Jean Rhodes (*she/her*) is the Frank L. Boyden Professor of Psychology and Director of the Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. She is also co-founder of MentorPRO, a platform for advancing effective mentoring and training. Dr. Rhodes has devoted her career to understanding positive youth development, the transition to adulthood, and mentoring, including cross-age youth mentoring. Rhodes has published over 200 scholarly papers and several books, most recently, *Older and Wiser: New ideas for youth mentoring in the 21st century*, which received the 2023 Eleanor Maccoby Award from Div. 6 of the American Psychological Association. Rhodes is a Fellow in the American Psychological Association and a former Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellow and Distinguished Fellow of the William T. Grant Foundation. She is the 2024 recipient of the American Psychological Association's Urie Bronfenbrenner Award for Lifetime Contribution to Developmental Psychology in the Service of Science and Society.



Carlos E. Santos, PhD (*he/him/el*) is an associate professor at University of California, Los Angeles' Luskin School of Public Affairs. Dr. Santos' research draws on diverse disciplines, theories and methods to better understand how oppressions (e.g., racism, heterosexism, etc.) overlap to create unique conditions for individuals; conditions that are shaped by the contexts one occupies, with implications for one's development and well-being. He is interested in how individuals cope with these overlapping stressors through attitudes associated with membership in different social groups (e.g., having pride in one's ethnic-racial and/or sexual identity group), and positions one occupies (e.g., being undocumented), and whether such coping attenuate or amplify the negative consequences of overlapping oppressions on mental health, educational outcomes, and civic engagement.



Theo Schwartz (*they/them*) is the Youth Coordinator for the Youth Empowered Solutions to Succeed program with the Utah Office of Substance Use and Mental Health. They have worked with transition-age youth for eight years in different capacities including sexual health, mental health, and social justice. They graduated from the University of Utah with a bachelor's degree in Community Health Education and is a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES). Schwartz is a queer, transgender, nonbinary, disabled, Jewish youth who strives to create equity and justice in health, policy, and social work with under-represented communities. They are especially passionate about transgender rights, disability justice, and transition-age youth care. They enjoy fun button-up shirts, coffee, and listening to music.



Sophie Szew (*she/they*) is a Los Angeles-born mental health activist, writer, and public speaker. She was a youth leader at MTV's Mental Health Youth Action Forum at the White House, where she shared her story with President Biden and helped guide the administration on how to best serve the needs of youth in the mental healthcare system. Sophie is also a 3-time intern at the U.S. House of Representatives and an internationally recognized poet, winning the 2021 Woorilla Poetry Prize and serving as an inaugural poet for Mayor Karen Bass. She has advised numerous organizations, including Lady Gaga's Born This Way Foundation, Mental Health America, and the California Mental Health Consortium. As a first-year student at Stanford University, she hopes to double-major in American Studies with a concentration in mental healthcare justice and Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity, with two minors in Human Rights and Creative Writing. As an eating disorder survivor and proud Jewish Latina, Sophie combines their own experiences with injustice brought about by mental healthcare inequity with her passion for writing, advocacy, and leadership to uplift the voices of those with lived experiences and fight for the systemic destigmatization of marginalized bodies, and is very excited to do so as a member of NAMI's NNG!



Trace Terrell (*he/him*) is a mental health activist, peer health educator, and strategic storyteller with a background in adolescent crisis intervention, peer-to-peer support, and youth policy. From middle to early high school, he struggled with suicidal ideation, depression, and other mental health challenges, further complicated by his sexual orientation and rural community. At 14, he volunteered on a youth crisis line, which helped him realize that his mental health challenges were a microcosm of public health issues that affected hundreds of thousands of young people across the world. Since then, he has testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, reviewed mental health policies affecting transition-age youth from across the country, and advised several national campaigns like A.S.K., MTV and Active Minds' new "stop, drop, and roll" for mental health and peer support. A sophomore at The Johns Hopkins University, he studies public health and writing seminars and hopes to pursue a career in health policy and management. Currently, he researches the

implementation of a novel therapeutic framework and software meant to make nonclinical mental healthcare more scalable, cost-effective, and timely for people across the world at the Bloomberg School of Public Health.



Brian Villa, MPH (*he/him*) is a second-year Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) student at the University of California, Berkeley - School of Public Health. He is currently the Research Projects Director for Professor Emily Ozer's research lab and serves as a core member of the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and UC Berkeley Research-Practice Partnership. One of the projects he supports explores the impact of youth-led participatory action research (YPAR) on school decision-making processes. Brian has experience teaching high school Ethnic Studies/Asian American Studies, leading community health programming at a non-profit youth center, and supporting various YPAR projects. His research interests include YPAR, adolescent mental health, racial justice, health equity, and healing-centered liberatory approaches.



Nia West-Bey, PhD (*she/her*) is CLASP's director of youth policy. In this role, she leads a team that seeks to advance a vision for policy and systems change co-created with youth and young adults, ages 16-25, that centers safety, healing and well-being, and economic and racial justice. Previously, Dr. West-Bey was a senior policy analyst with CLASP's youth team, where she focused on youth and young adult mental health, two-generation policies and strategies to support young parents of color earning low incomes as well as girls and young women of color. She is a community psychologist with expertise in youth development, qualitative and quantitative data interpretation and analysis, and the intersection of psychology, social policy, and program evaluation. Prior to joining CLASP, Dr. West-Bey co-founded and spent 10 years as executive director of a community-based nonprofit organization offering youth development programming to young people in foster care in Washington, D.C. Through this work, she had the opportunity to learn and experience how national and local policy impacts disconnected youth. Dr. West-Bey earned an M.A. and a Ph.D. in community psychology from New York University and completed her undergraduate degree at Swarthmore College.



Clara Wolff (*she/her*) is in her 3rd year of her undergraduate studies at the University of Michigan. She is majoring in Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience and has been involved as a student researcher with MyVoice since her freshman year. Clara has worked on a variety of projects with MyVoice, including co-authoring a paper investigating youth perceptions of COVID-19 vaccine incentives, and leading a team in exploring youth perceptions of period poverty.



Briana Woods-Jaeger, PhD (*she/her*) is an Associate Professor and Vice Chair for Equity and Engagement in the Department of Behavioral, Social, and Health Education Sciences at Emory University and Associate Director of the Injury Prevention Research Center at Emory (IPRCE). Dr. Woods-Jaeger's research examines social and structural drivers of health inequities associated with trauma and early adversity and culturally responsive, strengths-based solutions to these inequities. She is currently a Principal Investigator on research projects supported by the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and United Way focused on partnering with communities to identify ways to prevent adverse childhood experiences and support different systems such as education, health care, and community-based organizations in responding to the needs of trauma-exposed youth of color. Dr. Woods-Jaeger currently leads youth participatory action research that utilizes a participatory arts approach to prevent violence and promote mental health equity among Black youth. Dr. Woods-Jaeger is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist specializing in culturally affirming approaches to care and systems-level interventions to address trauma that center cultural humility.



Allysa Ware, PhD (*she/her*) is the executive director of Family Voices. She is a family leader and researcher with extensive experience in strategic planning, family engagement, grant writing, human relations, and systems change. Ware's research is focused on the lived experience of individuals and families with an autism diagnosis. Her commitment to advocacy for individuals on the autism spectrum began with her personal experience as a parent and expanded through her practice as a social worker. She has collaborated with notable researchers to conduct in-depth research on kinship care, transition to adult care, and early childhood systems. She was recognized with the researcher award for Milestones Autism Resources, an Ohio-based nonprofit organization that provides lifelong strategies and support for individuals on the autism spectrum.

Ware is the principal investigator on several initiatives at Family Voices, including building capacity for autism research in the African American community; the Center for Transition to Adult Care for Youth with Disabilities; and Pediatrics Supporting Parents, an early childhood social-emotional development initiative. Ware holds a B.S. in psychology from the University of Maryland Global Campus and an M.S. and Ph.D. in social work from The Catholic University of America.



Dashia Wright (*she/her*) is a current Masters student majoring Counseling Psychology at the University of Kentucky. Wright received a Bachelor's Degree at UC Irvine where she majored in Psychology and Social Behavior. During undergrad she participated in various leadership roles on campus including becoming a Peer Life Coach, and conducting a qualitative research study on Black College Women and healing. During high school Wright participated in a youth-led participatory action research project focusing on Gender and Sexual

Based Violence amongst youth which later allowed her to become a Staff Research Associate at UC Berkeley to work on a state-funded initiative to help support and scale up current YPAR/ youth-voice projects in California.



Joseph Yusuf (*he/him*) is a Changemaker from Washington, DC. Joseph works at Howard University, is an audio engineer, poet, and board member with Generation Hope. As an advocate for young parents, he's working to ensure that they can access free education and can succeed in our society.