

61st NYSSSWA State Conference – Schedule of Events

Wednesday, 11/11/2026 Pre-Conference (1.5 CEs) [Optional]

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm Registration at [The Hotel Ithaca](#)

6:30 pm – 8:00 pm "Therapeutic Tools and Self-Care for School Social Workers" by Jill Wojcik Pula, LCSW at [The Hotel Ithaca](#) (bring your yoga mat).

7:00 pm – 8:30 pm **Welcome Reception** Catch up with School Social Workers from around New York state.

Thursday 11/12/2026 (6 CEs)

8:00 am – 8:45 am Registration & **Coffee/Tea & Breakfast Buffet** (At [The Ithaca Conference Center](#))

8:45 am – 9:00 am Welcome & Opening Remarks

9:00 am – 10:30 am **Opening Keynote: "School Social Work in the Age of AI " by Marina Badillo-Diaz, DSW, LCSW (1.5 CEs)**

10:30 am – 10:45 am **Break**

10:45 am – 12:15 pm Breakout Sessions A: (1.5 CEs)

A1: "Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth: Tools & Strategies for School Social Workers" by Jack Kavanaugh, LMSW

A2: "Steps to Attendance: Understanding and Overcoming School Avoidance" by Robin DeLuca-Acconi, Ph.D., LCSW

A3: "Tap Into Their Nervous System: Strategies to Bring Balance to Your Students" by Lauren Etu, MS

A4: "Clinical Leadership in Crisis: School Social Workers on the Frontline of Threat Assessment and Crisis Response" by Paul Dischiavo, LCSW-R; Jodi Kapes, LCSW-R; Krystyna Feola, Sergeant; Trish Hoyer, LCSW

A5: "Putting the 'Good' in Goodfellas"/ "Empowering Young Men. Strengthening Mental Health. Building Connection" by Paul Thompson, LMSW

12:15 pm – 1:30 pm **Lunch Buffet, Ruth Schwartz Award**

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm Breakout Sessions B (1.5 CEs)

B1: "AI and Youth Mental Health" by Marina Badillo-Diaz, DSW, LCSW

B2: "The Stickers Aren't Working: Moving Beyond the Failed Reward Chart.: Social Work Behavior Modification for Students" by Stephanie Columbia, Ed.D., LCSW-R, BCBA, LBA

B3: "Building Resilience in a Complex World: Practical School-Based Strategies from Polyvagal Theory" (Self Regulations and De-escalation) by Laurie Belanger LCSW-R

B4: "Burnout-Proofing the Work: Sustainable Self-Care & Ethical Boundaries for School Social Workers" by Jennifer Schwytzer, LCSW, PLLC

B5: "Human Trafficking – Assessing, Assisting, and Advocating" by Christina Diaz, LMSW & Molly Johnson, M.Ed.

3:00 pm – 3:15 pm **Break**

3:15 pm – 4:45 pm **General Session 1: "From Pain to Purpose: Rethinking Co-Occurring Disorders in Youth"** by Stephanie Marquesano, JD, Consultant Substance Abuse MH Services Admin Opioid Response Network (1.5 CEs)

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm **Hors d'oeuvre Reception, Networking, Prizes... and more** [The Hotel Ithaca](#)

Friday 11/13/2026 (5.5 CEs)

7:30 am – 8:30 am Coffee/Tea & Breakfast Buffet ([The Ithaca Conference Center](#))

8:00 am – 8:30 am NYSSSWA Annual Meeting

8:30 am – 10:00 am **General Session 2: "Helping Students Overcome the Power of Perfectionism" by Kimberly Morrow, LCSW (1.5 CEs)**

10:00 am – 10:15 am BREAK

10:15 am – 11:45 am Breakout Sessions C (1.5 CEs)

C1: "Ethics Part 1: Establishing & Maintaining Appropriate Professional Boundaries: Licensing, Ethical Standards, Boundaries": by Courtney Hill, LCSW, CSWM; (contributions by Christopher Scoville, JD & Deena Mikhail, JD) **(Need both sessions to fulfill New York's Ethics/ Boundary requirements.)**

C2: Part 1: "Advancing Prevention and Awareness of Co-Occurring Disorders: Implementing and Supporting the COD Curriculum in High School Settings" by Stephanie Marquesano, JD, Consultant Substance Abuse MH Services Admin Opioid Response Network **(Must attend Part 1 & 2 for the training)**

C3: "Functional Assessment and Behavior Intervention Planning: Behavior Management Uncovered" by Stephanie Columbia, Ed.D., LCSW R, BCBA, LBA

C4: "It Takes a Village: The Role of the Attorney for the Child, and How We Can Work Together to Advocate for Children" by Rebecca Considine, Esq, Rachel Ritzenthaler, LMSW; Clare Smokowski, Esq, Katharine Noonan, BSW, MSW Student

C5: "DBT Distress Tolerance in Schools: Practical Skills for Helping Students Manage Difficult Emotions and Challenging Moments" by Monique Johnson, LCSW

11:45 am - 12:45 pm Lunch Buffet

12:45 pm – 2:15 pm Breakout Sessions D (1.5 CEs)

D1: Ethics: "Establishing & Maintaining Appropriate Professional Boundaries: Ethics, Boundaries, HIPAA vs FERPA" by Courtney Hill, LCSW, CSWM; Christopher Scoville, JD & Deena Mikhail, JD **(Need both sessions to fulfill New York's Ethics/ Boundary requirements.)**

D2: Part 2: "Advancing Prevention and Awareness of Co-Occurring Disorders: Implementing and Supporting the COD Curriculum in High School Settings" by Stephanie Marquesano, JD, Consultant Substance Abuse MH Services Admin Opioid Response Network **(Must attend Part 1 & 2 for the training)**

D3: "Helping Students Face Fears: A Practical Anxiety Skills Group for Schools" by Brianna Morrow, LCSW

D4: "The School Social Worker's Guide to the Committee on Special Education" by Rebecca Considine, Esq, MSW; Rachel Ritzenthaler, LMSW; Clare Smokowski, Esq, Katharine Noonan, BSW, MSW Student

D5: "DBT Mindfulness in Schools: Practical Skills for Student Focus, Emotional Regulation, and Classroom Success" by Monique Johnson, LCSW

2:15 pm – 2:30 pm Break

2:30 pm – 3:30 pm Closing Keynote: "Navigating Student Anxiety: Real Cases, Practical Solutions for School Social Workers" by Kimberly Morrow, LCSW & Brianna Morrow, LCSW (1 CE)

3:30 pm Closing – Safe Travels!