VCA Annual Convention

Finding Joy in the Work We Do

November 12-14, 2026
Norfolk Waterside Marriott



Virginia Counselors Association
129 Cabell Street
Lynchburg, VA 24504
434-207-8825; vcaoffice@vacounselors.org

2026 CONVENTION AT-A-GLANCE

Making Meaning in Counseling: Strengthening Connections, Transforming Lives

Wednesday, November 11, 2026		
6:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Attendee Check-in & Tote Bag Pickup	
Thursday, November 12, 2026		**CE Hour**
7:30 AM – 5:00 PM	Convention Registration	
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	Coffee & Breakfast Items	
7:30 AM – 5:00 PM	Silent Auction Items on Display	
8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	VCA Marketplace	
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	Session 1- Morning Mindfulness	**1**
8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Welcome Space Open	
8:45 AM – 9:30 AM	VCA All-Member Business Meeting/Advocacy Update	
9:40 AM – 10:50 AM	Welcome & Keynote Speaker	**1**
11:00 AM – 12:30 PM	Lunch on Your Own	
12:45 PM – 1:45 PM	Session 2	**1**
2:00 PM – 3:00 PM	Session 3	**1**
3:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Poster Sessions/Break	**1**
4:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Session 4	**1**
5:00 PM – 6:00 PM	Session 5 - Evening Mindfulness	**1**
6:15 PM – 7:00 PM	Opening Night Attendee Reception	
7:00 PM – 8:30 PM	Chapter/Division-Attendee Receptions (This year's theme is 90's television)	
8:30 PM – 9:30 PM	VCA President's Reception	
Friday, November 13, 2026		
7:30 AM – 5:00 PM	Convention Registration	
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	Coffee & Breakfast Items	
7:30 AM – 11:00 AM	Silent Auction Items on display	
8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	VCA Marketplace	
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	Session 6 - Morning Mindfulness	**1**
8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Welcome Space Open	
8:45 AM – 9:45 AM	Session 7	**1**
10:00 AM – 11:00 AM	Session 8	**1**
11:15 AM – 12:45 PM	VCA Awards Ceremony & Luncheon	
1:00 PM– 5:00 PM	Silent Auction Pick-up	
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM	Session 9	**1**
2:00 PM – 2:45 PM	Break	
2:45 PM – 3:45 PM	Session 10	**1**
4:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Session 11	**1**
5:00 PM – 6:00 PM	Session 12 – Evening Mindfulness	**1**
5:00 PM – 6:00 PM	Chapter/Division Meetings	
8:00 PM – 10:00 PM	Special Event – DJ & dancing (Norfolk I - IV)	
Saturday, November 14, 2026		
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	Session 13 – Morning Mindfulness	**1**
7:30 AM – 11:30 AM	Convention Registration	
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	Coffee & Breakfast Items	
8:45 AM – 9:45 AM	Session 14	**1**
10:00 AM – 11:00 AM	Session 15	**1**
11:00 AM – 12:30 PM	Lunch on Your Own	
12:45 PM – 1:45 PM	Session 16	**1**
2:00 PM – 3:00 PM	Session 17	**1**

Total Possible NBCC CE hours - 19

*All Convention meetings, events & receptions are open to every convention attendee.

President's Welcome



On behalf of the Virginia Counselors Association I'd like to welcome you to the 2026 Virgina Counselor's Convention and to the Norfolk Waterside Marriott. We hope you enjoy your stay. Our convention theme this year is 'Finding Joy in the Work We Do.' The convention planning committee members and our Association as a whole want for you to engage in the many activities we have planned, and it was our intention to curate moments for you to find connections with people who support and understand the work that you do. Your work is an essential part of the lives and well-being of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the accomplishments that you achieve each day are valued.

No one reading this welcome message will be surprised by the statement that our day-to-day activities are not without challenge and strife. We find ourselves in a time of great transition, changing expectations, shifting regulatory and funding patterns, and technological innovation. It is imperative that we remain up to date on all these transitions and it was our intention that many of the sessions included in the program will assist you to do just that.

These next few days shouldn't just be about managing our stress and staying afloat. I encourage you to pause, refocus, and actively look for moments of joy. Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines joy as: "The emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune, or by the prospect of possessing what one desires." Obviously, we each will define joy differently, but if you haven't had the time or the inclination to think about how joy impacts your life, I'd like to personally invite you to think about the construct and how it relates to you and the work you do over the next few days.

I want to thank everyone involved in developing our Convention Program this year including our Convention Committee Chair, Sarah Tracy, our Speakers Committee Chair, Aimee Brickner, our Director of Operations, Summer Tetterton, and of course, Vicky Wheeler for her many years making sure that our Conventions rise to the level of excellence we have come to expect. Make sure to attend Dr. John Sommers-Flanagan's Keynote address - The Future of Counseling is Counseling for Happiness (and Joy) as well as his two related convention breakout sessions.

This annual Convention gives us the opportunity to gather, reconnect, and support one another as a community and it is an integral tradition among counselors in Virginia. Please make sure to review the program brochure and schedules so you can plan to attend all the events that are aligned with your interests. On Thursday evening, there is an opening night reception, followed by Chapter and Division receptions. Please come by and meet and re-connect with colleagues. Wrap up the evening by coming by the President's Reception to say hello to me and to my family as well. I know that seeing you all at the Convention will give me great joy, and I hope you will have more than a few moments that bring you joy as well.

With appreciation,

Dr. Rob Froehlich
VCA President

GENERAL INFORMATION

Registration Desk Hours

On-site convention registration and check-in is located on the 3rd Floor, in the Presidential Foyer. Volunteer staff will be able to assist pre-registered participants. VCA Staff will be able to assist with on-site registration and other needs, such as convention receipts or membership renewal/confirmation. Presenters and exhibitor check-in and support will also be available:

Wednesday, November 11, 6:00 PM—9:00 PM
Thursday, November 12, 7:30 AM—5:00 PM
Friday, November 13, 7:30 AM—5:00 PM
Saturday, November 14, 7:30 AM—1:00 PM

National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC)

VCA is an NBCC approved provider (2047) of continuing education for National Board of Certified Counselors. Forms for documenting NBCC credit, up to 19.0 continuing education hours are in your convention tote bag. This documentation is only applicable to those holding NBCC certificates.

Certificate of Participation

All registered participants will receive a certificate of participation. The certificate can be used to document up to 19.0 continuing education hours for licensure renewal and recertification by LPCs and School Counselors. A certificate can be found in your convention bag.

General Consent and Image Release

VCA will take photos of attendees throughout the VCA Convention. These photos are for VCA use only and may appear on the VCA website, newsletter, brochures, social media outlets, or other future VCA promotional material. By virtue of your attendance, you agree to usage of your likeness in such media. Attendees who do not wish to have their image recorded for distribution should make their wishes known to the VCA Office at vcaoffice@vacounselors.org, in writing and include a photo. VCA will use the photo solely for identification purposes to comply with the attendee's request.

Silver Sponsor



Thursday Keynote Speaker – Dr. John Sommers-Flanagan
9:40 AM – 10:50 AM

The Future of Counseling is Counseling for Happiness (and Joy)



For about 45 years (since publication of DSM-III), mental health professionals have over-focused on diagnosis and assessment. During this time, mental disorders have consistently increased. The talk on the street--and in counseling offices--is all about trauma, anxiety, depression, substances, and other mental, emotional, and behavioral problems. In this keynote, we will identify and experience two evidence-based strategies for moving our discipline, ourselves, and our clients toward wellbeing, mental health, happiness, and joy.

Learning Objectives: 1) Describe how to use a strength warning. 2) Articulate ways that counselors and other mental health professionals overfocus on negative thoughts and experiences. 3) Define the pursuit of eudaimonic happiness. 4) Experience and apply two methods for increasing well-being, mental health, physical health, and eudaimonic happiness.

Biography - John Sommers-Flanagan is a professor of counseling at the University of Montana. He received his doctorate in psychology in 1986, completing his pre-doctoral internship at Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, NY. In addition to teaching, research, and supervision, John also has a small independent practice. Previously he was the mental health consultant for Trapper Creek Job Corps (2003-2014), served as executive director of Families First Parenting Programs (1995 to 2003), and was co-host of a radio talk-show on Montana Public Radio titled, “What is it with Men?” His work with youth and parents has been captured for educational purposes on many different local and national video productions.

John primarily specializes in working with children, parents, and families. He is author or coauthor of over 100 professional publications, including eight books. A sampling of his books include Tough Kids, Cool Counseling (2nd ed., ACA Publications, 2007), Suicide Assessment and Treatment: A Strengths-Based Approach (2021, ACA Publications), Counseling and Psychotherapy Theories in Context and Practice (3rd ed., John Wiley & Sons, 2018), Clinical Interviewing (6th Ed., Wiley, 2017), and How to Listen so Parents will Talk and Talk so Parents will Listen (Wiley, 2011). John is widely sought as a keynote speaker and professional workshop presenter throughout the United States and Canada.

John is featured in many different counseling and psychotherapy training videos published by Psychotherapy.net, Alexander Street Press, PESI, and John Wiley & Sons. In 2018, he produced a three-part, 7.5-hour suicide training video with Psychotherapy.net.

John has published many newspaper columns, Op-Ed pieces, and has had articles in Psychotherapy Networker, Counseling Today, and Slate Magazine. In his spare time, John loves to run (slowly), dance (poorly), laugh (loudly—usually at himself) and produce home-made family music videos.

This keynote presentation counts towards one (1) NBCC continuing education hour
Located in Norfolk Ballroom 1 - III (First Floor)

Special Events…

Welcome Space

Presidential Foyer, Madison Room, 3rd Floor
Thursday & Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
Saturday, 8:00 am – 1:00 pm

The Welcoming Committee invites you to a serene space for reflection, rejuvenation, and respite during the conference. This space will offer various self-care activities, designed to help you relax and recharge amidst the busy schedule. Whether you stay for a few minutes or a few hours, you'll find a welcoming environment to nurture your well-being. Sponsored by the Virginia Counselors for Social Justice (VA-CSJ).

VCA Marketplace

Thursday & Friday, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
First Floor Foyer & Hallway
Third Floor Foyer & Hallway

Come experience an interactive opportunity for idea and information exchange, knowledge sharing, and learning. The VCA Marketplace features exhibitors offering the opportunity to learn about products, services, and ideas that you can use every day in your workplace.

VCA Annual Members' Meeting And Advocacy Update

Thursday, 8:45 am – 9:30 am
Norfolk Ballroom 1 - III, First Floor

This is your opportunity to be involved in YOUR professional organization. The annual business meeting offers members a forum to interact with VCA leadership, address any questions, and take care of business. VCA Lobbyist, Debra Rodman will also provide a snapshot of the current challenges and opportunities for counselors in Virginia and provide information on the VCA Legislative Agenda for the coming year.

VCA Chapter & Division Meetings

Friday, 5:00 – 6:00 pm
Third & Fourth Floors

Come meet and network with colleagues who live right in your neighborhood and/or share similar interests.

CVCA - Central Valley Chapter - **Marriott I** (4th)
HRCA - Hampton Roads Chapter-**Marriott V** (4th)
LACA - Lynchburg Chapter - **Marriott II** (4th)
RACA Richmond Chapter - **Marriott III** (4th)
ROACA - Roanoke Chapter - **Marriott VII** (4th)
VA-CSJ - Social Justice - **Marriott VI** (4th)
VCCA - Clinical Counselors - **Hampton III** (3rd)
VASC - School Counseling - **Hampton VI** (3rd)
VACES – Education/Supervision – **Hampton I** (3rd)

ALL receptions are open to EVERYONE!!

Opening Night Attendee Reception

Thursday, 6:15 pm – 7:00 pm
Hampton Ballroom IV & V, Third Floor

Please join us for the opening night reception! Have fun reminiscing with all your VCA friends and colleagues. Meet VCA President, Dr. Rob Froehlich, along with many other current and past VCA leaders. Enjoy some snack items and a cash bar.

VCA Chapter & Division Receptions

Thursday, 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Everyone is invited to stop by the VCA Chapter and Division receptions. This year's reception theme is *90's Television*. Feel free to represent your favorite show or character.

7:00 pm – 7:45 pm

Richmond (RACA) & VA-CSJ - Suite 420
VCA Foundation, VASGW & NVCA – Suite 606
HRCA – Suite 616

7:45 pm – 8:30 pm

VCCA – Suite 406
VASC – Suite 416
ROACA & LACA – Suite 2420
Central Valley (CVCA) – Suite 2416

From 8:30 - 9:30 pm, the receptions finish up with the **VCA Presidents' Reception.** VCA President, Dr. Rob Froehlich will be the host in Suite 2316

Silent Auction

Presidential Foyer - Third Floor
Bids close Friday @ 11:00 am

Don't miss your chance to bid on wonderful items at this year's silent auction. The winning bids will be announced at the end of the VCA Awards Ceremony & Luncheon at 12:40 pm. Items can be picked up and paid for at the registration desk, located on the Third Floor, Presidential Foyer, until 5:00 pm on Friday.

VCA Chapter, Division & Committee Tables
Thursday & Friday - First Floor Hallway

Advocacy Committee
Adrienne Randle, Chair;
advocacy@vacounselors.org
VCA Lobbyist, Debra Rodman;
debra@debrarodman.com

Membership Committee
Risi Green-Baker, Chair; risigreen@hotmail.com

Central Valley Counselors Association (CVCA)
cvcapresident1@gmail.com

Hampton Roads Counselors Association (HRCA)
hrca3105@gmail.com;
http://hamptonroadscounselors.org

Richmond Area Counselors Association (RACA)
racassoc@gmail.com

Virginia Counselors for Social Justice (VA-CSJ)
presidentvacsj@gmail.com

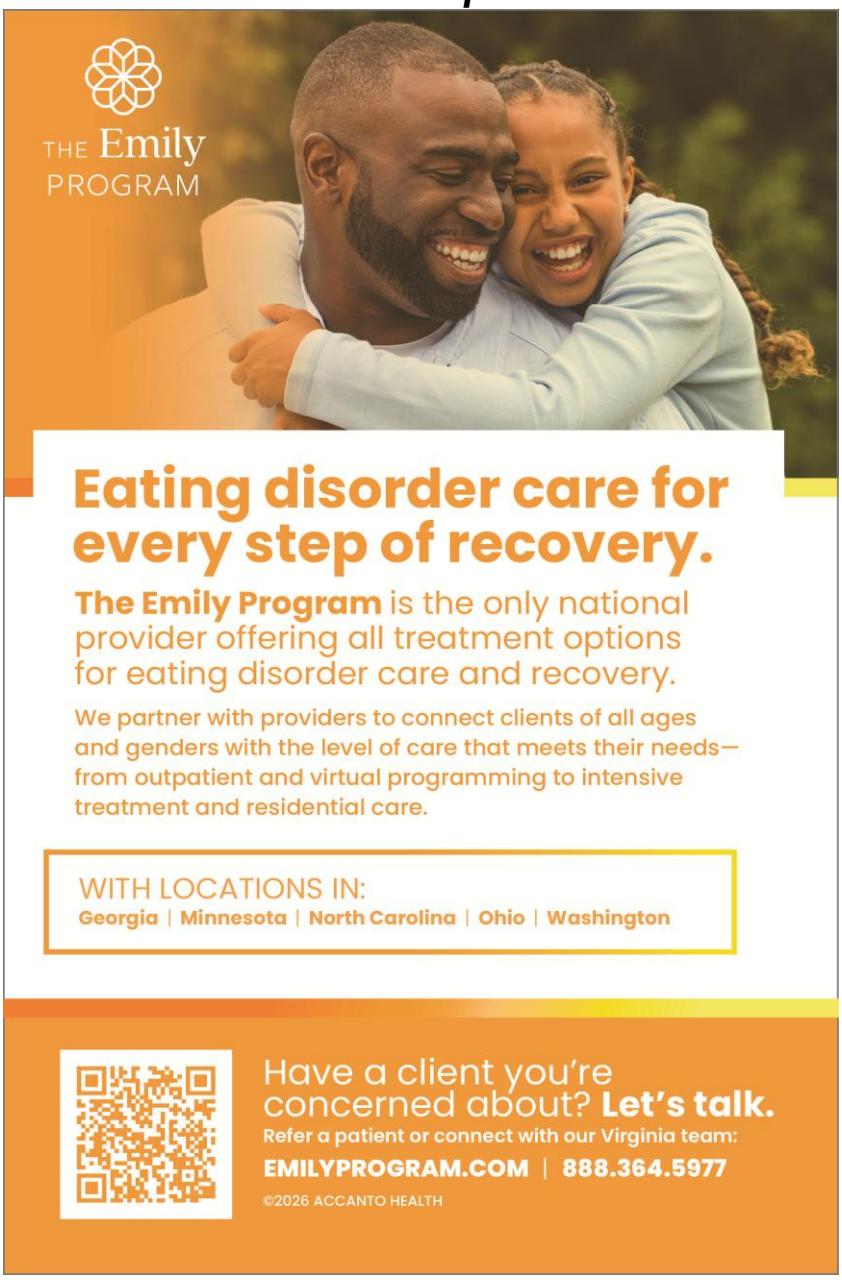
VA Assoc. Specialist in Group Work (VASGW)
tmasonvca@aol.com;
https://sites.google.com/view/vasgw

Virginia Clinical Counselors Alliance (VCCA)
wellness.for.wellness@gmail.com

Virginia Alliance for School Counseling (VASC)
TUXBURYKL@vcu.edu; vca-vasc.org

Virginia Association for Counselor Education & Supervision
vacespresident@gmail.com; vacesonline.org

Silver Sponsor



Awards Ceremony & Luncheon
Friday, 11:15 am – 12:45 pm
Norfolk Ballroom I – IV (First Floor)

Take time to honor your fellow colleagues' significant contributions to the counseling profession at VCA's Annual Awards Luncheon. VCA awards include the *John R. Cook Award, Humanitarian and Caring Person of the Year, Chapter of the Year* and *Division of the Year. (*Additionally, VCA Chapter and Division Members of the Year, Michele Dowdy Student Awardees, BIPOC Awardees, Pete Warren Fellows, and Suzee Leone Grant Recipients are recognized.

Music by DJ Eshorty
Friday, 8:00-10:00 PM - Norfolk Ballroom I – IV (First Floor)
Party, Party, Party!! All attendees at the conference are invited!

Session Descriptions

Virginia Counselors Association (VCA) has been approved by NBCC as an Approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP No. 2047. Programs that do not qualify for NBCC credit are clearly identified. Virginia Counselors Association (VCA) is solely responsible for all aspects of the program.

Please scan the QR code to view presentations and for last-minute changes/cancellations during the VCA Convention.

All presentations count towards one (1) NBCC CE hour unless otherwise marked.

Session 1
Thursday, November 12, 2026, 7:30 AM – 8:30 AM

T100 - Morning Mindfulness Practice Group
Presenter: Alan Forrest, EdD, LPC, LMFT
Frank/Shang/York
Mindfulness is present moment awareness and the art of conscious living. It is the intentional attending to what is happening right now without judgment or reactivity. This morning practice group will provide an opportunity for participants to have a place to begin their day in stillness and silence; it can serve as a calming touchstone to return to throughout the day. The structure of the practice session will consist of a welcome, lightly guided period, and silent sit. We are all each other's teachers; therefore, we will conclude with an optional open discussion. Beginners and seasoned meditation practitioners are welcome. This is a gentle way to begin your day.

Session Keynote
Thursday, November 12, 2026, 9:40 AM – 10:50 AM

The Future of Counseling is Counseling for Happiness (and Joy)
Presenter: John Sommers-Flanagan, Ph.D.
Norfolk Ballroom I - III
For about 45 years (since publication of DSM-III), mental health professionals have over-focused on diagnosis and assessment. During this time, mental disorders have consistently increased. The talk on the street--and in counseling offices--is all about trauma, anxiety, depression, substances, and other mental, emotional, and behavioral problems. In this keynote, we will identify and experience two evidence-based strategies for moving our discipline, ourselves, and our clients toward wellbeing, mental health, happiness, and joy.

Session 2
Thursday, November 12, 2026, 12:45 PM – 1:45 PM

***T200* – Integrating Strengths-Based and Traditional (Medical Model) Approaches to Suicide Assessment**
Presenter: John Sommers-Flanagan, Ph.D.
James I - III
Traditional suicide assessment tends to be a top-down information-gathering process wherein counselors and other professionals use questionnaires and clinical interviews to determine suicide risk. This approach may not be the best fit for people from populations with historical trauma, or for people who continue to experience oppression or marginalization. In this presentation, John Sommers-Flanagan will review principles of a strengths-based approach to suicide prevention, assessment, and treatment. He will also discuss how to be more sensitive, empowering, collaborative, and how to leverage cultural strengths when working with people who are potentially suicidal. You will learn three practical strengths-based strategies for suicide assessment.

T201 – Rewiring for Restoration: Brain-Based Self-Care Strategies for Students, Administrators, and Counselor Educators
Presenter: Asia S. Foster, MA, LPC
Co-Presenter: Timothy M. Jones, Sr., PhD
Norfolk V
Explore how neuroscience and wellness psychology intersect to revolutionize self-care. This interactive session reveals how stress reshapes the brain, impairing focus, empathy, and regulation. Participants will learn evidence-based, brain-informed strategies including mindfulness, neuroplasticity, and rest cycles to reset the nervous system, enhance resilience, and sustain cognitive and emotional wellbeing.

T202 – When Systems Fail: School Threat Assessment, Red Flags, and Lessons from a Teen Dating Violence Case (Part 1, ETHICS, SCHOOL)
Presenter: Dr. Wendy Eckenrod-Green
Norfolk VI
This session examines gaps in school-based threat assessment through a case-informed analysis of teen dating violence. Participants will identify red flags, explore breakdowns in communication and response systems, and learn strategies for effective intervention, documentation, and advocacy within school settings.

T203 – Maintaining Hope Amid Despair: How to Salvage Optimism When There Is Every Reason for Pessimism
Presenter: Radha Horton-Parker, Ph.D., NCC, NCSC
Co-Presenter(s): Judith Wambui Preston, Ph.D., LPC, NCC, ACS, BC-TMH
Hampton I
How do counselors and clients sustain hope when the evidence points toward despair? This session explores the psychology and neuroscience of hope, distinguishes adaptive optimism from toxic positivity, and equips participants with evidence-based strategies to cultivate and maintain hope in their clients and in themselves.

T204 – Under Development: Serving populations Needing Additional Considerations (Part 1)
Presenter: Drew Edwards, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Noelle Edwards, MA
Hampton II
This two-part presentation focuses on understanding and reducing barriers to mental health care access for populations who often are overlooked: people who are economically disadvantaged (part 1) and people living or rooted in Virginia's Appalachian Region, a culturally distinct, yet important, part of the state (part 2).

T205 – Global Service Learning: Perspectives of a Host Community in Kenya (Part 1)
Presenter: Sommer Garrett, PhD., LPC/S
Hampton III
This session explores global service learning through the host perspective, focusing on a 2-day intensive trauma-focused counseling model. Participants will examine cultural, ethical, and systemic considerations, evaluate program impact, and learn strategies to enhance collaboration, cultural responsiveness, and sustainability in international counseling initiatives.

T206 – Leveraging Pop Culture in Clinical Supervision to Enhance Clinical Development (SUPERVISION)
Presenter: Sharon Silverberg, PhD, LPC, LMFT, ACS, RPT-S, CSOTP
Marriott VI
This presentation focuses on clinical supervisor techniques to help counselors develop skills to critically analyze clinical presentations and situations accurately during clinical supervision. Strategies to develop cognitive skills during clinical supervision using pop culture (movies, fictional books, newspaper articles, etc.) and how to assess their progress will be explored.

T207- Concordism as a Model for Helping Christian Parents Affirm of Their Gender-Expansive Children in Virginia (Part 1 of 2)
Presenter: Charles F. Shepard, PhD, NCC, LPC
Marriott VII
Christian parents of transgender or gender-expansive (TGE) youth living in Virginia often struggle to reconcile religious practice and affirmation of their child's gender identity. This session provides a means of integrating science and spirituality that improves the odds of positive mental health outcomes for TGE youth in The Commonwealth.

T208 – Teen Takeovers: Examining Parental Responsibility, Community Response, and the Role of Professional Counselors
Presenter: Mary Sanderfer-Stull, PhD, LPC, RN, BSN, EMT-B
Hampton VII
Teen takeovers are a growing concern across the United States, raising critical questions about adolescent behavior, parental accountability, and community safety. This session examines the psychosocial factors driving teen takeovers and explores how counselors can facilitate parenting skill development, strengthen family systems, and promote pro-social behavior among at-risk adolescents.

T209 – Beyond the Chatbot: Helping Clients Maintain Human Connection in a Digital World
Presenter: Jenny Wagstaff, PhD, LPC- VA, LCMHC-S, NC
Co-Presenter(s): Melissa Reed, LCMHC
Hampton VIII
AI platforms and therapy chatbots are reshaping how people seek emotional support. This session explores the ethical and relational challenges of digital mental health while highlighting digital well being as a form of primary prevention. Participants will examine practical strategies, including JOMO, to promote presence, connection, authenticity, and renewed joy in counseling work.

T210 – Working with Couples Using Emotional Intelligence
Presenter: Edward M. Andrews, LPC, LMFT, NCC, CCMHC, MAC, CT
Marriott I
It seems like we continue to move in the direction of gleaning intelligence from a cognitive perspective, learning information, facts and figures from experts and Artificial Intelligence sources. This presentation will suggest that improving and enhancing our Emotional Intelligence is just as important if not more than our I.Q.

T211 – We Carry It All: Somatic and Expressive Approaches for Clients Living with Systemic Stress
Presenter: Danielle L. McDowell, LPC, Virginia Board of Counseling Approved Supervisor
Marriott II
Counselors are increasingly working with clients whose distress is not solely rooted in individual experiences but in ongoing exposure to systemic stressors including racism, discrimination, economic instability, caregiving burdens, community violence, political polarization, and chronic uncertainty. Traditional talk therapy alone may not adequately address how these experiences are carried in the body. This interactive workshop explores practical somatic and expressive arts interventions that help clients move beyond cognitive processing and engage the body as a source of healing, regulation, and resilience.

T212 – Serving the Neurodiverse population: Cultivating a Neuroaffirming lens of healing and support
Presenter: Elizabeth O'Neill Hunter PhD LPC ACS NCC
Marriott III
This session provides education about serving the Neurodiverse (ND) population in counseling settings. The session will position the clinician to welcome the ND population in their offices with neuro-affirming care and strategies. Together, we will explore crucial diagnostic considerations for the ND population, including current diagnostic criteria, dual and comorbid diagnoses. We will also discuss current assessment options, as well as key terms every clinician should be aware of when treating this population. We will close the session with Implications for practice, including treatment planning considerations.

T213 – Seeing the Unseen: Moving Beyond Awareness to Action in Counseling Practice
Presenter: Audra Lancaster Boyce, M.Ed., PPS
Co-Presenter(s): Rachel Holcombe, M.Ed.
Marriott V
This poster session invites counselors to reflect on who may be overlooked in their practice and the systemic, cultural, and personal factors contributing to these gaps. Participants will move beyond self-awareness to engage in inclusive, equity-centered counseling, leaving with practical strategies for creating socially just counseling environments that reduce barriers.

T214 – Joy-pardy! Putting the Fun Back into the Fundamentals of Ethical Practice through Game-Based Education: Serious Ethics, Joyful Learning! (ETHICS)
Presenter: Holly Tracy, LMFT, LPC, ACS, RPT-S, CTTS, CT, NCC
Chesapeake 1 & 2
Joy-pardy! brings ethics to life through game-based learning, a structured, research informed approach. The Jeopardy style format promotes applied ethical reasoning as participants analyze Standards and Regulations using collaborative, scenario-based methods to enhance cognitive flexibility, ethical clarity, reasoning, engagement, decision-making and professional resilience (Wolfer et al., 2022; Streiner et al., 2024; Gaydos et al., 2026).

Session 3
Thursday, November 12, 2026, 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

***T300* – Redirecting the Bad News Brain: How Counselors Can Pursue Greater Happiness for Themselves and Others**
Presenter: John Sommers-Flanagan, Ph.D.
James I - III
Whether you're teaching or providing mental health services, professional counseling is a demanding profession that requires a foundation of personal well-being and resiliency. Unfortunately, the brain naturally orients toward fear, anxiety, sadness, depression, guilt, outrage, and disappointment. In this workshop, John Sommers-Flanagan will describe four ways the brain undermines our ability to productively grow skills, strengths, and positive experiences. We will engage in three evidence-based activities designed to energize the pursuit of happiness for yourself and others.

T301 – Creating Bridges: School Counseling to Clinical Counseling (ETHICS, SCHOOL)
Presenter: Beth Lang, MS NCC NCSC LPC ACS
Co-Presenter(s): Autumn Church, M.Ed, LPC; Lisa Moore, M.Ed, Resident in Counseling
Norfolk V
This interactive workshop introduces a structured transitional supervision model designed to support school counselors pursuing LPC licensure in Virginia. Attendees will explore key similarities and differences between school counseling and clinical mental health practice, hear directly from current LPC residents, and gain practical tools for supervision, training, and workforce development.

T302 – When Systems Fail: School Threat Assessment, Red Flags, and Lessons from a Teen Dating Violence Case (Part 2, ETHICS, SCHOOL COUNSELING)
Presenter: Dr. Wendy Eckenrod-Green
Norfolk VI
This session examines gaps in school-based threat assessment through a case-informed analysis of teen dating violence. Participants will identify red flags, explore breakdowns in communication and response systems, and learn strategies for effective intervention, documentation, and advocacy within school settings.

T303 – Bridging the Gap: Mentoring and Incentivizing the Next Generation of Black Counseling Professionals
Presenter: Carlton J. Henderson, Ph.D., LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Brandy K. Richeson, Ph.D., LPC, LSC, ASC
Hampton I
Representation matters. For many Black students, the decision to pursue counseling begins with seeing what is possible. This presentation highlights the role of mentorship, community partnerships, funding opportunities, and affirming educational experiences in encouraging Black students to view counseling as both a viable career and advocacy.

T304 – Under Development: Serving populations Needing Additional Considerations (Part 2)
Presenter: Drew Edwards, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Noelle Edwards, MA
Hampton II
This two-part presentation focuses on understanding and reducing barriers to mental health care access for populations who often are overlooked: people who are economically disadvantaged (part 1) and people living or rooted in Virginia's Appalachian Region, a culturally distinct, yet important, part of the state (part 2).

T305 – Global Service Learning: Perspectives of a Host Community in Kenya (Part 2) Presenter: Sommer Garrett, PhD., LPC/S
Hampton III
This session explores global service learning through the host perspective, focusing on a 2-day intensive trauma-focused counseling model. Participants will examine cultural, ethical, and systemic considerations, evaluate program impact, and learn strategies to enhance collaboration, cultural responsiveness, and sustainability in international counseling initiatives.

T306 – Beyond "Fine": Counseling High-Functioning Women and the Hidden Roots of Functional Anxiety
Presenter: Judith Wambui Preston, Ph.D., LPC, NCC, ACS, BC-TMH
Co-Presenter(s): Radha Horton-Parker, Ph.D., NCC, NCSC
Marriott VI
Many high-achieving women initially downplay their stress as being contained, manageable, and "no big deal," until anxiety later emerges as permeating all aspects of their lives. This session provides clinicians with practical Feminist/Womanist, ACT, and somatic strategies to help them build awareness, reduce anxiety, and pursue more intentional, values-driven living.

Celebrating Over 30 Years of Service to VCA & the Counseling Profession

VIRGINIA COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION

GOLD SPONSOR

VCA Convention 2026

Congratulations to the 2026 VCAF Award Recipients!

John Cook Award

Dr. Cyrus Williams

Pete Warren Fellows

Sah Ara Sanu-t - Liberty University
Audra Boyce Lancaster - VCU
Monica Brile - Wiliam & Mary
Stephanie Lemus-Ortiz - Capella University
Maya Morrison - Bluefield University
Alysssa Smith - University of Lynchburg
Holly Wescott - VCU
Samara Williams - ODU
Syreeta Wright- VCU

VCAF Suzee Leone Grant Recipients

Emily Bowles - Therapeutic Gardening
Tamara Howe - Calming Wheels
Angela Opitz - Connected, Capable, & Confident Play-Based Counseling
Samantha Redd - VR Connection 2
Anna Schnetzler - Middle School Sensory Wall
Shannon Smith (Esther Pincus Grant Awardee) - Creating Classroom Calming Corners
Minnie Tsai - Trauma-Informed Role Play Group Counseling
Naomi Wheeler - Expanding School-Based Training
Syreeta Wright - Counselor Efficacy & AI Cultural Responsiveness

Join us for our grant-writing session:

Friday, November 13
1:00 p.m., Room Frank/Shang/York
F914: SUCCESSFUL VCA FOUNDATION SUZEE LEONE GRANT APPLICATIONS

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T307 – Concordism as a model for helping Christian parents affirm their gender-expansive children (Part 2)
Presenter: Charles F. Shepard, PhD, NCC, LPC
Marriott VII
Christian parents of transgender or gender-expansive (TGE) youth living in Virginia often struggle to reconcile religious practice and affirmation of their child's gender identity. This session provides a means of integrating science and spirituality that improves the odds of positive mental health outcomes for TGE youth in The Commonwealth.

T308 – Integrating Faith into Evidence-Based Couples Therapy: A Gottman-Informed Approach
Presenter: Lauran Thomas, LPC, Supervisor
Hampton VI
This workshop prepares clinicians to ethically integrate the Gottman Method with clients' spiritual values. Participants will explore parallels between relationship science and faith concepts, assess spiritual beliefs, and adapt interventions using faith-consistent language. Emphasis is placed on cultural humility, informed consent, and maintaining clinical boundaries in faith integrated couples therapy practice.

T309 – The Joy of Being Heard: Influence, Impact, and Authentic Professional Voice
Presenter: Kate Steiner West, Ph.D., LMHP-R
Hampton VII
Too many good ideas go unheard. This hands-on workshop helps counseling professionals communicate with clarity, confidence, and authentic presence, turning exhausting meetings and difficult conversations into moments of genuine connection. Walk away with practical tools to present your ideas in ways that actually land and rediscover the joy in being heard.

T310 – Innovating with Wellness: Integrating wellness into your counseling practice
Presenter: Elias Moitinho, PhD, LPC (VA), LMFT (TX)
Hampton VIII
A counselor's theoretical orientation guides assessment, case conceptualization, and treatment planning but in many cases, it tends to focus on a particular facet or dimension of the human experience rather than the whole person. When this happens, the theoretical orientation may limit the counselor's approach to mental health counseling and, consequently, the services are not provided from a holistic perspective. Although the biopsychosocial-spiritual model has become widely recognized and accepted in the counseling profession, still many counselors tend to use approaches that are symptom-focused and compartmentalize the various dimensions of life. On the other hand, wellness models have a holistic framework and go beyond the biopsychosocial-spiritual model as they incorporate other areas of life such as occupational, financial, environmental, and contextual to provide a more comprehensive understanding of factors that influence mental health and well-being. Thus, this workshop will identify holistic models of wellness and mental health, explore wellness assessment tools counselors can use, and describe wellness-focused mental health interventions and collaborative practices to facilitate lifestyle changes to improve clients' mental health and well-being.

T311 – Outsourcing Thought: AI Use and Student Emotional Development
Presenter: Alivia L. Evans, M.S. Ed.
Marriott I
Artificial intelligence is transforming how students think, learn, and cope with academic demands. This session explores the cognitive and emotional impact of AI use, including effects on self-efficacy, identity, and resilience. Participants will gain practical, ethical strategies to support balanced AI use and promote student wellness in evolving school environments.

T312 – Fuel that Flame: Evidenced-Based Sex-Affirming Therapy Across the Lifespan - an EFT Approach
Presenter: Dr. Nathaniel Mason, LPC, NCC
Co-Presenter(s): Dr. Betsy Zimmerman, LPC, NCC
Marriott II
Emotionally-focused therapy (EFT) for couples has proven to cultivate emotional safety and strengthen attachment patterns. This presentation uses the EFT model to introduce sex-affirming therapy for couples of all developmental and life stages. The presenters will process the EFT stages and steps for assisting couples with their sexual concerns.

T313 – (Almost) Everything I Learned About Counseling, I Learned From My Clients
Presenter: Alan Forrest, Ed.D., LPC, LMFT
Marriott III
Counselors hear a wide array of human experiences, ranging from profound trauma to everyday relationship struggles. Central to this work is the ability to hold space for clients with presence, empathy, and compassion. Counselors often discover that their most effective tool is not always a textbook intervention, but a consistent and authentic therapeutic presence. Through the counseling process, clinicians gain invaluable insights into resilience, human connection, and the transformative power of vulnerability; often learning as much from their clients as they offer in return. This session will provide participants with an opportunity to reflect on and share the wisdom they have gained from clients and explore how these experiences have shaped them personally and professionally as counselors.

T314 – New Flash: It's Not Just a Hot Flash!
Presenter: Laurie Wright, MS, Resident in Counseling
Co-Presenter(s): Haley Alvis, MS, RIC
Marriott V
Menopause impacts all clients directly or indirectly. Did you know menopause is influenced by adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), yet only 20% of counselors screen for this? What is menopause? How does menopause impact women, partners, and society? Join us to learn about women's health and counseling strategies for midlife women.

T315 – Winning the War Within: Maximizing the Relationship between Self-Compassion and Impostor Phenomenon
Presenter: Sara L. Wood, PhD, LPC, LCMHC, NCC
Co-Presenter(s): Sarah Haney Jarvie, Ed.D., LPC, NCC
Chesapeake 1 & 2
Impostor phenomenon creates an internal professional identity war that detracts from our work with clients and professional quality of life. Fortunately, self-compassion presents a significant safeguard we can engage to emerge victorious. This session will equip counselors to identify impostor phenomenon, employ self-compassion strategies, and promote legitimate self-care.

ALL GENDER RESTROOM

The all gender restroom is next to the Presidential Foyer, on the third floor of the Norfolk Waterside Marriott. It will be identified with the below signage.



Poster Session
Thursday, November 12, 2026, 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

All posters will be presented in Frank/Shang/York

P1 – Blending Families Well (This poster does not qualify for NBCC CE)
Presenter: Chloe Cozort, Graduate Student MFT
Blending families has its share of challenges as well as beauty. When bringing together the family members of two different families, it is likely for there to be some difficulties, however if the parents are considerate of the ways in which they can integrate well, they are far more likely to have a less challenging experience.

P2 – Trauma, the body, and well-being: Safety within one's physical form as foundational to healing (This poster qualifies for .5 NBCC CE)
Presenter: Kim Hughes, Doctoral Candidate, M.A., Ed.S., CCTP, Resident in Counseling
Effective trauma work entails bodily regulation, requiring a sense of safety and comfort within one's physical form. Factors, like marginalization stress, may impact a sense of bodily connectedness, undercutting healing. This poster provides psychoeducation on the body's role in healing and offers novel interventions for establishing bodily safety and security.

P3 – Elementary Classroom Calming Corners (This poster qualifies for .5 NBCC CE)
Presenter: Shannon Smith, MA. Ed., School Counselor
Elementary students often struggle with emotional regulation, which can impact learning. This grant-funded project presents a research-based, schoolwide approach to implementing classroom calming corners that provide practical tools and routines. Participants will learn strategies to teach self-regulation, reduce disruptions, and maintain instructional time and a positive classroom environment.

P4 – Understanding Counselors'-in-Training Conceptualizations of Religion and Spirituality in Counseling Practice (This poster qualifies for .5 NBCC CE)
Presenter: Chimdiogo Onyeani-Nwosu, MA., Doctoral Student
This poster presentation explores a proposed phenomenological study examining how counselors'-in-training conceptualize spirituality and religion and how these understandings influence counseling practice. The presentation highlights implications for counselor training, therapeutic relationships, ethical decision-making, and spiritually responsive counseling care within professional counseling settings.

Session 4
Thursday, November 12, 2026, 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

T400 – Finding Joy in Difficult Supervisory Conversations: Navigating Remediation in Virtual Supervision (SUPERVISION)
Presenter: Joshua Freeman, MA, LPC, ACS, NCC
Co-Presenter(s): Tammy Griffin, Resident In Counseling
James I -III
Remediation conversations are among the most challenging responsibilities in supervision. This presentation introduces a culturally responsive framework for navigating remediation in virtual supervision while balancing supervisee development, gatekeeping responsibilities, and client welfare. Participants will learn practical strategies that reduce ambiguity, strengthen supervisory confidence, and create greater satisfaction in difficult supervisory work.

T401 – Navigating Dual Relationships and Ethical Challenges in Rural Counseling (ETHICS)
Presenter: Mike Takacs, PhD, EdS, LPC-S
Norfolk V
Counselors practicing in rural communities face unique ethical challenges related to dual relationships, community visibility, confidentiality, and limited referral options. This presentation explores practical ethical decision-making strategies and risk management approaches that support effective counseling while maintaining professional boundaries in rural settings.

T402 – Neurodiversity-Affirming Counseling: Practical Interventions and Creative Strategies for Working with Neurodivergent Clients
Presenter: Susanne Preston-Josey, PhD, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Christine Lindh, PhD
Norfolk VI
This interactive session will provide practical, neurodiversity-affirming counseling strategies and interventions for working with neurodivergent children, adolescents, and adults. Participants will learn hands-on techniques that support communication, emotional regulation, sensory needs, executive functioning, and therapeutic engagement using creative and adaptable approaches.

T403 – From Session to Documentation: The Art of the Progress Note
Presenter: Austin Francis, LPC, CCTP
Hampton I
This presentation explores practical approaches to writing clear, concise, and clinically meaningful progress notes that support continuity of care, communicate treatment progress, and satisfy documentation expectations across counseling settings, with AI use, and with insurance billing. Participants will learn sustainable documentation strategies that balance clinical usefulness, client protection, and compliance requirements.

T404 – Virtual Reality Based Interventions for Children and Adolescents With Autism Spectrum Disorder
Presenter: Samantha Redd, M.A.
Hampton II
This session explores how the Suzee Leone Grant Project: VR Connection uses immersive virtual reality to bridge therapy and real-world application. Children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ages 7-18) practice social interaction and emotional regulation in safe & brave spaces, transforming anxiety into confidence and supporting independent use of skills in everyday situations.

T405 – Exposed: Comparing In-Vivo and Imaginal Exposure Therapy in Clinical Practice
Presenter: Eric Reitz, LPC
Hampton III
This presentation examines in-vivo and imaginal exposure therapy across obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety disorders, and PTSD, exploring habituation, emotional processing, and inhibitory learning models. Clinicians will gain practical tools for building exposure hierarchies, implementing response prevention, targeting covert compulsions, managing safety behaviors, and integrating both modalities for superior, evidence-based client outcomes.

T406 – DinoRoar! Beyond Talk-Therapy, Rediscovering Joy, Play, and Connection Through Creative, Interactive, Ethical Interventions: Roaring Toward Repair
Presenter: Holly Tracy, LMFT, LPC, ACS, RPT-S, CTTS, CT, NCC
Marriott VI
Dinoroar! introduces research supported experiential interventions, including games, dinosaur-based role play, storytelling, and creative arts, to deepen emotional insight in couples and families. Using 7 Dinoroar Archetypes, participants learn ethical, culturally responsive, bias aware strategies that move therapy beyond talk only methods while embodying the VCA theme, “Finding Joy in the Work We Do.”

T407 – Finding joy across your school counseling career (SCHOOL)
Presenter: Kristen Tuxbury, Ph.D.
Marriott VII
School counselors possess transferable skills valuable in many different career environments. This panel will include career school counselors and those who have moved into positions as administrators, faculty members, and other areas of counseling. Our panelists will explore how their different career trajectories have brought them joy.

T408 – From Discernment to Decision: Integrating Emotionally Focused Therapy and Discernment Counseling with Couples Facing Divorce
Presenter: Betsy Zimmerman, PhD, LPC, NCC
Co-Presenter(s): Nathaniel Mason, PhD, LPC, NCC
Hampton VI
Mixed-agenda couples often enter therapy with different hopes for the relationship's future. This presentation integrates Discernment Counseling and EFT to help clinicians maintain neutrality while understanding the attachment processes beneath ambivalence, withdrawal, pursuit, and distress, supporting couples in making clearer, more accountable decisions about reconciliation, therapy, or separation.

T409 – Garden and Grow
Presenter: Emily Bowles, MA. Ed., Resident in Counseling
Co-Presenter(s): Katie Scott, B.S.
Hampton VII
"Garden and Grow" is a grant-funded, community-based counseling initiative that blends nature-informed counseling interventions with experiential learning. This program aims to foster emotional resilience and peer connection for youth from low-income backgrounds.

T410 – Who Cares for the Caregiver? Supporting Clients with Aging Parents
Presenter: Jennifer Gerlach, Ph.D., NCC, Resident in Counseling
Co-Presenter(s): Laura McGrath, M.Ed.
Hampton VIII
As the U.S. population ages, many people may become caregivers to aging parents or relatives. Caregiving can be a significant source of stress that impacts mental health and wellbeing. Based on personal and professional experiences, the presenters will share common challenges and helpful strategies to support client caregivers.

T411 – Beyond Referrals: Real Collaboration Strategies Between Schools and Community Mental Health Providers (SCHOOL)
Presenter: JilliAn Moreland, MS, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Calandre Eager, MA, LPC; Christina Quinn, M.Ed
Marriott I
This session explores practical strategies for improving collaboration between school counselors and community mental health providers. Participants will examine role clarity, ethical considerations, and communication barriers while learning actionable tools to strengthen coordination across systems and improve outcomes for students with complex emotional and behavioral needs.

T412 – Applying Cultural Competencies to Enhance Therapeutic Outcomes with First Responders
Presenter: Angelia Dickens, PhD, LPC, LMFT, NCC, ACS
Co-Presenter(s): Averi Pino, MA
Marriott II
This presentation reviews best practices as well as supporting research to assist counselors in applying cultural competencies to strengthen therapeutic rapport and enhance therapeutic outcomes when working with first responders such as law enforcement officers, emergency medical service professionals, and firefighters.

T413 – Integrating Problem Gambling Treatment into Current Practice
Presenter: Marie Bage, LMHC-D
Marriott III
This session will explore how to screen, assess, and treat Problem Gambling concerns utilizing common addiction treatment practices. It will identify the need for Gambling treatment and the benefits of integrating it into current practices.

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Session 5
Thursday, November 12, 2026, 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

T500 – Evening Mindfulness Practice Group
Presenter: Alan Forrest, EdD, LPC, LMFT
Frank/Shang/York
This session concludes the day with a guided meditation and brief discussion designed to help conference participants integrate the day's learning and process emotionally impactful content. This grounding and reflective time encourages participants to release accumulated physical and emotional tension, and nurture mental clarity and emotional balance. The meditation will allow space to shift from a state of doing to one of presence and being. Participants are invited to recognize and share personal and professional insights, celebrate moments of growth and success, and cultivate a sense of completion and closure. The practice concludes by gently bringing awareness back to the present moment while promoting reflection, resilience, and self-care.

Session 6
Friday, November 13, 2026, 7:30 AM – 8:30 AM

F600 – Morning Mindfulness Practice Group
Presenter: Alan Forrest, EdD, LPC, LMFT
Frank/Shang/York
Mindfulness is present moment awareness and the art of conscious living. It is the intentional attending to what is happening right now without judgment or reactivity. This morning practice group will provide an opportunity for participants to have a place to begin their day in stillness and silence; it can serve as a calming touchstone to return to throughout the day. The structure of the practice session will consist of a welcome, lightly guided period, and silent sit. We are all each other's teachers; therefore, we will conclude with an optional open discussion. Beginners and seasoned meditation practitioners are welcome. This is a gentle way to begin your day.

Session 7
Friday, November 13, 2026, 8:45 AM – 9:45 AM

F700 – The Sleep-Deprived Counselor: Why Your Sleep Is an Ethical Issue and How to Improve It (Part 1, ETHICS)
Presenter: Kevin B. Handley, Ph.D.
Norfolk V
You are ethically obligated to maintain competence and practice self-care, but sleep is rarely part of that conversation. This workshop makes the case that sleep deprivation is an ethics problem, not just a wellness concern, and gives you practical, evidence-based tools to improve your own sleep and your clients' outcomes.

F701 – Strengthening Clinical Care Through Peer Integration and Collaborative Practice (Part 1, SUPERVISION)
Presenter: A. Polly Jessen, RPRS-CS, CPRS
Co-Presenter(s): Brittany Samaniego Greer, LPC, LSATP-R
Norfolk VI
Peer Recovery Specialists are increasingly integrated into behavioral health programs, yet many counselors receive little guidance on effective collaboration. This session presents a practical framework for integrating peers into treatment teams while maintaining role clarity, strengthening engagement, supporting continuity of care, and improving outcomes through coordinated peer support and clinical care.

F702 – Issues and Techniques for Clinicians Working with LGBTQ Clients (Part 1)
Presenter: Edward M. Andrews, LPC, LMFT, NCC, CCMHC, MAC, CT
Hampton I
When it comes to working with LGBT clients, we seem to be moving in several conflicting directions concurrently. While acceptance of Gays and Lesbians, Gay Marriage and openness to the issue of sexuality in general seems to be more tolerant than in years, some governmental guidelines and societal opinions seem to be becoming more intolerant and negative. As mental health professionals, we should be more welcoming, supportive and affirming than ever to our LGBTQ clients. This presentation will outline some of the current issues and suggest ways to incorporate affirmation with our clinical techniques and so, offer the best therapy to our clients.

F703 – The Hidden Wounds of Service: What Every Counselor Should Know About Military and Veteran Mental Health

Presenter: Ann B. Iñiguez, LPC

Hampton II

What happens when the strengths that helped someone survive military service become challenges in civilian life? This insightful presentation goes beyond PTSD to explore military culture, moral injury, stigma, reintegration, suicide risk, and barriers to care while providing practical strategies counselors can use to better understand, engage, and support those who served.

F704 – Working with Adolescents' Emotions from the Integrative Therapy Framework

Presenter: Elena Savina, PhD

Hampton III

Difficulty dealing with emotions often brings adolescents to therapy. Many of them lack emotional skills including emotional awareness, emotion regulation, and understanding others emotions. The presentation will demonstrate how to integrate therapeutic approaches including ACT, CBT, mentalization-based, and expressive therapy to work with adolescents' emotions and train their emotional skills.

F705 – Pleasure-Based Counseling Strategies to Support Intimate Partners' Relational and Sexual Health (Part 1)

Presenter: Amber L. Pope, PhD, LPC, LMHC

Co-Presenter(s): Kim Hughes, M.A., Ed.S.; Chelsea Yang, LCPC, CST; Crystal Jones LMFT, RYT-200HR

Marriott VI

The presenters introduce a pleasure-based framework for relational and sexual health in intimate partnerships. Participants will explore how relational patterns shape sexual satisfaction and erotic connection. Through case-based application of multiple counseling modalities, attendees will learn interventions that support clients' erotic pleasure and intimacy while challenging deficit-based approaches to sexuality.

F706 – Ethical Consideration and Integration Strategies in Bridging Spiritual Incongruence in Counseling (ETHICS)

Presenter: Bosede Balogun, PhD, LPC

Co-Presenter(s): Bradley Scott Ellis, PhD, LPC, NCC

Marriott VII

Clinicians are trained in multicultural competence; however, some may not be comfortable with spiritual integration. Many clients embrace spirituality as an important part of their lives and prefer integrating it into their counseling experience. This incongruence between a client's identity and clinician competency can negatively impact holistic conceptualization and clinical outcomes.

F707 – Disability and Intersectionality: Implications for theory and practice.

Presenter: Aaron Albright, M.Ed., LPC-R (VA), Doctoral Candidate

Hampton VI

Disability is often addressed as a single identity. However, disabled people live within multiple intersecting systems of identity, privilege, and marginalization. This session uses results from a phenomenological study of college students with disabilities to explore intersectional disability experiences. Findings and implications will be discussed.

F708 – Beyond Resilience: Addressing the Intersections of Race, Gender, and Professional Identity Among Women Counselors of Color (Part 1)
Presenter: LaConda Fanning, PsyD, RN, LPC, LSATP
Co-Presenter(s): Karen Pender LPC; Sonya Allen LPC
Hampton VII
This two-part workshop examines how race, gender, and professional identity intersect to shape the experiences of women counselors of Color. Participants will explore workplace challenges, emotional labor, wellness, leadership, and resilience while developing practical strategies that promote psychological safety, professional flourishing, advocacy, and sustainable career success in counseling.

F709 – Beyond Masking: Authenticity, Sustainability, and Joy for Neurodivergent Counselors (Part 1)
Presenter: Chelsea R. Piechowski, M.S.Ed., NCC, LPC
Hampton VIII
This two-part session explores how neurodivergent counselors often navigate masking, burnout, perfectionism, and chronic emotional labor while offering neurodiversity-affirming strategies to cultivate sustainable practice, professional fulfillment, and joy in counseling work.

F710 – Creative Connections: Practical Play Therapy and Art Therapy Techniques for Children and Teens
Presenter: Susanne Preston-Josey, PhD, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Katy Mattox, Resident in Counseling and Provisional Registered Art Therapist
Marriott I
Participants will learn engaging play therapy and art therapy interventions that can be immediately implemented in counseling sessions with children and adolescents. This interactive presentation will demonstrate hands-on creative techniques that support emotional expression, regulation, communication, rapport-building, and therapeutic engagement across a variety of clinical settings.

F711 – Focusing and Empathetic Confrontation: Micro-Skills that transform counseling with Military Female Veterans
Presenter: Kaycee Colon Roberts, PhD, LPC, NCC, CCMHC
Co-Presenter(s): Joanna Collins, PhD, LPC
Marriott II
This session will explore how the microskills of focusing and empathetic confrontation can help transform your work with military female veterans. Participants will learn concrete strategies that support emotional access, reduce avoidance, and strengthen the therapeutic relationship while honoring the lived experiences of women who have served.

F712 – Beyond the Behavior: Understanding What Students Bring Into the Classroom (SCHOOL)
Presenter: Daija Monroe, LPC
Marriott III
This session examines student behavior through a trauma-informed lens, helping counselors and educators recognize the underlying factors driving behavior. Participants will learn how to move beyond punitive responses and implement practical, relationship-centered strategies that support student success across educational settings.

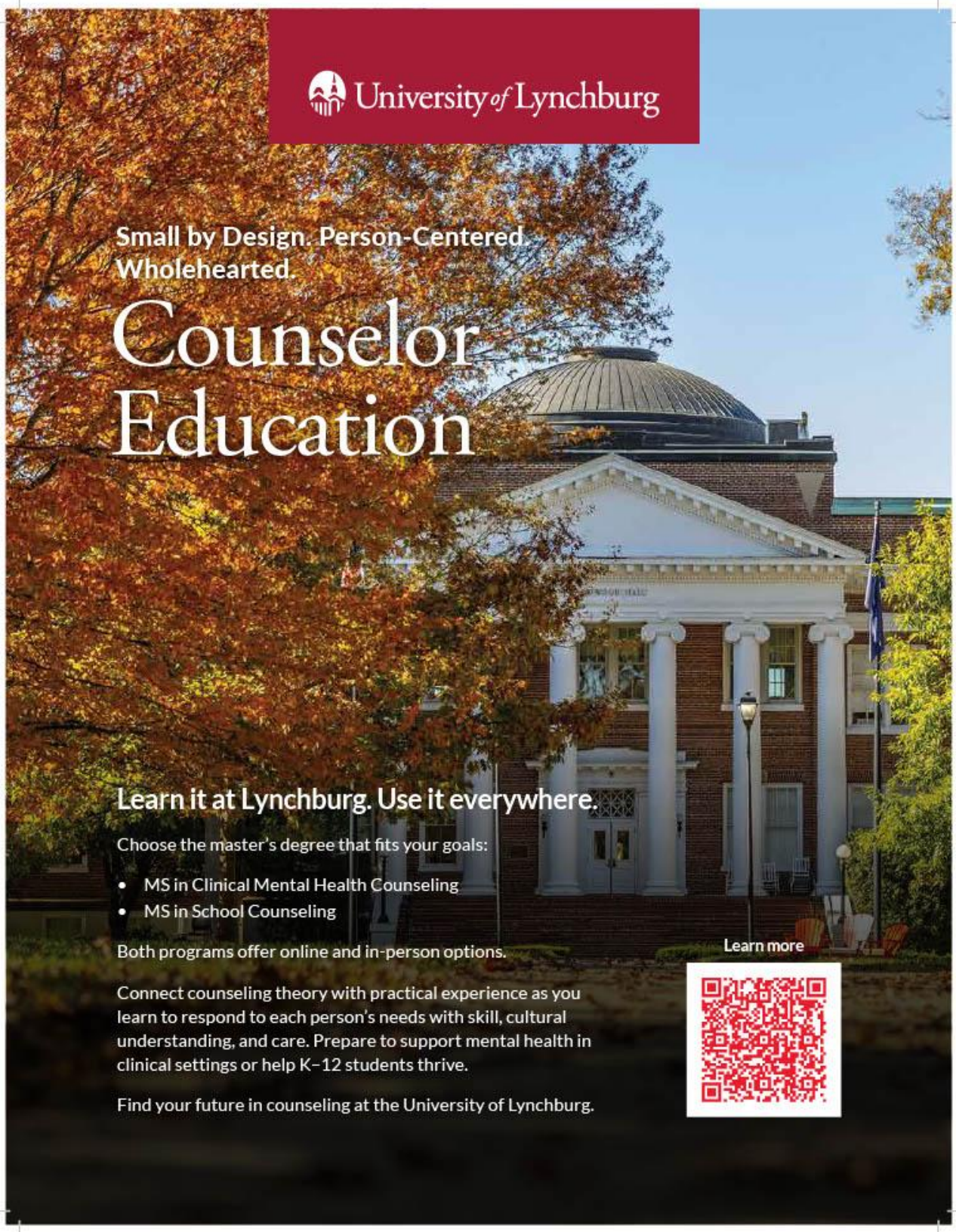
F713 – Suicide Prevention: Examining the possibilities interactively
Presenter: Randall Lucas, LPC
Marriott V
A suicide awareness and prevention activity that uses a humorous and interactive scenario to demonstrate that even in the direst of circumstances there are options and there is hope.

F714 – Love, Compassion, and Spirituality in Counseling: Creating a Culture of Healing (Part 1)
Presenter: Alan Forrest, Ed.D., LPC, LMFT
Frank/Shang/York
Love, compassion, and spirituality are increasingly recognized as essential elements in counseling and psychotherapy, transforming the clinical space from a purely diagnostic environment into a true "culture of healing." This approach moves beyond simply fixing problems; it emphasizes nurturing self-worth, fostering deep emotional connection, and addressing clients' existential needs. By integrating these dimensions, counselors can cultivate a "soul-to-soul" practice that supports clients in moving from shame and self-criticism toward wholeness and self-compassion. In this context, love and compassion are not sentimental or superficial emotions. Rather, they reflect a profound presence characterized by genuine connection, empathy, and unconditional positive regard. At its core is the counselor's unwavering belief in the client's capacity for healing; a belief that creates a sense of safety, allowing clients to explore and work through their deepest wounds. This program invites participants to explore the often overlooked yet essential roles of love, compassion, and spirituality within the counseling process. Participants will also have opportunities to share and reflect on how these qualities are integrated into their own counseling practice.

F715 – The Road to Understanding: Using Parts and Patterns to Map Internal Experiences
Presenter: Decca Knight, LPC, EMDR Certified Therapist
Chesapeake 1 & 2
This session introduces the "Road to Understanding," a framework created by the presenter that uses parts work to help clients visualize internal patterns that lead to distress. Participants will also have the opportunity to create their own Road to Understanding while learning to support insight, reduce stigma, and build integration.

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Session 8
Friday, November 13, 2026, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

F800 – The Sleep-Deprived Counselor: Why Your Sleep Is an Ethical Issue and How to Improve It (Part 2, ETHICS)
Presenter: Kevin B. Handley, Ph.D
Norfolk V
You are ethically obligated to maintain competence and practice self-care, but sleep is rarely part of that conversation. This workshop makes the case that sleep deprivation is an ethics problem, not just a wellness concern, and gives you practical, evidence-based tools to improve your own sleep and your clients' outcomes.

F801 – Strengthening Clinical Care Through Peer Integration and Collaborative Practice (Part 2, SUPERVISION)
Presenter: A. Polly Jessen, RPRS-CS, CPRS
Co-Presenter(s): Brittany Samaniego Greer, LPC, LSATP-R
Norfolk VI
Peer Recovery Specialists are increasingly integrated into behavioral health programs, yet many counselors receive little guidance on effective collaboration. This session presents a practical framework for integrating peers into treatment teams while maintaining role clarity, strengthening engagement, supporting continuity of care, and improving outcomes through coordinated peer support and clinical care.

F802 – Issues and Techniques for Clinicians Working with LGBTQ Clients (Part 2)
Presenter: Edward M. Andrews, LPC, LMFT, NCC, CCMHC, MAC, CT
Hampton I
When it comes to working with LGBT clients, we seem to be moving in several conflicting directions concurrently. While acceptance of Gays and Lesbians, Gay Marriage and openness to the issue of sexuality in general seems to be more tolerant than in years, some governmental guidelines and societal opinions seem to be becoming more intolerant and negative. As mental health professionals, we should be more welcoming, supportive and affirming than ever to our LGBTQ clients. This presentation will outline some of the current issues and suggest ways to incorporate affirmation with our clinical techniques and so, offer the best therapy to our clients.

F803 – The Embodied Counselor: Exploring Brain & Body Integration for Sustainable Self-Care and Professional Resilience
Presenter: Asia S. Foster, MA, LPC
Co-Presenter: Timothy M. Jones, Sr., PhD
Hampton II
Discover how brain's body integration cultivates counselor wellness and resilience. Grounded in neuroscience, polyvagal theory, and mindfulness research, this session equips counseling students, educators, and supervisors with somatic tools to reduce burnout, restore regulation, and enhance clinical presence through experiential exercises that engage the body as a source of wisdom and renewal.

F804 – Understanding aggression as a part of survival: Treating reactive abuse in the counseling room
Presenter: Jennifer Gobble, PhD, LPC, NCC, ACS
Co-Presenter(s): Trevor Gobble, MA, LPC
Hampton III
This session will explore the concept of reactive abuse and look closely at the trauma drive survival responses within coercive and emotionally abusive relationships. Participants will be able to address nervous system dysregulation, identity restoration and emotional reactivity through trauma informed assessment and interventions.

F805 – Pleasure-Based Counseling Strategies to Support Intimate Partners' Relational and Sexual Health (Part 2)
Presenter: Amber L. Pope, PhD, LPC, LMHC
Co-Presenter(s): Kim Hughes, M.A., Ed.S.; Xihlovo Mabunda, LPC; Chelsea Yang, LCPC, CST; Crystal Jones LMFT, RYT-200HR
Marriott VI
The presenters introduce a pleasure-based framework for relational and sexual health in intimate partnerships. Participants will explore how relational patterns shape sexual satisfaction and erotic connection. Through case-based application of multiple counseling modalities, attendees will learn interventions that support clients' erotic pleasure and intimacy while challenging deficit-based approaches to sexuality.

F806– Enhancing Wellness: Creativity in Counselor Supervision (SUPERVISION)
Presenter: Renee Staton, Ph.D., LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Michele Kiely, Ph.D., LPC
Marriott VII
Counselor supervision is a cornerstone of professional development, ethical practice, and personal growth in the counseling profession. However, the increasing demands on counselors in all settings have highlighted the need for supervision models that not only ensure clinical competence but also promote counselor wellness and creativity. This presentation explores an integrative framework that embeds wellness practices and creative expression into the supervisory relationship. Drawing from positive psychology, expressive arts, and trauma-informed supervision, this session will offer practical strategies for supervisors to foster resilience, innovation, and reflective practice in their supervisees. Participants will engage in experiential activities and leave with tools to enhance both their supervisory practice and their own well-being.

F807 – Let 'Em Know: Actively Building Micro-Collectives for Black Therapists to Combat Burnout
Presenter: Dr. JaNae Taylor, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Denisha Hosey, LPC; Danielle McDowell, LPC; Dr. LaToya Edwards, LCSW
Hampton VI
This experiential session transforms professional development into a live lab for collective healing. Black therapists will actively connect, process systemic burnout, and practice immediate, actionable peer-support steps. Participants will leave with an established micro-community and a practical framework to sustain regional wellness-centered collectives.

F808 – Beyond Resilience: Addressing the Intersections of Race, Gender, and Professional Identity Among Women Counselors of Color (Part 2)
Presenter: LaConda Fanning, PsyD, RN, LPC, LSATP
Co-Presenter(s): Karen Pender LPC; Sonya Allen LPC
Hampton VII
This two-part workshop examines how race, gender, and professional identity intersect to shape the experiences of women counselors of Color. Participants will explore workplace challenges, emotional labor, wellness, leadership, and resilience while developing practical strategies that promote psychological safety, professional flourishing, advocacy, and sustainable career success in counseling.

F809 – Beyond Masking: Authenticity, Sustainability, and Joy for Neurodivergent Counselors (Part 2)
Presenter: Chelsea R. Piechowski, M.S.Ed., NCC, LPC
Hampton VIII
This two-part session explores how neurodivergent counselors often navigate masking, burnout, perfectionism, and chronic emotional labor while offering neurodiversity-affirming strategies to cultivate sustainable practice, professional fulfillment, and joy in counseling work.

F810 – Gray Divorce Through an Attachment Lens: Emotionally Focused Therapy with Couples Over 50
Presenter: Nathaniel Mason, PhD, LPC, NCC
Co-Presenter(s): Betsy Zimmerman, PhD, LPC, NCC
Marriott I
Gray divorce is more than a late-life separation; it often ruptures a long-standing attachment bond. Using EFT, this presentation explores how later-life transitions, accumulated injuries, emotional disconnection, and grief shape couples over 50 as they consider whether to rebuild, separate, or mourn what the relationship has become.

F811 – Counseling Christian Couples: Multicultural Competencies Every Counselor Needs to Know
Presenter: Elias Moitinho, PhD, LPC (VA), LMFT (TX)
Co-Presenter(s): Denise Moitinho, PhD, EdD
Marriott II
Sixty-two percent of U.S. adults identify as Christians (Pew Research Center, 2025). Although the Christian population in the U.S. encompasses various denominations and shared core beliefs, it is a diverse community of believers that expresses faith and spirituality in distinct ways (Dochuk & Van Dyke, 2026). Additionally, most Christians hold strong values regarding marriage, family, and relationships (Köstenberger & Jones, 2010; Moitinho & Moitinho, 2026), which influence how they participate in counseling. Developing multicultural competencies is essential for mental health counselors (American Counseling Association, 2014) and growing in multicultural competence, particularly in religious diversity, is an integral aspect of counseling (Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling - ASERVIC, 2024). Thus, this workshop will discuss some of the core values and beliefs of the Christian faith and their implications to marriage counseling. It will also describe strategies to help increase cultural competencies so that counselors can engage in faith-based counseling in an ethically and clinically responsive manner. Finally, this workshop will present research-based best practices for counseling Christian married couples.

F812 – Think Like a Business Owner, Not Just a Therapist
Presenter: Mikenley Lundy, EdD, MBA, LPC (VA), LPCC (MN), LMHC (MA, FL)
Marriott III
The session will help counselors build a business owner perspective, going beyond only clinical abilities. Participants will discover practical techniques for positioning, marketing, operations, financial sustainability, risk management and ethical growth. Participants will walk away with concrete strategies to create sustainable, client-centered, and mission-driven practices using techniques learned in the MBA.

F813 – Love, Compassion, and Spirituality in Counseling: Creating a Culture of Healing (Part 2)
Presenter: Alan Forrest, Ed.D., LPC, LMFT
Frank/Shang/York
Love, compassion, and spirituality are increasingly recognized as essential elements in counseling and psychotherapy, transforming the clinical space from a purely diagnostic environment into a true “culture of healing.” This approach moves beyond simply fixing problems; it emphasizes nurturing self-worth, fostering deep emotional connection, and addressing clients’ existential needs. By integrating these dimensions, counselors can cultivate a “soul-to-soul” practice that supports clients in moving from shame and self-criticism toward wholeness and self-compassion. In this context, love and compassion are not sentimental or superficial emotions. Rather, they reflect a profound presence characterized by genuine connection, empathy, and unconditional positive regard. At its core is the counselor’s unwavering belief in the client’s capacity for healing; a belief that creates a sense of safety, allowing clients to explore and work through their deepest wounds. This program invites participants to explore the often overlooked yet essential roles of love, compassion, and spirituality within the counseling process. Participants will also have opportunities to share and reflect on how these qualities are integrated into their own counseling practice.

F814 – Effective Methods to Address Gateslipping in Counselor Education Programs (ETHICS)
Presenter: Keesha Kerns, PhD, LPC, LCMHC-S, LSATP, CRP, NCC, ACS, CCTP, PSC
Co-Presenter(s): Nicole Harris, EdD, LPC (VA, TX, GA), LCMHC, LCPC, LSATP, CRP, HS-BCP, BC-TMH, ACS; Jennifer Perry, Ph.D., LCMHCA, NCC, ACS
Chesapeake 1 & 2
Counselor education programs' purpose is to produce competent counseling professionals. While the purpose remains, there are a growing number of itinerant students from other graduate programs looking to enter a counselor program, not the counseling profession. To avoid gateslipping, counselor education programs must infuse ethical standards and staples throughout the program.

F815 – Understanding, Recognizing, and Treating Medical Trauma in the Counseling Room
Presenter: Michelle McDevitt MS, MD
Co-Presenter(s): Kathleen McCleskey, PhD, NCC
Marriott V
This session will offer education about the nature of medical trauma, how to recognize and anticipate medical trauma, and how to help clients overcome the impact of medical trauma. Clinical mental health counselors are ideally positioned to treat this type of trauma as it manifests across the lifespan.

Session 9
Friday, November 13, 2026, 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

F900 – Navigating Change: What Do We Expect in the New ACA Code of Ethics? (ETHICS)
Presenter: Robert J. Froehlich, Ed.D., LPC, CRC
Co-Presenter(s): Kathleen McClesky, Ph.D., NCC; Aimee Brickner, Ph.D., LPC
James I - III
The first revisions to the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics since the 2014 Code are expected to be released this year. This session will provide an overview of the proposed updates including guidance relative to artificial intelligence (AI), forensic practice, telehealth, and multicultural considerations. Implication for practice will be discussed.

F901 – The Grieving Counselor: How Grief Strategies Promote Sustainable Practice
Presenter: Taylor Patterson, PhD, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Cindy Charles, LMFT
Norfolk V
As counselors engage with suffering, it naturally elicits grief. In this interactive presentation, participants will consider the research around grief and compassion fatigue. Participants will reflect upon their own loss templates, apply evidence-based models of emotion regulation and grief processes, and develop a toolkit of resources to promote sustainable practice.

F902 – Psychotropic Medication Literacy for Counselors: Having Informed Client Conversations
Presenter: Sophia Sills-Tailor, Ph.D., LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Elizabeth Pound, PMHNP
Norfolk VI
Counselors frequently discuss psychotropic medication with clients yet often receive limited training in medication literacy and psychoeducation. This interdisciplinary presentation provides counselors with practical knowledge, ethical guidance, and client-centered communication strategies to support informed conversations about psychotropic medication, treatment collaboration, and medication management.

F903 – When Parenthood Hurts the Partnership: Love, Labor, and the Transition from Partners to Parents
Presenter: Ashley Peterson, LPC
Hampton I
This presentation examines how postpartum depression, anxiety, OCD, trauma, identity shifts, and changing relational roles contribute to relationship distress during the transition into parenthood. Through a trauma-informed and emotionally focused lens, clinicians will explore practical interventions, assessment strategies, and psychoeducational tools to support couples navigating postpartum relationship challenges.

F904 – Making a Difference: Turning Advocacy into Action
Presenter: Adrienne Randle, LPC, NCC
Co-Presenter(s): Rebecca Kaderli, LPC, LSATP, C-DBT, NCC, ACS; Ashley Spanfelner, LPC, LSATP
Hampton II
This is where passion meets policy. Advocacy isn't just policy talk–it's power, influence, and the key to shaping the future of counselors. Join VCA's Advocacy Committee for a look at how to take action to effectively advocate by looking at how everyday conversations can translate into real legislative wins.

F905 – What is behind the story? Restoring identity and healing through the use of self-as-context and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
Presenter: Jennifer Gobble, PhD, LPC, NCC, ACS
Co-Presenter(s): Trevor Gobble, MA, LPC
Hampton III
This session will explore the Acceptance and Commitment theory concept of self-as-context and the benefits of this technique in the treatment of identity healing, emotional regulation and recovery from trauma. Participants will learn and apply interventions to help clients separate from painful self-stories and move toward wellness.

F906 – Using a Cultural Humility Framework for LGBTGEQIAP+ Accompliceship Development
Presenter: Amber L. Pope, PhD, LPC, LMHC
Marriott VI
In today's sociopolitical climate, counselors must actively support LGBTGEQIAP+ communities to reduce barriers to well-being. Drawing from research and training experience, the presenter offers practical accompliceship strategies grounded in cultural humility, including advocacy at micro, meso, and macro levels, navigating challenges, and fostering ongoing personal and professional accompliceship development.

F907– The Amalgamation Supervision Model (ASM): An Integrative and Developmental Approach to Clinical Supervision (SUPERVISION)
Presenter: Bosede Balogun, PhD, LPC
Marriott VII
Clinical supervision is essential to counselor professional identity development and gatekeeping responsibilities. This presentation introduces the Amalgamation Supervision Model (ASM), an integrative and developmental approach to supervision. It examines supervisory relationships, use of the Counseling Competencies Scale, and strategies that promote supervisee growth, autonomy, and effective professional development.

F908 – Treating ADHD in Girls
Presenter: Gabriel Villarreal, LPC
Hampton VI
This session examines best practices for identifying and treating ADHD in girls into adulthood. Clinicians will explore gender differences in ADHD presentation, barriers to diagnosis, emotional dysregulation, masking, and evidence-informed treatment approaches, including psychoeducation, DBT-informed interventions, and executive functioning support strategies.

F909 – From Participants to Partners: A Practical Introduction to Participatory Action Research for Counselors and Counselor Educators
Presenter: Naomi Wheeler, PhD, LPC, LMHC, NCC
Co-Presenter(s): Melissa Hinton, LPC
Hampton VII
Participatory Action Research (PAR) offers counselors and counselor educators a collaborative approach to scholarship grounded in partnership, advocacy, and community voice. This introductory session will provide an accessible overview of PAR principles, practical applications in counseling settings, ethical considerations, and strategies for developing community-engaged research and program evaluation partnerships.

F910 – Operation Expressive Arts: Supporting Mission Readiness in Military Youth (SCHOOL)
Presenter: Yonsenia White, LPC, ATR, CMCC, MFA
Hampton VIII
Like dandelions, military children are resilient, adaptive and bloom wherever planted. Although military life presents challenges and constant change, the expressive arts provides them with a voice, sense of control, self-expression and mindfulness. This session explores how expressive arts practices support mission readiness through catharsis, coping skills and community building.

F911 – How To Use Your "Senses" When Conducting Mental Status Exams
Presenter: Sharon Silverberg, PhD, LPC, LMFT, ACS, RPT-S, CSOTP
Marriott I
Conducting Mental Status Exams (MSE) is an essential clinical skill for counselors to master. This presentation will focus on introducing counselors and counselor educators/supervisors a new way to approach this essential clinical task. Special attention will be given to cultural factors and how they can potentially impact clinical impressions.

F912 – Relax, Relate, Release: Practical Self-Regulation & Self-Care Tools for Therapists to Enhance Co-Regulation and Clinical Effectiveness
Presenter: Meagan E. Graham, LPC, CCTP-II, CCATP, CCFP
Marriott III
This presentation explores the role of co-regulation in the therapeutic relationship and highlights the importance of therapist well-being. Participants will learn practical self-regulation strategies, including EFT tapping, diaphragmatic breathing, somatic and mindfulness practices, time management, gratitude, affirmations, and meeting basic physical needs to enhance therapeutic presence and effectiveness.

F913 – Beyond Student Trauma: Responding to Educators in this Time of Crisis
Presenter: Stephanie Filio, M.Ed.
Marriott V
This session will increase counselor understanding of the burnout crisis in education. Learn practical and deliverable skills to help your client-educators who stay in or transition out, from someone who has been on the inside. who has been through it on a three year journey of perspective shifting work within the heart, mind, and counseling office.

F914 – Successful VCA Foundation Suzee Leone Grant Applications (Does not qualify for NBCC CE hours)
Presenter: Celeste Hall, M.Ed.
Co-Presenter(s): Lorraine K. Hall, M.A.; Anne Henry M.Ed.; Renee Staton Ph.D., LPC
Frank/Shang/York
This session will highlight strategies for writing successful VCAF Suzee Leone Grant applications. Recent grant recipients will share ideas for utilizing grant funding to enhance the counseling profession.

F915 – Invisible Sentences: Children and Families Serve Sentences, Too, Without Ever Being Sentenced
Presenter: Dr. Lakesha Roney Ed.D., LPC
Co-Presenter(s): JaNell Jones, M.Ed., QMHP-T, CSAC Supervisee
Chesapeake 1 & 2
This presentation explores the mental health impact incarceration has on children and families, including trauma, grief, stigma, attachment disruptions, and reunification challenges. Attendees will learn trauma-informed and culturally responsive counseling approaches that support healing, resilience, and family stabilization within clinical, school, and community counseling settings.

Session 10
Friday, November 13, 2026, 2:45 PM – 3:45 PM

F1000 – Affirming and Embracing Neurodiversity in Counselor Education and Supervision (SUPERVISION)
Presenter: Carrie Lynn Bailey, Ph.D., LPC, NCC
James I - III
This presentation will promote awareness, share knowledge, and affirm strengths of those within the neurodivergent population. Participants will gain insights into how understanding and embracing neurodiversity fosters inclusive practices, enhances empathy, aligns with ethical and cultural competencies, and supports the well-being of counselors in training, supervisors, faculty, and clients.

F1001 – Nonlinear Healing After Intimate Partner Violence: A Relational-Cultural Understanding of Recovery, Rupture, and Return (Pete Warren Student Fellow)
Presenter: Syreeta Wright, EdS, LPC, CSAC, NCC
Co-Presenter: Dina Berenshteyn-Barger
Marriott VII
This presentation applies Relational-Cultural Theory to intimate partner violence healing to reframe recovery as a non-linear cycle of recovery, rupture, and return. It emphasizes systemic and cultural influences, relational dynamics in counseling, and the importance of connection. Interactive activities seek to promote culturally responsive, relationally grounded practice and reflection.

F1002 – But there are two of them: Overcoming Fears of Working with Couples
Presenter: Mike Takacs, PhD, EdS, LPC-S
Norfolk VI
Working with couples is often described as anxiety provoking by counselors at various levels. This often creates disparity with the availability for couples to find assistance with their relationships. This session assists counselors with encouraging interest, addressing misconceptions, and promoting engagement.

F1003 – The Counselor's Guide to Going Deeper: Trauma-Informed Treatment Planning That Fosters Meaningful Change (Part 1)
Presenter: Katie Askren, PhD, LPC, LSATP, NCC, ACS
Hampton I
Many counselors struggle to move beyond surface-level interventions and develop treatment plans that create meaningful change. This session explores trauma-informed approaches to addressing shame and low self-esteem, building depth in counseling, creating personalized treatment plans, and improving documentation efficiency without sacrificing clinical quality.

F1004 – Sacred Spaces and Healing Pathways: Exploring the Role of Spirituality and the Black Church in Black Mental Wellness
Presenter: Carlton J. Henderson, Ph.D., LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Brittany G. Suggs, Ph.D., MPH, LPC
Hampton II
Mental health stigma and systemic barriers continue to affect Black communities, while spirituality and the Black church remain important sources of resilience, support, and meaning-making. This presentation explores how the Black church promotes mental wellness, influences help-seeking behaviors, and serves as a potential partner in culturally responsive mental wellness.

F1005 – From Love Bombing to Lethality: Assessing and Intervening in Intimate Partner Violence and Domestic Murder-Suicide (Part 1)
Presenter: Dr. Wendy Eckenrod-Green
Hampton III
This two-part presentation equips clinicians to assess and intervene in intimate partner violence and domestic murder-suicide while integrating ethical decision-making and standards of practice. Participants will identify warning signs, assess risk, apply safety strategies, and navigate ACA ethical responsibilities including duty to warn, documentation, and client protection.

F1006 – Working With PDA: Practical, Relationship-Based Strategies for Supporting Children with Pathological Demand Avoidance
Presenter: Brett Welch, LPC, NCC
Marriott VI
Children with PDA often experience everyday demands as threats, leading to resistance, shutdowns, or explosive behaviors. This session explores relationship-based, low-demand approaches that reduce anxiety, build trust, and improve collaboration in the therapy room, at home and school while honoring neurodiversity and preserving dignity for all.

F1007– I Graduated! Now What? Empowering New Clinicians in Their School-to-Practice Transition
Presenter: Dawn White, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Maria Morgan, graduate student; Sarah Rieke, LPC
Norfolk V
New clinicians often graduate with strong clinical skills but limited knowledge of the administrative demands of practice. This interactive session explores common gaps in billing, documentation, compliance, and practice management and offers practical strategies for practice owners, educators, and new clinicians to bridge this divide and build sustainable and joyful careers.

F1008 – Beyond the Crisis: Creating Safe and Successful Student Pathways Through Collaborative Partnerships (Part 1)
Presenter: Amanda G. Francis, M.Ed./Ed.S, LPC
Hampton VI
As student mental health needs continue to rise, school counselors are increasingly responsible for supporting students in crisis, and in returning to school following significant mental health or safety concerns. This session explores collaborative reentry planning, threat assessment considerations, safety planning, and establishing realistic expectations among schools, families, and mental health professionals.

F109 – Grief Across Cultures: Introducing the Cultural-Structural Good Grief Model (CSGGM) for Culturally Aware Bereavement Care

Presenter: Chimdiogo Onyeani-Nwosu, M.A., Doctoral Student

Hampton VIII

This presentation introduces the Cultural-Structural Good Grief Model (CSGGM), a framework for culturally responsive bereavement care. In this interactive session participants will examine cross-cultural grief traditions, explore limitations of dominant Western grief frameworks, and learn practical strategies for assessing and supporting grief experiences across diverse cultural and structural contexts.

F1010 – Psycho-Sensory Intervention: Integrating Sensory Processing, Movement, and Creative Expression in Trauma-Informed Mental Health Care

Presenter: JilliAn Moreland, MS, LPC

Marriott I

This interactive training explores how trauma impacts sensory processing, attachment, movement, and emotional regulation in children and adolescents. Participants will learn practical psycho-sensory, movement-based, and expressive interventions that support nervous system regulation, therapeutic engagement, and trauma-informed care across clinical, school-based, and community settings.

F1011 – The Military Mindset

Presenter: Gregory Lemich, Ph.D., LPC

Marriott II

From day one, military members are taught to think differently. They learn how to work during a crisis and how to function when in danger. To thrive, they acquire very specific cognitive traits atypical for the civilian world. We will explore these traits and the identity that arises from them.

F1012 – A Counselor's Critique of the 12 Steps: No Client is Powerless

Presenter: Justin Jordan, PhD, LPC, LSATP

Marriott III

Counselor Profession Identity emphasizes holistic wellness, prevention, healthy development, client empowerment, and social justice. While the 12 Steps of various self-help groups (primarily for addiction) have helped many people, these prescriptive steps are not a perfect fit for all clients and are misaligned with counselor professional identity.

F1113 – The Sustainable Counselor: Trauma-Informed, Fully Booked, and Finding Joy

Presenter: Shay Malone, Ed.S., LPC

Marriott V

Counselor burnout often stems from feeling isolated and unsupported, professionally and financially. This session reframes joy as a direct outcome of competence. Participants will learn to replace siloed care with trauma-informed, holistic care, empowering them to support clients effectively and practice in a way that is fulfilling and financially sustainable.

F1014 – Healing in Motion: Dance Movement Therapy for Black Girls with Anxiety (Michelle Dowdy Emerging Leader)

Presenter: Amanda Gilbert, M.A., Resident in Counseling, Doctoral Student

Frank/Shang/York

Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) is a culturally responsive community intervention that is embodied, creative, and relevant to Black adolescent girls experiencing anxiety. This presentation will present research about the efficacy and implementation of a DMT intervention for increasing positive mental health outcomes in Black girls with anxiety. Implications for counselors and counselor educators and strategies for implementation are highlighted.

F1015 – The Ultimate Intervention: Using Attunement and the Nervous System to Deepen the Therapeutic Alliance (Part 1)
Presenter: Sirena Pangelinan, LPC, EMDR-C, PhD
Co-Presenter(s): Ellen Winsor Chaffin, LPC, CAGS, EMDR-T, SEP, CCTP
Chesapeake 1 & 2
Working cognitively without understanding the nervous system limits our therapeutic effectiveness. For counselors, this can lead to burnout, compassion fatigue, and imposter syndrome, while for clients it can look like resistance, avoidance, delayed progress, and even retraumatization. This 2-hour presentation seeks to address this gap by providing a framework for using awareness and knowledge of the nervous system as the primary intervention supporting and sustaining the healing process for both clients and counselors.

Session 11
Friday, November 13, 2026, 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

F1100 – "Please Don't Tell Anyone:" Ethical Decision-Making in Identity Exploration and Confidentiality (ETHICS)
Presenter: Dawn White, LPC
James I - III
What do you do when a client trusts you with something they're not ready to share with others? Using Reamer's model, this session walks through ethical dilemmas with confidentiality, documentation, and conflict offering practical, affirming strategies clinicians can use immediately.

F1101 – The Living Goodbye: Finding Joy in a Palliative Approach to Grief, Unresolved Anger, and Spiritual Loss
Presenter: Avivah Knowles, LPC, NCC, MAR in Pastoral Counseling, MDiv Student in Interreligious Chaplaincy
Norfolk V
This session applies palliative care philosophy to the living losses of grief, unresolved anger, and spiritual loss through two original, low-cost, spiritually neutral interventions: The Clinical Wind Phone™ and The Iron Haven™. Participants explore how walking alongside clients, rather than directing healing, transforms client outcomes and renews the counselor's joy through hope and practice.

F1102 – From Crispy to Thriving: Rediscovering Joy Through Burnout Recovery
Presenter: Kate Steiner West, Ph.D., LMHP-R
Norfolk VI
Burnout doesn't just drain your energy; it steals your joy. This session helps counselors recognize their personal burnout warning signs, build sustainable boundaries and routines, and reconnect with the meaning that brought them to this work, using the Steiner Self-Reflection Sustainability & Wellness (SSRSW) Model as a practical guide.

F1103 – The Counselor's Guide to Going Deeper: Trauma-Informed Treatment Planning That Fosters Meaningful Change (Part 2)
Presenter: Katie Askren, PhD, LPC, LSATP, NCC, ACS
Hampton I
Many counselors struggle to move beyond surface-level interventions and develop treatment plans that create meaningful change. This 2-hour session explores trauma-informed approaches to addressing shame and low self-esteem, building depth in counseling, creating personalized treatment plans, and improving documentation efficiency without sacrificing clinical quality.

F1104 – Productive, Burned Out, and Praised for It: Counseling in a Performance-Driven Culture
Presenter: James Harris, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Devonte Tucker, Resident in Counseling
Hampton II
This presentation examines how performance-driven culture, social media, and chronic productivity can mask burnout and emotional distress in high-functioning clients. Participants will explore the impact of survival mode and emotional suppression while gaining culturally responsive strategies for recognizing hidden struggles within modern counseling practice.

F1105 – From Love Bombing to Lethality: Assessing and Intervening in Intimate Partner Violence and Domestic Murder-Suicide (Part 2)
Presenter: Dr. Wendy Eckenrod-Green
Hampton III
This two-part presentation equips clinicians to assess and intervene in intimate partner violence and domestic murder-suicide while integrating ethical decision-making and standards of practice. Participants will identify warning signs, assess risk, apply safety strategies, and navigate ACA ethical responsibilities including duty to warn, documentation, and client protection.

F1106 – More Than Good Intentions: Cultural Humility in Counseling and Supervision
Presenter: Mashal Bilal, M.S., M.A., NCC, Ph.D. Student
Co-Presenter(s): Ayesha Liaqat, MA, Ph.D. Student
Marriott VI
How can counselors remain grounded in evidence-based practice while responding meaningfully to clients' cultural worlds? This session invites participants to explore cultural humility as a practical counseling stance rooted in empathy, openness, self-reflection, authenticity, and relational repair. Drawing from research on cultural humility (Hook et al., 2017; Zhu et al., 2021) and culturally adapted psychotherapy (Bernal & Domenech Rodriguez, 2012), participants will examine how humility can guide ethical and culturally responsive practice in counseling, supervision, and classroom settings. Through case analyses and reflective journaling prompts, attendees will gain tools for recognizing assumptions, responding to cultural ruptures, and fostering stronger relationships with clients, supervisees, and students.

F1107 – Finding Joy in Supervision: Promoting Wellness, Resilience, and Professional Sustainability in Counseling (SUPERVISION)
Presenter: Janita Daggy, Ph.D., LPC-S, NCC
Marriott VII
Professional counselors and supervisors face increasing demands that contribute to burnout, compassion fatigue, and emotional exhaustion. Wellness-oriented supervision serves as a critical protective factor that promotes resilience, ethical practice, professional identity, and long-term sustainability. This presentation explores supervision in cultivating joy, meaning, and professional fulfillment while addressing daily challenges.

F1108 – Beyond the Crisis: Creating Safe and Successful Student Pathways Through Collaborative Partnerships (Part 2)
Presenter: Amanda G. Francis, M.Ed./Ed.S, LPC
Hampton VI
As student mental health needs continue to rise, school counselors are increasingly responsible for supporting students in crisis, and in returning to school following significant mental health or safety concerns. This 2-hour session explores collaborative reentry planning, threat assessment considerations, safety planning, and establishing realistic expectations among schools, families, and mental health professionals.

F1109 – Considerations and Impacts of Non-Consensual Intimate Material Distribution
Presenter: Adrienne Randle, LPC, NCC
Hampton VII
You may have heard of NCIMD, particularly in cases of celebrity intimate material leaks. While stories have been blasted across media, there can be stigma and impacts that are not considered and ways that sharing and contributing to the stigma have been normalized. Join for a deeper dive into this.

F1110 – Internet Use Disorder: Research, Assessment, Diagnosis and Treatment
Presenter: Dr. Ben Newman, LPC, LSATP
Co-Presenter(s): Abigail Williams, LPC, CSAC, ATR-BC; Traci Powers, Resident in Counseling
Hampton VIII
This presentation explores the evolving clinical landscape of internet use disorders, addressing current empirical research and diagnostic frameworks (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). Attendees will examine validated assessment measures and evidence-based treatment modalities, including specialized cognitive-behavioral techniques (Zou et al., 2026), to equip counselors with practical strategies for addressing digital addictions.

F1111 – Messy, Painful, Necessary: Collective Healing Beyond the Therapy Room
Presenter: Danielle L. McDowell, LPC, Virginia Board of Counseling Approved Supervisor
Marriott I
Many client concerns are rooted in community, culture, historical trauma, and systemic inequities. This workshop explores collective healing as a counseling framework and challenges participants to consider how connection, belonging, advocacy, and community engagement can support healing beyond individual symptom reduction.

F1112 – The Future of Online Supervision is Now
Presenter: Nicole Harris, EdD, LPC (VA, TX, GA), LCMHC, LCPC, LSATP, CRP, HS-BCP, BC-TMH, ACS
Co-Presenter(s): Keesha Kerns, PhD, LPC, LCMHC-S, LSATP, CRP, NCC, ACS, CCTP, PSC
Marriott II
The current counseling climate has motivated the profession to perfect online counseling supervision to address the diverse cultural populations of future counselors. Coupled with the latest technological advances, the many successes and ethical challenges indicate the permanency of online counseling supervision and its benefits to supervisors and supervisees alike.

F1113 – Beyond Burnout: Lessons in Leadership and Resilience from Physician Residents
Presenter: Cory Gerwe, PhD, LPC, ACS
Co-Presenter(s): LaConda Fanning, PsyD, LPC, ACS; Agatha Parks-Savage, EdD, LPC, ACS
Marriott V
Through coaching physician residents in high-stress healthcare settings, counselors can gain valuable insight into resilience, leadership, and human needs. Grounded in Self-Determination Theory, this session explores how autonomy, competence, and connection influence wellbeing while highlighting counselor-driven wellness initiatives designed to strengthen psychologically safe and sustainable professional environments.

F1114 – Why We Stay: Reclaiming Meaning and Joy in Counseling Work
Presenter: Tammy Griffin, MA, Resident in Counseling
Co-Presenter(s): Joshua Freeman, MA, LPC, NCC, ACS
Frank/Shang/York
Counseling professionals often focus on preventing burnout, compassion fatigue, and impairment. Focus is typically on preventing harm rather than cultivating fulfillment. This presentation examines joy as a resource contributing to counselor functioning, resilience, and long-term sustainability while offering practical strategies for reconnecting with purpose and engagement in counseling work.

F1115 – The Ultimate Intervention: Using Attunement and the Nervous System to Deepen the Therapeutic Alliance (Part 2)
Presenter: Sirena Pangelinan, LPC, EMDR-C, PhD
Chesapeake 1 & 2
Working cognitively without understanding the nervous system limits our therapeutic effectiveness. For counselors, this can lead to burnout, compassion fatigue, and imposter syndrome, while for clients it can look like resistance, avoidance, delayed progress, and even retraumatization. This 2-hour presentation seeks to address this gap by providing a framework for using awareness and knowledge of the nervous system as the primary intervention supporting and sustaining the healing process for both clients and counselors.

F1116 – The Joy of Belonging: Building Strong VCA Divisions For the Future of Counseling
Presenter: Jacqueline D. Butler, PhD, LCSW, LSATP
Marriott III
Counselors face increasing challenges including burnout, workforce shortages, and professional isolation. This interactive workshop explores how strong professional divisions foster belonging, leadership, mentorship and advocacy. Participants will learn strategies for recruiting and retaining members while developing an action plan to strengthen community, engagement, and resilience.

Session 12
Friday, November 13, 2026, 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

F1200 – Evening Mindfulness Practice Group
Presenter: Alan Forrest, EdD, LPC, LMFT
Frank/Shang/York
This session concludes the day with a guided meditation and brief discussion designed to help conference participants integrate the day's learning and process emotionally impactful content. This grounding and reflective time encourages participants to release accumulated physical and emotional tension, and nurture mental clarity and emotional balance. The meditation will allow space to shift from a state of doing to one of presence and being. Participants are invited to recognize and share personal and professional insights, celebrate moments of growth and success, and cultivate a sense of completion and closure. The practice concludes by gently bringing awareness back to the present moment while promoting reflection, resilience, and self-care.

Session 13
Saturday, November 14, 2026, 7:30 AM – 8:30 AM

S1300 - Morning Mindfulness Practice Group
Presenter: Alan Forrest, EdD, LPC, LMFT
Frank/Shang/York
Mindfulness is present moment awareness and the art of conscious living. It is the intentional attending to what is happening right now without judgment or reactivity. This morning practice group will provide an opportunity for participants to have a place to begin their day in stillness and silence; it can serve as a calming touchstone to return to throughout the day. The structure of the practice session will consist of a welcome, lightly guided period, and silent sit. We are all each other's teachers; therefore, we will conclude with an optional open discussion. Beginners and seasoned meditation practitioners are welcome. This is a gentle way to begin your day.

Session 14
Saturday, November 14, 2026, 8:45 AM – 9:45 AM

S1400 – When Trauma Looks Like Conflict: Beyond Communication Skills in Trauma-Informed Couples Counseling
Presenter: Naomi Wheeler, PhD, LPC, LMHC, NCC
Hampton VIII
Many couples presenting with communication problems are actually struggling with: trauma-shaped survival responses, attachment-based protection strategies, emotional dysregulation, and relational safety threats. At the same time, counselors must carefully differentiate trauma reactivity from coercive control and abusive relationship dynamics. This presentation provides counselors with a trauma-informed framework for understanding couple conflict beyond surface-level communication patterns while helping clinicians assess for safety, power, and appropriateness of conjoint treatment.

S1401 – Safety, Readiness, and Ethics: Why Stabilization Matters (Part 1, ETHICS)
Presenter: Austin Francis, LPC, CCTP
Co-Presenter(s): Amanda G. Francis, M.Ed./Ed.S, LPC
Norfolk V
This 2-hour presentation examines stabilization and resourcing in trauma counseling as necessary and ethical under the ACA Code of Ethics. We will explore how adequate preparation for trauma processing aligns with ethical obligations related to competence and client welfare, while learning practical stabilization interventions that participants can immediately begin using with clients.

S1402 – Finding Joy Through Resilience - Strategies for Counselor Wellness
Presenter: Kathleen McCleskey, PhD, NCC
Co-Presenter(s): Elizabeth Mottley, BA
Norfolk VI
This interactive session will focus on counselor resilience, joy, and wellness. The stress of counseling work will be explored and then balanced with the joys, vicarious growth, and significance the work brings. Self-care and meaning-making activities will be included. Come spend some time with us learning how to build resilience!

S1403 – The Solitary Nomad: Navigating Loneliness, Identity, and Belonging in Third Culture Kids
Presenter: Heyde Luz, PhD, LPC, NCC
Co-Presenter(s): Katie Solvig, LPC
Hampton I
This session explores the unique cultural framework of Third Culture Kids (TCKs) and the persistent loneliness that often shapes their development. Attendees will learn specific narrative and attachment-focused interventions to help TCK clients process grief, reframe their migratory histories, and cultivate a lasting sense of internal belonging.

S1404 – Group Counseling for International Populations: Practice-Based Evidence from the Field
Presenter: Sam Steen, PhD, Prek-12 PPSL
Co-Presenter(s): Dina Berenshteyn-Barger, Sarah Yi, Aidan Markley
Hampton II
This interactive session integrates research and field experts' perspectives on group counseling with international populations. Presenters illustrate creative and non-traditional facilitation strategies designed to promote joy and connection with a variety of international populations in the U.S. and abroad. Participants gain strategies immediately applicable in their own clinical practice.

S1405 – Grounded in Roots: An Earth Centered Approach to Decolonized and Re-indigenized Mental Health Therapy
Presenter: Lupita Rodriguez, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Javier Omar Melendez-Vega, LCSW
Hampton III
The presentation explores colonialization's enduring effects on mental health, intergenerational trauma, and Eurocentric clinical practices. Participants will examine professional identity through an eco-centric lens, practice culturally responsive approaches avoiding ethnic glossing, experience land-based therapeutic interventions, and develop ethical frameworks for integrating Indigenous wisdom while honoring sacred traditions and environmental interconnectedness.

S1406 – ***Mind, Body, & Trauma: Navigating the Unique Challenges of our Disabled Clients (Part 1)***
Presenter: Brandy Fallon, M.Ed., RIC
Hampton VI
Whether they were born with a disability or have acquired it, our disabled clients face a unique set of challenges: physical or emotional trauma, isolation, fear, and distrust of any type of healthcare provider. In this 2-hour presentation, we discuss the use of Acceptance & Commitment Therapy to help them reconnect with themselves and others.

S1407– Waiting to Feel Ready: What Imposter Phenomenon Costs Counselors-in-Training and What to Do About It (Part 1)
Presenter: Kevin B. Handley, Ph.D.
Hampton VII
You know the feeling: certain that someone will discover you don't belong here. Among counseling trainees, the imposter phenomenon is nearly universal. And waiting for it to disappear before showing up fully is a career-limiting move. This 2-hour workshop gives you practical, evidence-based tools to lead yourself through it, not around it.

Session 15
Saturday, November 14, 2026, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

S1500 – Supervising Smarter: Ethical Applications of AI in Clinical Supervision (SUPERVISION)
Presenter: Katie Askren, PhD, LPC, LSATP, NCC, ACS
Hampton VIII
As artificial intelligence becomes more common in counseling, supervisors face new opportunities and ethical questions. This presentation explores how AI may be integrated into clinical supervision to support counselor growth and improve client care while addressing confidentiality, ACA ethical standards, and Virginia regulations. Participants will leave with practical strategies and a clear framework for ethically incorporating AI into supervision.

S1501 – Safety, Readiness, and Ethics: Why Stabilization Matters (Part 2, ETHICS)
Presenter: Austin Francis, LPC, CCTP
Co-Presenter(s): Amanda G. Francis, M.Ed./Ed.S, LPC
Norfolk V
This 2-hour presentation examines stabilization and resourcing in trauma counseling as necessary and ethical under the ACA Code of Ethics. We will explore how adequate preparation for trauma processing aligns with ethical obligations related to competence and client welfare, while learning practical stabilization interventions that participants can immediately begin using with clients.

S1502 – From Clinician to Clinical Leader: Managing, Supervising, and Leading Healthcare Professionals in Mental Health
Presenter: Jessica Houston, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Teresa Adams, LPC; Scott Sawyer, Supervisee in Substance Abuse Counseling
Norfolk VI

Mental health leaders are often promoted based on their clinical skills, yet many receive little formal training in supervision, staff accountability, crisis leadership, or team management. In high-risk community mental health settings, ineffective leadership can directly impact staff performance, documentation quality, clinician retention, and ultimately client care. This presentation explores practical leadership strategies for supervising mental health professionals while balancing compliance, compassion, accountability, and organizational expectations.

S1503 – Numbing vs. Newness: Differentiating True Self-Care from Escapism in Clinical Practice
Presenter: Heyde Luz, PhD, LPC, NCC
Co-Presenter(s): Steve Warren, PhD.
Hampton I
Counselors are frequently encouraged to practice self-care, yet many struggle to translate that advice into sustainable habits. This interactive roundtable explores practical, evidence-informed strategies for preventing burnout, fostering professional resilience, and reconnecting with meaning and joy in counseling work through discussion, reflection, and collaborative problem-solving.

S1504 – Our New Social Life: Bridging Social Psychology and Counseling Practice to Rebuild Meaningful Human Connection
Presenter: Natalie Kerr, Ph.D.
Co-Presenter(s): Elizabeth Shoop, LPC, LMHC, CCTP
Hampton II
This presentation explores how social psychology can inform counseling practices, introducing common barriers to social connection in the modern world and evidence-based strategies for overcoming them. Attendees will gain practical tools to help clients initiate and deepen social connections.

S1505 – Building Resilient Counseling Teams in Community Mental Health Settings
Presenter: Sonya A. Allen, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Karen D. Pender, LPC, LaConda Fanning Psy.D, RN, LPC, LSATP
Hampton III
Community mental health (CMH) settings present some of the most demanding conditions in the behavioral health workforce. Clinicians in these environments routinely carry high-acuity caseloads, navigate chronic resource limitations, and absorb significant secondary traumatic stress (STS), often without adequate organizational support. The consequences are well-documented: burnout rates approaching 50%, STS prevalence between 34-56% among trauma-serving clinicians, and annual staff turnover averaging 25-40% (Acker, 2018; Hensel et al., 2015; SAMHSA, 2023). These figures represent not only a workforce crisis but a direct threat to equitable, continuous care for the communities CMH practitioners serve.

This workshop responds to that crisis with a structured, evidence-based approach to building team-level resilience from within clinical systems. Designed for licensed practitioners across disciplines including LPCs, LCSWs, LMFTs, and psychologists" the session moves beyond individual self-care rhetoric to address resilience as a collective, organizational capacity requiring deliberate design and sustained leadership commitment. Participants will leave with validated assessment instruments, a curated evidence-based resource list, and a practical action plan grounded in their specific clinical environment.

S1506 – Mind, Body, & Trauma: Navigating the Unique Challenges of our Disabled Clients (Part 2)
Presenter: Brandy Fallon, M.Ed, RIC
Hampton VI
Whether they were born with a disability or have acquired it, our disabled clients face a unique set of challenges: physical or emotional trauma, isolation, fear, and distrust of any type of healthcare provider. In this 2-hour presentation, we discuss the use of Acceptance & Commitment Therapy to help them reconnect with themselves and others.

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Session 16
Saturday, November 14, 2026, 12:45 PM – 1:45 PM

S1600 – Transitioning from Counselor Education Program to Counseling Agency Owner
Presenter: Keesha Kerns, PhD, LPC, LCMHC-S, LSATP, CRP, NCC, ACS, CCTP, PSC
Co-Presenter(s): Nicole Harris, EdD, LPC (VA, TX, GA), LCMHC, LCPC, LSATP, CRP, HS-BCP, BC-TMH, ACS; LaConda Ambrose Fanning, RN LPC, LSATP, ACS, CCTP; Richard Mason, PhD, LPC, CCMHC, NCC, ACS
Hampton VIII
Counselor education programs teach theoretical frameworks of counseling but not always the business aspect of the profession. Preparing counselor education graduates to eventually own businesses in the counseling profession, coursework needs to include counseling business ethics, billing practices, developing organizational procedures and licensing statues to build foundations for counseling entrepreneurship.

S1601 – The Ethical Application of Art in Therapy for Counselors & Counselor Supervisors (Part 1, ETHICS)
Presenter: Abigail "Albie" Williams, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Lauren Tatro, LPC, ATR; Ashley Tuttle, LPC, CSAC
Norfolk V
Using art in counseling is not the same as practicing art therapy. This session clarifies what distinguishes art therapy as a profession from the ethical, adjunctive use of art in counseling, covering scope, documentation, trauma risk, Virginia regulation, and supervision, so counselors and supervisors can practice creatively within their scope.

S1602 – Why Do I Keep Doing This? How to Break Toxic Cycles, Heal Origin Wounds & Rebuild Self-Trust (Part 1)
Presenter: Laura Copley, PhD, LPC
Norfolk VI
Trauma doesn't just damage trust in others; it damages trust in the self. This highly experiential workshop explores how attachment wounds and origin trauma teach clients to override their instincts, emotions, and needs. Participants will learn innovative psychosensory interventions designed to restore self-trust and create lasting change.

S1603 – How to Protect Yourself: at the Office and in Court Difficult Clients & How to Deal with Parental Alienation/Triangulation (Part 1)
Presenter: Heather Massey, LPC, NCC, CCMHC, CFMHE
Co-Presenter(s): Kim Montgomery, LPC
Hampton I
In today's world, there are more reports to the board and counselors being taken to court to testify than ever before. We have gathered information on how to protect your practice and put together a summary of how to protect yourself before you go to court and during court proceedings. The next hour will be concerning difficult clients and how to tell the difference between Parental Alienation and Triangulation.

S1604 – Developing Your Scholarly Voice: Academic Writing in the Age of AI (Part 1)
Presenter: Sophia Sills-Tailor, Ph.D., LPC
Hampton II
Graduate students are frequently expected to write with scholarly authority without explicit instruction in scholarly voice, synthesis, or academic discourse. This interactive workshop explores scholarly writing as a teachable process of synthesis, positioning, and participation in academic discourse and provides practical strategies for developing scholarly voice, ethical AI use, synthesis skills, and confidence in graduate-level writing.

S1605 – From Bravo to Breakthroughs: Using Reality Television to Explore Relationships, Trauma, Attachment, and Cultural Narratives
Presenter: Ashley Peterson, LPC, ADHD-CCSP
Hampton III
This presentation explores how reality television can be ethically utilized as a psychoeducational and rapport-building tool in clinical practice. Through a trauma-informed and culturally responsive lens, clinicians will examine how reality television reflects attachment dynamics, trauma responses, communication patterns, identity performance, and relational conflict while supporting client insight, engagement, and emotional exploration.

S1606 – Learning from Mistakes in Clinical Practice: Building an Edison Mindset as an Inherent Part of Deliberate Practice
Presenter: Katherine "Katie" Worsham, LPC, ACS
Co-Presenter(s): Charis Miller, M.A., LPC, NCC, ACS, BC-TMH
Hampton VI
Do you ever feel frustrated or discouraged in your clinical practice? The feelings of imposter syndrome, failure, and "not getting it right" may impede growth and hinder healthy work with our clients. Participants will leave with tools in their toolbelt for making meaning from mistakes leading to improved attunement, responsiveness, and therapeutic outcomes.

S1607 – Building a CES and Public School Partnership: Graduate Student Experiences in a School-Based Mental Health Model (SCHOOL, Michelle Dowdy Student Fellow)
Presenter: Amanda Gilbert, Resident in Counseling, Doctoral Student
Hampton VII
This presentation shares findings from a case study of counseling graduate students involved in the first year of a school-based mental health partnership between a counselor education program and an urban public school district. The results of semi-structured interviews will be shared including strategies for effective implementation and impacts on counselor-in-training development.

S1608 – The Tree of Life: A Trauma-Informed, Culturally-Rooted Approach to Healing and Connection
Presenter: Rachael Goodman, PhD, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Maribel Tohara Nakamatsu, M.Ed.; Alejandra Salazar Salame, M.S. Ed.
Frank/Shang/York
This presentation introduces the Tree of Life (Árbol de Vida), a culturally-aligned, trauma-informed, and strengths-based intervention using expressive arts and nature-based metaphors. We demonstrate its application with Central American immigrant mothers through community-based participatory research. Attendees will learn practical implementation strategies for individual and group settings across diverse clinical contexts.

Session 17
Saturday, November 14, 2026, 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

S1700 – The Ethical Application of Art in Therapy for Counselors & Counselor Supervisors (Part 2, ETHICS)
Presenter: Abigail "Albie" Williams, LPC
Co-Presenter(s): Lauren Tatro, LPC, ATR; Ashley Tuttle, LPC, CSAC
Norfolk V
Using art in counseling is not the same as practicing art therapy. This session clarifies what distinguishes art therapy as a profession from the ethical, adjunctive use of art in counseling, covering scope, documentation, trauma risk, Virginia regulation, and supervision, so counselors and supervisors can practice creatively within their scope.

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S1702 – How to Protect Yourself: at the Office and in Court Difficult Clients & How to Deal with Parental Alienation/Triangulation (Part 2)
Presenter: Heather Massey, LPC, NCC, CCMHC, CFMHE
Co-Presenter(s): Kim Montgomery, LPC
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In today's world, there are more reports to the board and counselors being taken to court to testify than ever before. We have gathered information on how to protect your practice and put together a summary of how to protect yourself before you go to court and during court proceedings. The next hour will be concerning difficult clients and how to tell the difference between Parental Alienation and Triangulation.

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Presenter: Sophia Sills-Tailor, Ph.D., LPC
Hampton II
Graduate students are frequently expected to write with scholarly authority without explicit instruction in scholarly voice, synthesis, or academic discourse. This interactive workshop explores scholarly writing as a teachable process of synthesis, positioning, and participation in academic discourse and provides practical strategies for developing scholarly voice, ethical AI use, synthesis skills, and confidence in graduate-level writing.

S1704 – "I'm Still Here": Retreating to Remember the "You" in Counseling
Presenter: Sara L. Wood, PhD, LPC (VA), LCMHC(NC), NCC
Co-Presenter(s): Jason Wood
Hampton III
Counselors often sacrifice themselves for the good of those they serve, resulting in burnout and turnover. Retreating presents an opportunity to remember oneself amidst ever-growing professional demands. This session will equip counselors to examine the burden of self-sacrifice, engage the solace of retreat, and develop a rhythm of retreating to promote professional fulfillment, resilience, and retention.

S1705 – The Cost of Caring: How Suicidal Clients Impacts Counselors
Presenter: Katie Greene Kegley, PhD
Hampton VI
This session explores the personal and professional impact suicidal clients have on their counselors. Participants will examine the mental, emotional, and professional implications counselors face when navigating this phenomenon, while also identifying strategies for resilience and self-care.

S1706– Decolonizing Eating Disorders Through An Afrocentric Paradigm
Presenter: Mina Attia, PhD, NCC
Co-Presenter(s): Isadora Gallanar; Keziah Chinebuah
Hampton VII
This presentation deepens and expands beyond Eurocentric conceptualizations of eating disorders (EDs) through an Afrocentric paradigm. Presenters will explore Ubuntu philosophy and Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT) as frameworks for understanding EDs among Black Americans, highlighting culturally responsive approaches that address systemic influences, relational dynamics, culture-specific factors, and treatment disparities.

ALL GENDER RESTROOM

The all gender restroom is next to the Presidential Foyer, on the third floor of the Norfolk Waterside Marriott. It will be identified with the below signage.



VCA's Annual Legislative Day
Monday, January 18, 2027

ADVOCACY begins with YOU!

As many counselors as possible are urged to participate in VCA's Annual Legislative Day on Monday, January 18, 2027, in Richmond, VA. As a professional counselor, you can't afford to miss this opportunity to make your voice heard. Please plan to attend Legislative Day and tell your delegate and senator how concerned you are about the state of mental health services and the strains on public education. To register, go to www.vcacounselors.org. Registration is free!

If you have advocacy-related questions in the meantime, please contact the VCA Lobbyist, Debra Rodman at debra@debrarodman.com, or the Advocacy Committee Chair, Adrienne Randle at advocacy@vacounselors.org.

Silver Sponsor

CONTACT

757-289-1125

connect@vbcounselingservices.com

5505 Indian River Rd, STE 100, Virginia Beach, VA 23464

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- Court-Ordered: Parenting, Anger Management, Batter's Intervention
- Occupational Therapy & ABA Services
- Educational Advocacy

ABOUT US

Virginia Beach Counseling Services and Family Enrichment Center provide compassionate mental health support to children, adolescents, and adults throughout Hampton Roads. Our team provides psychotherapy, testing, occupational therapy, ABA, educational and court ordered services that are tailored to a wide range of emotional, behavioral, and psychological challenges.

Services are available in English and Spanish, with flexible scheduling, including evenings and weekends (virtual and/or in-person).

2026 VCA MARKETPLACE

Thursday & Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM; First & Third Floor Foyers & Hallways

The Barry Robinson Center *Silver Sponsor*
757-455-6100; admissions@barryrobinson.org
www.barryrobinson.org
The Barry Robinson Center offers a residential treatment program for military-connected youth with emotional and behavioral difficulties. Youth, ages 11-17, from military-connected families will find a supportive community here. Our treatment programs have been designed to help children and teens from military-connected families find understanding and acceptance, which contributes to their success in treatment. Many of our employees served in the military, and we are committed to training all employees in military lifestyle and culture.

The Chicago School
202-706-5054; jdixon2@thechicagoschool.edu
https://www.thechicagoschool.edu/
The Chicago School's Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program prepares future counselors to provide compassionate, culturally responsive, and evidence-informed care to individuals, couples, families, and communities. Our graduate program combines rigorous academic preparation with practical clinical training, equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed to support clients across diverse populations and mental health settings. With a focus on professional development, ethical practice, and applied learning, The Chicago School prepares aspiring counselors to make a meaningful impact in the communities they serve.

ChildHelp
540-319-3190; admissions@childhelp-va.org
https://childhelp.org/
Childhelp is a nonprofit, psychiatric residential treatment facility located in Culpeper County, Virginia. Our unique location on 270-acres provides a nurturing treatment setting with a variety of therapy resources. We take a holistic approach to serving children, addressing their physical, emotional, educational, and spiritual needs. Through targeted treatment we empower our youth to overcome obstacles, fostering reintegration into nurturing homes and the community.

Clinician Connection
757-575-8331; hello@clinicianconnection.net
https://www.clinicianconnection.net/
Clinician Connection is an annual professional development conference dedicated to inspiring, educating, and connecting mental health professionals. Held in Virginia Beach, this dynamic two-day event brings together clinicians, supervisors, practice owners, and industry leaders for engaging presentations, evidence-based training, and meaningful networking opportunities. Our mission is to bridge the gap between clinical excellence, professional growth, and personal well-being while fostering a supportive community of mental health professionals. Through expert speakers, innovative topics, and practical strategies, Clinician Connection empowers attendees to strengthen their clinical skills, expand their perspectives, build lasting relationships, and return to their work feeling energized, informed, and inspired.

Coastal Counseling Center of Virginia *Silver Sponsor*
757-436-0605; optumbhcare.com
https://www.coastalcounselingcenter.com
Coastal Counseling Center of Virginia provides compassionate, evidence-based mental health care for children, teens and adults. Our licensed therapists offer individual therapy and work with concerns such as anxiety, depression, trauma, school and behavioral challenges, relationship challenges, grief, addiction and sleep difficulties. We are committed to creating a safe, inclusive space where you feel heard and supported, and we match you with a provider well-suited to your unique needs. With a range of evidence-based approaches and a focus on your personal strengths, we're here to help you move toward greater balance and emotional well-being.

The Emily Program *Silver Sponsor*
888-364-5977; outreach@emilyprogram.com
www.emilyprogram.com
The Emily Program is a national leader in eating disorder treatment, providing compassionate, personalized care for people of all ages and genders. Since 1993, our multidisciplinary teams have supported lasting recovery through a full continuum of care, from outpatient therapy to 24/7 inpatient and residential treatment. With locations across Washington, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Georgia, plus comprehensive virtual treatment options, we make specialized care accessible nationwide. To learn more or access support, visit emilyprogram.com or call 1-888-EMILY-77.

Evolution House
757-705-3202; info@evolutionhouse.org
www.evolutionhouse.org
Evolution House provides a 90+ day 3.1 low-intensity residential care with Partial Hospitalization (PHP) and Intensive Outpatient (IOP) programming for men and women. Our program integrates the strength of peer fellowship in the homes with clinical expertise at our counseling center, encouraging residents to actively engage with outpatient providers, therapists, and recovery resources while building practical life skills essential for long-term success.

Falcon Behavioral Services
214-704-5355; Katilyn@falcon-bh.com
https://www.falcon-bh.com/
Falcon Behavioral Services provides adult mental health Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) services in Virginia Beach. Our program offers structured, intensive support for adults who need a higher level of care than traditional outpatient treatment or continued stabilization following inpatient or emergency care. Services include group-based therapy, medication management, nursing support, case management, and coordination with community providers. We are committed to improving access to care and serving as a reliable behavioral health resource throughout Hampton Roads.

George Washington University
202-994-6040; justinew@gwu.edu
www.gwu.edu
The George Washington University (GW) is a private research university located in the heart of Washington, D.C., just blocks from the White House and the National Mall. Founded in 1821 by an Act of Congress, GW leverages its unique urban setting to provide its roughly 25,000 students with unprecedented access to internships, political networking, and global institutions. The university is highly regarded for its world-class programs in international affairs, political science, public policy, law, and medicine.

Intercept Health
540-759-8517; zlsebra@intercepthealth.com
https://www.intercepthealth.com/
The LifeBridge Continuum of Care offers a comprehensive range of highly effective services designed to assist individuals and their families facing functional impairments at home, in school, or within the community. With services catering to children, adolescents, adults, and families, the LifeBridge Continuum of Care offers both individual and wrap-around options, ensuring flexibility and continuity of care.

Jay Walkers
703-599-0613; erin@jay-walkers.org
www.jay-walkers.org
Jay Walkers is a national nonprofit dedicated to suicide prevention innovation. We work year-round to mobilize ordinary people to take action to end suicide as a public health crisis by reducing stigma, encouraging open conversations, and funding proven intervention measures. We are currently taking applications from eligible Virginia clinicians to participate in FREE CAMS-care training, an opportunity made possible by Jay Walkers, Rotary District 7600, and the Virginia Department of Health. To learn more about this opportunity, please stop by the Jay Walkers table.

Kempsville Center for Behavioral Health
757-461-4565; rosanne.foggin@uhsinc.com
www.kempsvillecbh.com
Kempsville Center for Behavioral Health is a premier inpatient stabilization, long-term residential, and full-day outpatient treatment for youth ages 4 - 18 (ages vary by program).

The Lemich Clinic
757-536-1233; info@lemichclinic.org
https://www.lemichclinic.org/
The Lemich Clinic specializes in therapy for those serving our community. This includes veterans, first responders, law enforcement, medical providers and military members. We offer individual talk therapy, group therapy, psychological evaluations, NEXUS letters, and life coaching.

Mental Health Virginia
804-257-5591; hculbertson@mentalhealthvirginia.org
mentalhealthvirginia.org
Mental Health Virginia is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting mental wellness, reducing stigma, and increasing access to support and resources. Through education, advocacy, peer support, outreach, and programs such as the Virginia Warm Line and (Re)STORE, we help individuals and communities build connection, resilience, and hope. Our work centers lived experience and the belief that recovery is possible. We are committed to creating a Virginia where everyone has the opportunity to achieve mental wellness.

Mount Regis Center
434-426-8323; Christy.Meeks@mtregis.com
www.mtregis.com
Mount Regis Center is a licensed 48-bed residential treatment facility located in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains in Salem, Va. There they provide Detox, Residential, Partial Hospitalization with housing and in-person or virtual Intensive Out Patient to adults 18 years of age and older, dealing with a primary Substance Use Disorder. The clients have individual support in several ways, such as specialized recovery tracks, in-house support groups, and 24/7 support from our on-site staff of addiction professionals. For those who need transportation, we are able to transport up to 6 hours away. Mount Regis proudly works with most insurances, along with VACCN and TriCare.

The National Association of Black Counselors, Inc.
804-938-5273; nabcounselors@outlook.com
www.nabcounselors.org
NABC is a nationally recognized professional association (and supportive community) that enhances and encourages professional growth and endeavors in the field of counseling and mental health; NABC also welcomes all that have concern and interest in the overall health and mental health affecting those of African ancestry in the United States and abroad.

Norton Therapeutic Solutions
757-514-1588; admin@ntsva.com
https://nortontherapeuticsolutions.com
Norton Therapeutic Solutions is a community-based behavioral health agency dedicated to strengthening individuals, families, and communities through accessible, compassionate, and evidence-based mental health services. NTS provides outpatient therapy, crisis intervention, community stabilization, and other behavioral health supports designed to meet individuals where they are. Our team focuses on promoting emotional wellness, resilience, stability, and long-term growth while connecting individuals to the resources they need. Through clinical excellence, community partnerships, education, and outreach, Norton Therapeutic Solutions is committed to reducing barriers to mental health care and creating healthier, more resilient communities.

Oasys
646-496-6669; hi@oasys.health
https://oasys.health/
Oasys is the operating system for growing group behavioral health practices. It replaces the patchwork of EHR, billing, scheduling, and messaging tools with one connected platform, AI-assisted clinical documentation, multi-clinician scheduling, insurance and payments, client portal, and telehealth, purpose-built for how group practices actually run. HIPAA-compliant, with real human support, so your team spends less time on operations and more time on care.

University of Lynchburg *Gold Sponsor*

434-544-8692; gradsuccess@lynchburg.edu
www.lynchburg.edu

The University of Lynchburg's counseling programs prepare students to become skilled, ethical, and culturally responsive professionals who support individuals, families, and communities across the lifespan. Through comprehensive coursework and hands-on experiences, students develop expertise in counseling theory, evidence-based practices, consultation, assessment, wellness, and professional ethics. The programs emphasize multicultural competence and responsiveness to diverse identities, backgrounds, and life experiences. Students pursuing School Counseling develop specialized skills for supporting K-12 students, families, educators, and school communities, while Clinical Mental Health Counseling students gain preparation for clinical practice with diverse populations and presenting concerns. Both programs integrate theory, practical training, and professional development to foster confident, competent counselors.

VCA Foundation *Gold Sponsor*

vcafboard@vcafoundation.org
www.vcafoundation.org

VCAF has 20+ years of supporting counselors in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Our Board of Directors includes a hardworking, energetic and seasoned veterans of the counseling profession. They are committed to enhancing the counseling profession. However, the practicing professional counselor makes the difference every day, to help build and support the counseling profession of the future. That is why the VCA Foundation affirms that, "Counselors are the Foundation, Everyday!

Virginia Beach Counseling Services *Silver Sponsor*

757-289-1125; connect@vbcounselingservices.com
vbcounselingservices.com

Virginia Beach Counseling Services & Family Enrichment Center was founded in 2015 with a goal to provide compassionate and accessible mental health care to individuals and families across Hampton Roads. Our clinicians offer a supportive, non-judgmental space where you can explore your experiences, build new skills, and move toward the life you want. We proudly serve children, adolescents, and adults, offering flexible scheduling, including evenings and weekends, to support busy families and working professionals. The Family Enrichment Center division offers affordable court-ordered services. We are committed to creating an inclusive, welcoming environment for individuals from all backgrounds. Se habla Español.

Virginia Telemental Health Initiative

804-214-6770; anna@ehealthvirginia.org
https://virginiatelementalhealth.org/

The Virginia Telemental Health Initiative (VTMHI) is a statewide virtual free mental health clinic and workforce development program - the first in the nation - that supports un- and under-insured Virginians by working together with the Commonwealth's free and charitable clinics and pre-licensed mental health provider volunteers who are in the process of pursuing licensure. This model aims to expand access to mental health services for ALL Virginians in need, and to grow Virginia's mental health workforce by advancing the timeline for licensure.

William & Mary School of Education *Silver Sponsor*

757-221-2317; graded@wm.edu
https://education.wm.edu/admissions/

Since 1693, William & Mary has prepared educators to lead and inspire. Grounded in a legacy of innovative teaching, learning and community engagement, we empower students to make an impact in schools, clinics and beyond. Join the Tribe and take your next step with the School of Education. Earn your bachelor's, master's, educational specialist, doctoral degree or certificate with us. Choose from programs in: Educational Policy, Planning & Leadership, School Psychology & Counselor Education, Teacher Education (Curriculum & Instruction).

VCA 2027 CONVENTION

November 11-13, 2027

Kalahari Resorts and Conventions - Spotsylvania

$169 + tax nightly rate*

*$39.99 Resort Fee waived & free admission to waterpark with lodging reservation!!

- **Guest Rooms:** 907 guest rooms and suites.
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- **Water and Adventure Parks:** Admission to the indoor and outdoor (weather permitting) waterparks is included for all registered guests.
    - 175,000 sq. ft. indoor waterpark & 3 acres of seasonal outdoor pools
    - 90,000 sq. ft. Tom Foolerys Adventure Park, featuring thrill rides, climbing walls, an indoor zip line, bowling, laser tag, 250+ arcade games and numerous other attractions.
- **Food and Beverage:** 13 on-site food & beverage outlets, including four signature dining experiences along with buffet and grab-and-go options.
- **Recreation & Entertainment**
    - 10,000+ square feet of retail space (3 retail experiences)
    - State-of-the-art Fitness Center
    - Build-A-Bear Workshop®
- **Meeting & Exhibit Facilities**
    - 150,000 square feet of flexible space
    - 2 ballrooms 30,000-square-feet | 19,000-square-feet
    - 16 additional meeting rooms and multiple hospitality suites with flexible space
    - Complimentary Wi-Fi throughout
    - 10-hour ergonomic convention chairs

Location: Kalahari Resorts & Conventions – Spotsylvania, VA, will be located off I-95 near Dominion Raceway & Entertainment, 45 minutes from Richmond, 1 hour from Washington, D.C., 1.5 hours from Charlottesville and a short drive from many other East Coast metropolitan areas.

About Kalahari Resorts and Conventions

Kalahari Resorts & Conventions, founded by Todd and Shari Nelson, is home to America's Largest Indoor Waterparks, and offers an unmatched mix of all-under-one-roof experiences for families, vacationers, and meeting attendees. With locations in Wisconsin Dells, WI; Sandusky, OH; Pocono Mountains, PA; Round Rock, TX; and a new resort opening in 2026 in Spotsylvania, VA, each property draws inspiration from the rich culture and vibrant landscapes of Africa. Recognized by USA TODAY's 10BEST for Best Indoor Water Park and Best VR Water Slide, Kalahari continues to set the standard for family entertainment and hospitality. Across its growing collection of resorts, guests can expect well-appointed accommodations, signature dining, unique retail, expansive indoor and outdoor waterparks, immersive adventure parks, and state-of-the-art convention centers. Coming in 2026, Kalahari is introducing its Adventure Collection, a suite of premium lodging options. Select locations also feature full-service spas and wellness destinations, creating the ultimate all-in-one getaway. For the latest news and media resources, visit www.kalaharimedia.com.

PAST PRESIDENTS OF VCA

1930-31	Bessie M. Mottley	1971-72	Ellen Chewning	2000-01	Arlene Ingram
1931-32	H. I. Willett	1972-73	Rex Tillotson	2001-02	Laurie Rokutani
1932-33	Bessie M. Mottley	1973-74	Shirley Downes	2002-03	Michele Dowdy
1933-34	W. C. Ikenberry	1974-75	Jack Duncan	2003-04	Loretta Kreps
1934-35	W. C. Ikenberry	1975-77	M. Catherine Cockrill	2004-05	A. Renee Staton
1935-36	Bessie M. Mottley	1977-78	Janet W. Dingman	2005-06	Adele Walker-Blue
1938-40	Martha Reely	1978-79	Fred Adair	2006-07	Terry A. Mullinnix
1940-41	Martha Reely	1979-80	Johnnie Miles	2007-08	Lisa M. McDowell
1941-42	Mitchell Dreese	1980-81	Bonnie Wasmund	2008-09	Denise J. Jones
1942-43	J. E. Bauserman	1981-82	Ted Remley	2009-10	Gerard Lawson
1943-45	Wilbur S. Pence	1982-83	Claire Cole	2010-11	Marcia Obenshain
1946-48	John F. Showalter	1983-84	Bob Pate	2011-12	Pamelia Brott
1948-50	Fred B. Dixon	1984-85	Carol G. Barr	2012-13	Summer Tetterton
1950-52	C. L. Schollenberger	1985-86	Janice Clark	2013-14	Edward Magalhaes
1952-54	Alfred J. Mapp	1986-87	Nancy Helms	2014-15	Linda Leitch-Alford
1954-56	Rebie H. Lassiter	1987-88	Lou Talbutt	2015-16	Hillary Press
1956-58	Kathryn G. Cook	1988-89	Carl Swanson	2016-17	Helen Runyan
1959-60	Donald J. Herrmann	1989-90	Pete Warren	2017-18	Linda Grubba
1960-61	Dallas H. Smith	1990-91	Libby Hoffman	2018-19	Monica Band
1961-62	George O. McClary	1991-92	Eleanor Saslaw	2019-20	Rebecca Kaderli
1962-63	Paul E. Behrens	1992-93	Susan D. Leone	2020-21	Cyrus Williams
1963-64	Virginia B. Goggin	1993-94	Leslie Kaplan	2021-22	Wendy Eckenrod
1964-65	Marguerite Key	1994-95	Judith Ladd	2022-23	LaConda Fanning
1965-66	Walter O. Jewell	1995-96	Dorothy Blum	2023-24	Mike Takacs
1966-67	Ethel R. Chrisman	1996-97	Patricia Lynn	2024-25	Lakesha Roney
1968-69	Richard L. Beard	1997-98	Claudia Sowa	2025-26	Cory Gerwe
1969-70	Helen Jones	1998-99	Donald Anderson		
1970-71	Paul B. Walter	1999-00	Paul Galvin		

Acknowledgments

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land we are on is the ancestral and present-day lands and waters of the Lumbee and Chesapeake peoples, who have nurtured and maintained profound relationships with this place since time immemorial. Our commitment to acknowledging this territory among our colleagues—and to approaching this place with gratitude and mindfulness—honors not only the land itself, but the enduring presence and resilience of the Indigenous peoples who call it home. May our actions continue to grow from reflection into meaningful care, stewardship, and respect for all who are connected to these waters and this land. We give honor and recognition to this tribe and their enduring legacy. In addition, we acknowledge the 21,000 women, men, and children that left Virginia via Norfolk and sold to enslavers down the Mississippi River Valley. We honor their labor and immense suffering. Their resilience and spirit laid the foundation for much of the history and culture of Norfolk, Virginia. To the Lumbee, Chesapeake, and African people of this land we give honor.

VCA Historical Award Winners

John R. Cook Award

1991	John Cook
1992	Ted Remley
1993	Fred Adair
1994	Robert Pate
1995	Ellen Chewning
1996	Pete Warren
1997	Don Ayers
1998	Carl McDaniels
1999	Libby Hoffman
2000	Dorothy Blum
2001	Dale Brittle
2002	Carl Swanson
2003	Jack Duncan
2004	Ruth Perlstein
2005	Patricia Lynn
2006	Andrew Beale
2007	Martha Woods
2008	Paul Galvin
2009	Etta Jane Hall
2010	Judith Ladd
2011	Eleanor Saslaw
2012	Gerard Lawson
2013	Michele Dowdy/Sandy Hite
2014	Bryan Carr
2015	Marcia Obenshain
2016	Suzee Leone
2017	Emanuel Bartolotta
2018	Linda Grubba
2019	A. Adele Walker-Blue
2020	Richard Gressard
2021	LaConda Fanning
2022	Regina Meredith
2023	Ellissia Price-Fagin
2024	Lennis Echterling
2025	Terri Mason

Van Hoose Career Service Award

1984	Claire Cole
1986	Ellen Chewning
1989	Fred Adair
1990	Gary Kelly
1991	Nancy Helms
1992	Kevin Geoffrye
1993	Robert Pate
1994	D.L. “Pete” Warren
1995	Dorothy Blum
1996	Don Ayers
1997	Andy Beale
1998	Rick Gressard
1999	Claudia Sowa
2000	Susan Leone
2001	Betty Hornick
2002	Tim Grimes
2003	Gary Waynick
2004	Thomas Hohenshil
2005	Claire Cole Curcio
2006	Hildy G. Getz
2007	Carol Kaffenberger
2008	Carl Swanson
2009	Linda Grubba
2010	Rosemary Thompson
2011	Sandra Hite
2012	Michele Dowdy
2013	A. Renee Staton
2014	Ellissia Price
2015	P. David Glanzer
2016	Lennis Echterling
2017	Nancy Bodenhorn
2018	Rebecca Dedmond
2019	Vacant
2020	Renee Bruno
2021	Kevin Doyle
2022	Robert Froehlich
2023	Brandy Smith
2024	LaConda Fanning
2025	Vacant

Counselor of the Year

1984	Michele Diana
1986	Carolyn Wallace Jacobs
1989	Howard Taylor
1990	Gary Waynick
1991	Richard Kravitz
1992	Martha Jane Woods
1993	Pat Lynn & Susan Bates
1994	Bill Holmes
1995	JoAnn McCabe
1996	Jan Chandler
1997	Sue Conrad
1998	Phyllis Land
1999	Elaine Simmerman
2000	Lorraine Hall
2001	Wanda Chandler
2002	Terry Brown
2003	Suzanne Whitehead
2004	Loretta Kreps
2005	Carol Mallory
2006	Sylinda Gilchrist
2007	No awardee
2008	Kimberlee Ratliff
2009	Brenda Robey
2010	Carol Hoffman
2011	Shala Darwin
2012	Tracy Jackson
2013	Hillary Press
2014	April Harmon
2015	Jenn Kurbel/Regina Meredith
2016	Jodi Myers
2017	Norma White
2018	Terri Mason
2019	Monica P. Band
2020	Taisha Steele
2021	Chelsea Ogden
2022	Emily Cook
2023	LaConda Fanning
2024-25	Vacant

Humanitarian & Caring Person

1984	Betty Sult
1986	Eva Davis Brinkley
1990	Carl Cooper
1991	Kathy Nolan
1992	Marge Bleiweis
1993	John Pettyjohn
1994	Barbara Mills
1995	Randall Clingenpeel
1996	Eleanor Saslaw
1997	M. Kay Orr
1998	Ellen Chewning
1999	Anita Tieman
2000	Don Ayers
2001	JoAnn McCabe
2002	Lonna Horeth
2004	Lennis Echtering
2005	Mary Durgala
2006	Hillary Wing-Richards
2007	Alan Forrest
2008	Anne Stewart
2009	Marilyn Draughon
2010	Larri Pat Donaldson
2011	Patricia Lynn
2012	Felecia Allen
2013	Karre Lloyd Jones
2014	Adrienne McDonald
2015	Elizabeth Vohar
2016	Laura Farmer
2017	LaConda Fanning
2018	Decca Knight
2019	Todd Stanley
2020	Vacant
2021	Christy Cundiff
2022	Vacant
2023	Chereen Gamal
2024	SC Nealy
2025	JaNaé Taylor

Chapter of the Year

1984	Peninsula
1986	Northern Virginia
1990	Peninsula
1991	Peninsula
1992	Northern Virginia
1993	Prince William (large) Rappahannock (small)
1994	Peninsula (large) Rappahannock (small)
1995	Peninsula (large) Apple Valley (small)
1996	Peninsula (large) Apple Valley (small)
1997	Northern Virginia (large) Apple Valley (small)
1998	Richmond (large) Rappahannock (small)
1999	Hampton Roads (large) Lynchburg (small)
2000	Hampton Roads (large) Lynchburg (small)
2001	Hampton Roads (large) Apple Valley (small)
2002	Richmond (large) Central Valley (small)
2003	Richmond (large) New River (small)
2004	Roanoke (large) New River (small)
2005	Hampton Roads (large) Central Valley (small)
2006	Hampton Roads (large) Roanoke (small)
2007	Richmond (large) Roanoke (small)
2008	Hampton Roads (large) Lynchburg (small)
2009	Hampton Roads (large) Western Tidewater (small)
2010	Central Valley (large) Peninsula (small)
2011	Central Valley (large) Roanoke (small)
2012	Central Valley (large) Roanoke (small)
2013	Central Valley (large) Roanoke (small)
2014	Central Valley (large) Roanoke (small)
2015	Central Valley (large) Roanoke (small)
2016	Central Valley (large) Roanoke (small)
2017	Central Valley (large) Roanoke (small)
2018	Central Valley (large) Prince William Region (small)
2019	Richmond (large) Roanoke (small)
2020	Richmond (large) Roanoke (small)
2021	Richmond (large) Northern Virginia (small)
2022	Northern Virginia
2025	Lynchburg (small) Hampton Roads (large)

Division of the Year

2018	VASGW
2019	VCDA
2022	VASGW
2023	VASC
2024	VACES
2025	VACES

VCA CONVENTION EVALUATIONS

Thank you so much for attending the 2026 VCA Annual Convention at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott, in Norfolk, VA. We are proud to bring together some amazing presentations, a keynote speaker, exhibits and special events. Your feedback is critical in our ongoing effort to improve this annual event. Please tell us about your experience at the VCA Convention by completing ***both*** the Overall Evaluation, and the Individual Sessions Evaluations Online at **https://www.vcacounselors.org/page/VCAConventionEvaluation**

Individual Session Evaluation - *Session Evaluations are important to VCA since they are **required for NBCC Certification** of programs offered by VCA at the Convention.*

Overall Survey - *Feedback regarding overall experience.*



The Welcoming Space

VA-CSJ
TO BE OF SERVICE

Sponsored by VA-CSJ & the VCA Racial and Diversity Committee

Take a break. Breathe. Be yourself.

The Welcoming Space is designed as a safe, affirming environment for individuals who identify with marginalized communities and groups.

Here you can:



Relax with yoga mats, pillows, and calming water sounds



Reset with oil diffusers, crystals, and bubbles



Reconnect through coloring and creative expression



Belong in a community with like-minded individuals

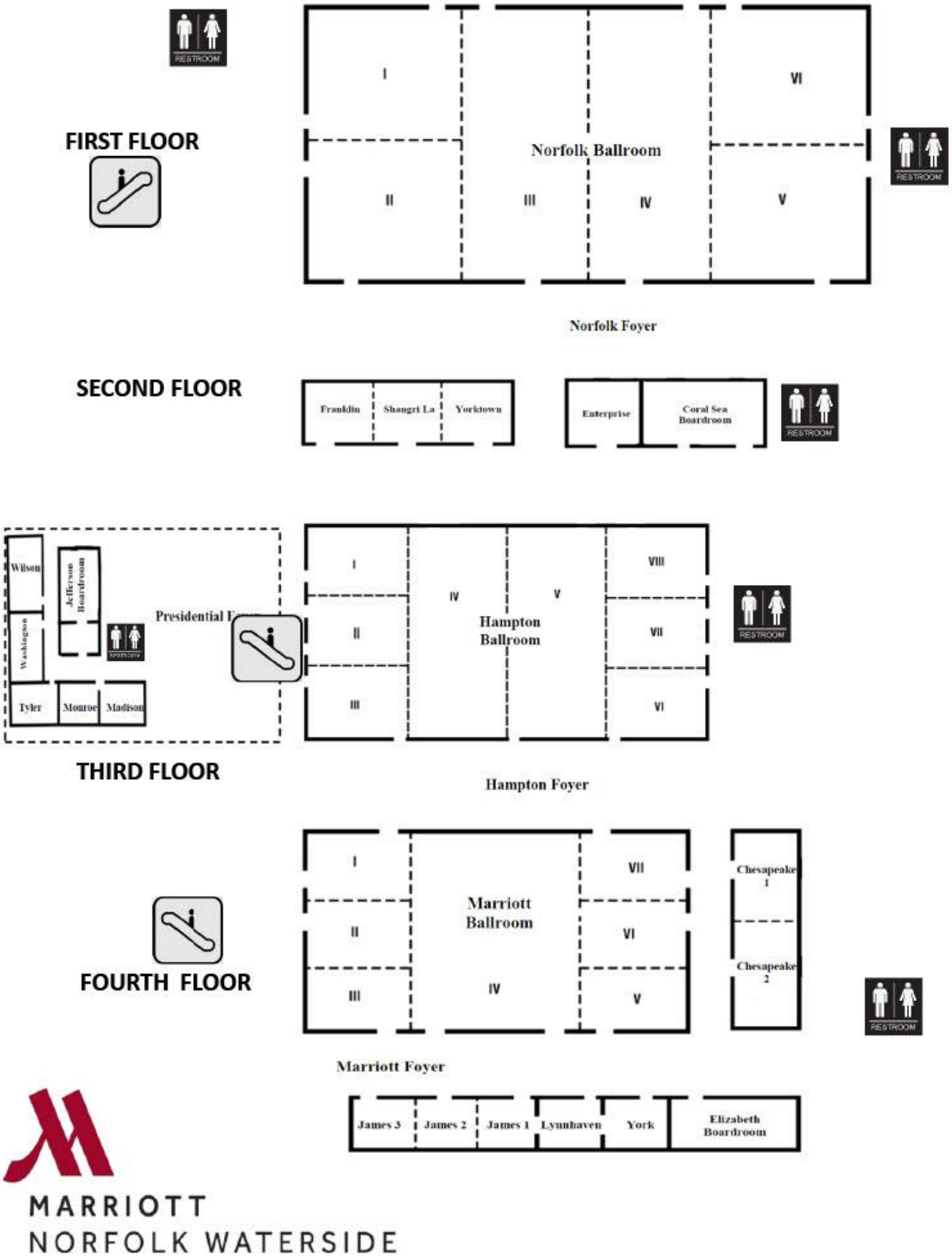


This is a judgement-free space where you are welcome to show up as your full, authentic self. Whether you need quiet reflection, mindful activities, or meaningful connection, the welcoming space is here for you

COME AS YOU ARE. LEAVE RENEWED



Located on the 3rd floor in the Madison Room off of the Presidential Foyer


RESTROOM
FIRST FLOOR
I
II
III
IV
V
VI
Norfolk Ballroom
RESTROOM
Norfolk Foyer
SECOND FLOOR
Franklin
Shangri La
Yorktown
Enterprise
Coral Sea Boardroom
RESTROOM
Wilson
Jefferson Boardroom
Washington
Tyler
Monroe
Madison
Presidential
I
II
III
IV
V
VIII
VII
VI
Hampton Ballroom
RESTROOM
THIRD FLOOR
Hampton Foyer
I
II
III
IV
V
VI
VII
Marriott Ballroom
Chesapeake 1
Chesapeake 2
RESTROOM
FOURTH FLOOR
Marriott Foyer
James 3
James 2
James 1
Lynnhaven
York
Elizabeth Boardroom
MARRIOTT
NORFOLK WATERSIDE