



Mental Health Services
Oversight & Accountability Commission

STRIVING FOR ZERO SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGIC PLANNING LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

AGENDA | Carlsbad, CA | February 28- March 1, 2024



DR. JENN CARSON, D.S.W.

Dr. Jenn Carson, DSW, oversees the Inland SoCal United Way's Crisis Helpline (951-686-HELP). Founded in Riverside County in 1968, the Helpline is a project of the Inland SoCal United Way 211+, the largest United Way chapter in the United States. Dr. Carson holds Baylor University, George Washington University, and California Baptist University degrees. She has spoken about her experience as a childhood attempt survivor with C-PTSD on CNN, NPR, the BBC, and "The Today Show" and in People Magazine. Dr. Carson can be reached at jcarson@iscuw.org and can be linked at [linkedin.com/in/jennlynnecarson](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jennlynnecarson).



CHERYL KARP ESKIN, M.A., L.M.F.T.

Cheryl Eskin is the Senior Director of Teen Line, a program of Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services and the co-chair of the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Network. Teen Line is a teen-to-teen hotline where teenagers can talk to a trained teen listener about any problem, no matter how big or small. Cheryl started her mental health career at the age of 14 as a Teen Line listener. She has been licensed as a marriage and family therapist since 2002 and has worked with adolescents in a variety of settings, including nonpublic school, private practice, and community mental health. Cheryl is passionate about power of peer-to-peer connection and regularly speaks with parents and educators on improving communication with their teens as well as mental health warning signs.



CARLY MEMOLI (Striving for Zero TA Team)

Carly Memoli has 20 years of experience designing, providing, and evaluating mental health crisis and suicide prevention-related services throughout California. She served as the Program Director for the Suicide Prevention Service of the Central Coast, a regional, AAS accredited crisis center and 988 call center and has administered state and federally funded suicide prevention grants and projects. Carly has developed and provided a wide range of suicide screening, assessment, and intervention training programs and is a master trainer in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), as well as a safeTALK and Mental Health First Aid trainer.



MATTHEW TAYLOR, M.A.

Matt Taylor directs the California 988 Lifeline Network for Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services, which was founded in 1958 and is based in Los Angeles County. He previously served as Senior Director of Center Engagement at Vibrant Emotional Health (the national administrator of 988) where he onboarded new centers into 988 and directed the 988 State Planning grants. Mr. Taylor has also worked with SAMHSA's National Child Traumatic Stress Network, FEMA, and the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Health Students. In these roles he helped develop a national training on emergency management, Incident Command and Psychological First Aid. He loves live music, long dinners and just about any outdoor adventure above or below water.



ANDREA TOLAIO

Andrea Tolaio has over twenty-five years of years of cross-functional community engagement and development and a knack for making meaningful connections, Andrea Tolaio joined Family Service Agency of the Central Coast (FSA) as the Director for Suicide Prevention Service in January 2022. Her understanding of organizational dynamics and commitment to value-based leadership have been instrumental in Suicide Prevention of the Central Coast's pivotal shift from a small volunteer-based call center into a thriving and healthy member of the national 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Network.

Andrea earned her B.S. in Business Administration from Golden Gate University, facilitates peer-support groups for Suicide Loss Survivors, serves as a 988 Responder, and is a member of the newly formed 988 CALIFORNIA: The Crisis Center Consortium. Andrea is a member of the Santa Cruz County Suicide Prevention Steering Committee, the Monterey County Suicide Prevention Coalition, and the Santa Cruz County Integrated Behavioral Health (IBH) Action Coalition.

Wednesday, February 28

2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Registration and Excellence Awards Resource Table Set-Up

3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

OPENING SESSION: RESPONDING TO CRISIS

Crisis Coping Theory- A Refresher

Noah Whitaker, M.B.A., Carly Memoli (Striving for Zero TA Team)

A brief overview of a conceptual model that provides a tool for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention planning.

Responding to Crisis Panel Discussion

Jenn Carson, D.S.W. (Helpline), Cheryl Karp Eskin, M.A., L.M.F.T. (Teen Line), Matthew Taylor, M.A. (Didi Hirsch), Andrea Tolaio (Suicide Prevention of the Central Coast)

Panelists from various California crisis lines will share updates, activities, and milestones on the road to comprehensive crisis response and care.

5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Putting Planning into Practice Reception & Networking: Lessons from the Field Part 1

This reception will provide an opportunity to network and learn about local efforts by visiting the Striving for Excellence Award Finalists.

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

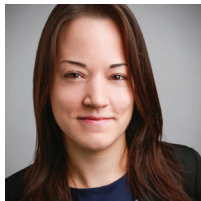
Dinner Banquet and Keynote Speaker Marina Nitze: Hack Your Bureaucracy

During this presentation, keynote speaker Marina Nitze will share real stories, tips, and inspiration for how to navigate the complexities of bureaucracy, avoid burnout, and set and hold vision for the future.

Excellence Award Showcase

- Sustainable Practices
- Innovative Partnerships
- Communicating Data & Measuring Outcomes
- Infusing Culture and Diversity
- Outreach, Media & Communication
- Targeted Approaches
- Interventions (After a Suicide Attempt & After a Suicide Loss)
- Comprehensive Suicide Related Care
- Involving the Whole Community
- Striving for Zero

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



MARINA NITZE

Marina Nitze has navigated some of the toughest bureaucracies on Earth - including the Department of Veterans Affairs, the White House, Fortune 500 companies, and the foster care system. Marina was the Chief Technology Officer of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs under President Obama, after serving as a Senior Advisor on technology in the Obama White House and as the first Entrepreneur-in-Residence at the U.S. Department of Education. She is the coauthor of the new book Hack Your Bureaucracy. Marina is also a fellow at New America's New Practice Lab, where she works on improving America's foster care system. Marina will inspire us with stories of how she and her colleagues have made lasting impact at scale, and share insights about how to leverage your skills, navigate the complexities of bureaucracy, avoid burnout, and set a bold vision for the future.



COURTNEY ACKERMAN, M.A.

Courtney Ackerman is a policy researcher with the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission. Through a commitment to community engagement and building awareness around complex topics, Courtney works to improve policy and practice within California's public mental health system. Her work includes leading the evaluations of the state's Innovation Incubator initiative under the Innovation component of the MHSA and the behavioral health Workforce Education and Training component of the MHSA. Currently, Ms. Ackerman is leading the Commission's Impacts of Firearm Violence policy research project, which aims to clarify the connection between firearm violence and mental health and elevate promising solutions. She has a BA in Psychology from the State University of New York at Oswego and a master's degree in Positive Organizational Psychology and Evaluation from Claremont Graduate University.



RENAY BRADLEY, PH.D.

Renay Bradley currently serves as Chief of the Epidemiology, Surveillance, and Evaluation Section within the Injury and Violence Prevention Branch at the CA Department of Public Health (CDPH). Dr. Bradley is a psychologist and epidemiologist who has focused her career on development, implementation, and evaluation of programs and policies that promote health and wellbeing. Dr. Bradley has extensive experience working with a variety of California state agencies, as well as local/state government entities across the U.S., to promote and support use of data to drive decision-making, promote equity, and strengthen public health efforts. Dr. Bradley is the PI for CDPH's Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Program and contributes to other CDPH injury and violence-prevention programs, including the Office of Suicide Prevention, Essentials for Childhood Initiative, All Children Thrive—California, Crash Medical Outcomes Data Project, and the California Violent Death Reporting System.



MARA MADRIGAL-WEISS

Mara Madrigal-Weiss is the Executive Director of Student Wellness and School Culture for the San Diego County Office of Education. She leads various efforts at the SDCOE, including mental health and wellness initiatives, foster youth, homeless education, and the AmeriCorps programs. Mara has been promoting student mental health and wellness for over 20 years. For the past eight years, Mara has led the efforts of her team to enhance mental health awareness, literacy, stigma, and suicide prevention and intervention practices across the county and works closely with the state to streamline resources and promote best practices in the field. Mara serves as the designee of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction as a Commissioner on the Mental Health Services Oversight Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) and has served as Chair of the Commission for the past two years. She is a passionate advocate of all things life and wellness enhancing for students and staff. She is authentic and sincere and appreciates laughter and kindness above all else.



KALI PATTERSON, M.A.

Kali Patterson has dedicated her career to building a more equitable, high-quality, and trauma-informed public health system in California. In her current role as policy research supervisor at the California Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission, Ms. Patterson's is committed to driving systems- and population- level approaches to mental health, and centering community voice in research and practice. She wrote the Commission's report, Well and Thriving, which offers a blueprint for implementing mental health prevention and early intervention strategies in California and is currently leading a project on universal mental health screening for children and youth. Prior to the Commission, Ms. Patterson spent seven years at the Department of Public Health where she worked to enhance mental health surveillance and services for California's refugee population. Ms. Patterson holds a master's degree in clinical health psychology from Northern Arizona University and a BA in psychology from Cal Poly Humboldt.



JANA SCZERSPUTOWSKI, M.P.H. (Striving for Zero TA Team)

Jana Sczersputowski is the President of Your Social Marketer and the Executive Director of the Youth Creating Change non-profit organization. Jana has over 22 years of experience planning and implementing county and statewide social marketing campaigns and integrated technical assistance programs. She applies public health principles to a broad range of communication and training structures, especially in the areas of audience research, community engagement, applying behavior change models to create effective and targeted campaign messages and materials, and applying evaluation to deliver outcome driven and sustainable initiatives.

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Thursday, February 29th

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Breakfast Buffet

WELCOMING REMARKS

Mara Madrigal-Weiss (Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission)

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Striving for Zero: National, Statewide and Local Perspectives

Updates on the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention - *Jerry Reed Ph.D., MSW.*

An overview of statewide initiatives aligned with strategic aims in Striving for Zero: California's Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan.

Courtney Ackerman, M.A. Senior Researcher - California Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission, Renay Bradley, Ph.D. Chief of the Epidemiology, Surveillance, and Evaluation Section within the Injury and Violence Prevention Branch at the CA Department of Public Health (CDPH), and Kali Patterson, M.A. Research Supervisor, California Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission

Milestones from the Striving for Zero Learning Collaborative.

Jana Sczersputowski, M.P.H. (President, Your Social Marketer, Striving for Zero TA Team)

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Lunch Buffet & Networking

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Strengthening and Sustaining Partnerships

Noah Whitaker, M.B.A. (Striving for Zero TA Team)

Through an interactive game of Jeopardy, participants will explore and discuss building and sustaining coalitions and engaging a broad range of partners.

3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Putting Planning into Practice: Lessons from the Field Part 2

This session will begin with a series of brief talks on topic areas relevant to local suicide prevention efforts, followed by facilitated breakout groups in each topic area. The purpose of this session is to advance local efforts by learning from others doing similar work, share successes, and problem-solve challenges.

Topics will include:

- Crisis Response
- Means Safety
- Infusing Culture and Diversity
- Comprehensive Training Plans
- Suicide Fatality Review Teams
- Postvention

6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Optional Networking Activity

Dinner on your own; continued networking is encouraged!



JERRY REED, PH.D., M.S.W.

Jerry Reed served as Senior Vice President for Practice Leadership at Education Development Center until his retirement in October 2021. In this capacity, he directed the Suicide, Violence and Injury Prevention Portfolio. He oversaw the work on multiple projects such as the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, the Zero Suicide Institute, the Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, the Children's Safety Network, and several violence prevention initiatives and also served as Co-Director of the Injury Control Research Center for Suicide Prevention with partners at the University of Rochester Medical Center. Prior to joining EDC, Dr. Reed served as a career public servant working in the Department of Defense leading Community and Family Support Programs in both the U.S. and abroad and served several years in the U.S. Senate. Dr. Reed received a Ph.D. in Health-Related Sciences with an emphasis in Gerontology from the Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond in 2007 and his MSW degree from University of Maryland at Baltimore in 1982 with an emphasis in Aging Administration. He served in the United States Navy during the period 1974-1978.



SANDRA BLACK, M.S.W. (Striving for Zero TA Team)

Sandra Black is a suicide prevention specialist with Your Social Marketer and has worked on several statewide suicide prevention initiatives. Prior to consulting, she worked in mental health agencies at the community, county, state, and federal levels. While at the California Department of Mental Health, she led the state's first Office of Suicide Prevention and oversaw state level implementation of the California Strategic Plan on Suicide Prevention. She holds a Master's of Social Welfare (MSW) from the University of California, Berkeley and lives in Davis. She shares a passion for basketball (especially the Sacramento Kings) with her husband and two sons.



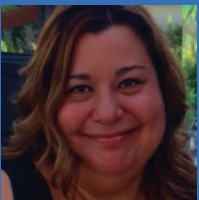
JOYCE CHU, PH.D. (Striving for Zero TA Team)

Joyce Chu is a licensed Clinical Psychologist whose expertise lie in the areas of suicide prevention, diversity and culture, and community mental health. Dr. Chu completed her training at Stanford University, University of Michigan, and the University of California, San Francisco, and is currently a Professor of Psychology at Palo Alto University where she directs/co-directs the Diversity and Community Mental Health (DCMH) emphasis and Multicultural Suicide Research Center. She is also a director at Community Connections Psychological Associates. Her work is focused around advancing the assessment and prevention of suicide for ethnic minority and LGBTQ+ populations, particularly in Asian Americans. Dr. Chu has published numerous works including a cultural theory and model of suicide and a tool that assists in accounting for cultural influences on suicide risk. Her work is community-collaborative and aims to address the need for culturally congruent outreach and service options for underserved communities.



STAN COLLINS (Striving for Zero TA Team)

Stan Collins has worked in the suicide prevention field for more than two decades since losing a friend to suicide in high school. He utilizes his experience to develop and implement strategies to create system level changes around suicide prevention at the community, county, and statewide level. Often his work focuses around means safety, youth and schools, and effective communication for suicide prevention.



NICOLLE PERRAS, M.P.H., M.A., L.M.F.T. (Striving for Zero TA Team)

Nicolle Perras has worked at the intersections of public health and mental health for 20 years; with specializations in suicide prevention, gender-based violence, the impact of trauma on health and wellbeing, systems of care and employee wellbeing. She has extensive education, clinical training, and public health experience in addressing the intersections between various forms of violence and social determinants of health, health equity, trauma, resiliency, and post-traumatic growth. She frequently provides presentations, trainings, and consultation to government and community partners on suicide prevention, gender-based violence prevention, utilizing data and trauma informed messaging, and the connections between multiple forms of violence. Nicolle received her BA and Master of Public Health (MPH) from UCLA, and is also a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in Los Angeles, California. Nicolle received her BA and masters of public health (MPH) from UCLA, and is also a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in Los Angeles, California.



MELANIE SCHINDELL, M.P.P.A.

Melanie Schindell, MPPA, is a research scientist at California Department of Public Health's Office of Suicide Prevention. She is responsible for the evaluation of two Youth Suicide Prevention Projects which are a part of the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI), the Youth Suicide Prevention Media and Outreach Campaign, and the Youth Suicide Reporting and Crisis Response Pilot Program. Melanie has over 10 years of experience in program evaluation and has worked on projects at the county and state level.



NOAH WHITAKER, M.B.A. (Striving for Zero TA Team)

Noah Whitaker is a passionate advocate for postvention. His motivation stems from personal experience; he lost both his father and paternal grandfather to suicide. Noah has worked in the mental health field for more than twenty years with efforts centered around serving those with severe and persistent mental illness, the unhoused, the substance-addicted, and numerous other populations. He led a government communications team and has vast familiarity with marketing, design, technology, content creation, social media, and storytelling. He has a particular love of branding. For the last decade, Noah has consulted with communities in strategic planning and implementation of suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention efforts. Noah serves on the Tulare County LOSS Team and has responded to the scene of dozens of suicides over the last decade to support the newly bereaved through postvention response efforts. He is a firm believer that everyone has a role in creating hope. Noah has been married to his high school sweetheart for more than twenty years, and they have five children.

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Friday, March 1

7:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

Breakfast Buffet

8:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

Infusing Culture into Data and Outcome Measurement

Dr. Joyce Chu, PH.D (Striving for Zero TA team)

This session will address ways to infuse culture and diversity throughout data and program evaluation aspects of suicide prevention strategic plans, as a critical foundation for culturally responsive suicide prevention work. Culturally responsive approaches to data measurement, collection, and analysis are essential for addressing suicide disparities for culturally diverse and marginalized communities. We will discuss different ways to approach data collection with diverse communities, how to assess for culture-related competencies in measurement tools, and how to leverage community-level suicide data to identify and address disparities, and other important considerations.

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

A Deep Dive into Accessing and Communicating Data

Sandra Black, M.S.W., Stan Collins, Nicolle Perras, M.P.H., M.A., L.M.F.T., Jana Sczersputowski, M.P.H., Melanie Shindell, M.P.P.A., Research Scientist at CDPH

Facilitated by the California Department of Public Health and Striving for Zero TA team, this session will provide hands-on tutorials and support with accessing suicide data using public dashboards. Participants will access local data and, after a brief refresher on messaging and guidelines to communication suicide prevention data, will create a “napkin” version of a data hand-out using the data they accessed during the session. The TA team will be happy to transform hand-out drafts into designed pieces for anyone interested!

11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Downstream Suicide Prevention: Implementing Best Practices in Culturally Responsive Suicide Clinical Care

Dr. Joyce Chu, PH.D (Striving for Zero TA team)

In order to effectively prevent suicide, there is a need to pair upstream community-level efforts with downstream focus on improving clinical systems of care through the use of best practices. Organizational needs assessment, consultation, and training can play critical roles in system transformation with the goal of creating clinical teams who are trained to practice and document evidence-based suicide screening, comprehensive assessment, crisis stabilization, safety planning, and intervention with attention to culture and diversity. This session will provide a forum to discuss how counties can create sustainable suicide safety nets within their clinical systems through systematic organizational work. We aim to inspire critical thinking and planning around downstream transformation.

12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Closing Ceremony and Excellence Awards

SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGIC PLANNING LEARNING COLLABORTIVE RESOURCE CENTER

Find recordings and slides from a wide range of topics related to strategic planning and implementation of suicide prevention activities, as well as copies of California County Strategic Plans.

www.mhsoac.ca.gov/initiatives/suicide-prevention/collaborative/

This event was funded by MHSOAC as part of the Striving for Zero Suicide Prevention Strategic Planning Learning Collaborative and planned by Your Social Marketer, Inc. For questions about the event please email jana@yoursocialmarketer.com

STRIVING FOR ZERO EXCELLENCE AWARDS

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

This award will go to a county team that has put in place any type of sustainable practice that will help ensure suicide prevention leadership and implementation work will continue when faced with staff, leadership, or funding changes. Examples could include data sharing MOUs, suicide prevention trainings that are part of employee onboarding practices, uniform risk assessment processes, or the responsibility of co-chairing a committee or providing administrative oversight as part of a job description.

INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

This award will go to a county team that has established untraditional or innovative partnerships to advance implementation of their strategic plan and local suicide prevention work. Examples include partnerships with organizations (hospitals, sports teams, local businesses, other departments, coalitions, and more) that can provide access to community members, provide staffing or funding, or implement trainings.

COMMUNICATING DATA AND MEASURING OUTCOMES

This award will go to a county team with advances in gathering and using data to inform suicide prevention efforts and/or creating public-facing data documents that align with effective messaging for suicide prevention. Examples include data dashboards, suicide prevention reports to the community, establishment of a suicide fatality review team, facilitation of data integration workgroups and more.

INFUSING CULTURE INTO SUICIDE PREVENTION EFFORTS

This award will go to a county team that has infused culturally responsive strategies and approaches throughout their plan and other efforts. Examples may include infusing culture throughout their strategic planning process and implementation, ensuring the strategic plan and outreach and education materials available in several or all threshold languages, using data to inform culturally responsive suicide prevention activities and outcomes.

OUTREACH, MEDIA & COMMUNICATION

This award will go to a county team for excellence in outreach and raising awareness about suicide prevention. Examples can include communication efforts ranging from grassroots and shoestring budgets to larger scale social media and traditional media campaigns.

TARGETED APPROACHES

This award will go to a county team that has implemented innovative outreach efforts, interventions, or programs to reach populations at disproportionate risk for suicide.

INTERVENTIONS (AFTER A SUICIDE ATTEMPT)

This award will go to a county team that has implemented impactful programming to support individuals after a suicide attempt. This might include establishing or expanding attempt survivor support groups or creating a formal or informal “caring contact” program to support individuals after a suicide attempt, or supports to help individuals transition back to school or work after a suicide attempt.

INTERVENTIONS (AFTER A SUICIDE LOSS)

This award will go to a county team that has implemented impactful programming to support individuals, families, or communities after a suicide death. This might include but is not limited to the creation of delayed or active response teams, offering survivor of suicide loss support groups, creating school or community-based postvention plans.

COMPREHENSIVE SUICIDE RELATED CARE

This award will go to a county team that has implemented practices to identify, support, and promote care for individuals during times of suicidal distress or elevated risk. Examples may include developing policies, procedures, and workforce training for screening, assessment, management, and triage across multiple organizational levels. Other potential examples include integrating suicide care tools (e.g., safety plan templates, screening tools, suicide documentation templates) into electronic health records or resource repositories for staff, innovative approaches to crisis stabilization and continuity of care, or provision of clinical trainings in evidence-based suicide interventions.

INVOLVING THE WHOLE COMMUNITY- EVERYONE CAN PLAY A ROLE IN SUICIDE PREVENTION

This award will go to a county team that found a way to engage a broad range of partners in the community in their suicide prevention efforts. This could be through a public event, a press conference, a conference/summit, or another type of activity/event hosted by their coalition or network.

STRIVING FOR ZERO

This award will go to an effort that didn't fit any of the other categories, but is believed to make a difference in Striving for Zero suicides in local communities.

There is hope.



**Please remember to take care of yourself.
Call or text 988 to reach the
Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.**