

KEYNOTE: Haner Hernandez, PhD, CPS, CADCI, LADCI

Dr. Hernández is Puerto Rican, bilingual and has worked for over 36 years in the health and human service field developing, implementing, and evaluating culturally and linguistically intelligent youth and adult health prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery support programs. He is a master trainer and facilitator and provides individualized technical assistance and support to organizations that provide Substance Use Disorder, Mental Health, and gambling prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery supports. Also, Dr. Hernández has over 30 years of experience in delivering mental health services, addiction counseling, and clinical supervision to professionals in the field.

KEYNOTE: Vesper Moore

Vesper Moore is an Indigenous political activist, leader, organizer, public speaker, and educator in the radical mental health and disability rights movements. Vesper concentrates on building social movements and public knowledge to facilitate and sustain systems change. They have supported the development of mental health organizations in different parts of the world and have fought to uplift civil rights in the United States. Vesper has brought the perspectives of disabled people and people with mental health challenges to national and international spaces with their advocacy. Vesper works with both the United States government and the United Nations in shaping strategies around trauma, intersectionality, and disability rights. They have been at the forefront of legislative reform to shift the societal paradigm surrounding mental health.

Wendy Allen

Wendy Allen is a mother of 5 and has sustained long term recovery from SUD for 7 years. She is system impacted and has had CPS involvement with a positive outcome. She holds many certifications, but her lived experience is the most valuable in this work. She currently works for Maine Reentry Network as a Peer Recovery Support Specialist for Family Recovery Court and Child Protective Services impacted individuals in Penobscot County, she is a public speaker for Maine Speaks, sharing her experience, strength and hope as well as educating communities around SUD and its effects on families and communities. Today, she recovers loud for those who still suffer in silence.

Hope L. Becker

Hope has been living her mental health journey most of her life, learning how to advocate for herself at 18 and seeking out resources for support. She began sharing her experiences with her mental health on social media and in writing as a way of processing her own thoughts, feelings, and experiences and found that a lot of people resonated with what she had to say. Creativity in many different forms has been a mainstay of her toolbox for most of her life and she feels very passionate about sharing her creativity experiences with the Peers she works with at CCS, BHHS, Case Management where she has been professionally working as a PSS for just over 2 years.

Lorraine Brown

Lorraine Brown, former Executive Director at The Restorative Justice Project of Maine, is a writer, theater arts activist, and community arts organizer, who has produced events and projects in Canada, Britain and throughout the US. She is a member of Theater of the Oppressed Laboratory NYC (TOPLAB) where she has used activist theater director Augusto Boal's facilitation, and community organizing techniques, to bring together youth leaders working with AIDS related issues throughout their communities, workers at the World Trade center site affected by asbestos poisoning, and adults dealing with literacy challenges. Lorraine originally trained at the University of Toronto's Royal Academy of Drama and Music. She draws on her training with artists and performers, including David Diamond's Theatre for Living, and renowned acting coach Deena Levy. Early in her career she worked with Saul Alinsky trained radical Jesuit organizers to include the arts in creating an alternative 'community' government in Riverdale, at that time one of Toronto's poorest neighborhoods, to assist residents in addressing poverty, ineffective schools, and increasing crime. Her focus was on improving housing conditions by using creative activism to bring 'slum' landlords to accountability. Lorraine created and directed the improv team 'Playing in Traffic', and 'The OutCast Players', a group of adults, and their allies, with BIG stories, who were not able to read and write. The group regularly performed around Maine until 2012, at libraries, annual prison, and education conferences, for state legislative bodies, the Governor, the public, for the purpose of illustrating the lives of those who are faced with literacy challenges. Lorraine founded, produced the Fifteen Minute Festival, an international playwriting competition, and original play festival based in Belfast, Maine. The festival was supported by award winning artists, writers and Tony Award winning actors and directors. She has directed many plays in Maine, NYC, and Toronto. Her play 'Secrets,' about the high price of keeping political and personal secrets, won a Perishable Theater award, and was performed around New England. She founded RAW - Restorative Art Works - a fierce, funny, fantastic group of incarcerated individuals and their allies who write and perform original work - true stories of their lives. She initiated 'What's Art Got To Do With It?' a three-day Artivism conference that put the arts at the center of discussion, dialogue, and action regarding Maine's opioid epidemic. In collaboration with Norman Kehling, a formerly incarcerated activist, she wrote and directed a play 'For The Next Guy', which has recently been optioned for a movie.

Angela Despres

Angela Despres is a mother of two. Her 14-year-old son lives with her. She is a student at UMA majoring in psychology. Along with working at MERN and going to university, she also works part-time at a residential treatment center in Lewiston. Angela is passionate about spreading the "infectious gift" of believing and experiencing that recovery is possible! She enjoys spending time with her family and helping others find their way to success in recovery and parenting.

Vickie Fisher, LCSW, CCS

Vickie Fisher, Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Clinical Counseling Supervisor, resides in Augusta, Maine. She has been working in social services in several capacities since 1995. Before that she served as a foster parent. Vickie has worked as a case manager, clinician or supervisor for almost 30 years. In 2008, she received her Master's in Social Work. In 2011, she founded Maine Behavioral Health Organization (Augusta/Skowhegan) with four other individuals. It is a honor to be at this conference with so many people devoted to recovery in the State of Maine.

Sara Halsey, CADC

Sara is an individual in long-term recovery, formally incarcerated and dealing with mental health challenges. Sara is the Director of the Augusta Recovery Reentry Center. Additionally, she holds a certification as a CADC from the state of Maine and is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in mental health and human services with a focus on addiction studies at the University of Maine in Augusta. Sara has also completed the substance abuse rehabilitation technician program through the University of Maine. Beyond professional pursuits, she finds immense joy in being a dedicated parent to two incredible children and cherishes her role as a bonus mother to three other wonderful kids. Outside of work, family, friends, and fun is her hobby. Outdoor adventures, water parks, amusement parks, anything to get out, active and see her kids have fun and enjoy life.

Linnea Hofmeister, LCSW, LADC, CCS

My name is Linnea Hofmeister. I am the Director of Adult Services for Maine Behavioral Health Organization. I have been employed here for 13 years and enjoy every single day! My hobbies are cooking, baking, gardening and the outdoors. These hobbies allow me to practice mindfulness in my everyday life. I obtained my MSW from UMO in 2017 and I am licensed as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Licensed Alcohol & Drug Counselor and Certified Clinical Supervisor. I am a mother of 2 grown sons, a grandmother of 4 with another on the way, and a wife of over 30 years to my husband, Steve.

Norman Kehling

Norman George Kehling was born in Dorchester Mass on June 22 1958. He entered prison in 1989 and left Maine State Prison/Maine via the Maine Coastal Regional Reentry Center in March of 2018. At the time of his initial incarceration he had a seventh grade education. Now he possesses a BA from University of Maine and two Associates Degrees. While studying at Kennebec Valley Community College he was given the Fred Whitney Award for Perseverance and was one of only three students nominated for Student of the Year. During his past six years of freedom he has established an organization HIIT - Helping Incarcerated Individuals Transition under the auspices of a nonprofit 501c3 organization. Through HIIT he co-produced a statewide conference, 'Life is All About How You Handle PLAN B' which used the power of the arts to address the dual opioid and covid pandemics and attracted policy makers, law enforcement, recovering addicts, formerly incarcerated, social workers and artists from all genres. Norman is a member and co-director of a small theater group 'RAW - Restorative Art Works' that takes true life stories of struggle, challenge, redemption, resilience, hope and turns those stories into live theater presentations. On October 7/8 2022 a play about his own life in and out of foster homes and incarceration premiered at the Strand Theater in Rockland. 'For The Next Guy' sold out three performances and is now under contract to be turned into a feature movie. Since leaving incarceration more than six years ago Norman has dedicated himself to improving the environment, support systems and opportunities for those who become involved in our criminal justice system, those who are currently serving time, those who are transitioning into our communities and those whose lives are fragile and vulnerable to future incarceration due to challenges related to mental health, wellness, poverty, lack of education, addiction. While incarcerated he assisted numerous residents with a variety of appeal processes. Norman currently lives in the Midcoast Maine woods, amidst many rescued animals, for whom he is their primary caretaker. He feels incredibly fortunate to engage a strong, healthy support system

of friends, family and colleagues. He is a grateful sober man. That gratitude is his everyday touchstone and guiding light.

April Kerr

April is married and has 3 grown children as well as 8 grandchildren. She is a Statewide Consumer Council Representative and the chairperson for the Farmington Local Council. She is also currently the chairperson of the CCSM board of directors, Issues Subcommittee and the PAMI advisory council for DRM. She is a trained Fidelity Assessment Common Ingredients Tool (FACIT) evaluator. April is also a dedicated member of her local church where she is greatly involved in many ways. She loves music and is an organized, mindful person who pays attention to details. She is someone who loves people and helps them wherever and whenever she can. She has learned to pave the way for other people, keeping in mind that not all walk or talk, think or process the same way. As an advocate, she understands that it is important to see from others' perspectives.

Richard Knight

(need – ask Noddin)

Henry Lyons, B.A., J.D., M.S.IT.

Henry Lyons, B.A., J.D., M.S.IT. is the author of Being Free: On the Inside. He served six years in Maine state prisons, was released in 2002, and successfully completed probation in 2008. He currently resides in Dresden with his husband and is active in supporting prisoner re-entry efforts. Henry was an attorney and has since worked as a systems administrator, programmer, web designer and small business consultant. He has led mastermind groups, organized business networking events (both in person and online) and has been a leader in prison ministry.

Vickie McCarty

Vickie is a policy analyst for the Consumer Council System Council of Maine. She works primarily with other peers and allies in helping to create policies and positive systemic changes relating to Maine's Mental Health system which includes leveraging the valuable skills, talents, and contributions of Maine's recovery community. Vickie has interacted with diverse groups of people, from everyday lay people to legislators and policymakers. She passionately believes in open communication and education as steppingstones to creating effective social justice opportunities for all.

Charley Mestrich

Charley Mestrich (they/them) is a youth peer support partner at the Psychosis Identification and Early Referral (PIER) Program at Maine Behavioral Healthcare. They started working in peer support after graduating from Bryn Mawr College in 2022 with a degree in sociology, with a focus in gender and sexuality. Charley is passionate about equitable access to care that is trauma informed and culturally competent. As a survivor of sexual assault, Charley is passionate about peer support as an alternative method of mental healthcare. Charley spends their free time embroidering, cooking, and hanging out with their roommates.

Jane Moore, JD

Jane joined Disability Rights Maine in 2017 as an advocate for the patients at Riverview. After 5 years as an advocate at RPC she became a community advocate in the southern part of the state. Prior to this she served as a Certified Intentional Peer Support Specialist (CIPSS) also at Riverview. Jane graduated from NYU law school and worked as a legal services attorney in Miami representing clients in public benefits and immigration cases. Because of her personal experience as a psychiatric survivor, she became passionate about the rights of people with disabilities, Jane changed her area of practice to disability rights and has done this work in both Florida and Illinois as well as Maine. Jane is a person with a psychiatric label and a survivor of both inpatient and outpatient psychiatric settings.

Emily Mott, Esq.

Emily is a 2023 graduate of the University of Maine School of Law, where her commitment to equitable justice and advocacy fueled her personal, academic, and professional journey. In 2023, she joined Disability Rights Maine as a staff attorney on the mental health team. Emily's dedication to advocating for the rights of individuals with disabilities was sparked first by her experience of losing her father to suicide at a young age. In her current role as an attorney, Emily relies on a client centered, trauma-informed approach, in addition to concepts first introduced to her as an undergraduate student when she was working as an Intentional Peer Support Specialist at Sweetser, in order to amplify voices and foster positive change.

Casey Nadeau

Bruce Noddin

Bruce Noddin is the Executive Director of The Maine Reentry Network (MERN), a statewide nonprofit focused on providing peer support and coordinated community resources for hundreds of individuals returning to Maine communities from prison, jail, and treatment courts. Bruce was appointed to the Maine State Workforce Board by Governor Mills in April 2022 and appointed by Senate President Jackson to the Maine Recovery Council in August 2022. Bruce is a "6 Who Care", "Rising Tide", and Spirit of Goodwill Award winner, and the recipient of multiple awards for MERN's community collaboration. Bruce and his wife Susan have four grown children between them and three grandchildren. Bruce is a person in long term recovery, a former small business owner, internet retailer, and political organizer. When Bruce isn't working, volunteering, or enjoying family time you can find him fly fishing, hiking, skiing, cycling, mountain-biking, or playing guitar and singing with his dad.

Lorie Paddleford

Kellie Pelletier

Kellie Pelletier has worked for the Department of Health and Human Services since 2011 and has held various roles across the Office of Child and Family Services, including Child Welfare, Children's Behavioral Health Services, and within the Office of MaineCare Services Complex Case Unit. Kellie is a Licensed Master Social Worker with a concentration in Social Policy and holds a Master's Degree in Abilities and Disabilities Studies with a concentration in Education Policy. Kellie has supported children with special needs and their families, as well as school staff and

community providers, to promote achievement of individual, family, and agency goals. In June 2023, Kellie was hired as the CCBHC Program Specialist for Children's Behavioral Health Services and is thrilled to be able to share the experience and systems knowledge gained over the years to assist with advancing the CCBHC Initiative in Maine.

Vals Porter

We like to be called Vals. I refer to myself as (we, us), at times, to be honest, authentic, and inclusive. We prefer the pronouns they, them and also respond to (she, her) and (he, him) My most recent volunteer work starts in 2021. In May of 2023 we did 3 shadow puppet performances at the Casco Bay Art and Music Festival, at Casco Bay High School. In 2023 we facilitated 3 continuing Ed classes for the CIPSS Program. Featuring, "The Art of Healing". During the Fall of 2022, we displayed our art, did a shadow puppet performance about homelessness, and performed with RAW, (Restorative Art Works) in the Plan B Activism conference, presented art and shadow puppet show at the Belfast Soup Kitchen, and in 2023 the same for LINC Center in Augusta, Maine. In the summer of 2022, we presented our art at the Janet Mills Opioid Summit, in Bangor Maine. We taught at camp Jenga, for children who have experienced loss. We have done presentations for Non-Violent Communication Integration and earned certification of completion of the Integration Program with Peggy Smith and Leah Boyd of clarity services. We have many years of lived experience with a mental health diagnosis, and have been CIPSS trained. We are a member of the Union of Maine Visual Artists and have been published in their journal several times. We have 2 years of art at the University of Maine at Augusta, and most of all we love art, mother earth, our family and friends and animals.

Julie Potter

Julie Potter is a Certified Intentional Peer Support Specialist who strives to embody the IPS values of compassion, empathy, holding multiple truths, and mutuality. She is fiercely passionate about supporting people to define their own, autonomous, self-directed path toward wellness and believes in the power of a relational approach to healing. She is an intuitive, inciteful, human being who is a creative spirit, poet, and spiritual warrior of sorts. Julie has a talent for using her unique brand of brave self-expression, intuition, introspection, and creativity to inspire people to be curious about their own inner world and wellness journey's.

Stephanie Roberts

Jessica Rogers

Jessica has been in recovery from opiate use since her arrest and incarceration in 2009/2010. Due to her substance use and subsequent legal issues, she has experience with Child Protective Services and had a positive outcome. In 2020 she lost her son, Hunter, the day before his 24th birthday to accidental fentanyl overdose. This has made her passionate about reducing stigma and educating people on the risks of substance use, as well as harm reduction for those who do use substances. She has a history in the medical field, though never in substance use or mental health. She is fairly new in the local recovery community, having started working at the Augusta Recovery Reentry Center in March 2023 and has made many positive connections within this growing community.

Liz Schiavoni

This is my first year as a Peer Support Specialist at Maine Behavioral Health. I have participated in peer support spaces for a few years, including online spaces facilitated by the Wildflower Alliance. I love art, reading, and being outdoors. I facilitate creative support spaces. Art and writing are powerful tools for healing and sharing our experiences.

Mindy Smith

Mindy (she/her) has worked in Peer Services since 2011, starting in direct support roles at a recovery center in Portland and Spring Harbor Hospital, then moving on to program and project management, workforce development and supervisory roles. Mindy managed the Peer Support Programs for Riverview Psychiatric Recovery Center, Maine Medical Centers psychiatric emergency department, Amistad's Peer Run Recovery Center in Portland, as well as the Rapid Access Program in collaboration with Northern Lights Mercy Hospital, two Peer Run Substance Use Recovery Centers as well as a federally funded Statewide Consumer Network, where she developed workforce support and advocacy opportunities for Peer Support Specialists around Maine. She currently works for the Office of Behavioral Health as the Peer Policy Project Manager, supporting development of Peer Service policy within the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic development as well as other projects in Maine.

Melody Thornton