Welcome to Mount Saint Mary’s University and the 2020 Critical Teaching in Action Conference. We invite you to explore the many practices and resources to promote your own resilience and that of the youth and community members you serve.

Julie Feldman-Abe, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Cultural Fluency
Inspiring Resilience
Keynote panel featuring members of the Alexandria House community.

Ima Matul is the Coordinator of the Survivor Leadership Program at the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST), and a former member of the US Advisory Council on Human Trafficking. She is a mother of three children.

Ashly Nufio-Mazul, a single mother of three, is currently an office assistant at the World Financial Group. She has travelled with the Poor People’s Campaign to Sacramento as an advocate for decent and affordable housing.

Keanakay Scott is a mother of two daughters, activist and advocate for policy change, including in the foster care system. Author of *I’m Not Welcome in Your Backyard*, she has been featured on NPR’s morning radio, Fox News, etc. She is currently running for the California 34th District Congressional Seat.

Judy Vaughan is a long-time activist and Founding Director at Alexandria House and mother to Ray. She was previously on faculty in Sociology at MSMU and has spent 40 years in program development, administration and fundraising for national and community-based organizations. She is a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

Angela Harris, writer of *Skid Row Sista* also created a show portraying an intimate look at the struggles with poverty, mental health, homelessness, survival and renewal.

Panel facilitator: Abigail Rea is an Assistant Professor in the MSMU Nursing program.
Presented to the inspired and inspiring women of Alexandria House. Founded in 1996, Alexandria House is a transitional residence and house of hospitality. They provide safe and supportive housing for women and children in the process of moving from emergency shelter to economic stability and permanent housing. Located in the densely populated and ethnically diverse Mid-Wilshire area of Los Angeles, they provide educational and enrichment opportunities for their residents, as well as their neighbors. More than 92% of the women who have moved through the Alexandria House program have succeeded in securing financial stability and permanent housing. www.Alexandriahouse.org

2020 Cultural Fluency Award

Afternoon Sound Bath Meditation:

Kundalini Yoga teachers and sound healers, Satyajeet Avila and Michele Upham, lead a special Sound Bath Meditation group experience in which multiple gongs and singing bowls are played in a manner designed to relax the body, quiet the mind, and ignite an inner experience. The sounds promote deep relaxation, peace, expansion of consciousness, and open the body’s energetic system. While there are periodic loud or intense swells of sound, the tones are generally in the medium range of volume and intensity to offer the greatest spectrum of sounds and vibration.
Healing-Centered Engagement: Helping Practitioners Embody the Heart of Trauma-Informed Care

This workshop addresses specific steps teachers, school leaders, and healthcare providers can take to provide an authentic healing presence for children or adults who have been exposed to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), trauma or toxic stress. Participants will learn how their personal ACE score impacts their ability to serve others from a grounded state, using specific mindfulness practices that will help regulate their own brains, hearts, and nervous systems. This workshop is especially beneficial for the ones who recognize themselves to be an empath (someone who absorbs the physical or emotional energy of others).

Dr. Niki Elliott is a clinical professor of education and co-director of the Center for Neurodiversity, Learning, and Wellness at the University of La Verne. She is a holistic educator, author, speaker and trainer in the fields of mindfulness, interpersonal neurobiology, and mind/body healing.

Eating Mindfully: How to be Kind to Yourself Around Food

Research shows that dieting is correlated to feelings of stress, failure, lower self-esteem, and social anxiety. Mindful eating is the anti-diet. Mindful Eating is the process of eating with awareness and without judgment. Through this workshop, participants will define mindful eating and contrast it with the diet mentality. During an interactive portion of the presentation, participants will get the opportunity to tune into their inner cues and practice eating mindfully. Finally, participants will learn strategies for identifying and dealing with the "food police".

Alison Halpern is a registered dietitian, certified health education specialist, and body image educator. She is the Wellness Manager at Mount St. Mary’s and works with students to implement wellness programming on campus.
Honoring the Lives of People Who Work In Schools

We know from current research that relationships with caring adults are instrumental in helping children heal from trauma. And yet, how often do we focus on the wellness of the caring adults who work in schools? We firmly believe that healthy and whole adults are the best intervention for student success. In our session, we will seek to affirm the complex social-emotional experience of educators, provide interactive opportunities to reclaim our professional identities, and explore ways that people who work in schools might advocate to make staff wellness a priority.

**Judee Fernandez** is an educator, coach, and storyteller committed to creating an equitable world where people in under-served communities may have an opportunity to heal and thrive. **Michelle Kurta** is an educator, coach, and artist working in the dynamic intersection of teaching/learning, healing, and justice.

Increasing Vitality and Self-Reliance

Billy Gill will offer stories, teachings and techniques from ancient spiritual traditions and philosophies, interpreted through modern psychology and physiology as a means to increase vitality, courage and self-reliance. There will be some gentle movement and breathing techniques offered as well as recommendations on meditative practice.

**Billy Gill** teaches yoga and meditation, leading classes, workshops and retreats in Europe, Asia and the United States. He holds a B.F.A. in Theatre Studies from Southern Methodist University’s Meadows School of the Arts and is currently gaining credentials as a practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicine at Yo San University of Traditional Chinese Medicine.
Recharging your Inner Battery with Self-Hypnosis

In this interactive workshop, you will explore how caregivers are wired to meet the needs of their clientele while not giving themselves permission to practice self-care. Each participant will create his/her own personal goal to take control of his or her own wellness and learn self-hypnosis to achieve this goal easily, automatically and subconsciously.

Promoting Self-Care Programs for Employees in Education/Healthcare Settings

Participants in this workshop will explore how to implement Self-Care programs for their employees – from set up and advertising, to experiential activities and program evaluation. Dr. Tarver-Behring will share tips on how attendees can promote Self-Care in their professional settings. Dr. Joshua Einhorn will lead participants in chair stretches and yoga breathing exercises, and demonstrate how to lead a guided relaxation/meditation.

Dr. Shari Tarver-Behring is Dean, College of Michael D. Eisner College of Education (MDECOE) at California State University Northridge. Dr. Joshua Einhorn, a certified yoga instructor who taught yoga at LAUSD for 4 years and Self-care at CSUN for three years, is the Co-Director of the MDECOE Self-Care program.

Lisa R. Machenberg is an Instructor at Hypnosis Motivation Institute College in Tarzana, California and is known as The Hypno Mom on the Steve Harvey Show, Bravo and Good Morning America.
Reducing Mental Illness Stigma in Latinx Communities

This workshop will discuss stigma and other barriers to mental health care that Latinx communities face. It will also cover different strategies for community engagement, resources for people in need and will share activities that can be done to engage individuals of all ages in conversation and psycho-education about mental health, mental illness, and finding resources.

Paula Helu-Brown, PhD, LMFT, is an assistant professor in the bilingual counseling psychology program ¡Enlaces! at Mount Saint Mary’s University. Her work centers on intersectionality, mental illness in the Latinx community, and gender and sexuality. She is the developer and clinical coordinator of a mental health program for Latinx Immigrants at the Consulate of Mexico in Los Angeles.

Return to Source: Applications of Yoga Philosophy and Practice in Secondary Classrooms

Kimberly Nao, a trained kundalini yoga instructor, discusses her experiences in engaging secondary students in breathing techniques, meditation, and physical poses as an enhancement to academic learning. The session outlines the ways that yoga as both an ancient Indian practice and as a pedagogical framework allows students and educators to use a holistic approach to the mind body connection for self-reflection and self-healing. Participants will engage in experiential learning around these different modalities and learn how to implement these transformational practices.

Kimberly Nao, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Education at Mount Saint Mary's University where she directs the Instructional Leadership and Induction Programs. Kimberly has studied yoga philosophy in the U.S. and India and researches yoga as a new pedagogical frontier.
Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE)-Affirming Schools

Social Justice from the Ivory Tower

This interactive workshop will engage participants in dialogue about their visions for SOGIE-affirming school environments for students, staff, and families. We will explore strategies to leverage data and community voice to support systemic change. SOGIE-affirming schools prosper with a synergistic blend of institutional leadership, school-site visionaries, and vocal students and families. We will profile current data, policies, initiatives, and examine emerging opportunities for growth for schools.

Judy Chiasson, Ph.D. leads up the LAUSD’s Office of Human Relations, Diversity & Equity. Dr. Chiasson has achieved national recognition for her work on SOGIE-affirming practices in K-12 education. Ms. Escobar is a licensed social worker, supports teachers, students, and parents in strategies for maximizing for mental health and resiliency.

Self-Healing for Educators: Preventing Burnout with Accessible Self-Care

Participants will learn about the 5 layers of experience in order to use simple breathing, mindfulness techniques, and physical postures throughout the day to heal the nervous system. Participants will engage in a journaling activity, experience passive sound with crystal bowls, and an interactive hip + back opener demonstration (safe for all bodies).

Chris Johnson (they/them) is a former classroom educator turned yoga + meditation teacher, Reiki Master and sound healer who loves supporting educators in their resilience practices.
Ten Psycho-Spiritual Habits for Balance and Happiness

Participants will learn proven, secular dawn-to-dusk practices that help buffer against stress and anxiety, in particular as experienced by healthcare practitioners. The workshop is full of interactive exercises, based on Positive Psychology and the peaceful paths of the East. Participants will practice preventing stressful reactions and taking in the good, keeping themselves energized, practicing self-love and allowing the body to restore itself at night.


Transforming Challenging Relationships

In this session, participants will have the opportunity to explore strategies and practices that hold the potential to transform relationships with students, parents, administrators and colleagues. Through experiential engagement, we will utilize a creative practice that can help identify the essence of a challenging relationship. We’ll then explore tangible personal strategies and practices to transform these relationships to embrace open communication and mutual respect, supporting the development of responsive, resilient relationships, reducing stress and having every interaction be an expression of self-care.

Jan Kirsch came to Inner-City Arts in 1993 after 16 years as a professional dancer, teaching artist, educator, event producer and social justice activist. Passionate about the possibilities that the arts and creative expression hold for children, youth and community, Jan’s work has allowed her to bring that vision of possibility to over 1,000 classroom teachers, teaching artists, administrators and community members each year.
Trans 101: Providing Responsive Support to Transgender Students in K-12 Settings.

The workshop centers on providing knowledge and information on transgender students and how to support them and includes a panel of trans*/gender non-conforming students who speak about their experiences. The workshop will provide participants with a clear and comprehensive understanding of gender, gender identity, and the experiences of transgender/gender non-conforming individuals through a combination of terminology, policies, legal explanations and personal experiences. Participants will leave this workshop with an understanding and working knowledge of the different ways to promote and support the social, emotional, physical and mental health of transgender and gender non-conforming youth in their respective professions.

Alex Hutchings (They/Them), M.Ed., is a Teacher of the Deaf at the Ramon C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts in Los Angeles, who has been working within and as an advocate of the LGBTQIA community for over 15 years. Miguel Covarrubias, (he/him), M.Ed is a Social Studies teacher at Ramon C. Cortines School of Visual Performing Arts in Los Angeles, with over 20 years of experience as an educator, trainer, and advocate for the LGBTQIA community. Laura Travnitz, (she/her) MSW/LCSW, is a Psychiatric Social Worker at Ramon C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts, with more than 30 years experience in school social work with individuals of various ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.

Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences: Help that Helps

This workshop provides information about the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study, along with neurobiology that explains why ACEs impact people’s lives, and what we can all do to dramatically improve health and resilience for this and future generations.

Dr. Leigh Belhumeur is a licensed psychologist, serving as Chief Executive Officer at Western Youth Services (WYS) for over 18 years. Sandra Renner is a WYS Board of Directors member and a retired educator with 35 years of services in the Anaheim City School District.
Upgrade Your Brain and Body For Optimal Performance

This workshop is all about making simple changes to turn up your mental mojo so you can do more, and be more. By making even a few of these small shifts, chances are you will see a dramatic improvement in your energy level, mood, and memory. Areas of focus are upgrading your diet, body, and sleep.

Jimmy Lindsey is a Strength and Conditioning Specialist and Corrective Exercise Specialist. He studied Applied Physiology at Columbia University and is currently becoming certified as a Psychological Fitness Specialist. He has worked for Nike, Equinox, and Goldman Sachs.

Writing for Self-Efficacy and Resilience

In this workshop, participants will engage in a guided reflection followed by a creative writing exercise to explore their areas of strength, self-efficacy, and resilience. We will introduce a newly developed framework, Self-Efficacy, and Navigational Resilience. This model highlights both the individual and communal nature of building self-efficacy and resilience as a way of successfully navigating challenges and opportunities. (No prior creative writing experience or skills needed.)

Mae Choe is currently a Ph.D. Candidate in education at Claremont Graduate University; she is also a part-time faculty member at MSMU’s General Counseling Psychology (GCP) Program. She will be joined by 3 MSMU graduate students: Natali Rodriguez is a Mount alum whose professional goal is to work in higher education career development. Mardeza Salinas’ master’s thesis is on the experiences of former foster youth in higher education. Patricia Salmeron master’s thesis is focused on housing needs, community advocacy, and policy.
About Mount Saint Mary’s University
Mount Saint Mary’s is the only women’s university in Los Angeles and one of the most diverse in the nation, known for its research on gender equity, innovative health and science programs, and commitment to community service. As a leading liberal arts institution, it provides year-round and online programs. Alums use their knowledge and skills to better themselves, their communities and the world. www.msmu.edu

University Programs
Mount Saint Mary’s also offers continuing co-ed education for adults, including a Weekend/Evening College baccalaureate program for working adults, as well as ten different graduate programs. msmu.edu/weekend-and-evening and msmu.edu/graduate

About the Center for Cultural Fluency
The Center for Cultural Fluency provides classroom resources and professional development opportunities for faculty, students, as well as local K-12 teachers on cultural diversity and social justice. The Center curated a collection of essential, compelling resources for educators who wish to add multicultural perspectives to their curricula. msmu.edu/culturalfluency

Teaching & Practicing Resilience

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