Connecticut Counseling Association
A Branch of the American Counseling Association

Counseling Connections Fall 2026

Responsive Counseling: Honoring Culture, Experience, and Individual Needs

Friday, November 13, 2026
8:00 am - 4:15 pm

Courtyard by Marriott
in Cromwell, CT

This conference explores the diverse cultural, developmental, and clinical factors that shape counseling practice. Through sessions focused on military culture, culturally responsive care, brain health, perinatal/infant mental health, and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), participants will gain practical knowledge and explore specialized approaches for supporting the unique needs of clients and communities.

Earn up to 5.5 continuing education clock hours!

- **Education Sessions**
- **In-Person Networking**
- **Division Updates**
- **Poster Presentations**
- **Hot Executive Meals**
- **Exhibitors & Sponsors**

Are You a Student Member?
Apply for a Student Scholarship to help defray the cost of attendance!

Not a CCA Member?
Join today and take advantage of the best rates to attend the conference!

APPROVED CONTINUING EDUCATION PROVIDER NBCC

Conference Agenda

7:30 am	–	**8:00 am**	Registration Opens & Hot Executive Breakfast
8:00 am	–	**8:15 am**	Opening Remarks
8:15 am	–	**9:15 am**	**Beyond the Uniform: Understanding Military Culture in Clinical Practice (1 hour)**
9:15 am	–	**9:45 am**	Conference Exhibitors/Sponsors, Student Poster Presentations & Resume/LinkedIn Reviews
9:45 am	–	**10:45 am**	**Bridging Faith and Family: Culturally Responsive Care for South Asian, Muslim Clients (1 hour)**
10:45 am	–	**11:15 am**	Conference Exhibitors/Sponsors, Student Poster Presentations & Resume/LinkedIn Reviews
11:15 am	–	**12:15 pm**	**Exploring Specializations in Perinatal and Infant Mental Health for Counselors (1 hour)**
12:15 pm	–	**1:00 pm**	Lunch
1:00 pm	–	**2:30 pm**	**EMDR and How the Brain Heals from Stress and Trauma (1.5 hours)**
2:30 pm	–	**3:00 pm**	Division Meetings (CACES/CMHCA)
3:00 pm	–	**3:15 pm**	Dessert
3:15 pm	–	**4:15 pm**	**Promoting Brain Health: Ethical Issues for Midlife Clients (1 hour)**

Schedule is subject to change

Continuing Education Information

Connecticut Counseling Association has been approved by NBCC as an approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP No. 2007. Programs that do not qualify for NBCC credit are clearly identified. Connecticut Counseling Association is solely responsible for all aspects of the programs. (Policy J.4)

Up to 5.5 clock hours of continuing education may be earned.

Clock hours are awarded for sessions attended in full, documented with confirmed attendance at the start and end of the session and submission of a completed evaluation form.
No exceptions will be made.

1. **Print** your name **clearly** on the attendance sheet for each session you attend (no signatures).
2. Complete the electronic evaluation for **each** session attended by the deadline.
3. CCA will email certificates within 1 month of the event (check spam/junk mail).

Session Information

Beyond the Uniform: Understanding Military Culture in Clinical Practice

This presentation provides an overview of military culture and its clinical implications when working with service members and veterans. It explores how military experiences shape identity, communication, trust, emotional expression, help-seeking, and responses to stress and adversity. The objectives of this session are for participants to learn to distinguish culturally adaptive military behaviors from symptoms of clinical concern, while avoiding the pathologizing of behaviors that may have served an important purpose during service. The presentation provides practical, culturally responsive strategies for building rapport, military-sensitive clinical interviewing, understanding military-informed perspectives, and supporting service members and veterans while recognizing the unique challenges associated with military service, transition, and reintegration.

Elisha Logan, LPC, LADC, brings more than 28 years of behavioral health experience, including 10 years providing clinical counseling to Marines and Sailors while working alongside military leadership. Her experience includes mental health, substance use, suicide prevention, and military behavioral health. She offers a unique perspective shaped by direct clinical experience within the military community and brings practical insight into the culture, challenges, and strengths of those who serve.

Bridging Faith and Family: Culturally Responsive Care for South Asian, Muslim Clients

This session equips clinicians and educators with practical strategies for engaging South Asian and Muslim families, whose help-seeking is often shaped by collectivist family structures, religious values, and stigma around mental health. Using case examples and current research on culturally responsive practice, attendees will explore how family hierarchy, faith, and immigration experience influence disclosure and treatment engagement. The objectives of this session are for participants to identify key cultural/religious factors affecting care-seeking, apply at least two adaptable clinical strategies, and recognize common barriers to access. Grounded in multicultural counseling competency frameworks, the session blends theory, case discussion, and actionable techniques for immediate use in clinical or school settings.

Aneela Shah, LPC, founded Mindset Time Counseling and brings over 16 years of experience in coaching, advising, and therapy. Drawing on CBT, DBT, Internal Family Systems, CBT, and Solution-Focused Therapy, she offers a warm, strengths-based approach that helps clients build a healthier mindset and navigate life's challenges.

Promoting Brain Health: Ethical Issues for Midlife Clients

Research indicates 47% of dementia is preventable with lifestyle changes. This workshop explores the ethical issues of predictive biomarker testing in Alzheimer's, including the mental health impact of genetic testing and pathology pre-disease, and when counselors should be promoting brain health interventions. The objectives of this session are for participants to identify at least five risk factors for late-life cognitive decline, discuss three ethical concerns inherent with blood biomarker testing, and list three strategies for managing anticipatory cognitive loss. Resources: Finding Meaning, Sixth Stage of Grief (Kessler, 2019); US Pointer Study (Alzheimer's Association, 2025); models of grief, loss and mourning (Worden, Boss, Doku and Kubler-Ross); among others.

Pamela Krist Atwood is a psychotherapist, gerontologist, award-winning author, and President of Atwood Dementia Group/Live Laugh Learn LLC. Pam has 35+ years of experience working with individuals and families living with neurocognitive disorders, and her company specializes in coaching and counseling caregivers and people living with Alzheimer's.

Session Information

Exploring Specializations in Perinatal and Infant Mental Health for Counselors

Exploring Specializations in Perinatal and Infant Mental Health for Counselors: Understanding career paths, training, social and professional impact, and clinical opportunities. In this presentation, participants will deepen their understanding of perinatal and infant mental health concepts within counseling practice. Participants will explore common mental health concerns that can arise during the perinatal period and early infancy, along with their effects on parents and families. We will also identify career pathways and specializations in this field and their significance for counselors. Participants gain some insight into available training opportunities, certifications, and organizations that offer specialized training in this area. The objectives of this session are for participants to define core concepts in perinatal and infant mental health relevant to counseling practice; identify common mental health concerns affecting parents and infants and how these specialties overlap; acknowledge complex situations related to perinatal mental health care that may evoke strong political perspectives and how they impact the counseling profession; gain understanding of initiatives and policy work in Connecticut to support perinatal/infant mental health work; and explore specialization pathways and training opportunities.

Michelle "Mickie" Loucraft is an LPC, PMH-C, trauma-informed, trained in ART and IMH practice, owner, and adjunct professor. BA in Psychology and an MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Bay Path University. Mickie has significant experience in hospital settings, including crisis intervention. And currently a PhD candidate in Counselor Education and Supervision. She is a devoted wife, mother of four adults, and grandmother to nine. Avid reader, nature lover, and karaoke queen.

EMDR and How the Brain Heals from Stress and Trauma

Our brains have a remarkable ability to heal, but sometimes difficult experiences remain “stuck” and continue to affect emotions, reactions, relationships, and daily functioning long after the event has passed. This presentation introduces EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), an evidence-based therapy that works with the brain’s natural capacity to process and resolve stressful and traumatic experiences. Participants will explore how EMDR can support individuals experiencing trauma, PTSD, complex PTSD, grief and loss, anxiety, and everyday stress. The session will also highlight the differences between traditional weekly EMDR therapy and intensive formats, which allow focused therapeutic work over a shorter period. Participants will practice a simple EMDR-based resourcing technique designed to promote calm and resilience. The objectives of this session are for participants to explain how the brain stores stressful experiences and how EMDR helps facilitate processing and resolution; identify the range of concerns that may be addressed through EMDR, from significant trauma and loss to everyday stress and anxiety; describe the difference between traditional weekly EMDR therapy and EMDR intensive formats; and practice at least one EMDR-based resourcing technique to support calm and resilience.

Erica Wilcox, LPC, an experienced Licensed Professional Counselor and EMDR specialist, founded Wilcox Wellness, LLC in East Hampton, Connecticut. She has worked in the mental health field for more than 20 years and has been in private practice since 2014. Erica specializes in EMDR intensive therapy for trauma, PTSD, complex PTSD, recent traumatic events, grief and loss, anxiety, and performance enhancement. She works with high-achieving professionals, executives, athletes, and creatives to help them move forward from difficult experiences and strengthen their ability to perform and engage fully in their personal and professional lives. Erica is an EMDRIA Certified Therapist, EMDRIA-Approved Consultant, and is trained in EMDR 2.0. She also speaks globally on corporate wellness, providing practical, brain-based strategies for stress management and resilience. Erica holds an MS in Counselor Education from Central Connecticut State University and a BA in Psychology from Fairleigh Dickinson University. She is a recipient of the Counselors Choice Award, and Wilcox Wellness is a two-time Natural Nutmeg 10Best winner.

Conference Registration

www.ccacounseling.com/conference

Registration Type	Ticket
Professional Member	$90
Professional Non-Member	$135
Student/Retiree Member	$50
Student/Retiree Non-Member	$70

Come Ready to Win Prizes at the Graduate Student Scholarship Raffle!

All proceeds go to a dedicated fund that helps defray conference costs for students.

Bring cash or credit card for tickets.

Cancellation Policy

All requests for refunds must be made in writing through email. Written notice of cancellation received by email or mail sent via email by **November 4, 2026** will be issued a full refund. Any written notice of cancellation received by email after November 4, 2026 will be refunded 33% of the original payment.

All requests should be directed to cca_exec_dir@msn.com. Transfer of registration to another individual may be done at any time without a fee.

Questions or Needs

All requests related to dietary, ADA, or any other needs should be directed to CCA:

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