

# *Counseling Connections Spring 2024: Spring Renewal*

**Elevating Excellence Through Professional Development**

**Friday, May 3, 2024**

**COURTYARD HARTFORD CROMWELL**

**4 Sebethe Drive, Cromwell, CT**

Join us for a transformative counseling conference designed to rejuvenate and empower professionals in the field. Attendees can expect dynamic workshops and interactive sessions tailored to enhance their skills, foster personal growth, and elevate their counseling practice. This springtime gathering will serve as a platform for networking, sharing best practices, and gaining insights from leading experts, creating an enriching environment for advancing excellence in the counseling profession.

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## **Join us at the annual conference!**

- Education Sessions
- Networking
- Annual Awards
- Poster Presentations
- Hot Executive Meals
- Exhibitor/Sponsors

## **Are You a Student Member?**

Apply for a [Student Scholarship](#) to help defray the cost of attendance!

## **Not a Member of CCA?**

[Join today](#) and take advantage of the best rates to attend the conference!



# Conference Agenda

7:30am	Registration Opens / Hot Executive Breakfast First Timers Student and New Professional Orientation
8:00 am	<b>Welcome</b>
8:15 - 11:15 am	<b>Navigating Multiple Relationships and Boundaries...Without Getting Lost</b> [3 clock hours - Ethics]
11:20 - 12:00 pm	<b>Visit our Sponsors, Exhibitors, Graduate Student Poster Presentations</b>
12:00 - 1:00 am	Hot Executive Lunch, Annual Awards, and CMHCA & CACES Division Presentation
1:00- 2:00 pm	<b>Being Neurodiverse Aware in the Counseling Community</b> [1 clock hour]
2:15 - 3:15 pm	<b>Career Counseling for Veterans Across all Service Eras: Challenges in Military-to-Civilian Workforce Transitions</b> [1 clock hour]
3:30 - 4:30 pm	<b>Cleaning the Closet: Reframing Coming Out as Identity Management</b> [1 clock hour]

## Continuing Education Information

**Up to 6 clock hours of continuing education may be earned.**

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)



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.

CCA Requirements for: Processing of Clock Hours - Clock hours are awarded for sessions attended in full, with confirmed attendance at the start and end of the session, and submission of a completed evaluation form for each session.

### **As Simple as 1, 2, 3...**

- 1) Sign in and out for each session attended.
- 2) Complete the electronic evaluation for each session attended.
- 3) CCA will email certificates within one month of event

# Session Information

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## **Navigating Multiple Relationships and Boundaries... Without Getting Lost**

Multiple relationships and boundary crossings are some of the most common reasons counselors incur professional liability claims. Therefore, in this interactive workshop, we will explore the ethics behind multiple relationships and boundaries and ways to keep ourselves out of hot water. Counselors will leave this workshop with concrete knowledge of their ethical requirements and explicit strategies to remain compliant. This interactive lecture will focus on the ACA Code of Ethics and draw support from recent peer-reviewed work and insurance industry reports. Case studies will be utilized to support the topic, and participants will leave with a folder of tools to use to help ensure that they will remain ethical while navigating the often complex world of multiple relationships and boundaries.

**Dr. Sarah Evans Zalewski, NCC, ACS, BC-TMH, LPC, Registered Play Therapist**, is the immediate Past President of CCA. She has a private practice and is a Counselor Educator at Central Connecticut State University. **Dr. Mikayla Bozym, LPC, NCC** is the director of an Urgent Crisis Center, has her own private practice, and is an adjunct professor at Central Connecticut State University.

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## **Being Neurodiverse Aware in the Counseling Community**

Over the course of the past 5-7 years, the field of neurodevelopmental disabilities have been challenged with new insight and perspectives on what it means to have differing neurology from those said to be more “neurotypical.” Much conversation and debate has arisen over what it means to be “neurodiverse affirming” and the implications it has on mental health counseling and improving one’s social/adaptive skills. This workshop will provide mental health counselors with a platform to be “neurodiverse aware” as it pertains to clients who identify as neurodiverse. An examination of a client’s experience with social injustices, past interventions and parental expectations will be had. Recommendations for a strength based approach to counseling will be highlighted. Participants will provide examples of what it means to be neurodiverse aware. Participants will explore ways to integrate trauma informed practices into counseling sessions with a neurodiverse client. Participants will create ways to use one’s strengths and interests to assist in the counseling process. This session will introduce participants to various resources associated with creating “neurodiverse awareness” as it can impact therapeutic processes. Techniques and research on the topic will be shared.

**Chris Abildgaard, Ed.D, NCSP, LPC, NCC**, is the owner and director of the Social Learning Center (SLC), LLC. located in Cheshire, CT. Chris earned his Doctor of Education in School Psychology from Loyola University Chicago, is a Nationally Certified School Psychologist & a Licensed Professional Counselor with a specialization in Autism Spectrum Disorders and Neurodiverse learners. Chris holds a Graduate Certificate from the University of Massachusetts Lowell in Behavioral Interventions in Autism. In addition to his clinical, consultation and supervision duties at the SLC, Chris teaches at several top universities in Connecticut. Dr. Abildgaard was heavily involved as an Adjunct Professor in the Special Education Department at the University of St. Joseph (USJ) as he helped to update and enhance their Master’s in Autism and Neurodiversity program. He currently holds an Adjunct Professor position at the University of Hartford in the Psychology Department. His duties at both universities include teaching, curriculum development and supervision.

## **Career Counseling for Veterans Across all Service Eras: Challenges in Military-to-Civilian Workforce Transitions**

This workshop will address some of the challenges Connecticut veterans from all eras encounter as they transition to and adjust to the civilian workforce. An overview of specific populations will include recently separated veterans, Vietnam-era veterans transitioning to part-time positions or retirement, and veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE) including combat and non-combat-related injuries, homelessness, criminal justice involvement, mental health disorders, trauma, and substance abuse-related issues. An exploration of challenges experienced during transition includes trauma experience, military socialization, self-stigma, stereotype threat, and discrimination. The workshop will also add job search related issues including lack of interviewing experience, especially among newly-separated veterans, as well as overuse of military jargon in resumes]. An overview of VR&E (Veteran Readiness and Employment, formerly known as Vocational Rehab), Strategies for Career Counseling, a review of DOL and VA programs and resources will be provided to participants. This session will be an Interactive workshop to include icebreaker exercises, a PowerPoint Presentation, short video, sample case studies involving participants, and a question/answer session.

**Jarett Esposito, USMC veteran**, veterans' outreach representative at CT Department of Labor and **Michael Shavel, LPC, MBTI, CPRW** is a Career Counselor with the CT Dept of Labor in Bridgeport. Clients include recently laid off workers, managers and executives, clients re-entering the workforce, justice-involved, and clients with disabilities. He is also a past-president of CCA.

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## **Cleaning the Closet: Reframing Coming Out as Identity Management**

When training pre-service counselors, clinical discussions of how to best serve members of the LGBTGEQIAP2S+ community are frequently focused on a process typically referred to as, "coming out." Terms like, "coming out" have the capacity to reinforce shame. This presentation engages participants in uprooting heterosexism and cisgenderism associated with common terms like, "Coming Out", "Stealth", and "Being on the Down Low." Participants will learn how to use language that deconstructs shame, how to facilitate effective discussions with clients that lead to intentional decisions about where, when, to whom and how to disclose information about LGBTGEQIAP2s+ status. This dynamic and fun presentation involves the use of a platform called AHA Slides to engage the audience and provide opportunities for group participation. The presenters are out-and-proud members of the LGBTGEQAIP2S+ community with a combination of 25 years of experience working with queer clients in agency and educational settings. This presentation leverages a queer theory lens to disrupt heterosexist and cisnormative prescriptions in the language clinicians use when working with queer clients. The presenters will provide opportunities for participants to practice using a liberation framework in response to case vignettes.

**Dr. Laurie Bonjo** is associate professor and program coordinator of the doctoral program in counselor education and supervision (CES) at Southern Connecticut State University. Dr. Bonjo is the 2023 AMHCA Counselor Educator of the Year and the President-elect of the Association for Counseling Sexology and Sexual Wellness. **Mx. Cody Helgesen** (they/them) is a third-year CES doctoral student whose primary research interests include queer identity, neurodivergence, underrepresented ages, and intersectional experiences in school and clinical settings. Mx. Helgesen works as a Transition and Post-Secondary counselor for a therapeutic day school, as well as a private practice clinician.

# Register for the Conference - [www.CCAcounseling.com](http://www.CCAcounseling.com)

Registration Type	Ticket Price
Professional Member	\$85
Professional Non-Member	\$130
Student/Retiree Member	\$45
Student/Retiree Non-Member	\$65

## 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 April 19, 2024** will be issued a full refund. Any written notice of cancellation received by email after April 19, 2024 will be refunded 33% of the original payment. All requests should be directed to [cca\\_exec\\_dir@msn.com](mailto: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 at the contact information below.



## Come Ready to Participate in the Graduate Student Scholarship Raffle!

Tickets will be sold for our raffle of wonderful and exciting raffle baskets!  
Bring cash for tickets!

**Connecticut Counseling Association, PO Box 3735, Milford, CT 06460**  
**1-888-818-1110    [cca\\_exec\\_dir@msn.com](mailto:cca_exec_dir@msn.com)    [www.CCAcounseling.com](http://www.CCAcounseling.com)**