Radical Recovery Summit - Meet the Speakers

Daniel Bergner


Caroline Mazel-Carlton

Caroline Mazel-Carlton is someone whose own personal experiences frequenting psychiatrists' offices, hospitals and jails have helped her form a vision of a more supportive world. She has worked professionally providing direct support for other folks with psychiatric diagnoses for the past 15 years. Caroline has worked in diverse settings from community support teams in rural Appalachia to peer-run community centers in urban areas to long-term forensic hospitals. She has facilitated educational events for human-rights & harm reduction approaches to mental health, such as "Alternatives to Suicide", in North & South America, Australia, Europe and the Middle East. Caroline currently serves as the Director of Learning Opportunities for the Wildflower Alliance, home of the WHO-recognized peer respite "Afiya House" and does extensive training and facilitation for the Hearing Voices Network. She has contributed to multiple academic publications on supporting people with suicide and one book on her experience skating on a roller derby team as #18 Mazel Tov Cocktail.
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**Robert Bergner**

Bob Bergner is the pastor of Grace and St John’s Episcopal Church in Hamden, Connecticut, a parish known for its generous hospitality and innovative outreach programs, including the Dinner for a Dollar community supper and an ecumenical community garden project. Bob is a co-founder of Swords To Plowshares Northeast an organization that transforms bought-back guns into garden tools and jewelry. He is also an active member of the greater New Haven performing arts community as a musician and dancer, sharing his talents in a variety of venues, including Choate Rosemary Hall, New Haven Ballet, Educational Center for the Arts and Yale New Haven Hospital. Bob holds degrees from Harvard University, McGill University, the Montreal Diocesan Theological College and Middlebury College.

**Leigh Nathan, MD**

Leigh Nathan, MD is a psychiatrist practicing in Connecticut and the Clinical Lead of Person-centered Care at the Institute of Living, where she practices Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry, educates trainees in Psychiatry, and oversees the implementation of the World Health Organization’s QualityRights Initiative at the Institute of Living. She seeks to address existing mental health laws and social service program guidelines and reduce coercive and involuntary practices in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

**Kathy Flaherty**

Kathy is the Executive Director of Connecticut Legal Rights Project, Inc. ([www.clrp.org](http://www.clrp.org)) an agency that provides legal services to low income individuals with mental health conditions on matters related to their treatment, recovery, and civil rights. Kathy combines her personal experience as a psychiatric and long COVID survivor and her legal background to speak to issues affecting people with disabilities. Kathy lives in her hometown of Newington, CT with her husband, Jim Valentino. Kathy is on Twitter @ConnConnection. Kathy has written op-eds on a variety of topics, including politics, law, mental health, adoptee rights, and soccer.
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Kimberly Horowitz

Kimberly graduated from Muhlenberg College with a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology. She worked in the telecommunications industry for several years, then attended Rutgers School of Law in Camden, New Jersey. She worked in a volunteer capacity for a non-profit as Connecticut Legislative Director for several years before attending a certification course to become a Recovery Support Specialist (RSS). She is a person with lived experience of mental ill-health. She joined Hartford HealthCare’s Institute of Living in 2019, beginning as the only RSS in the inpatient units; she now oversees a team of RSSs that provide coverage for all of the Donnelly inpatient units.

Aieyat Zalzala, PhD

Dr. Zalzala is a counseling psychologist with clinical interests in providing insight-oriented therapy to individuals suffering from severe mental illness, with special emphasis on schizophrenia spectrum disorders. She is also involved in training fellows, residents and interns across disciplines in the area of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Her research interests are centered on improving treatment approaches for those with SMI and the intersection of multiculturalism and social justice in mental health care.

Monnica T. Williams, PhD

Dr. Monnica T. Williams is a board-certified licensed clinical psychologist and Associate Professor at the University of Ottawa, in the School of Psychology, where she is the Canada Research Chair in Mental Health Disparities. She is also the Clinical Director of the Behavioral Wellness Clinic in Connecticut, where she provides supervision and training to clinicians for empirically-supported treatments. Dr. Williams’ research focuses on BIPOC mental health, culture, and psychopathology, and she has published over 200 scientific articles on these topics. Current projects include the assessment of race-based trauma, barriers to treatment in OCD, improving cultural competence in the delivery of mental health care services, and interventions to reduce racism. This includes her work as a PI in a multisite study of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy for PTSD for people of color. Her work has been featured in several major media outlets, including NPR, CBS, Huffington Post, and the New York Times.”
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Altha J. Stewart, MD

Altha J. Stewart, MD is Senior Associate Dean for Community Health Engagement, Director, Division of Public and Community Psychiatry, and Director, Center for Youth Advocacy and Well-Being at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis. A native of Memphis, she graduated Temple University Medical School, completed residency at Drexel University, and has led large public mental health systems in Pennsylvania, New York, and Michigan over her 40 year career. Dr. Stewart is currently President of the American Association for Community Psychiatry, following her historic election in 2017 as the 145th President of the American Psychiatric Association, where she was the first African American ever elected as president in the 175-year history of the organization. She is also past president of the Black Psychiatrists of America, Association of Women Psychiatrists, and American Psychiatric Foundation. She has served as Visiting Professor at UC San Francisco, UC Davis, University of Maryland, and Massachusetts General Hospital, and received honorary degrees from her alma mater, Christian Brothers University in Memphis, as well as Regis College in Weston, MA. She is also an honorary member of the South African Society of Psychiatrists.

She is the recipient of the 2023 NAMI-TN “Courage to Share” award, 2022 Brain and Behavior Research Foundation Pardes Humanitarian Prize, UT President’s Award – “Connect” Category, the American Psychiatric Association Alexandra Symonds, Solomon Carter Fuller and Administrative Psychiatry and Leadership Awards, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine Arlene Parsons Bennett, MD Health Equity Award, and the Black Psychiatrists of America Lifetime Achievement Award. She currently serves on the boards of numerous local and national professional, academic, non-profit and advocacy organizations.

Karen Kangas, EdD

Karen Kangas is a nationally recognized leader on behavioral health. She is a powerful educator with a compelling message of hope and recovery. Dr. Kangas has also achieved national recognition during her long and successful career. She received the prestigious Clifford Beers Award in recognition of her efforts to help improve conditions for and attitudes toward people with mental health and addiction challenges. On a local level she received the Roger Sherman Award for her work in advancement of human rights in the State of Connecticut. Advocacy Unlimited, a DMHAS funded agency created the “Karen Kangas Excellence in Advocacy Award” to be given yearly to an outstanding advocate. This year the award went to Dr. Javeed Sukhera, the Medical Director at the Institute of Living.

Hilary Rudenauer

Hilary Rudenauer is a Reiki Master Teacher, Postpartum Doula, 500-Hour Kripalu Yoga Teacher, and owner of The Mindful Mama. She combines her lived experience with mental health challenges, addiction, and trauma with her professional expertise in the areas of mental health, maternal care, and holistic healing to create transformational experiences where people feel seen, safe, nurtured, and empowered.
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Kelvin Young

Kelvin Young is an award-winning sound healer, recovery support specialist, at IOL, published author and co-founder of the SoulCare Love, LLC. Kelvin has presented around the country in diverse settings, including yoga studios, retreat centers, conferences, high schools, colleges, prisons, addiction treatment centers, psychiatric hospitals, and mental health agencies. He is passionate about holding space for people to heal and is known for his warm, loving, and down-to-earth way of connecting with people.

Tess Atkinson

Tess Atkinson is a Clinical Research Associate at the Institute of Living (IOL), focusing broadly on racial trauma, cultural humility, stigma towards mental health, and health disparities and helps with ongoing initiatives for improving diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) at the IOL. Tess has a bachelor’s degree in Psychology and a master’s degree in Health Psychology. Tess was also a collegiate athlete who played on the CCSU Women’s Soccer team. Her personal experience with mental health concerns fueled her passion for advocating for mental health awareness in collegiate athletics.

Through the ideas learned from the Recovery Leadership Academy (RLA) course and her own experiences, she strives to bring a compassionate and optimistic approach to her research, advocate for more health equity and recovery-oriented systems, and further inspire others to share their stories.