Superhero Therapy Conference
Session Abstracts, Objectives, References, and Target Audience
Please note: Sessions marked with * are not approved for CE credit

Thursday, September 22, 2022

K1) 11:00 am to 12:00 pm EDT*
Keynote
Chase Masterson

12:00 am to 1:00 pm EDT (1 CE hour)
A1) The Power of Storytelling: Applying Superheroes and Supervillains in Therapy
Maria Laquerre Diego & Sophia Ansari

The stories from comic books and pop culture media can offer a powerful analogy to frame our own experiences. Integrating a client's interests in therapy can nurture rapport building, encourage creativity, and can provide a safe distance to process emotions and gain perspective.
This interactive workshop will provide participants with creative interventions that integrate their clients' interests. Learn how to help your clients discover they are the heroes of their own stories!

Learning Objectives:
- identify three ways to use pop culture, superheroes and villains in your therapy practice
- demonstrate ways to use pop culture, superhero and villain based interventions with clients

Target Audience:
This workshop is appropriate for mental health professionals, including psychologists, social workers, marriage and family therapists, and professional counselors – beginner level

References:
- Hill, R. M., Oosterhoff, B., Layne, C. M., Rooney, E., Yudovich, S., Pynoos, R. S., & Kaplow, J. B. (2019). Multidimensional Grief Therapy: Pilot Open Trial of a Novel Intervention for Bereaved Children and Adolescents. Journal of Child and Family Studies, 28(11), 3062–3074. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-019-01481-x
- Niemiec, R. (2020). Character strengths cinematherapy: Using movies to inspire change, meaning and cinematic elevation. Journal of Clinical Psychology.
- Smieszek, M. (2019). Cinematherapy as a Part of the Education and Therapy of People with Intellectual Disabilities, Mental Disorders and as a Tool for Personal Development. International Research Journal for Quality in Education, 6(1), 30-34. https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-73029-5

A2) 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm EDT (1 CE hour)
Why do we like to be scared? Mental health implications and uses of horror in treatment.
Shayna Gurvitz & Kathy Dickson

There is still much stigma surrounding interest in horror and scary content. Especially for teens and children, horror is sometimes even considered concerning or a "warning sign" for negative or violent

behavior. We will explore why these topics speak to clients, and how to use them in effective therapeutic practice, as well as identify contra-indications for use in treatment.

Learning Objectives:
- Identify when integrate horror and horror themed interventions in mental health treatment
- Describe 2 ways to use horror themed interventions with clients

Target Audience:
Mental Health Professionals, beginner to intermediate level

References:
1) Martin G. N. (2019). (Why) Do You Like Scary Movies? A Review of the Empirical Research on Psychological Responses to Horror Films. Frontiers in psychology, 10, 2298. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02298

2) Andersen MM, Schjoedt U, Price H, Rosas FE, Scrivner C, Clasen M. Playing With Fear: A Field Study in Recreational Horror. Psychol Sci. 2020 Dec;31(12):1497-1510. doi: 10.1177/0956797620972116. Epub 2020 Nov 2. PMID: 33137263; PMCID: PMC7734554.

3) Scrivner, C., Johnson, J. A., Kjeldgaard-Christiansen, J., & Clasen, M. (2021). Pandemic practice: Horror fans and morbidly curious individuals are more psychologically resilient during the COVID-19 pandemic. Personality and Individual Differences, 168, 110397. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.110397

4) Scrivner, C., & Christensen, K. A. (2021, February 4). Scaring away anxiety: Therapeutic avenues for horror fiction to enhance treatment for anxiety symptoms. https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/7uh6f

5) C. (2021, October 21). The Psychology of Fear | Concordia University, St. Paul Online. CSP Online. https://online.csp.edu/resources/article/pyschology-of-fear/#:%7E:text=Horror%20entertainment%20can%20trigger%20the,fans%20habitually%20watch%20scary%20movies

6) Varrati, M. (2021, October 13). Scream Therapy: The Mental Health Benefits of Horror Movies. Healthline. https://www.healthline.com/health-news/scream-therapy-the-mental-health-benefits-of-horror-movies#Horror-movies-can-help-us-face-our-fears

7) The Psychology Behind Why We Love (or Hate) Horror. (2021, October 26). Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2021/10/the-psychology-behind-why-we-love-or-hate-horror

8) Linan, S. (2018, October 30). Why do we like to be scared? USC experts explain the science of fright. USC News. https://news.usc.edu/151096/why-do-we-like-to-be-scared-usc-experts-explain-the-science-of-fright/

9) Johnson, N. (2021, May 4). How horror movies can help people overcome real-world trauma. Science. https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/how-horror-movies-can-help-overco Me-trauma-and-relieve-stress

10) Asma, S. T. (2016). On monsters: An unnatural history of our worst fears. Langara   College.

11) Kerr, M. (2017). Scream: Chilling adventures in the science of fear. PublicAffairs.

12) Krause RJ, Rucker DD. Can Bad Be Good? The Attraction of a Darker Self. Psychol Sci. 2020 May;31(5):518-530. doi: 10.1177/0956797620909742. Epub 2020 Apr 21. PMID: 32315251.

13) Clasen, M., Kjeldgaard-Christiansen, J., & Johnson, J. A. (2020). Horror, personality, and threat simulation: A survey on the psychology of scary media. Evolutionary Behavioral Sciences, 14(3), 213–230. https://doi.org/10.1037/ebs0000152

14) Hudson, M., Seppälä, K., Putkinen, V., Sun, L., Glerean, E., Karjalainen, T., Karlsson, H. K., Hirvonen, J., & Nummenmaa, L. (2020). Dissociable neural systems for unconditioned acute and sustained fear. NeuroImage, 216, 116522. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroimage.2020.116522

A3) 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm EDT (1 CE hour)
SuperKids: An Interactive Comic Book to Deliver Evidence-based Skills to Youth
Sandra Pimentel, Chase Masterson, Maria Alba, Janina Scarlet, and Abe Crawford

Adolescents and young adults hospitalized with medical illness may experience anxiety, depression, and difficulties with adjusting to their illness. They may benefit from evidence-based interventions to assist with coping with pain and associated psychological distress. Moreover, with rates of childhood psychiatric illness on the rise amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, creative, far-reaching therapeutic interventions are needed to respond effectively and efficiently to the current mental health crisis. One innovative format is comic books, which are receiving increasing attention for their potential for disseminating evidence-based care to youth. Prior research has indicated that comics may be a promising strategy to promote health behaviors, reduce anxiety and aggression, and promote resilience.

SuperKids: Change the World (SK) takes the concept of comic books one step further by integrating cognitive-behavioral and acceptance-based strategies into an interactive activity book. SK aims to provide a youth-friendly approach to dealing with the difficult experiences associated with medical illnesses. SK content is based on real Bronx families and was developed collaboratively with the Montefiore Medical Center Psychiatry and Pediatrics teams and the team at PopCulture Hero Coalition. SK was illustrated by Wellington Alves and authored by psychologist, Dr. Janina Scarlet. SK features four diverse child characters experiencing real pain, fears, and sadness in relation to their illnesses. A group leader coaches the characters to practice various strategies (e.g., problem-solving, mindful breathing, coping self-talk) using super-hero language and narratives (e.g., superpowers, "origin stories," "power-ups").

This panel will provide information about the initial pilot study that assessed youth satisfaction with SK in an inpatient medical setting. Panel members will discuss the benefits, challenges, and considerations for using comic books to deliver evidence-based skills to increase coping in youth. Clinicians who attend this panel will increase their knowledge in creative, CBT-focused interventions, and will leave with ready-to-use strategies for implementing SK with their youth population.

Learning Objectives:
- Describe the benefits of using innovative methods for delivery of psychosocial interventions, such as comic books

- Discuss early data collected and next steps for studying the effectiveness of using SK to deliver cognitive-behavioral and acceptance-based skills in therapy sessions

Target Audience:
Mental Health Professionals – all levels

References:
1. Scarlet, J., & Alves, W. (2017). Superhero therapy: Mindfulness skills to help teens and young adults deal with anxiety, depression, and trauma. Instant Help, New Harbinger Publications, Oakland, CA.
2. Betzalel, N., & Schechtman, Z. (2017). The impact of bibliotherapy on youth who experience parental absence, School Psychology International, 38 (5), 473-490.
3. Branscum, P., Sharma, M., Wang, L., Wilson, B., & Rojas-Guyler, L. (2013). A true challenge for any superhero: An evaluation of a comic book obesity prevention program, Family and Community Health, 36 (1), 63-76.
4. Fradkin, C. Weschenfelder, G., &Yunes, M. (2016). Shared adversities of children and comic superheroes as resources for promoting resilience: Comic superheroes are an untapped resource for empowering vulnerable children, Child Abuse and Neglect, 51, 407-415.

Friday, September 23, 2022

K2) 11:00 am to 12:00 pm EDT (1 CE hour)
Self Processes as the Golden Key to the ACT Model
Kelly Wilson

Stories can be a terrible trap. When they are traps, they isolate, and so the trap tightens. Understanding and working with self and identity can be the key to flexibility and creativity. In this talk, I will speak about self and identity primarily from an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy perspective, though I will draw from existential and phenomenological sensibilities. In this talk, I will offer an examination of the ACT model through the lens of self work. From a behavioral view, self and identity are created in a crucible of questions. As clinicians the crucible of questions we make for our clients can turn the key that springs the trap. ACT processes are sometimes taught using examples and exercises that explicitly highlight the individual process. In practice, the linking of these processes can create synergies that amplify the impact of an intervention. I will describe a behavioral view of self and identity and of simple actionable means of unlocking flexibility, creativity, and stories of meaning, purpose, and connection.

Learning Objectives:
- Discuss how to learn to use the principles "slow is fast and small is big" to build broader self-expression.
- Discuss how to use perspective taking as an essential element of self and identity work.
- Describe how to inquire into rigidly held, well-practiced stories in ways that promote defusion and flexibility.

Target Audience:
Mental health professionals: beginner - intermediate level.

References:
- Osler L (2022) "An illness of isolation, a disease of disconnection": Depression and the erosion of we-experiences. *Frontiers of Psychology.* 13:928186.doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.928186
- Stockton, D., Kellett, S., Berrios, R., Sirois, F., Wilkinson, N., & Miles, G. (2019). Identifying the Underlying Mechanisms of Change During Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT): A Systematic Review of Contemporary Mediation Studies. *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy, 47*(3), 332-362. doi:10.1017/S1352465818000553
- Gloster, A. T., Walder, N., Levin, M., Twohig, M., & Karekla, M. (2020). The empirical status of acceptance and commitment therapy: A review of meta-analyses. *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science, 18*, 181-192. DOI: 10.1016/j.jcbs.2020.09.009

B1) 12:00 am to 1:00 pm EDT (1 CE hour)
Coping with death, grief, and loss with the aid of horror, fantasy, and superhero narratives
Christa Call, Laura Vecchiolla & Casey Jones

Death and loss are inevitable realities of life, and although we are aware of this fact, it generally remains out of our daily consciousness. So, when we are faced with the death of a loved one or the loss of something significant, we struggle to cope. Death and loss can challenge a griever's sense of purpose, meaning, and identity as well as

Although we live in a culture that tends to deny death and encourage individuals to hide their grief, our stories do not. This panel will examine how different genres of media and storytelling offer relatable parallels to lived-experiences of bereavement that exemplify the struggles of grief and loss. This panel will also, through use of a superhero, YA fantasy, and horror genres, will highlight how a myriad of fiction narratives can be used to validate a griever's experience, explain evidence-based grief theories and concepts, and demonstrate intervention strategies.

Learning Objectives:
- Identify meaning-making challenges that bereaved individuals face and the value of stories and use of fictional narratives in therapy for the bereaved
- Discuss the concept of Continuing Bonds and how it is used in grief therapy.
- Identify the importance of modifying grief treatment to the individual
- Discuss the influence and power that a specific narrative experience can have on an individual

Target Audience:
This training is intended for mental health clinicians who wish to further their knowledge of practicing within field death, dying, loss, grief. Beginner-Intermediate level.

References:
- Broom, T., Chavez, R., & Wagner, D. (2021). Becoming the King in the North: identification with fictional characters is associated with greater self–other neural overlap. Social Cognition and Neuroscience, 16(6), 541-551.
- Shedlosky-Shoemaker, R., Costabile. K.A., & Arkin, M.R. (2014). Self-Expansion through Fictional Characters, Self and Identity, 13(5), 556-578, DOI:10.1080/15298868.2014.882269
- Mitima-Verloop, H. B., Mooren, T. T. M., & Boelen, P. A. (2019). Facilitating grief: An exploration of the function of funerals and rituals in relation to grief reactions. Death Studies, 45, 1-11.

- Shear, M. K. (2015). Complicated grief. The New England Journal of Medicine, 372, 153-160.

B2) 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm EDT (1 CE hour)
Shazam: Foster Care, System Problems and Therapeutic Plans
Rachel Wethers

Exploring the story of Billy Batson in Shazam and his various experiences entering the foster care system, struggling to trust new caregivers while managing the heavy weight of wanting to trust his Mother to be there for him. As a former foster who aged out of the system, Rachel will help explore the current state of the system in the US, as well as many of the common difficulties experienced by young people in the foster care system. Participants will review and apply common therapeutic trauma approaches to support foster or former foster youth's various life transitions, applying both ACT and Narrative Therapy to Billy's experience- providing an intervention commonly used with children who have experienced ongoing complex trauma.

Learning Objectives:
- Discuss some of the many needs of foster youth, and therapeutic interventions for trauma work in therapy.

Target Audience:
Mental health professionals working in the trauma and foster care fields. Beginner-Intermediate level.

References:
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau, www.acf.hhs.gov/cb Preliminary Estimates for FY2018 as of August 22, 2019 (26)

Cénat, J. M., McIntee, S., Mukunzi, J. N., & Noorishad, P. (2020). Overrepresentation of Black children in the child welfare system: A systematic review to understand and better act. Children and Youth Services Review, 120, 105714. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105714

Dettlaff, A. J. (2020). Introduction to Racial Disproportionality and Disparities in Child Welfare. Child Maltreatment, 3–7. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-54314-3_1

B3) 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm EDT (1 CE hour)
How I started to deal about OCD as a fearsome parasite, using ACT: three real stories of courage, dreams and creativity
Martina Migliore

Obsessive-compulsive disorder is a mental illness that includes obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviors. The obsessions can be repetitive thoughts, mental images, or urges that are both unwanted and intrusive. In an attempt to reduce the anxiety and distress caused by the obsessions, individuals with OCD engage in compulsive behaviors. The frequent or constant bombardment of these unwanted thoughts can make it very difficult for teens to focus at school or work, let alone enjoy life: this leads to a hell from which it seems impossible to escape. The mechanism is similar to the one enacted by an usurer: you are offered protection in exchange for

a favor. Too bad that single favor becomes an endless debt. In my daily practice, I use the theoretical principles of the ACT, to build what I call "the otherside dimension": a parallel space in which to experiment together in the process of change. Starting from the client's passions, we find together what really inspires them the most, and we use it to create stimuli and metaphors useful to work together. As therapeutic tools, I actually use table top role play games (TTRpG), Dixit cards and many stimuli from the fantasy universe of movies and TV series. Here I propose the story of three teenagers, taken hostage from one of the most fearsome mind parasites: the OCD. Using their favorite heroes' stories, we built together a common language and environment where the OCD became a powerful and subtle villain to fight against.

The parasite has had a different face, according to the boy: the ancient thousand-tentacled Gravemind of Halo, the faint devious voice of Alyssa from Silent Hill and the obscure power of the Scarlet Witch of the last Doctor Strange.

So, the Otherside Dimension was dominated by a devious and hostile villain, who had reduced boys' self-esteem, to the dregs. In each of the cases the boys were in constant doubt and danger: would bad luck, pain, sadness taint them forever? They could not risk it! Compulsions were the only salvation… or at least that was what was whispered to them slyly by the parasite. We will see together how Lucio, Daniele and Filippo successfully embarked on the superhero journey of their lives. They explore how they were able, through ACT processes, to unmask the enemy's plan and render it harmless, restoring it to its true nature as an inflexible psychological defense. Once the nature of blackmail was discovered, the boys had a chance to react and experiment with me to raise their self-esteem: kids had the opportunity to challenge themselves and be free again.

Learning Objectives:
- Describe how to build a therapeutic alliance with DOC teens and focus on their needs

Target Audience:
Mental health professionals working in the trauma and foster care fields. Beginner-Advanced level.

References:
Fradkin C. (2017) Janina Scarlet: Superhero Therapy: A Hero's Journey Through Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Journal of Youth and Adolescence 46(7):1629-1632

Philip J. Cherian V. (2021) Acceptance and commitment therapy in the treatment of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: A systematic review. Journal of Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders vol.21

Trent E.S Guzick A. G. Viana A.G., Storch E.A. (2021) Third-Wave Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder?: A Promising Approach if It Includes Exposure. Advances in Psychiatry and Behavioral Health. Vol. 1, Issue 1, September 2021, Pages 37-51

K3) 11:00 am to 12:00 pm EDT (1 CE hour)
Becoming a real-life superhero in the face of global disasters
Janina Scarlet

In the light of the recent global events - wars, violence, the ongoing suppression of human rights, and the rapidly rising mental health crisis, clinicians need to make mental health accessible and relatable. Most people might feel so overwhelmed by the global trauma that they might feel frozen in their ability to adapt and respond. This keynote will discuss ways to activate clients' sense of purpose in order to help clients to take actions toward becoming their own version of a superhero in real life.

Learning Objectives:
- Explain how to help clients activate their sense of purpose in the face of global trauma

Target Audience:
Mental health professionals, beginner-intermediate level

References:
1) Hamby, S., Taylor, E., Mitchell, K., Jones, L., & Newlin, C. (2020). Poly-victimization, trauma, and resilience: Exploring strengths that promote thriving after adversity. Journal of Trauma & Dissociation, 21(3), 376-395.
2) Berman, S. L., Montgomery, M. J., & Ratner, K. (2020). Trauma and identity: A reciprocal relationship?. Journal of Adolescence, 79, 275-278.
3) Matos, L., Indart, M., Park, C., & Leal, I. P. (2018). Meaning-making and psychological adjustment following refugee trauma. In Actas do 12º Congresso Nacional de Psicologia da Saúde (pp. 513-521). ISPA–Instituto Universitário.

C1) 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm EDT (1 CE hour)
The Oreo, the King, and the Wakandan Salute: What Black Panther Shows Us About Why Representation Matters
Mercedes Samudio

We all go on a journey in life to become our most authentic, fully realized selves. But, if you live in a culture where you don't get to see fully realized versions of a large part of your identity, it can be difficult to find the courage to show up as your best self. Being a Black nerd in the late 90s/early 00s was difficult, to say the least. When everyone else was reading Eric Jerome Dickey, I had my face in a Harry Potter book. When everyone else was listening to B2K, I was popping to Backstreet Boys. And although I wasn't alone in these pursuits, the idea that a Black kid could be so enamored with genres and interests that didn't progressively showcase her heritage was still odd to most in the Black community.

In this workshop, licensed psychotherapist Mercedes Samudio will use her personal experience as a so-called "white-washed" Black girl to explore how important representation is, especially when your identity is part of a marginalized culture. We'll explore racial identity development, psychosocial development, and social learning theories and how all three are influenced by the representation illustrated in the movie. We will also explore what it looks like to assimilate to the dominant culture and be ridiculed for it because the genres and entertainment you enjoy don't have enough representation.

Lastly, we'll dive into a discussion on the influence movies like Black Panther have on Black kids to finally see themselves reflected in a genre that's predominantly dominated by white figures and images. Attendees will learn how to apply theoretical knowledge to real-life case examples and unique interventions to implement in sessions with African-American clients. Attendees will also learn how to assess for and acutely treat racial trauma.

Learning Objectives:
- Discuss representation in media as it relates to racial identity development
- Explore how psychosocial development determines our ability to relate to others and understand ourselves
- Illustrate the effects of social learning theory on how we develop social norms and its influence on identity development

Target Audience:
For mental health professionals, all levels welcome

References:
1. Brittian Loyd, A., & Williams, B. V. (2016). The potential for youth programs to promote african american youth's development of ethnic and racial identity. Child Development Perspectives, 11(1), 29–38. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12204
2. Chaffers, Q., Ashley, W., & Archer, D. (2021). The elephant in the room: Systemic racism and psychotherapy. EMDRIA Virtual Conference 2022. https://emdriaconference.com/sessions/systemic-racism-and-psychotherapy/
3. Dogan, J. N., Rosenkrantz, D., Wheeler, P. B., & Hargons, C. N. (2022). Exploring identity and coping among Black viewers of Marvel's Black Panther. Psychology of Popular Media, 11(2), 183–195. https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000359
4. Hewitt, A. A. (2018). Black panther and the importance of racial socialization. Psychology Today. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/you-empowered/201802/black-panther-and-the-importance-racial-socialization
5. Malcoun, E., Williams, M. T., & Bahojb-Nouri, L. V. (2015). Assessment of posttraumatic stress disorder in African Americans. In L. T. Benuto & B. D. Leany (Eds.), Guide to Psychological Assessment with African Americans, New York: Springer. ISBN: 978-1-4939-1003-8.
6. Mayhew, A., & Weigle, P. (2018). Media engagement and identity formation among minority youth. Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America, 27(2), 269–285. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chc.2017.11.012
7. National Science Foundation. (2018). S&E indicators 2018. National Science Foundation. https://nsf.gov/statistics/2018/nsb20181/
8. Parker, S. (2018). Black panther and the power of representation. Psychology Benefits Society. https://psychologybenefits.org/2018/05/02/black-panther-and-the-power-of-representation/
9. Sundwall, M., & Savage, J. (2022). Confronting systemic racism & healing racial trauma w/ David Archer. Voice That Podcast. https://emdr-podcast.com/david-archer-anti-racist-74/
10. Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Quintana, S. M., Lee, R. M., Cross, W. E., Rivas-Drake, D., Schwartz, S. J., Syed, M., Yip, T., & Seaton, E. (2014). Ethnic and racial identity during adolescence and into young adulthood: An integrated conceptualization. Child Development, 85(1), 21–39. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12196
11. Williams, M. T., Printz, D., Ching, T., & Wetterneck, C. T. (2018). Assessing PTSD in ethnic and racial minorities: Trauma and racial trauma. Directions in Psychiatry, 38(3), 179-196.
12. Williams, M. T., Printz, D., & DeLapp, R. C. T. (2018). Assessing racial trauma in African Americans with the Trauma Symptoms of Discrimination Scale. Psychology of Violence. doi: 10.1037/vio0000212

C2) 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm EDT (1 CE hour)
Navigating Complex Trauma and Human Trafficking with Super Powers
Charlie Quinn Tebow & Brittany Greenbaum

Survivors of sex trafficking often experience symptoms of complex trauma that interfere with their mental health, interpersonal relationships, and general functioning. Symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder coupled with depression, anxiety, chronic pain, and attachment-trauma bonds and beliefs often lead survivors to psychotherapy, however, very few treatment modalities have been explored for their efficacy for this population, generally, and specifically for survivors from marginalized identities. Emerging research is showing a trend towards the benefits of strength-based, empowerment-centered approaches for survivors of sex trafficking.

This training will review research on the experiences of complex trauma survivors of sex trafficking and discuss strength-based approaches so that clinician have an new tools to support survivors. Additionally, case studies of foster care youth will be utilized to enable a deeper understanding of how to apply an empowered superpowers approach with survivors. Activities presented to 50 youth over the past year utilizing a self-constructed curriculum that incorporates Marvel and DC comics and video game references to help youth build their own super heroes will be shared.

Learning Objectives:
- Discuss what complex trauma is related to sex trafficking and foster care
- Identify at least two tools to help youth connect to their mental health through superheroes and comics

Target Audience:
Mental health professional, intermediate level

References:
1) Kathleen M. Preble, Andrea Nichols & Megan Owens (2021) Assets and Logic: Proposing an Evidenced-based Strategic Partnership Model for Anti-trafficking Response, Journal of Human Trafficking, DOI: 10.1080/23322705.2021.1899525

2) Franco D, Sunkel M, Sherman P. Social Work with Transgender Survivors of Human Trafficking: Implications for Practice. Journal of Human Rights and Social Work. 2021 Nov 13:1-0

3) Kometiani MK, Farmer KW. Exploring resilience through case studies of art therapy with sex trafficking survivors and their advocates. The Arts in Psychotherapy. 2020 Feb 1;67:101582.

4) Knight L, Xin Y, Mengo C. A scoping review of resilience in survivors of human trafficking. Trauma, Violence, & Abuse. 2021 Jan 20:1524838020985561

5) Scarlet, J. (2021). Superhero therapy for anxiety and trauma: A professional guide with Act and Cbt-based activities and worksheets for all ages. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

6) SCARLET, J. (2021). Super-women: Superhero therapy for women battling anxiety, depression, and trauma. READHOWYOUWANT.

C3) 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm EDT (1 CE hour)
I have no clue what I'm doing!: Adulthood and the need to play to thrive
Charlene MacPherson, Julia Stamman, & Matthew Rickmon

After the age of 25, we are expected as adults to know how to create a sustainable life. This includes how to make friends, and foster relationships, all while staying on top of all our obligations and responsibilities. Unfortunately, the only socially acceptable practice we get in adult life is our work environments and immediate family. Meanwhile, our friendships and play tend to fall by the wayside. With these overwhelming expectations and no social support, it is no wonder why today's adults feel more isolated, depressed, anxious, and alone than ever. Play is the answer.

As children, it is acceptable and encouraged to learn through social play but as soon as we are deemed adults, play becomes stigmatized and degraded. In this panel, we will discuss the extent to which role-playing games (RPGs) create an opportunity for adults to socialize, learn important life skills, make long-lasting relationships, have fun, and become superheroes in their own lives. With this innovative application of therapeutic RPGs, we will talk about the necessity of play for adults, its benefits, techniques, and success stories.
Through this panel, we will reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and accessing mental health services. We will legitimize therapeutic role-playing games as a therapeutic tool for the wider professional and the general community, as well as counter the stigma around using imagination and play as tools to help adults not only survive adulthood but thrive.

Learning Objectives:
* identify the potential benefits of Therapeutically Applied Role Playing Games

Target Audience:
Mental Health Professionals- intermediate level

References:

Daniau, S. (2016). The Transformative Potential of Role-Playing Games—: From Play Skills to Human Skills. Simulation & Gaming, 47(4), 423–444. https://doi. org/10.1177/1046878116650765

Wright, J. C., Weissglass, D. E., & Casey, V. (2017). Imaginative Role-Playing as a Medium for Moral Development: Dungeons & Dragons Provides Moral Training. Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 0022167816686263. https://doi. org/10.1177/0022167816686263

Blackmon, W. D. (1994). Dungeons and dragons: The use of a fantasy game in the psychotherapeutic treatment of a young adult. American Journal of Psychotherapy, 48(4), 624–632

C4) 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm EDT (1 CE hour)
Gamification Therapy in Wake, Sleep, Dreams, and Exposure
Michael Herold, Isaac Taitz, & Benjamin Taitz

Gamification Therapy in Wake, Sleep, Dreams, and Exposure is an entertaining presentation on the habitual pitfalls that interfere with sleep, the behavioral paths to upgrade your sleep strategy, as well as the ability to find the workability of one's own behavior patterns and design their own exposure exercise. In this presentation, presenters connect with audience members to put to rest myths and misconceptions about sleep, as well as help begin a new plan to wind down and stay in bed, utilize the dreaming experience, as well as get up on time. The first half of the presentation informs attendees on the science of sleep and dreams, as well as how to use that information to carve out a gameplan around bedtime and waking, thus improving patient sleep hygiene, buy-in for therapy, and overall prognosis in therapy Furthermore, the latter half of the presentation will inform and guide audiences through understanding psychological flexibility through zoom, peer groups, and exposure exercises. Particularly, audiences will learn how to utilize exposure interventions in group settings to facilitate support, empathy and gamification.

Learning Objectives:
- Describe ways to apply games and geek culture to sleep hygiene.
- Identify dream signs for nightmare reduction.
- Discuss how to introduce exposure games in workshops or direct work with clients
- Demonstrate examples of exposure exercises

Target Audience:
Mental health professionals, intermediate-advanced level.

References:
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3) Pramana, G., Parmanto, B., Lomas, J., Lindhiem, O., Kendall, P. C., & Silk, J. (2018). Using mobile health gamification to facilitate cognitive behavioral therapy skills practice in child anxiety treatment: open clinical trial. JMIR serious games, 6(2), e8902.
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Sunday, September 25, 2022

K4) 11:00 am to 12:00 pm EDT*
Keynote -Greg Weisman

D1) 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm EDT (1 CE hour)
The Use of superhero Therapy with our heroes (active duty, first responders): How has geek and hero therapy helped active-duty first responders open in treatment?
Sara Roldan

This presentation is an overview of the short- and long-term use of Hero therapy treatment modalities used in the United States for military personnel, first responders, and with posttraumatic stress disorder

and aid in introducing therapy such as acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), and cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). As a means of de-stigmatizing the Active duty mental health experience, Hero Therapy (HT) is the use of popular culture in evidence-based therapy.

This program will utilize Hero Therapy (HT) to help Active duty personnel feel understood and supported, extend their emotional language, and aid them in becoming their version of a superhero, supporting posttraumatic healing and fostering a therapeutic alliance. No prior knowledge of popular culture is needed.

Learning Objectives:
- Describe two ways in which Hero Therapy may be used to promote treatment adherence.
- Describe ways to implement and use short- and long-term use of Hero therapy treatment modalities for military personnel with posttraumatic stress disorder
- Discuss how other modalities such as acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), and cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) can be used with Hero Therapy

Target Audience:
For mental health professionals, an intermediate level that works with active duty veterans and first responders.

References:
Aggie Hirst, "Videogames Saved My Life": Everyday Resistance and Ludic Recovery among US Military Veterans, International Political Sociology, Volume 15, Issue 4, December 2021, Pages 482–503, https://doi.org/10.1093/ips/olab018

Reger, G.M. and Gahm, G.A. (2008), Virtual reality exposure therapy for active duty soldiers. J. Clin. Psychol., 64: 940-946. https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20512

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Derrick, J. E., Gabriel, S., & Hugenberg, K. (2009). Social surrogacy: How favored television programs provide the experience of belonging. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology 45, 352–362

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Chris Fradkin (2018) Superhero therapy: a hero's journey through Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Pastoral Care in Education, 36:2, 170-171, DOI: 10.1080/02643944.2018.1465235

D2) 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm EDT (1 CE hour)
Improving Mindfulness and Therapeutic Connection with LEGO
Yoni Sobin, Nicole Hassler, & Benjamin Taitz

LEGO-Based Therapy is a form of play therapy and therapeutic intervention that has been shown to be effective in working with children with autism and other related conditions (LeGoff et al, 2014). For example, LEGO building has been shown to facilitate prosocial interactions and social competence (LeGoff, 2004; Boyne 2014). Building with LEGO bricks can boost positive emotionality and elicit feelings of accomplishment and has been used to cultivate mindfulness practice (Headon, 2019). Initially developed for children aged 6-16, LEGO has found popularity across the lifespan as an excellent way to express one's creativity. It has gained particular attention among adults recently during the COVID-19 pandemic (Celestine, 2021). This presentation will focus on using LEGO building as a method of cultivating mindfulness practice and developing a therapeutic relationship, and how LEGO can be used in a therapeutic manner to develop social skills. Panelists will discuss the basics of mindfulness practice and LEGO building, the therapeutic applications of LEGO, and will provide examples of exercises clinicians can use in their practice.

Learning Objectives:
- Define mindfulness and identify basic mindfulness practice of using the five senses
- Describe how LEGO building can be used to improve social and emotional learning
- Identify how LEGO can be used to facilitate individual and group therapy sessions
- Identify 5 different activities to build with LEGO in a mindful manner

Target Audience:
For mental health professionals, beginner level

References:
Legoff, D. B., & Sherman, M. (2006). Long-term outcome of social skills intervention based on interactive LEGO© play. Autism, 10(4), 317-329.

LeGoff, D. B. (2004). Use of LEGO© as a therapeutic medium for improving social competence. Journal of autism and developmental disorders, 34(5), 557-571.

Baron-Cohen, S., De La Cuesta, G. G., LeGoff, D. B., & Krauss, G. W. (2014). LEGO®-Based Therapy: How to build social competence through LEGO®-based Clubs for children with autism and related conditions. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

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D3) 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm EDT (1 CE hour)
Behind the Mask: Exploring the Psychological Appeal of Cosplay
Joe Serrano, Edgar A. Ramos, & Samantha Ramos

This training will discuss the cosplay fandom as well as the appeal of cosplay from a psychological lens. The panel will include discussion and interpretation of the artistry behind the creation and portrayal of characters. Understanding the social integration and inclusion of the community, and its psychological underpinnings. Attendees will have a greater understanding of the cosplay world, concerns that the community faces, the benefits of participating in the culture, and its utilization in therapy.

Learning Objectives:
- Analyze the artistic, social, and psychological dynamics of cosplay
- Discuss how to employ culturally sensitive therapeutic interventions.

Target Audience:
Mental health professionals, Beginner Level

References:
- Buhl, M. (2019). Cosplays and cosplayers: A global phenomenon in a local context. In Anna Sparman (Ed.), Making culture: Children's and young people's leisure cultures (pp.33-46). Retrieved from www.forskningsdatabasen.dk
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