Symposium Description

Social workers, counselors, and other helping or support professionals are on the front line when working with children, youth and their biological and resource families. There is increasing recognition that trauma-informed, and resilience building approaches are needed in child welfare, health, behavioral health, education, juvenile justice, community and faith-based organizations and within communities.

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and adult exposure to a disturbing or threatening event are potentially traumatic events that can have negative, lasting effects on the health and well-being of those exposed to these experiences.

Trauma-informed practices promote growth after trauma to establish a strength-based approach focused on building on an individual’s resilience. Resilience building interventions recognize the potential of individuals, supports healing to increase the protective capacity of parents and caregivers, while helping to foster resilience in children, families, and adults that support them to live healthier lives. Systems of support can ensure that all the parents (caregivers), children and youth are seen for their potential, not only their trauma.

The symposium will provide information about what is trauma, what effects can childhood and adult-onset trauma have on children and adults, and what can be done to help survivors move towards a path of success. Attendees will also have opportunities to hear personal stories of survival and resilience, network and share resources while learning new strategies to create a trauma-sensitive environment to support the health, well-being, and success of children, youth and their parents or caregivers.

While the Symposium is focused on child welfare it will be of interest to social workers, and helping professionals from all systems of care, including, the faith-based community, community-based organizations, substance use treatment, health care professionals, behavioral health, schools, after-school programs, and others who support youth and families.
Tonier Cain-Muldrow is a trauma survivor and internationally recognized trauma informed care expert. Tonier’s work has focused on heightening awareness of the characteristics and effects of trauma and improving the performance of service providers, businesses, government agencies and others who interact with trauma victims and survivors.

Dr. Iran Barrera

Dr. Iran Barrera is an Associate Professor at Fresno State in the Department of Social Work Education. Dr. Barrera was just selected for a National Leadership program supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Interdisciplinary Research Leader) to become a change agent with advanced leadership skills and a clear focus on health and equity, allowing him to apply health research and policy to meet the pressing needs of communities. Dr. Barrera is also the Chair of the Cultural Competency Track for the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) and newly elected NASW-CA region D Committee on Nominations and Leadership Identification.

Dr. Kizzy Lopez

Dr. Kizzy Lopez is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at Fresno Pacific University. Her research examines practices and policies and the impact on outcomes for college-going foster youth and students of color. Prior to becoming as Assistant Professor, Dr. Lopez was instrumental in establishing a foster youth support program at California State University, Fresno called the Renaissance Scholars Program. She was the Program Director for 10 years creating innovative services and practices that significantly improved the retention and graduation rates of the former foster youth attending the institution. Her passion and commitment to serve this population, through her research and practice, stems from her own experiences with the foster care system as a child and experiences with homelessness while in college.

Brian Semsen Sr.

The love of family is the source of Brian’s passion for loving and serving others in our community. Born and raised in Delano, CA, he moved to Fresno after graduating high school in 1985. Brian has been married to his best friend, Jessica Semsem for twenty wonderful years. Last year Brian and Jessica finalized the adoption of their niece and nephew. They also continue to foster another niece and nephew which they have had since 2015, growing their family to nine amazing children and six wonderful grandchildren. Brian is a full time student at Fresno Pacific University in the Social Work Degree completion program. He also works full time as the Director of Recreational Resilience programs at Every Neighborhood Partnership which is a local nonprofit serving under resourced communities throughout the City of Fresno.

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“Lessening Trauma’s Hold in Today’s World: Confronting Trauma in a Professional Practice”

8:00-8:30 am  Registration
Continental Breakfast

8:30-9:00 am  Welcome & Introduction–
Opening Remarks
Cheryl Whittle, Ph.D.
Title IV-E Coordinator
Maggie Armistead, MSW
Title IV-E BASW Coordinator
Martha Vunkhanching, Ph.D., Chair
Department of Social Work Education
Daniel Espinoza, MSW
Intro of Speaker Frankie Freitas, MSW

9:00-10:15 am  Keynote–
Tonier Cain-Muldrow
CEO & Founder of Healing Neen Inc.

10:15-10:30 am  Break

10:30–11:30 am  Speaker–
Iran Barrera, Ph.D–
Associate Professor, Fresno State Department of Social Work Education

11:30-12:00 pm  IV-E BASW Special Awards, Student Recognition

12:15-1:00 pm  Luncheon

1:00-1:30 pm  IV-E MSW Special Awards, Student Recognition

1:30-2:30 pm  Panel–
Tonier Cain-Muldrow
Dr. Iran Barrera
Dr. Kizzy Lopez
Brian K. Semsem

2:30-2:45  Break

2:30-3:30  Keynote–
Tonier Cain-Muldrow
CEO & Founder of Healing Neen Inc.

3:30—4:00 pm  Wrap Up