

SOMERSET COUNTY

# HUMAN SERVICES AND STIGMA-FREE Conference

MONDAY | MAY 19, 2025 | 9 A.M.-3 P.M. | RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE



## EVENT AGENDA

### 9 A.M. | DOORS OPEN

*Check-ins, light refreshments, networking and table vendors*

### 9:25 A.M. | INTRODUCTION

*Ebeny Torres, Somerset County Addiction Services Coordinator*

### 9:30 A.M. | OPENING REMARKS

*Paul M. Drake, Somerset County Commissioner*

### 9:45 A.M. | WELCOME TO STIGMA-FREE ZONE

*Mark Williams, Stigma-Free Committee Chairperson*

### 10 A.M. | KEYNOTE SPEAKER

**Letting the Glitter Settle: Becoming the Teacher I Needed**

**Stefanie Lachenaur**

*2024-2025 New Jersey State and Somerset County Teacher of the Year*

Stefanie shares her journey from a student facing stress and overwhelm to an educator committed to creating supportive systems that help students thrive. Through personal stories, real-world initiatives, and a reminder that nurturing ourselves is essential to sustaining this work, she inspires mental health professionals to build stronger, more compassionate environments where every young person feels seen, supported, and empowered.

### 11 A.M. | SESSION I

#### 1. Like, Relationship between Stigma and Social Media

**Kevin Dyches, TriCounty CMO**

This discussion explores how the internet and social media serve as major distributors of stigma globally, particularly in mental health. Key factors include misinformation, self-stigma, barriers to treatment, and the rise of self-diagnosis influenced by online portrayals.

#### 2. \* Labels and Stereotype

**David Garlock, Criminal Justice Reform Advocate and Educator**

David addresses the stigma faced by formerly incarcerated individuals and advocates for the adoption of person-first language to promote dignity and respect in discussions about incarceration and reentry.



**3. \* Targeted Violence: Behavioral Threat Assessment & Management (BTAM)**

**Steve Crimando, NJ DMHAS Disaster and Terrorism Branch**

This session introduces the New Jersey Statewide Threat Assessment Team (NJ STAT), a collaborative effort among various agencies to identify, assess, and intervene with individuals at risk of targeted violence. It focuses on behavioral threat assessment, reducing stigma around mental illness, and equipping participants with tools to recognize and address potential threats.

**4. Treatment Advocate Reducing Stigma and Building Support for Sober Living Homes**

**Anthony Justo, CPRS, Business Development Specialist**

Anthony addresses stigma surrounding sober living through his impactful personal story, experiences with stigma, and positive changes witnessed firsthand. It concludes with actionable tips for navigating stigma in everyday life and fostering understanding.

**12 P.M. | LUNCH**

**12:30 P.M. | Lunch Presentation – Journaling**

**Roseann Cervelli, MS, LCADC, CCS, CPS**

Join Roseanne for a transformative mini workshop that blends mindful self-compassion with journaling to help you cultivate inner peace and resilience. Limited space available, so don't miss this opportunity to explore powerful tools for enhancing your well-being with guided journaling experience.

**1 P.M. | SESSION II**

**5. Transforming Perceptions: Fostering Respect Across Generations**

**Chris Kellogg, Nightingale NJ**

Chris challenges negative stereotypes about aging and their impact on both older adults and younger generations. Through education and open dialogue, participants will explore ways to foster respect, reduce stigma, and create an inclusive community that values individuals at every stage of life.

**6. \* Let the Glitter Settle: Trauma Sensitive Mindfulness Beyond the Glitter Jar**

**Stefanie Lachenauer, Montgomery Upper Middle School**

Join NJ Teacher of the Year Stefanie Lachenauer in exploring strategies to manage stress, maintain emotional regulation, and support others effectively. This workshop emphasizes self-care, co-regulation, and practical techniques like mindfulness to nurture well-being and strengthen resilience.

**7. \* Problem Gambling: The Hidden Epidemic**

**Jeanne Swain, Council on Compulsive Gambling**

With the surge of advertising, the spread of problem gambling has become extensive across New Jersey. The enticement to continue gambling for 'fun' can cross the line into problem gambling quickly and with devastating impact on the gambler, their loved ones and their community. Frequently, as a co-occurring condition, problem gambling is minimized or overlooked as other behaviors receive treatment. Become aware of gambling trends and the signs of problem gambling – for yourself and those you care about.

**8. Breaking the Silence: Reducing Stigma Around Calling DCP&P**

**Danielle Zsamba, *RWJ University Hospital in New Brunswick***

Danielle explores the stigma healthcare professionals face when calling DCP&P as mandated reporters, addressing challenges like social judgment, retaliation fears, and cultural factors. It offers practical strategies to improve reporting practices, fostering collaboration with families to provide support and enhance their well-being.

**2 P.M. | SESSION III**

**9. Bridging Community through Volunteerism**

**Laurie Roome, *Office of Volunteer Services***

This session explores how volunteerism fosters connections, strengthens communities, and creates meaningful social impact. Participants will learn how service bridges diverse groups, builds empathy, and empowers individuals to drive positive change together.

**10. \* HARM Reduction**

**Shannon Kiernan, *RHCH&WC, Harm Reduction Coordinator***

**Joni Whilden, *RHCH&WC, Recovery Support Specialist***

This interactive Harm Reduction presentation combines education with engaging activities to teach strategies for minimizing risks associated with high-risk behaviors, while gaining valuable insights into public health approaches and harm reduction strategies. Participants will also get the chance to listen to Joni's personal recovery story, which will help to shine a light on just how important peer support is when providing harm reduction services.

**11. The Impact of Race and Culture on Mental Health Recovery**

**Subha Bolisetty, *NAMI NJ***

This multicultural panel, featuring 3-4 panelists from NAMI NJ Multicultural programs, will explore the impact of race and culture on mental health recovery. Panelists, including individuals with lived experience, caregivers, and mental health providers, will share their perspectives on how cultural beliefs, stigma, and racial disparities influence mental health treatment and recovery.

**12. \* Stigma Veterans Face**

**Jenn Stivers, *Community Hope***

This discussion will explore the stigma and cultural barriers that prevent veterans and active-duty military members from seeking help, particularly regarding mental health and reintegration. It will also address the impact of negative stereotypes and misconceptions, including those affecting homeless veterans, to promote a more accurate and supportive understanding of their experiences.

**3:00 P.M. | CLOSING REMARKS AND THANK YOU!**

*\* Presentations offer continuing education units*