



Legislative Education & Advocacy Day (LEAD) 2023: Raising Expectations for Competent Care

Welcome



Vincent Atchity | (he/him/his) | President & CEO, Mental Health Colorado

Vincent Atchity, Ph.D. is President & CEO of Mental Health Colorado. Vincent is an advocate for public health and health equity, has worked statewide and nationally as leader of the Equitas Project to disentangle mental health and criminal justice and promote care not cuffs, and has served on the Colorado Governor’s Behavioral Health Task Force and Behavioral Health Transformational (ARPA) Task Force. Vincent also serves on Colorado’s first Jail Standards Commission, the Colorado Public Defender Commission, and the Denver District Attorney Advisory Council on Mental Health.

Master of Ceremonies



Jordan Chavez | (he/him/his) | 9News

Jordan Chavez is an anchor and reporter for 9NEWS, the NBC affiliate here in Denver. He’s covered everything from politics, crime and justice, wildfires – to stories that inspire hope and make you feel good. Through it all, he’s also suffered with severe anxiety – which led him to want to learn more about managing it – and helping other people learn to manage their own and continue thriving. Jordan is known to discuss his struggles openly on air – in hopes it might encourage others to take the first step in finding necessary help.

Panelists:

Khatira Amn | (she/her/hers) | Early Childhood Education Policy Advocate, Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning

Khatira Amn is the Early Childhood Education Policy Advocate at Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning. In this role, she serves to improve the lives of dual language learner children, families, and educators by influencing legislators’ and policymakers’ opinions and activities. Khatira joined Spring Institute in August 2018 as an instructor for Ready Tots, an early childhood community-based family learning program.

Khatira immigrated to the United States in 2017. She holds a Bachelor of Law and Political Science and an ABA-approved Paralegal Certificate. Before coming to the United States, Khatira worked as an attorney and as an advocate for women’s rights to advance equality in different sections of the governmental system by developing and executing meaningful life-changing programs and policies. She also worked as a counselor, professor, and as manager for the Ministry of Higher Education in gender-related affairs.



Brad Barfield, MBA, PMP | (he/him/his) | Vice President, Envision:You

Brad Barfield (he/him) is Vice President of Envision:You, and as a multiracial queer person in recovery himself, is passionate about creating culturally responsive and affirming resources for the LGBTQ+ community focused on mental health, substance use, wellness, and belonging. At Envision:You, he oversees all community programming, grant efforts, and initiatives related to inclusivity, diversity, equity, and accessibility. Brad holds a Masters of Business Administration in nonprofit management from George Washington University, and a Bachelors of Engineering from Vanderbilt University. He was also selected as a Fellow in the inaugural year-long cohort of the Behavioral Health Administration's and College of Behavioral Health Leadership's Equity-Grounded Leadership program, which concluded earlier this year.



Betsy Craft | (she/her/hers) | Peer Navigator with the Office of the Municipal Public Defender & HRAC former participant & current volunteer

Betsy Craft has been working as a Peer Navigator with the Office of the Municipal Public Defender with the City of Denver since March 2022. Previous to her work at the Public Defender's Office, she worked as a Peer Support Specialist with the Safe Outdoor Spaces and the Tiny Home Villages with Colorado Village Collaborative. Betsy enjoys leveraging her lived experience with houselessness, the criminal justice system, mental health & substance misuse to develop meaningful partnerships with trauma-informed community providers to support the Peers she works with. Betsy 100% believes in the peer support approach and working alongside Peers as they build hope & resilience in their lives.

Betsy believes in giving people the opportunity to learn, grow and change in their own time by offering non-judgmental, non-coercive support, options and tools for success. Utilizing a harm reduction lens with her own recovery, Betsy also encourages the Peers she works with to explore and define for themselves what recovery looks like for them. As an overdose survivor, Betsy dreams of a world where people who use drugs (PWUD) aren't stigmatized, Naloxone is accessible on every corner, there is reliable & robust drug checking services, Housing First Programs, Overdose Prevention Centers, equitable access to various levels & types of treatment including MAT & Safe Supply as these are all evidence-based, data-driven concepts to reduce preventable overdose deaths. Peers bring a very valuable perspective, and there needs to be more policies and procedures that support the lived experience perspective, as well as more opportunities for peer-led engagement.

In her spare time, you can find Betsy hanging with family and friends, hiking & paddleboarding with her dog, Radar, practicing yoga, volunteering with HRAC's neighborhood cleanups, riding her bike, or gardening. In 2022, Betsy also graduated with her B.S. in Business with a focus on Organizational Leadership, as well as becoming a first-time homeowner in Denver, CO.



Chrissy Evans | (she/her/hers) | Peer Specialist at Integrated Insight Therapy

Chrissy is a peer specialist with Integrated Insight Therapy in Delta, Colorado. She has previously worked in juvenile facilities in her home state of Pennsylvania and with the young offender program in the women's prison in Lusk, Wyoming. She currently works in the flagship IMPACT program and has created and runs a program to help people obtain their high school equivalency. She is inspired by her boyfriend and their combined five sons. In her spare time Chrissy plays the bass, is an avid football fan, and makes Native American beadwork.



Lindsay Saunders-Velez | (she/her/hers) | Commissioner of the Jail Standards Commission

Lindsay Alexandria Saunders-Velez is a former foster child and youth from the Division of Youth Services. She is now the Founder and Senior Executive Director of the Colorado Justice Advocacy Network, an organization that aims to provide equal access to justice for individuals who are justice-involved, safeguard the rights and liberties of such individuals, and resolve matters in a timely and efficient manner. Lindsay also serves as a Commissioner of the Colorado Jail Standards Commission, the Vice Chair of Community and Personal

Advocacy for Colorado Young Democrats, and is a member of a stakeholder group through the Colorado Child Protection Ombudsman. Lindsay has been recognized by the Colorado Department of Corrections for her outstanding service to justice-involved individuals. She is currently working towards a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from Metropolitan State University Denver and has a long-term goal of earning a Juris Doctorate.

Keynote Speaker:



LJ Jensen, LMSW | (they/them/theirs) | The Gender & Sexuality Therapy Center

LJ Jensen, LMSW is a queer, trans psychotherapist at the Gender and Sexuality Therapy Center in New York City. A graduate of the NYU Silver School of Social Work, they have advanced training in harm reduction, liberation-oriented practice, and trauma-centered care. They specialize in issues within LGBTQ+ communities, with particular focus on the intersection of queer/trans experiences and embodiment.