



# SHOULDER TO SHOULDER VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

*Strengthening Children and Families*

**October 25 & 26, 2021**

*Shoulder to Shoulder is a collaborative partnership between community agencies to provide quality training and networking opportunities to those who work with, support and care for children and families who have been connected to Child Welfare. We rely on community partners and collaborations to operate. Conference funding was made possible by federal grant funds from the Juvenile Court Improvement Program, and the scholarship funds from Oregon Resource Family Alliance. Contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the grantors.*

## 2021 Conference Planning Committee



**Boys & Girls Aid**



**CASA for Children**  
(Multnomah, Washington & Columbia Counties)



**Child Welfare**  
Central Office & SDA 2



**Friends of the Children Portland**



Juvenile Court Improvement Program  
Oregon Judicial Department

**Juvenile Court Improvement Program**



**Morrison Child & Family Services**



**Native American Youth and Family Center**



**Oregon Resource Family Alliance**  
(formerly OFPA - Oregon Foster Parent Association)



**Oregon Post Adoption Resource Center**  
A Program of NW Resource Associates



**Child Welfare Partnership Training Unit**



**Providence Swindells Resource Center**

# 2021 Shoulder to Shoulder Virtual Conference



## MONDAY, OCTOBER 25

11:00 AM TO 2:30 PM (PST)



***It's all about relationships: How Adults Can Interact with Children to Promote Self-Regulation***

DR. IRA CHASOFF



***Creating an Equity-Focused Child and Family Well-being System***

ODHS DEPUTY DIRECTOR APRILLE FLINT-GERNER



***Why TBRI®?***

RENAE DUPUIS

Training Specialist at the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development



*Including a message from  
ODHS Child Welfare Director  
Rebecca Jones-Gaston*

## TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26

9:00 AM TO 12:30 PM (PST)



***The strengths and challenges of Native American Families: Charting our course as we navigate two worlds***

HILARY WEAVER, DSW



***The Power of being Good Enough***

COREY BEST



***Transracial Parenting: How to Talk about Race and Racism***

DR. CHAITRA WIRTA-LEIKER

2021 Conference Sponsors



# 2021 Shoulder to Shoulder Speakers & Presentations



**DAY 1: MON, OCT 25, 2021**

**11:00 AM - 2:30 PM (PST)**

## ☐ [Welcome Message](#)

11:00 AM - 11:15 AM

Special message from ODHS Child Welfare Director, Rebecca Jones Gaston.

**Speaker(s):** Rebecca Jones Gaston, ODHS Child Welfare Director

Rebecca became the Child Welfare Director in November 2019 after serving as the executive director of the Social Services Administration at the Maryland Department of Human Services. In that role, she oversaw both child welfare and adult services, which focuses on the needs of the elderly, disabled and vulnerable adults.

Rebecca has worked in human services and child welfare for more than 19 years as a social worker, advocate, therapist, consultant, and administrator. She spent eight years with Casey Family Programs, providing technical assistance to child welfare agencies throughout the United States. Rebecca also served as the national director of a campaign for foster and adoptive families in collaboration with the Ad Council and Children's Bureau. She was a program director with the National Association of Former Foster Care Children of America and a program coordinator for the National Center on Permanency for African American Children at Howard University.

She holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Georgetown University and a master's degree in Social Work from the University of Pennsylvania.

## ☐ [It's all about relationships: How Adults Can Interact with Children to Promote Self-Regulation](#)

11:15 AM - 12:45 PM

[View Handout](#)

Prenatal exposure to alcohol and drugs changes the structure and function of the developing fetal brain, resulting in significant difficulties with behavior and learning. To develop intervention strategies that can have a long-term impact, it is best to understand these difficulties through the lens of self-regulation. Based on Dr. Chasnoff's new book, *Guided Growth*, and grounded in the knowledge that self-regulation is achieved only through relationships with caring and supportive adults, this session will integrate the sciences of education, brain development, early learning, and behavior management specifically related to children affected by their birth mother's use of drugs and alcohol during pregnancy.

**Speaker(s):** Dr. Ira Chasnoff, MD

Ira Chasnoff, MD, an award-winning author, researcher and lecturer, is president of NTI Upstream and a Professor of Clinical Pediatrics at the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Chicago. He is one of the nation's leading researchers in the field of child development and the effects of maternal alcohol and drug use on the newborn infant, child, and adolescent. His research projects include multiple studies of the long-term cognitive, behavioral and educational developmental effects of prenatal exposure to alcohol, marijuana, and illicit drugs; strategies for screening pregnant women for substance use; the effects on birth outcome of prenatal treatment and counseling for pregnant women who misuse or abuse alcohol and other drugs; innovative treatment approaches for children affected by prenatal exposure to alcohol or illicit drugs, and effective policy development that benefits children, families, and society as a whole.

# 2021 Shoulder to Shoulder Speakers & Presentations

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Dr. Chasnoff led the development and operation of a laboratory preschool classroom to develop specific interventions for children prenatally exposed to alcohol and other drugs and developed a model Head Start Family Service Center for children and their families at risk from drugs and the drug-seeking environment. In addition, Dr. Chasnoff directed one of five national sites conducting research into the integration of behavioral health interventions into primary health care services for high-risk children and their families, and through this project studied the impact of concurrent planning on permanency placement for children in the foster care system.

Since 2002, Dr. Chasnoff has been leading cutting edge research into innovative treatment for children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) and served as principal investigator for the development of a treatment intervention that has been recognized as an evidence-based model of therapy for children with FASD.

## ▣ Creating an Equity-Focused Child and Family Well-being System

1:00 PM - 1:25 PM

[View Handout](#)

Join us in a conversation with Oregon Child Welfare Division Deputy Director, Aprille Flint-Gerner, who will share how the Oregon Child Welfare Division Vision for Transformation is creating an equity-focused child and family well-being system.

**Speaker(s):** Aprille Flint-Gerner, ODHS Deputy Director

Aprille Flint-Gerner is the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) Child Welfare Deputy Director of Equity, Training and Workforce Development

Oregon Child Welfare Division Deputy Director Aprille Flint-Gerner is a social worker with over 25 years of public service ensuring sound implementation and provision of social work “best practices” as well as culturally appropriate, trauma-informed services and supports to children, youth, families, communities and Tribal Nations. She is considered an expert in many promising practice frameworks in child welfare and human services having worked in various systems in both California and Nevada. With a strong commitment to promoting equity and inclusion and modeling cultural humility, and an awareness of how healthy relationships can shift organizational culture, she has helped countless leaders and organizations work towards transformation of the human service workforce.

Aprille’s past work includes serving as the Child Welfare Workforce Development Manager at the University of Nevada Las Vegas where she created, implemented, and managed effective workforce development assessment and training to Nevada child welfare workers, supervisors, and providers. Aprille is very active with several initiatives aimed at eliminating disparate outcomes for youth most impacted by the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

## ▣ Why TBRI®?

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

[View Handout](#)

Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI®) is an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention, designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. With an emphasis on connection, the intervention is based on years of attachment, sensory processing, and neuroscience research. In this session, Renae M. Dupuis, Training

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Specialist at the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development, will provide an overview of TBRI principles and their application in healing environments. Parents and professionals will cultivate a deeper understanding of how they can better address attachment needs and fear-based behaviors. Designed for those new to TBRI and a refresher for current TBRI Practitioners, this session will provide encouragement and support for the healing journey.

**Speaker(s):** Renae Dupuis, M.Div.

Renae M. Dupuis, M.Div. R-HYI, R-TSHYI, is a teacher, speaker, writer, and advocate in Southern California and a Regional Training Specialist for the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development (KP ICD) at TCU.

As an adoptive parent of two children with complex developmental trauma, Renae experienced first-hand the significant impact of TBRI (Trust-Based Relational Intervention) on the healing journey during her time as an Intensive Treatment Foster Parent. In 2015, Renae joined OC United and developed the RESPITE (Resources, Education, & Support for Parents | Interventions for Trauma-Sensitive Environments) Program at OC United, providing healing opportunities for individuals, families, and communities who have experienced individual and collective trauma. While serving as the Director of Trauma and Whole-Person care at OC United, she has developed a library of compassion expansion and self-care tools. She has mentored graduate and undergraduate students from Cal State Fullerton, Hope International, Chapman University, Vanguard, Baylor, and Biola as the Field Instructor for OC United's Internship Program.

Renae completed her Masters in Divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary in 2013 and is a Trainer/Facilitator for: Empowered to Connect, ACE Interface, Living Compass Community Wellness, and Making Sense of Your Worth. As Chaplain at CHOC Children's Hospital, she was on the Trauma response team, and is a Steering Committee member of the Orange County Trauma-Informed Network of Care, developing a robust community network of referral and buffering systems to reduce the impact of Adverse Childhood and Community Experiences.

Renae joined the Purvis Institute in 2021 and loves to visit other places but calls Southern California home, where she resides with her husband (who is also a TBRI Practitioner) and her two teenage daughters.



# 2021 Shoulder to Shoulder Speakers & Presentations



**DAY 2: TUES, OCT 26, 2021**

**9:00 AM - 12:30 PM (PST)**

☐ **The strengths and challenges of Native American Families: Charting our course as we navigate two worlds**

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

[View Handout](#)

Strong families are central to the wellbeing of Native American Peoples. In the United States, many policies and institutions have undermined families and created challenges for wellbeing, both in the past and in present times. Despite that fact, Native American families maintain many strengths that foster wellbeing and these strengths can help us chart a path forward. Examples will be highlighted from the Healthy Living in Two Worlds program that was designed to cultivate wellbeing in urban Native American youth and the Council on Social Work Education Statement of Accountability and Reconciliation for Harms Done to Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.

**Speaker(s):** Hilary Weaver, DSW

Hilary N. Weaver, DSW, is a professor and associate dean for diversity, equity and inclusion in the University at Buffalo School of Social Work. As a social worker, educator and researcher, most of her work focuses on the importance of culture in helping processes with a particular focus on Indigenous Peoples and a secondary focus on refugees. She views both through the lens of the common experience; these populations are often displaced people who have experienced trauma and are enveloped in foreign cultural contexts. She is Lakota and has lived much of her adult life in Haudenosaunee territory in Western New York.

Weaver has presented her work regionally, nationally and internationally including multiple times at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (2005-2008, 2013-2018). Her publications include many authored, co-authored and edited books, including "Explorations in Cultural Competence: Journeys to the Four Directions" (2005). She edited the well-received book, "Social Issues in Contemporary Native America: Reflections from Turtle Island" (2014). She is at work on a book on contemporary Native American issues viewed through the dual lenses of trauma and resilience.

Weaver has received funding from the National Cancer Institute to develop and test "Healthy Living in Two Worlds," a culturally grounded wellness curriculum for urban Native American youth. She is a member of NASW and CSWE and serves as president of the Indigenous and Tribal Social Work Educators' Association. In recognition of her lifelong contributions to promote American Indians in social work education, in 2017 she was the youngest person to be awarded the American Indian Elder Award from the Indigenous and Tribal Social Work Educators' Association.

☐ **The Power of being Good Enough**

10:15 AM - 11:15 AM

[View Handout](#)

Corey will enlighten guests as he explores his view of partnering with parents, youth, young adults and the adaptive value of investing in HOPE. Co-creating safe, strong and supported communities is achieved through mutual respect, cultural/racial humility, shifts in practices and the fundamental belief that all voices embody the collective experiences that will ensure we live up to the vision we have for child and community welfare. During the conversation with, Corey will uncover meaningful examples of what it takes to live the value of belonging, racial

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justice, self-awareness and reciprocity. He believes that the protective factors are magical ingredients that elevate systems and families partnerships. Throughout this experience, you will witness the joy of authenticity and the transformative power of what occurs when we focus on what's strong and invest in HOPE!

**Speaker(s):** Corey Best, Mining for Gold

Corey B. Best is foremost, a dedicated father, and the founder of *Mining For Gold*. He is originally from Washington, DC and now resides in Florida. This is where Corey began his transformation into adaptive leadership training, systems building, authentic family engagement, racial justice, promoting protective factors, social equality, and highlighting “good enough parenting” for those impacted by the child welfare system.

*Mining For Gold* is the curator of community experiences and utilizes those ideas and expertise to shape new thinking within complex systems. Corey has utilized his platform as a Community Curator to re-build child and family serving systems that are responsive to sharing power among constituents with a laser focus on preventing and dismantling all forms of racism. The idea began with the fact that each one of us have pieces of metaphorical “gold” flowing through our souls. This idea for *Mining For Gold* is directly influenced by the 402 plus years of racialized arrangement in our communities.

In partnership with child welfare leaders, communities and parents, Corey has curated the racially just and equitable *Authentic Family Engagement and Strengthening Approach*. Since May 2020, *Mining For Gold* has held a brave container to explore the impact of racialization with over 1,500 child and family serving leaders and staff. Corey was awarded the 2021 *Champion for Children's Award in Advancing Equity*. This honor recognizes his ability to keep the historical impact at the forefront of future strategies and solutions.

*Mining For Gold* is a platform where leaders from social institutions think, stretch, and grow alongside other leaders within their communities who have exper

## ☐ [Transracial Parenting: How to Talk about Race and Racism](#)

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

[View Handout](#)

Learn how to navigate the tough conversations about race & racism with your transracially parented youth and clients, including developmentally appropriate language, the do's and do not's of being a supportive ally, and strategies for responding to racism. This workshop is appropriate for adoptive parents, waiting parents, foster parents and professionals.

**Speaker(s):** Dr. Chaitra Wirta-Leiker, PsyD.

Dr. Chaitra Wirta-Leiker is a licensed psychologist, international/transracial adoptee of color, and an adoptive parent. She specializes in providing mental health support focused on adoption, trauma, and racial identity work. She is a frequent speaker and trainer at adoption agencies, camps, and conferences throughout the U.S., and the creator of the National Adoptee-Therapist Directory. She authored “The Adoptee Self-Reflection Journal,” “The Adoptive Parent Self-Reflection Journal,” and will be releasing a children's book series entitled “Adoptees Like Me” for elementary-age adoptees in 2022.