

# Alberti Center for Bullying Abuse Prevention



## 2023 *Alberti Center Conference*

# *STRENGTHENING SUPPORT FOR THE WHOLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY*

Presented by:



October 5, 2023 | 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET  
Classics V Banquet Facility | 2425 Niagara Falls Blvd | Amherst, NY

# PROGRAM AGENDA

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- 8:00**     **Check-In | Continental Breakfast | Exhibitor Tables**
- 8:30**     **Welcome**  
Suzanne Rosenblith, PhD  
*Dean & Professor, Graduate School of Education | University at Buffalo*
- Opening Remarks**  
Amanda Nickerson, PhD  
*Professor & Director of Alberti Center | University at Buffalo*
- 8:45**     **Keynote | *Moving From What's Wrong to What's Strong: Harnessing Strength-Based Practices for a Positive School Climate***  
Byron McClure, EdD  
*Author, Speaker, School Psychologist, and Director of Innovation  
7 Mindsets*
- 9:45**     **Debrief/Q&A**
- 10:15**    **Break | Exhibitors**
- 10:30**    **Keynote | *Self-care and Advocacy: Meal Preps for the Soul***  
Stacy A.S. Williams, PhD, LP  
*The Child Research and Study Center  
University at Albany*
- 11:30**    **Debrief/Q&A**
- 12:00**    **Buffet Lunch | Exhibitors | Networking**
- 1:00**     **Keynote | *Strengthening Support for the Student Community***  
Rebecca Vujnovic, PhD, NCSP  
*Clinical Associate Professor  
University at Buffalo*
- 2:00**     **Q&A**
- 2:15**     **Closing Remarks/Distribute evaluation links**
- 2:30**     **Break | Exhibitors**
- 2:45**     **Mindfulness Techniques Demonstration**

# ALBERTI CENTER FOR BULLYING ABUSE PREVENTION

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*The Alberti Center for Bullying Abuse Prevention will reduce bullying abuse in schools and in the community by contributing knowledge and providing evidence-based tools to effectively change the language, attitudes, and behaviors of educators, parents, students, and society.*

**Amanda B. Nickerson, PhD** | Director

**Stephanie S. Fredrick, PhD** | Associate Director

**Brie Kishel** | Program and Operations Manager

**Toni Torchia, PhD** | Community Programming Consultant

**Dylan Harrison, Kay Huang, Kat Margiotta, Lucia Sun** | Graduate Assistants

**Jay'ana King, Swapna Balkundi** | Schomburg Fellows

**Julianna Casella** | Presidential Fellow

*With special thanks and sincere gratitude to **Dr. Jean M. Alberti** for her continued dedication, generosity and support of our mission!*

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## CONFERENCE EXHIBITORS

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***UB Alberti Center for Bullying Abuse Prevention***

***BAND Against Bullying***

***Boys on the Right Track***

***BryLin Hospital***

***Compeer***

***Embrace the Difference®***

***Horizon Health Services***

***Peaceful Schools***

***Spectrum Health and Human Services***

***UB Graduate School of Education***



**Byron McClure, EdD**

Author, Speaker, School Psychologist, and Director of Innovation  
*7 Mindsets*

Dr. Byron McClure is a renowned National Certified School Psychologist, best-selling author of *Hacking Deficit Thinking*, and visionary educator committed to shifting from what's wrong to what's strong.

Dr. McClure holds a Doctor of Education in School Psychology from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania and has over a decade of experience driving change in inner-city communities. Notable for his innovative approach, Dr. McClure has created groundbreaking programs, like Students With A Goal (SWAG) and the Student-Athlete Education Program (SAEP), designed to meet youth's social and emotional needs furthest from opportunity. As the Assistant Director of School Redesign, he led school transformation initiatives such as the Dream Team, which helped both students and staff learn and use their strengths. Currently, he serves as the Director of Innovation at 7 Mindsets, where he continues transforming the future of education and promoting mental wellness.

***Moving From What's Wrong to What's Strong: Harnessing Strength-Based Practices for a Positive School Climate***

In this session, we dissect the concept of deficit-thinking, showcasing its subtle, yet pervasive presence in our educational systems and the counterproductive effects it can have on student development and school culture. We will then argue for a fundamental paradigm shift to strength-based practices. By focusing on what's strong instead of what's wrong, we can better support the social and emotional development of our students. This shift offers a fresh lens through which to view the unmet needs of the youth - not as unsolvable problems but as opportunities for actionable change.

We will then delve into the role of strength-based practices in creating a positive school climate. Drawing on research from positive psychology and school climate case studies, we will illustrate the potential of strength-based culture to improve individual student outcomes and overall school community well-being. Importantly, this keynote discussion will be practical, providing concrete strategies for implementing strength-based practices in schools. By the end of the session, participants will be energized, inspired, and able to walk away with a clear understanding of the importance of these practices and a roadmap for bringing them into their own school communities.

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—Shanese Mills,  
School-Based Clinician  
Williamsville Central Schools

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## KEYNOTE SPEAKER



**Stacy A.S. Williams, PhD, LP**  
The Child Research and Study Center  
*University at Albany*

Dr. Stacy Williams is the Director of New York State Education Department multi-tiered system of supports-integrated (MTSS-I) center located at the University at Albany, an adjunct associate professor and Director of Field Training at Marist College, and a licensed psychologist and certified school psychologist in New York State. As a founding member of Creating Inclusive Communities (CIC) and inaugural director of Marist College Diversity Leadership Institute (MCDLI) at Marist, Dr. Williams and her colleagues have provided diversity and equity training to faculty and staff to support diversity and inclusion activities in the classroom and in the wider campus community.

Dr. Williams regularly provides training in social justice, creating inclusive classrooms, academic and behavioral interventions, data-based decision-making for teachers, restorative self-care, and university/school partnerships. At the national level, Dr. Williams serves on the Trainers of School Psychologists (TSP) executive board as the President. Additionally, Dr. Williams mentors students and early career faculty of color through the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) mentoring program. At the state level, Dr. Williams is the Fiscal Advisor for the New York Association of School Psychologists, mentors school psychology candidates, and develops content for the state association annual conference.

### ***Self-care and Advocacy: Meal Preps for the Soul***

Being an advocate will require us to move beyond silence and fear to advocate for all students. Moving beyond fear and silence may create discomfort, loss of privileges, or dissonance, and may not align with political or religious views (Sue, 2015). Thus, it is precisely the effects of advocacy that necessitate an investment in self-care: advocacy and self-care are two sides of the same coin.

It is essential to recognize the types of resistance that are aligned with advocacy and the need to engage in protective and restorative self-care behaviors. The following presentation is aligned with the theme of the conference, in that self-care is paramount to unlocking our full potential, so that we can support diverse communities. The presentation is organized into three parts. The first part articulates concepts such as toxic stress and racial trauma. The second section highlights several resources to build practitioner awareness and student support. The final section explores restorative self-care resources.

This presentation aims to inform practitioners about the relationship between advocacy and self-care. It is my hope that practitioners will leave the presentation having identified additional resources to support diverse communities and resources to support their self-care regimen.



**Rebecca Vujnovic, PhD, NCSP**  
Clinical Associate Professor  
*University at Buffalo*

In her current role, as Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Counseling, School & Educational Psychology, Dr. Rebecca Vujnovic is currently focused on teaching and service-related work. As such, she presently directs the School Psychology MAAC program and recently served as the Co-Director of Training for the Combined Counseling & School Psychology Doctoral Program. Dr. Vujnovic's work is centered around creating opportunities, mentoring, and supporting students in school psychology practices through fieldwork and service, cultivating collaborative partnerships with local school districts.

In addition to her work at the University at Buffalo, she serves as a consultant to a local therapeutic preschool, working to support teachers in supporting students, and has a small part-time private practice.

### ***Strengthening Support for the Student Community***

Attendees will learn how to promote student mental health by building knowledge and providing psychoeducation of the physiological pathways of fear, anxiety and trauma. Attendees will learn practical strategies rooted in mindfulness for helping students to deal with fear, anxiety, and trauma. These strategies will begin with handouts and materials to guide students through increasing awareness of how and where their “stressed out me” might show up by learning more about individual worries and worry triggers to move the student to learn more about managing these situations with mindfulness, understanding the fundamental mindfulness skills of diaphragmatic breathing and present moment awareness.

Participants will be guided through strategies to further encourage students to manage situations instead of becoming overwhelmed, by using skills such as understanding the roller coaster of emotions, planning ahead for stressful situations, strategies for managing panic, and practicing gratitude.

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