



**VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**  
**18<sup>th</sup> Annual Midwest Conference on Problem**  
**"Celebrating Inclusivity and Hope:**  
**Recovery in Uncertain Times. "**

June 16-17, 2021

**Presenter Biographies**

**Keynote Speaker – Brianne Doura-Schawohl** serves as Vice President of US Policy and Strategic Development for EPIC Risk Management. She most recently served as Legislative Director for the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG). Her experience includes a decade of leadership in advocacy, public policy, government affairs, communications, and member relations. Doura-Schawohl's experience spans a wide range of work with executive and legislative branch officials and private sector stakeholders at the international, federal, state, and local levels of government. She has a history of experience and achievements in United States Congressional legislative work, including a diverse portfolio of complex problem gambling policy issues. This continues to be invaluable in her ability to make a difference on behalf of people with gambling problems around the world. Doura-Schawohl works with Congress and many state legislatures to provide expert advice on gambling policy. She continues to work with stakeholders on both sides of the aisle in state legislatures across the country. Additionally, she has been featured in numerous local, state, national, and international media. In 2019 she was appointed as a member of the Digital Gaming Advisory Group for the State of Hawaii and served on numerous coalitions. In 2020 she was a guest faculty member for Seton Hall Law School at their Gaming Law, Compliance, and Integrity Program. She continues to speak at many conferences and other public events on gaming policy in the United States and Europe. Prior to joining NCPG, Doura-Schawohl served as Director of Policy and Communications for the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling. She also worked as the Associate Director of Operations & Development at the National Association of Development Companies (NADCO) in McLean, Virginia prior to joining the Massachusetts Council. Mrs. Doura-Schawohl holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Mary Washington. She resides in Fairfax, Virginia with her family.

**Jeremy Eberle, of Lincoln Nebraska**, MA LIMHP, CDGC, LADC is a licensed therapist who has been providing services in the form of individuals, groups, couples, and families since 2010. Mr. Eberle has focused primarily on treatment for substance use disorders as well as gambling disorders. In 2017, Mr. Eberle was the lead researcher in a study connecting prevalence among Nebraska college students and daily fantasy sports. These findings were presented at the National Gambling Conference in Portland, Oregon in July 2017 as well as at other conferences throughout the country. In July of 2019, Mr. Eberle opened Eberle Therapy Services, but later joined services with Mrs. Johnson in 2020 successfully establishing Alternative Avenues in Lincoln Nebraska. His current area of interest is the intersection between Gambling Use Disorder and Gaming Use Disorder, as these two disorders appear to share a great deal of similarity and comorbidity. Mr. Eberle hopes to continue his research projects as he explores the impact of gambling/gaming use on both young people and adults.

**Erika Holliday, MPH, CHES**, is a Senior Program Coordinator for the Mid America Addiction Technology Transfer Center in Kansas City, MO. In this position, Erika is responsible for planning and facilitating programs and technical assistance for Substance Use Disorder needs for addiction professionals in Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and Missouri. Her focus areas include harm reduction, Hepatitis C, overdose response, and community enhancement initiatives. Erika received her BS from Truman State University and her Master's in Public Health from the University of Michigan.

**Janet L. Johnson, MA, LIMHP, CDGC, LADC, LPC**, has been working as a counselor for the past 16 years. Janet began her career working with youth and families in 1996 as a Family Support Specialist/Youth Tracker at Blue Valley Behavioral Health in Nebraska City and Cedars Youth Services in Lincoln. In 1998, Janet expanded family services into Rural Southeast Nebraska, based out of Beatrice which served 16 counties surrounding Lancaster County. In 2005, Janet obtained her Master of Counseling degree, as well as her Gambling Certification, working at Choices Treatment Center in Lincoln focusing on mental health, addictions, and gambling disorders. In October 2019, Janet won the Nebraska Counseling Association Counselor of the Year Award. In 2020, Janet and her Associate, Jeremy Eberle, began their private practice, Alternative Avenues, located in Lincoln Nebraska. Janet's clientele consists of individuals, families, youth, and adults, specializing in serving couples and family members affected by addictions.

**Keynote Speaker - Nicholas Kardaras, Ph.D., LCSW** is an Ivy-League educated psychologist, an internationally renowned speaker, and one of the country's foremost addiction experts who has clinically worked with over 2,000 clients over the past 20 years. A former Clinical Professor at Stony Brook Medicine where he specialized in teaching the neurophysiology and treatment of addiction, he is currently the Founder and Chief Clinical Officer of Maui Recovery in Hawaii and Omega Recovery in Austin. He has appeared on ABC's 20/20, Good Morning America, the CBS Evening News, FOX & Friends, NPR, Good Day New York and has written about addiction for TIME Magazine, Scientific American, Psychology Today, Salon, The NY Daily News, The NY Post, and FOX News, and has been featured in Esquire, New York Magazine, VICE, and Vanity Fair. He is also considered the leading expert on young people and digital addiction and is the author of "Glow Kids" (St. Martin's Press, 2016), the seminal book on tech addiction.

**Esther Maddux, Ph.D., CFP(R), GCAC-II, KLAC, KCGC-I** is a Resource Management Consultant in private practice as a financial planning, alcohol, drug, and gambling counselor. She has been a Certified Financial Planner (CFP®) certificant since the late 1980s and a certified addiction counselor since 2007. She taught personal financial management at the University of Georgia and Kansas State University where she is professor emeritus, sold financial products and has had a fee-only financial planning practice. She has worked in the addiction field in many different types of settings as an addiction counselor. She did an internship at a hospital recovery center; has worked in an intensive outpatient treatment center as well as a residential treatment and a residential recovery center. She has completed the beginning and advanced Prime Solutions certifications for providing substance abuse education in Level-I treatment programs in Georgia. She has a BS from the University of Georgia, MS from the University of Tennessee, Ph.D. from Purdue University, and a Certificate in Addiction and Prevention Studies from Allen Community College in Kansas. In 2018, she was selected as a University of Georgia Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) 100 Centennial 1918 - 2018 Honoree. One-hundred

individuals were recognized for contributing strength, conviction, and commitment in shaping FACS programs since the program was founded in 1918.

**Keynote Speaker – Victor Ortiz**, MSW, LADC I, CADC II is a social worker with over twenty-five years of experience in the development of programs and services in the area of addiction, youth development, child welfare, and behavioral health. He has worked extensively with a wide range of populations, especially in addressing health disparities, promoting equity and social justice. Victor has served in various professional positions aimed at improving access, and advocacy of care for individuals and families. In 2009, Victor received his BSW from Anna Maria College; He was recognized for academic excellence while serving as a mentor to many students seeking professional guidance. Victor received national scholarship recognition from the National Association of Social Workers and The Council on Social Work Education for his many years of advocacy in the Latinx community. In 2010, Victor received his MSW from Simmons College School of Social Work. Victor's professional and personal experiences have contributed to many op-eds and publications and was a contributor in the book: Responsible Gambling: Primary Stakeholders Perspective. Victor is a nationally recognized speaker, trainer, and educator in the areas of addiction, gambling disorders, and health disparities and equity. Victor is currently the Director of the Office of Problem Gambling Services at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

**Keynote Speaker – Richard Rawson** Ph.D., is Professor Emeritus at the UCLA Department of Psychiatry and a Research Professor at the Vermont Center for Behavior and Health at the University of Vermont. He received a Ph.D. in experimental psychology from the University of Vermont in 1974. Dr. Rawson conducted numerous clinical trials on pharmacological and psychosocial/behavioral addiction treatments for the treatment of individuals with cocaine and methamphetamine disorders. He was a member of the Federal Methamphetamine Advisory Group to Attorney General Janet Reno (1996-2000) and has represented the US at numerous international meetings on methamphetamine. He also has conducted addiction system evaluation activities in a number of states and countries. He has led addiction research and training projects for the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the Drosos Foundation, and the U.S. State Department, exporting science-based knowledge to many parts of the world. Dr. Rawson has published 3 books, 40 book chapters, and over 250 peer-reviewed articles and has conducted over 1,000 workshops, paper presentations, and training sessions.

**Bree Sherry, BA**, is a Project Coordinator for the Mid-America Addiction Technology Transfer Center. Experiencing personally the positive impacts on recovery in her family, Bree is passionate about recovery efforts in her hometown of Kansas City, MO. In her current role, she plans and facilitates trainings and technical assistance to enhance Substance Use Disorder providers in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. Her focus areas include family recovery, leadership and workforce development, and overdose response.

**Daniel Smith** BACC, ICCGCII, LCSW is an entertaining speaker, clinical educator, online facilitator, and experienced teacher of alternative complementary medicine including meditation and journey work for nearly thirty years. As a licensed therapist, teacher in university and clinical settings since 1973, Smith provides clinical consultation in the US for the International Gambler Counselor Certification Board; previously sat on the American Gambling

Counselor Certification Board; and is a featured speaker both online and at conferences. As a specialist in gambling and other addictive behaviors, Smith currently is Clinical Director of BetNoMore Gambling Programs at Assessment Counseling Solutions in St. Louis MO treating addicts and their families. Consultation and counseling have been delivered in person since 1989 and online since 2010.

**Keynote Speaker - Dan Trolaro**, MS Psychology is the Assistant Executive Director for 800-GAMBLER in NJ. He has spoken around the state and country on topics including the “Dis” Ease of Addiction, sports betting, emerging trends in gambling and the convergence between video gaming and gambling. Dan’s favorite phrase is “Rules without Relationships leads to Rebellion.”

**Keynote Speaker - Ben Westhoff** is an award-winning investigative journalist who writes about culture, drugs, and poverty. His books are taught around the country and have been translated into languages all over the world. His new book Fentanyl, Inc.: How Rogue Chemists Are Creating the Deadliest Wave of the Opioid Epidemic is the highly acclaimed, bombshell first book about fentanyl, which is causing the worst drug crisis in American history. Westhoff was interviewed about the book for Fresh Air and Joe Rogan and published an excerpt in The Atlantic. Since the book’s publication, Westhoff has advised top government officials on the fentanyl crisis, including from the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. embassy in Beijing, and the U.S. State Department. Westhoff’s work has appeared in the Library of Congress and publications including The Guardian, The Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, NPR, Rolling Stone, and Forbes.

**Jennifer Wolfe**, CPS, is a Recovery Coach for EPICC/ Commcare in Kansas City, MO. In this position, Jennifer is responsible for engaging the highest risk population in SUD treatment. Jennifer specializes in Opiate Use Disorder amongst other Substance Use Disorders. Jennifer gained training from lived experience which transitioned into a professional role in the mental health community. Her focus is on Medication Assisted Treatment, Naloxone distribution and engaging consumers in appropriate treatment options. Jennifer’s passion comes from her own story of Substance Use Disorder, including a loss of life and relationships to gaining freedom and restoring relationships. She uses these experiences as a gateway to show community members a path to recovery.