21ST ANNUAL

LIBERATION-BASED HEALING CONFERENCE

2026 FINAL PROGRAM

BUILDING FUTURISMS TOGETHER

Decolonizing structures and processes toward liberatory praxis.

Decolonizing is a precursor to liberatory healing.

COURAGE. RESIST. CELEBRATE.

NOVEMBER 6 & 7, 2026 • ONLINE ONLY • 15 NJ-NY CEUs AVAILABLE

FINAL PROGRAM • SESSION ABSTRACTS • LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Program Architecture

The program moves intentionally from global analyses of coloniality and settler-colonial power, through decolonizing critique and institutional accountability, toward locally grounded liberatory praxis, collective care, resistance, and futurity.

Presented by The Institute for Family Services and co-sponsored by Tri County CMO.

DAY ONE — FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2026

Connecting global and local scholarship on coloniality with efforts to decolonize structures and advance liberatory praxis. Please note: All times are Eastern Time.

9:00 - 9:30 a.m.

Taino Quechua Artist-Acknowledging Sovereignty Naming the Ground, Building the Circle.

WELCOME AND OPENING

- Presenters:
  - Cliff Matias – Taino Quechua Artist
  - Caroline Hann, LCSW
  - Deja Amos, MSW
  - Kim Mackanic, LCSW
  - Rhea V. Almeida, PhD, LCSW

CEUs: Educational & Clinical: Conference grounding, collective accountability, and liberatory praxis.

Abstract: The conference opens by locating liberation within land, ancestry, relationship, social location, and accountability. Participants enter a shared intellectual and relational journey:

naming colonial power, resisting institutional harm, reclaiming suppressed knowledge, and building collective conditions for healing, dignity, and futurity.

Learning Objectives:

1. Locate Liberation-Based Healing within land, ancestry, and social location.
2. Describe the conference's movement from coloniality to liberatory praxis.
3. Name one accountability commitment for practice.

9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

From Coloniality to Structural Transformation: Decolonizing Social Work Pedagogy and Institutional Power.

- Moderator: Simone Snyder, DSW
- Presenters:
  - Lisa Werkmeister Rozas, PhD
  - Rashaad Abdur-Rahman, PhD

CEUs: Clinical & Ethics: Decolonizing institutions, and liberatory practice.

Abstract: Social work and helping institutions do not stand outside coloniality; their curricula, professional norms, and service systems can reproduce white supremacy while presenting themselves as neutral. Drawing on intersectionality and liberatory praxis, this session moves from structural critique toward decolonizing institutional authority and restructuring power, accountability, and access to material and Indigenous resources.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify colonial and white-supremacist patterns in social-work institutions.
2. Apply intersectionality to analyze institutional power and privilege.
3. Propose one strategy that redistributes authority or resources.

10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Whose Knowledge Counts? Critical Consciousness, Indigenous & Queer Dignities: Decolonizing the Platforms of HELP & Education.

- Moderator: Caroline Hann, LCSW
- Presenters:
  - Richard Q. Shin, PhD
  - Manuel Teran (Student)
  - Abdul Aziz Baig (Student)
  - Uma Balaji (Student)
  - Elisa Lacerda-Vandenborn, PhD

CEUs: Clinical & Ethics: Intersectionality, research, and Indigenous self-determination.

Abstract: Colonial helping systems determine which identities, theories, and ways of knowing become legitimate—and which harms remain veiled. Bringing critical consciousness and intersectionality into dialogue with Indigenous self-determination and communally constituted knowledge, this session challenges individualizing models and re-centers sovereignty, community knowledge, and ethical accountability.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify colonial assumptions in helping-profession knowledge and practice.
2. Apply critical consciousness to expose epistemic exclusion.
3. Distinguish Indigenous self-determination from symbolic recognition.

11:30- 12:00 p.m.

Is America The Bad Guy?

- Presenters:
  - Ta-Nehisi Coates
  - Hasan Minaj

CEUs: Non-CEU

Abstract: Hasan Minaj, writer and journalist, talks to Author Ta-Nehisi Coates about the difference between intelligence and wisdom, and the inherent violence of Empire.

Learning Objectives: Non-instructional lunch period

12:00–2:00 p.m.

Antisemitism or Zionism: Contested Knowledge, Muslim and Palestinian Family Liberation—from Institutional Silencing to Collective Action.

- Moderator: Kim Mackanic, MSW, LCSW, LCADC
- Presenters**:**
  - David Surrey, PhD
  - Michelle Fine, PhD
  - Jairo Funez, PhD

CEUs: Ethics & Community Organizing.

Abstract: Colonial institutions produce authoritative stories about whose knowledge, grief, identity, and resistance are credible. Drawing on critical psychology, research with Muslim youth, and participatory traditions, this session confronts institutional silencing, state-installed apartheid, and the criminalization of Palestinian resistance while centering youth and families as knowledge makers and agents of collective liberation.

Learning Objectives:

1. Analyze institutional narratives about Jewish, Muslim, and Palestinian safety.
2. Apply epistemic justice to center youth, family, and community knowledge.
3. Develop one action grounded in accountable solidarity.

2:00- 2:30 p.m.

Shaping Institutional Structures that Shape Exclusion & Belonging: Civil Rights and Community Resistance.

- Moderator: Kelly Kim, MA
- Presenter:
  - Amy Meckler

CEUs: Clinical, Advocacy & Civil Rights.

Abstract: This session focuses on decolonizing systems of justice and liberatory practices by showcasing a citizen-run intervention in New Jersey called Watch NJ, wherein community members organized to observe and transform how state laws and policies created to prevent domestic violence were implemented in the family civil court.

Learning Objectives:

1. Connect clinical and academic interventions with legal and grassroots influences on liberation and healing.
2. Illustrate what blocks and opens the door for individual, family and community safety.
3. Offer one action that strengthens protection and collective power.

2:30–3:15 p.m.

Engineered Conflict: Abolishing the Architecture of Structural Violence

- Presenters: Carolyn Tubbs, PhD, in conversation with David Stovall, PhD

CEUs: Education: Structural violence and community organizing

Abstract Structural violence is engineered through the linked geographies of housing, schooling, policing, displacement, and racial capitalism. In conversation with Dr. Carolyn Tubbs, Dr. David O. Stovall traces these continuities and asks what abolitionism requires when communities—not institutions—become the authors of educational freedom and collective futurity.

Learning Objectives

1. Map connections among housing, schooling, policing, and displacement.
2. Analyze the school/prison nexus as structural racial domination.
3. Identify one community-authored abolitionist practice.

3:15–5:00 p.m.

Collective Reflection Circle: From Analysis to Actionable Steps/Commitments

- Presenters: Day one presenters and conference participants.

CEUs: Education, Community Engagement, & Liberatory Action Steps

Abstract: This facilitated learning circle converts the day's analysis into decolonizing processes, towards liberatory praxis. Through presenter dialogues, guided case application, small-group synthesis, and action planning, participants integrate legal, clinical, educational, Indigenous, and community-rooted insights to identify what must be disrupted, reclaimed, repaired, and built in their own settings.

Learning Objectives

1. Synthesize Day One frameworks on coloniality, resistance and repair.

2. Apply two frameworks to a practice-based case.
3. Create one accountable action step for liberatory practice.

DAY TWO — SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2026

Structural analysis moves into embodied healing, community practice, institutional refusal, and collective commitments for building futurisms together. Please note: All times are Eastern Time.

9:00-9:30 a.m.

Honoring Dignity & Land Sovereignty. Re-Membering the Work: From Reflection to Collective Intention

WELCOME AND OPENING

- Presenters:
  - Cliff Matias – Taino Quechua Artist
  - Caroline Hann, LCSW
  - Deja Amos, MSW
  - Kim Mackanic, LCSW
  - Mabel Quinones, PhD, MA

CEUs: Conference grounding, collective accountability, and liberatory praxis.

Abstract: Day Two begins by re-membering—bringing bodies, histories, relationships, and unfinished questions back into the circle. Participants reconnect Day One's structural analyses to the embodied, artistic, educational, and community practices through which liberatory futures are made.

Learning Objectives:

1. Connect a Day One analysis to embodied or community practice.
2. Identify one unfinished question requiring collective attention.
3. Set one intention for accountable liberatory practice.

9:30–10:30 a.m.

Scholasticide and Co-Resistance: Education Under State-Installed Apartheid

- Moderator: Rhea V. Almeida, PhD, LCSW
- Presenters:
  - Chandni Desai, PhD
  - Michelle Fine, PhD

CEUs: Research & Ethics: Education and collective resistance.

Abstract: The destruction of Palestinian education is not collateral damage but scholasticide: an assault on knowledge, memory, cultural life, and collective futurity within state-installed apartheid. The session examines how colonial authority operates through education and how participatory knowledge-making and international solidarity can become practices of co-resistance.

Learning Objectives:

1. Define scholasticide within settler-colonial domination.
2. Identify how universities censor or erase racialized testimony.
3. Select one knowledge-making strategy for co-resistance.

10:30–11:30 a.m.

Rupture, Repair, and Institutional Refusal: Art, Trauma, and Decolonizing Higher Education

- Moderator: Deja Amos, MSW
- Presenters
  - Donna Bassin, PhD
  - Sarah Anne Hale

CEUs: Clinical - Trauma healing and restructuring systems of pedagogical harm.

Abstract Art can bear witness to rupture without converting pain into spectacle, while collective action can expose institutional harm without reducing people to deficits. Bringing trauma-informed art practice into dialogue with research on class power, first-generation students, neoliberalism, and collective action, this session explores ethical repair, institutional refusal, and the decolonizing of higher education.

Learning Objectives

1. Explain how art can serve as ethical witness and resistance.
2. Analyze one higher-education practice through a decolonial lens.
3. Design one collaborative practice centering community knowledge.

11:30–12:00 p.m.

Lunch and Community Connection

CEUs: Non-CEU.

Remembering Palestinian Artist Silmon Monsour

Learning Objectives: Reflections and Rest

12:00–1:30 p.m.

Structuring Healing Through a Lens of Disrupting Perspectives of White Male Pegagogies of Psychology and Installing Critical Decolonial Pedagogies of Liberatory Healing

- Moderator: Kim Mackanic, MSW, LCSW, LCADC
- Presenters:
  - Ashley A. Hicks, PhD, IMFT-S, RYT-200
  - Rhea V. Almeida, PhD, LCSW
  - Sakeena Everett, PhD

CEUs: Clinical and Spiritual: Intersectional practice and supervision.

Abstract Therapeutic systems of care reproduce coloniality when they individualize suffering, pathologize BIPOC families and communities, and erase social location, historical power, lineage, and ancestral community knowledge. Bringing Ashley Hicks's scholarship on Black family healing into dialogue with Rhea V. Almeida's Liberation-Based Healing framework, this session advances critical consciousness, accountability, collective therapeutic practice, resistance, and liberatory praxis. Sakeena Everett expands visibility, inclusion, and access to intersectional grief-informed research and resources.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify white-centered assumptions and structural conditions that re-traumatize those who experience grief and are harm-inducing for BIPOC & LGBTQ+ communities.
2. Apply intersectionality to therapeutic and supervisory contexts.
3. Develop one practice grounded in liberation and accountability.

1:30–3:10 p.m.

Constructions of Masculinity & Pedagogies of Wholeness: Embodied Decolonizing Praxis and Community Liberation

- Moderator: Danielle Barcelo, PhD
- Presenters:
  - Marvin Toliver, LCSW
  - Nathalie Edmond, PsyD, RYT-500
  - Sonalee Rashatwar, LCSW, Med

CEUs: Clinical: Embodied decolonizing praxis and collective healing.

Abstract: This session locates liberatory praxis in embodied, relational, and community-rooted spaces. Integrating trauma-informed care, yoga, intersectionality, spiritually grounded dialogue, and decolonizing practice, it explores how mind, body, spirit, and relationship can become sources of knowledge, resistance, repair, and collective healing. It also provides a space to examine how fat-positive sexual healthcare shapes the experiences of clients who identify as superfat queer and non-binary.

Learning Objectives:

1. Explain how art can serve as ethical witness and resistance.
2. Analyze one higher-education practice through a decolonial lens.
3. Design one collaborative practice centering community knowledge.

3:20–5:00 p.m.

Celebrating LGBTQ+ Lives Amid Violent Apartheid Policies: Community-Rooted Healing and Collective Care

- Presenters: Conference presenters and community voices.

CEUs Cross-disciplinary synthesis, collective accountability, and liberatory praxis.

Abstract: Liberation is sustained through action, memory, relationship, and accountability—not declaration. Through facilitated case reflection, dialogue, and collaborative planning, this final learning lab examines threats to LGBTQ+ lives within violent apartheid policies and integrates the conference's scholarship, embodied wisdom, art, resistance, and community knowledge into commitments for building futurisms together.

Learning Objectives

1. Analyze how apartheid policies threaten LGBTQ+ lives and belonging.
2. Apply two conference frameworks to a community-based case.
3. Create one institutional and one relational commitment.