

# Chicagoland Trauma Informed Congregations Network



## Holding Hope in a Hurting World

*Faith Gives us the Courage to Go to the Hard Places*

Thursday, October 30, 2025

9am to 3pm

Catholic Theological Union

### Meeting Purpose

There is healing power when we hold hurt and hope together, both for ourselves and for our communities. And the wisdom of our spiritual traditions can help us connect to those deep places of wholeness.

This event provides space for exploring how grief and hope connect and how our faith, spiritual resources, and inner strength can help us mobilize love, peace, and justice as we seek healing.

Together, we will bring experiences from our diverse backgrounds to share our wisdom, foster a sense of community, and generate ideas for addressing grief and healing in our own faith-based settings.

### Desired Outcomes

At the end of the gathering, participants will have:

1. A deeper understanding of how faith communities' practices, values, beliefs support courage, healing, and resilience in hard times
2. Increased awareness of resources and programs
3. Greater awareness about practical ways to apply the learnings in congregations, communities and faith-based settings

## Program Agenda

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
8:00 – 9:00 am	Registration and morning refreshments
9:00 – 9:30 am	Welcome and Introduction to the Topic Getting Acquainted Setting our Culture
10:00 – 10:15	Centering in Our Bodies
10:15 – 11:15 am	Sharing Stories of Hurt, Hope, Faith, and Courage
11:15 – 11:30	Break
11:30 – 12:30	Workshops/Connection Rooms <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Courage for the Journey: Multifaith Perspectives on Grief and Hope</li><li>• Empathy in Action</li><li>• Healing Congregations</li></ul>
12:30 – 1:15	Lunch
1:15 – 2:15	Workshops/Connection Rooms <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Holding Space for Youth in Grief</li><li>• Sound Therapy</li><li>• Healing Movement</li><li>• Question, Persuade, Refer Suicide Prevention</li></ul>
2:15 – 2:30	Break
2:30 – 3:15	Circle Sharing: Building the Story of Hope
3:15 – 3:30	Closing

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Trauma Informed  
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**Holding Hurt and Hope  
Speakers and Workshops**

**Morning Speaker**

**Healing Through Storytelling: Sharing Stories of Hurt, Hope, Faith, and Courage**

We don't heal in isolation. We heal in community. Storytelling builds community. Alden Bell will offer background on storytelling and how sharing our stories is a healing and transformational activity that helps us express ways that we experience hope in the midst of adversity. Telling our stories of faith and spirit can give us the courage to go to the hard places.



**Story Facilitator: Alden Bell**

Alden Bell since the mid 1960's as a youth has been involved with various social justice movements and has dedicated his life to service. In 2013 he completed restorative justice training and has been working with that movement ever since. He was ordained in 2023 under The Family of Affirming Ministries (TFAM) under Bishop Yvette Flunder. He currently works as a Research Assistant here in Chicago with MWCCS a national forty-year-old NIH, HIV/AIDS study in Chicago. Alden is an active member of Omnia Institute for

Contextual Leadership a global leadership training and consulting program serving religious and civic leaders who are committed to solving societies' most intractable challenges; The Poor People's Campaign fighting for the rights of those on the margins of society; ASE a professional Black storytellers group; and a board member of One Roof Chicago a lgbtia senior housing initiative.

## Workshops/Connection Rooms

### 1. *Holding Space for Youth in Grief*

**Workshop Description:** Join us to learn how to best support children and teens who are grieving. Through discussion and hands-on activities, you will gain practical tools and knowledge to support young people in processing their losses and building resilience.



**Workshop Facilitator: Zaya Gillogly, LCSW (she/her/hers)**

Zaya Gillogly has over 7 years of clinical experience working with children and families. She specializes in working with youth experiencing mental health challenges in response to grief, loss, family separation, attachment disruption, and/or developmental trauma. She earned her Master's degree in Social Work with a concentration in mental health at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She has worked in community mental health, youth shelters, domestic violence shelters, LGBTQ centers, and home-based services. Zaya is a Certified Theraplay Practitioner and is working toward her Registered Play Therapist credential.

### 2. *Integral Sound Healing/Sound Bath Workshop*

**Workshop Description:**

With a combination of sound and vibration, you will experience a deeply restorative “adult nap”. Using bowls, chimes, and other instruments, the relaxation response is triggered automatically calming the nervous system, reducing cortisol levels, and enhancing sensory awareness. Sound healing particularly supports grief healing through energetic release, mindfulness, safe space establishment and making meaning. Sound healing is scientifically proven to improve sleep quality, enhance mental clarity, boost immunity, and some pain management.



**Workshop Facilitator: Furrunnecia Newberry, LCPC.**

Furrunnecia Newberry has been in the field of mental health counseling since 2012. Initially serving as a childcare worker in a group home for teen girls on Chicago's westside, and growing into her own private practice, The Urban Counselor LLC, and now serving as the Clinical Director of the Chicago Counseling Solutions team at Kids Above All. Furrunnecia continues her professional development through building her trauma intervention skills with therapeutic interventions such as EMDR, IFS, and most recently Sound and Vibrational Healing.

### **3. *Healing Congregations: Nurturing Love, Life, and Hope in a Hurting World***

**Workshop Description:** This interactive workshop introduces a powerful resource book for pastors and lay leaders that uses stories to explore the connection between adversity, faith, and healing. Participants will receive a copy of the Healing Congregations book.



#### **Workshop Facilitator: Kirsten Peachey (she)**

Kirsten Peachey is a leader at the intersection of faith and health and has led countless programs and initiatives to help faith leaders and religious communities support health equity, mental health, and trauma healing. She leads the Faith and Health Partnerships department at Advocate Health in Illinois and Wisconsin. She is clergy in the United Church of Christ.

### **4. *Courage for the Journey: Multifaith Perspectives on Grief and Hope***

**Workshop Description:** There are resources in all faith traditions that ground us and draw us to wholeness in times of stress. In this workshop, members of the Bridge Inter-Religious Alliance will share how their scriptures and beliefs address grief and how their rituals and practices help their members connect with hope and resilience in times of loss or suffering.

#### **Workshop Facilitators from BRIDGE Interfaith Alliance:**

- **Dr. Regina Davis-Bridges**
- **Kristen Barlow, LCSW.** Kristen has spent the past 20 years walking alongside individuals and families as they navigate life's hardest (and holiest) moments. She specializes in trauma treatment using EMDR, Accelerated Resolution Therapy and Synergetic Play Therapy and loves helping people find peace and hope after painful experiences. A member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Kristen can usually be found chauffeuring her kids around town or in line at the McDonalds drive thru ordering a soda.
- **Dr. Mohammad Siddiqi**

## 5. *Empathy in Action: Exploring Grief Together*

**Workshop Description:** This session offers an opportunity to examine grief as a universal human experience. Recognizing that every individual carries a personal loss history, we will reflect on how grief presents itself in faith, relationships, and daily life. The session will also explore approaches to communication and the development of a shared language that supports empathy, understanding, and a community of care. Together, we will ground ourselves in the basics of grief and practice compassionate communication, strengthening our capacity to build connection, healing, and resilience across our communities of faith.

### **Workshop Facilitators:**



**Kristin James, LCPC,** has specialized in working with families coping with illness, trauma and loss for nearly thirty years. She currently coordinates the Grief Care Network, dedicated to specialized grief support across the lifespan. Kristin is nationally recognized for her work in pediatric palliative care and grief support and has provided clinical consultation and extensive training, advocacy and education to healthcare systems, community agencies, coroner's offices, funeral professionals, and school systems. Kristin co-founded Missing Pieces and developed a benchmarked program for Pediatric Bereavement Care at Lurie Children's Hospital. Kristin received her master's in counseling from Loyola University.



**Amy McNicholas, LCPC.** Master's degree in Counseling Psychology/Trauma. For the past 10 years, Amy has specialized in working with children, adults, and families coping with trauma and grief. She has provided clinical consultation, training, advocacy, and education to medical teams, schools, and community agencies throughout the Midwest. Amy is currently the Director of Missing Pieces, a pediatric bereavement care program. Amy is a Restorative justice practitioner and circle keeper, a certified trainer for Adult and Youth Mental Health First Aid and a National Trainer for the Companionship Movement. As a bereaved mom, Amy has been able to marry her lived experience with her clinical education, bringing a unique lens, and a deep sense of compassion and understanding of what it means to support grieving families.



**Rev. Nilsa Irrizarry.** Rev. Nilsa serves as Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) Senior Equity Officer and oversees the Office of Racial Equity and Belonging (OREB). She has been a passionate leader in the public health field for two decades; she answered God's call to serve in love with a liberating, interfaith lens for equity and justice. Rev. Nilsa holds a Master of Divinity from Chicago Theological Seminary. She is an ordained clergy person with the Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC).

## 6. *Question, Persuade, Refer—Preventing Suicide in our Communities*

### **Workshop Description:**

QPR is a recognized approach that trains everyday people from all walks of life to recognize suicide warning signs, take immediate steps to mitigate risk of a suicide attempt, and make referrals to competent professional care. QPR training is one way to build community, connectedness, and knowledge to understand the issues concerning suicide and mental health, help others in crisis, and change the conversation around suicide.

### **Workshop Facilitators**



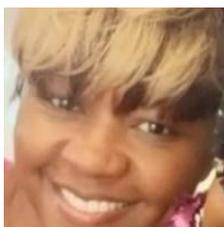
Dr Octavia Tyson, LCPC. Octavia is a public health and behavioral health professional who has co-designed trauma-informed initiatives for CDPH, involving curriculum development and workshop facilitation. She has years of experience as a social justice advocate offering advanced training and technical support, assisting in the development of systems that support prevention and promote health.



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## 7. *Healing Movement*

**Workshop Description:** We carry our experience in our bodies, so it makes sense that connecting with our bodies in positive ways is a critical step in healing and resilience. In this workshop, Kendra will teach us more about how movement inspires healing and get us moving to connect our bodies, minds, and spirits.



**Workshop Facilitator: Kendra Cornett**  
Kendra, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and certified yoga teacher, collaborates with local partners like Chicago Public Schools, Something Good in Englewood, Centered, and Educating Our Community to bring quality wellness initiatives to the community. With a Bachelor of Fine Art in Dance Performance, Kendra emphasizes the importance of connecting mind, body, and soul. Her mantra, “Movement is the language of the soul,” reflects her commitment to using yoga, dance, mindfulness, art, and music to inspire hope and healing within individuals and communities.