

PURPOSE TO PRACTICE: EMPOWERING OUR YOUTH

OPENING AND WELCOME

9:00AM –10:45AM

Come in and make yourself comfortable with Complimentary breakfast and coffee! Opening remarks will begin at 9:30 AM.

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM		Room
<p>Prevention Best Practices: Trauma Informed, Equity, & Cultural Competency Michelle Barron, Mia Williams</p>	<p>Effective youth prevention goes beyond information—it requires trauma-informed, equitable, and culturally responsive approaches. This session explores evidence-based strategies and practical tools to address risk behaviors, adapt to diverse communities, and center youth voice for real-world impact.</p>	M202
<p>Gambling 101 Luis Arroyo</p>	<p>An overview of Gambling trends, risks, and prevention. Understanding Local and nationwide effects.</p>	M204
<p>Why Restorative Practices matter for Behavioral Health: Data From Suburban Cook County and Paths Forward *Two-Hour Session* Brenda Boyd, Hanna Kite, Alda Dansou, and Monica Chen</p>	<p>Students who experience unfair discipline are at greater risk for substance use, anxiety, depression, and suicidal behaviors. While restorative practices are gaining traction in schools, they are often narrowly applied. When used more broadly, they can strengthen relationships, promote healing, and support youth well-being.</p> <p>This session highlights the link between school discipline and behavioral health, featuring data from the Cook County Department of Public Health in suburban Cook County. Participants will learn practical tools—such as “I” statements and restorative questions—and engage in an interactive restorative circle and group discussion.</p> <p>Attendees will leave with actionable strategies to support more equitable, relationship-centered approaches in their work with youth.</p>	M210
<p>Focus Group Mario Nunez</p>	<p>A discussion group dedicated to exploring the diverse strengths and challenges facing youth across Suburban Cook County, with a focus on fostering understanding, collaboration, and meaningful solutions.</p>	M206

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12:15 PM - 1:15 PM	Room
<p>Supporting Youth in Recovery & Reducing Stigma Daryl Pass</p>	<p>This session will explore evidence-based and best-practice strategies to effectively support youth in recovery, with a focus on promoting resilience, long-term stability, and overall well-being. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the unique challenges youth in recovery face and learn practical approaches to foster supportive, youth-centered environments. In addition, the session will examine the stigma surrounding individuals who use substances, highlighting its impact on recovery outcomes, and will provide actionable strategies to reduce stigma and promote more compassionate, inclusive attitudes and practices.</p> <p>M202</p>
<p>Winning Grants in Today's Funding Environment Yashica Weeks</p>	<p>This session provides a practical overview of nonprofit grant writing, supporting both new and experienced grant writers. Participants will explore organizational readiness, navigate the grant landscape, and learn how to develop strong strategies and competitive proposals. Attendees will leave with actionable tools and a clearer roadmap for developing successful, mission-aligned proposals.</p> <p>M204</p>
<p>Why Restorative Practices matter for Behavioral Health: Data From Suburban Cook County and Paths Forward *Two-Hour Session*</p>	<p>Students who experience unfair discipline are at greater risk for substance use, anxiety, depression, and suicidal behaviors. While restorative practices are gaining traction in schools, they are often narrowly applied. When used more broadly, they can strengthen relationships, promote healing, and support youth well-being.</p> <p>This session highlights the link between school discipline and behavioral health, featuring data from the Cook County Department of Public Health in suburban Cook County. Participants will learn practical tools—such as “I” statements and restorative questions—and engage in an interactive restorative circle and group discussion.</p> <p>Attendees will leave with actionable strategies to support more equitable, relationship-centered approaches in their</p> <p>M210</p>

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LUNCH PROVIDED

1:30 PM – 2:30 PM

2:45 PM – 3:45 PM		Room
Intersectionality Topic: Substance Use, Juvenile Justice, & Homelessness Ashley Warren	This session on the intersectionality of youth experiencing homelessness, substance use and juvenile justice. Exploring how one of the three can lead to another resulting in a domino effect during what can be considered the hardest stage of life.	M202
Coalition Development: Community Organizing Mario Nunez	This session explores how coalition building and community organizing can strengthen prevention efforts by bringing together diverse partners, including youth and trusted community voices.	M204
Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs): Building Resilience in Youth leisha Taylor	This interactive workshop explores Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and their social and environmental impacts on youth. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of how early adversity affects brain development, behavior, and mental & physical health. Through discussion and reflection, attendees will learn practical, trauma-informed strategies to support healing, resilience, and prevention.	M210
Focus Group Mia Williams	A discussion group dedicated to exploring the diverse strengths and challenges facing youth across Suburban Cook County, with a focus on fostering understanding, collaboration, and meaningful solutions.	M206

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4:00 PM – 5:00 PM		Room
<p>QPR: Question, Persuade, and Refer Stephanie Vazquez</p>	<p>QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) is a suicide prevention approach that teaches individuals to recognize warning signs and respond to someone in crisis. It focuses on asking direct questions, encouraging the person to seek help, and connecting them with appropriate support resources.</p>	M202
<p>Youth Mental Health: Role of Trauma & Mental Health & Substance Use Josh Massaro & Curt Gaynor</p>	<p>A session that explores how substances impact youth mental health, including effects on brain development and emotional well-being. It highlights the key risk factors and trends, while providing practical strategies for prevention.</p>	M204
<p>When Fathers Struggle: Recognizing Paternal Substance Use and Supporting Youth leisha Taylor</p>	<p>During this engaging workshop, participants will explore how paternal substance use affects youth emotionally, behaviorally, and academically. Through practical examples, interactive exercises, and effective strategies, attendees will learn to recognize early warning signs, understand the challenges children face, and discover ways to foster resilience and supportive relationships.</p>	M210
<p>Focus Group Mia Williams</p>	<p>A discussion group dedicated to exploring the diverse strengths and challenges facing youth across Suburban Cook County, with a focus on fostering understanding, collaboration, and meaningful solutions.</p>	M206