

# Conference NDFBSA Sessions

**TUESDAY MARCH 24, 2026**

**Money Matters are Family Matters: Navigating the Intersection of Financial and Relational Health**

Dr. Jeffrey Anvari-Clark | 1:00PM-4:15PM (15 min break) – 3hrs

In this session, participants will explore the concept of financial interdependence in family systems, gaining a deeper understanding of how financial socialization patterns influence family dynamics. This includes the impact of financial health as a component of behavioral health and the interdependence of social relations and financial decision making. This session will provide the knowledge of the application of financial ecomapping to assess family economic relationships and stressors. The session will delve into practical strategies for addressing money matters in family-based practice.

# WEDNESDAY MARCH 25, 2026

## **Trust, Comfort, Communication, and Transparency in the Foster Care System**

North Dakota Youth Advisory Association Board | 8:30AM-10:00AM – 1.5hrs

This youth-led session offers an authentic look into the foster care system through the eyes of those who have lived it. Presenters will share personal stories, highlight current youth perspectives, and offer communication strategies that foster genuine connection between youth and service providers. Attendees will leave with actionable insights to improve engagement and outcomes in family-based services.

## **State Update – FamilyFirst Services in North Dakota**

Tracy Miller | 10:30AM-11:30AM – 1hr

This overview will describe FamilyFirst service in the state of North Dakota. Funded through Title IV-E, FamilyFirst services are designed to strengthen and stabilize families so children can safely remain in their homes. These services provide practical parenting support and help address behavioral needs, including mental health and substance use challenges. FamilyFirst services in North Dakota, include Brief Strategic Family Therapy, Family Check-Up, Functional Family Therapy, Healthy Families, Multisystemic Therapy, Nurse-Family Partnership, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, and Parents as Teachers.

## **Trauma-Informed Care**

Jennifer Schlinger, EdD, MSW, LMSW | 1:00PM-3:00PM – 2hrs

This session provides foundational knowledge and increases awareness of trauma and its impact on individuals. Participants will explore the principles and purpose of trauma-informed care, gain an understanding of the diverse forms trauma can take, and learn how the brain and nervous system respond to traumatic experiences. The session will also address practical strategies for regulating the nervous system, highlight supportive interventions, and introduce practical techniques that prioritize self-care and resilience for both personal and professional settings.

## **Children Who Experience Domestic Violence**

Kayla Jones | 1:00PM-3:00PM – 2hrs

About 4.5 to 15 million children in the U.S. each year are present in the home during the abuse of a parent, primary caregiver, or other adult family member. In this session, participants will increase their understanding of the defining characteristics of children's experiences with domestic violence and the traumatic impacts of this violence on children and non-offending parents. Participants will also learn about ways to more effectively address the safety and wellbeing of children and families living with domestic violence, and how they can best provide collaborative support for resilience and healing.

## **Family Matters Understanding DBT Together**

Dr. Hannah Baczynski and Amber Nelson | 1:00PM-3:00PM – 2hrs

This session provides an introduction to Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and the foundational principles of DBT theory. Participants will learn how DBT skills can be applied to support parents, caregivers, and professionals working in family-based settings. The training will explore core DBT skills, including addiction-focused skills, and how these strategies can help adolescents and families manage emotional, behavioral, and relational challenges. DBT is effective across a wide range of diagnoses and offers practical tools that can be used both in family-based work and by individuals supporting youth and families in their professional roles.

## Supporting Fathers, Strengthening Families: Reflections and insights from the Nurturing Fathers Program in North Dakota

Kelvin Hazangwi, LCSW. Amy Tichy, Dr. Sean Brotherson, and Dr. Kyle Johnson | 3:30PM-5:00PM – 1.5hrs

This panel presentation will provide an in-depth overview of the Nurturing Fathers Program in North Dakota, highlighting its origins, structure, impact, and effectiveness. Attendees will gain a comprehensive understanding of how the program supports fathers in developing nurturing parenting skills and strengthening family relationships.

The session will begin with Amy Tichy, Parent Educator with NDSU Extension, who will share the background of the Nurturing Fathers Program in North Dakota, including when and why it was introduced and the needs it was designed to address.

Kelvin Hazangwi, LCSW, will then present an overview of the 13-week program structure, highlighting the core tenets of the curriculum. This includes the program's reflective and inclusive approach, such as exploring fathers' birthing stories, examining participants' experiences with their own fathers, and building key parenting and relationship skills within a supportive group setting.

Kyle Johnson, MD, will offer a unique perspective as both a father who has participated in the program and as a co-facilitator. He will share personal reflections on the impact of the program, discuss why it is especially important for fathers, and outline how the program supports positive change. The panel will also include insights and reflections from past participants, sharing experiences before and after completing the program.

Finally, Dr. Sean Brotherson will present highlights from evaluations of nurturing programs, focusing on outcomes, effectiveness, and best practices.

The session will conclude with an open question-and-answer discussion, providing attendees with panelists, asking questions, and explore how the Nurturing Fathers Program can be included in their work with families.

## **Movement and Mindfulness: Using Yoga to Feel Better**

Roberta Pytlik, LPCC, LMAC | 3:30PM-5:00PM – 1.5hrs

This experiential session is appropriate for anyone that is client-facing or experiences stress. Yoga has a long history of being utilized to help individuals create more balanced mental states and more recent research has suggested that yoga-based practices are especially effective for increasing interoception and proprioception, reducing distress, and developing effective coping skills for individuals with PTSD. This session will combine lecture and actual practice of yoga skills.

## **Mothers, Children, and Hope: Keeping Families Connected Through Incarceration**

Cheryl Thomas | 3:30PM-5:00PM – 1.5hrs

This session highlights the sharp rise in female incarceration, with women more likely to be imprisoned for drug and property offenses and 62% being mothers. This impacts millions of children, increasing risks of adverse experiences and emotional challenges. Maintaining family contact reduces depression and recidivism, making programs like North Dakota's Children of Incarcerated Parents Initiative and the new prison nursery critical. The nursery, authorized by SB 2352, allows infants to stay with their mothers for up to 18 months, fostering healthy attachment and supporting reintegration. States with similar programs report significantly lower recidivism, underscoring the importance of family-centered approaches in corrections.

# THURSDAY MARCH 26, 2026

## Keeping Families Connected: A Healing-Centered Approach for Child Welfare Professionals

Beth Tyson, MA | 8:30AM-9:30AM – 1hr

By the end of this keynote, participants will understand the critical importance of maintaining safe, supportive, and consistent connections for children and families navigating foster care, kinship care, and reunification. Attendees will learn how family connection services as both a protective factor and a healing force in the face of trauma and ambiguous loss. Using stories from the field, evidence-based research, and practical strategies, this session will highlight how professionals, advocates, and caregivers can reduce harm, strengthen resilience, and foster belonging for children whose families have been disrupted. Participants will leave with a renewed hope and concrete tools to sustain family ties while navigating the complex realities of child welfare.

## Legislative Panel

ND Legislators | 10:00AM-11:30AM – 1.5hrs

This interactive nonpartisan legislative panel brings together North Dakota legislators to provide an educational overview of the legislative process and highlight how policy decisions directly impact social work, education, and helping professions. Panelists will share their personal journeys into public service, describe their roles within the Legislature, and explain how committees and subcommittees function, from bill introduction to final votes.

Attendees will gain a practical understanding of how advocacy works in North Dakota, including when and how citizens can engage with legislators, testify, and influence policy. This session is designed to empower helping professionals and school counselors with the knowledge and confidence to participate meaningfully in the legislative process while honoring professional responsibilities. This session is educational and is not an endorsement of any candidate or party.

## **Ethics**

Katie Krukenberg, LMSW | 1:00PM-3:00PM – 2hrs

This session explores the ethical dimensions of practice for helping professionals, with a focus on rural settings and family-based services. Participants will examine professional standards related to self-care, consider unique boundary and ethical dilemmas that arise in rural communities, and learn practical strategies for resolving challenges while maintaining ethical, client-centered practice.

## **Keeping Families Connected While Ensuring Safety: Trauma-Informed Supervised Visitation**

Beth Tyson, MA | 1:00PM-3:00PM – 2hrs

Supervised visitation plays a vital role in child welfare, yet without a trauma-informed approach, it can unintentionally increase distress for children, families, and professionals. This training provides child welfare professionals with a practical understanding of how trauma affects behavior, attachment, and emotional regulation during supervised visits. Participants will examine the ways trauma histories influence family interactions and how visitation settings, expectations, and responses can either support healing or contribute to re-traumatization. The workshop focuses on applying trauma-informed principles to real-world visitation practice, including creating predictable and emotionally safe environments, responding to challenging behaviors with empathy and structure, and balancing safety with dignity and family engagement. Through case examples and applied strategies, participants will strengthen their ability to support children and caregivers during visits while reducing stress, conflict, and secondary traumatic stress for staff.

## **The Dangers of Nicotine and its Newest Devices: How to Talk to Youth About It All**

Heather Austin | 1:00PM-3:00PM – 2hrs

This session examines the history and evolution of tobacco and nicotine products, from early commercial cigarettes to today's high-tech vaping devices targeting youth. Participants will learn how electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) impact physical and emotional health, review current youth vaping prevalence and risk factors, and explore why the vaping epidemic is a critical prevention priority. The session will highlight emerging and "stealth" products seen in schools, industry tactics used to attract youth, effective strategies for talking with young people about nicotine use and quitting, and current tobacco prevention policies at the local, state, and national levels, with an emphasis on building youth leadership and advocacy.

## **Fostering Employee Resilience Through Reflective Supervision**

Janet Amundson, MA, LPCC, IMH-E | 3:30PM-5:00PM – 1.5hr

In this session, attendees will be able to understand reflective supervision and how this impacts their employees in not only preventing burnout but also building resilience. They will also be introduced to entry-level ways to facilitate and build reflective capacity to those they supervise.

## **Is It Me Or Is Conflict Uncomfortable**

Christy Wilkie, LCSW and Lucas Mitzel, LCSW | 3:30PM-5:00PM – 1.5hr

This session will help provide insight on how to navigate conflict within families and relationships. This is important as these dynamics are at the heart of many social service challenges. By equipping professionals with tools to understand and manage conflicts, this session will help foster healthier outcomes for individuals and families.

## **The Eyes Lead the Way**

Dr. Ryan Capouch | 3:30PM-5:00PM – 1.5hr

What if a key driver in childhood development gets missed when a child is screened at their school? What if dyslexia, ADHD, and other processing disorders aren't as severe in some children as we think? In this conversation, Dr. Ryan Capouch explores how the visual system depends on three factors: health, clarity, and function; and how many children are slipping through the cracks because we don't know what to look for.

# FRIDAY MARCH 27, 2026

## **ND ICWA Family Preservation Program: Working Together to Help Families**

Jessi Leneagh | 8:30AM-10:00AM – 1.5hrs

This panel will highlight the North Dakota ICWA Family Preservation Partnership, a collaborative coalition working to strengthen outcomes for Native American children and families. Led in partnership with Tribal Nations, the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services, the North Dakota Supreme Court Court Improvement Program, the Native American Training Institute, and the University of North Dakota, the program promotes culturally responsive, family-centered practices aligned with the Indian Child Welfare Act. Panelists will discuss how cross-system collaboration, tribal sovereignty, and family preservation efforts work together to prevent unnecessary separation and strengthen Native families and communities across North Dakota.

## **Generational Trends: Psychological and Social Considerations**

Kristi Bitz, PhD | 10:30AM-12:00PM – 1.5hrs

This session explores generational patterns through the lens of psychological theory, research, and technological change. Participants will examine key traits and trends among the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, Generation Z, and the emerging Generation Alpha/Polars, with a focus on Gen Z. Topics include mental health, lifestyle, work, income, gender, politics, sexuality, and family structures within the context of generational identity. Special attention will be given to how technology acts as a driver of generational change. Attendees will leave with a stronger understanding of how generational context influences client experiences, communication styles, and values. This knowledge supports more empathetic, informed, and effective engagement across diverse age groups in both clinical and community settings.