

2026 CASSW Conference Sessions

CASSW Conference Day 1 (5 CEU's) Monday January 12, 2026 9AM-4PM		
Session Title	Session Description	Presenter(s)
H.E.A.R.T.S. Method: The Six-Phase Journey to Mindfulness for School Social Workers	Stressed school social workers can learn to combat burnout and prioritize their well-being in this essential session. Holistic health practitioner and educator Dr. Catalina Andrade presents the H.E.A.R.T.S. Method, a six-phase mindfulness journey designed for those who serve K-12 students. Implementing this method will help reduce stress, enhance self-awareness, and embrace self-care. Ultimately, a greater sense of well-being leads to more effective support for students and families.	Dr. Catalina Andrade
Creating and Utilizing an SEL Room	Want to create or improve an SEL (Social Emotional Learning) space in your school? This workshop is designed for school social workers to explore how a dedicated SEL Room can boost student emotional well-being. Learn practical steps for implementing a structured process, from a morning check-in using the RULER Mood Meter to organizing emotion-based activities and setting up a functional calming corner. Participants will leave with clear strategies and tools to develop an SEL Room tailored to their unique school community.	Mayra Perez
Flipping the Script: How 7th Grade Students Unlearn Ableism through Teaching Disability Awareness	What happens when students lead the conversation about empathy, inclusion, and belonging on campus? At one rural public TK–8 charter school, this question inspired the creation of a campus-wide Inclusion Fair—an event designed to elevate student voice while promoting awareness, acceptance, and dialogue around disability and inclusion. This session explores the planning and implementation of this initiative and provides an analysis of pre- and post-test data, revealing measurable growth in student empathy. Participants will leave with adaptable strategies, planning tools, and insights to bring this transformative, student-centered model to their own school communities.	Eliza Dyer & Wendy Elmore
Foundations of Mental Health: Meeting the Moment with Classroom-Based Mental Health Education	Mental health education is essential in today's classrooms. This session introduces the Sonoma County Office of Education's Foundations of Mental Health, a free, open-source, and adaptable curriculum designed to help high schools meet requirements like California's SB 224. The eight-lesson curriculum is anti-racist, trauma-responsive, and culturally responsive, covering vital topics like stress, anxiety, depression, and suicide awareness. Attendees will learn implementation strategies, receive curriculum tools, and discover how to join a statewide Community of Practice for ongoing support.	Rebekah Pope & Cristal Perez Sierra

Supporting our Trans & Nonbinary Students	Participants will learn concrete and immediate ways to help affirm and support the transgender and nonbinary students around them. Through storytelling and collaborative planning, participants will walk away ready to support this vulnerable and vibrant community both at the micro and macro levels.	Maria Al-Shamma, MSW, PPS
COE Supporting Districts: Stories from SSWs placed in County School Districts	The workshop will explore how KCSOS (Kern County Superintendent of Schools) started supporting districts with School Social Workers and the development of the Kern SSW Community of Practice. The workshop will highlight stories from SSWs that are placed in different school districts in Kern County and the journey of billing through the CYBHI Fee Schedule.	Jeffrey Coggan, LCSW, PPSC Melany Ledesma, ASW, PPSC Stephanie Guzman, LCSW, PPSC
Rooted & Resilient: Restorative Justice Reimagined Through Cultural Healing & Collective Care	Rooted & Resilient: A Healing Curriculum Haus™ reimagines restorative justice by centering cultural healing, identity, and equity through the R.O.O.T.S. Method™, while integrating Creative Roots' sustainable arts-based practices to enhance cultural diversity, amplify student voice, and provide actionable strategies educators can use to transform school discipline into belonging-centered care.	Ashley Brown & Jacie Rowe IV
Beyond the Absence: Engaging Families, Schools, and Systems to Support Student Attendance	This workshop offers school social workers, educators, and leaders a comprehensive, strengths-based, systems approach to improving student attendance. Grounded in current practice, the session will explore common attendance barriers while examining policy, legal considerations, and the critical role of the school social worker. Participants will learn effective, culturally responsive strategies for interventions and parent engagement. You'll leave with actionable tools and time to proactively strategize collaborative solutions for your school community.	Rebecca Ollivier, LCSW, Gabby Briit, ASW, PPSC; Micha Saenz, LCSW, PPSC-SSW & CWA
From Caseloads to Leadership: How School Social Work Expertise Elevates School Administration	Are you a school social worker ready to step into an administrative leadership role? This dynamic workshop demonstrates how the core competencies and ethical foundations of school social work make you uniquely qualified to transform educational environments. We will explore the deep alignment between the NASW Standards for School Social Work and the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSEL). Learn how to leverage social work systems theories to drive data-driven decisions, navigate complex school dynamics, and build collaborative teams that lead to sustainable, student-focused change.	Cristina Dobon-Claveau, LCSW, PPS
From Intervention to Implementation: A Practical Model to Address Class-Cutting and Tardies	This session introduces the Attendance Support Intervention Program (ASIP), a relationship-based Tier 2 MTSS intervention focused on improving in-school attendance for students with frequent tardiness or class-cutting. ASIP pairs students with a trusted adult for weekly check-ins, collaborative goal-setting, and individualized support. Participants will learn how to use data to identify eligible students, structure meaningful interactions, and effectively track progress and engage families. Leave with real student outcome examples and the tools needed to implement this connection-focused program at your school.	Johnny Pinto, CASW, PPSC

Can You Hear Me Now? Disrupting Black Male Silence Through Spoken Word Poetry	This workshop introduces a trauma-informed, arts-based intervention designed to help justice-impacted Black and Brown men break emotional silence through spoken word poetry. Implemented in a reentry program on Skid Row, the project fostered healing, connection, and voice. Attendees will explore clinical implications, case examples, and practical tools to integrate culturally responsive, creative methods into their work.	Kiyatana Sapp
Building Relationships through Attendance in a Rural TK-8	Learn how Pond TK-8 Elementary School in California's Central Valley transformed its attendance rates by leveraging daily initiatives as a relationship-building tool. This session will walk participants through the successful systems and strategies used to reduce chronic absenteeism from 24% to 3% in just three years. Discover how their approach, rooted in authentic connections, culturally responsive outreach, and trauma-informed practices, has fostered a stronger sense of belonging and success for all students.	Michelle Placencia & Verna Alejo
Tier 1 School Mental Health Supports: Highlighting Erika's Lighthouse	Join this engaging workshop to explore the latest youth mental health statistics and trends and learn proven prevention strategies for schools. The session spotlights Erika's Lighthouse, a FREE, evidence-informed Tier 1 mental health program with comprehensive, ready-to-use resources. You'll be introduced to classroom curricula, parent workshops, and student-led clubs designed to support the entire school community. Equip yourself with accessible tools to quickly start or strengthen your school's mental health initiatives.	Anna Farrell
Puppets, Guitars, Drumsticks, Stories & Games! An Exploration of Creative Interventions in Social Work	Join Michael D. Romero for a unique, two-part workshop on engaging youth and families through creativity and rhythm. Part 1, "Puppets, Songs, Stories – Oh My!", explores using musical books and original puppet videos to hold space for important conversations, culminating in a live musical performance. Part 2, "Using Rhythm to Connect and Cope", will be an active session where participants use simple percussion to learn eight music activities focused on regulating, connecting, and coping. All creative and rhythmic strategies are designed to be immediately applicable to any area of practice.	Michael D. Romero, LCSW-S
Interconnecting PBIS and School Based Mental Health - Using the Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF) to Improve Social-Emotional-Behavioral Outcomes	This session provides an overview of the Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF), a structure designed to integrate Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Social Emotional Learning (SEL), and School Mental Health within the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Learn how to effectively integrate resources, training, and data to improve outcomes for all students. Presenters will share the Placer County Office of Education's journey in regional technical assistance, providing concrete case examples of truly integrated, not just co-located, systems with district and community mental health partners.	Joey Olsen, LCSW, PPSC & Patti Schetter, MA, BCBA, PPSC

Conference Day 2 (4 CEU's)
Tuesday January 13, 2026 8:30AM-12:45PM

Session Title	Session Description	Presenter(s)
Suicide is Not a Bad Word - Let's Talk About it	Mental health challenges and suicide are an ever-present reality for students and staff, with suicide being the second leading cause of death for ages 10–14. This unique workshop goes beyond typical prevention training to provide social workers with a foundational, practical understanding of this critical topic. We will explore rarely discussed aspects like cultural considerations for Black and Latinx youth, suicidality theories, and firearms and means reduction. Participants will gain actionable scripts and tips for engaging with someone who may be suicidal, leaving the session feeling confident and prepared to play a vital role in prevention.	Elyce Mandich, LCSW
MTSS- Attendance & Mental Health	Build a cohesive Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to proactively address the interconnected issues of student attendance and mental health. This workshop will guide school leaders and staff through applying MTSS principles—prevention, early intervention, and tiered support—to these critical areas. Explore school-wide strategies (Tier 1), targeted group interventions (Tier 2), and intensive individualized supports (Tier 3), all driven by data-informed decision-making. Leave with an implementation toolkit and an action plan to create a sustainable, high-impact MTSS framework tailored to your school community.	Ashley Chismark
Making Connections Understanding Intersectionality and Positionality in School Mental Health	This interactive workshop guides school-based mental health providers in exploring their own intersectional identities and how these influence relationships with students. Participants will learn to develop a positionality statement as a vital tool for self-reflection and culturally responsive practice. By understanding their own background, providers can better recognize and honor students' diverse experiences. This leads to stronger advocacy and the application of equity-centered practices within the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).	Dr. Viviana Martinez, DSW, LCSW, PPS
How did I get here?: Taking time to reflect on your personal story and clinical practice	This reflective workshop encourages school social workers to examine how their personal histories and relational experiences shape their practice and clinical thinking. Leave with a "zoomed-out" perspective on your journey and tools to sustain your personal well-being and professional learning.	Elaine Ellis
Planting Seeds of Wellness: Cultivating Calm, Creativity, & Connection	This experiential workshop invites school social workers to pause, reflect, and reconnect with their purpose by engaging in expressive art, resilience-based strategies, and community-building circles. Rooted in trauma-informed practices, the Bloom From Within wellness book, and Community-Building Circle kit, participants will explore simple yet powerful tools that promote calm, creativity, and connection, for themselves and the students and families they serve. The session blends reflection, skill-building, and interactive dialogue to strengthen wellness, advocacy, and belonging in school communities.	Carla Lavelle Trinh
Mandated Reporting Reform in Education	Learn about Los Angeles County's multi-year effort to transform mandated reporting practices by school personnel. This initiative aims to improve report accuracy,	Alicia Garoupa & Dr. Tamara Hunter

	focusing on the narrowed definition of general neglect, and mitigate harm from unnecessary calls to child protective services. Attendees will explore strategies to shift mindsets, improve decision-making, and eliminate over-surveillance of low-income communities of color. Discover available resources and how to participate in this broad-based systems change effort to keep children safe and families strong.	
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