



2023 NDBH Conference Agenda

Dialogues to Action: Responses to Address Trauma and Violence

October 29 – November 1, 2023

Renaissance Arts Hotel, New Orleans, LA

Conference Overview

This conference aims to dispel myths and to identify appropriate and meaningful preventive and treatment responses to the causes and needs of the people who perpetrate interpersonal violence, violence to self, or who are victimized by violence. To stem the tide of violence, we must first understand its causes, and be able to identify high risk situations and those individuals at risk to become perpetrators or victims. Repeatedly, people with mental illness are blamed by the media, law enforcement and elected officials as the instigators of daily instances of violence, yet the research literature does not support this expectation. Without truly understanding the causes of violent acts, and those who commit them, it's not possible for first responders, behavioral and public health providers, or policy makers to take meaningful action.

The NDBH preconference, offered on Sunday, October 29th will focus on informing participants of the current understanding of the causes of violence, those who commit violent acts and the impact of increasing violence on the behavioral health workforce, first responders and the community. Additionally, it will provide guidance on how these professionals can respond safely and effectively to both deescalate and manage the aftermath of violent acts. There will be a focus on working collaboratively across multiple sectors and settings, and when and how to engage with the crisis response system.



The 2023 annual conference by the National Dialogues on Behavioral Health will focus on the increasing frequency and impact of escalating violence against self and others, within the home, school, healthcare setting and the broader community. Speakers will present what is known about the causes of violence, and approaches that can be and are currently being implemented, to help prevent violent acts and how to best respond when these troubling and traumatic events occur. Sessions will cover what the traditional and non-traditional behavioral health provider and system can do to reduce the incidence and impact of violence, by and on, youth and adults, with a focus on research backed interventions to address aggressive behavior, paranoia, domestic violence, conduct disorder, trauma, and substance misuse. Public health approaches presented will include a focus on treating violence as a preventable

health issue and strengthening communities to prevent violence and foster recovery if a community wide violent event should occur.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2023

9:30 – 1:00 PM- Pre-Conference

Take Action Now! Understanding and Limiting the Impact of Violence

The preconference will focus on informing participants of the current understanding of the causes of violence, those who commit violent acts and the impact of increasing violence on the behavioral health workforce, first responders and the community. Additionally, it will provide guidance on how these professionals can respond safely and effectively to both deescalate and manage the aftermath of violent acts. There will be a focus on working collaboratively across multiple sectors and settings, and when and how to engage with the crisis response system.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2023

8:30 – 8:45 AM Welcome and Overview

This year's conference goals are to educate and dispel myths around the causes and those who perpetrate the widespread violence that has become a daily news event across our country. Speakers will present information on the current research on the causes of violence to self and others, and approaches that can be implemented by traditional and non-traditional behavioral health providers, and the community at-large, to help prevent violent acts and how to best respond when these troubling and traumatic events occur. An interdisciplinary approach that includes interventions across the lifespan and in a variety of settings, will be presented.

8:45 – 9:45 AM Understanding the True Causes of Violent Behavior

Understanding the research behind the etiology of violent behavior is paramount to being able to prevent it. Too often, violent acts are attributed to people with a mental illness, but the research doesn't support this. To stem the tide of violence, we must first understand causes, identify situations and who are the individuals at highest risk. We can then know what, when and where are the most impactful approaches to take. Behavioral health practitioners and others can play an active role in preventing violence and taking impactful steps once it occurs and informing public policy and laws once it is better understood.

9:45 – 10 AM Break

10:00 – 12:00 PM Violence and Behavioral Health Interventions: Adults

The focus of this session is on behavioral health interventions for adults that can help reduce the incidence and impact of mass violence that is now occurring with more frequency and regularity. Research indicates that a large proportion of persons with mental illness will NOT be involved with any act of violence. One objective of this session is to review the current knowledge base of what we know and what can be done to identify potential perpetrators and appropriate interventions. Research also suggests that some persons in these groups may experience severe PTSD. A second objective of the session is to review interventions that have been implemented and appear to work to address these collateral impacts. A third objective is to identify interventions at the policy level as well as interventions at the clinical level that can support interventions for potential perpetrators and for persons experiencing collateral impacts.

12:00 – 2:00 PM Lunch on Your Own

2:00 – 3:15 PM Violence and Behavioral Health Interventions: Children and Adolescents

Studies have found that youth are exposed to violence and crime at a much higher rate than adults. Nearly 70% of youth in the U.S. are exposed to violence as victims or as witnesses to violence. This can have long lasting repercussions, even with some of these youths' becoming perpetrators of violence themselves. Being exposed to violence can lead to emotional harm, mental health conditions, and physical harm to name a few. In general, this exposure is associated with a myriad of issues including, behavioral and emotional dysregulation, academic difficulty, and disproportionate contact with law enforcement.

Evidence also suggests we can stem the tide of negative repercussions. This session will focus on research backed interventions for working with youth struggling with aggressive behavior and conduct disorder, trauma, substance use, and their own social and emotional learning. We will discuss interventions that have been shown to work in homes, communities, schools, courts, child welfare, and justice systems. Identifying these youth early, and understanding the strengths and risk of screening and assessment will be explored.

3:15 – 3:30 PM Break

3:30 – 4:30 PM Violence and Behavioral Health Interventions: Children and Adolescents (Continued)

4:30 – 5:00 Dialogue with the Experts

5:15 – 6:30 PM Reception – Art Gallery: Join us for Hor d'oeuvres and Beverages

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2023

8:30 – 9:45 AM Public Health Approach to Violence: How Behavioral Health Fits

This session will review the public health approach to violence. The approach focuses on prevention and intervention strategies and treats violence as a preventable health issue.

The approach includes:

1. Collecting data on community violence that helps identify high-risk areas and populations.
2. Identifying and addressing protective factors like strong social support, community engagement and decreased access to lethal means.
3. Raising awareness about the trauma to individuals and communities that results from violence and the importance of promoting conflict resolution and healthy relationships.
4. Policies that decrease the risk of violence, including gun safety, safe housing and neighborhoods, and behavioral health services.

9:45 – 10:00 AM Break

10:00 – 11:15 AM Traditional and Non-traditional Responses to Address Increasing Rates of Self Harm and Death by Suicide

Death by suicide, is considered violence against the self, and has been increasing for all age groups. While the behavioral health practitioner has an essential role in identifying individuals at risk for self-harm and providing timely interventions, research shows that most people who die by suicide are not receiving care from a behavioral health provider. This session will focus on approaches to prevent suicide within the behavioral healthcare system and in a variety of non-behavioral health care settings. The presentation will include interventions to address self-harm and suicidal ideation for specific age groups and populations, and evidence-based approaches for the ongoing clinical management of high-risk individuals. Settings covered will include primary care clinics, school-based sites, and universities.

11:15 – 11:45 AM Dialogues with the Experts

11:45 – 1:45 PM Lunch on Your Own

1:45 – 3:00 PM Mass Media: Ethical Issues and Public Perception of the Causes of Violence

Media reporting on mass shootings, hate crimes, and other violent acts is ubiquitous. The use of technology has made the reporting of these types of incidents nearly instantaneous. Given the ability to rapidly and immediately disseminate information, what are the ethics and responsibilities of news media organizations who report on these events? Should the public get detailed information regarding perpetrators? Should unsubstantiated theories regarding the mental health of perpetrators be part of the story? This session will discuss ethical issues associated with mass media reporting and the impact on perception by the public of individuals with mental illnesses and other behavioral health issues.

3:00 – 3:15 PM Break

3:15 – 4:30 PM Social Media: Healthy or Dangerous, Good or Bad? – The Pros and Cons of Social Media Use and the Impact on Individuals, Families and Communities

There has recently been a flurry of attention in both the popular press as well as from a scientific perspective directed towards the impact of social media on children, youth and adults ranging on a continuum from harmful to helpful. Of particular note is the U.S. Surgeon General's recently released advisory on social media and youth mental health that states that "there are ample indicators that social media can also pose a risk of harm to the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents, while also acknowledging that there may also be some benefits. Social media has also been identified as promoting positive outcomes such as reducing isolation of individuals by providing virtual connections to family, friends and other social support networks, providing increased awareness and access to mental health and other health services that are/have traditionally been difficult to access. Given a range of pros and cons, how can social media and social media platforms be balanced and harnessed to help support the creation of healthier communities and to support the mental health of individuals and families? This session will focus on strategies for the positive use of social media, while mitigating and addressing concerns associated with the negative aspects.

4:30 – 5:00 PM Dialogues with the Experts

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2023

8:30 – 10:00 AM Workforce Challenges in an Era of Increasing Acts of Violence

The behavioral health field is continuing to face a multitude of workforce related challenges including reduction in force due to retirement or burnout as well as recruitment and retention of both traditional and non-traditional staff. Behavioral health practitioners, school mental health staff and first responders are being asked to do more and more, and they are experiencing stressors related to addressing trauma of individuals receiving treatment due to violence or exposure to violence.

How can the behavioral health field support the workforce as they provide treatment and support to these individuals? This session will address four key issues: (1) How can the field recruit and train a broader range of individuals to serve the population of individuals who need care, and who are increasingly traumatized by exposure to acts of violence? (2) How can behavioral health address the self-care needs of practitioners to help mitigate stress associated with working in the field, (3) How can professionals in related fields be provided with the support that they need to address the behavioral health needs of individuals with whom they routinely interact? and (4) How can technological innovation be used to support the workforce?

10:00 – 10:15 AM Break

10:15 – 11:30 AM Levers of Change

The conference will conclude with a discussion on initiatives that are being implemented to impact the epidemic of violence that is currently being seen across the United States. Recommendations with regard to how behavioral health providers can play an active role in educating the public on the causes of violence, how they can play a realistic role in interrupting violence, and their critical response once violent acts occur will be discussed.

11:30 – 12:00 Discussion and Wrap-up

We hope to see you this year!

