



LPCA CONNECTION

Counselors Rock!

Official Publication of the Licensed Professional Counselors Association of Georgia

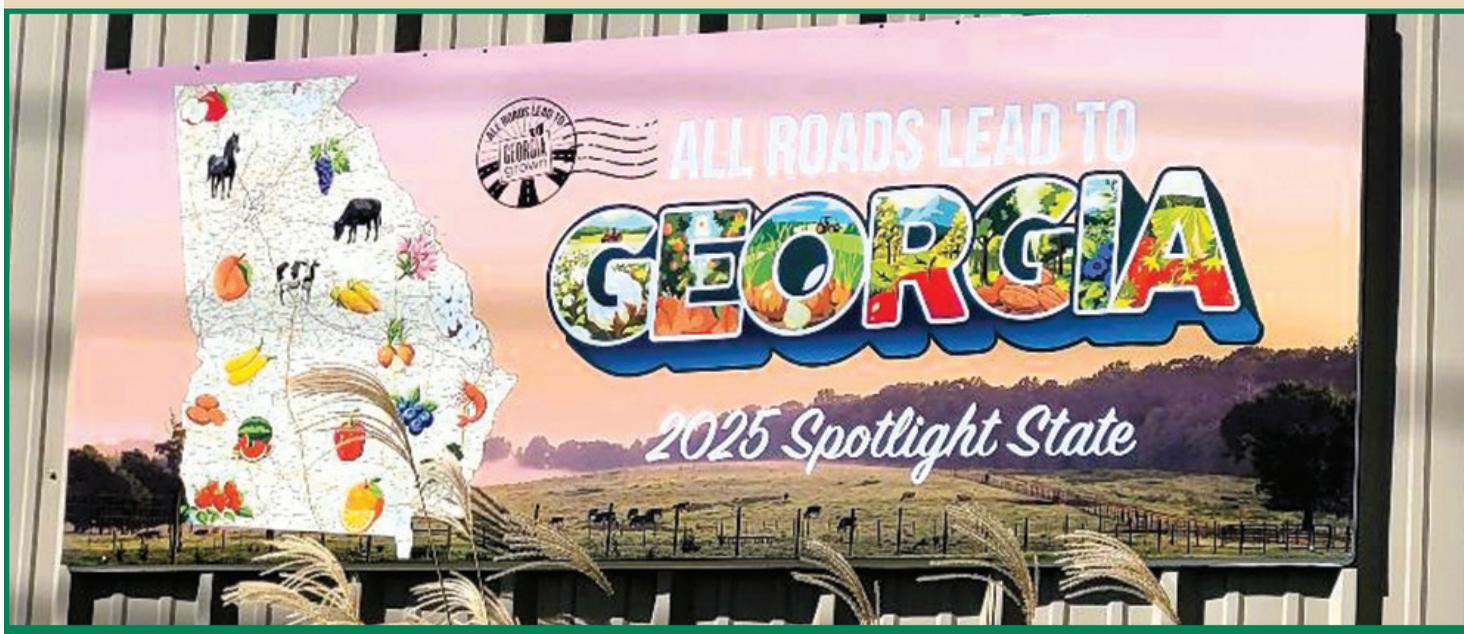
LPCA Advocating for Mental Health in Georgia's Farm Communities

In October of 2025, LPCA President Tracey Pace represented LPCA of GA at The Sunbelt Ag Expo in Moultrie, GA. Held annually at Spence Field in October, this event is North America's premier farm show, featuring over 1,200 exhibitors, live demos, cutting-edge farm tech, seminars, tractor pulls, livestock, family fun, and events like the Southeastern Farmer of the Year competition. Our state of Georgia was honored as the 2025 Spotlight State, showcasing our peanut, broiler, and pecan industries. This event afforded Tracey Pace the opportunity to connect with GA Agriculture Commissioner Tyler Harper, GA House Representative Tim Fleming of District 114 (Morgan County and parts of Newton and Walton Counties), GA Governor Brian Kemp, and GA First Lady Marty Kemp, to advocate for LPCs and Mental Health Care in Georgia's rural farm communities.

(See page 11 for more photos from event.)



LPCA President Tracey Pace with Georgia First Lady Marty Kemp



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Gale Macke LPCA@LPCAGA.org



Member Dues Changes

Since 2005, we have proudly maintained our membership dues at the same level. Over the years, LPCA of GA has been dedicated to providing valuable resources, including:

- Increased continuing education workshops for earning CEs toward licensure renewal.
- Expanded consultation services in support of your professional success as an LPC.
- Engaging networking events for camaraderie and valuable information.
- Advocacy efforts, including the employ of three lobbyists, for working toward more inclusive laws for the benefit of LPCs and Mental Health Care in Georgia.

These efforts reflect LPCA's commitment to support your professional growth and advance more opportunities for LPCs. However to continue our efforts, the increased costs of programs, expanded services, and advocacy efforts necessitate a modest increase in membership dues. We strongly believe that increasing investment in our association will directly benefit your practice and our community as a whole.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please don't hesitate to reach out. You can LPCA directly by emailing us at: President@LPCAGA.org or by calling the LPCA office at 770-449-4547.

LPC Day at the Georgia Capitol January 22, 2026

What has become an annual tradition for LPCA of GA, LPC Day at the Capitol affords Georgia's LPCs the opportunity to advocate for our counseling profession. Join us at the Capitol between 8:30–9:30 AM to meet with our lawmakers and stay for group photo on the Capitol Stairs at 10:00 AM. LPCA tables will remain on the second floor South Stairs until approximately noon. For more information or to register: lpcaga.org. (See page 24 for more detailed information.)



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PRESIDENT-ELECT

Tonja Simmons Lee, PhD, LPC, NCC, CPCS

GSCA Annual Conference

School Counselors Helping Students Rule Their Success

This past November I was honored to represent LPCA of GA at the 2025 Annual Georgia School Counselor Association (GSCA) Conference in Macon. GSCA is a non-profit association comprised of school counselors, counseling directors, supervisors, administrators, and counselor educators that speaks for school counselors at state and national levels.

Attending this conference provided a valuable opportunity for both learning and networking. I presented a workshop titled, *Enhancing Practice: Pathways to LPC Licensure for Georgia's School Counselors*, alongside LPCA President Tracey Pace. It was an amazing success with over 100 participants.

Upcoming LPCA Annual Convention Atlanta, May 11–15, 2026

This year's convention promises an enriching experience for attendees.

Cutting-Edge Workshops: Learn from leading experts on the latest research, emerging therapies, and innovative practices shaping the future of mental health profession.

Networking Opportunities: Experts remind us of the value in connecting with your colleagues, including enhanced career opportunities, improved job performance, and a stronger professional support system.

Interactive Sessions: Engage in hands-on workshops, panel discussions, and case scenarios designed to enhance your skills and broaden your perspective. Discover new tools, technologies, and resources to support your practice and professional growth.



Recipients of a Scholarship Toward Payment for LPC Packet Submission
Shemetria Risper from Georgia Southern University and
Wendell Benjamin from Georgia State University



Tonja Lee Presents Workshop at GSCA Conference



Georgia School Counselor Association 2025 Annual Conference
LPCA President Tracey Pace and LPCA President-Elect Tonja Simmons Lee with Happy GSCA Conference Attendees



PRESIDENT

Tracey Pace, ThD, LPC, CPCS, CFMHE

As we prepare for the upcoming legislative session, I've been actively engaging in a variety of meetings, gatherings, and events to advocate for LPCs and support our members. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of our past Boards of Directors and LPCA staff, we've made significant strides in expanding our privileges, and we are committed to building on this progress in 2026.

Recently, I attended the following events for the advancement and advocacy of LPCs.

October 24—Internship 101: Launching Your Professional Journey Hosted by LPCA Western District Rep. Olga Maxwell

Held in Lagrange, GA, this presentation provided clinical mental health counseling students with practical tools and strategies on how to secure an internship site, screen a potential supervisor, and make the most out of their internship experience. Students were left better equipped to start applying for placements and deal with the potential challenges that may arise when it comes to securing a placement. For more about this event, see the Western District Report on page 9.

October 28—Legislative Event Hosted by GA House Speaker Jon Burns

Held at Super-Sod Store in Ft. Valley, GA, this event afforded me the opportunity to meet with both Senator Larry Walker and House Speaker Jon Burns to advocate for LPCs and mental health care in Georgia.



Senator Larry Walker, Tracey Pace and GA House Speaker Jon Burns

November 5—Legislative Event in Lyons, Georgia in Support of Agriculture Commissioner Tyler Harper



Tyler Harper

Harper's goal is to increase access to mental health services in rural Georgia. This event provided a valuable platform to engage with fellow stakeholders who were very interested in learning about LPCA's ongoing efforts to increase mental health care in rural Georgia including greater access to LPCs. Additionally, it was an excellent opportunity to network with influential figures such as Rep.

Leesa Hagan, who has recently been appointed as the Chair of the House Rural Development Committee. Connecting with Rep. Hagan allowed me to engage in meaningful discussions about rural development priorities and potential collaborative efforts with LPCA to support growth and prosperity for rural Georgians.



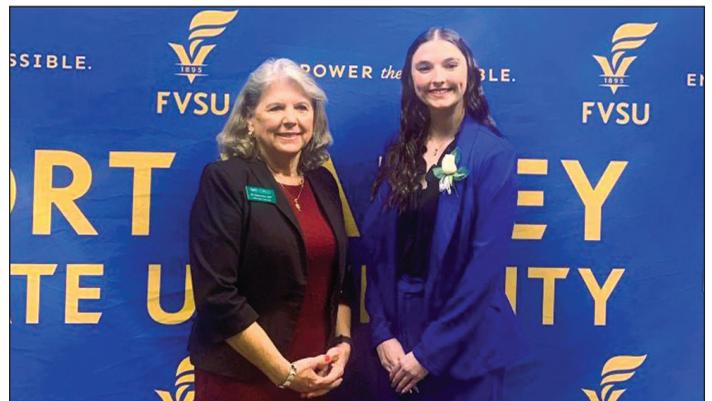
Leesa Hagan

November 6—Medicaid Summit in Downtown Atlanta

Special thanks to our Immediate Past President, Dr. Keisha Buhcanan, for organizing this informative and interactive event. Attendees were able to leave with a clear path to resolving reimbursement concerns and increased opportunities to be on a variety of insurance panels. Participants have requested that the event be yearly as well as increased opportunities to attend topic related spinoff CEs. See Immediate Past President Report on page 5 for more details.

November 11—Fort Valley State University Chi Sigma Iota Induction Ceremony

Chi Sigma Iota is an international honor society for counselors. This chapter recognizes high academic and professional achievement in counseling, and its members are students in FVSU's counselor education programs who meet specific eligibility criteria, such as having a GPA of 3.5 or higher and completing a full academic term. The chapter promotes excellence in counseling through activities like advocacy, professional development, and networking for both students and graduates. I was honored to attend this beautiful ceremony.



Tracey Pace with Caroline Holland, Chapter President of FVSU Chi Sigma Iota Honor Society



Fort Valley State University Chi Sigma Iota Induction Ceremony
Dr. Adrienne D. White, FVSU Professor and co-Advisor of CSI
Tracey Pace, LPCA of GA President
Diamond Brown, Janae Horton and Kayla Walker, Clinical Mental Health Student Inductees
Dr. Tanisha Guy-Richardon, Keynote Speaker and Owner of Specialized Transformation Counseling and Consulting
Dr. Bridget Holyfield Moss, FVSU Professor and Co-Advisor of CSI

November 12, 2025: Georgia School Counselors Association, GSCA, Event at the Macon Marriott City Center

The event's theme was, *School Counselors Helping Students Rule Their Success*, and included keynote speakers, workshops, and excellent networking opportunities. I presented a workshop at the event alongside LPCA President-Elect, Dr. Tonya Simmons-Lee. The room was set for eighty but there were over a hundred crowded into the room with more spilling out into the hallway!

LPCA Monthly Rural Roundtable Meetings

Once a month LPC members are invited to engage in lively discussions on how to increase opportunities for LPCs in rural communities, help those in need to find an LPC, and learn what state and federal services are available in rural communities for LPCs, including free CEs, funding and grants.

LPCA Board of Directors Meetings

LPCA Board members meet once a month to review progress on existing goals and to address new opportunities to advance LPCs in Georgia. Currently, the Board is focused on:

- Increasing LPCs visibility in the community as an integral part of the health care system
- Assisting members in navigating the new GOALS software on the licensing board website
- Continuing our efforts to reach every lawmaker to help them understand how important LPCs are in the continuum of care.

See you on LPC Day at the State Capitol on Thursday, January 22. We need every LPC to show up between 8:30 and 10:00 AM to show lawmakers we are 10,000+ strong! (see page 26 for more info)

To learn more about Tracey as your current LPCA President, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjwOd7CQxzU>.



IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Keisha Buchanan, EdD, LPC, CPCS, CCTP

Managed Care Summit for Mental Health Providers

In November 2025, Georgia made history by hosting its first statewide Managed Care Summit for Mental Health Providers, bringing together private clinicians, CMOs, billing experts, and DCH leadership for a groundbreaking three-day learning and collaboration experience. This historic event marks only the beginning of ongoing education, partnership, and advocacy for the mental health workforce across our state.

Designed to empower providers in navigating Medicaid and managed care with confidence, this 3-day summit equipped attendees with practical tools, a clearer understanding, and direct access to the organizations that impact their daily practice.

Day one presented, *Managed Care 101*, explaining how managed care works, the importance of mental health parity, and what providers should expect in the current system. Day two explored differences between Medicaid, Marketplace, and commercial insurance, and how these systems impact continuity of care. I opened day three with, *Using a Billing Company*, allowing participants to ask questions directly to billing company reps to gain clarity on best practices, common pitfalls, and how to protect their practices financially. The summit concluded with a powerful session on advocacy, presented by Tracey Pace, providing practical guidance on strengthening provider voice and protecting clinical and financial integrity within managed care and political systems.



Managed Care Summit for Mental Health Providers

L–R: Marisol Robles, Amerigroup Provider Collaboration Programs Director; Diane Connie; Reme Rodriguez, Peach State Health Plan Vice President of Behavioral Health Operations; Maria Henriquez, Amerigroup Director of Marketing; Keisha Buchanan, LPCA of GA Immediate Past President; Patrica Jackson Brown, CareSource Health Partner Network Specialist; Sandra Thompson, CareSource Behavioral Health Manager; Lakeisha Williams, Amerigroup Director of Behavioral Health Services

ATLANTA DISTRICT

**Former Atlanta District Chair
Joanna Goulding Kester, LPC, NCC, CBTS**



The 12th annual Youth Protection Seminar organized by the Boy Scouts of America and the Youth Protection Committee, was held on October 9, 2025. Attendance was even better than expected with registrations at the maximum number allowed! This annual seminar caters to community and civic leaders, and Youth serving organizations that have an impact on children's lives and wellbeing. The goal is to partner together and create a safer community for all of our children by preventing and responding to childhood sexual abuse. The LPCA of Georgia was a proud sponsor along with other significant support from organizations like the Children's Advocacy Centers of Georgia, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Fulton County District Attorney's Office, elected officials, Department of Juvenile Justice, Cobb County School District, Boys and Girls club of Atlanta, Big Brothers Big Sisters, The Atlanta Police Foundation, Georgia Bureau of investigations, Pathways to life, the YMCA, to name a few.

The Youth Protection Seminar included breakout sessions that provided continuing education to a variety of professional organizations. The main focus this year is "Let's get Fearless and Overcome-no more victims". I presented on "How to have healthy relationships and use your voice after trauma." Corey Milsap, PsyD, LPC, presented on "Working with survivors to connect the dots amidst multiple layers of trauma" and "Victim restoration: how can it be effective and appropriate for child sex abuse survivors." Other topics also included: walking through an investigation; addressing youth vulnerability to abuse; therapy outside the box-helping teens heal from trauma; speak up online—guiding children to navigate digital risks safely; empowering families—safety planning to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse.

I have served on the Youth Protection Committee leadership team for the past seven years, and have been privileged to work closely with experienced and effective advocates for protecting our children. We have a unique responsibility as therapists to learn how to most effectively support the survivors of abuse at any age, and their caregivers. As a psychotherapist in the Atlanta area, and LPCA member, I see the value of partnering with the Boy Scouts of America and their many notable sponsors, in supporting and participating in future youth protection events. Please join us next year! See this link for more information: www.atlantabsa.org/YPSEMINAR.

Editor's Note: Atlanta District Chair, Lei Tun, is expecting a new baby boy... updates to follow...



Dr. Corey Milsap, Vickie Blount, Joanna Goulding Kester, Andrew Blackmore

SOUTHERN DISTRICT

Loriann Merritt, LPC

Culturally-Responsive Counseling in Latino Communities

The Community

According to the American Community Survey (ACS), the Latino community makes up approximately 11% of Georgia's population. LPCA Southern District Counties Tift, Echols, and Atkinson are experiencing significant percentage increases, showing Latino population growth beyond urban centers. Specific mental health challenges affecting our Latino neighbors include stigma, lack of insurance, and language difficulties. Many of these challenges stem from cultural, economic, and systemic issues (LAG, 2024). Latino communities are experiencing considerable emotional distress and a reduced sense of safety due to current immigration enforcement practices, with common fears including family separation, violence, and negative encounters with authorities. This emotional distress is not limited to those directly affected by immigration status, but also to family members, those with mixed-status households, and those receiving and giving community support.

Our Responsibility

Our responsibility as counselors remains grounded in our Code of Ethics—to be culturally competent, to advocate for our clients, and to honor and value our therapeutic alliances.

As counselors, we all know the importance of a strong therapeutic alliance with our clients. This is especially important with our Latino community, as a reduced sense of safety can also lead to a reduced sense of trust in institutions and systems.

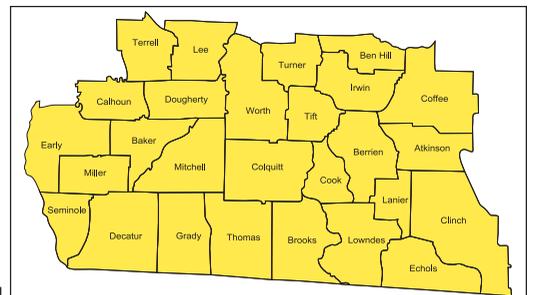
Cultural competency and cultural humility are essential to the therapeutic alliance with our Latino clients. Key elements to this include:

- Being aware of your own biases and privilege, even when it is uncomfortable.
- Being willing to learn about the sociopolitical and systemic challenges facing our clients.
- Being able to continually commit to self-reflection, learning, and amplifying the voices of those who have lived experiences.

While we may not be able to individually change the larger systems that contribute to harm and disparities, each of us can prioritize creating a safe, supportive, and empowering space for our clients. By participating in organizations such as the LPCA of GA, we unite our voices to advocate for meaningful progress in our profession and to support the evolving needs of counselors across the state.

References:

Latinx Alliance Georgia. (2024, November 18). State of the Latino community in Georgia. State of the Latino Community in Georgia. <https://stateoflatinosga.org>





Dottie Chambers

CENTRAL DISTRICT

*Dottie Chambers, LPC, CPCS
Jeannie Powell, LPC, CPCS*

Connecting and Collaborating

Central District continues to foster meaningful connections and professional growth!

Coffee & Chat – October 18

We gathered in beautiful central Georgia for another Coffee & Chat and what a day it was! Perfect weather set the stage for even better conversations. Counselors and supervisors stayed after the event, sharing ideas, experiences, and encouragement. There's nothing better than connecting in person and building our professional community over a good cup of coffee.

Lunch 'n' Learn – September 26

Our recent Lunch 'n' Learn focused on recognizing and supporting individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

During this powerful session, mental health

professionals explored key signs and symptoms of ASD, intervention techniques to support clients and families, and online and local resources to enhance care and community support. The lecture sparked insightful discussions and provided practical takeaways for working with neurodiverse individuals in various settings. A big thank you to Christina Charette, PsyD, and everyone who joined us as we continue to grow our knowledge in support of inclusive, compassionate care!



Jeannie Powell

Looking Ahead

As we prepare for the new year, please reach out if you are interested in hosting an event in the Middle Georgia area. Let's keep the momentum going and continue building a strong, connected professional community!



October Coffee & Chat: Marcus Prevette and Misha Blaise



September Lunch 'n' Learn: Charlotte Stewart, Deanna Schultz, Shinerika Banks, Dottie Chambers, Annie Duchene, Dr. Christina Charette, Hannah Rule, Arthur Fegain, Roselle Holcombe, Thomas Fibbe, Karen Cotton-Everett, and Candace Leong

NORTHERN DISTRICT

Jessica Koalenz, LPC, NCC

Coffee & Chats

On November 14th, the Northern District hosted a delightful Coffee & Chat in Ellijay, providing a wonderful opportunity for community members to connect amidst this beautiful setting. Ellijay, Georgia, is truly a gem nestled in the scenic North Georgia mountains. Its breathtaking natural beauty includes lush forests, rolling hills, and the picturesque Toccoa River. During the fall, Ellijay transforms into a vibrant tapestry of colors with its stunning autumn foliage, attracting visitors from near and far. Attendees included myself, Maura Kalafut, and Julia Cornman, who enjoyed engaging conversations and the company of fellow residents and visitors alike. The event was a fantastic way to celebrate the area's natural charm and foster community spirit.

Save the Date

Looking ahead, we are excited to announce our next Coffee & Chat scheduled for Friday, January 23rd at 10:00AM at Swift and Finch in Rome, Georgia, a charming city with a rich history and a variety of attractions that appeal to different interests. Be sure to plan a stop off at Berry University. Known for its stunning campus, it is one of the largest contiguous college campuses in the world, offering picturesque views, historical buildings, nature trails, and their famous school store for amazing locally grown organic items.

We look forward to continuing these enriching gatherings and exploring more of Georgia's beautiful locations from the northwest to northeast mountains together!

Registration and directions are on the LPCA of GA website.



Northern District Coffee & Chat
Maura Kalafut, Jessica Koalenz, and Julia Cornman.

COASTAL DISTRICT

Patricia Whalen, LPC, CPCS, NCC, CST

Due to unforeseen circumstances the Coastal District did not meet this last quarter. However, we are planning a Coffee & Chat in February, (date to be determined as soon as we have a location in Kingsland, GA and the Brunswick/Savannah area) in addition to a scheduled Lunch 'n' Learn. The dates and times will be announced as soon as we receive confirmation from our presenter.



WESTERN DISTRICT

Olga Maxwell, LPC, NCC, CPCS

Western District stayed busy in the last few months offering a variety of events to LPCA members.

On September 23, Probate Judge Marc D'Antonio and Jacqueline White, LPC, conducted a training on LEAP, which stands for Listen, Emphasize, Agree, and Partner.

LEAP is an effective approach for working with individuals who have Anosognosia, a neurological condition where a person is unaware of their own disability or illness, specifically in cases of those diagnosed with Schizophrenia. The Judge presented from the legal perspective and shared personal experience in using the approach when working with Probate cases.



Heather Smith with DBHDD Discusses LEAP Approach

On October 24th, Western District held a workshop providing 3 CE's at LaGrange College titled, *Internship 101, Launching Your Professional Journey*. Presented by Deborah Hammond, Amiaa Vanover and Tiffany Payton, this event focused on providing information for students currently enrolled in clinical mental health counseling programs. Presenters provided participants practical tools on how to identify potential sites, how to prepare for an interview, and what questions to ask. During the latter part of the workshop, information was presented on how to have a private practice mindset and what it takes to start a private practice once fully licensed. LPCA President Tracey Pace and Supervision Chair Tracy Kissinger were in attendance during this workshop and during the pre-workshop networking.



Western District Workshop at LaGrange College
 L–R: Tiffany Payton, Hana Swales, Tracey Pace, Olga Maxwell, Deborah Hammond, Amiaa Vanover, and Molly Stretch.



Western District Workshop at LaGrange College
 Front: Hana Swales and Tracey Pace
 Middle: Sherri Radney and Olga Maxwell
 Back: Sierra Kelly and Hannah Hooven

On November 14th, Western District held a Coffee & Chat networking event at the Midtown Coffee House in Columbus. Participants were able to discuss various topics, such as upcoming training, supervision, and LPC Day at the Capitol, all while enjoying delicious coffee.

Hope you're able to join us at our upcoming events!



CONTINUING EDUCATION CHAIR

Vicki Blount, LPC, CPCS, MAC

Let's Get Fearless and Overcome—No More Victims!

On October 9, 2025, I had the privilege of attending The Youth Protection Seminar at the Atlanta Area Council, Scouting America in Cobb County. Last year, Andrew Blackmore from the LPCA office, and I sat at the LPCA of GA table in the front sharing with others who we are and what we do. This year I was invited not only be a host but also to attend some of the workshops.

I was thrilled for the opportunity to see with my own eyes what happens behind the closed doors. To my amazement I heard horrific stories about child sexual abuse that broke my heart but opened my eyes how to be more aware, educated and take steps to help keep our kids safe. It was crystal clear that it's our responsibility as adults to make choices that protect our children allowing them to live well-adjusted lives to their full potential in a safe environment.



Vicki Blount and Corey Millsap

The panel discussions focused on interfamilial abuse, exploring the walk of healing and restoration needed with insight from the victim/survivor/overcomer, other involved family, people who were the most helpful to the victim including counselor/therapist. Breakout session presented *Connecting the Dots Amidst Multiple Layers of Trauma* led by Corey Millsap, PsyD. Breakout session two focused on *Therapy Outside the Box* led by Kim Borna and Kimberly Tinsley. Breakout session two presented *How to Have Healthy Relationships and Use Your Voice after Trauma* led by Joanna Goulding Kester, MA, LPC. Final breakout session was *The Victim Restoration Process* led by Corey Millsap, PsyD. Both Corey Millsap and Joanna Goulding Kester are active members of LPCA.

As counselors we are obligated to report suspected cases of child or elder abuse and neglect to the appropriate authorities. Therefore, *“Let's join together in the journey towards an abuse free community for our children. Be open and willing to help protect our children and commit to building a stronger, safer community for the children in Metro-Atlanta.”*

For more information go to: www.scoutingatl.org. Reference Scouting America Youth Protection Volunteers and Professionals Resources (2025) Boy Scouts of America



Vicki Blount and Andrew Blackmore

COMMUNICATIONS

Brittany Briscoe, LPC, NCC

As we close out the final months of 2025, our Communications Committee would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude for an incredible past six months. This year has been a period of growth, connection, and meaningful engagement within our community.

Thanks to your continued support, all of our social media platforms have experienced strong momentum, increased interaction, and expanded reach. Our shared efforts have helped amplify the voice of licensed professional counselors and highlight the vital work happening across our field.

As we move into the new year, we are excited to build on this progress—continuing to uplift our members, strengthen communication, and create even more opportunities for connection and professional engagement.

Thank you for being a valuable part of our community. We look forward to an inspiring and impactful year ahead!



TREASURER REPORT Building on a Strong Foundation

Les Cole, D.Min., LPC, CCTP, CPCS, NBCC

As we move through this year, I'm pleased to share that LPCA of GA's financial position remains strong and steady. Our stability is no accident—it's the direct result of years of thoughtful stewardship and disciplined leadership that have built a solid foundation for growth.

Because of that groundwork, we continue to operate from a position of confidence. Membership remains healthy, our programming is well-supported, and our reserves are secure. This allows us not only to sustain our core initiatives, but also to strategically invest in new opportunities that advance our mission and strengthen our impact across Georgia's counseling community.

The commitment of past and current leaders to fiscal responsibility and member support has given us the flexibility to respond to emerging needs, whether through professional development opportunities, advocacy efforts, or collaborative partnerships. As we look ahead, our goal is to continue managing resources with transparency and foresight, ensuring LPCA of GA remains a trusted, thriving organization for years to come.

On behalf of the LPCA Board, I want to thank our members for their continued engagement and trust. Your participation is what fuels our collective success and allows us to keep doing meaningful work for our profession and those we serve.



National Counselors Exam Prep Workshop

Johnnie L. Jenkins III, PhD, LPC, CPCS

This one exam stands between licensure and continued employment as a counselor. On average, at least 40% will fail every time.

Our NCE Exam Practice and Workshops Bundle give you the tools to understand and master the NCE exam. We've helped thousands of people achieve their dream scores with a success rate of 98% for the last several years.

This is an overview and in-depth approach to understanding theories of psychotherapy and their application in preparation for the NCE licensing examination. The exam candidate is provided the most complete coaching experience, and gets a 3" thick study manual covering the DSM. Each prep course has been designed by experts who know the test inside and out. This workshop is a total of six hours of interactive one-on-one instruction, plus weekly follow-up on the at-home study materials.



NCE Prep Exam Saturday, September 27, 2025
L-R: Patrick Binienda, Dr Tiffany Lee, and Velencia Brooks



NCE Prep Exam Saturday, October 25, 2025
Front L-R: Tiffany Mayo, Tiffany Morville, and Tyese Miller
Middle L-R: Candace Ford and Dr Val Stinson
Back L-R: Quandus Patterson and Destiny Harris

LPCA of GA President Tracey Pace Representing LPCA of GA at the Sunbelt Ag Expo in Moultrie, GA



Tracey Pace with Tyler Harper, Commissioner of Agriculture, a strong advocate for greater access to mental health care in rural Georgia communities



Agriculture Commissioner Tyler Harper, First Lady Marty Kemp and Governor Brian Kemp at the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony where approximately 100,000 farmers and farm related partners toured the Rural Health Initiative Building that offered numerous free health screenings and health related information.



Tracey Pace discussing concerns with processing licenses and applications with SOS candidate Representative Tim Fleming



LPCA Southern District Member Dr. Vicki Cools, APC Representing NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) with LPCA President Tracey Pace



A Good Soldier

Tracey Pace, ThD, LPC, CPCS, CFMHE

When Toy Story was first released my five-year-old son never seemed to tire of watching it. He, along with most of our family, could quote the lines from memory. One day while doing holiday grocery shopping, he found a broken nutcracker and asked if he could buy it. I explained that it was broken and to look for one that

wasn't broken. He responded, "A good soldier never leaves a man behind." What could I say to that? I suggested that he speak with the store manager, whom we knew, to see if he could get a discount on the broken nutcracker. At five, he did just that. A few minutes later we were walking out of the store with a five dollar damaged toy. When we got home his older brother helped him repair it and place it on the mantle with our other nutcrackers.

This began the family tradition of buying broken nutcrackers and restoring them. At first it was a very serious process but as my three boys grew they became more creative with their restorations. One nutcracker wears a perpetual arm cast, others have new feet (a common problem with nutcrackers), and one particularly stern former sword wielding nutcracker is shedding a tear over having dropped a scoop of his double scoop mint chocolate chip ice cream cone.

This year as I was unboxing the nutcrackers, it occurred to me that we as LPCs have very similar goals. We take wounded people and do our best to restore them to their place in the world. Maybe their lives cannot be restored to past perfection, but we help them find new hope, goals and purpose. We may not use balsa wood, paints and sculpey (a nod to those who add art to their approach), our tools instead are theory, application, listening, empathy, and even humor.

A few months ago, I met a hospital CEO who did not know what an LPC was. I explained it to him, and he asked me if he had any in his county. Even with mental health parity on par with physical health, we still have a long way to go. Stay informed, stay involved and help LPCA educate legislators and other health care practitioners to understand who we are and what we do. Remember, counselors not only improve the quality of people's lives, sometimes, we save them.

As this year begins, I want to thank you for what you do and remind you of how valuable and essential you are to caring for Georgians.

A good soldier never leaves a man behind!



LPC Day at the Capitol January 22nd, 2026

Go to page 24 for more information

Fighting for Myself: How Losing a Piece of My Femininity Triggered a New Sense of Empowerment

Jo-Anne T. Liakakos, MA, LPC, NCC

I was 38 years old, and no one would listen to me.



I had been to the hospital three times in the past three days, only to be told to go home. But there I was, doubled over in pain, my abdomen distended like I was seven months pregnant, and I knew something was terribly wrong. As I walked out of the hospital on day three in more pain than when I entered, hunched over, clutching onto my husband's arm for support, I knew if I didn't get help, I would die.

Day 1:

When I went to the hospital on day one in massive pain, my skin tinted a dull green, I was informed that I had an ovarian cyst rupture. Struggling with PCOS my entire life, I knew this was something I may need to deal with. They sent me home and said the blood would absorb back into my body, and I would be okay.

Day 2:

The next day, in worse shape, I went back to the same ER and was refused another scan. The nurse laughed at me when I pointed out how large my abdomen was, and said, "I wish I were as small as you." I was shocked. I was disregarded and couldn't help but wonder what my fate would be if I couldn't get someone to listen.

Day 3:

By day three, dealing with excruciating pain, I went back and was met with accusations of drug seeking and discharged once again. Luckily for me, also having Multiple Sclerosis, I had an appointment that day with my neuro-ophthalmologist, who was amazing and always listened. With one look and one touch, he sensed that something was terribly wrong. I had rebound tenderness, and he tried to send me to the ER. I cried and explained they wouldn't help me, and he made some calls as I headed to my primary physician for a scan.

911:

Once there, lying on the floor because I couldn't sit up, people walked over me as the five o'clock timecards were punched. Again, with no help, my husband called 911 from within the medical building walls. I was rushed to a different hospital for emergency surgery for a ruptured ovarian cyst with torsion. Due to the delay in treatment, the size of the ovary, and necrosis, I was cut from hip to hip and lost not only my ovary but my fallopian tube as well.

As women, we face so many barriers, and our healthcare certainly is one of them.

Speaking up and being proactive about our physical health is not only crucial but also necessary for our mental health. Self-advocacy is not

Hunched over, clutching onto my husband's arm for support, I knew if I didn't get help, I would die.

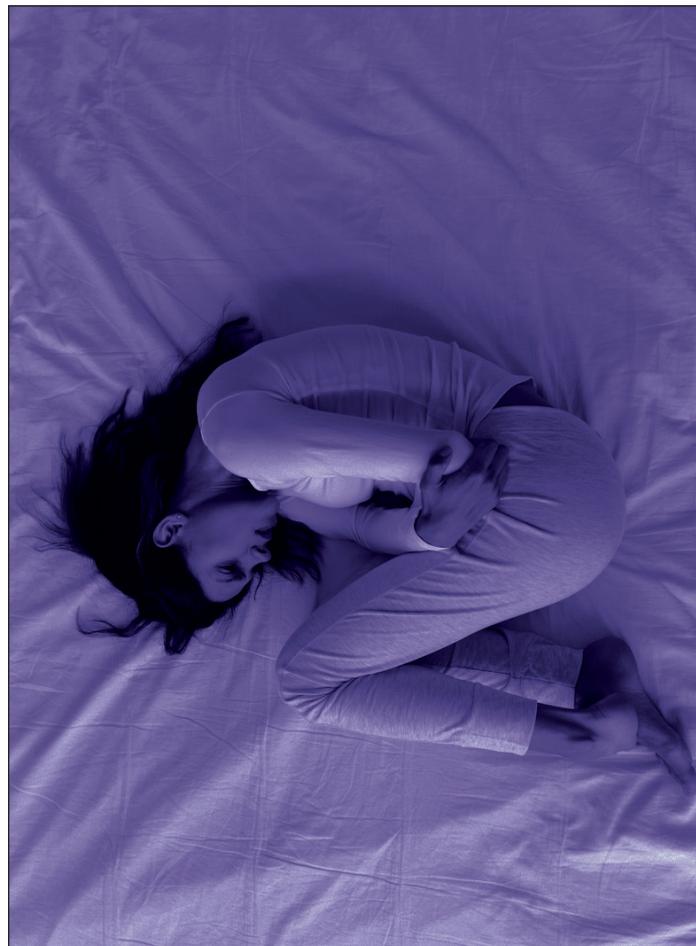
only about our own empowerment, it is about women as a whole. I was told my "high pain tolerance" was the reason I was not believed, yet I know better. We need to refuse to settle for things that don't feel right. To fight for ourselves and be our best advocate.

There needs to be a cultural shift where women's health is prioritized for all of us and is taken seriously.

Our mental health is impacted when our physical health is dismissed. When women's physical symptoms are ignored or our emotional needs are brushed aside, it takes a toll.

Dismissal is trauma and it impacts our mental health in deep, lasting ways.

Jo-Anne Liakakos is the founder of Major Counseling Solutions & Consulting in Alpharetta, Georgia. She helps adolescents, adults, couples, and families uncover their true potential and create meaningful change. Drawing from complementary therapy approaches, Jo-Anne empowers clients to navigate challenges, strengthen relationships, and foster emotional well-being with compassion and practical guidance.



My Journey Into Internal Family Systems (IFS): A Transformative Therapeutic Model

**Patricia Whalen, LPC, LMHC, CPCS, CST
LPCA Coastal District Representative**



Internal Family Systems (IFS) has emerged as one of the most influential and clinically effective therapeutic models for trauma, attachment injuries, and complex internal systems. What makes IFS distinctive is its deeply respectful, non-pathologizing view of the mind. Rather than seeing internal multiplicity as a disorder, IFS recognizes it as a natural development of the human mind.

Founder of IFS, Richard C. Schwartz, PhD, explains in his introductory video on the IFS Institute website that “people have parts... it’s the nature of the mind to be subdivided.” According to Dr. Schwartz, the internal structures seen in individuals with Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) are not fundamentally different from the internal parts we all carry—those clients have simply endured more extreme fragmentation due to severe trauma. What are traditionally called “alters,” IFS calls parts.

Most of us intuitively reference our parts without realizing it. We say things like, “A part of me wants to move forward, but another part is hesitant.” This everyday language reflects an inner system with competing needs, fears, or motivations. IFS offers a structured way to engage with these parts compassionately and therapeutically.

Using the ‘Parts Language’ in Trauma Work

I first encountered IFS in 2017 during a PESI trauma training. Because my graduate work had focused on the long-term effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in older adults, I found that IFS provided the “parts language” that helped clients articulate internal conflicts they had struggled to describe. It quickly became clear that IFS was more than a set of techniques—it was a framework that made sense of deeply held emotional pain and protective coping strategies. The more I incorporated this perspective into my work, the more I wanted formal training.

Issues encountered in pursuing IFS Training

I soon discovered there was high demand for IFS training. To enroll in the Level 1 class, it meant entering a lottery system. Enrollment opportunities for IFS Level I classes were limited, response windows were brief, and classes filled quickly. From 2017 to 2020, I submitted multiple applications without securing a spot.

In the fall of 2020, I finally received an opportunity to enroll in an IFS Level I class from the Internal Family System’s Institute of Barcelona. The class was opened to members of the BIPOC community only. Because of my Mexican heritage I qualified and was accepted. The training was conducted in Spanish, and was in a different time zone. It was the Central European Time Zone, which meant navigating a significant time difference from my home in the State of Georgia. The program extended over five months and included fourteen full training days, each seven to eight hours long.

Despite the demanding schedule—and the financial investment—the experience was invaluable. IFS Level 1 training provided both the structure and depth necessary to begin practicing IFS with confidence, and it expanded my clinical lens in ways no other modality had.

Integrating IFS Into My Clinical Work

Since completing Level 1, I have continued my studies and am currently working toward IFS certification. I have found IFS to be one of the most rewarding and effective therapeutic models for clients with Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (CPTSD), particularly when combined with mindfulness practices and somatic interventions.

I also completed Level 2 IFIO (Intimacy From the Inside Out), an IFS-based approach for couple’s work. IFIO has become a powerful addition to my practice, especially in helping partners recognize and respond to each other’s protective parts with greater compassion and clarity.

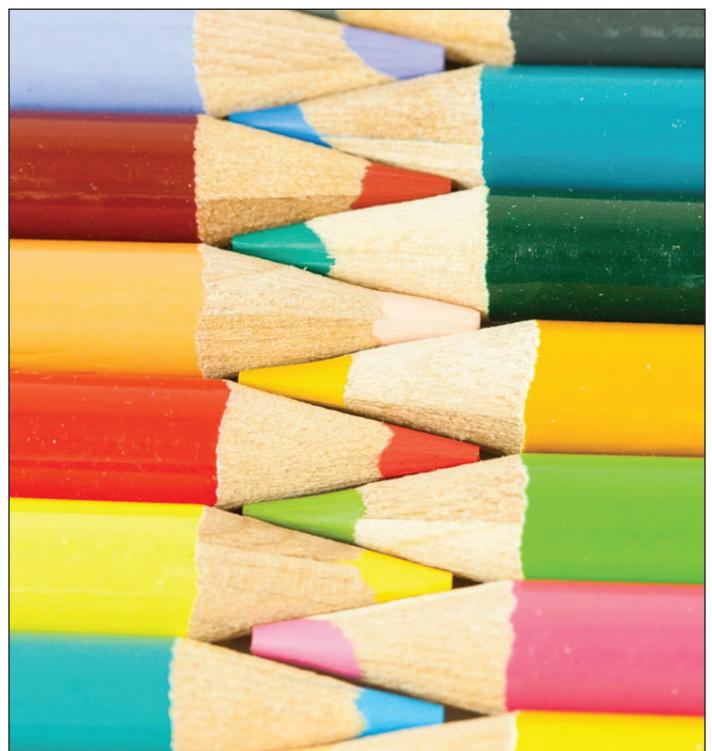
Final Thoughts

IFS has transformed the way I understand and approach the internal systems we all carry. For those of you interested in deepening trauma-informed practice or exploring a model that honors both complexity and self-compassion, IFS is an exceptional path. I encourage anyone curious to explore the IFS Institute website and consider engaging with this profoundly meaningful therapeutic framework.

Reference:

<https://ifs-institute.com/about-us/richard-c-schwartz-phd>

Patricia Whalen is bi-lingual (English/Spanish) and works with survivors of adverse childhood experiences; couples facing infidelity or other sexual problems, as well as emotional abuse, grief, and life changing events. As a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, Patricia is able relate to her client’s pain with compassion and understanding. Her personal philosophy is: “people are wounded in relationship, and it is in relationship where the greatest healing occurs.” She is the sole proprietor of Hope for Shattered Hearts, LLC, located in Saint Mary’s, GA.



From Clinician to CEO: The Journey to Becoming a Solo Practitioner



Chantelle Walker, PsyD, LPC, NCC, LMHC
C.U.R.E. Therapy & Consulting, LLC

In the evolving landscape of mental health care, many licensed professional counselors find themselves at a crossroads; seeking greater autonomy, flexibility, and alignment between their professional values and the work they do each day. For many, this journey leads to one empowering destination: solo private practice.

Becoming a solo practitioner is not just a business decision; it's a personal and professional transformation. It's the process of stepping into a new role, one that blends clinical expertise with entrepreneurship, creativity, and leadership.

Why More Clinicians Are Going Solo

In recent years, Georgia has seen a steady rise in clinicians choosing private practice as a way to regain control over their schedules, treatment approaches, and professional identities. While community agencies and group practices offer valuable training grounds, the demands of productivity quotas, limited autonomy, and administrative pressures can lead to burnout.

Solo Practice Offers Something Different: Freedom, Intentionality, and Sustainability

Clinicians who open their own practices often cite these benefits:

- **Autonomy** to design their clinical schedules and caseloads.
- **Alignment** between their personal values and professional mission.
- **Flexibility** to specialize, set their fees, and choose their ideal clients.
- **Empowerment** to build a business that reflects their authentic approach to healing.

The Entrepreneurial Shift: From Clinician to Practice Owner

Making the leap to private practice requires a mindset shift. As clinicians, we are trained to focus on the client: their needs, emotions, and progress. As business owners, we must also focus on *systems, sustainability, and scalability*.

Here are three foundational steps to begin that shift:

1. Clarify Your Vision

Ask yourself: *What kind of practice do I want to build, and why?*
This vision becomes your compass. Define your ideal client, your mission, and the impact you want your work to have in your community.

2. Lay a Solid Foundation

Register your business (LLC or PLLC), obtain an EIN, and ensure compliance with state licensing and insurance requirements. Build ethical and legal systems, including consent forms, HIPAA compliance, and liability coverage from day one.

3. Treat Your Practice as a Business

Learn the essentials of financial management, marketing, and branding. Understand that your practice is both a clinical service and a business entity that deserves structure, attention, and planning.



Common Fears and How to Overcome Them

Many clinicians hesitate to launch their own practice due to fears about finances, marketing, or business acumen. These fears are valid but manageable.

The truth is, none of us entered this field to “become business owners,” yet entrepreneurship and mental health share common threads: resilience, problem-solving, and compassion. You already have the core skills to build something meaningful; it's simply about expanding them into a new context.

Community, Not Competition

One of the most rewarding realizations for solo practitioners is that private practice doesn't have to mean isolation. The private practice community in Georgia is rich with collaboration opportunities, consultation groups, and professional associations (like LPCA of GA) that foster connection and continued learning.

As you grow, consider ways to contribute through workshops, mentoring, or community outreach. When one clinician succeeds, the profession strengthens as a whole.

Where to Start

If you're considering taking the leap into private practice, start small and intentional. Begin by creating a vision statement, researching your target population, and mapping out the logistics of your ideal workweek. Surround yourself with colleagues who can offer mentorship and accountability.

Final Thoughts

Transitioning into solo practice is not simply about leaving one setting for another; it's about embracing your capability, uniqueness, resilience, and empowerment; the very qualities that make you an effective clinician.

Your journey to becoming a solo practitioner is, at its core, an act of professional self-care—a declaration that you are ready to practice on your own terms and lead with authenticity.

Chantelle Walker is the owner of C.U.R.E. Therapy & Consulting, LLC. She provides person-centered therapy, consulting services for clinicians launching private practices, and community mental health workshops. She has been a member of LPCA of GA since 2024 in the Atlanta District. Learn more at curetherapy.org.



Your Chronically Ill Clients Need You To Believe Them

Advocate with Them Accommodate Them

Destiny Davis, MS, LPC, CRC

The first time I received a diagnosis, I did what any good millennial would do. I went straight to Google to find support. What I found was Facebook group after Facebook group promising me community and support for a condition that was highly misunderstood and ripe for the picking when it came to false cures and manufactured hope.

I was in grad school at the time. I already knew that childhood emotional neglect was my desired area of expertise to grow into as a clinician. But clicking “join group” in these Facebook groups run by unlicensed, unqualified, and most importantly—unhealed people, made me realize that without counselors present online, the only voices online would be those who claim to have answers that they simply didn’t have.

The idea of specializing in a subject matter that you have personal, lived experience in has traditionally been considered taboo in our profession, and I understand why—it leaves a lot of room for overidentifying with clients and projecting our experiences onto them. There’s no doubt that this should be taken with a great deal of caution. But what we’ve seen in the chronic illness community is this—people without lived experience still project, and worse, they underidentify. Meaning, they can’t possibly imagine how someone could wake up with a migraine twenty days out of the month while doctors have no answer as to the reason why, so they assume it’s anxiety or psychosomatic symptoms. It’s dangerous and it causes harm every single day.

76.4% of US adults now report having at least one chronic illness (Watson et al., 2025). Chronic is anything lasting longer than three months. If you’re starting to see more clients with fibromyalgia, Long COVID, Lyme disease, POTS, autoimmune conditions, or other chronic conditions, you’re probably noticing some similar trends. Things like the fact that most of these clients go years before getting a diagnosis, fighting for dignity in every medical office they enter, and a strong desire to just have answers that make their experiences make sense.

These clients need us to show up differently, and I want to share some things I’ve learned along the way.

Let’s Talk About the Nervous System Regulation Problem

Here’s something that keeps me up at night: nervous system regulation is being sold as a cure for chronic illness, and it’s causing even more harm.

Don’t get me wrong—I use somatic work in my practice. The mind-body connection is real, and helping clients regulate their nervous systems can absolutely improve their quality of life. Sometimes, it can even reduce or eliminate some physical symptoms. But we have to stop pretending it’s going to cure them.

I’ve had too many clients come to me after spending months or years in programs that promised if they just did the work, if they just calmed their



nervous system enough, their illness would go away. And they blamed themselves when it didn’t. They thought they failed. Many, myself included, even delayed getting proper medical treatment because they were convinced their symptoms were “just” nervous system dysregulation. This narrative is dangerous because it puts the entire burden on the client. It suggests their continued illness is their fault. It’s just another version of “it’s all in your head”—the same dismissive message our clients have been hearing from doctors for years.

The truth is more complicated. Yes, trauma and stress affect the body. Yes, nervous system work can reduce symptom severity for some people. But chronic illness is real, it’s physiological, and no amount of vagal toning is going to cure an autoimmune disease or reverse neurological damage.

Our job isn’t to fix our clients’ bodies. It’s to help them navigate the psychological reality of living with a body that doesn’t work the way they need it to.

Why This Work Is Different

Every client with chronic illness comes in carrying something most of our other clients don’t: medical trauma. They’ve been dismissed, disbelieved, and gaslit by healthcare providers. They’ve had to fight for diagnoses, justify their pain, and prove they’re “sick enough” to deserve care. That shapes everything about how they show up in therapy.

They’re also dealing with grief that doesn’t fit our traditional models. They’re grieving a future they planned for, a career they can’t maintain, activities they used to love. And unlike other types of loss, this one doesn’t have a clear endpoint. The grief keeps coming in waves as their illness progresses or changes.

Then there’s the family piece. Some clients have partners who don’t believe them. Parents who think they’re being dramatic. Friends who got tired of cancelled plans and drifted away. The isolation is real and it’s heavy. And this is drastically exacerbated when the therapist also believes the client might just be too dramatic.

But I get it... treatment planning can get tricky with these clients. Symptoms aren’t consistent. A client might be fully present and

engaged one week, then need to keep their camera off and mostly listen the next because they're in a flare. Your standard CBT homework might not work when someone's too fatigued to get out of bed. We have to be flexible in ways we might not be with other populations.

What You Actually Need to Know

If you want to do this work well, you need more than good intentions. You need to understand common chronic conditions and how they progress. You need to know what medical trauma looks like and how it's different from other trauma presentations. You need to get comfortable with the biopsychosocial model and actually apply it - not just give it lip service.

And if you're going to engage with nervous system regulation, then you need to work on your own nervous system resilience first. If you don't have a chronic illness to practice this with, I encourage practicing when you feel activated by the fear, anger, and resentment that comes with a chronically ill client's experience.

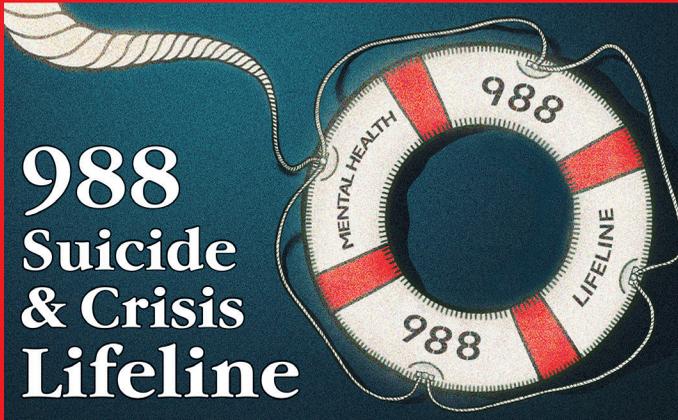
This work is heavy. If you also live with chronic illness, you need really solid boundaries to prevent over-identifying with your clients. I've been there, and it's completely doable with good clinical consultation.

For more on this topic visit: www.thechronicillnesstherapist.com

Reference:

Watson, K. B., Wiltz, J. L., Nhim, K., Kaufmann, R. B., Thomas, C. W., & Greenlund, K. J. (2025). Trends in multiple chronic conditions among US adults, by life stage, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2013–2023. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, 22, Article 240539. <https://doi.org/10.5888/pcd22.240539>

Destiny Davis specializes in helping people with invisible illnesses and disabilities navigate relationships and build meaningful lives using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Somatic Experiencing approaches. She created and facilitates Welcome to The Waiting Room, a membership community providing evidence-based, peer support for people with complex medical conditions. As host of The Chronic Illness Therapists Podcast and leader of clinical consultation groups for medical professionals, Destiny bridges the gap between lived experience and clinical expertise in chronic illness care. Destiny has been a member of LPCA since June 2025, and resides in the Atlanta District.



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Supporting Counselor Wellness in a Changing World

Shakiyla Benson, CMHC, APC



As mental health continues to shift, professional counselors in Georgia are carrying increasing caseloads, navigating complex client needs, and balancing professional expectations with personal wellbeing. Over the years, challenges such as global uncertainty, sociocultural stressors, rising levels of trauma, and workforce shortages have intensified the demand for high quality mental health care. While we remain committed to supporting the emotional wellness of individuals, families, and communities, it is equally essential that we, as helpers, receive the support needed to sustain our work.

Counseling is uniquely rewarding but also uniquely taxing. The emotional labor involved in holding a safe space for others, managing crisis situations, and maintaining ethical practice can quietly accumulate. Without adequate support and intentional wellness practices, counselors risk burnout, compassion fatigue, and professional stagnation.

Professional organizations like the LPCA of GA play a crucial role in reinforcing counselor wellness through advocacy for fair policies and licensure pathways, continuing education that prioritizes personal and professional growth, networking opportunities that support early career clinicians as well as member resources that promote ethical, competent practice. As counselors, connection is our lifeline. When we feel supported, informed, and empowered, we show up more fully for our clients and communities.

Georgia's counselors are the heartbeat of mental health care in our state. By investing in our own wellness, we model resilience, ensure ethical practice, and sustain the profession for future generations. LPCA of Georgia remains a vital partner in this work, advocating, educating, and uplifting those who dedicate their lives to healing others.

Shakiyla Benson is a dedicated mental health professional and has been a member of LPCA of GA since 2023. She is committed to advancing the field of Counseling Education and Supervision. She has worked in community mental health for nearly eight years, building a career centered on advocacy, service, and supporting underserved populations. Alongside her academic and clinical work, she is passionate about leadership, mentorship, and creating opportunities for growth among other mental health professionals. She aspires to continue developing as a counselor educator, researcher, and consultant.





Using the INSIGHT Model: A Practical Framework for Counseling Practice

Delton De Vose, PhD, LPC (GA/NC/SC)

Introduction

As counselors, we often see clients who present with familiar patterns across different areas of life. A client may struggle with conflict in marriage, then describe similar challenges at work, and later reveal parenting stress. The themes echo one another.

The question becomes: How do we help clients move beyond the surface issue to the deeper roots of these patterns?

To meet this need in my practice, I developed the INSIGHT model, a structured yet flexible framework that helps counselors and clients move from confusion to clarity.

The INSIGHT Model

INSIGHT is an acronym that stands for seven areas of reflection:

- I Issue:** Naming the core concern clearly.
- N Negotiation:** Identifying the client’s internal or external bargaining (fear vs. desire, security vs. risk).
- S Source:** Tracing the origin of this response in family, culture, or past experience.
- I Individual:** Understanding the client’s identity, strengths, and values today.
- G General expectations:** Exploring the assumptions and beliefs the client carries about themselves and others.
- H History:** Mapping how often and in what relationships this issue has recurred.
- T Trauma:** Considering the role of personal or generational trauma.

Rather than acting as a rigid checklist, INSIGHT functions as a compass, guiding the counseling process while integrating easily with CBT, trauma-informed care, and supervision.

Case Vignette: Fatherhood and Guilt

A father entered therapy after giving up custody of his children. He carried deep shame and guilt, and described feeling like he had “failed” as a parent.

Using the INSIGHT framework, we unpacked his experience:

- **Issue**
Shame over not being present in his children’s lives.
- **Negotiation**
Rationalizing the decision while simultaneously regretting it.
- **Source**
An absent father in his own childhood, which reinforced withdrawal as a paternal role.
- **Individual**
His current desire to redefine fatherhood for himself.

- **General expectations**
The belief, “I’ll never be good enough as a dad.”
 - **History**
Similar feelings of inadequacy emerged in past relationships.
 - **Trauma**
His abandonment experience left deep scars shaping his choices.
- This process gave him language and structure to reflect instead of spiral. Importantly, it also increased my own counselor self-awareness: having raised my children despite my father’s absence, I had to recognize my bias and avoid overlaying my story onto his. INSIGHT provided a framework for both of us.

Why Counselors Find INSIGHT Useful

- **Clarity**
Breaks down complex experiences into manageable pieces.
- **Empowerment**
Clients leave with a structure they can use for self-reflection between sessions.
- **Integration**
Fits well with CBT (challenging beliefs/expectations) and trauma-informed practice (linking past to present).
- **Supervision**
Provides interns and associates with a scaffold for case conceptualization.
- **Bias Awareness**
Encourages counselors to reflect on how their own stories may influence practice.

Closing Thoughts

INSIGHT helps counselors and clients move from the “what” of a problem to the “why.” It strengthens our ability to conceptualize, empowers clients to understand themselves, and gives both a roadmap for deeper work.

As counselors in Georgia and beyond, we are tasked with guiding our clients through complexity. INSIGHT offers a practical tool to make that journey clearer.

Delton Wade De Vose is the owner of D.W. De Vose & Associates, LLC, an outpatient counseling and consulting practice. With more than 25 years of experience and over a decade of involvement with LPCA of GA, Dr. De Vose specializes in trauma-informed care, substance abuse, and counselor development. A clinician-scholar committed to advancing practical frameworks for professional practice, he is the developer of the INSIGHT Model, a structured approach that supports clinical assessment, treatment planning, and client transformation.

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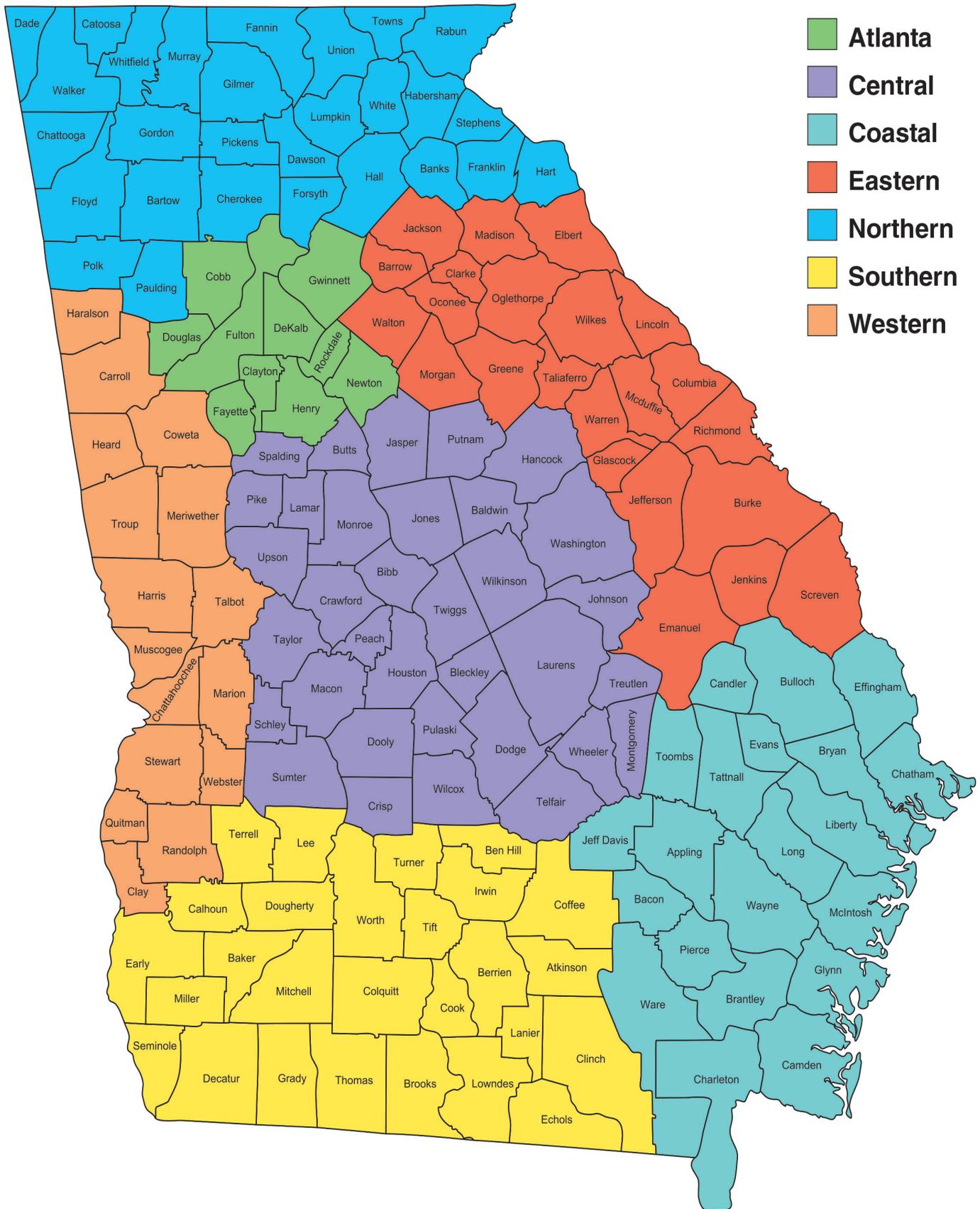
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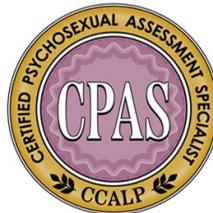
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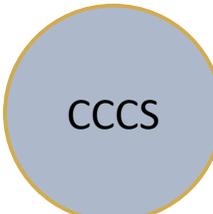
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Certified Mental Health Assessment Specialist (CMHAS): This advanced 40-hour certification workshop is designed for licensed mental health professionals to strengthen their skills in the administration and interpretation of mental health assessments.



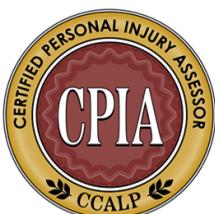
Certified Coercive Control Specialist (CCCS): Gain the expertise to recognize, assess, and respond to coercive control, enhancing your ability to support survivors and address the psychological and legal complexities of this form of abuse.



Certified Custody Evaluator (CCE): Gain the expertise to conduct ethical, objective evaluations that support children's best interests and guide court decisions in complex family law cases.



Certified Grief Therapist (CGT): Empowering mental health professionals to compassionately and effectively support clients through all forms of grief, including traumatic and complicated loss.



Certified Personal Injury Assessor (CPIA): Equips mental health professionals with the clinical and legal expertise to conduct personal injury evaluations and excel at the intersection of law and psychology.



Anger Management Certifications: Effectively assess, understand, and treat anger-related issues, addressing both the symptoms and root causes to promote healthier behaviors and relationships.

LPC Day at the Georgia Capitol

January 22, 2026

Promoting Awareness and Advocacy for Licensed Professional Counselors

LPC Day at the Capitol is a vital opportunity for LPCs to gather at Georgia's State Capitol and advocate for our profession. This free event is designed to promote awareness of the role professional counselors play in the mental health landscape while providing legislators with a better understanding of how LPCs are key to addressing the state's mental health needs. Through a series of activities, including meetings with lawmakers, a group photo with the Governor, and educational stations, we will demonstrate the importance of our profession to those shaping Georgia's policies.

Capitol Event

Kickoff of the day will be at the South Stairs at the LPCA Tables. This area will allow you to network with colleagues and advocate with the LPCA Team. Lawmakers will be there, they want to meet and talk with you. Informational pamphlets, LPC Support Sticks, Bling for you to distribute will be available. LPCA Advocates will assist with questions and help you network with elected officials.

Photo on the Capitol Steps with Georgia Governor

This is your chance to stand with your fellow LPCs and be photographed with the Governor on the historic Capitol steps. (Governor schedule pending) This powerful image will highlight the strength, unity, and importance of professional counselors across the state. It's not just a photo op—it's a symbol of our collective impact on Georgia's mental health care system. Photos of you on the stairs will be available 24 hours after the event.

Meet with Your Legislators

Participants will have the opportunity to meet with their state legislators. These meetings are a key moment to share your experiences as an LPC, discuss challenges we face, and advocate for policies that will strengthen mental health workforce. Whether it's advocating for legislative changes or simply raising awareness about the vital work we do, these conversations are essential for building strong relationships with our representatives.

Tour of the Capitol

Explore the beautiful and historic halls of Georgia's State Capitol during a guided tour. You'll have the opportunity to see the legislative chambers where decisions are made, learn more about the state's political history, and experience the atmosphere where important policy discussions take place. This tour is a great way to connect with the heart of Georgia's government while being part of an influential advocacy day.

Information Tables

Throughout the Capitol, information tables will be set up to provide both politicians and LPCs with valuable insights into our profession. These tables will offer educational materials about the history of LPCs in Georgia, the services we provide, and the critical role we play in the state's mental health system. This is an excellent opportunity to engage with lawmakers and provide them with the knowledge they need to fully understand the importance of LPCs in their constituencies.

Please arrive at the Capitol between 8:30–9:30 AM to meet with our lawmakers and stay for photo on Capitol Stairs at 10:00. LPCA tables will remain on the second floor South Stairs until approximately noon. For more information or to register: lpcaga.org.





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