



Institute  
for Translational  
Research  
Education  
in Adolescent Substance Use

10<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
Translational Research  
in Adolescent Substance Use  
**AGENDA**  
April 16-18, 2023

**NORTHERN  
ARIZONA  
UNIVERSITY** 



UNIVERSITY of  
**SOUTH FLORIDA**  
College of Behavioral & Community Sciences  
Child & Family Studies

The Institute for Translational Research Education in Adolescent Substance Use is supported by the National Institute on Drug Abuse of the National Institutes of Health under award number R25DA031103.

# Welcome to the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual University of South Florida (USF) Institute for Translational Research Education in Adolescent Substance Use (ITRE) Conference!

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## Join Us Virtually

Zoom Link:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/295957762?pwd=ZDdFZzJXVFhscVJQ3B5eFZZb0Z09>

Meeting ID: 295 957 762

Passcode: 009504

Find your local number:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/k3BYFZmyD>

Since its inception in 2007, the USF ITRE has provided state of the art training in implementation science and practice to inform researchers, service providers, and policy makers.

This year's conference theme is *Strengthening Community Partnerships Through Implementation Practice*, and is aimed at telling the story of how improving the quality of services in community behavioral health requires effective collaboration and partnerships among researchers, academics, service agencies, and community members. Implementation in practice requires that we understand the needs of communities, the realities of service provision, and the critical value of what is effective and evidence-based in-service delivery.

In this year's conference we have brought together program developers, service agencies, and our ITRE scholars to share their insights and experiences in a collaborative learning opportunity.

For our current scholars, we hope the last year has proven to be an exceptional learning experience that you will take with you in your future career in behavioral health. We look forward to the presentations of your community-based research. For our new scholars, we hope your kick-off conference provides both education and enlightenment and demonstrates the opportunities and broader understanding of the critical nature of implementation science and practice in improving community based behavioral health services. We also welcome interested graduate students, faculty, and community members, and hope you will find our conference engaging and informative.

From the ITRE Executive Team,

Tom Massey

Bruce Levin

Donna Burton

Ercilia Calcano



All conference sessions, unless specified, will be held at the University of South Florida, in the CBCS Atrium.

## Sunday April 16, 2023

8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Sessions Are Open to  
ITRE Cohort-10 Scholars & Presenters Only

Time	Title	Presenters
8:30 AM	Conference Introduction Registration and Welcome	Dr. Tom Massey; Dr. Bruce Levin; Dr. Donna Burton
9:00 AM	Icebreaker/Group Activity	Dr. Donna Burton
10:00 AM	Networking Break	
10:15 AM	Responsible Conduct of Research Training—Part I	Dr. Paul Stiles
12:15 PM	Lunch – “Get to Know You” Meeting with Mentors	Academic Mentors, Peer Mentors
1:15 PM	Responsible Conduct of Research Training—Part II	Dr. Paul Stiles
3:15 PM	Break	
3:30 PM	Orientation to Service-Learning and Community Partnerships	Dr. Tom Massey
4:55 PM	Program Updates	Ercilia R. Calcano, MPH
5:00 PM	Travel to Embassy Suites	
6:00 PM	Meet & Greet with Cohorts 9 & 10, Mentors, CPs, EC <i>Location: Embassy suites, lounge area</i>	<i>Cohort 9 &amp; 10 Scholars and ITRE Affiliated Mentors to Join</i>
7:30 PM	Conference Closing for the Day	

## Monday April 17, 2023

9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Sessions  
Are Open to ITRE Cohorts 9 & 10 Scholars Only

Time	Title	Presenters	Page
9:30 AM	Guest Registration and Continental Breakfast		
10:00 AM	Opening Remarks  Service-Learning Fair & Matching Experience— <i>Cohort-10</i> Manuscript Development— <i>Cohort-9 (room MHC 1636)</i>	Dr. Myrna Hogue; Cindy Grant; Dr. Margarita Romo; Elle Snelling; Kateri William  Dr. Tom Massey; Dr. Donna Burton  Dr. Bruce Levin; Kimberly Menendez, MS	
12:00 PM	Lunch		
1:00 PM	Strengthening Community-University Partnerships: HCADA and USF—Over 20 Years of Successful Partnership	Cindy Grant; Ellen Snelling	5
1:45 PM	Strengthening Implementation Practice through Community Partnerships	Charles Mendez III	5
2:30 PM	Networking Break		
2:45 PM	The Role of School Based Mental Health Professionals in Providing Supports and Services Using a Multi-Tiered System of Supports Framework	Myrna Hoge, EdD, LCSW; Maggie Dean, EdS, NCSP	5
3:30 PM	Stepping up to Aging Out: A Standardized Model for Measuring Independent Living Skill Success in Transition Age Foster Care Youth	Kelsie King, MA; Michelle Bollom, OTS; Taylor Goodman, OTS; Amy Armstrong-Heimsoth, OTD, OTR/L, BCp; Kim Vehon	5

All conference sessions, unless specified, will be held at the University of South Florida, in the CBCS Atrium.

## Monday April 17, 2023 *(Continued)*

Time	Title	Presenters	Page
4:00 PM	Lessons Learned in Conducting Community-Engaged Mental Health Research within Traditionally Underserved Communities	Tocara Jackson, MSW; Salah-Eddin Komrokji, MSW; Margarita Romo, FSH CEO; Alexandra Albizu-Jacob, MPH, Dr. Enya B. Vroom; Dr. Oliver Massey	6
4:30 PM	The Truth About Delta-8 THC: Parent Knowledge About Its Impact on Adolescents	Ansley Davis, MS, CCC-SLP; Tara Indar, MS; Chloe Talbert, BS; Destin Rothe; Kimberley Menendez, MS, CPP; Dr. Kathleen Moore; Ellen Snelling; Cindy Grant	6
5:00 PM	Conference Closing for the Day		

## Tuesday April 18, 2023

Time	Title	Presenters	Page
8:30 AM	Continental Breakfast		
9:00 AM	Services Research at NIDA: Spotlight on Implementation Science and Community Connections	Dr. Lori Ducharme	6
9:45 AM	Screen4Success: Perspectives on Development and Implementation of an EBP	Dr. Michael Dennis	6
10:30 AM	Networking Break		
10:45 AM	Moving Science to Practice: Practical Implications of Program Implementation in Community Behavioral Health Settings	Dr. Enya Vroom	7
11:30 AM	USF COPH Activist Lab: Finding our Voices for Change	Dr. Karen Liller	7
12:15 PM	Lunch <i>(Provided for ITRE Scholars &amp; affiliates in room MHS 1636)</i>		
1:15 PM	Applying Implementation Science to School Mental Health and Violence Prevention Programs	Dr. Anna Davidson Abella; Areana Cruz, MSED	7
2:00 PM	Closing Remarks to the General Public		
2:10 PM	Service-Learning Teams Meeting—for Cohort-10 Scholars, ITRE Faculty, and Community Partners	Dr. Levin; Dr. Burton	
3:10 PM	Passing the Torch: Advice and Lessons Learned for Future Scholars—for <i>Scholars in Cohorts 9 &amp; 10</i>	Alexandra Albizu-Jacob, MPH; Kim Menendez, MS	7
4:30 PM	Scholar's Reception		
6:00 PM	Conference Ends—See You Next Year!		

# Monday Sessions *Open to all conference participants*

## **1:00 PM**    **Strengthening Community-University Partnerships: HCADA and USF—Over 20 Years of Successful Partnership**

**Cindy Grant**, *Director of the Hillsborough County Anti-Drug Alliance*;  
**Ellen Snelling**, *Chair, Tampa Alcohol Coalition*

This presentation will explore how to promote community change through community and university partnerships. HCADA has partnered with USF and with other community partners in an effort to prevent and reduce substance use disorder in our community for over 20 years. These collaborative efforts have increased our ability to raise awareness and better educate the community and have resulted in positive change.

## **1:45 PM**    **Strengthening Implementation Practice through Community Partnerships**

**Charles Mendez III**, *Managing Director, Mendez Foundation & ITRE National Advisory Board member*

This presentation will examine the relationship between schools and other community partners in the implementation of evidence-based programs. It will highlight the Mendez Foundation's efforts in its work with community partners to establish the implementation of EBPs and address barriers to implementation including the need to adapt the EBP to local needs while maintaining fidelity to the program model and maximizing student outcomes.

## **2:30 PM**    **Networking Break**

## **2:45 PM**    **The Role of School Based Mental Health Professionals in Providing Supports and Services Using a Multi-Tiered System of Supports Framework**

**Myrna Hoge, EdD, LCSW**, *Supervisor, School Social Work Services, Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, School District of Hillsborough County*; **Maggie Dean, EdS, NCSW**, *Manager, Quality Assurance and MRT*

This presentation will outline how School-based problem-solving teams identify and respond to mental health concerns by utilizing a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework to identify and connect students and families to appropriate mental health services. The importance of mental health awareness, promotion of mental wellness, and a focus on combatting the stigma of mental health will be outlined. Current data and trends will be presented as well as legislation that guides procedures.

## **3:30 PM**    **Stepping up to Aging Out: A Standardized Model for Measuring Independent Living Skill Success in Transition Age Foster Care Youth**

**Kelsie King, MA; Michelle Bollom, OTS; Taylor Goodman, OTS; Amy Armstrong-Heimsoth, OTD, OTR/L, BCp**, *Northern Arizona University*; **Kim Vehon, CEO**, *Foster Arizona*

This pilot study aids in the validation of a performance-based life skills assessment, the Kohlman Evaluation of Living Skills for Youth/Young Adults (KELS-Y). This assessment aims to identify areas of strength and growth for youth transitioning out of foster care (YTC). The KELS-Y, along with subjective measures and semi-structured interviews, were completed to further item development. In addition, a literature review informs the creation of life skill modules, to improve employment outcomes for YTC.

**4:00 PM Lessons Learned in Conducting Community-Engaged Mental Health Research within Traditionally Underserved Communities**

**Tocara Jackson, MSW, Salah-Eddin Komrokji, MSW; Margarita Romo, FSH CEO; Alexandra Albizu-Jacob, MPH, Enya B. Vroom, PhD, MS; Oliver Massey, PhD, *University of South Florida***

A community benefits from education and resources that cater to their specific needs and are culturally cultivated. Researchers should be immersed in the community and be able to adjust to community needs. Flexible researchers are more likely to successfully course-correct and readily adapt to the community's needs while staying true to the overall purpose. Results of this research study found that mental health knowledge of youth is imperative for capacity building.

**4:30 PM The Truth About Delta-8 THC: Parent Knowledge About Its Impact on Adolescents**

**Ansley Davis, MS, CCC-SLP; Tara Indar, MS; Chloe Talbert, BS; Destin Rothe; Kimberley Menendez, MS, CPP; Kathleen Moore, PhD, *University of South Florida*; Ellen Snelling, Board Chair; Cindy Grant, Executive Director, Hillsborough County Anti-Drug Alliance**

The CDC has noted growing concern about a particular form of cannabis known as Delta-8 THC. Minimal research has been conducted about its impact on adolescents. This study investigated how much parents in Tampa Bay know about Delta-8 THC. A mixed methods approach was employed to analyze results from community awareness events, environmental scans, and qualitative interviews. Results and implication for future policy will be discussed.

**5:00 PM Conference Closing for the Day**

## Tuesday Sessions *Open to all conference participants*

**9:00 AM Services Research at NIDA: Spotlight on Implementation Science and Community Connections**

**Lori Ducharme, PhD, Program Officer, Services Research Branch, National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)**

In this presentation, Dr. Ducharme will provide an overview of addiction treatment services research at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). Topics will include: the role of implementation science in the Institute's strategic plan; highlights of several current initiatives to address the ongoing overdose crisis; and efforts to ensure meaningful engagement of patients, stakeholders, and communities to speed the translation of research to practice.

**9:45 AM Screen4Success: Perspectives on Development and Implementation of an EBP**

**Michael Dennis, PhD, Director, Global Appraisal of Individual Needs Coordinating Center, Chestnut Health Systems**

Dr. Dennis will share insights on the development and implementation of "Talk They Hear You" a parent education campaign, web-based app, and self-screening tool aimed at underage drinking and drug use. This new tool helps parents and caregivers better understand the health, wellness, and wellbeing of their children and targets schools, and other community-based groups and providers. Important aspects of program development and design, training, and plans for data collection to assess fidelity and sustainability will be discussed. Dr. Dennis will discuss the path forward to building an evidence-base for this promising practice.

**10:30 AM Networking Break**

**10:45 AM Moving Science to Practice: Practical Implications of Program Implementation in Community Behavioral Health Settings**

**Enya Vroom, PhD**, *ITRE Scholar Alumni and NIH/NIDA Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Florida*

This presentation will provide a background on the disconnect between implementation science and practice. It will also discuss findings from a research study about what community-based behavioral health organizations think is important for adopting, implementing, and sustaining evidence-based practices within their service settings and where the field of implementation practice is heading.

**11:30 AM USF COPH Activist Lab: Finding our Voices for Change**

**Karen Liller, PhD, CPH, FAAAS**, *Distinguished USF Health Professor, College of Public Health*

The purpose of this presentation is to provide participants information on the USF COPH Activist Lab in terms of our advocacy and education, research, service, and leadership in working with communities for change. Also discussed will be evaluation of our activities and leadership lessons learned.

**12:15 PM Lunch** (*Provided for ITRE Scholars & affiliates in room MHS 1636*)

**1:15 PM Applying Implementation Science to School Mental Health and Violence Prevention Programs**

**Anna Davidson Abella, PhD**, *Research Assistant Professor*; **Areana Cruz, MSED**, *University of South Florida*

This presentation will focus on implementation science and its use in educational settings. Specifically, we will focus on describing the implementation and evaluation of school-based mental health and violence prevention programs. The prevention programs and evaluation were funded by the National Institute of Justice's Student, Teachers, and Officers Preventing School Violence (STOP) Grants. The presentation will provide an overview of implementation science and current implementation science frameworks, the current mental health and violence prevention programs, and findings from an evaluation on the implementation of the programs.

**2:00 PM Closing Remarks to the General Public**

**2:10 PM Service-Learning Teams Meeting**—*for Cohort-10 Scholars, ITRE Faculty, and Community Partners*

**3:10 PM Passing the Torch: Advice and Lessons Learned for Future Scholars**—*for Scholars in Cohorts 9 & 10*

**Alexandra Albizu-Jacob, MPH; Kim Menendez, MS**, *University of South Florida*

**4:30 PM Scholar's Reception**—*USF College of Behavioral & Community Sciences, Atrium Lobby*

**6:00 PM Conference Ends – See You Next Year!**

# Executive Committee



**Dr. Oliver Tom Massey** is Co-PI of ITRE and Associate Professor and Director of the Division of Child & Family Behavioral Health in the Department of Child & Family Studies (CFS), USF College of Behavioral and Community

Sciences (CBCS). He specializes in the organization, implementation, and evaluation of mental health services for adolescents in schools and in the community. He has expertise in quantitative and qualitative methodology and has conducted research and evaluation projects on the delivery of mental and substance use services in K-12, the sustainability of mental health services, and adolescent engagement in effective services. He is the author of numerous publications and book chapters devoted to evaluation in the applied sector.



**Dr. Bruce Lubotsky Levin** is CO-PI of ITRE and Associate Professor in both USF CFS and Associate Professor and Faculty Lead of the Behavioral Health Concentration, USF College of Public Health (COPH). Dr. Levin currently serves as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal*

*of Behavioral Health Services & Research*. He has teaching and research interests in mental health and substance use services delivery, behavioral health policy, mental health informatics, managed behavioral health care, and implementation science. He is senior editor of 10 textbooks, including *Foundations of Behavioral Health* (Springer Nature, 2020) and *Introduction to Public Health in Pharmacy Second Edition* (Oxford University Press, 2018).



**Dr. Donna Burton** is Co-PI of ITRE and a Research Assistant Professor in USF CFS. She earned her PhD from the Department of Community & Family Health at USF COPH. She has served in a range of positions from practitioner to clinical director

and executive director for both private non-profit and public sector organizations. She has provided specialized curricula to drug abuse and mental health practitioners and administrators at four state-level schools of addiction studies. Dr. Burton has participated in the implementation of evidence-based practices for adolescents through federal level grant-funded mechanisms.



**Ercilia Calcagno** brings 25 years of public health experience in program planning and development, community engagement, budgeting, program management and evaluation, research administration, and teaching. Her previous leadership roles

contributed toward policy and system changes. She has worked with local coalitions to implement teen substance use prevention best practices in communities and schools and has served in state, national, and international workgroups to tackle public health priorities. She has provided students with service-learning opportunities focused on the needs of underserved populations and root causes of health disparities.



# Cohort-9 Scholars (2022-2023)



**Michelle Bolloom** is a doctoral student in the Occupational Therapy Program at Northern Arizona University (NAU) Phoenix Biosciences Campus. She earned a B.A. in Psychology from Arizona State University-West, where she worked in the Stress and Coping

Research Lab, interned for The New Song Center for Grieving Children, and volunteered as a Court Appointed Special Advocate for children in foster care. Michelle has spent over a decade in community mental health services. The majority of Michelle's professional work has centered on trauma-informed care and behavior modification within high-risk populations. Michelle's research interests lie in the power of play throughout the lifespan, positive neuropsychology, and community engagement. Her goal is to develop and implement a model of care centered on fostering a strong sense of purpose and meaning in people's lives.



**Ansley Davis** is currently a graduate student at USF pursuing her Ph.D. in Communication Sciences and Disorders. She earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Central Florida and a Master of Science from the University

of Hawaii at Manoa, both in Communication Sciences and Disorders. Ansley has worked in the public school system as a Speech-Language Pathologist. She worked on a research project that looked at the effects of a social communication intervention on students' language skills and presented the results in the 2020 American Speech and Hearing Association conference. Her primary research interests include pragmatic language deficits, literacy, and the impact that executive function deficits (e.g., emotional regulation, self-monitoring, etc.) have on communication in children and adolescents. She is also interested in studying the impact of trauma on youth's social communication skills. Ansley's goal is to contribute to the dissemination of evidence-based interventions for practicing speech-language pathologists.



**Tara Indar** is a Guyanese American that grew up in the Tampa Bay area. She is a first-year doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program at USF. In 2020, she completed her master's degree in Educational Leadership at the University of North

Florida. Tara also earned her B.S in biology from the Stony Brook University of New York in 2016. She has taught grade levels 3rd-8th for the past five years. Because of her experience, she has generated intense interest in making the classroom a better place, specifically in teacher retention.



**Tocara Jackson** is currently a student in the Master of Social Work (MSW) degree program at USF. Tocara has worked with youth in various roles including as a pediatric nurse, teacher, and youth leader. In these roles, she became intrigued with how

certain aspects of an adverse childhood created barriers for children and affected them in multiple areas of their lives. Currently, she is employed at the Tampa Bay Community and Family Development DBA Bethesda Ministries as a Trauma Informed Specialist/Case Manager. In this role, Tocara helps families identify stressors or traumas in their home and life and provides resources and purposeful practices to them. Her research interests include the safety and support of children and the correlation between their behavior when there is stress and trauma. Her long-term goal is to engage in philanthropy and establish a youth-focused nonprofit entity.



**Kelsie King** is currently completing a Psychological Sciences Master's program at NAU. During her undergraduate education, she also studied abroad for a semester in Austria, served as a student health liaison, peer mentored first-generation

students, and assisted in several research labs on campus. Kelsie has assisted in various research projects including translational research on betrayal trauma experienced by Neo-Natal Crisis Unit mothers and has presented a poster at the Western Psychological Association Conference on trauma-focused therapy for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in children and adolescents. These experiences illustrate her research interests in child and adolescent trauma as well as others including risk and protective factors for

serious mental illness and positive parenting interventions. After completing her master's at NAU, Kelsie plans to pursue a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology and hopes to work directly with children and adolescents. Her goal is to promote early recognition of trauma and mental illness to provide younger generations with a strong emotional foundation for healthy development.



**Taylor E. Stringer** is a graduate student at NAU pursuing her doctoral degree in Occupational Therapy at the Phoenix Biomedical Campus. Taylor earned her Bachelor's Degree in Nutrition and Food, with a double minor in Psychology and Biology

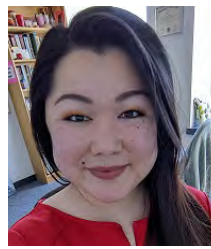
from NAU. She has a long history of working with youth of varying ages and continues that passion for focusing on youth in the pursuit of her doctoral degree. Taylor aspires to work in pediatrics and help bring healing through trauma-informed care. She aspires to play a part in helping to bridge the gap between foster care and occupational therapy as well as bring awareness to this emerging practice setting. Taylor hopes to gain the experience and knowledge to further this dream and continue to develop her research skills through this incredible opportunity to learn from her teammates and faculty at USF ITRE.

## Cohort-10 Scholars (2023-2024)



**Miracle Macias Burgos** is currently in her first year for a Psychological Sciences Masters at Northern Arizona University. She is a first generation college student from Ecuadorian immigrants which has influenced her research interests to focus

on marginalized groups in the U.S, specifically Latin American groups. In her undergraduate career, she worked in a neuroscience lab for two years and found her passion to be in researching addiction/substance use disorders. This program has given her a chance to explore the public health field in those topics specifically. Her research style has also moved from traditional to translational research seeing that it is more catered to helping these marginalized groups directly. Her current plan is to pursue a clinical PhD in psychology and contribute to the translational research done at the National Institute on Drug Abuse.



**Dr. Yasmin Fucci** has over 12 years of experience at the Florida Department of Health in the areas of demographic analysis and quantitative research. She graduated with a doctoral degree from the USF COPH. Previously, she earned her Master of Public

Health from the University of North Florida. Yasmin is currently the Program Administrator at the Bureau of Vital Statistics where she directs and coordinates comprehensive trainings and data quality improvement projects that seek to implement meaningful strategies for current users and future public health professionals utilizing the statewide Electronic Birth and Death Registration Systems. Yasmin's research interests include improving anomalies in health indicator data, researching statewide statistical trends and their subsequent impact on data driven decisions relating to the underdevelopment of community health education programs in Florida, and conducting statistical analyses that impact legislative bills.



**Jacqueline Houston** is a first-year graduate student at USF in the Master of Public Health degree program, with a concentration in Behavioral Health. She earned her Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) while completing her field practicum at the United States

Agency for International Development, where she managed the Social Service Workforce Group in support of the Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity Strategy. Jacqueline is a McKnight Junior Scholar in the USF Social Work Interdisciplinary Research Lab where she is working on several manuscripts analyzing Gender-Based Violence and Adverse Childhood Experiences in Cité Soleil, Haiti. In her current role, Jacqueline serves as the Domestic Violence Child Welfare Advocate at The Spring of Tampa Bay, where she supports the Child Protection Investigations Project. Jacqueline's primary research interest is the Troubled Teen Industry. She recently established the National Youth Rights Association Tampa Node and is energized to advocate for the protection of youth rights in Florida. Following graduation, Jacqueline will pursue a Ph.D. in psychiatric epidemiology.



**Tajjah Kittling** earned a Master's Degree in Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health from USF and has over 10 years of experience with community-based initiatives. Most of her educational and employment history focuses on behavioral health

within a community. Direct engagement with children, adolescents, young adults, and adult families spurred her interest in improvement science, blending dissemination with implementation and sustainability. Her current practices actively implement evidence-based treatments on a local level with community professionals, where the focus is on providing direct services and cultivating program intrapreneurship. She aims to structure her practices and leadership around neuro-inclusion, trauma-informed management, system of care, values, principles, and equity. Her goal is to focus on the integration of new culturally responsive policies while developing employee personal and professional skills through a supervision/coaching model.



**Greg Levitt** is a first year Master of Social Work Student at USF. After earning a Bachelor of Science in Physics, Greg spent 6 years as a middle and high school STEM instructor. During his time as a teacher, he found greater meaning

in lending an ear to students experiencing emotional distress than teaching about math and science. Since that realization, he has worked in a domestic violence shelter and in a program for adolescents and young adults overcoming dual diagnoses. Presently, he is working as a research assistant in a lab examining complementary therapies for Veterans experiencing symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and is completing his field placement with Lifepath Hospice in South Tampa. His primary research interest is to examine the training and support systems for direct service providers in the behavioral health field.



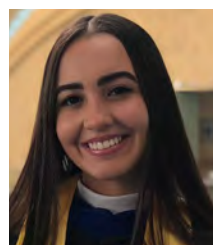
**Manuel "Manny" Mayor** graduated the USF COPH MPH degree program in public health administration. He has more than 12 years of public health experience, which includes research and prevention efforts in the fields of Human Immunodeficiency viruses,

colorectal cancer, Alzheimer's Disease, and tobacco cessation. He is currently working at Premier Community HealthCare to create connections with community members, collaborate with community organizations, and coordinate events aiming to improve community access and health. As the Community Engagement Manager, he manages a team that helps the community in gaining health care access, health education, and social resources. A focus of his efforts is underserved communities such as migrant seasonal agricultural workers, people experiencing homelessness, and public housing residents among others. He is also currently working to complete his doctoral degree in public health at USF COPH.



**Joshua Mincey** is a first-year graduate student in the Social Marketing Concentration pursuing a Master's Degree in Public Health at USF. He earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Public Health from Florida State University. Throughout his life,

Joshua has frequently volunteered with community events, community organizations, and non-profit organizations. Joshua hopes to understand the roles of different psychological and neurological factors that spur decision making. Currently, Joshua is involved with several local and statewide organizations focusing on substance abuse. He hopes to graduate from the ITRE program with the tools to successfully and effectively champion behavioral health interventions and promoting preventative health within communities.



**Arielis Perez** is a first-year student in the Master of Science in Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health Degree program at USF. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Albizu University, where she received the Outstanding Student Medal for

graduating with the highest GPA (4.0) in her class. In 2019, she began her Undergraduate Post-Baccalaureate in Science at Florida International University. Arielis has received training on child exposure to substances and trauma from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and a certification in the Challenges of Global Health from Duke University. Before starting graduate school, she was a lab research assistant where she worked on projects focused on innovative ways to teach procedural knowledge to undergraduate students through primary scientific literature. Arielis is interested in child cognitive

development, including both the biological and social bases. She joined the ITRE to learn more about community-level projects to improve the well-being of multicultural children and adolescents.



**Ginger Ross**, Hampton, NH, is the founder of Choices Peer Recovery Coach Training. Ginger has worked in the peer recovery field since 2015 and is a grassroots pioneer in developing the movement in NH. Choices Recovery Training is nationally recognized

and approved by National Association of Drug Addiction Counselors. Ginger has designed a library of peer recovery-related training and addiction/recovery-related training for community partners, family court workers/child welfare, family members, and first responders. Ginger has been an interim program manager programs and companies where peer coaching has been an integral part of the service delivery. Ginger has consulted with the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability in creating fidelity tools for Alternative Peer Groups, the Benzodiazepine Action Work Group through the University of Colorado to develop Peer Support for Benzodiazepine training, and the New Hampshire Problem Gambling Council. Ginger earned her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Southern New Hampshire University. She holds the Certified Recovery Support Worker license in New Hampshire and the National Peer Credential. Ginger has lived experience with domestic violence, recovery, and working with child welfare.



**Erin Sadowski** is a Master of Public Health student at USF COPH in the Behavioral Health Concentration. She completed her bachelor's degrees in Human Biology and Clinical Psychology at the University of California San Diego in 2020. Following the completion of her undergraduate

work, Erin returned to Florida to work as a case manager for the Community Action Treatment team in Hendry and Glades counties. Through her work with this program, she developed a passion for working with children, adolescents, and young adults in crises related to behavioral health concerns. Her decision to pursue an advanced degree in public health was influenced by a desire to create system-level change for more equitable access to behavioral health services for all. Currently, Erin acts as a case manager for Gracepoint Wellness's adult emergency services facility. Erin is grateful for and honored by the opportunity to work alongside colleagues in USF ITRE.



**Elzbieta Wiedbusch** is a second-year doctoral student in the Behavioral and Community Sciences program at USF. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Criminal Justice/Criminology from Loyola University Chicago.

Elzbieta has assisted in research projects regarding youth community violence exposure, recovery from substance misuse and addiction, and the criminal justice system's impact on marginalized communities. Her efforts resulted in poster presentations at regional and national conferences and published manuscripts on recovery from substance use disorders. Her current research focuses on the intersection of substance misuse and addiction, trauma, and attention deficit disorder among girls in the juvenile justice system. Elzbieta is also interested in diagnostic procedures and assessments used in juvenile justice systems and their validity for female and non-White youth. Her professional goal is to promote and disseminate evidence-based prevention and intervention programs for youth at risk for criminal justice involvement. She plans to work with community-based agencies to prevent local youth from justice involvement and provide them with needed behavioral health services.



**Ling Zhang** graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Chinese Medicine from Gansu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine. During her undergraduate education, she participated in a research project

assisting families with using herbal and western medicines to lower the cost of treatment. Ling started her master's program in Public Health Promotion in 2022 at NAU. She is currently a Graduate Research Assistant of Southwest Health Equity Research Collaborative at NAU working on promoting recreation time among Individuals incarcerated in jail sponsored by the National Institutes of Health. She is also facilitating an employee-wellness research study at Twin Arrows Project serving the Navajo population. Her research interests have centered on family and children well-being, adolescent substance use, and primary and second prevention for mental disorders among underserved populations. She is honored to be a scholar for USF ITRE.

# National Advisory Board



**Dr. Julie A. Baldwin** is a Regent's Professor at NAU's College of Health and Human Services. Her research has focused on alcohol and drug abuse prevention in youth and young adults, utilizing community-based participatory

research approaches, working with underserved and/or marginalized populations (particularly Native Americans), and addressing health disparities by developing and implementing culturally competent public health interventions. As an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, she has made a lifelong commitment to serving diverse communities and to advocating for health promotion programs for children, adolescents, and families.



**Dr. Richard Dembo** is a Professor of Criminology at USF. Dr. Dembo has directed a number of NIDA-funded projects addressing drug abuse, mental health, and related needs among youths having contact with the justice system. He has conducted

extensive research on the relationship between drug use, delinquency, and public health issues, has published three books and over 250 articles, book chapters, and reports in the fields of criminology, substance use, mental health, and program evaluation. He is currently involved in a NIDA funded, family intervention project for Haitian youth having contact with the justice system in Miami-Dade County, Florida. Dr. Dembo earned his Ph.D. in Sociology from New York University.



**Dr. Michael L. Dennis** (Chair of ITRE National Advisory Board) is a Senior Research Psychologist and Director of the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs (GAIN) Coordinating Center at Chestnut Health Systems in Bloomington, IL. He was the

coordinating center principal investigator of the largest adolescent treatment experiment to date, the Cannabis Youth Treatment study. Over the past decade, he has been coordinating center director or Co-PI of over a dozen adolescent treatment research projects and grant programs funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism,

and the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Dr. Dennis is the primary developer of the GAIN: a standardized biopsychosocial to help make clinical decisions about diagnosis, placement, and treatment planning; it is a key piece of infrastructure to bridge the gap between clinical research and moving practice towards evidence based practice. Under his direction, the GAIN Coordinating Center has provided training and support to use GAIN for over 500 adolescent and adult research studies, demonstration grants, states, and agencies throughout the U.S., Canada and Mexico. He earned his Ph.D. in Psychology, Methodology, and Evaluation Research from Northwestern University.



**Dr. John Lowe** is a Professor and Joseph Blades Centennial Memorial Professorship Chair at the University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing. He is one of only 23 American Indian & Alaskan Native (AI/AN) doctoral prepared nurses within the USA. He

has conducted NIH-funded intervention studies for the prevention of substance use and related risk behaviors for AI/AN and Indigenous populations globally. He has significant expertise in cultural competence, health disparities, and evidence-based practices. Models that have emerged from his funded research are used to promote the health and well-being of Native Americans and Indigenous peoples globally. He was recently appointed to the National Institutes of Nursing Research Advisory Council.



**Dr. Aaron R. Lyon** is a clinical psychologist and Associate Professor in the University of Washington's (UW) Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. He is also Director of the UW School Mental Health Assessment, Research, and Training

Center. Dr. Lyon's research focuses on improving the implementation and impact of mental health interventions for children, adolescents, and families; delivered within contexts (e.g., schools) that routinely provide care to chronically underserved populations (e.g., low socioeconomic status and ethnic minority youth). Dr. Lyon is currently principal investigator on grants from the National Institute of Mental Health, National Institute of Justice, Institute of Education Sciences, and various local and national foundations across the U.S. He earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in Clinical Child Psychology at DePaul University.



**Dr. Kenneth J. Martinez** is a retired child psychologist and Adjunct Faculty in the Department of Psychiatry at the Health Sciences Center, University of New Mexico where he has been on the faculty in various capacities for over 40 years. Dr. Martinez previously served as a Principal

Research Analyst at the American Institute for Research in Washington DC, where he provided technical assistance to over 70 federally funded children’s mental health grantee sites. He has extensive clinical, policy, administrative, and academic expertise. In addition, Dr. Martinez previously served as the children’s behavioral health director for the State of New Mexico and past national chair of the Children, Youth, and Families Division of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors. He earned his Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology at Stanford University and his Doctoral Degree in Child Clinical Psychology at the University of Denver where he was a Ford Foundation Fellow.



**Charles Mendez III** is the managing director of the C.E. Mendez Foundation, a not-for-profit organization dedicated since 1975 to preventing substance use, bullying, and violence in children and adolescents to promote health and wellbeing. He has expertise in the

development, training, implementation, and dissemination of the Foundation’s evidence-based *Too Good for Drugs* and *Too Good for Violence* prevention programs which develop social-emotional skills to build protection in children grades K-12 to mitigate the risk factors associated with substance use and aggressive behavior. He continues working with his colleagues to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and reach of prevention education and social skills development through innovation and partnerships translating research into age-appropriate development and behavior change strategies that are easily adopted and implemented. He also oversees the foundation’s business administration, marketing, and sales departments and has expertise in the sustainability of not-for-profit organizations. As a Community Agency Partner for USF ITRE, he has mentored scholars in their design and implementation of research projects. Serving as a Community Agency Partner with the ITRE for 5 cohorts, he can provide real-world expertise of the development, implementation, and sustainability of school-based substance use prevention programs to contribute to the development of ITRE curricula and training.



**Rachel Shelton, ScD, MPH** is an Associate Professor of Sociomedical Sciences at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health and is a social and behavioral scientist with expertise in

the areas of implementation science, health equity, and community-engaged research. Dr. Shelton has been funded as Principal Investigator for 10 years in implementation science and health equity, with funding through American Cancer Society, National Cancer Institute, National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, and National Institute on Aging. She has taught a course in implementation science since 2013 and is currently leading a campus-wide Initiative on Implementation Science at Columbia University through Columbia’s CTSA.

## Academic Mentors



**Dr. Amy Armstrong-Heimsoth** is the Department Chair & Associate Clinical Professor for the Department of Occupational Therapy at NAU on the Phoenix Biomedical Campus. She has been a faculty member with the

department since 2015. She has previous experience with the ITRE as a Cohort 5 Scholar. Amy graduated with a doctoral degree from Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions in 2014. She earned her Bachelor’s Degree in Human Development & Family Studies from the University of Missouri in 1992 and her Master’s Degree in Occupational Therapy from the University of Southern California in 1997. Amy has 25 years of clinical pediatric occupational therapy experience. Her research interests include neurodevelopmental disabilities, influences of trauma on development, empowerment through health literacy, and foster care youth. Amy currently serves as President of the Arizona Occupational Therapy Association. She is also a board member for Opportunity, Community, & Justice for Kids, which serves foster care youth in Arizona.



**Dr. Brooke De Heer** is an Assistant Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at NAU. She earned her M.A. (2009) and Ph.D. (2011) in Psychology, with an emphasis in quantitative legal psychology at The University of Texas, El Paso. She's

a lecturer in the field of criminology and victimology and previously worked as an Intelligence Analyst for the FBI. Her research to date has primarily focused on issues of gender and power in sexual violence, and inequitable treatment and consideration of vulnerable victims involved in the criminal justice system. Two themes that run through her scholarship are: 1) the representation of diverse populations as victims of sexual violence; and 2) understanding antecedents and responses to gendered violence, including availability of services. She currently teaches courses on violent crime, forensics, and the American court system at NAU.



**Dr. Kathleen Moore** is a Research Professor in the Department of Mental Health, Law, and Policy at USF CBCS. She currently serves as the Executive Director for the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute. For the past 18 years, she

has collaborated with community-based agencies on numerous projects at the local, state, and national levels focused on substance abuse and mental health. Her emphasis has been on project evaluation, bridging the gap between research and practice, and social policy issues such as co-occurring disorders, homelessness, and jail diversion.



**Dr. Enya B. Vroom** is a National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Drug Abuse Postdoctoral Fellow in the T32 Substance Abuse Training Center in Public Health in the Department of Epidemiology in the College of Public Health

and Health Professions and College of Medicine at the University of Florida. Dr. Vroom earned her PhD in Behavioral and Community Sciences from USF and has previous experience with the ITRE as a Cohort 4 Scholar. Dr. Vroom's current research focuses on the epidemiology of substance misuse among justice-involved adolescents, with an emphasis on racial and gender disparities and the implementation of treatment services. She also

has expertise in the translation, implementation, and evaluation of evidence-based school- and community-based behavioral health services.

## Responsible Conduct of Research Trainer



**Dr. Paul G. Stiles** is an Associate Professor and Associate Chair in the Department of Mental Health Law & Policy at the USF Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute.

Dr. Stiles has more than 25 years' experience studying and teaching about mental health law, policy, and ethics. He teaches courses on legal and ethical issues in aging, provides intensive workshops on research ethics, and formerly chaired the social-behavioral IRB at USF and currently chairs the USF Conflict of Interest Committee. He has obtained external funding including several National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants to train clinical/services researchers in ethics and research integrity, as well as research grants to examine the consent process.

## Peer Mentors



**Alexandra Albizu-Jacob** is a third-year doctoral candidate in the Behavioral and Community Sciences program at USF. She earned her master's degree in public health in the Behavioral Health Concentration from USF COPH. She was in the first cohort

of ITRE Scholars 2013-2014. She has provided peer mentorship to numerous cohorts of ITRE scholars. Alexandra's experience includes technical assistance, evaluation, and clinical trial project management across a wide variety of topics including adolescent behavioral health, trauma-informed care, men's mental health and wellbeing, father engagement in schools, and pediatric psycho-oncology. Currently, she is a graduate research associate for a 5-year, PCORI-funded randomized controlled trial that aims to reduce racial disparities in hospital readmissions and negative outcomes post hospitalization for older adult African Americans and Hispanics. Her research interests include examining community, organization, and system-level processes through implementation science research and practice.



**Tracy Bales** is a doctoral student in the CBCS PhD Degree program at USF. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Design and a Bachelor of Psychology with Honors from USF. In addition, Tracy earned a Master of Public Health at USF COPH and a Graduate

Certificate in ITRE at USF CBCS. Her previous research focused on behavioral economics in health, implicit health decision-making under stress, adolescent substance use prevention, and implementation fidelity in substance use prevention programming. Her current research interests include arts in health, effects of the built environment on behavioral health, neuroaesthetics, behavioral economics, and adolescent substance use.



**Dr. Emily Farber** recently graduated with an Occupational Therapy Doctoral Degree at NAU. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Kinesiology from Arizona State University. In her undergraduate program, she served as a research

assistant in the Sensory Motor Development Lab researching the effects of assisted cycling therapy on the motor and cognitive processes of adolescents and young adults with Down syndrome and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Dr. Farber has researched the effectiveness of transition programs for youth aging out of the foster care system. In addition, she serves on an event committee for a local foster care agency. Her research topics of interest include trauma-informed care, lymphedema, neurological disorders, and cancer-related health disparities.



**Dr. Amanda Hunter** is a citizen of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and was born and raised in Tucson, AZ. Dr. Hunter earned her MPH (2016) and PhD (2020) in health behavior and health promotion from the University of Arizona. She currently resides in

Flagstaff, Arizona and is a postdoctoral scholar at NAU's Center for Health Equity Research under the mentorship of Dr. Julie Baldwin. Amanda's research focuses on the relationship between cultural identity and mental and behavioral health outcomes in Indigenous youth. Since 2015, Amanda has worked with Indigenous communities in Arizona to develop, implement, and evaluate a culturally grounded after-school program called Native Spirit. Native Spirit aims to strengthen resilience, cultural identity, and self-esteem, while attenuating substance use in Indigenous youth. Dr. Hunter uses a community-grounded and mixed-methods approach to conduct evaluation of the Native Spirit program.



**Kimberly Menendez** is a doctoral student in Behavioral and Community Sciences at USF and is the Editorial Associate for the Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research. She earned a master's degree in forensic psychology at USF and is a certified

prevention professional. Kimberly earned a graduate certificate in as a Cohort 1 Scholar in the USF ITRE. She has also served as an ITRE community agency mentor for several ITRE cohorts. Prior to her acceptance into the PhD program, her career has been in child and adolescent behavioral health equipping youth with the skills to avoid risky behaviors including substance use. Her current area of research focuses on adult populations with opioid use disorder and includes the exploration of opioid-related surveillance data within emergency medical services systems.



# Community Partner Agencies

2022-2024

## Farmworkers Self-Help, Inc. (FSH)

Dade City, FL

<https://floridaimmigrant.org/placemarks/farmworkers-self-help-inc-fsh/>

Contact: Margarita Romo, Executive Director, [romo1936@gmail.com](mailto:romo1936@gmail.com)



FSH was organized as a grassroots effort by immigrant Mexican and Mexican-American migrant farmworkers and former farmworkers to find solutions to the problems of the farmworker population. FSH facilitates self-development, self-help, grassroots organizing, participation and leadership development, and seeks to bridge the gap between isolation and societal mainstreams, while preserving cultural heritage. It is committed to farmworkers and other poor taking charge of their own lives and destinies.

## Foster Arizona

Phoenix, AZ

<https://fosterarizona.org/>

Contact: Kimberly Vehon, Founder & CEO, [kim@fosteraz.org](mailto:kim@fosteraz.org)



Foster Arizona is a non-profit public charity focused on educating, encouraging, and empowering Arizonans to positively impact the lives of kids in foster care. Their vision is that every child in Arizona's foster care system will be empowered, supported, and have the opportunity to enrich their lives through intentional community connections.

## Hillsborough County Anti-Drug Alliance, Inc. (HCADA)

Tampa, FL

<http://hcada.com>

Contact: Cindy Grant, Director, [togetheragain@earthlink.net](mailto:togetheragain@earthlink.net)



HCADA promotes healthy communities in Hillsborough County free of substance abuse and addiction through education, collaboration and advocacy. HCADA's vision is a community where youth and families are safe, healthy and free of substance abuse and addiction.

## Hillsborough County Public Schools, School Social Work Services

<http://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/departments/63/social-work-services/about/>

Contact: Myrna Hogue, Supervisor of Social Work Services, [myrna.hogue@sdhc.k12.fl.us](mailto:myrna.hogue@sdhc.k12.fl.us) (813) 273-7090



As part of the Division of Student Services, School social workers, through their unique training and practice, provide a variety of professional services which foster students' physical, social, emotional, and academic growth. They promote and support the educational process by meeting the individual needs of students and families within the community.

## Mendez Foundation, Too Good Programs

Tampa, FL

<http://www.toogoodprograms.org/>

Contact: Charles E Mendez, III, Managing Director, [cmendez3@mendezfoundation.org](mailto:cmendez3@mendezfoundation.org)



For more than forty years, the Mendez Foundation has been developing and implementing unparalleled K-12 prevention education through its Too Good programs preparing children and adolescents to make healthy choices and resist substance use and other risky behavior. Their evidence-based, skill-building programs make a positive impact on the lives of students, teachers, parents, and community leaders nationwide.

## Native Americans for Community Action, Inc.

Flagstaff, AZ

<http://www.nacainc.org/>

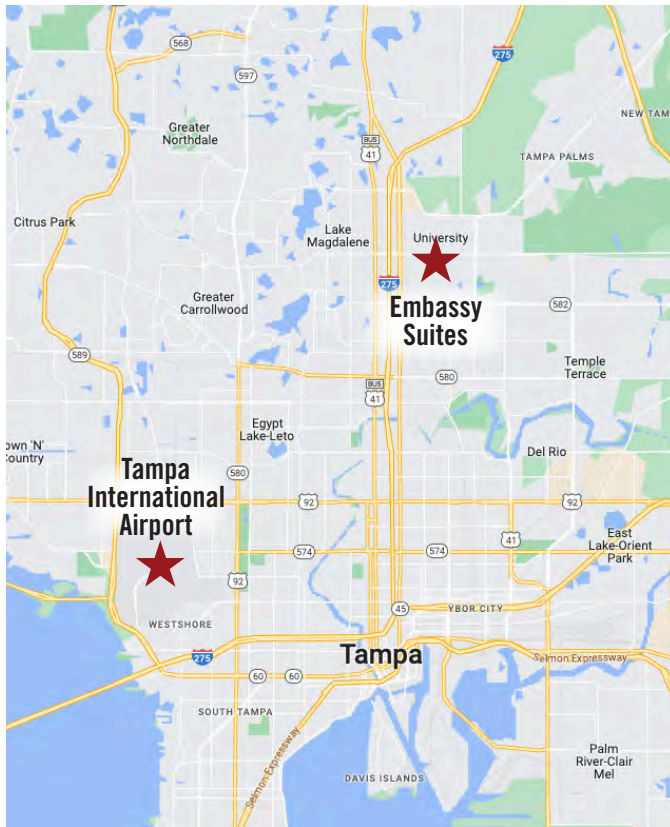
Contact: Dr. Curtis Randolph, Clinical Director of Behavioral Health, [crandolph@nacainc.org](mailto:crandolph@nacainc.org), or Kateri Williams, Pathways Program Coordinator, [kwilliams@nacainc.org](mailto:kwilliams@nacainc.org)



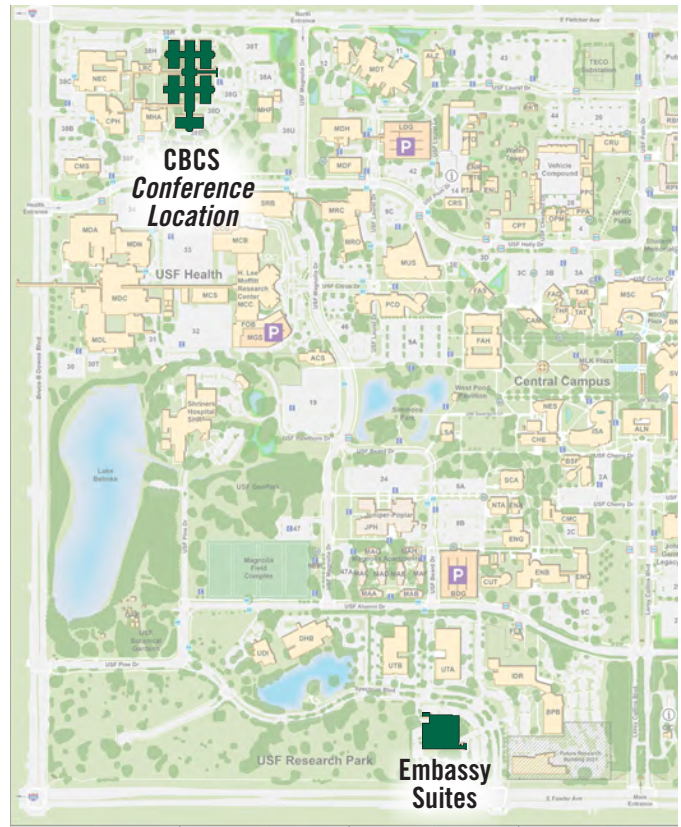
Native Americans for Community Action provides preventative wellness strategies, empower, and advocate for Native peoples and others in need to create a healthy community based on Harmony, Respect, and Indigenous Values.



# Tampa Bay Area



# USF Tampa Campus



## Travel Information

### Hotel Information

Embassy Suites  
 3705 Spectrum Boulevard  
 Tampa, FL 33612  
 Phone Number: (813)-977-7066

### USF CBCS (Conference Location)

University of South Florida  
 MHC Building (Atrium Lobby)  
 13301 Bruce B Downs Blvd  
 Tampa, FL 33612

### Uber/Lyft Ridesharing

From TPA airport to the Embassy Suites is \$50

### Shuttle Schedule (hotel/conference)

Date	Hotel → USF CBCS	Conference Start	USF CBCS → Hotel
Sunday, April 16	8:00 AM	8:30 AM	5:00 PM
Monday, April 17	9:00 AM	9:30 AM	5:00 PM
Tuesday, April 18	8:00 AM	8:30 AM	6:00 PM



**Institute for Translational Research Education in  
Adolescent Substance Use**

Department of Child & Family Studies  
College of Behavioral and Community Sciences  
University of South Florida  
13301 Bruce B Downs Blvd  
Tampa, FL 33612

[www.usf.edu/cbcs/cfs/itre](http://www.usf.edu/cbcs/cfs/itre)



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**College of Behavioral & Community Sciences**  
Child & Family Studies