



The 21st Annual Professional School Counselor Conference

Program Guide
February 1-3, 2026
Fort Worth, TX

Preliminary Program as of February 1, 2026
Subject to Change

Sunday, February 1st | Learning Institute
(Additional Registration Fee)
9:30AM-5:30PM

Title: Digging Deeper Into Sand Tray: Utilizing Various Modalities to Benefit Students

Learning Institute

Topic: Responsive Services (Preventive, Remedial, and Crisis), Counseling Theory/Practice and the Counseling Relationship

Presenter(s): Betty White

Sand tray has long been utilized as a means of benefitting individuals with a variety of needs. Most counselors have been introduced to a non-directive form of sand tray. However, there are many other approaches to sand tray that allow counselors to tailor the sessions to the individual needs of the students involved. This experiential session will allow participants to both build and debrief trays from a variety of theoretical orientations, such as Gestalt, Adlerian, Humanistic, Solution Focused, and Cognitive Behavioral. In addition, participants will explore dynamic sand tray, virtual sand tray, and group applications. Miniatures and trays will be provided so that all can experience both building and evaluating trays.

Sunday, February 1st | 90-Minute Programs
1:30PM-3:00PM

1. Beyond ADHD: Understanding Alternative Explanations for Attention and Hyperactivity Behaviors

90-Minute

Sunday

Time: 1:30PM - 3:00PM

Room: 201A

Topic: Behavioral Interventions, Counselor Professional Identity and Practice Issue

Presenter(s): Beth Robinson, Jenene Alexander

Beyond ADHD is a 90-minute, research-based training designed to help school counselors accurately interpret student attention and behavior concerns. Because ADHD-like symptoms can arise from trauma, anxiety, depression, learning disabilities, environmental stressors, cultural differences, and contextual factors, misattribution is common—and can lead to ineffective or inappropriate interventions. This session equips counselors to differentiate true ADHD from look-alike presentations by examining timelines, triggers, functional patterns, and cross-setting behavior. Participants will learn practical assessment considerations, culturally responsive interpretation strategies, and indicators for comprehensive referral. The training also provides targeted intervention frameworks based on underlying causes, ensuring that students receive appropriate support even without a formal diagnosis. Through case examples, guided analysis, and clear decision-making tools, counselors will strengthen their ability to collaborate with teachers and families, reduce bias in referrals, and provide functional, compassionate, and developmentally informed support for diverse learners.

2. From Burnout to Balance: Building Counselor Wellness in a Demanding Profession

90-Minute

Sunday

Time: 1:30PM - 3:00PM

Room: 201BC

Topic: Leadership, Advocacy, and Professional Issues, Wellness and Prevention

Presenter(s): Denise Toro, Erin Gutierrez

You give so much to everyone else—come receive something for you. Counselors are carrying more than ever, and it's taking a toll. Take a moment at this conference to step away from stress and into steadiness with this restorative TASCA session. From Burnout to Balance delivers grounding

activities and practical, research-backed strategies that help you think clearly and feel steady again. With hands-on experiences and real tools that actually work, you'll leave lighter, stronger, and more centered. If your heart is tired, this is your space.

**Sunday, February 1st | 3-Hour Program
1:30PM-4:30PM**

3. Being a Change Agent: Ethical Support for School Counselors and their Advocacy Efforts

3-Hour

Sunday

Time: 1:30PM - 4:30PM

Room: 203AB

CE Credential Category: Ethics

Topic: Ethics and Legal Issues, Counselor Professional Identity and Practice Issue

Presenter(s): Elizabeth J. Rogers

This program is for counselors ready to drive real change within their school counseling programs. Come prepared to learn about the ethical guidelines that anchor your professional actions and learn the skills to identify systemic barriers and evaluate the effectiveness of your comprehensive school counseling program. Become the data-informed voice for all students. School counselors who are seasoned change agents, or new squeaky wheels, will learn with your fellow school counselors how advocacy melds with school counselor identity.

**Sunday, February 1st | 90-Minute Programs
3:30PM-5:00PM**

4. From Band-Aids to Breakthroughs: Real-Time Counseling Priorities

90-Minute

Sunday

Time: 3:30PM - 5:00PM

Room: 201A

Topic: Comprehensive School Counseling Program Design & Management

Presenter(s): Tiffany Blackwood, Katherine Dixon

Just like triage nurses, school counselors must quickly assess, prioritize, and respond to student needs in real time. This session explores how counselors move from quick fixes to meaningful breakthroughs by identifying high-impact priorities, managing crises, and aligning their work with a comprehensive school counseling program. Leave with practical tools to turn urgency into lasting

Monday, February 2nd | 90-Minute Programs
8:00AM-9:30AM

6. From Chaos to Clarity: The Campus Crisis Response Playbook You Can Count On!

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 102

Topic: Responsive Services (Preventive, Remedial, and Crisis)

Presenter(s): Tye Hobbs, Matthew Smith, Chastidy Ervin

In moments of crisis, every second counts, and so does every decision. This session will take participants inside a proven, districtwide Crisis Response Framework designed to reduce confusion, streamline communication, and empower school counselors to lead effectively in high-stakes situations. Attendees will explore practical protocols, real campus examples, and ready-to-use tools that strengthen coordination before, during, and after a crisis. Leave with a clearer roadmap, stronger confidence, and actionable strategies to elevate your campus crisis response.

7. Reimagining Your Positionality to Expand Your Impact: Why Your Voice Is Needed in Doctoral Spaces

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 103AB

CE Credential Category: Supervision

Topic: Counselor Education and Supervision, Counselor Professional Identity and Practice Issue

Presenter(s): Jennifer H. Stover, Gabriela Herrera, Angela Perez

This session invites school counselors to reimagine their positionality and recognize why their unique expertise, including their lived experiences, leadership, and advocacy, is needed in institutions of higher education. Participants will explore the benefits and requirements for attaining a PhD, examine how their representation shapes research and policy, and gain practical insight into exploring the journey that can expand their professional impact and identity.

8. The Soundtrack for Success: Enhancing Your Program with Music

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 104

Topic: Comprehensive School Counseling Program Design & Management, Counseling Theory/Practice and the Counseling Relationship

Presenter(s): Lindsey Jannaman

This session will explore how music can be used to support the school counseling program. The session focus will be strategies and practices to enhance engagement, promote a positive culture, and support explicit social and emotional instruction using music. Attendees will have opportunities to participate in, practice, and take away ideas for immediate implementation.

9. Paying for College: Exploring Alternatives to Traditional Financial Aid

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 201A

Topic: College, Career, Military Readiness

Presenter(s): Jeffrey Cranmore, Natalie Rangel

The cost of attending college has grown exponentially over the past 10 years. In many cases, traditional financial aid and scholarships may not be enough to meet these costs. What do we do then? This session will focus on alternative methods of securing funding for post-secondary education. This session will include tuition benefits in jobs, loan forgiveness programs, and more.

10. Research-Based Strategies for Supporting Anxious Students

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 201BC

Topic: Guidance and Personal Skills Instruction, Counseling Theory/Practice and the Counseling Relationship

Presenter(s): Sara Cottrill-Carlo

School counselors are needed to support students with anxiety through both direct and indirect services within the ASCA National Model®. This session shares research-based, CBT-informed strategies to help anxious students and the adults who support them manage anxiety so they can be more successful at school. Because CBT can feel abstract for younger learners, we will focus on engaging, developmentally appropriate ways to help elementary students (1) understand the connection between their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and (2) challenge unhelpful thinking patterns. Counselors will leave with concrete, play-based ideas for individual sessions, small group counseling, and class lessons, plus simple strategies to teach and model for teachers and caregivers so they can provide brief, effective anxiety support across multiple tiers.

11. Building a Positive School Culture for Students and Staff

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 202AB

Topic: Responsive Services (Preventive, Remedial, and Crisis), Wellness and Prevention

Presenter(s): Stephanie J. Venegas, Jennifer Kaatz

This proposal outlines a conference session designed to help school leaders, educators, and staff explore how incentive-based strategies can foster a positive, collaborative, and motivating school culture. The session will highlight practical approaches, research-based practices, and real-world examples of incentive programs that improve student engagement and staff morale.

12. Student Wellness: Guidance Curriculum Tier 1 Supports

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 202CD

Topic: Guidance and Personal Skills Instruction, Wellness and Prevention

Presenter(s): Stephanie Lerner

One of the most significant ways that school counselors can support their students is through the guidance curriculum service delivery component, especially as it relates to universal student wellness. This presentation will provide counselors with various strategies and wellness activities for their tier 1 guidance lessons. Participants will also explore recent legislative implications for school counseling guidance curriculum practices. The presentation content aligns with both the Texas Model guidance curriculum statutory requirements (Texas Education Code, §33.005) and the integration of counselors into the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework.

13. TCA Legislative Ambassador Orientation

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 203AB

Presenter(s): Elizabeth J. Rogers, Noah Jones

TCA is excited to begin the rollout of our new District Ambassadors program. By combining the efforts of dedicated members across the state that we can

plant the seeds for a promising 2027 legislative session. Reaching out to your legislators in their home districts gives you the opportunity to educate them and create public policy solutions that will benefit not only professional counselors, but all Texans. Please join the Public Policy Committee and TCA staff to engage in this new initiative.

Note: CE Credit is not being offered for this program

14. "I'm Grieving as Fast as I Can!"

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 203C

Topic: Guidance and Personal Skills Instruction

Presenter(s): Jill Riethmayer

In a world saturated with loss, we rarely get to fully acknowledge much less grieve our losses. The past few years have contained multiple losses coupled with lost opportunities to acknowledge much less grieve those losses. Come & learn as we take a look at loss & grief with the emphasis on how new losses often tap into ungrieved past losses. Until past losses are acknowledged & grieved, these ungrieved past losses will continue to complicate current & future losses. Unacknowledged loss & grief "robs us" of being able to fully live in the present. Come look at grieving new loss as well as "layered losses". Specific loss & grief tools will be shared in this workshop.

Come identify the critical tasks, challenges & obstacles for the grieving in our current world.

15. Starting Strong: Establishing Your Counselor Identity as a New School Counselor

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 204AB

Topic: Comprehensive School Counseling Program Design & Management, Counselor Professional Identity and Practice Issue

Presenter(s): Jacqueline S. Moreno

New to school counseling? You're not alone. In this engaging and supportive session, graduate students and new professionals will explore how to confidently step into their role as school counselors. From defining your professional identity to navigating school politics and building culturally responsive relationships, this session will provide practical tools and honest insights into starting strong. You'll leave with strategies for managing the transition, communicating your role clearly, and advocating for your place on the school team—all while maintaining a healthy balance and sense of purpose.

Monday, February 2nd | General Session

Ballroom BC | 10:00AM-11:30AM

Keynote Speaker: Charles E. Dupre

Because I Knew You: Changing Lives for Good

Inspired by the song For Good from Wicked, Charles Dupre will offer a reflective and hope-filled keynote that honors the quiet, lasting impact school counselors have on the lives they touch. Through personal stories and moments of vulnerability, he will share how teachers, counselors, and caring adults changed the trajectory of his life—not through grand gestures, but through presence, belief, and compassion offered at just the right time. Dupre will invite counselors to pause, recognize the unseen ripples of their work, and remember that long after schedules change and students move on, their influence remains. Because I Knew You affirms that the work of school counselors matters deeply—and that each conversation, each act of care, and each moment of advocacy has the power to change a life for good.

Monday, February 2nd | 90-Minute Programs

12:30PM-2:00PM

16. Counselor Power: Advocating, Influencing, and Leading on Campus to Strengthen Your Role, Build Collaborative Relationships, and Elevate Your Leadership

90-Minute

Monday**Time:** 12:30PM - 2:00PM**Room:** 102**Topic:** Leadership, Advocacy, and Professional Issues**Presenter(s):** Shannon Clark

This session explores how professional school counselors can effectively advocate for their role and leadership on campus through collaboration with school administrators. Drawing on research with Texas school counselors, key strategies for professional advocacy include using teachable moments, building flexible and comfortable relationships, approaching advocacy strategically and confidently with data, and prioritizing in-person collaborative meetings. Participants will learn practical ways to define and communicate the counselor role, strengthen partnerships with principals, and enhance their influence as campus leaders. Attendees will leave with actionable insights for elevating counselor impact and fostering administrator understanding of the essential work counselors perform.

17. "How to Help The Dying . . . and the living"

90-Minute

Monday**Time:** 12:30PM - 2:00PM**Room:** 103AB**Topic:** Guidance and Personal Skills Instruction**Presenter(s):** Jill Riethmayer

Nothing is as challenging as facing death - a client's death, a family member's death or our own death. Where do you go to explore death and dying in order to be better equipped to assist others &/or yourself navigate the formidable task of death & the dying process? There is no "teacher" who has been there and then comes back to teach us how to make this journey or to assist someone else (client, family member or friend) in making this journey. Or is there? Actually, a wealth of information & knowledge exists about death and the "dying process"; however, one rarely hears someone talk about death and dying. Come learn from: the dying, hospice nurses, doctors, NDE survivors & grief counselors. Become more prepared to assist someone else or yourself in this journey.

18. The Elementary Career Lab Experience: Play Based Learning That Builds Future Pathways

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 12:30PM - 2:00PM

Room: 104

Topic: College, Career, Military Readiness, Career Development and Counseling

Presenter(s): Jennefer Bell

This session will explore the importance of elementary career exploration by showing how play based, hands on learning can build strong career awareness. Participants will examine research that supports early career development and learn how playful exploration strengthens academic engagement, SEL skills, and future readiness. I will walk through the creation and structure of my Career Lab as well as share practical alternatives that any campus can implement, even without a dedicated space. The session also addresses funding options as well as alternative ideas to traditional "Career Day". Participants will leave with actionable ideas, ready to bring meaningful career exploration to life in the elementary setting.

19. How to Unpush Your Buttons: A Practical Guide to Self-Regulation

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 12:30PM - 2:00PM

Room: 201A

Topic: Responsive Services (Preventive, Remedial, and Crisis), Wellness and Prevention

Presenter(s): Shelbee D. Russell

School counselors and educators support others through their toughest moments — yet even the most composed professional can have their buttons pushed. Emotional regulation isn't just something we teach — it's something we must practice daily to survive this work.

This Learning Institute provides a practical and (mercifully) humorous approach to staying regulated during inevitable challenges. Participants will explore the brain science behind stress, identify their personal triggers, and practice strategies to respond intentionally instead of reacting impulsively. Through interactive activities and real-world scenarios, attendees will create a personalized “Button-Unpushing Toolkit” to use immediately on campus.

We’ll focus on research-aligned self-regulation skills, de-escalation communication, and schoolwide practices that support emotionally safe environments — because stress isn’t going away, but we can get better at handling it.

20. 89th Texas Legislature: Updates for School Counselors

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 12:30PM - 2:00PM

Room: 201BC

Topic: Counselor Professional Identity and Practice Issue

Presenter(s): Stephanie Lerner

This presentation will deliver essential updates from the 89th Texas Legislature relevant to K–12 education, with a focus on legislation impacting school counselors. It will also explore how these updates align with existing laws and highlight key resources and guidance from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Participants will have the opportunity to provide input on future school counseling initiatives and resources.

21. Incorporating Nature-Based Approaches in School Counseling Programs

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 12:30PM - 2:00PM

Room: 202AB

Topic: Comprehensive School Counseling Program Design & Management, Wellness and Prevention

Presenter(s): Jeffrey Cranmore, Natalie Rangel

Research has connected Nature-based counseling/gardening to positive results in learning and wellbeing to school age students. The goal of this session is to explore developing guidance lessons that connect to concepts that occur through nature-based approaches. Further, participants will find ways to create Nature-based spaces for students, to work and care for, as well as provide opportunities for students to make connections to nature. These spaces may be small container gardens to larger scale gardens that can provide learning spaces for students, as well as provide food supplements to families and the community. The session will explore ways to introduce Nature-based learning into academic classes, such as mathematics, social studies, and sciences. Finally, counselors will find ways to start community gardens.

22. Stop Scrolling, Start Growing: Practical Tools for Cultivating Resilience and Digital Wellness in Adolescents

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 12:30PM - 2:00PM

Room: 202CD

Topic: Guidance and Personal Skills Instruction, Group Dynamics and Counseling

Presenter(s): Reagan Dickson, Nicole Palacios, Mya Patterson

Secondary school counselors consistently report that the adolescents they serve are struggling with grades, attendance, and mood. Though myriad factors contribute to these challenges, the influence of social media has been definitively linked to adolescent mental health and well-being. This presentation provides school counselors with a comprehensive look at how social media use can impact resilience among adolescents and provides school counselors with ready-to-go resources to support student well-being.

This presentation includes psychoeducation, experiential activities, and a 12-week group curriculum to help students define their current relationship with social media, identify its impacts, and develop essential coping skills and healthy boundaries. Key activities include the "Social Media Time Tracker," "Introduction to Boundaries," and "Self-Care Scale". The ultimate goal is to provide school counselors with the necessary information and tools to

empower students to set personal goals outside of their digital life and build resilience.

24. Chasing Away the Blues: Practical Interventions for Elementary Students Navigating Grief

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 12:30PM - 2:00PM

Room: 203C

Topic: Responsive Services (Preventive, Remedial, and Crisis), Wellness and Prevention

Presenter(s): Ana Garcia, Sloane Sivek, Marita Bailey

Grief manifests uniquely in elementary-aged children and is often misunderstood by adults. This interactive 90-minute workshop equips school personnel with practical, play-based strategies to support grieving students. Developmental stages of grief and the signs of distress will be addressed. Drawing from play therapy principles, the focus will be on accessible, low-cost interventions, including expressive arts, therapeutic storytelling (bibliotherapy), and sand tray techniques; that can be seamlessly integrated into the school setting. The session will also cover essential multicultural considerations and how to create a supportive environment, encouraging children to express pain through play rather than avoid it. Attendees will leave with a ready-to-use "Grief Toolkit" of activities to implement in their schools. Presenters will engage in discussion around areas to enhance parental consent in regard to Senate Bill 12.

Monday, February 2nd | 3-Hour Programs

1:00PM-4:00PM

23. Show me the data! Using program evaluation strategies to strengthen school counseling programs

3-Hour

Monday

Time: 1:00PM - 4:00PM

Room: 203AB

Topic: Comprehensive School Counseling Program Design & Management, Research and Program Evaluation

Presenter(s): Felicia Mirghassemi, Tershundrea Branch, Alex Penno, Lisa Burnette-Kerrigan

School counselors engage with various sources of data every day - from assessing a student's level of risk for not graduating to observing student interactions in the lunchroom. In this presentation, school counselors will learn step-by-step how to use the data they are already collecting to inform school counseling program planning, effectiveness, and advocacy.

Throughout the session, school counselors will learn the basics of identifying types of data, creating program evaluation questions based on their school's unique needs, and analyze the data using Microsoft Excel. This hands-on and experiential presentation will provide school counselors with the time and consultation to prepare a program evaluation proposal that they can implement with existing data as soon as they return to their school.

25. "Are You as Smart as a Buzzard: How to Avoid Becoming Ethical Roadkill"

3-Hour

Monday

Time: 1:00PM - 4:00PM

Room: 204AB

CE Credential Category: Ethics

Topic: Ethics and Legal Issues, Counselor Professional Identity and Practice Issue

Presenter(s): Betty White

Who says ethics has to be either boring or scary? When a former biologist becomes a counselor, ethics becomes more entertaining. This session, presented by an ASCA Legal and Ethical Specialist, will relate the ASCA ethical standards to animal behavior in a way that will entertain and educate participants. Along the way, we will examine a variety of potential ethical dilemmas and legal cases, as well as address ethical dilemmas presented by participants. Special consideration will be given to ASCA 2022 updates to the standards, including cultural competence.

Monday, February 2nd | 90-Minute Programs
2:30PM-4:00PM

26. What Drives You? 8 Archetypes for Driving Change in the Classroom and Beyond

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 2:30PM - 4:00PM

Room: 102

Topic: Leadership, Advocacy, and Professional Issues

Presenter(s): Melisa Nichols, Jennifer Malave

The powerful catalysts for change within a campus are often underestimated. Educators in all settings can provide unique insights and pathways to create change in K-12 education. In this program you will learn your unique leadership style and how to collaborate with other leadership styles to create a successful program!

27. Healing Trauma Imprints: From Defense to Mindful Connections
90-Minute

Monday

Time: 2:30PM - 4:00PM

Room: 103AB

Topic: Behavioral Interventions, Human Growth and Development Theories in Counseling

Presenter(s): Nichelle Chandler, Azadeh Mansour

In this presentation, the active role of emotional pain in past trauma will be explored with considerations to germane interrelated facets. Additionally, the function of attachment and its influence on development, mental health, emotional regulation, and specific defense mechanisms will be further explored. Clinical application examples and key considerations in the areas of attachment, trauma, and socio-emotional awareness and mindfulness healing will also be highlighted through review of empirical literature and evidence-based practices. Practical clinical insights will be provided to conference attendees with the goal to benefit both the novice counseling

trainee and advanced clinician through this educational, clinical treatment conceptualization and planning process.

28. High School Career Day--Even in a Small Town

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 2:30PM - 4:00PM

Room: 104

Topic: College, Career, Military Readiness, Career Development and Counseling

Presenter(s): Nita Fields

What Do I Want To Be When I Grow Up? Helping your students in a small school discover their future career by hosting an Annual Career Day that connects students learning to their goals, helps them refine their future career pathway, and helps them build relationships with community members in the field they hope to pursue after high school. I'll share the nuts and bolts of how we put this event on annually in a rural community so you can take this idea home and make it your own.

29. School Counseling Advisory Established! Now What?

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 2:30PM - 4:00PM

Room: 201A

Topic: Comprehensive School Counseling Program Design & Management

Presenter(s): Tiffany Blackwood, Katherine Dixon

Establishing your school counseling advisory is an integral piece that is needed when building your comprehensive school counseling program. You have your members, location, time and date, but what are the next steps? During this presentation you will learn how to successfully implement your school counseling advisory and how to partner with your stakeholders to collaborate on creating your needs based comprehensive school counseling program.

30. Supporting Homeless & Foster Care Youth: School Based Wrap Around Services for Vulnerable Populations

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 2:30PM - 4:00PM

Room: 201BC

Topic: Comprehensive School Counseling Program Design & Management, Counseling Theory/Practice and the Counseling Relationship

Presenter(s): Matt B. Smith

This session will outline wrap around services provided across Humble ISD in supporting students experiencing homelessness & foster care. This unique population experiences unique needs. Come along for the ride as we navigate layers of support that help launch these students into success!

31. Crisis Response in the Classroom

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 2:30PM - 4:00PM

Room: 202AB

Topic: Responsive Services (Preventive, Remedial, and Crisis), Wellness and Prevention

Presenter(s): Jeffrey Cranmore, Hannah Hoogeveen

Crisis Response can take many forms, and it may be necessary in some cases that the response may come from multiple staff members, and not just the school counselor. This session will look at how school counselors and teachers can partner to deliver these responsive services to all students. With the increasing number of students in crisis, creating partnerships with teachers to deliver response is one way to ensure student needs are met.

32. Counselors for Good: Turning Ordinary Objects into Extraordinary Lessons

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 2:30PM - 4:00PM

Room: 202CD

Topic: Guidance and Personal Skills Instruction

Presenter(s): Missy Masters, Emily Loesch

Abstract concepts like empathy, perseverance, and self-control can be difficult for elementary students to grasp through words alone. Object lessons offer counselors a creative way to make these ideas tangible and memorable. Using simple items - like marbles to show how trust builds one small action at a time, a candle to represent friendship that must be cared for to keep burning, or balloons to illustrate the balance of organization and effort - helps students see and feel each concept come to life. These visuals not only bridge the gap between abstract ideas and real understanding but also add excitement and curiosity that keep students engaged. This session will guide school counselors in selecting, presenting, and connecting object lessons to SEL themes. Participants will leave inspired and equipped with ready-to-use demonstrations that transform everyday objects into extraordinary teaching moments - proof that a little counseling magic goes a long way.

33. Rural School Counselors and Advocacy

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 2:30PM - 4:00PM

Room: 203C

Topic: Leadership, Advocacy, and Professional Issues, Counselor Professional Identity and Practice Issue

Presenter(s): Nicole Killian, Tara Martin

This presentation explores the critical role of advocacy in rural school counseling. Attendees will examine the unique barriers rural school counselors face, including limited resources, role confusion, and community challenges, while gaining insight into effective advocacy roles such as client support, social justice leadership, and professional advocacy. The session highlights strategies to strengthen counselor impact and promote equitable outcomes for students in rural school communities.

Monday, February 2nd | 90-Minute Programs
4:30PM-6:00PM

**34. How Family Engagement Shapes Student Health and Learning:
Lessons from Emerging Research**

90-Minute

Sunday

Time: 4:30PM - 6:00PM

Room: 102

Topic: Behavioral Interventions, Counseling Theory/Practice and the Counseling Relationship

Presenter(s): Wesley Furlong, Amy Lawrence

What does the latest national research reveal about the ways family engagement shape school engagement (behavioral and emotional) and ultimately child wellbeing and academic outcomes?

Join Dr. Wesley Furlong, Ph.D., MSW, MA, child welfare researcher and Director of Impact & Learning at Frankly, and Amy Lawrence, Director of Counseling Services for Denton ISD, for a timely and practical exploration of how specific forms of family engagement serve as powerful protective factors for school engagement and child outcomes. Drawing from key national datasets (e.g., NSDUH, NHES, YRBS) and recent peer-reviewed studies, this session will help counselors distinguish the types of engagement that truly matter and how to strengthen them across diverse communities.

**35. From Connection to Insight: Using Minute Meetings to
Strengthen School Counseling Impact**

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 4:30PM - 6:00PM

Room: 103AB

Topic: Responsive Services (Preventive, Remedial, and Crisis)

Presenter(s): Ami Ray

Minute meetings are a simple yet powerful way to build relationships, increase student connectedness, and gather meaningful insights to guide

counseling services. In this session, participants will learn how to structure and implement quick, intentional check-ins that help students feel seen, heard, and supported. Attendees will explore how even brief conversations can reveal patterns, highlight emerging concerns, and inform next steps such as individual follow-up, group referrals, and campus collaboration. The session provides practical tools, templates, and real examples from a high school setting, demonstrating how minute meetings can fit seamlessly into a counselor's workload. Participants will leave with actionable strategies to strengthen connections, efficiently collect student data, and enhance their overall counseling impact.

36. New Counselor Academy: Strategies for Leaders to Support Success

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 4:30PM - 6:00PM

Room: 104

Topic: Comprehensive School Counseling Program Design & Management

Presenter(s): Leigh O'neal, Rosalynn Tamayo, Michelle Gallegos-Irujo

The New Counselor Academy is a key investment in counselor preparation, program quality, and student success. This session will guide leaders in understanding how structured onboarding—aligned with district priorities and state expectations—equips new counselors to deliver a comprehensive, equitable, and effective school counseling program from day one. Learn strategies to support counselors, foster consistency across campuses, and strengthen your district's counseling services.

37. Bring Solutions, Not Problems: A Solution-Focused Approach for School Counselors

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 4:30PM - 6:00PM

Room: 201A

Topic: Guidance and Personal Skills Instruction, Counselor Professional Identity and Practice Issue

Presenter(s): Jacqueline S. Moreno

This 90-minute session translates the core principles of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) into practical, campus-ready tools for school counselors, supervisors, and mental health professionals. Built from real school-counseling experience and grounded in evidence-based practice, this session demonstrates how SFBT supports efficient, high-impact interventions that align with both the ASCA National Model and Texas school counseling expectations. Participants learn how to shift from problem-saturated conversations to future-focused, strengths-driven dialogue using techniques such as miracle questions, scaling strategies, and exception identification. The session also introduces a full SFBT toolkit, including scaling cards, check-in forms, a worry-box method, and supervision templates—and guides attendees through hands-on practice and action-planning. Whether serving a busy campus or supervising LPC-Associates, participants leave with concrete resources and a renewed sense of confidence in using SFBT to support student success, resilience, and self-advocacy.

38. Supporting Teachers in Behavior Management: Evidence-Based Strategies for School Counselors

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 4:30PM - 6:00PM

Room: 201BC

Topic: Behavioral Interventions, Counselor Professional Identity and Practice Issue

Presenter(s): Beth Robinson, Jenene Alexander

Supporting Teachers in Behavior Management is a dynamic 90-minute training designed to equip school counselors with practical, research-informed tools to strengthen teacher capacity and improve student behavior. This session explores behavior as communication, the impact of brain regulation on student responses, and trauma-informed approaches that prioritize safety and connection. Counselors will learn how to build collaborative partnerships with teachers, implement proactive classroom management strategies, and apply effective de-escalation and calming techniques. The program also introduces function-based interventions for

common challenging behaviors and provides guidance for designing campuswide positive behavior support systems. Participants will leave with ready-to-use scripts, data collection tools, and consultation frameworks that promote teacher confidence, resilience, and long-term success. Grounded in real-world school experience, this training empowers counselors to serve as collaborative coaches who help create supportive, well-managed learning environments where every student can thrive.

39. Attendance Matters: Small Steps, Big Impact

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 4:30PM - 6:00PM

Room: 202AB

Topic: Guidance and Personal Skills Instruction, Wellness and Prevention

Presenter(s): Hillary Newton

Discover how one campus transformed its attendance culture through a collaborative, data-driven approach. This session highlights innovative strategies—including individual interventions, parent engagement, and schoolwide initiatives like “Beat the Bell” and “attenDANCES”—that led to measurable improvements in student attendance and punctuality. Attendees will leave with practical tools and research-backed insights to address chronic absenteeism in fun, effective ways that build community and boost student success.

40. Creating Safer, More Resilient Schools: Integrating SEL, MTSS, and School Safety to Strengthen Crisis Readiness and Student Resilience

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 4:30PM - 6:00PM

Room: 202CD

Topic: Responsive Services (Preventive, Remedial, and Crisis), Wellness and Prevention

Presenter(s): Michelle Calhoun, Tiffany Chaney

Texas school counselors are at the forefront of student mental health and campus safety. This session introduces an MTSS and Texas Model-aligned approach that weaves SEL, trauma-informed practices, and crisis readiness into a comprehensive school counseling program. Participants will explore current legislation (including SB12), clarify their safety role, and leave with ready-to-use tools—crisis-response scripts, SEL mini-lessons, and a 30-day implementation plan, to strengthen student resilience and school safety across PK–12 settings.

41. A.R.T.ful Conflict Management: The M.I.C. Drop for Regulated Conversations

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 4:30PM - 6:00PM

Room: 203AB

Topic: Leadership, Advocacy, and Professional Issues

Presenter(s): Denise Toro

Conflict doesn't have to derail your day. With the right rhythm and the right framework, conversations become clearer, calmer, and more collaborative. In this engaging TASCA session, you'll learn the A.R.T. approach—Awareness, Reflection, and Tools—paired with the M.I.C. Drop: Mindfulness, Integration, and Confidence. Through movement, visuals, and hands-on practice, you'll build confidence for the moments that matter and walk out with tools you'll reach for again and again.

42. Time Savers for Secondary Counselors to Improve Effective Advising

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 4:30PM - 6:00PM

Room: 203C

Topic: College, Career, Military Readiness, Career Development and Counseling

Presenter(s): Nita Fields

This program will share time saving strategies and tips on evaluating how a counselor can more effectively utilize their advising time based on studies analyzing the effectiveness of college and career advising in secondary schools. As a veteran counselor I will share time saving tools created over my 27-year career as a professional school counselor to improve advising efforts with high school students with a focus on College and Career advising.

43. Shifting Roles: Navigating the Transition from School Counselor to Licensed Professional Counselor in Texas

90-Minute

Monday

Time: 4:30PM - 6:00PM

Room: 204AB

Topic: Counselor Professional Identity and Practice Issue

Presenter(s): Megan E. "Meg" Guidry

Designed for Texas counselors ready to expand beyond the school setting, this session is presented by a veteran professional school counselor who is dually licensed as a Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor. The presentation explores role variation, legal and ethical differences, navigating dual licensure, and considerations for those seeking to pursue LPC licensure, offering practical guidance for practicing across counseling settings.

Tuesday, February 3rd | 90-Minute Programs 8:00AM-9:30AM

45. Adult to Adult: Using Transactional Analysis to Reach Avoiders, Disrupters, and Anxious Students

90-Minute

Tuesday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 103AB

Topic: Guidance and Personal Skills Instruction, Counseling Theory/Practice and the Counseling Relationship

Presenter(s): Mike Hays, Jennifer Stinson, Laynie Johnson, Tim Berube

Why do our best interventions sometimes make difficult behaviors worse?

This 90-minute workshop reveals how Transactional Analysis explains why the anxious student becomes more dependent on reassurance, why the avoider shuts down when we offer help, and why the disrupter escalates when we set limits. You'll learn to identify the ego states driving problematic behaviors and practice Adult-to-Adult interventions that build student capacity instead of reinforcing stuck patterns.

This isn't lecture-based theory. Through live role-plays, case study planning, and scenario analysis, you'll develop concrete strategies for your most challenging students—the ones who avoid, disrupt, dysregulate, and catastrophize. You'll leave with specific scripts, a quick-reference guide, and intervention plans you can use Monday morning.

Perfect for: School counselors working with middle and high school students who want practical tools that actually shift behavior patterns.

46. The ABCs of Campus Culture: Activities, Belonging, and Celebration

90-Minute

Tuesday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 104

Topic: Responsive Services (Preventive, Remedial, and Crisis), Wellness and Prevention

Presenter(s): Shayla Green

Discover how intentional Activities, a sense of Belonging, and meaningful Celebration can transform your campus culture and boost student engagement and attendance. In this engaging session, participants will explore practical strategies that build community, motivate students, and energize staff in a secondary school setting. Walk away with ready-to-use ideas and a simple framework to create a positive, connected, and joyful school environment where everyone thrives.

47. TSCA Presents: You can earn CREST & Updates!

90-Minute

Tuesday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 201A

Topic: Comprehensive School Counseling Program Design & Management

Presenter(s): Heather Degroot, Jill Adams

In this session, we'll guide participants step-by-step through the CREST Award application process and updates. The CREST recognizes exemplary comprehensive school counseling programs that meet student needs and truly make a difference in student outcomes. Fully aligned with the Texas Model, the CREST application is a powerful tool for advocating for your school counseling program and celebrating the meaningful work you do every day. Join us and let's get started!

48. Development, Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation of a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support - Behavior: Practical Evidence-Based Practices, Successes & Resources

90-Minute

Tuesday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 201BC

Topic: Behavioral Interventions, Career Development and Counseling

Presenter(s): Ann Hughes, Gina Lea, Christine Russell, Joshua Baker

Come hear from practitioners about the steps, practical tips & resources developed & used during Sanger ISD's 5 year journey setting up and implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior, PreK-12. The free, validated Universal Screener used twice annually will be discussed; the data dig collaborative team/problem solving meetings that follow up on students scoring high on the screener& examination of their other critical data sources (ABCs - Academic, Behavior, & Completion of Work) will be highlighted. Processes, procedures and protocols used to develop Tiers 2 & 3 behavior support/intervention student plans will be shared including how we monitored for fidelity of implementation of plans. Specific research-based Tier 2 & 3 interventions that have been effective with our students will be

reviewed. How we achieved 90% of caregiver participation/engagement in the MTSS-Behavior support meetings will be shared. Strategies for meaningful student involvement will also be highlighted.

49. Brief Sand Tray Protocols: Time Efficient Interventions for School Settings

90-Minute

Tuesday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 202AB

Topic: Guidance and Personal Skills Instruction, Counseling Theory/Practice and the Counseling Relationship

Presenter(s): Alexis Benavides

School counselors often face the challenge of providing meaningful therapeutic support with limited time. This interactive session introduces practical, evidence-informed sand tray protocols specifically designed for 10–20 minute sessions. Participants will engage in hands-on practice using structured interventions for emotional regulation, solution-focused problem solving, and transition support. Learn how to integrate these protocols into MTSS frameworks, crisis response, and individual or small group counseling, even with limited space and materials. Leave with immediately implementable strategies and digital resources to enhance your counseling practice.

50. The Regulation Mixmaster: Spinning the Neurological Playlist for Student Regulation

90-Minute

Tuesday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 202CD

Topic: Guidance and Personal Skills Instruction

Presenter(s): Denise Toro

Ready for a PD that wakes you up and helps your students? This TSCA session invites you to spin your own Neurological Playlist—a music-centered

approach to student regulation that blends rhythm, movement, and neuroscience into tools counselors can use immediately. You'll experience beat-based routines, rhythmic tapping, and whole-body movement that activate the prefrontal cortex and calm the amygdala. You'll also create simple music-infused regulation chants and movement resets you can use with dysregulated students tomorrow. If you want PD that energizes you and delivers strategies that truly stick, this is the one.

51. Follow the Yellow Brick Road: A Texas Counselors Guide to Navigating Law and Ethics

90-Minute

Tuesday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 203AB

CE Credential Category: Ethics

Topic: Ethics and Legal Issues, Research and Program Evaluation

Presenter(s): Megan E. "Meg" Guidry, Justin McClure

This interactive, scenario-based session designed to help Texas school counselors confidently navigate today's legal and ethical landscape. Using a "journey" framework, participants will explore how local district policies, state law, and federal requirements intersect in everyday counseling practice. From consent and confidentiality to documentation, mandatory reporting, FERPA, SB 12, and the ASCA Ethical Standards, this session breaks down complex regulations into clear, practical guidance. Real-world scenarios will highlight difficult legal and ethical gray areas, emphasizing decision-making, consultation, and professional judgment within the realities of today's school climate. Counselors will leave with practical tools, increased confidence, and a clearer roadmap for staying legally compliant while advocating for students.

52. I Got 99 Problems, But a Lesson Ain't One

90-Minute

Tuesday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 203C

Topic: Guidance and Personal Skills Instruction, Wellness and Prevention
Presenter(s): Robert Crawford

This high-energy, hip-hop-themed session helps school counselors move beyond disconnected “random acts of guidance” and start designing intentional, engaging classroom lessons that truly resonate with students. Framed like an album with purposeful tracks, participants will experience a clear, practical framework for building lessons with strong objectives, meaningful flow, and interactive strategies—brought to life through live demonstrations of different counseling lessons they can immediately remix for their own. Counselors will leave equipped to create inclusive, high-impact lessons that boost engagement, strengthen outcomes, and keep their program’s message on repeat.

53. “From Shutdown to Show Up: Helping Students Thrive with Polyvagal Theory and Emotional Intelligence (EI)”

90-Minute

Tuesday

Time: 8:00AM - 9:30AM

Room: 204AB

Topic: Responsive Services (Preventive, Remedial, and Crisis), Counseling Theory/Practice and the Counseling Relationship

Presenter(s): Cynthia Lee Coronado, Karina Saldana, Patricia Goodman

This program equips school counselors and therapists with a practical, integrated approach to supporting student regulation and emotional development by combining Polyvagal Theory with Emotional Intelligence (EI). Participants learn how autonomic nervous system states influence behavior, readiness for learning, and therapeutic rapport, while EI provides the vocabulary and cognitive framework to help students identify, understand, and skillfully navigate emotions. Through interactive activities, case scenarios, and ready-to-use tools, attendees gain strategies for assessment, co-regulation, communication, and intervention that promote safety, connection, and resilience across school settings.

Tuesday, February 3rd | General Session

Ballroom BC | 10:00AM-11:30AM

Keynote Speaker: Veronica V. Sopher
Defying Gravity with Unreasonable Intentionality
Tuesday, February 3rd | 90-Minute Programs
12:00PM-1:30PM

55. Building Confidence and Connection: The Impact of a Rising 9th Grade Summer Bridge Program

90-Minute

Tuesday

Time: 12:00PM - 1:30PM

Room: 103AB

Topic: Guidance and Personal Skills Instruction

Presenter(s): Leslie Sarno

The transition from junior high to high school is one of the most pivotal, and often most challenging, moments in a student's academic journey. This session highlights Dickinson High School's 9th Grade Summer Bridge Program, a free three-week enrichment experience designed to equip incoming freshmen with the academic readiness, social connections, and confidence needed for a successful start to high school. Participants will learn how the program blends academic preparation, campus orientation, and relationship-building to create a proactive support system before students ever step on campus in the fall.

We will explore the program's structure, curriculum, staffing model, and evaluation data, as well as practical strategies school counselors can use to replicate or scale a similar transition program. Attendees will leave with actionable tools, sample schedules, and insights into how early intervention positively affects student engagement, attendance, and high school readiness.

57. After The Trauma

90-Minute

Tuesday

Time: 12:00PM - 1:30PM

Room: 201A

Topic: Guidance and Personal Skills Instruction

Presenter(s): Jill Riethmayer

Trauma is inevitable in modern day life: abuse (inside & outside of the home), shootings/mass shootings, wars, bombings, terrorism, pandemics, both natural & man-made disasters, etc. It seems as though trauma happens more frequently, & there is a resulting effect of cumulative trauma & more generational trauma. The list of recent traumatic events seems endless & grows daily. We as individuals & as a country are experiencing new traumas, more cumulative trauma & more generational trauma. The media has brought trauma directly into our homes on a daily basis. Come learn how trauma – especially cumulative & generational trauma – impacts not only individuals, but families, communities, schools & nations. We will take a detailed look at how to work through individual trauma, cumulative trauma & generational trauma.

58. 89th Texas Legislature: Updates for School Counselors

90-Minute

Tuesday

Time: 12:00PM - 1:30PM

Room: 201BC

Topic: Leadership, Advocacy, and Professional Issues, Counselor Professional Identity and Practice Issue

Presenter(s): Stephanie Lerner

This presentation will deliver essential updates from the 89th Texas Legislature relevant to K–12 education, with a focus on legislation impacting school counselors. It will also explore how these updates align with existing laws and highlight key resources and guidance from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Participants will have the opportunity to provide input on future school counseling initiatives and resources.

CANCELED 59. Brain Health Burn Out for Yourself and Staff

90-Minute

60. Stronger Together: Building Meaningful Parent–Student–School Connections

90-Minute

Tuesday

Time: 12:00PM - 1:30PM

Room: 202CD

Topic: Comprehensive School Counseling Program Design & Management, Career Development and Counseling

Presenter(s): Aubrey Halford, Amanda Cavazos, Amy D'Angelo

This presentation walks through a yearlong program designed to get parents and students more involved and working closely with the school. Each month, the counseling department invite parents to come to campus and meet with the counseling team in a relaxed, supportive setting.

Every session focused on an important topic—things like how the school works, getting ready for college, staying healthy during the holidays, choosing classes for next year, building good relationship skills, using technology responsibly, and making the most of summer learning opportunities.

The big goal of the program is to improve communication, build trust, and create a strong team made up of students, families, and school staff. By doing this, the school hopes to foster a community that's more informed, connected, and actively involved in supporting student success.

61. World Changers in Action: Embedding Student Leadership into a Comprehensive School Counseling Program

90-Minute

Tuesday

Time: 12:00PM - 1:30PM

Room: 203AB

Topic: Comprehensive School Counseling Program Design & Management, Social and Cultural Foundations in Counseling

Presenter(s): Carisa A. Brown

This session will highlight how Hanna Springs Elementary (HSE) -a two-time CREST Award-winning campus- integrates student leaders, the World

Changers, into their Comprehensive School Counseling Program (CSCP). Participants will explore how the World Changers model can be implemented to promote student empowerment, collaborative leadership from all levels while following the schoolwide SEL initiative and supporting the components of a CSCP that align with the Texas Model. Practical examples include student leadership roles, service projects, school-wide goals, peer-modeled behaviors, and data-driven reinforcement systems that amplify student voice campus-wide. Attendees will leave with replicable strategies, templates, and research-supported practices for effectively integrating student leaders into their own CSCP. The session provides evidence of impact on school culture, altruistic behavior, and academic engagement, offering a realistic and scalable approach for Texas counselors seeking to expand Tier 1 support through student leadership structures.

63. The Neuroscience of High-Risk Behavior: Implications for Prevention & School Treatment

90-Minute

Tuesday

Time: 12:00PM - 1:30PM

Room: 204AB

Topic: Responsive Services (Preventive, Remedial, and Crisis), Wellness and Prevention

Presenter(s): Crystal Collier

In this engaging session, Dr. Collier uses brain-science to illuminate why adolescents engage in high-risk behaviors and how school counselors and prevention specialists can intervene effectively. She explains how the developing brain—particularly the frontal lobe and executive-function networks—is vulnerable during the teenage years to the effects of substances, technology misuse, and other risky activities. Drawing on neurodevelopmental research, she shows how early initiation of risky behaviors can derail healthy brain maturation and set the stage for addiction and impaired decision-making. The presentation then translates this science into practical prevention and school-treatment strategies: building refusal-skills, executing family or school “brain-savvy” codes, harnessing executive-function growth, and implementing consistent prevention messaging in

classroom and counseling settings. Ultimately, participants leave equipped to make neuroscience an actionable foundation for prevention and treatment.