



The Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force is the voice of the community on issues related to the quality and responsiveness of mental health and substance abuse disorder services.

Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force 2022 Karen Avery Forum
— Awards Presentation —
In partnership with Milwaukee Turners Vel Phillips Forum

Empowering Families:
Peer and Community Mental Health Support for
Child Welfare Involved Parents and Families
Listening to the voices of lived experience at the intersection of
race, gender, mental health and child welfare

Tuesday, November 15, 2022 2 - 4:30 PM on Zoom
Register online at tinyurl.com/MHTFTurnersForum

This year's Karen Avery Forum is the first in a series of discussions on supporting parents and families for success in the Child Welfare system. In Wisconsin over 3000 children annually are removed from their parents' homes for alleged child neglect or abuse, in a process that may include foster care placement and termination of parental rights. Involvement in this process may be traumatic for parents and their children. It is particularly challenging when issues of mental health and racial and economic inequities affect subjective judgments of risk, safety and parental fitness. Our speakers will share other models that include peer support and a strength based approach to support parents and families.

OPENING SESSION:

Lifting up the Voice of Lived Experience: Peer Support and Empowerment

Rise is an organization that supports and works with impacted parents to shift conditions that harm families and build new collective care networks of peer support. Rise Magazine has been a leader nationally in supporting parents and families with peer support and with an emphasis on listening to the voices and the needs of parents with lived experience. Speakers from Rise will share their philosophy of peer support and empowerment.



Jeanette Vega Brown: Co-Executive Director for Leadership and Policy, RISE

Jeanette is a proud Puerto Rican mother of 4 awesome boys. She has been advocating for the past 17 years for family rights in NYC. She is a graduate of the Child Welfare Organizing Project, the first Parent Advocate to sit in child safety conferences and has also worked as a Parent Advocate at a foster care agency. Currently, Jeanette is Co-Executive Director for Leadership and Policy at RISE. Rise is an organization that supports and works with impacted parents to shift conditions that harm families and build new collective care networks of peer support. Her commitment is to continue uplifting parents' voices and power to make changes that support families' wellbeing.





Shakira Paige: Parent Peer Trainer

Shakira graduated from the Rise & Shine Parent Leadership Program and became a Rise Contributor in 2019. She became part of Rise’s Peer Vision Team in 2020, working to develop a report and model for peer and community care to support safe, thriving families and prevent involvement with the family policing system. Shakira became a Peer Trainer in 2021, and is now part of the parent-led team working to implement the peer and community care model. They are currently building the necessary infrastructure to begin training Peer Supporters.

PANEL DISCUSSION:

A Strength Based Approach: Involving the Court and Parents in Family Preservation

More and more judges who preside over child welfare matters are engaging with justice involved individuals in a more collaborative, therapeutic and problem-solving way. It is often career-defining for the judge and can be quite transformative for the individuals. It starts out as an understanding of human suffering and is always fueled by sheer perseverance and hope. Milwaukee’s Drug Treatment Specialty Court at Children’s Court has demonstrated the power of a holistic and collaborative approach, for parents whose addiction and mental health challenges may otherwise have led to permanent family separation. Meet a judge and two dynamic women who will tell their stories of that perseverance and hope.



Chief Judge Mary Triggiano

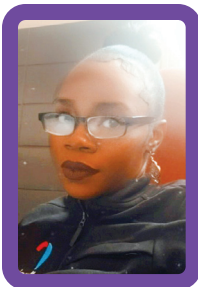
Chief Judge Mary Triggiano is a graduate of UW-Madison Law School and has been a Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge since August 1, 2004. She was first assigned to the Children’s Division from August 2004 to August 2009. She was next assigned to the Domestic Violence Court, handling adult misdemeanor and felony domestic abuse and child abuse cases. From August 2013 to August 2017, she was again assigned to the Children’s Court Division where she led the Family Drug Treatment Court. She was a Deputy Chief Judge for Chief Judge Maxine White for over four years. She is currently the

Chief Judge District 1 Milwaukee County. Judge Triggiano has co-presented on *The Impact of Childhood Trauma on Adult Health, Well-Being and Behavior* to more than 4000 individuals. In 2015, she co-chaired & presented at the Conference on Child Welfare and the Courts: *Moving Toward a Trauma-Informed Wisconsin*.



Robyn Ellis, Recovery Community Coordinator, Meta House

Robyn is a 2015 graduate of Family Drug Treatment court, Peer Support Specialist and Recovery Community Coordinator at Meta House. A recent graduate of UW-Milwaukee, she is currently studying for her master’s in Social Work.



Jonisha Neita, Parent Partner, Wellpoint

I am a mother of 7 children. I have 6 children alive, 1 deceased, and I gave one child up for adoption. Within that relationship we built and practice shared parenting. I have been through many obstacles being a child of the system and having my kids also in child welfare; (generational trauma). I feel that being a Parent Partner is my “Calling”. I believe that everything that I’ve been through has meaning. “Meaning” I like to refer to as seeds; with the seeds that have been planted within in myself I plan to plant in other parents that face some of the challenges I did. The seeds of empowerment, courage, and healthy resilience. I am a 2016 graduate of FDTC and Parent Partner for Wellpoint.





FORUM MODERATOR

Martina Gollin-Graves, MSW, APSW - President and CEO of Mental Health America of Wisconsin (MHA)

Martina has been with MHA for 17 years. Her career with MHA started as a home visitor and advocate for parents involved in the child welfare system and living with a mental illness. This experience fueled her efforts to become an advocate and voice for families with lived experience who were often discriminated against by the child protective system for their health condition. Her work is driven by MHA's commitment to promoting mental health as a critical part of overall wellness for individuals and families with a core belief that there is no health without mental health.

Presentation of the Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force 2022 Awards:



Karen Avery Award:

Annually recognizes an individual whose work and values align with the legacy of Karen Avery, who was an outstanding advocate, mentor, peer, friend, and leader in the fight for disability rights. As Associate Director of IndependenceFirst, she was a respected leader in the mental health consumer/survivor movement in Wisconsin and nationally, tirelessly advocating to advance the rights of people with mental illness and ensure a strong consumer voice. Karen was a leader in the Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force. She was generous in sharing the challenges of her own lived experience and recovery journey. After Karen's passing in 2013, the Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force established this award to honor her important and enduring legacy.

Marie C. Perry Rising Leader Award:

Inspired by the dedication of our inaugural recipient, this award honors Marie's memory and recognizes visionary leadership by an individual who is a rising and/or young leader in the Milwaukee area mental health community. Marie began demonstrating outstanding leadership to advance mental health and recovery values early in her own recovery. The Award recognizes the legacy of this young woman who was truly a visionary leader and gifted educator, making a daily impact in our community. Thank you to Marie's family for the generous endowment that funds the scholarship awarded to recipients of the Marie C. Perry Rising Leader Award.



Annual Membership Drive

The Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force annual membership drive is underway. Your membership will support our work as a positive force for systems change, cover a portion of staff costs to coordinate the task force, fund programmatic and communications expenses, and ensure our programs are open to all. We need your support to sustain our important work – please join or renew your membership. We welcome organizational memberships as well as individuals who want to support the task force.

Membership materials are posted at:

www.milwaukeeemhtf.org/2022/10/04/2022-2023-membership/

About Our Sponsors

Today's forum is hosted by the Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force in partnership with Milwaukee Turners. It is the first of several forums on this topic.

- To find out more about the Milwaukee Turners, visit www.milwaukeeturners.org.
- To find out more about the Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force, visit www.milwaukeeemhtf.org/. To be added to our email list, contact barbarab@drwi.org.

Accommodation Requests:

The forum will be captioned and ASL interpreters will be available. To request other disability related accommodations, email barbara.beckert@drwi.org as soon as possible. We will do our best to be responsive to all requests received.

Continuing Education

Certified Parent Peer Specialists and Certified Peer Specialists may receive 2.5 Continuing Education Hours for attending the entire training and submitting a completed evaluation.

All participants can request a Certificate of Participation for 2.5 hours by attending the entire training and submitting a completed evaluation.

