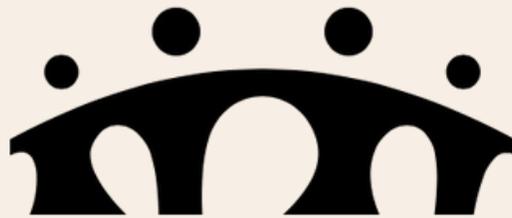




2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



BRIDGING THE GAP
BUILDING FUTURES

Thursday February 19, 2026

7:30AM-3:30PM

Arizona State University

West Valley Conference Center

4701 W Thunderbird Rd, Glendale, AZ 85306

6 CEUs will be provided for full attendance.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION
Now through January 19, 2026

SSWAAZ MEMBERS

\$160.00*

NON-MEMBER

\$200.00* Includes SSWAAZ Membership through August 31, 2026

STUDENT

\$65.00* Includes SSWAAZ Membership through August 31, 2026

PLEASE NOTE THAT PURCHASE ORDERS AND PAYMENTS RECEIVED AFTER 5:00 PM ON JANUARY 19TH WILL BE SUBJECT TO THE CONFERENCE RATES BELOW.

SSWAAZ MEMBERS

\$200

NON-MEMBER

\$240 (Includes SSWAAZ Membership through August 31, 2026).

STUDENTS

\$85 (Includes SSWAAZ Membership through August 31, 2026).

REGISTER HERE!



CONFERENCE REGISTRATION & CANCELLATION POLICIES

Conference registration and payment will be processed on our website. Conference registration fees can be paid by Purchase Order, Check, or by Credit/Debit Card.

Conference registration will close **February 12, 2026 at 5:00 PM** and all Purchase Orders **must** be received by the close of registration. **No exceptions will be made.** Please send Purchase Orders to sswaazboard@gmail.com.

All cancelations and refund requests must be submitted in writing to sswaazboard@gmail.com no later than February 12th, 2026.

No refunds will be given after February 12, 2026. Please note that refund payments will be for the amount paid minus PayPal fees.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Adrienne Udarbe



Adrienne Udarbe, MS, RDN is the Executive Director of Pinnacle Prevention, an Arizona-based nonprofit dedicated to cultivating a just food system and opportunities for joyful movement. In this role she leads innovative efforts to support Arizona's collective wellbeing through policy, advocacy, research, and community programming. Adrienne is a Registered Dietitian and shares more than two decades of experience in public health and public sector systems with a focus on justice, access, and community engagement to support community wellbeing for all. Adrienne is a passionate advocate inspired by good causes, good people, and good food!

Bridging Gaps Through Connection While Delighting in Difference

This session will offer a perspective on the power of connection to bridge gaps. We will explore what gets in the way of supportive and collaborative relationships and why it matters to be curious and delight in difference so that we all can thrive together.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

7:30am - 8:15am Registration and Exhibitors

8:15am - 9:00am Welcome, Breakfast & Awards Presentation

9:00am - 10:15am Keynote presentation

10:15 - 10:30am *Break + Exhibitor Hall*

10:30am - 11:45am Morning Breakout Sessions

11:45pm - 12:30pm *Lunch and Exhibitor Hall*

12:30pm - 1:45pm Midday Breakout Sessions

1:45pm - 2:00pm *Break*

2:00pm - 3:15pm Afternoon Breakout Sessions

3:15pm - 3:30pm Closing Remarks and Evaluations

Closing remarks and evaluations will take place in the afternoon breakout session rooms. Please remain in your final breakout room at the conclusion of the afternoon session.

7:30am - 3:30pm Wellness Room

The Wellness Room will be available to conference attendees throughout the day. This designated quiet space offers guests the opportunity to take a moment away from the event to regulate and recharge as needed.

NETWORKING AND CONNECTIONS

An opportunity for participants to connect with one another, community resources, future school social workers and to reconnect with themselves.

EXHIBITOR HALL

Community agencies and organizations will table in the foyer to connect with conference participants and to share information about their programs and/or services.

NETWORKING

Spend time meeting and connecting with other conference guests informally in the 'Devil's Den.'

WELLNESS ROOM

A quiet space for conference participants to pause, and reconnect with themselves throughout the day.



CONFERENCE SESSIONS

MORNING SESSIONS 10:30AM - 11:45PM

1A: Cultural Responsivity: Empowering and Supporting Native American Students

ELAINE MOLLINDO / SOPHIA BEGODY

ADE OFFICE OF INDIAN EDUCATION

BEGINNER LEVEL

Participants will discover how Hammond's Culture Tree can foster a more responsive environment for Native American students and learning communities. They will gain a deeper understanding of the unique history, traditions, and family dynamics within Native American populations. Participants will also engage in thought-provoking discussions and hands-on activities that will help them apply cultural responsivity principles in real-world scenarios. This workshop is highly interactive and offers tools and knowledge to make a positive impact on the lives of Native American students and all students in Arizona schools.

1B: Creating Intentional Spaces of Safety

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

LESLIE ANWAY, PSY.D NCSP

DIRECTOR OF RESILIENT SCHOOLS - PIMA COUNTY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

What if the key to showing up fully in your work and life isn't about doing more- but about finally feeling safe enough to be yourself? Join me for a transformative session that will change how you understand your own nervous system, inner landscape, and untapped potential. Drawing from the groundbreaking book "Transform! The Felt Safety Toolkit: What Happens When You Finally Feel Safe Enough To Show Up", this interactive experience will guide you through a powerful journey of self-discovery. This session offers a practical toolkit to help you lead with authenticity, reconnect with yourself, and grow beyond burnout- revealing what's possible when safety meets courage.

1C: Bridging Systems, Amplifying Voices: Power and Equity in Schools

JACQUALINE PIERCE, LCSW

HEALING WITH ME PLLC

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

As a school social worker, you're at the center of complex systems- balancing the needs of students, families, teachers, and administrators. How you position your power can either maintain the status quo or drive meaningful change. Through case vignettes, reflective exercises, and role-play, participants will explore common challenges, including ethical dilemmas, confidentiality, and collaboration with staff. You'll gain practical strategies to strengthen partnerships, advocate effectively, and enhance student well-being. Walk away with tools to step confidently into the role of bridge builder, using your expertise and influence intentionally to create lasting impact for students, families, and school communities.

1D: School-Based Applications for Internal Family Systems Therapy (IFS)

BEN CLARK, LCSW / TIFFANY MCCALL, LMSW

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

ADVANCED LEVEL

Internal Family Systems (IFS) is an evidence-based therapy that has been used to treat trauma, depression, substance use, and other mental health disorders. It has been used in a variety of settings with many different client populations. This session will provide a basic foundational understanding of key concepts in IFS and practical strategies for applying IFS concepts with students.

CONFERENCE SESSIONS

MID-DAY SESSIONS 12:30PM - 1:45PM

2A: DBT Skills for School-Based Professionals

*NICOLETTA ALFARO, LPC / TAEOR EMMERT, LPC / SAMANTHA BAILEY, LPC
THE HEALING HOUSE*

BEGINNER LEVEL

Through an interactive presentation, participants will learn how to understand, apply, and integrate the core DBT skill modules into their work to support students' social-emotional development and enhance their own professional well-being and stress management.

2B: Healing Across Generations: Bridging Indigenous Knowledge and Contemporary Trauma Science in Schools

CASANDRA STOUDER

INDIGENOUS WELLNESS CONSULTANT & COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT SPECIALIST

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

This workshop establishes nurturing frameworks instead of maintaining dysfunctional patterns. Physical beings embody collective narratives that influence educational interactions. Transcending superficial interventions, staff will understand how historical trauma affects learner growth. We'll navigate four shame transformation elements: recognizing vulnerabilities, deepening awareness, cultivating community, and designing authentic expression environments. Attendees will acquire strategies for genuine youth engagement, culturally-attuned emergency responses, and enduring support structures that unite traditional knowledge with contemporary research-backed methodologies.

2C: EMBODIED RESILIENCE: YOGA AND TRAUMA-INFORMED STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

KATHLEEN MCKEEVER, INDEPENDENT CERTIFIED YOGA INSTRUCTOR /

KATHLEEN M. LEONARD, LCSW - RETIRED SSW - FULLTIME FACULTY GCU, BSW PROGRAM

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

This experiential session equips school social workers with trauma-informed, yoga-based strategies to support both personal well-being and student engagement. Co-led by a certified yoga instructor and a licensed clinical social worker and educator, the session blends theory, practice, and reflection. Participants will explore how breathwork, movement, and mindfulness can be ethically and inclusively adapted for diverse school populations, including students with IEPs, trauma histories, and behavioral challenges. Lastly, addressing burnout and secondary trauma among practitioners. .

2D: Art Heals: Express. Release. Restore.

JAXINTA SCJAFFER., LCSW, CERTIFIED SSW /

CARL HAYDEN COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL - PHOENIX UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADVANCED LEVEL

Art Heals is an interactive workshop that invites participants to explore art as a tool for emotional expression, stress reduction, and community connection. Grounded in trauma-informed and person-centered practices, this session provides a safe and inclusive space to create without judgment. Participants will engage in hands-on art activities—such as painting, collage, and the creation of small Nicho boxes—that encourage reflection, mindfulness, and self-discovery. Through creative exploration, attendees will experience how art supports mental wellness by offering nonverbal ways to process emotions and restore balance. The workshop models how educators, social workers, and librarians can integrate art-based practices into classrooms or community spaces to foster belonging and connection. No art experience is needed—just an open mind and willingness to create.

CONFERENCE SESSIONS

AFTERNOON SESSIONS 2:30PM - 3:15PM

3A: Special Education: What is the Role of the School Social Worker?

EMILY PHARES, LMSW

BEGINNER LEVEL

CHANDLER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

This workshop will explore the recommendations of national and local agencies for providing Social Work as a Special Education related service. It will include exploring what this looks like at the district (macro) and site (micro) level and make connections with other specialized services that Social Workers can provide (including health plans, safety plans, 504s, etc.). Participant discussion will include what different districts currently do to support identified students across regions throughout Arizona. Recommendations will be shared for potential opportunities to embed School Social Workers into Special Education to help make the role indispensable for schools.

3B: Your Role in Strengthening Families to Prevent Child Adversity

CLAIRE LOUGE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

PREVENT CHILD ABUSE ARIZONA

Through the 'Your Role in Strengthening Families to Prevent Child Adversity' Training designed by Prevent Child Abuse Arizona, participants will examine how they can protect children from adversity by examining their own assumptions and connecting families to what they need, when they need it, shifting their lens from focusing solely on their role as mandated reporters, to one in which they consider themselves community supporters. The strategies and techniques explored are rooted in the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework, an approach that recognizes when families have access to the supports needed to deal with life's stressors, children thrive.

3C: Better CICO (Check In/Check Out) Begins with Better Conversations

DR. TIM GRIVOIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

TGS EDUCATIONAL CONSULTING

Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) is more than a Tier 2 intervention—it's a relational practice rooted in meaningful conversation. This session invites school social workers to rethink CICO as a connection-building tool, not a compliance routine. We'll explore how to design systems that align with school rhythms, reduce staff burden, and foster authentic student engagement. Participants will learn to guide students in setting purposeful goals during check-in and offering values-based feedback during check-out, even on tough days. Through real school stories, we'll highlight how CICO can become a daily opportunity to listen, affirm, and support students in becoming their best selves.

3D: Root It Out: Preventing Violence Through Peer Accountability and Skill Development

JOSHUA BLACK, LMSW- BLOOM365/

ADVANCED LEVEL

TARINDA CRAGLOW, LCSW- OMBUDSMAN CHARTER SCHOOL

Ready for a prevention model that reaches high-risk students? This workshop introduces Root It Out, a BLOOM365 initiative targeting the root causes of violence- unaddressed trauma and harmful social norms. Move beyond generic education with a trauma-informed, accountability-driven approach. Learn our five-step framework (Educate, Advocate, Activate, Intervene, Train) and gain practical tools for intervention. Participants can pilot the peer accountability curriculum designed for students at risk of harming others. Hear firsthand from Ombudsman Charter Schools and youth who've transformed through this program. Leave equipped with evidence-informed strategies and adaptable materials to boost school safety and support.

ADDITIONAL CONFERENCE INFORMATION

SSWAAZ AWARDS

Each year, the School Social Work Association of Arizona recognizes the commitments of leaders and accomplishments of school social workers and educators throughout the state. Awards are given in the categories of ***School Social Worker of the Year***, ***Lifetime Achievement in School Social Work***, and ***Public Educator of the Year***. To learn more about the awards or to nominate an outstanding colleague in any of these areas, please fill out the nomination form below. Nominations are due by December 12, 2025, at 5:00 pm. Awards will be presented at the annual Conference on February 19, 2026.

AWARD NOMINATION FORM

PARKING - ASU West

Available in the **South Zone** (Lots 1, 2, 3, and 20).

HOTELS

The following hotels are located near the venue. SSWAAZ does not endorse any specific location. The following list is provided as reference.

- Extended Stay America - Phoenix / Peoria
- Hampton Inn - Phoenix/ Glendale / Peoria
- Residence Inn by Marriott - Phoenix / Glendale / Peoria
- SpringHill Suites by Marriott - Phoenix / Glendale/ Peoria

MEALS

Breakfast and lunch are included in your registration fee. If you have any allergies or dietary restrictions, please reach out no later than February 9th, 2026.

SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS

If you have any special ADA accommodations, please reach out to our SSWAAZ President at sswaazboard@gmail.com



SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK ASSOCIATION OF ARIZONA

For questions regarding our event, please email us at
sswaazboard@gmail.com

PO BOX

12232
Chandler, AZ 85248

www.sswaaz.org



SSWAAZ



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