



## ***Social Work and Religious Diversity: Faith-Based Perspectives on Trauma and Healing***

A continuing education conference for social workers and their colleagues, developed by the Interfaith Center of New York, in partnership with the Jewish Board, and the Psychotherapy and Spirituality Institute.

**May 15, 2019 • 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY**

*The Interfaith Center of New York is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Work as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed social workers, #SW-0163.*

*This conference offers **7 contact hours of continuing education** for New York State LMSWs and LCSWs.*

## **8:30 - 9:00**                      **Welcome and Registration**

*Please plan to arrive by 8:45, as the conference will start promptly at 9:00. Coffee, tea, and snacks will be available for conference participants.*

## **9:00 - 12:00**                      **Spiritual Dimensions of Trauma, Ritual Practices for Healing**

*In recent years, a growing number of social service and mental health care providers have worked to understand and address the life-long impacts of trauma. In path-breaking research on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), in the struggles of domestic violence and sexual assault survivors, in the epidemic of gun violence afflicting communities throughout the United States, in the experiences of New Yorkers and others during and after 9/11, in the harrowing journeys of refugees fleeing conflict zones throughout the world – in these and many other contexts, we are coming to terms with the profound effects of trauma on both individuals and communities.*

*In addition to its social, psychological, and physical effects, trauma may have far-reaching spiritual or religious consequences. An individual's faith may be shattered by trauma, or enriched by post-traumatic growth. More broadly, our diverse faith traditions offer a number of powerful resources – in their narratives, practices, and institutions – to support healing in the wake of trauma. Different faith communities may understand and respond to trauma in different ways, but at their best they can all help to make broken people whole.*

*We will explore these issues in dialogue with Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, and Ifa - Orisha faith leaders and clinicians. Each speaker will reflect on their tradition's distinctive understandings of trauma, then lead a spiritually-grounded healing practice. Each dialogue will be followed by questions and conversation with conference participants. Our first two speakers will be:*

- ❖ **Rev. Dr. Serene Jones**, President of Union Theological Seminary, Johnston Family Professor for Religion and Democracy, and author of *Trauma and Grace: Theology in a Ruptured World*
- ❖ **Dr. Pilar Jennings**, Psychoanalyst in Private Practice, Buddhist Teacher, and author of *To Heal a Wounded Heart: The Transformative Power of Buddhism and Psychotherapy in Action*

*Following a brief break, our second two speakers will be:*

- ❖ **Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW**, Rabbinic Director of The Jewish Board, Psychotherapist in Private Practice, Editor of *Healing of Soul, Healing of Body*, and Author of *Guide Me Along the Way: A Jewish Spiritual Companion for Surgery*
- ❖ **Iyanifa Rev. DeShannon Barnes-Bowens, MS**, Founder of ILERA Counseling and Education Services, Assistant Director of the OneSpirit Interfaith Seminary, Ifa Priest, and author of *Hush Hush: An African American Family Breaks their Silence on Sexuality & Sexual Abuse*

## **12:00 - 1:00**                      **Lunch – No Formal Program, Just Quality Time with Colleagues**

*A catered lunch will be available for all conference participants, including vegetarian, kosher, and other options.*

## **1:00 - 2:40**                    **Trauma and Healing throughout Social Work Practice**

*The effects of trauma may be felt in every aspect of life – impacting individuals, communities, and American society as a whole. Trauma is therefore an essential topic in every area of social work practice. This panel discussion with religiously diverse educators, clinicians, and service providers will explore the impact of trauma on a number of populations, including: communities responding to natural disasters and terrorist attacks, young people shaped by childhood experiences of abuse, survivors of domestic violence, and victims of hate-crimes motivated by racial or religious bigotry. What are the similarities and differences among these experiences of trauma? How can social workers partner with faith leaders and others to support healing in settings like these? Our speakers will be:*

- ❖ **Peter Gudaitis, MDiv**, Executive Director of New York Disaster Interfaith Services, and President of the National Disaster Interfaiths Network
- ❖ **Dr. Carol Mills Kamara, DMin, LCSW**, Psychotherapist at Graham Windham and Paki Chireah & Associates, and Founder and Executive Director of Reaching out to Children with Kindness
- ❖ **Robina Niaz, MS, MSW**, Founder and Executive Director of Turning Point for Women and Families
- ❖ **Dr. Prabhjot Singh**, Director of the Arnhold Institute for Global Health, and Chair of the Department of Health System Design and Global Health, at the Mount Sinai Health System

## **2:40 - 2:50**                    **Coffee/Snack Break**

## **2:50 - 3:50**                    **Bodily Healing through Trauma-Sensitive Yoga**

*The effects of trauma linger in the body – disrupting a survivor’s sense of safety in their physical self, their most intimate bonds with family and friends, and their engagement with the sensory world. Bodily, somatic therapies like yoga can be an essential tool in healing from trauma, but they must be provided in a trauma-sensitive manner, and in an environment designed to safely allow clients to befriend their bodies again. This workshop will help providers navigate these complex issues, through an introduction to trauma-sensitive yoga. It will speak to social workers in all practice areas, whether or not they are planning to integrate yoga into their work. The workshop does not require any previous experience with yoga, but it will invite hands-on participation. Our speaker/trainer will be:*

- ❖ **Sarah Ward, LCSW, MDiv, CYT**, Psychotherapist and Yoga Therapist, in Private Practice at Whole Being Therapy and the Psychotherapy and Spirituality Institute

## **3:50 - 4:00**                    **Coffee/Snack Break**

## **4:00 - 5:00**                    **Closing Discussion, Reflection, and Evaluations**

*Following a brief presentation by a leading social work educator, participants will reflect on the key points of the conference in small group conversations and a facilitated town-hall discussion. What, we will ask, have we learned from today’s speakers, and from each other? What can we take back to our practice? The conversation will be framed and facilitated by:*

- ❖ **Dr. Mary Ragan, LCSW**, Executive Director of the Psychotherapy and Spirituality Institute, and Former Adjunct Professor at Columbia University School of Social Work

## ***Important Details to Keep in Mind***

**Bathrooms** are in the basement – down the escalator behind the reception desk in the lobby, then to your left.

**Wifi is available.** The network is *guest@interchurch*, user name is *TICGUEST*, and the password is *guest475*

Our conversations today will touch on difficult issues surrounding trauma, and some of our speakers will lead experiential exercises to encourage personal reflection on these issues. **If you need a brief break** from this emotionally charged program, the Interchurch Center Chapel (on the north side of the lobby) is open to all for quiet reflection. If you would prefer a more private, or non-Christian, space for reflection, the Robing Room (at the north-east corner of the lobby) is open to conference participants.

The Robing Room (at the north-east corner of the lobby) is also available for Muslim participants, or others, to perform **daily prayers**.

If you've ordered a **strictly kosher lunch**, please see ICNY staff at the registration desk at the beginning of the lunch break.

Please take a moment to fill out your **conference evaluation form** after each session. You will need to submit this form in order to receive a certificate of completion at the end of the day.

**Credit-bearing certificates of completion** will be available to pick up at the conclusion of the conference, at 5 pm, and not before (as per New York State Education Department regulations).

Don't forget to check out the **resource table**, to learn more about your colleagues' amazing work.

A **photographer** will be documenting the conference. These photos may be used in Interfaith Center program materials, including social media platforms. Please let the photographer know if you would rather not have your picture taken.

If you tweet any of your own photos or reflections on the conference, please tag **@ICNY**.



## ***Social Work and Religious Diversity: Faith-Based Perspectives on Trauma and Healing***

### **Speakers Biographies**

#### **Buddhist-Christian Dialogue on Spiritual Dimensions of Trauma**

**Dr. Pilar Jennings** is a psychoanalyst in private practice based in New York City with a focus on the clinical applications of Buddhist meditation. She received her Ph.D. in Psychiatry and Religion from Union Theological Seminary, and did prior graduate work in medical anthropology at Columbia University. She has been working with patients and their families through the Harlem Family Institute since 2004. Dr. Jennings is a Visiting Lecturer at Union Theological Seminary; Columbia University; and a Faculty Member of the Nalanda Institute for Contemplative Science. She is also a facilitator of a Columbia University Faculty Seminar addressing topics related to slavery and memory, with a focus on the inter-generational transmission of trauma. She has given workshops and retreats internationally on the Buddhist and psychoanalytic approach to trauma, the relevance of spirituality in clinicians, and the unfolding conversation between Buddhist and developmental psychology. Her most recent book, *To Heal a Wounded Heart: On the Transformative Power of Buddhism & Psychotherapy in Action*, is a psychoanalytic memoir exploring her collaboration with a Tibetan Buddhist monk in the treatment of a young girl traumatized by loss. Her other publications have included "East of Ego: The Intersection of Narcissism and Buddhist Meditation Practice," "I've Been Waiting for You: Reflections on Analytic Pain," "Imagery and Trauma: The Psyche's Push for Healing," and *Mixing Minds: The Power of Relationship in Psychoanalysis and Buddhism*. Dr. Jennings is a long-term practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism in the Sakya lineage and student of Khenpo Pema Wangdak, founder and guiding teacher of the Vikramasila Foundation. Her upcoming retreats at the Garrison Institute and Omega Institute will address the *Upaya*, or skillful means in response to trauma and psycho-spiritual efforts at healing.

**Rev. Dr. Serene Jones** is the President of Union Theological Seminary, and a highly respected scholar, theologian, and public intellectual. The first woman to head the 182-year-old institution, Jones holds the Johnston Family Chair for Religion and Democracy. She is also a past president of the American Academy of Religion, which annually hosts the world's largest gathering of scholars of religion. Jones came to Union after seventeen years at Yale University,

where she was the Titus Street Professor of Theology at the Divinity School, and Chair of the University's Program in Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies. She is the author of several books including the influential *Trauma and Grace*, which places academic and clinical work on trauma in dialogue with Christian theologies of hope, love, and grace, and a forthcoming memoir *Call It Grace: Finding Meaning in a Fractured World*. Jones is a popular public speaker, and is often sought by journalists to comment on major issues impacting society because of her deep grounding in theology, politics, women's studies, economics, race studies, history, and ethics. For example, you may have read her recent (April 20, 2019) reflections on Easter and the Gospel message in the *New York Times*.

## **Ifa-Jewish Dialogue on Spiritual Dimensions of Trauma**

**Rev. DeShannon Barnes-Bowens, MS** (Iyanifa Iwalewa Ifasalewa Fasina), is the founder of ILERA Counseling and Education Services, and works as a psychotherapist, professional development trainer, and spiritual counselor. Through ILERA, she offers workshops and programs focusing on: sexuality and spirituality, sexual abuse, vicarious trauma and wellness. Iya DeShannon received a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of Missouri - St. Louis, and a Master's degree in Counseling from Pace University. She has practiced the Orisa-Ifa spiritual tradition for over 18 years and is an initiated priestess. Iya DeShannon is also an ordained Interfaith-Interspiritual Minister through One Spirit Interfaith Seminary. She served as a first year dean for three years before becoming Assistant Director of the seminary program. This fall she will begin serving as Co-Director. Iya DeShannon is the author of *Hush Hush: An African American Family Breaks their Silence on Sexuality and Sexual Abuse* (2007, 2015). The second edition of her book inspired a full length play of the same title, as well as an arts education program called *Hush Hush the Healing Project*. She is also a member of CONNECT Faith's Ending Child Sexual Abuse Collaborative and coordinated their Safe Faith Community Project to help religious communities in New York City prevent sexual abuse. Iya DeShannon is the first recipient of the Bill T. Jones Award from the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists (AASECT), an Emeritus Scholar for State of Formation and was published in the Journal of Interreligious Studies 23<sup>rd</sup> issue, *The Color of God*. Some presentations of her work have taken place at the national and eastern regional conferences of the American Academy of Religion, Harvard University, The Children's Aid Society, Washington University, New York Theological Seminary, University of Connecticut, Union Theological Seminary, Interfaith Center of New York and the Values Caucus of the United Nations. For more information about Iya DeShannon and her work visit [www.ilera.com](http://www.ilera.com).

**Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW**, serves as Rabbinic Director of the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services. Rabbi Weintraub designs and leads workshops on Jewish spiritual resources for living with illness, caregiving, loss, and trauma; develops training seminars for rabbis and health care professionals; creates innovative Jewish healing rituals; and has written and lectured widely on the use of traditional texts and practices for Jewish spiritual healing. Rabbi Weintraub was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1982, earned a Master's

Degree in Clinical Social Work from Columbia University in 1983, and graduated from the Couples and Family Therapy Program of the Postgraduate Center for Mental Health in New York in 1988. He is an Adjunct Lecturer in Pastoral Skills at JTS, teaching courses related to Jewish healing, spiritual caregiving, loss and bereavement, and behavioral health. He helped to design and teaches in the Post-Master's Certificate Program in Spirituality and Social Work at NYU's Silver School of Social Work. Among other publications, he is the author or editor of *Healing of Soul, Healing of Body, Finding Spiritual Strength in Pain or Illness: Reaching In, Reaching Out, Reaching Up*, and *Guide Me Along the Way: A Jewish Spiritual Companion for Surgery*. In addition to his writing, teaching, and work at JBFCs, Simkha maintains a private practice in couples and family therapy in New York City, working with couples and families confronting a wide range of issues, including chronic illness, infertility, interfaith concerns, and more. His passions include the nexus of spirituality and mental health, cross-disciplinary innovation, interfaith exchange and intergroup dialogue, and human rights – indeed, he will be honored this month as a co-founder of T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights.

## **Trauma and Healing throughout Social Work Practice**

**Peter Gudaitis, MDiv**, is the Executive Director of New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS), and President of the National Disaster Interfaiths Network. NYDIS is a federation of service providers, charitable organizations, and faith communities providing disaster readiness, response, and recovery services for New York City. Peter has had over 30 years of experience as a practitioner and instructor in chaplaincy, crisis leadership, disaster and emergency management, long-term recovery, faith-based philanthropy, and disaster human services – including, early in his career, a decade in Emergency Medical Services. He is a subject matter expert in disaster spiritual care, interfaith coalition building, long-term recovery, and religious literacy and competency in crisis settings. He holds a Master of Divinity degree from the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church and a BA from Kenyon College. In addition to his work at NYDIS, he serves on many local and national boards and committees in a variety of capacities, including as Co-Chair of the NYC Faith Sector Community Preparedness Program Advisory Board of the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene.

**Dr. Carol Mills Kamara, DMin, LCSW**, is a psychotherapist at Graham Windham, and in private practice with Paki Chireah and Associates, where she works with clients on a range of developmental and situational issues, primarily related to attachment and trauma, post-traumatic stress, collaborative problem solving, conflict resolution, and effective parenting. She earned her MSW at the Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service, where her clinical skills were developed and her concern for social justice was awakened. She has also had specialized training in Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Trauma System Therapy. In addition to her clinical work, she is the Founder and Executive Director of Reaching out to Children with Kindness (ROCK), a nonprofit organization that helps children and teens affected by poverty and violence, and coauthor of *Breaking Point: A Journey to Self-Awareness and Finding Purpose in Pain*, which follows a path from trauma to healing. In her DMin

dissertation, *Do No Harm*, Dr. Kamara worked to develop and evaluate trauma ministries at predominantly African-American and Caribbean-American 7th Day churches in Brooklyn and the Bronx.

**Robina Niaz, MS, MSW**, is the Founder and Executive Director of Turning Point for Women and Families, the first nonprofit organization to address domestic violence in New York City's Muslim community. Robina worked with various nonprofit organizations for over 12 years before founding Turning Point in 2004, and has served on numerous boards including Queens Women's Network, SAKHI, the Coalition of Battered Women's Advocates, the Muslim Community Network, the Field Education Advisory Board of Adelphi University's School of Social Work, and the Social Work Advisory Council at Medgar Evers College. A social worker, activist, and fierce advocate for Muslim women's rights, Robina has spoken extensively against domestic violence locally, nationally, and internationally. She has received numerous honors and awards, was named a CNN Hero and One of 500 Most Influential Muslims in 2009. She received the Joan H. Tisch Public Health Prize by the Roosevelt House at Hunter College (2013), and a Public Service Award (2015) from the Queens General Hospital. In 2017, Robina was named one of 21 "Movement Makers" by the NoVo Foundation. She currently serves as a Commissioner on NYC's Commission on Gender Equity and as a board member of International Human Rights Art Festival.

**Dr. Prabhjot Singh** is Director of the Arnhold Institute for Global Health, and Chair of the Department of Health System Design and Global Health at the Mount Sinai Health System, where he directs a team that designs and tests improvements to the health care system with the potential to scale both nationally and abroad, in partnership with the communities they serve. He is the author of *Dying and Living in the Neighborhood: A Street-Level View of America's Healthcare Promise*. Like far too many Sikh New Yorkers, Dr. Singh has experienced hate crimes motivated by religious bigotry first-hand, including a widely publicized attack in September 2013. Following these experiences, he has explored the ways in which trauma-informed care guidelines developed in other settings apply to people who have experienced hate crimes.

## **Bodily Healing through Trauma-Sensitive Yoga**

**Sarah Ward, LCSW, MDiv, CYT**, is a licensed psychotherapist and yoga therapist, with a lifelong passion for yoga and mindfulness practices. Through professional experience, diverse trainings, and evidence-based research, Sarah has found that integrating physical and spiritual practices into psychotherapy can help to achieve a more complete state of well-being than talk therapy alone. Sarah uses an individualized combination of traditional talk therapies, embodied therapies such as body awareness and therapeutic yoga, and spiritual practices such as mindfulness and self-compassion to help you create a deeper connection to your authentic self and develop tools to overcome obstacles to whole being wellness. Sarah received a degree in Advanced Clinical Practice from Columbia University and a Masters of Divinity degree from



Union Theological Seminary, where her work focused on the intersection of psychology and spirituality. Sarah received certification as a yoga instructor from the Integral Yoga Institute, one of the oldest ashrams in the United States, and in trauma sensitive yoga from the Trauma Center in Boston and Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health. She has been teaching yoga and therapeutic yoga since 2000, and practicing holistic psychotherapy in a variety of settings including community mental health clinics and universities since 2009. Sarah specializes in treating anxiety disorders, depression and identity questions, and trauma – particularly sexual assault survivors and adult survivors of childhood abuse.

## Closing Reflection

**Dr. Mary Ragan, LCSW**, is the Executive Director of the Psychotherapy and Spirituality Institute, and maintains a clinical practice at PSI's Trinity Church Wall Street site. Her research explores the contours of traumatic grief, its differences from general bereavement, and the clinical interventions that proved most effective. This research informed her own trauma work with first-responders and family members after 9/11, and with survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. She is also a volunteer therapist for Give An Hour, an organization that provides pro bono therapy for returning veterans. She recently concluded ten years as an Adjunct Professor at the Columbia University School of Social Work, where she regularly taught a course on "Spirituality and Social Work." In addition to her work as a clinician, administrator, and educator, Dr. Ragan has served as a consultant to a wide range of faith-based and secular organizations.

## Moderator

**Dr. Henry Goldschmidt** is a cultural anthropologist, community educator, interfaith organizer, and scholar of religious diversity. He is currently the Director of Programs at the Interfaith Center of New York, where he develops interfaith dialogue, social action, and diversity education programs for a range of audiences, including religious and civic leaders, K-12 teachers and students, social workers, and others. Henry received his Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of California at Santa Cruz in 2000, and taught religious studies and anthropology at Wesleyan University and elsewhere before coming to the Interfaith Center in 2010. Among other publications, he is the author of *Race and Religion among the Chosen Peoples of Crown Heights* and the co-editor of *Race, Nation, and Religion in the Americas*. He is a life-long, fanatic New Yorker, and lives in Brooklyn with his wife and two children.