



**NC STRIVE Western Conference
Blue Ridge Community College
Conference Center
180 Campus Drive
April 9, 2019**

Planning Committee Members:

- Briana Ford, Western Carolina University
- Jessica Rice, ABBCM
- Donna Turner, Blue Ridge Community College
- Pat McKinsy, VA Medical Hospital in Asheville
- Rick Starkweather, Helios Warriors
- Judith Harris, Mars Hill University
- Nicole Kimball, 211th National Guard Unit

Sponsors:



The cost of freedom is always high, but Americans have always paid it. And one path we shall never choose, and that is the path of surrender, or submission. –John F. Kennedy

NC STRIVE is supported in part by the US Department of Veterans Affairs and block grant funding from the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration through the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services, NC Department of Health and Human Services.



Speaker Bios

Jesse Bennett, MSW, Statewide Overdose Prevention Coordinator, Raleigh, NC, is a former drug user and a formerly incarcerated person. He works as the statewide overdose prevention coordinator, an outreach worker and the statewide volunteer coordinator for the North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition and, as such, he participates in and advocates for harm reduction efforts in the community. These efforts include but are not limited to access to clean syringes, access to naloxone, safer drug use, and safe sex practices. Jesse operates the syringe access programs in Wake and Johnston counties. Jesse's practice focus is in harm reduction therapy.

Robert Donnellan, Lecturer, Western Carolina University, served for three years in the US Army and three years in the Michigan Army National Guard. He earned a BA in Sociology/ Anthropology from UNC Asheville before going on to earn his MA in English at Western Carolina University, where he currently serves as a Lecturer in the Writing, Rhetoric, and Critical Studies program. Robert helped develop and teaches a transition course for military students, the first of its kind at WCU. He is also the faculty advisor for the WCU Student Veteran Association.

Briana Ford, Director, Western Carolina University Military Student Services, has been the Director of Military Student Services at Western Carolina University since 2013. She has been with WCU since 2007 in various positions. Briana has a Bachelor's of Science in Psychology and a Bachelor's of Arts in English. She is currently working on a Master's of Project Management degree. Briana is also an honorary member of the WCU Student Veteran Association, a graduate of Leadership Asheville (33), and the Chair of the WCU Military Advisory Committee. She has been a board member of the Western NC Veterans Council since 2014 and was recently appointed as co-chair. She has also been the co-chair of the planning committee for NC Strive Western Region since 2016. She is currently president of the Southeastern Council on Military Education. Briana also serves on the UNC System special committee on Military Affairs. Briana has had a connection with the military most of her life. She has been a military dependent (Army), a military spouse (Marines), and now a military parent (Air Force).

Michelle Geiser, Prevention Specialist and Project Coordinator, HopeRX Michelle works with Substance Misuse and Trauma in order to prevent the onset and reduce the progression of substance abuse and substance abuse-related problems. Michelle believes in supporting students and individuals through strengthening prevention infrastructure at the community level. Educators have the ability to initiate change in their students. Michelle has been trained in substance misuse and mental health prevention, psychological first aid, and traumatology. Michelle holds a Master's in Education from Liberty University and is a Doctoral Candidate in Community Traumatology.

George Lindenfeld, Ph.D. is a Diplomate in Clinical Psychology and founder of the RESET Therapy Professional Institute in Sarasota, FL. The institute is dedicated to the permanent healing of emotional trauma. He served in the Navy Seabees prior to attaining his doctorate in Child and Developmental Psychology at Utah State University in 1971. He completed his Residency in Medical Psychology at the University of Oregon Medical School in 1971. He has been certified in EEG Biofeedback by BCIA and the Academy of Certified Neurotherapists. George has served as Director of the Inpatient Psychiatric Unit at the Geisinger Medical Center, in Danville PA, Executive Director at the CMHC Center for Human Development in Grand Forks, ND, and Seminole County Mental Health Center in Altamonte Springs, FL. As part of his practice working with veterans, he has monitored ongoing memory research and pursued the application of the non-invasive potential of neuro-acoustical intervention. This has led to the development of RESET Therapy, which has demonstrated rapid and enduring remission of the emotional aspects of PTSD.

Amy Prokopowicz, National Certified Counselor, Licensed Professional Counselor, Licensed Clinical Addictions Specialist, Master Addictions Counselor NC Problem Gambling Program State Administrator MH, DD, SAS NC Department of Health and Human Services, serves as the Program Administrator for North Carolina Problem Gambling. Prior to her current position with NCPG, she worked as a problem gambling treatment provider for eight years. She was awarded a provider scholarship to attend NCFADS summer school in 2012, 2013, and 2018 and received a scholarship to attend the 2014 National Center for Responsible Gaming Annual Conference. She is an approved presenter by NCSAPPB for an educational training she developed, Wheel of Misfortune: Problem Gambling Education 101. She speaks at various community trainings and behavioral health agencies about problem gambling and other process addictions and is engaged in outreach events in the recovery community. Amy has 14 years of experience working in community mental health specifically with homeless women and families, court ordered individuals, military families and active duty military, and problem gamblers. Amy earned a BS from North Carolina State University and an MA in Agency Counseling from North Carolina Central University. To recharge, Amy enjoys gardening, swimming, and spending time in the great outdoors.

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Vendors

Vendor	Contact	Website
NC Serves	Jessica Rice	Western.americaserves.org
Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Marilyn Edwards	www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh
East Carolina University	Jeff Netznik	www.ecu.edu
Equinox Ranch	Margo Capparelli	www.equinoxranch.org
NC Problem Gambling Program	Alison Drain	www.morethanagamenc.com
Goodwill of NWNC	Sarah Facemyer	www.goodwillnwno.org
HopeRX	Michelle Geiser	Hope-rx.org
Mars Hill Adult & Graduate Studies	Jenny Webb	www.mhu.edu
Montreat College Adult & Graduate Studies	Jesse Boeckermann	www.montreat.edu
NC Housing Finance Agency	Troy Hershberger	www.nchfa.com
NC State Veterans Home	Tonia Holderman	
NC Works Career Center	Shirley Butler	www.ncworks.gov
NC Division of Veterans Affairs	Jeremy Hughes	https://www.milvets.nc.gov
South College	Kira Duthu	www.south.edu
VA Suicide Prevention (CGVAMC)	Bryce Ludlow	
Vaya Health	Meredith Comer	http://www.vayahealth.com/

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