



# Connecting with CLAS

## Training Catalog



# Introduction

Promoting health equity, meaning everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible, is a priority for behavioral health services in Connecticut. Existing disparities based on race, ethnicity, language, and other dimensions of identity contribute to a lack of access to quality care and can disproportionately impact health outcomes.

Building off of the National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards and in alignment with the Connecticut Department of Children and Families' (DCF) racial justice framework, Connecting to Care offers a blueprint for child- and family-serving organizations to implement racially just and culturally and linguistically appropriate services that will advance health equity, improve the quality of services, and help eliminate racial and ethnic disparities.

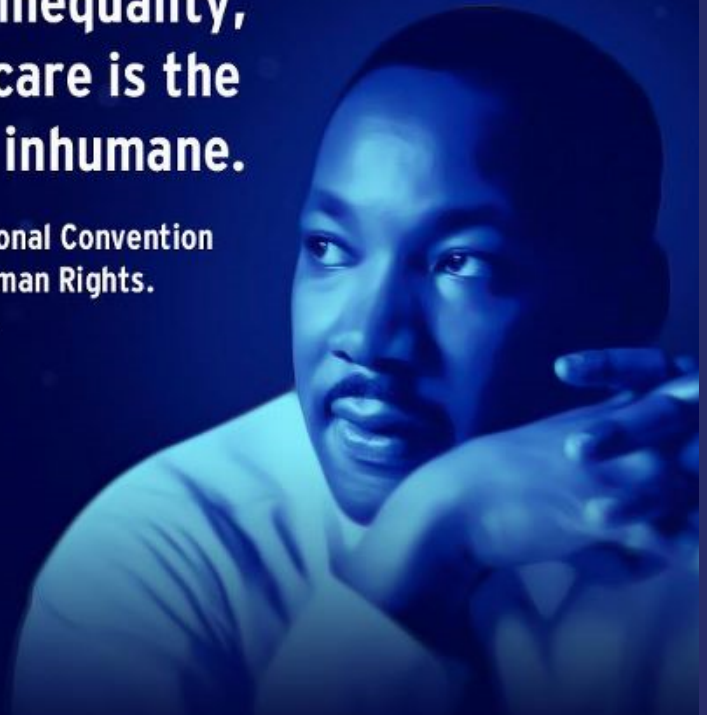
*Watch a brief CLAS  
Video below*



## MARTIN LUTHER KING

**Of all the forms of inequality,  
injustice in health care is the  
most shocking and inhumane.**

**Speaking before the Second National Convention  
of the Medical Committee for Human Rights.  
Chicago, Illinois. March 25 1966.**



# Trainings

## CLAS Standards Training

Overview of National Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards. Learn about the CLAS Standard thematic areas and 15 actions steps that serve as a blueprint for health and healthcare organizations seeking to advance health equity, improve quality, and help eliminate health care disparities. Participants will learn the importance of embedding CLAS Standards in everyday work.

This workshop will focus on:

- Familiarizing yourself with the National CLAS Standards
- Learning how to operationalize and implement the National CLAS Standards in your everyday work
- Increasing your knowledge of and ability to implement the National CLAS standards to address health equity, racial justice, and health disparities

**Time:** 90 min

**Audience:** Anyone working directly with children and families or individuals

## Implicit Bias and Cultural Humility

Acknowledging the reality and impacts of implicit biases in guiding behaviors and beliefs can result in actionable and effective solutions to facilitate and improve relationships. This training will build and foster understanding of implicit biases and cultural humility. A framework for positive attitude development and the facilitation of reciprocal open questions will be cultivated.

**Time:** 2 hours

**Audience:** Anyone working directly with children and families or individuals

**Moving from  
cultural  
competence  
to cultural  
humility.**

“Cultural humility seeks to cultivate self-awareness on the part of providers and acknowledges the ways in which cultural values and structural forces shape client experiences and opportunities.”

Marcie Fisher-Borne, et al. (2015) Journal of Social Work Education

# Trainings

## Best Practices in Language Interpretation

In this training, you will learn why interpretation services are needed, which CLAS standards address language and communication needs, various modes of interpretation and tips.

**Time:** 1 hour

**Audience:** Organizations that are committed to meeting CLAS standards and have gone through the Connecting to Care CLAS cohort and/or will be going through the cohort.

## Introduction to Health Equity Planning

This introduction explains how Connecting to Care utilizes a 4 phase model of change to help organizations implement racially just and culturally and linguistically appropriate services that will advance health equity, improve quality, and eliminate disparities in access and outcomes in children's behavioral health.

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Audience:** Champions of Racial Justice and/or Senior Leadership within an organization.

Note: This training is not limited to behavioral health providers.

**Does your  
organization have  
a Health Equity  
Plan?  
We can help you  
develop one.**

"There is a compelling need to reduce disparities in behavioral health care in communities across the country. These disparities directly affect the quality of life for all individuals. The lack of behavioral health equity adversely affects neighborhoods, communities, and the broader society, making the issue not only an individual concern but also a public health concern. Culturally and linguistically appropriate services are increasingly recognized as effective in improving the quality of care and services."

(Beach et al., 2004; Goode et al., 2006)

# Trainings

## **Building Capacity to Evaluate Health Equity Plan Strategies**

Provides participants with the basic knowledge and skills to determine how well their health equity plan strategies are addressing identified areas of need. The training will be comprised of didactic and interactive components. Participants will apply their knowledge to real-world scenarios and health equity plans.

**Time: 90-120 minutes**

**Audience:** Organizations that have created health equity plans can send their Diversity or Health Equity officers and CLAS Racial Justice champions within the organization.

## **How to Facilitate Courageous Conversations**

The purpose of this training is to train participants on how to facilitate courageous conversations in the workplace. This training will provide internal capacity to host these conversations, leaving participants feeling confident and comfortable to do so. Participants will be provided tools and resources and the opportunity to practice their skills and evaluate and reflect on their development.

Participants will:

- Understand the “role” of the facilitator
- Develop and utilize effective facilitation skills
- Develop strategies to use to handle challenging exchanges
- Understand their own biases and how they affect their interaction with others

Organizations benefit from having increased inclusion, diversity, equity capacity and workforce development internally.

**Time:** This intensive training is a total of nine hours spanning 3 different dates

**Audience:** Anyone working with children, families or individuals but preference will be given to organizations that participated in the Connecting to Care CLAS cohorts.

**"Integrity is choosing courage over comfort: It's choosing what's right over what's fun, fast, or easy; and it's practicing your values, not just professing them." - Brené Brown**



# Consultation Opportunities

## **Advancing Health Equity and Racial Justice Using CLAS Standards: 6 month Cohort Process using the Four-Phase Model of Change**

Provides guidance and support to organizations on planning and implementing CLAS standards. Using a four-phase developmental strategy, each phase of the model addresses various aspects of the CLAS Standards and assists with completing an organizational Health Equity Plan within a six-month period.

- Attending bi-monthly meetings, participating in training, and receiving individualized support in completing a Health Equity Plan;
- Utilizing Connecting to Care's Health Equity Toolkit that focuses on how organizations can create internal policy, systems, and agency changes that prioritize health equity.

**Time:** 6 month process

**Audience:** 1-3 representatives of an organization that will become the conduit for change within the organization and bring information back to all employees.

Note: Commitment letter will be obtained prior to joining.

## **Strategic Planning of Health Equity Outcome Measures**

Consultation is available to a limited number of organizations on evaluation of Health Equity plan outcome measures using logic models, Plan Quality Index, or other strategies.

**Time:** Up to 4 hours per organization

**Audience:** Organizations that have already developed a Health Equity Plan and want assistance with evaluation and measurement



# Consultation Opportunities

## Organizational Assistance on Utilizing Data to Inform Health Equity Planning

The CT Data Collaborative will provide consultation to a limited number of individual organizations to understand how they collect, use and incorporate demographic data into their Health Equity Plans.

**Time:** A limited number of hours

**Audience:** Organizations who have already developed a Health Equity plan and want assistance with utilizing data in planning.

## Organizational Consultation on Meeting Linguistic Needs and Requirements

Consultation will be provided to a limited number of individual organizations to assist with meeting federal guidelines and CLAS standards around linguistic needs and interpretation requirements, working with interpreters, supporting bi-lingual staff and other individualized agency needs.

Examples of support could include:

- In-house employee presentations
- Supporting Bi-lingual employees on the Code of Ethics and interpretations mode
- Assistance developing language communication access
- Individualized consultation to meet organizational needs

**Time:** Up to 3 hours per agency

**Audience:** Organizations that are committed to meeting CLAS standards and have gone through the Connecting to Care cohort and/or will be going through the cohort.

## Additional Consultation & Support

More intensive individualized consultation and support is available to organizations who previously attended the 6 month cohort process (as resources permit).



## Regional Learning Communities

The purpose of the Regional CLAS/Health Equity Learning Communities are to sustain and enhance the work of Connecting to Care. Organizations involved in racial justice work, reducing disparities and inequities, and committed to implementing CLAS standards will be invited to participate in the CLAS Learning Communities with a purpose of:

- Sharing best practices of implementation of National CLAS Standards
- Educating community on health equity diversity and CLAS Standards
- Sharing strategies of engagement with families and youth to support agency CLAS activities and progress of health equity plans

**Time:** 90-120 min, once per quarter

**Audience:** Representatives from organizations that have developed Health Equity plans, participated in CLAS cohorts, trainings, received consultation from Connecting to Care, or new organizations that are committed to implementing CLAS standards to eliminate disparities.

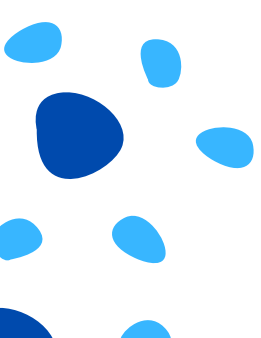
## Self-exploration of the Health Equity Toolkit

Connecting to Care published a free, self-guided Health Equity Toolkit, [Advancing Health Equity and Racial Justice in Children's Behavioral Health](#). The toolkit is designed to help organizations develop their own Health Equity Plans.

**Time:** Self-paced

**Audience:** Champions of Racial Justice and/or Senior Leadership within an organization

*"Diversity is not about how we differ.  
Diversity is about embracing one another's  
uniqueness" - Ola Joseph*



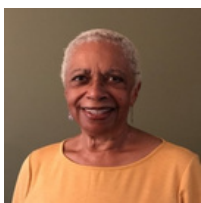
# Training and Consultation Team



## **Michele Stewart-Copes**

Michele Stewart-Copes is the CEO of SEET Consultants, LLC, System for Education Equity & Transition. She is a national trainer and consultant in system of care and cultural competency coaching. She holds the National Supervisor Coach Wraparound Certification, a Master of Science degree in Guidance and Counseling and a Master degree in Social Work. She developed and managed the nation's first and highly successful wraparound effort within an inner city area, focused on Puerto Rican and African American neighborhoods in Hartford, CT. She has provided wraparound training, and coaching in 20 states and Canada.

As Community Outreach Coordinator, at the Connecticut State Department of Public Health, Office of Multicultural Health, she worked with the Multicultural Health Advisory Commission and chaired the Workforce Development Committee of the Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership to impact policy planning and development. As Senior Coach and Trainer for the international and leading wraparound training, coaching and consulting firm in North America, Vroon VanDenBerg LLP, she facilitated the work of the U.S. National Wraparound Initiative, NWI. She co-facilitated and developed curricula for the wraparound practice model with internationally renowned Lecturer and Psychotherapist, Dr. John VanDenBerg. As Adjunct Professor, she taught the Cultural Competency class in the Master of Public Health Program at Southern Connecticut State University.



## **Marie M. Spivey**

Marie M. Spivey is a Principal/Consultant with the System for Education, Equity & Transition, LLC (SEET Consultants, LLC). She is a Registered Nurse who holds an EdD and MPA, from the University of Hartford, and a BS Degree in Human Service from Southern New Hampshire University.

Dr. Spivey co-chaired the New England Regional Health Equity Council - first of 10 Councils across the country created by the United States Department of Health and Human Service's Office of Minority Health formed to identify and eliminate health disparities, inequities, and their determinants. She currently works as a DEI consultant with the CT DCF, Caredon Behavioral Health and several local community-based organizations to provide them with the knowledge and benefits of diversity, equity, and inclusion frameworks based primarily on the Enhanced National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services Standards (CLAS) and the Title VI Civil Rights legislation.

Earlier in her career, Dr. Spivey moved from her former position as the CEO of the Charter Oak Terrace/Rice Heights Health Center to join the CT. DPH as its first Bureau Chief of Community Health, and subsequently became Hartford Hospital's first African American Vice President of Community Involvement. Dr. Spivey served as Vice President of Health Equity at the CT Hospital Association for several years working with the state's 28 hospitals to form Diversity Collaborative Teams addressing health equity policies, practices, and procedures, in order to better serve their constituents. She is an active Board member of the Connecticut League for Nursing, the Connecticut Center for Nursing Workforce, the Governing and Foundation Boards of the Duncaster Continuing Care Retirement Community, as well as Goodwin University and Capital Community College's Nursing Advisory Boards. Over the past 3 years of the coronavirus pandemic, Dr. Spivey's volunteerism has extended to assisting as a Covid Case Investigator for the Central CT. Health District.

# Training and Consultation Team

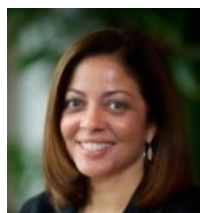


## **Cecilia Frometa**

Dr. Cecilia Frometa is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist and Assistant Professor at Yale University School of Medicine. She is the Director of the Family Based Recovery Program, Child Study Center and a core faculty member within the Psychology Section at the Child Study Center. Additionally, she leads the state-wide training coordination for a child and family centered psychiatric model developed at Yale.

Dr. Frometa has been in the mental health field for over 20 years and has extensive therapy, teaching, program development and public policy experience. Her work has been published in several issue briefs. She has been a keynote speaker, expert panelist, and presenter at several national and state-wide mental health forums. Most recently, she was featured on NBC Nightly News on a segment on 'helping parents identify depression in children during the COVID pandemic.

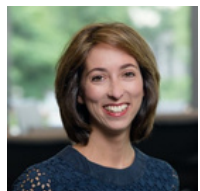
In 2020, she assisted YASC in developing a curriculum for students, parents and professionals focused on the impact of chronic trauma and psychosocial stressors on learning and emotional functioning. Dr. Frometa obtained her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from Northeastern University and completed her pre-doctoral clinical internship at Harvard Medical School with a clinical focus on trauma related disorders. She additionally completed her post-doctoral fellowship at Yale University School of Medicine.



## **Cindy A. Crusto**

Dr. Cindy Crusto is a Professor of Psychiatry (Psychology Section) at Yale University School of Medicine, and is the Director of Program Evaluation and Child Trauma Research at The Consultation Center. Dr. Crusto has more than 20 years of experience in developing, implementing, and evaluating preventive interventions in schools and community agencies. She also has extensive experience providing training and technical assistance to schools and to community-based organizations on the evaluation of prevention programs.

Dr. Crusto is interested in culturally relevant interventions for children from racial/ethnic minority and low-income backgrounds and in school-based behavioral health services. Her research examines the impact of family violence on children and the ecological influences on child and family well-being, and includes rigorous evaluations of community-based initiatives involving substance use and violence prevention, and the promotion of school readiness.



## **Michelle Riordan-Nold**

Michelle Riordan-Nold was named Executive Director of the CT Data Collaborative in February 2014. Michelle is responsible for executing the vision and strategy of the CT Data which is a user-driven, public-private partnership that educates, liberates, curates, and democratizes data for public consumption to help drive planning, policy, budgeting and decision making in Connecticut. In her tenure at CTData, she has grown the organization from 1 full time staff to 12.5 staff. In addition, she has created and developed new data service offerings including but not limited to, launching the CTData Academy, building an integrated data system initiative called the Hartford Data Collaborative, and launching a social enterprise in 2022, CTData Strategic Planning.

# Training and Consultation Team



## **Jackie Vancour**

As the Data Engagement Specialist at CTData, Jackie leads data literacy workshops for CTData's Data Academy. With her background in community psychology, program development, and impact management, Jackie brings a unique perspective and holistic understanding of how data can be used to drive change. Her teaching and facilitation skills allow her to simplify complex data concepts and present them in a way that is accessible and engaging for all. Jackie's passion for making data literacy accessible has helped individuals and organizations throughout Connecticut build the skills they need to make data-informed decisions and center equity in their data work.

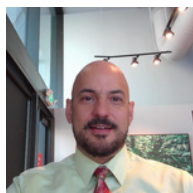


## **Ellen S. Boynton**

Ellen S. Boynton is the President of ESB~Consulting & Training Associates. She has her B.A. in Applied Social Relations and is a master trainer for Kaleidoscope Group on Diversity and Inclusion as well as several training certifications from the State of CT, the Anti-Defamation League, and others. She works with clients to build bridges, forge partnerships, improve decision-making, and lead and manage change. Her expertise is in human service and organizational development, providing strategic planning and utilizing experiential methods for diversity and cultural competency training, leadership development, team building and effective communication techniques, for youth and adults for more than twenty-five years.

Ellen recently retired from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) and was the Training Manager, and for the last 7 years, the Director of the Office of Multicultural Health Equity. Her work included the adoption and implementation of the, Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards to ensure the reduction of healthcare disparities in all DMHAS operated and funded services. She co-developed the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan for DMHAS and provided training for the department. She co-authored an article in the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal on, "The Organizational Multicultural Competence Assessment" (OMCA), 2021; and in The Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research, "Racial and Ethnic Differences in Use of State-Operated Inpatient Substance Abuse Services, 2004–2005 Versus 2010–2011", 2017 and co-authored a chapter in the book, "Black Americans and the Public Sector System-Design Strategies Promoting Health Equity", 2018. She is a Fellow of the CT Health Foundation, the American Leadership Foundation, and a graduate of Leadership Greater Hartford.

# Training and Consultation Team



## **Carlos A. Blanco**

Cuban born, English/Spanish Interpreter was raised on the Island of Puerto Rico, USA. He graduated high school from the American Military Academy in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico, continued studies at the University of Puerto Rico, and after 3 years moved to pursue a career with the Tourism/Hotel Industry. Carlos moved upward through the ranks in this industry until he achieved advancement into the position of Regional Director for the Puerto Rico Tourism Board - West Coast office, located in Los Angeles, CA.

Mr. Blanco has resided in the town of Naugatuck, Connecticut for the past twenty-one years. He began his career as an interpreter with the state's Judicial Branch as a Spanish Court Interpreter where he provided services for 5 years. In 2009 he graduated from the Medical Interpreting Course with Bridging the Gap in Manhattan, NYC. In 2022 obtain the TOT certification with Cross-Cultural Communications as a licensed trainer for Community Interpreters and Medical Interpreters.

Seasoned interpreter with 19 years' career experience working in the State of Connecticut and throughout the Tri State area. In addition, he worked concurrently in his role as Independent Interpreter to facilitate communications in many different scenarios and programs including the Federal Court, Judicial Branch, UCONN Hospital, Harford Hospital, Yale New Haven Hospital, Midstate, Wheeler Clinic, MCCA, CVH, Department of Corrections, DCF, DSS, and Social Security, as well as countless governmental and private entities.

Given the vast amount of skills Mr. Blanco has developed over the years as an Independent Interpreter, he is recognized by his colleagues and recipients of his services as an earnest, conscientious and clear communicator who has acquired the ability to assist professionals overcome legal, medical and community language barriers in their attempt to interpret individual and family needs by providing professional services and dignity to all who may not speak English as their first language.



## **Lisa Palazzo**

Lisa Palazzo, LCSW, is a Network of Care Manager at Carelon Behavioral Health with the Child and Family Division on the Intensive Care Coordination team. After receiving her Bachelors of Sociology with a Minor in Criminology at UCONN; Lisa went on to receive her Master of Social Work with a focus in Women and Children also from UCONN. Lisa worked with a multitude of populations including children, families, seniors, homeless individuals with HIV, severe mental health and substance use, and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in a variety of settings such as residential, group homes, nursing homes, housing programs and outpatient. From this experience, Lisa obtained a License in Clinical Social Work and currently enjoys her work at Carelon Behavioral Health, on a more macro level, promoting network of care principles and ensuring community-based service network improvement and development. Lisa is also a Certified School Social Worker with the State of CT and a Holistic Health Coach. In addition to her work, Lisa's other passion is travelling and practices self-care by exploring the world whenever she can.

# About Connecting to Care CT

Connecting to Care is a partnership to improve children's behavioral health by building an accessible and coordinated behavioral health system for children and their families.

## **The Vision:**

Create a system of care that offers a spectrum of effective, community-based services and supports for children and youth who have or are at risk for mental health challenges and their families. This system will be organized into a coordinated network, build meaningful partnerships with families and youth, and address cultural and linguistic needs, in order to help them to function better at home, in school, in the community, and throughout life.

Connecting to Care was initially developed with funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) through a Connecticut Network of Care Transformation (CONNECT) Planning Grant in 2014, Infrastructure Building Grant in 2015, and Expansion & Sustainability Grant in 2020.

## **Grant-Funded Partners**

The Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the primary recipient of funding for the Connecting to Care initiative from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Project partners include: The Child Health and Development Institute, Carelon Behavioral Health, Favor, Inc. and The Yale Consultation Center.



**For questions or to inquire about scheduling a training or consultation, contact: Lisa Palazzo at [Lisa.Palazzo@carelon.com](mailto:Lisa.Palazzo@carelon.com)**



## **Visit our websites:**

**[ConnectingtoCareCT.org](http://ConnectingtoCareCT.org)**  
**[plan4children.org](http://plan4children.org)**

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**and Instagram [connectingtocare\\_ct](https://www.instagram.com/connectingtocare_ct)**

Connecting to Care is a partnership that focuses on coordinating access to quality care through a youth-guided and family-driven approach. To improve behavioral health outcomes for children in Connecticut. Connecting to Care seeks to change the way the system operates so that all children have the opportunity to thrive.



**[connectingtocarect.org](http://connectingtocarect.org)**  
**[plan4children.org](http://plan4children.org)**

