



2026 Fall Symposium



Boundaries, Balance, and Bravery: Leading with Integrity in School Social Work

Thursday October 29, 2026

7:15AM-3:30PM

Franciscan Renewal Center

5802 E. Lincoln Dr., Scottsdale, AZ 85253

5.25 CEUs will be provided for full attendance.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION Now through August 31, 2026

SSWAAZ MEMBERS

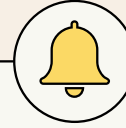
\$100

NON- MEMBER

\$135

STUDENTS

\$75



Symposium registration fee *does not include membership!*
It pays to **JOIN** early this year!!

AFTER AUGUST 31, 2026 PRICING

SSWAAZ MEMBERS

\$150

NON- MEMBER

\$185

STUDENTS

\$75

Please note that purchase orders and payments received after 5:00 pm on August 31st will be subject to the non-early bird conference rate!

SYMPOSIUM REGISTRATION & CANCELLATION POLICIES

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

Symposium registration will close **October 19, 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 **conference@sswaaz.org**.

All cancelations and refund requests must be submitted in writing to conference@sswaaz.org no later than October 19, 2026.

No refunds will be given after October 19, 2026. Please note that refund payments will be for the amount paid minus processing fees.

SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

7:15am - 8:15am Registration, Breakfast, and Exhibitors

8:15am - 9:00am Welcome, Keynote

9:00am - 9:15am *Break & Exhibitors*

9:15 - 10:30am Morning Breakout Sessions

10:30am - 10:45am *Break & Exhibitors*

10:45pm - 12:00pm Midday Breakout Sessions

12:15pm - 1:15pm *Lunch & Exhibitors*

1:15pm - 2:30pm Afternoon Breakout Sessions

2:40pm - 3:30pm Closing Panel Discussion / Raffle / Evaluation



***Please stay for the entire day to receive 5.25 CEU's**

***Certificates for 5.25 CEU's will be emailed to conference participants who have attended the conference in its entirety and completed conference evaluations by 11:59pm on 10/29/2026. Certificates will be e-mailed within 1 week of the conference to the address that was used for registration. No exceptions will be made.**

NETWORKING AND CONNECTIONS

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

EXHIBITORS

Community agencies and organizations will table in the outdoor area near the Community Life Center

NETWORKING

Spend time meeting and connecting with other symposium guests throughout the beautiful grounds of FRC.



SYMPOSIUM SESSIONS

MORNING SESSIONS 9:15AM - 10:30AM

1A: Don't Let Your Amygdala Drive the Bus

Yesenia Barkley, LMSW

BEGINNER LEVEL

Social Worker, Student Choice High School

This workshop reframes self-care for high-acuity helping professionals by addressing the neurobiological impact of chronic stress. Participants will examine the “cost of caring” and distinguish burnout, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma. Through understanding the Amygdala Hijack—when emotional responses override logical processing—attendees will identify personal stress triggers and regulating “glimmers.” The session concludes with the development of a personalized Professional Sustainability Plan, offering practical, protective strategies to strengthen resilience and support long-term professional well-being.

1B: Beyond Deep Breathing: DBT Based Mindfulness Skills Students Will Actually Use

Nicoleta Farías, MC, LPC

BEGINNER LEVEL

Co-founder, The Healing House

The Mindfulness module teaches practical, evidence-based skills to reduce stress, improve focus, and strengthen emotional regulation through present-moment awareness. Participants learn how mindfulness interrupts automatic stress responses and promotes intentional, values-based actions. Through guided breathing, grounding, body awareness, and sensory exercises, students build skills they can apply during academics, relationships, and daily life. By the end of the module, participants develop a personalized mindfulness toolkit that supports resilience, self-awareness, emotional balance, and overall psychological well-being.

1C: From Barriers to Best Practices: Working with immigrant youth and families

Ileana Salinas

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Cultiva Program Manager, Aliento

In Arizona, nearly one in nine students lives in a family with mixed immigration statuses, often navigating fear, instability, and systemic barriers that can affect attendance, mental health, family engagement, and overall well-being. This session will provide school social workers with practical strategies to build trusting relationships, and strengthen protective factors for immigrant students and their families. Through real-life stories, data-informed insights, and culturally responsive practices, participants will examine myths and better understand the structural pressures affecting school success. Participants will leave with best practices to collaborate with families, educators, and community partners to help create school environments where every child feels safe, supported, connected, and able to thrive.

1D&2D: Ethics in School Social Practice - PART I (3 hours - 2 sessions)

Cami Taylor, LCSW

INTER/AVD LEVEL

PXU Lead Social Worker - Phoenix Union High School District

This ethics training strengthens school social workers' ability to navigate complex decisions with clarity and integrity. Participants will deepen their understanding of how personal values and professional ethics shape practice in educational settings and learn to apply the NASW Code of Ethics to real-world school scenarios. Through interactive case discussions and guided analysis, attendees will practice ethical reasoning, strengthen confidence in decision-making, and enhance their ability to uphold ethical standards within school systems. This session fulfills the Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners' 3-hour Ethics CEU requirement.

SYMPOSIUM SESSIONS

MID-DAY SESSIONS 10:45AM- 12:00PM

2A: Don't Take the Bait: Self-Regulation Skills for School Social Workers in High-Stress Moments

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Lauri Pagano, LCSW

Social Worker/Clinical Consultant - Bioscience High School (PXU)/ Finding You Wellness, LLC

This interactive workshop helps school social workers stay regulated and grounded while navigating challenging student behaviors and difficult workplace interactions. Using a relatable, engaging approach with a touch of humor, the session blends real-life school examples, reflective discussion, and practical strategies. Through a trauma-informed lens, participants explore stress responses, co-regulation, emotional contagion, and concepts from neuroscience and Polyvagal Theory. Attendees learn concrete regulation skills to use in high-stress moments while maintaining boundaries and professionalism, leaving with tools to respond to difficult situations with greater confidence and resilience.

2B: The Role of Social Workers in School Safety

Professor Sarah Lindstrom Johnson / Michelle Cabinillas, LCSW

Arizona State University / Tempe Union HS District

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

In today's climate of heightened concern around physical and psychological safety in schools, ongoing training is essential for school-based mental health professionals. This session equips providers to navigate the complex intersections of ethical practice, legal mandates, and trauma-informed care while ensuring no harm is done. As frontline responders supporting students, families, and school communities during crises and unexpected traumatic events, practitioners often face blurred boundaries and rapidly shifting responsibilities. This training offers clarity, guidance, and practical frameworks to help school social workers uphold ethical standards and maintain grounded, legally sound practice in challenging situations. methodologies.

2C: Cause I Ain't Got Pencil-Holding Space for Trauma": Using Creative Expression to Create Spaces of Belonging in Schools

BEGINNER LEVEL

Dr. Erica Tatum-Sheade, DSW, LCSW, RPT-S, CADPT

Integrated Mental Health Associates

Inspired by Cause I Ain't Got a Pencil, this workshop explores the unseen burdens students carry—trauma, grief, family stress, discrimination, and experiences of not belonging—and how these can be misread as defiance or disengagement. Grounded in Adlerian Play Therapy, the Therapeutic Powers of Play, and belonging-centered practice, participants will learn creative, school-friendly interventions using art, storytelling, metaphor, and play to help students express difficult experiences. Attendees leave with practical tools, ethical guidance, and strategies for fostering connection, emotional wellness, and healing-centered school spaces.

1D&2D: Ethics in School Social Practice - PART II (3 hours - 2 sessions)

Cami Taylor, LCSW

INTER/ADV LEVEL

PXU Lead Social Worker - Phoenix Union High School District

This ethics training strengthens school social workers' ability to navigate complex decisions with clarity and integrity. Participants will deepen their understanding of how personal values and professional ethics shape practice in educational settings and learn to apply the NASW Code of Ethics to real-world school scenarios. Through interactive case discussions and guided analysis, attendees will practice ethical reasoning, strengthen confidence in decision-making, and enhance their ability to uphold ethical standards within school systems. This session fulfills the Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners' 3-hour Ethics CEU requirement.

CONFERENCE SESSIONS

AFTERNOON EXPERIENTIAL SESSIONS 1:15PM - 2:30PM

3A: Cositas: Creative Practice for Boundaries, Balance & Bravery

Jaxinta Shaffer, LCSW, PhD Student

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Mary Lou Fulton College for Teaching and Learning Innovation

This session introduces Cositas, an expressive arts intervention designed to support student mental health through creativity, containment, and meaning-making. At its core, a Cosita is a small-world diorama—created inside a container—where selected objects, images, and trinkets begin to “speak” to the maker, representing emotions, memories, and parts of their story. Grounded in trauma-informed and person-centered practices, participants will explore how constructing these symbolic worlds using everyday materials can help students safely express emotions, strengthen internal boundaries, and regain a sense of control. Attendees will create their own Cositas container and leave with a ready-to-implement strategy for school-based practice

3B: Boundaries, Balance, and Bravery: Embodied Resilience for School Social Work Practice

Kathleen Leonard, LCSW / Kathleen McKeever, MA

ALL LEVELS

Full-time Faculty - BSW Program, GCU / Certified Yoga Instructor

Co-led by a certified yoga instructor and a licensed clinical social worker and educator, the session blends trauma informed theory with accessible, yoga-based strategies designed to support both practitioner well-being and student engagement.

Participants will learn how to ethically and inclusively adapt embodied practices for diverse school populations, students with trauma histories, sensory needs, and behavioral challenges. The session also addresses burnout and secondary trauma, offering tools that help school social workers remain grounded, regulated, and resilient while navigating the emotional demands of their roles.

3C: Reclaiming Space for Self-Care in School Social Work

Katy Kraner / Lauren Austin - Co-Founders

ALL LEVELS

The Body Benefits

This restorative sound bath invites school social workers to reconnect with balance, strengthen boundaries, and cultivate bravery through trauma-informed sound healing. Participants experience guided grounding, therapeutic sound, and reflective prompts designed to support nervous-system regulation, emotional clarity, and sustainable self-care within the demands of school social work practice.. (A signed waiver required for this session - it will be sent after registration)

3D: Hone the Nest: Building insight through creative processing

Lori E. Robinson MSW, LMSW

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Tempe Union HS District

This will be a fun and interactive workshop where together we will learn about and explore protective factors in the individual, in the family system, and in communities that support us in our healing and allow us to move through challenging experiences in our lives. We will each create a physical representation of a nest by weaving together protective factors, our strengths, our core values, and the goals and intentions we have for ourselves as individuals, and also as practitioners working in community using diverse materials. The theoretical foundation of this workshop is rooted in the research of resilience, neuroplasticity, DBT, mindfulness, ecological systems, and the power of creative processing in building new ways of understanding ourselves and others and creating a life worth living. All of the art supplies will be provided by the presenter.

SSWAAZ Mini-Grants - Award Announcement

Each year, SSWAAZ is dedicated to ensuring that school social workers have the necessary funding for projects at their school sites. SSWAAZ funds up to \$350.00 for school social work projects - up to 10 projects for the 2026/27 school-year.

Mini grant applications will open to SSWAAZ members from Sept. 1-30, 2026. Mini-grant Award Recipients will be announced at this year's Symposium!

PARKING - Franciscan Renewal Center

FRC has parking throughout the complex and it is available to all participants. Handicapped parking is available throughout the complex.

We will be utilizing the San Domiano Auditorium and the Community Life Center for opening and breakout sessions, as well as, the dining room. See map on the following page.

HOTELS

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

- Valley Ho -Scottsdale 2.9 miles from venue
- Sonesta Suites/Gainey Ranch - Scottsdale 2.9 miles from venue
- Canopy by Hilton - Scottsdale/Old Town 2.9 miles from venue
- Camelback Inn - JW Marriott - Scottsdale .2 miles from venue

MEALS

Buffet-style breakfast and lunch are included in your registration fee. If you have any allergies or dietary restrictions, please reach out no later than October 19, 2026.

SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS

If you have any special ADA accommodations, please reach out to our SSWAAZ President at conference@sswaaz.org

EASTBOUND
EXIT \



SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK ASSOCIATION OF ARIZONA

For questions regarding our event, please email us at
conference@sswaaz.org

P O B O X

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Chandler, AZ 85248

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SSWAAZ



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