



2018 National Conference Keynote Presenters



Thursday, Opening Keynote
Transforming Trauma to Creative Growth and
Cultivating Resilience through Mindfulness
Amy Oestreicher

What's a detourist? A [detourist](#) travels along detours – simple enough. But in addition, a detourist embraces those unexpected routes as opportunities for growth, change and self-fulfillment. As a *detourist*, we look for the upside of obstacles. We welcome the unexpected change in my “thought-out” life, and see what opportunities may arise. In this inspiring Keynote address, Oestreicher shares her story and experience in overcoming trauma, shedding insights on navigating a range of life detours, through mindfulness, essential life skills, creativity, and resiliency. Serving to empower rather than

inspire attendees with foundational knowledge, Amy shares vital tools which serve to assist School Social Workers in their work. Attendees will leave with energy and ideas to assist the children and families with which they work deal with the detours in their own lives.

Amy Oestreicher is a PTSD peer-to-peer specialist, artist, author, writer for Huffington Post, speaker for TEDx and RAINN, health advocate, survivor, award-winning actress, and playwright, sharing the lessons learned from trauma through her writing, mixed media art, performance and inspirational speaking. As the creator of “Gutless & Grateful,” her BroadwayWorld-nominated one-woman autobiographical musical, she's toured theatres nationwide, along with a program combining mental health advocacy, sexual assault awareness and Broadway Theatre for college campuses and international conferences. She has studied as a playwright and performance artist in the National Musical Theatre Institute at the world-renowned Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. Her original, full-length drama, *Imprints*, premiered at the NYC Producer's Club in May 2016, exploring how trauma affects the family as well as the individual. To celebrate her own “beautiful detour”, Amy created the #LoveMyDetour campaign, to help others cope in the face of unexpected events. “Detourism” is also the subject of her TEDx and upcoming book, *My Beautiful Detour*, available December 2017. As Eastern Regional Recipient of Convatec's Great Comebacks Award, she's spoken to hundreds of healthcare professionals at national WOCN conferences, and her presentations on diversity, leadership and trauma have been featured at National Mental Health America Conference, New England Educational Opportunity Association's 40 Anniversary Conference, and have been keynotes at the Pacific Rim Conference of Diversity and Disability in Hawaii, the Eating Recovery Foundation First Annual Benefit in Colorado. She's contributed to over 70 notable online and print publications, and her story has appeared on NBC's TODAY, CBS, Cosmopolitan, among others. Learn more: amyoes.com.



Saturday, Closing Keynote
“Putting the “C” Back in Schools”
Nancy Feyl Chavkin, PhD., LMSW-AP

Based on forty years of research showcased in her new book *Family Engagement with Schools: Strategies for School Social Workers and Educators* (Oxford University SSWAA Workshop Series, 2017), Nancy Chavkin shares an easy-to-use “C” approach for supporting family engagement with schools. She will not only provide you with the evidence base, but also will share real-life examples for getting started and moving your current work with families to the next level of family engagement.

Valuing the strengths of families and seeing families as leaders are central to her work, and she will share the secrets to being able to **connect**, **communicate**, and **collaborate** with families and their communities. Nancy's presentation will inspire you to want to learn more about the communities your families live and work in and give you the evidence-based tools to make authentic family engagement with schools a reality.

Nancy Chavkin is a first-generation college graduate who has been blessed with a family that valued education and who worked hard to be engaged with schools even though they did not have much money or any educational experience. Nancy was the first in her family of seven children to go to college, became a school social worker, a parent, and a professor who specializes in bridging the research-practice gap. She is currently Regents' Professor and University Distinguished Professor Emerita of Social Work at Texas State University, and spends her time consulting with schools and writing about ways for families to be engaged with schools and communities. She is the author of four books and more than 100 articles on family, school, & community partnerships. She has been the principal investigator of grants and contracts totaling more than \$20 million dollars. Her program evaluation experience spans two decades and includes work with grants from the US Department of Education, the Administration for Children and Families, foundations, and state agencies. Nancy can be reached at nancychavkin@txstate.edu.