
- Lessons from the Field Webinar Series -

Navigating the Road to Recovery From School Violence

Wednesday, May 22, 2024 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM ET

SPEAKER BIOS

Nnamdi Chuwuocha

State Representative, DE; Community Schools Director, Children & Families First, DE



The Honorable Nnamdi Chukwuocha is a member of the Delaware House of Representatives, representing District 1. He is a licensed master social worker who sits on an array of boards and commissions including the Redding Consortium for Educational Equity. Rep. Chukwuocha has well over 30 years' experience in the nonprofit world, was recently awarded the Wilmington Urban League's Martin Luther King, Jr. Award, and has been recognized as an outstanding Delaware State University Alumni. Rep. Chukwuocha is the Director of community school initiatives for Children & Families First, a statewide nonprofit in Delaware. He is also along with his twin brother, the Twin Poets, are the Poets Laureate for the state of Delaware.

Dr. Jennifer Freeman

Crisis Coordinator, Center on PBIS; Associate Professor, Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut, CT



Dr. Jennifer Freeman has over 20 years of experience in public education at the K-12 and higher education levels. She is currently an associate professor in educational psychology at the University of Connecticut, and a technical assistance director for the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Her work focuses on applying multi-tiered systems of support such as PBIS



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to improve overall school climate and a sense of belonging for students and educators. She is particularly interested in improving graduation rates for students with behavioral and/or mental health disorders. She also studies professional development methods for improving teacher's use of evidence-based classroom management strategies and teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in the special education program. Dr. Freeman leads a national crisis preparation response and recovery workgroup within the Center on PBIS and has 10 years of experience supporting schools, districts, and states in recovery efforts following incidents of school or community violence. This work focuses on supporting short- and long-term recovery efforts as well as prevention and preparation efforts at the district and state levels.

Bridgette Gilbert

School Emergency Management Coordinator, Maine School Safety Center, ME



Ms. Bridgette Gilbert is a retired police officer from Maine. Sixteen of those years were spent as a School Resource Officer in rural Maine. Ms. Gilbert then worked in a contract position as an analyst with the Maine State Police, working out of the Fusion Center. Ms. Gilbert currently works for the Maine School Safety Center. Her passion is school safety and emergency preparedness, always striving to help make the schools safer for students and staff.

Niki Henderson

Director of Recovery Services, Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District, TX



Ms. Niki Henderson serves as the Director of Recovery Services for Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District. In this role, she collaborates with local, state, and federal partners to develop and oversee a wide range of support services for both students and staff. Ms. Henderson has been instrumental in creating a multi-tiered system of student support, building partnerships with community and state organizations, and organizing training programs to improve the well-being of staff and students. As a Licensed Professional Counselor, Ms. Henderson specializes in evidence-based, trauma-focused interventions and served UCISD as a licensed mental health professional during the Robb Elementary School tragedy. She is a member of several professional associations including the Texas Counseling Association, the Texas Association of School Psychologists, and the Texas Association of Family and Conciliation Courts. Currently, Ms. Henderson is pursuing a doctorate in School Psychology from Texas Tech University.

Heather Martin

Educator, Aurora High School; Lived Experience Expert, Columbine High School; Co-Founder, Rebels Project, CO



Ms. Heather Martin was two days away from her 18th birthday when the shooting occurred during her senior year at Columbine High School on April 20, 1999. After barricading in a small office for three hours, Ms. Martin returned home physically uninjured, but the effects of the trauma she experienced that day continued to impact in the following years as she went off to college. While the trauma caused her to initially drop out, she re-enrolled ten years later and obtained her Bachelors in English and teaching license. She co-founded The Rebels Project after the shooting at the Aurora, CO movie theater with other Columbine 1999 alumni. Ms. Martin is a national speaker advocating for informed responses to traumatic events from the perspective of a survivor. She currently resides in Colorado and teaches English in Aurora, CO.

Jeffrey Upton

Assistant Director, Maine School Safety Center, ME



Mr. Jeffrey Upton worked as a police officer for 23 years in southern Maine, spending the majority of his career as a School Resource Officer. During his career, he participated in updating the emergency safety plans for his district and acted as a trainer in their critical incident response plan. Towards the end of his work in law enforcement, Mr. Upton worked with a group of resource officers to start the Maine School Resource Officer's Association and became a mentor to new SROs in the State. As the Assistant Director of the Maine Department of Education's Maine School Safety Center, Mr. Upton is able to continue working to with schools to keep our students safe.

Dr. Marleen Wong

CEO, Center for Safe and Resilient Schools and Workplaces, CA



Dr. Marleen Wong, CEO for the Center for Safe and Resilient Schools and Workplaces and former Senior Vice Dean, David Lawrence Stein and Violet Goldberg Sacks Endowed Professor of Mental Health, Emerita, at the USC Suzanne Dworek Peck School of Social Work at the University of Southern California. A School Social Worker at the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), she gained expertise in the development of PreK-12 mental health, crisis intervention, earthquake/disaster recovery and threat assessment policies, procedures, and interventions over a span of 30 years.

Since 1984, she has worked with survivors and school districts of targeted violence and terrorist attacks including those in Littleton, Newtown, Parkland, Oklahoma City, 9/11 NYC and San Bernardino. Internationally, she is Senior Advisor for the North American Center for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response. As CEO of the Center for Safe and Resilient Schools and Workplaces, she is involved in training, consultation and forensic work focused on developing Trauma Informed organizations. She has developed curricula for the US Department of Justice COPS in Schools Program and has served as a consultant, curriculum developer and trainer for the US Department of Education Readiness and



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Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center (REMS TAC). Identified as one of the "pre-eminent experts in school crisis and disaster recovery" by the White House and the "architect of school-safety programs" by the Wall Street Journal, Dr. Wong is one of the original developers of the evidence based Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) and Psychological First Aid for Schools: Listen Protect Connect Model and Teach.