

Juvenile Justice and Health Equity: The Role of Trauma-Informed Courts for Youth with Disabilities

Speaker Biographies

John Bunn was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York by his single mother. At age 14, John was charged with the murder and attempted murder of two NYC Correction Officers in Brooklyn in 1991. He was convicted in a high-profile case at the time based upon the testimony of one eyewitness. John was released on parole in 2006. New evidence has surfaced that Louis Scarcella and other rogue Brooklyn homicide detectives illegally arrested John in his mother's apartment and framed him for the murder. On May 15, 2018, John Bunn was exonerated with help from the efforts of The Exoneration Initiative, a foundation dedicated to freeing the wrongfully convicted. At the same time as his exoneration is in progress, John started A Voice 4 the Unheard to do his best to bring positivity into the communities, schools, houses, and prisons of New York City.

Kristin Henning is a nationally recognized advocate, author, trainer, and consultant on the intersection of race, adolescence, and the policing of Black youth. She is the Blume Professor of Law and Director of the Juvenile Justice Clinic and Initiative at Georgetown Law, and was previously the Lead Attorney of the Juvenile Unit at the D.C. Public Defender Service. Kris has been representing children accused of crimes for more than 26 years, and is the co-founder of a number of initiatives to combat racial injustice in the juvenile and criminal legal systems, including the Ambassadors for Racial Justice program and a Racial Justice Toolkit for youth defenders. Kris trains state actors across the country on the impact of racial bias and the traumatic effects of policing on youth of color. Kris worked closely with the McArthur Foundation's Juvenile Indigent Defense Action Network to develop a 41-volume national training curriculum, the Youth Defense Advocacy Program. She now co-hosts, with the Gault Center, a week-long summer academy for youth defenders. Professor Henning writes extensively about race and the criminalization of adolescence. Her book, *The Rage of Innocence: How America Criminalizes Black Youth*, was featured on the front page of the New York Times Book Review. Professor Henning serves on the Board of Directors for the Public Welfare Foundation and is the Director of the Mid-Atlantic Region of the Gault Center. She has received many awards, including the Leadership Prize from the Juvenile Law Center and the Robert E. Shepherd, Jr. Award for Excellence in Juvenile Defense by the Gault Center. Kris earned her B.A. from Duke University, her J.D. from Yale Law School, and her LLM in Advocacy from Georgetown Law.

Hector Linares is a Clinic Professor at Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. He teaches the Youth Defense section of the Loyola Law Clinic where he trains law students to defend youth in delinquency proceedings through holistic representation and to engage in impact litigation and other systemic reform work to improve youth-serving legal systems. His academic research focuses on the topics of youth justice and the rights of students with disabilities. He is a graduate of Tulane University and New York University School of Law. Prior to entering academia, Hector was a public defender for youth in New Orleans at Juvenile Regional Services (now Louisiana Center for Children's Rights). He also practiced disability rights law as a supervising attorney at

Protection & Advocacy, Inc. (now Disability Rights California) in Los Angeles, California. He began his career as the Southern Poverty Law Center Special Education Fellow at the Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana. Hector is a member of the Gault Center's National Advisory Board, a co-director of the Southern Youth Defender Center, and a certified Youth Defense Advocacy Program trainer. He has received national recognition for his work as a recipient of both the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA) Award for Distinguished Advocacy for the Educational Rights of Children with Disabilities and the Gault Center's Robert E. Shepherd Jr. Leadership Award for Excellence in Youth Defense.

Melody Moore is a mother and fierce advocate. As the mother of a son with a disability who has been involved in the juvenile and criminal legal systems, Ms. Moore has fought vigorously to secure special education services and related supports and accommodations to meet her son's needs. Often wondering whether her son could have avoided the criminal legal system if he had received the support he needed as a child, she now advocates for other youth who are impacted by the system. Ms. Moore is a foster parent and has worked in early childhood education and studied child development.

Brian D. Smedley is a senior fellow in the Health Policy Division and a former equity scholar at the Urban Institute, where he conducts research and policy analysis to address structural and institutional forms of racism that affect the health and well-being of people of color. Previously, Smedley was chief of psychology in the public interest at the American Psychological Association, where he led the organization's efforts to apply the science and practice of psychology to the fundamental problems of human welfare and social justice. Among his other prior positions are cofounder and executive director of the National Collaborative for Health Equity, codirector of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Leaders program, and vice president and director of the Health Policy Institute of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. He also was a senior program officer at the Institute of Medicine (IOM), where he served as study director for the IOM report *Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care*, among other reports on diversity in the health professions and minority health policy. Smedley has been honored by the American Public Health Association, the Congressional Black Caucus, the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, and the American Psychological Association. Smedley is the treasurer and a member of the board for the Poverty & Race Research Action Council, the chair of the advisory committee to the Maryland Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, and a member of and consultant to the Institute for Healing Justice and Equity at Saint Louis University.

Dr. Amanda Zelechowski (zell-uh-husky) is a licensed clinical and forensic psychologist and attorney, specializing in trauma. She is a Clinical Professor of Psychology at the University of Notre Dame and Director of Clinical Services at the Veldman Family Psychology Clinic. Her scholarly interests lie at the intersection of psychology, law, and trauma, particularly for underserved populations. This includes evaluating psychological and forensic assessment methods, as well as working across systems to make evidence-based, trauma-informed practices more accessible. Dr. Zelechowski is board-certified in Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology and is currently the principal investigator or co-investigator on several trauma-informed capacity-building and implementation grant-funded projects for child-serving systems (e.g.,

juvenile justice, pediatric primary care, outpatient mental health, and K-12 education). She is passionate about “giving psychology away” through knowledge translation and dissemination initiatives, such as the digital resource hub, [Pandemic Parenting](#), and [Roadmap to Resilience](#) and [Roadmap for Change](#) podcast projects.