



December 2022

Quarterly Insights

Promoting quality mental health counseling services, maintain a viable and distinct professional identity, and influence public policy consistent with our professional ethics and values.

Letter From the President



Dear Colleagues,

Washington State is in a mental healthcare crisis and WMHCA is taking serious steps to provide equitable and quality healthcare, accessible to those who need it. As we close out 2022 and get ready for a new Legislative session in Olympia, here are the issues we are focused on and where you can get involved:

- Our Legislative Committee continues to focus on the Washington State **counseling compact**. We are finally, after at least seven years of proposed legislation in multiple states, approval of the compact will enter our own State legislation consideration this coming session. WMHCA will have informational meetings to ensure your understanding of this endeavor. In the meantime, please click [here](#) to find more information. *Our voices matter in this important piece of legislation and committee membership and participation in the compact work is open to members.*
- WMHCA continues to be a part of discussions with stakeholders and policy makers on the workplace shortage of mental health professionals, the low representation of diverse practitioners and underserved marginalized communities, and the pay inequities in our profession with reimbursement; all which contribute to this crisis. See [here](#) of more information.
- Our Education Committee completing a well attended “Lunch-and-Learn” series on Connection. We continue to look for applicable topics, so please don’t hesitate to **tell us** what you want to learn/talk about.
- Our Membership Committee is pulling together FAQ resources. Members and non-members have questions regarding licensure, supervision, and ethical concerns. Our goal is to create a resource accessible on our [website](#), to find the most current of answers. Look for that posted resource in January.

The underpinnings of all our work is that we are committed to becoming an anti-oppression organization. To that goal, we’ve established a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) task force. We are honored to have several WMHCA members on our task force, helping to insure our

commitment.

The need to change our mental health care system toward accessible, quality care for all is essential. We ask that you join us, engage where you can, provide us with your creative ideas, and help us to affect positive change.

My best to you this Holiday season. We have a very busy and exciting 2023 ahead.

Seasons Best,

Susan K. Leveridge, Psy.D., LMHC
WMHCA President 2021-2023

Legislative and Policy Updates

Barriers to Licensure Sub-committees Formed

This past summer the Washington Mental Health Counselor Association hosted two work groups focused on decreasing barriers in the mental health profession. WMHCA has now compiled that data and has facilitated the formation of sub-committees. The sub-committees will use the data WMHCA collected and then do a deeper dive of the information. They will then bring any legislative asks back to WMHCA and will determine if there are other things WMHCA can do outside legislation to decrease barriers. Each subcommittee is chaired by a WMHCA member. If you are interested in serving on a subcommittee you can reach out directly to the committee chairs. Their contact info is listed on [WMHCA's website](#).

Update on Counseling Compact

WMHCA is continuing to prepare for our upcoming legislative session and running the counseling compact bill. We are having a "Washington State and the Counseling Compact" virtual Info Session, January 4th from 12-1pm PT. This session will cover the basics of the counseling compact, the legislative process for Washington State, and have time for questions.

[Register Here](#)

Get to Know you WMHCA Lobbyist

When I was first hired by WMHCA in 2018, one of my initial tasks was to interview and hire a lobbyist. I interviewed about 5 different people. I can't remember exactly how the connection to Sara was created, however I do remember she was my last interview. After that meeting, I realized I had saved the best for last and reported back to the board there was no other

option besides Sara. I still stand by that decision today.

-Shannon Thompson, WMHCA's Executive Director



Sara is great in so many ways. Below is a short introduction to get to know the real Sara Stewart. The full length article can be found on our [website](#).

"I always say that my first legislative session was in 1983 as I was in utero, absorbing knowledge and insight as my 9-month pregnant lobbyist mother continued working until the final moments, lugging around 10-pound baby Sara. My sister and I grew up in the Capitol building, where we were often plopped on the desks of legislative assistants and secretaries while mom worked. We would wear princess dresses and bring our stuffed animals to the building, sending them on wild adventures down the marble steps and ramps.

When I was 13, I was a Senate Page and I felt like the most important teenager in the world because I already knew legislators and how to navigate campus. I was certain my Page friends were very envious!

Growing up in a politically active household, I've always been drawn to the process. I saw firsthand how impactful decisions that are made in Olympia, are in everyday life. I was always involved in student body government from middle school through college. I worked on campaigns (Democrats and Republicans) and stayed informed as much as I could, no matter which part of the country I was living in. Continued [HERE](#). (Sara is right behind Governor Inslee below.)



WMHCA is seeking members interested in serving on the

Update Your Profile with your legislative district

Nominations committee for 2023

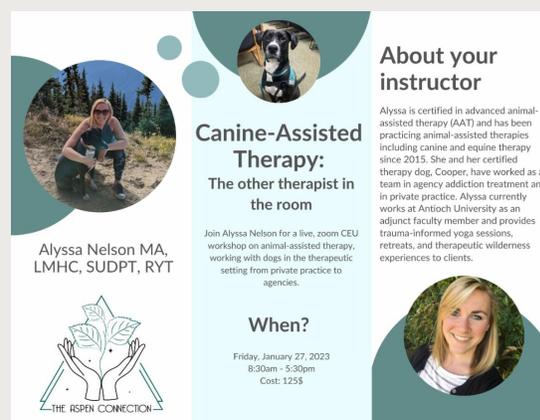
The WMHCA board is comprised of up to 15 voting members. Board terms are for two years and then the position is up for re-election. We have some positions open for re-election for the upcoming fiscal year. The Nominations committee chair is appointed by the president each year to determine the number of positions up for re-election, recruit members interested in serving on the board, present the list of nominees to the board and ensure that each voting member of WMHCA is notified of the approved list prior to the elections in May.

The Nominations committee will meet virtually for one hour in January, March, April and May. There will be offline communication via e-mail between meetings, and committee members may be asked to reach out to members via phone, review applications and attend all scheduled meetings.

If you are interested in serving on the Nominations committee or joining the board, please contact **Shannon Thompson** or **Jenny White**.

WMHCA recently updated our membership profiles to include member's legislative districts. If you haven't done so please take a moment to update your profile **HERE**. As we prepare for our upcoming Lobby Day, having your legislative district will be beneficial when scheduling meetings with legislators. Lobby Day is tentatively scheduled for in-person January 26, 2023. Lobby Day will be a chance for members to join us in Olympia, and advocate for important mental health issues that impacts Washington. WMHCA plans to also have a virtual Day-on-the-Hill date to be determined.

Paid Advertisement



Canine-Assisted Therapy:
The other therapist in the room

Join Alyssa Nelson for a live, zoom CEU workshop on animal-assisted therapy, working with dogs in the therapeutic setting from private practice to agencies.

When?
Friday, January 27, 2023
8:30am - 5:30pm
Cost: 125\$

About your instructor
Alyssa is certified in advanced animal-assisted therapy (AAT) and has been practicing animal-assisted therapies including canine and equine therapy since 2015. She and her certified therapy dog, Cooper, have worked as a team in agency addiction treatment and in private practice. Alyssa currently works at Antioch University as an adjunct faculty member and provides trauma-informed yoga sessions, retreats, and therapeutic wilderness experiences to clients.

Alyssa Nelson MA, LMHC, SUDPT, RYT

THE RESPEN CONNECTION

Scholarship Winners

WMHCA is proud to announce our second annual scholarship recipients. The graduate student scholarships are part of WMHCA's commitment to increasing the representation of historically marginalized individuals within the field of counseling and increasing access to culturally responsive counseling for underserved communities.

Fall 2022 WMHCA Scholarship Recipients are:

Mckenna Paddock
Vanessa Soto

Haley Fielder
Jane (Hsin Yu) Yang
Porter Woody
James Myles
Christine Choi-Pearce
Adam Hall
Nicole Coleman
Winonna Saari
Amanda Ratliff



Enter to Win an AMHCA Conference Registration

Join WMHCA's representation at the 2023 AMHCA Annual Conference, Tuesday June 27 to Thursday June 29 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Several of WMHCA board members are attending the conference and we want to invite you to join us as well. We are giving away 5 registrations to the conference. If you would like to attend, please fill out this form by Dec. 31st 2022. Winners will be randomly drawn. You do not have to be an AMHCA member to win, however you must be a WMHCA member. Fill out this [FORM](#) to be entered to win. More information about the conference can be found [HERE](#).

Treasurer's Report

Tim Griswold, WMHCA Treasurer

One of my roles as the 2022 Treasurer for WMHCA is to update you on our finances. To best represent our members and organization as your new treasurer, I have been reviewing the great work of our past treasurer and wanted to provide you with this update.

I also wanted to remind our members that WMHCA is a 501c6, which is a not-for-profit, to serve you, the members, through advocacy, education, and other services such as ethical consultations. Over the past several years, the board

has been budgeting to have a small surplus in funds to enable new benefits, such as offering more scholarships.

WMHCA's fiscal year 2022 ended with positive revenue and measured expenses. Revenue exceeded projections: 58% of revenue was from membership, 37% from workshops, and the remaining was from advertising and interest. The board was able to invest deeply in education and workshops by delivering six new workshops and six lunch and learns. Many of the workshops are available through our partner **ConstantEdu**, where we will continue to receive ongoing revenue. This past year, the board also worked to provide scholarships to enhance diversity in our profession by awarding eight scholarships and by keeping workshop prices below market rate. These efforts have helped WMHCA membership grow by 32%.

The full report can be found on [WMHCA's website](#).



Member Testimonials

Has WMHCA ever helped you in anyway or is there something that stands out as a great benefit from being a WMHCA member? Please take a moment to fill out this [FORM](#).



Washington Mental Health Counselors Association
www.wmhca.org

Connect with us

to get involved, share your story or give feedback
contact sara@wmhca.org



WMHCA | 11410 NE 124th St., Kirkland, WA 98034

[Unsubscribe sara@wmhca.org](#)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by sara@wmhca.org in collaboration
with



Try email marketing for free today!