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# THE STATE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESPONSE IN NEW YORK CITY

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13TH, 2024 | 9AM - 4PM  
THE CENTER | 208 W. 13TH ST. NEW YORK, NY 10011



## **Welcome Message from the Executive Director** *New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault*

Welcome to The State of Sexual Violence Response in New York City conference! On behalf of the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault, I am honored to welcome each of you—advocates, service providers, policymakers, survivors, and allies—to this pivotal gathering.

The work of addressing and responding to sexual violence is complex and requires not only resilience but also collaboration across communities and sectors. Today, we come together to explore the challenges, celebrate the progress, and identify actionable solutions for building a comprehensive, survivor-centered response system here in New York City. We are privileged to have leaders in the field sharing their expertise in panels and discussions that will highlight innovative strategies, address critical gaps, and strengthen the support network for survivors.

Thank you for your commitment to this work and for the dedication you bring to building a safer, more supportive city for all. We look forward to the insights, partnerships, and momentum that today will undoubtedly inspire.

Warm regards,



Emily Miles  
Executive Director  
New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault



# AGENDA

**9:00 AM - 9:30 AM**

**REGISTRATION**

**9:30 AM - 9:40 AM**

**WELCOME REMARKS**

***Clarissa Espinoza,***  
New York City Alliance  
Against Sexual Assault

**9:40 AM - 10:25 AM**

**KEYNOTE**

***Emily Miles,***  
New York City Alliance  
Against Sexual Assault

**10:25 AM - 10:35 AM**

**TRANSITION**

**10:35 AM - 11:40 AM**

**BREAKOUT SESSION # 1**

***Lessons Learned and Best Practices for NYC Sexual Violence Prevention***

Room 310

***Supporting Our Youngest Survivors: Enhancing Care for Pediatric Sexual Violence in New York City***

Room 110

***Digital Boundaries: Addressing the Growing Crisis of Cyber Sexual Assault***

Room 101

***Survivor Recovery: Accessing Supportive Services Throughout the Healing Journey***

Room 302



# AGENDA

**11:40 AM - 12:15 PM**

**LUNCH**

Room 101

**12:15 PM - 1:20 PM**

**BREAKOUT SESSION # 2**

***Navigating NYS Civil Law Remedies for Survivors of Sexual Violence***

Room 110

***Towards a Supportive Legal Process: Navigating a Survivor-Centered Approach in NYC's Criminal Justice System***

Room 310

***Empowering Communities: Culturally Responsive Strategies in Sexual Violence Prevention and Survivor Care***

Room 101

***Shaping the Future: Key Budget and Legislative Priorities to Strengthen Sexual Violence Response in New York State***

Room 302

**1:20 PM - 1:35 PM**

**TRANSITION**



# AGENDA

**1:35 PM - 2:40 PM**

***Beyond A Carceral Framework: Empowering Survivors Through Community Care***

Room 310

***Strengthening the Frontlines: Enhancing Rape Crisis and Advocate Programs in New York City***

Room 101

**2:40 PM - 2:50 PM**

**2:50 PM - 3:50 PM**

**3:50 PM - 4:00 PM**

**BREAKOUT SESSION # 3**

***Beyond Bars: Expanding Support for Incarcerated Survivors of Sexual Violence***

Room 110

***Expanding Access: Trauma-Informed Medical Care for Sexual Assault Survivors in NYC***

Room 302

**TRANSITION**

**PLENARY PANEL**

***Moving Forward Together: Building a Collaborative Future in Sexual Violence Response***

Room 101

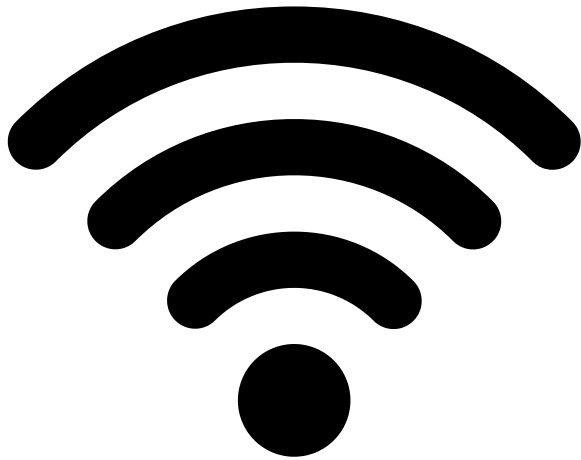
**CLOSING**

***Emily Miles,***

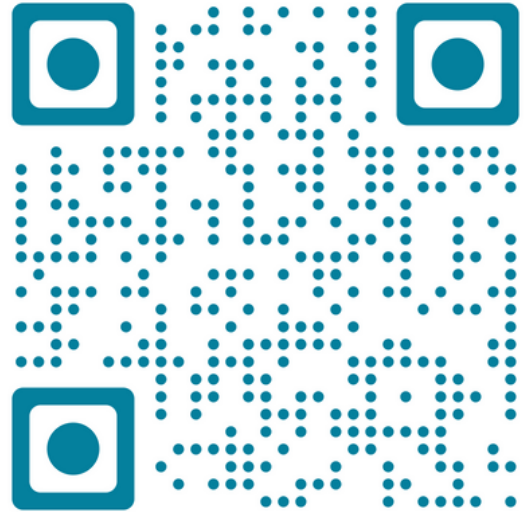
New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault



# RESOURCES



CenterEvents  
PW: Event208



**CONFERENCE  
PROGRAM  
(BIOS + RESOURCES)**



**SEXUAL VIOLENCE  
SURVIVOR  
RESOURCE GUIDE**



**CONFERENCE  
EVALUATION**



# SESSION #1

## PANEL DESCRIPTIONS

### **Supporting Our Youngest Survivors: Enhancing Care for Pediatric Sexual Violence in New York City**

**Room 110**

**Moderator: Nancy Harris**, Medical Manager/ Regional Child Advocacy Centers/ SPHP

**Description:** In New York City, the need for comprehensive, compassionate, and effective care for pediatric survivors of sexual violence is vital. This panel brings together experts in the response to pediatric survivors of sexual violence to provide an overview of the current system of care and explore ways to strengthen support for young survivors. Panelists will discuss the unique challenges faced by child survivors, the role of multidisciplinary collaboration in trauma-informed care, and opportunities for improvement within the existing framework.

#### **Panelists:**

**Aaron Miller, MD,MPA**, AVP Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment, NYC Health + Hospitals

**Jaclynn Dawood**, Detective, NYPD

**John Pickett**, VP of Child Advocacy Centers, Safe Horizon

**Lori Legano, M.D.**, Bellevue Hospital/NYU Langone Health



## **Lessons Learned and Best Practices for New York City Sexual Violence Prevention**

**Room 310**

**Moderator: Sam Skaller**, New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault

**Description:** Join us for a dynamic panel event featuring experts from New York City-based programs dedicated to sexual violence prevention. We'll explore cutting-edge strategies, share success stories from NYC initiatives, and discuss collaborative efforts to create safer communities in our city. Gain insights into innovative prevention methods tailored to NYC's unique landscape and learn how to implement effective programs in your own practice.

### **Panelists:**

**Havann Brown**, Campus Intern, New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault

**Hermayoli Colon**, Project DOT Assistant Coordinator, New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault

**Jennifer Le**, Community Education and Outreach Manager, Womankind

**Jovan Martinez**, STEPS-Early RAPP Community Educator, Rising Ground

**Scarlett Thompson**, Senior Prevention Coordinator, New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault





## **Digital Boundaries: Addressing the Growing Crisis of Cyber Sexual Assault**

**Room 101**

**Presenter: Lana Ramjit**, Director, Clinic to End Tech Abuse, Cornell

**Description:** Technology can be used to facilitate harm, including harassment, stalking, and even sexual abuse. Advocates have increasingly gained awareness and understanding of technology-facilitated harms. In this session, we move beyond awareness, devoting the majority of our time to response. We will discuss relevant statutes and laws in NYC addressing cyberviolence, prepare to help survivors navigate their criminal and civil legal options, and learn strategies that survivors can take immediately and without legal counsel.



## **Survivor Recovery: Accessing Supportive Services Throughout the Healing Journey**

**Room 302**

**Moderator: Carolyn El Serafi**, New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault

**Description:** Join us for a discussion with multi-service agency providers about the unique and diverse needs of sexual assault survivors. This session will identify the challenges and gaps in meeting individual needs; concluding with a discussion about the systemic, legislative and policy improvements needed to improve overall care for survivors no matter where they are in their healing journey.

### **Panelists:**

**Aditi Bhattacharya**, Director, Clinical Services, New York City Anti Violence Project

**Cynthia Amodeo**, CEO, Barrier Free Living

**Evelyn Trinidad-Armenia**, Director of Children and Family Services, Crime Victims Assistance Bureau, Office of the District Attorney - Bronx County

**Jeanette Gambaro**, Senior Sexual Assault Advocate, Office of the District Attorney - Bronx County

**Jennifer DiCarli**, Deputy Commissioner, Family Justice Center and Survivor Supports, Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence

**Kavita Mehra**, Executive Director, Sakhi for South Asian Survivors



# SESSION #2

## PANEL DESCRIPTIONS

### **Navigating NYS Civil Law Remedies for Survivors of Sexual Violence**

**Room 110**

**Moderator: Natasha Johnson**, Globalizing Gender

**Description:** Join us for an informative workshop on the civil law remedies available to survivors of sexual violence in New York State. This session will cover recent updates to statutes of limitation, guide participants through the civil case process, and provide insight into potential outcomes and remedies. Participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of the legal options available, and the steps involved in pursuing civil action. This workshop will equip you with valuable knowledge about navigating the civil legal system.

#### **Panelists:**

**Dan Ellis**, Attorney, Herman Law

**Helene M. Weiss**, Partner, Marsh Law Firm PLLC

**Madeleine Skaller**, Attorney, Levy Konigsberg LLP

**Sydney Zazzaro**, Associate Attorney, Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward & Maazel LLP



## **Empowering Communities: Culturally Responsive Strategies in Sexual Violence Prevention and Survivor Care**

**Room 101**

**Moderator: Shilpy Chatterjee**, New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault

**Description:** This panel will explore the critical role of culturally specific service providers in supporting survivors of sexual violence across diverse communities in New York City. Panelists will share insights into the unique challenges they face in addressing sexual violence within their communities, along with the culturally responsive strategies they employ to provide survivor-centered, compassionate care. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of the importance of cultural context in service provision, as well as actionable ways the broader community can engage with and support these essential organizations in their mission to combat sexual violence.

### **Panelists:**

**Alida Tchicamboud**, CEO/Founder, Healing Hands Incorporated

**Jeehae Fischer**, Executive Director, The Korean American Family Service Center

**Margarita Guzman**, Executive Director, VIP Mujeres



# **Towards a Supportive Legal Process: Navigating a Survivor-Centered Approach in NYC's Criminal Justice System**

**Room 310**

**Moderator: Judy Harris Klugger, Sanctuary For Families**

**Description:** As survivors of sexual violence navigate the criminal justice system, they often encounter challenges that can hinder healing and access to justice. This panel brings together experts from New York City's legal and advocacy communities to explore what it means to create a truly survivor-centered criminal justice system. Panelists will discuss the systemic barriers that make legal processes difficult for survivors, best practices for trauma-informed engagement, and the importance of collaboration between prosecutors, law enforcement, and advocates. Together, they'll examine how NYC can improve the responsiveness of its legal systems, foster survivor trust, and implement policies that better align with the emotional, psychological, and practical needs of those seeking justice.

## **Panelists:**

**Eric Rosenbaum**, Bureau Chief, Special Victims Bureau, Queens County District Attorney's Office

**Kathleen Collins Baer**, Director/Executive Counsel, Special Victims Division, New York City Police Department

**Maureen Curtis**, Vice President of Criminal Justice Programs, Safe Horizon

**Melissa O'Leary**, Deputy Chief of the Special Victims Division, Richmond County District Attorney's Office

**Michelle Kaminsky**, Chief of Gender Based Violence Division, Kings County District Attorney



## **Shaping the Future: Key Budget and Legislative Priorities to Strengthen Sexual Violence Response in New York State**

**Room 302**

**Moderator: Michael Polenberg, Safe Horizon**

**Description:** As New York State prepares for its upcoming legislative and budget sessions, this panel will delve into the critical opportunities to advance survivor-centered policies and funding priorities to enhance sexual violence response and services. Featuring key advocates and service providers, this session will explore legislative pathways and budgetary needs to address systemic gaps, bolster protections, and improve resources for survivors across the state. Panelists will provide insights on current priorities, potential new initiatives, and actionable steps to advocate for stronger support frameworks.

### **Panelists:**

**Emily Miles**, Executive Director, New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault

**Ilse Knecht**, Policy and Advocacy Director, Joyful Heart Foundation

**Kimberly Haight**, Director of Advocacy, New York State Children's Alliance

**Quadira Coles**, Director of Policy, Girls for Gender Equity



# SESSION #3

## PANEL DESCRIPTIONS

### *Expanding Access: Trauma-Informed Medical Care for Survivors in NYC*

**Room 302**

**Moderator: Karolina Valentine, CVTC**

**Description:** In New York City, survivors of sexual assault encounter significant obstacles when seeking immediate medical care and ongoing trauma-informed support. This panel will bring together local experts to explore how the city can transform its response systems to prioritize accessible, survivor-centered medical care. Panelists will examine current gaps in medical and trauma-informed services, highlight the role of cross-sector collaboration, and discuss practical strategies to make medical care more inclusive and responsive. This session will equip stakeholders with actionable insights to help build a comprehensive, community-driven response to sexual violence in New York City.

#### **Panelists:**

**Andrew Wollowitz, MD**, Vice-Chair, Department of Emergency Medicine, Montefiore Medical Center

**Rachel Sullivan**, Supervisor, New York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center

**Rachelle Obusan-Gonzalez**, PA-C and SART Coordinator, NYC Health + Hospitals Elmhurst and Queens Hospital

**Verena Salvi, LCSW**, SAFE Coordinator, NYP - DOVE



## **Beyond A Carceral Framework: Empowering Survivors Through Community Care**

**Room 310**

**Moderator: Ponny White**, New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault

**Description:** This panel will explore community-led alternatives to traditional law enforcement responses to sexual violence, focusing on how restorative justice and community care practices can support survivors of trauma. Our panelists will offer insights on survivor-centered approaches that prioritize autonomy, safety, and community well-being. They will also share their experiences supporting survivors navigating the legal system and provide practical strategies for first responders and community leaders to engage with survivors without relying on punitive or carceral systems.

### **Panelists:**

**Brittany Chambers**, Enough is Enough and Restorative Justice Coordinator, Kingsbridge Heights Community Center

**Erika Sasson**, Consultant and Practitioner of Restorative Justice

**Javon Treherne**, College Directions Coordinator, Kingsbridge Heights Community Center

**Kassiel Gonzalez**, Restorative Justice Program Manager, Violence Intervention Program





## **Strengthening the Frontlines: Empowering Survivors Through Community Care**

**Room 101**

**Moderator: Tracia “Trae” Banuelos-Rovaris**, New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault

**Description:** New York City’s rape crisis programs are vital to supporting survivors of sexual violence, yet these programs face significant challenges, including advocate shortages, accessibility gaps, and limited coordination across services. This panel brings together leaders from NYC rape crisis programs who oversee advocate initiatives to discuss the current state of services, the challenges of recruiting and retaining advocates, and strategies for delivering trauma-informed, inclusive care to survivors. Through shared insights and practical strategies, panelists will explore ways to create a resilient, well-coordinated support network that ensures comprehensive care and empowers advocates to sustain their impactful work.

### **Panelists:**

**Amy Iwanowicz**, Community Programs Manager, Crime Victims Treatment Center

**Arianna Argotte**, Program Manager, Violence Intervention and Treatment Program

**Kimmi Herring**, Associate Vice President of Community Programs, Safe Horizon

**Silva Sergenian**, SAFE Program and Volunteer Coordinator, Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program

**Zach Evenson**, New York Presbyterian DOVE



## **Beyond Bars: Expanding Support for Incarcerated Survivors of Sexual Violence**

**Room 110**

**Moderator: Samantha Max, Gothamist/WNYC**

**Description:** Incarcerated survivors of sexual violence face unique vulnerabilities and substantial barriers to accessing the support they need. This panel brings together experts from New York's rape crisis programs and the statewide coalition to explore the essential role of services for incarcerated survivors, the impact of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), and the gaps that persist due to stigma and limited resources. Panelists will discuss practical strategies for engaging service providers in this critical work, overcoming barriers, and building partnerships that bring trauma-informed, compassionate care to incarcerated survivors. Attendees will gain insights into how they can contribute to a supportive network, ensuring dignity and care for all survivors.

### **Panelists:**

**Carla Brekke, LCSW, Associate Director of Social Work, NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue**

**Clarissa Espinoza, Director of Programs, New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault**

**Melissa Belz, PREA Program Coordinator, New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault**

**Zoë Loewenberg, PREA Staff Therapist, Crime Victims Treatment Center**



# PLENARY PANEL

## **Moving Forward Together: Building a Collaborative Future in Sexual Violence Response**

**Room 101**

**Moderator: Josie Torielli, Clinical Social Worker**

**Description:** In this plenary panel session, leaders from diverse sectors of New York City's sexual violence response community will discuss strategies for fostering a stronger, more cohesive network of support for survivors. Panelists will bring their unique perspectives to the table, exploring current challenges and opportunities in cross-sector collaboration. Together, they will share insights on how to better coordinate services, bridge gaps in communication, and build a unified vision for a survivor centered, trauma informed response system that truly meets to needs of the full diversity of survivors in New York City.

### **Panelists:**

**Alena Victor, Chief Program Officer, Womankind**

**Angela Fernandez, Assistant Director, Mount Sinai Hospital Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program**

**Carlos Ortiz, Deputy Chief, New York City Police Department**

**Rama B. Rao, Medical Director, SAFE Program, New York-Presbyterian Weill Cornell**

**Shannon Lacey, Deputy Chief, Special Victims Division, Manhattan District Attorney's Office**



# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!!!

## Honoring the Mission of the NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault

*PLUS proudly partners with the NYC Alliance in the mission to end sexual violence.*

Since 1999, the NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault has been at the forefront of preventing sexual violence, supporting survivors, and advocating for systemic change through education, prevention, and policy reform. As a leader in creating a safe, inclusive New York City, the Alliance remains steadfast in its dedication to every survivor, ally, and community member, ensuring that all individuals—regardless of identity—deserve a life free from violence.

At PLUS, we are honored to stand with the Alliance, providing the financial expertise and dedicated support that amplifies their impact. Our commitment goes beyond numbers—we empower nonprofits like the Alliance to focus on what truly matters: the safety, support, and resilience of our community.



"We don't just balance sheets; we balance missions."

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# CTS



## Mission Critical IT

**Emily Miles (she/her/hers)***Executive Director*

Emily Miles serves as the Executive Director of the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault. Her prior roles include serving as the Chief Policy and Program Officer at FPWA and in the Obama Administration in the Office of the Vice President and the U.S. Department of Education managing gender-based violence initiatives. She holds a master's degree in social work from Columbia University and a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Georgia.

**Clarissa Espinoza (she/her/ella)***Director of Programs*

Clarissa Espinoza serves as the Director of Programs. For over 15 years, her work has focused on delivering trauma-informed, survivor-centered, and culturally competent support to survivors of crime, with a particular emphasis on sexual violence. She has led key initiatives, including PREA services, Nightlife Prevention, S.A.F.E. Training, Hospital and Helpline Advocacy, Volunteer Recruitment, and First Responder Training across New York State. Clarissa holds a B.S. in Criminology and Women & Gender Studies from The College of New Jersey and a M.A. in Nonprofit Management from The New School. Clarissa has been instrumental in expanding and strengthening rape crisis services across New York State, driven by her commitment to fostering community-based healing for survivors.

**Mark Cardona (he/him/his)***Director of Finance and Operations*

Mark has over 7 years of experience in the non-profit sector and currently serves as the Director of Finance & Operations at the NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault. In his positions he has demonstrated his commitment, overseeing site operations and staff and ensuring organizational excellence.

**Chloe Sarapas (she/her/hers)***Development & Communications Manager*

Chloe Sarapas is a fundraising and communications specialist focused on addressing gender-based violence. As a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) with an undergraduate degree in Psychology, Chloe is passionate about developing mutually beneficial relationships with donors, businesses, foundations, and communities dedicated to social justice.

**Carolyn El Safari (she/her/hers)***SAFETI Coordinator*

Carolyn El Serafi is the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Training Institute (SAFE-TI) Coordinator at NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault. In this role, she is responsible for ensuring that the forensic training healthcare professionals receive is up-to-date, trauma-informed, and comprehensively prepares them to provide compassionate care to reduce the systemic harm done to survivors of sexual assault. As a Licensed Master of Social Work, Ms. El Serafi applies a holistic, person-centered lens to her work. Prior to changing careers, Carolyn spent a decade in non-profit administration after completing her service in the United States Peace Corps. Her career in sexual violence prevention and response began when she co-founded and led an advocacy group representing survivors from her hometown on Long Island. They successfully advocated for school District-wide policy changes, the appointment of a Citizens Advisory Committee, and led an awareness campaign to educate community members about grooming and sexual violence. Ms. El Serafi received her Master of Social Work from New York University and a Bachelor of Arts from Providence College.

**Crystal Ward (she/her/hers)***Training Coordinator*

Crystal is the Training Coordinator for the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault. As a former Indianapolis Police officer of eight years, Crystal has worked with trauma survivors as well as victims of sexual assault. Crystal is a professional trainer and has trained the FBI, law enforcement, nonprofits, judges, district attorneys and faith-based institutions throughout the country on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. She is a former legislative aide and speechwriter for the former Minority Leader of the Ohio Senate. Crystal holds a bachelor's degree from Indiana University-Bloomington, as well as a master's degree from Long Island University-Brooklyn.

**Sam Skaller (she/they)***Senior Campus Coordinator*

Sam Skaller (she/they) has served as the Senior Campus Coordinator at the NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault since 2019, collaborating with up to 15 colleges and universities to provide sexual violence prevention training and technical assistance. Sam has initiated several student volunteer programs and currently leads the Collegiate Changemaker Fellowship Program, empowering students to become advocates for change. Sam holds an undergraduate degree from Syracuse University and a master's degree from McGill University, where they focused on musicology and gender, sexuality, and feminist studies. They are currently pursuing an advanced certificate in Public Policy at the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies and are also completing the Sexuality Educator Certification through the Sexual Health Alliance.

**Scarlett Thompson (she/her)***Senior Prevention Coordinator*

Scarlett is a sexual violence preventionist, consent educator, and rape crisis advocate. At the Alliance, Scarlett facilitates prevention programs for youth and for NYC nightlife. Previously, Scarlett worked as the Enough is Enough Coordinator for the Bronx and in the Support, Advocacy, and Violence Prevention Office at Vassar College. Scarlett is constantly interrogating how to advance equity, inspire change, and grow relationships within facilitation.

**Shilpy Chatterjee (she/her)***Senior Prevention Coordinator*

Shilpy Chatterjee is a committed Senior Prevention Coordinator at the Alliance, bringing a wealth of experience in sexual violence prevention and youth empowerment. With a degree in Law from the University of Delhi, she began her career as a farmer and tribal rights activist, advocating for underserved communities. This role gave her the invaluable chance to engage with people from diverse backgrounds and lived realities, shaping her dedication to justice and equity. Transitioning into work with survivors of gender-based violence, she developed a deep understanding of how each step forward contributes to breaking the cycle of violence. Working with survivors of domestic violence and sexual violence strengthened her commitment to survivor-centered advocacy and also support survivors through culturally specific and linguistically appropriate services. Shilpy's dedication extends beyond the workplace; she serves as a board member of Udayan, contributing to its mission of social justice and child rights. Shilpy has received honors such as the 2019 Advocate of New York City award and a citation from the New York State Assembly. It recognizes her impactful work with survivors



## NYCAASA STAFF



### **Ponny White (she/her)**

*Senior Prevention Coordinator*

Ponny White (she/her) is an NYU MA student, reproductive justice advocate, and storyteller. She's worked with Planned Parenthood, Advocates for Youth, and more to uplift BIPOC girls, young women, and GNC youth. Ponny has spoken at over 20 conferences, including NSAC and Black Girl Freedom Fund, and currently serves as Senior Prevention Coordinator at the NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault, co-managing Project DOT.



**Aaron Miller, MD, MPA (he/him)**

*AVP Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment, NYC Health + Hospitals*

Aaron J. Miller, MD, MPA, is Director of the Child Abuse and Sexual Assault (CASA) Clinic at Lincoln Hospital, and he serves as Assistant Vice President for Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment across the NYC Health + Hospitals system of 11 hospitals and 26 pediatric clinics.

**Aditi Bhattacharya (she/her)**

*Director, Client Services, New York City Anti Violence Project (AVP)*

Aditi is the Director of Client Services at the NYC Anti Violence Project, and has been practicing trauma informed and culturally centered anti-violence clinical and social work since 2010. A graduate of Silberman School of Social Work, and a NASW Emerging Leader in 2014, Aditi stewards AVP's hotline, counseling and advocacy work to amplify the voices of LGBTQ+ and HIV impacted survivors of all kinds of violence, and push for systems that are anti-oppressive, anti-racist and center community-led care. She is a professor at Columbia University School of Social Work and John Jay College of Criminal Justice Forensic Mental Health. She is a Forensic Evaluator, working in New York and New Jersey court systems around Coercive Control and DVSJA. Aditi is also a certified Death Doula and practices gift economy in her support of persons meeting their mortal arc. Aditi grounds all this work for herself in farming practice. As a settler on unceded Lenape Land, she is grateful to serve the Ramapo Lunaape Turtle Clan on their farm, to advance food Justice to the Turtle Clan community in Central New Jersey.

**Alena Victor (she/her)**

*Chief Program Officer, Womankind*

Alena Victor is the Chief Program Officer at Womankind overseeing the Clients Services and Operations departments within the organization. She is a licensed Social Worker in New York and joined Womankind in 2011. Coming from a Pakistani immigrant family, she seeks to uplift and elevate immigrant voices, especially around gender-based violence. Alena focuses her work on combating societal norms that support subjugation based on gender identity and works to increase collaborative and community-based interventions to engage in a collective and participatory approach to combating gender-based violence within immigrant communities. Alena has been in the field for over 20 years, starting out in the child welfare field then youth development work and eventually landing her focus to working in gender based violence field for close to 13 years. Alena also provides psychotherapy services part-time to individuals experiencing different forms of trauma.

**Alida Tchicamboud (she/her)**

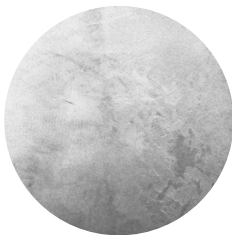
*CEO/Founder, Healing Hands Incorporated*

Inspiring motivational speaker Alida Tchicamboud speaks candidly from personal and professional experience about sexual assault, domestic violence and commercial sexual exploitation. Each keynote is crafted to specific audience needs and clients' goals. Nominated as the 2022 New York City Advocate by NYC Mayor's Office to end domestic and gender-based violence, Alida is a full-time trauma-informed consultant who uses her experience and expertise to empower survivors and help them live a positive life after trauma.

**Amy Iwanowicz (she/her)**

*Community Programs Manager, Crime Victims Treatment Center*

Amy (she/her) is the Community Programs Manager at Crime Victims Treatment Center (CVTC), a nonprofit in New York City that provides free counseling and legal services to survivors of interpersonal violence. In her role, she is responsible for the management of the organization's volunteer rape crisis and domestic violence advocate program. Amy also sits on the New York State Office of Victim Services Advisory Council. Prior to joining CVTC, Amy worked in the private sector in Government Affairs & Public Policy. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Government from Smith College.

**Andrew Wollowitz (he/him)**

*MD, Vice-Chair, Department of Emergency Medicine, Montefiore Medical Center*

No Bio Available

**Angela Fernandez (she/her)**

*Assistant Director, Mount Sinai Hospital Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention (SAVI) Program*

Angela Fernandez currently holds the position of Assistant Director for Mount Sinai Hospital's Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention (SAVI) Program. In this role, Ms. Fernandez works within a multidisciplinary system to ensure all survivors of sexual and intimate partner violence receive trauma-informed essential services with dignity, respect and compassion. She brings with her twenty-five years of advocacy and program development experience specializing in sexual health, violence prevention, and trauma-informed approaches to care. Before assuming her current role with the SAVI Program, Ms. Fernandez was serving as a Training and Curriculum Development Program Manager for Primary Care Development Corporation in the Performance Improvement Program. In this capacity, Angela transformed the way healthcare needs are addressed by emphasizing the importance of understanding how a person's social determinants of health and experiences with trauma directly impact their health outcomes later in life. Ms. Fernandez has been an active voice within the NYC victim services community pushing for a more comprehensive response to survivors of gender-based violence, emphasizing the importance of cross-system collaboration and partnership.

**Arianna Argotte (she/her/hers)**

*Program Manager, Violence Intervention & Treatment Program*

Arianna is the Program Manager of the Violence Intervention & Treatment Program (VITP) at Wyckoff Heights Medical Center. She is a licensed Mental Health Counselor and has been working with survivors since 2017. Prior to her transition to Program Manager earlier this year, she worked as the VITP Sexual Assault Coordinator for 4 years.

**Brittany Chambers (she/hers)**

*Enough is Enough & Restorative Justice Coordinator, Kingsbridge Heights Community Center*

Brittany is currently the RJ/ EIE coordinator at KHCC, she actively works within the Bronx community helping create events to educate as well as benefit the neighborhood collectively. Brittany coaches youth basketball work, with special needs children part time actively works with the families of incarcerated individuals to promote unity and prison reform.

**Carlos Ortiz (he/him/his)**

*Deputy Chief, New York City Police Department*

Deputy Chief Carlos Ortiz is a 26-year veteran of the NYPD. He joined the department in April of 1997 and began his career on patrol in the 44 Precinct. He is currently the Commanding Officer of the Special Victims Division. Previously, he was the Special Projects Inspector in the Patrol Services Bureau and the Commanding Officer of the 115 Precinct. He served as the Detective Borough Bronx Duty Captain for both Zone 7 and Zone 20, covering all the heavy, high-crime precincts within the Bronx, as well as being the Executive Officer for both the 24 and 32 Precincts. Throughout his career, he also held positions within Police Service Area 8 and the 45 Precinct. Deputy Chief Ortiz earned a Bachelor's Degree from Depauw University in Indiana, is a graduate of the Homeland Security Executive Leaders Program at Naval Post Graduate School for Homeland Defense and Security, as well as a graduate of the Senior Management Institute for Police at the Police Executive Research Forum.

**Cynthia Amodeo (she/hers)***CEO, Barrier Free Living*

Mrs. Cynthia Amodeo is a licensed mental health counselor who specializes in the intersection of domestic violence and disabilities. Her current role is Barrier Free Living's Chief Executive Officer. She began as a children's counselor at Freedom House in 2008 and has since held several leadership positions in the agency including Coordinator of Family Services, Director of Family Services, Director of Social Services, and Chief Program Officer. Ms. Amodeo has provided training and technical assistance around the intersection of domestic violence and disability for the past 10 years. She presents both locally and nationally to spread awareness about how domestic violence affects people with disabilities, how agencies can become culturally accessible for people with disabilities, and how ableism impacts clinical practices. Before working at Barrier Free Living, Ms. Amodeo counseled children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and survivors of the 2001 World Trade Center attack. Ms. Amodeo received her Master of Education and Master of Arts from Teacher's College, Columbia University in 2006.

**Dan Ellis (he/him)***Attorney, Herman Law*

Dan Ellis is the Senior Attorney at Herman Law's New York office. Dan has spent his entire career representing survivors of sexual abuse, starting as an intern at Herman Law in 2012. Since that time, Dan has represented thousands of survivors in litigation against institutions the Catholic Church, daycares and public schools as well as against several high profile individuals. Dan has taken several sexual abuse cases to trial and has secured over \$100 million in settlements on behalf of his clients. Dan has also dedicated a portion of his practice to pro bono representation of undocumented children facing deportation in immigration proceedings.

**Eric Rosenbaum (he/him)**

*Bureau Chief of Special Victims Bureau, Queens County District Attorney*

Eric Rosenbaum has been a prosecutor in Queens County since 1994 and was appointed Chief of the Special Victims Bureau in 2020 by DA Melinda Katz. Prior to becoming Bureau Chief, Eric served as Deputy Chief in Special Victims and also as Chief of DNA Prosecutions for many years. Eric is a senior legislative advisor to the District Attorneys Association of New York State for which he co-chairs the Legislative Committee on Special Victims and Domestic Violence. Eric has also served, through the U.S. Department of State and UNICEF, as a legal advisor to the Jordanian Family Protectorate and judiciary regarding law enforcement and judicial responses to gender-based violence and child abuse, and to the government of Malawi on the establishing of one-stop child advocacy centers throughout the country. In recent years, Eric has developed and conducted trainings on trauma-informed, survivor-focused interviewing for prosecutors throughout New York State. He also lectures in New York and nationally on advanced trial advocacy, special victims prosecutions, and forensic DNA best practices.

**Erika Sasson (she/her)**

*Consultant and Practitioner of Restorative Justice*

Erika Sasson is an attorney, consultant, and practitioner who designs and facilitates restorative justice processes, including for intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and homicide. She also teaches at Vermont Law School, and is a 2023 David Prize Winner. Learn more at [erikasasson.com](http://erikasasson.com).

**Evelyn Trinidad-Armenia (she/her)**

*Director of Children & Family Services, Crime Victims Assistance Bureau - Office of the District Attorney Bronx County*

Evelyn Trinidad-Armenia is the Director of Children and Family Services at the Crime Victims Assistance Bureau (CVAB) within the Special Victims Division of the Bronx District Attorney's Office. Evelyn is a Hunter College graduate with a Clinical Social Work License. Evelyn has over two decades of experience working with victims of crime, specifically survivors of domestic violence, gender-based violence, sexual assault, and homicide survivors. Evelyn is responsible for overseeing the Bureau's mental health program comprised of Therapists and Social Work Interns in addition to providing direct supervision to some of the bureau's specialty crime victim advocates, including the sexual assault, Enough is Enough College Campus, Child Advocate, and Human Trafficking Social Worker.

**Havann Brown (she/her)**

*Campus Intern, New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault*

Havann is a junior at NYU majoring in Metropolitan Studies. She currently engages in Restorative Praxis at NYU's Center on Violence and Recovery and serves as the Campus Intern for the NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault, supporting sexual violence prevention programs on college campuses.

**Helene M. Weiss (she/hers)**

*Partner, Marsh Law Firm PLLC*

Helene is a Partner at Marsh Law Firm and works to protect the rights of survivors of abuse. Helene works on a wide range of matters representing survivors of childhood sexual abuse, Title IX campus sexual abuse, harassment & retaliation. Helene has successfully litigated both civil and criminal trials. She is a former Special Victims Bureau Prosecutor and worked in the Nassau County District Attorney's Office for nearly four years, where she prosecuted an extensive array of criminal matters including child abuse, sexual abuse, elder abuse, and domestic violence. Helene presently serves as a Special Professor of Law at Hofstra Law School. She has appeared as an expert legal commentator on Inside Edition (CBS), and has presented CLEs and seminars at national conferences.

**Hermayoli Colon (she/her)**

*Project DOT Assistant Coordinator, New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault*

Hermayoli Colon (she/her) is a sophomore at Lehman College studying social work. She is an alumni of Project DOT, which she participated in through Grand Street Settlement, and currently works as a DOT Assistant Coordinator.

**Ilse Knecht**

*Director of Policy and Advocacy, Joyful Heart Foundation*

Ilse has 20 years invested in victim advocacy and is a nationally recognized expert on the rape kit backlog. She leads Joyful Heart's End The Backlog campaign, which is at the forefront of identifying untested rape kits across the country, appealing for laws and policies to improve criminal justice responses to sexual violence; and working with jurisdictions to assist them to develop and implement survivor-centered reforms. Previously, Ilse spent 16 years at the National Center for Victims of Crime, where she created the DNA Resource Center and led the center's efforts to reform policies and practices related to testing rape kits. She credits her mother with instilling a duty in her to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

**Jaclynn Dawood (she/her)**

*Detective, New York City Police Department*

Detective Dawood has been an officer with the New York City Police Department for the last 12 years. The past seven years, she has been a Detective for the Special Victims Division, Bronx Child Abuse Squad. She has investigated cases involving the allegations of physical and sexual abuse against children. Advocating for child victims and their families. Working along side Child Protective Services and the District Attorney's office to bring forward justice.

**Javon Treherne (he/him)**

*College Directions Coordinator, Kingsbridge Heights Community Center*

As a proud Bronx native and College Directions Coordinator at Kingsbridge Heights Community Center, my passion for empowering youth comes from witnessing the untapped brilliance in our communities. I believe these often-overlooked areas are home to the next generation of bold thinkers and leaders. My mission is to guide them toward authentic success—being pillars of change in their communities while nourishing their own souls. I stand firm in my belief that real change starts from within, and the future begins in the heart of our neighborhoods.



**Jeanette Gambaro (she/her)**

*Senior Sexual Assault Advocate, Office of the District Attorney, Bronx County*

Jeanette Gambaro is the Senior Sexual Assault Advocate at the Crime Victims Assistance Bureau (CVAB) within the Special Victims Division of the Bronx District Attorney's Office. Jeanette has worked for the Bronx District Attorney's Office for nearly 20 years. She started at CVAB in 1991 as a general advocate and began working with families of homicide victims. Shortly after that, she started to co-facilitate support groups for those families as well. This earned her a promotion to general advocate supervisor, a position she served until 2001. In 2018, she began working as an advocate for the Rape Crisis and Prevention pilot program. She was promoted to Senior Sexual Assault Advocate a year later. Along with overseeing the other Sexual Assault Advocate, she now collaborates with a multitude of programs and engages with community outreach programs to raise awareness of sexual abuse and to promote the services provided by the Rape Crisis and Prevention program.

**Jeehae Fischer (she/her/hers)**

*Executive Director, The Korean American Family Service Center*

Jeehae Fischer returned to the Korean American Family Service Center (KAFSC) in 2019 as the Executive Director, having previously served as the Director of Programs and Administration from 2012 to 2015. As a person of color working in an immigrant-led and immigrant-serving organization, she possesses a deep understanding of the numerous barriers and challenges faced by the Asian American community, especially survivors of gender-based violence, in their daily lives. Jeehae initially joined the KAFSC team in 2011 as the Self-Sufficiency Program Coordinator (now known as the Economic Empowerment Program), where she directly worked with immigrant survivors of gender-based violence and advocated for their needs in various ways. During her tenure as the Executive Director, Jeehae successfully led KAFSC in doubling its budget and expanding its capacity to serve immigrant survivors of gender-based violence. Prior to her return to KAFSC, she held the position of Director of Development and Communications at the Internationals Network for Public Schools, focusing on education for immigrant students. In addition to her role at KAFSC, Jeehae is currently a NYS Governor appointed member of the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence Council and she is currently a member of the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV) Committee. She also serves on the board of Mekong NYC. Jeehae holds a Master of Science in Nonprofit Management from The New School for Management and Urban Policy in New York, NY.

**Jennifer Le (they/them)**

*Community Education & Outreach Manager, Womankind*

Jennifer is the Community Education and Outreach Manager at Womankind; their background is in intimate partner violence and racial inequity research, which informs their programming. Jennifer is a community organizer beginning their MSW journey in social work, hoping to advance abolitionist practice.

**Jennifer DiCarli (she/her)**

*Deputy Commissioner, Family Justice Center & Support Services, Mayor's Office to End Domestic & Gender-Based Violence*

Jennifer DeCarli is the Deputy Commissioner for Family Justice Centers and Survivor Supports at the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV). In this role, she oversees the operations of the City's five Family Justice Centers, as well as other survivor support programs, including the office's housing initiatives work. She has over 25 years' experience working with survivors of domestic and gender-based violence and has dedicated her professional career to supporting survivors and helping them access and navigate the systems and supports they feel will lead them to safety. She holds a master's degree in social work from NYU and a law degree from the University at Buffalo School of Law. She has held several leadership positions during her career including Director of the Safe Horizon Brooklyn Family Court Program and their Staten Island Family and Criminal Court Program; Executive Director of the Brooklyn Family Justice Center for ENDGBV and Director of Legal Services at Her Justice. Prior to her work in New York City, she represented domestic violence survivors in Family Court in upstate New York and worked for the Empire Justice Center providing technical assistance and capacity building to communities and legal services agencies specializing in assisting domestic violence survivors.

**John Pickett (he/him/his)**

*Associate Vice President of Child Advocacy Centers, Safe Horizon*

John Pickett has over 28 years of diverse practice in the social service field as a clinician, leader, forensic interviewer, and trainer. He holds a master's degree in Forensic Psychology and a master's degree in Social Work. He has specialized training and expertise in the areas of trauma, crisis intervention, child forensic interviewing, and child abuse. He's currently the Associate Vice President of Child Advocacy Center at Safe Horizon where he oversees the five Child Advocacy Centers in New York City that annually provide support to over 9000 children and their families. His experience includes work in hospital psychiatric emergency rooms, elementary school, and internationally in South Africa and with Doctors Without Borders in Indonesia.

**Josie Torielli (she/her/hers)**

*Clinical Social Worker, Josie Torielli LCSW Consulting*

Josie has worked with Interpersonal Violence since 2004. Her goal is to ensure access to expert and compassionate care following the experience of trauma. Of particular interest is work with communities, activism, supervision, development of professional self, macro-systems improvement, and the recognition of vicarious trauma. To relieve stress, she occasionally asks her colleagues to 'dance it out' with her. She is a terrible dancer. Josie earned her BA from Syracuse University, her MSSW from Columbia University, and has completed post-graduate training in Advanced Trauma Treatment via the Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy. Prior experience includes work with the NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault, Training Institute for Mental Health, Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy, Aldea Counseling Services, New York Presbyterian Hospital, Safe Horizon and The Long Island College Hospital. She currently works as a freelance consultant, advising on work with trauma, clinical practice, and training initiatives. She has maintained her own psychotherapy practice since 2009, and is a Senior Lecturer at Columbia University School of Social Work.

**Jovan Martinez (she/her)**

*Supervisor for the Early Relationship Abuse Prevention Program, Rising Ground*

Jovan aka Miss Jay (she/her) is a Bronx Native, former RAPP Peer leader who has been committed to uplifting young folks voices for over 15 years. She strives to create spaces for youth centered voices to be heard, through her love and passion for writing and poetry Jovan works to infuse creativity and activism to break the silence around domestic violence.

**Judy Harris Kluger (she/her/hers)***CEO, Sanctuary For Families*

Since assuming the role of Executive Director at Sanctuary for Families in 2014, Judge Kluger has secured substantial new sources of private and public funding, growing the agency budget from approximately \$15 million to a budget of \$32 million today. Under her leadership, Sanctuary's Legal Center launched new programs to address the unique needs of college sexual assault survivors, incarcerated gender violence survivors, and Orthodox Jewish survivors. Sanctuary has also expanded its innovative Economic Empowerment Program, launched the first worker coop initiative for current and former clients, realigned the organization's clinical practice to a family-focused, evidence-based therapeutic model to help rebuild parent-child relationships, and shifted all services to virtual platforms to increase client accessibility. Prior to joining Sanctuary, Judge Kluger served for 25 years as a judge in New York State, most recently as Chief of Policy and Planning for the court system, a position through which she oversaw New York State's 300 problem-solving courts. Judge Kluger currently serves on the Special Victims Division Advisory Committee, the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV) Advisory Council, New York State Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts, and the advisory board of New York Nonprofit Media. She is also a member of the Chief Judge's Justice Task Force and the Independent Commission on NYC Criminal Justice and Incarceration Reform. Judge Kluger has received many honors and awards including the New York State Bar Association's 2013 Award for Excellence in Public Service, the New York Women's Bar Association's 2019 President's Special Award, and the Fund for Modern Courts' 2020 Career Public Service Award.

**Karolina Valentine (she/her/ella)***SAFE Program Manager, Crime Victims Treatment Center*

Karolina Valentine is currently the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) Program Manager at the Crime Victims Treatment Center. Karolina supervises CVTC's SAFE Training Institute, overseeing a variety of course offerings aimed at preparing medical professionals in the community to provide compassionate, patient led care to survivors of sexual and domestic violence, as well as managing SAFE program relations with CVTC's six partner hospitals. Karolina holds a Masters of Public Health in Policy and Administration and has worked in New York City public health services and management for nearly a decade.



**Kassiel Gonzalez (she/her/ella)**

*Restorative Justice Program Manager, Violence Intervention Program*

Kassiel's driving values are in building community, ensuring accessibility, and supporting restorative healing for all. With 7+ years of experience working mainly in immigrant and BIPOC communities, her work now continues to evolve in the restorative and transformative justice space.



**Kathleen Collins Baer (she/her)**

*Director/Executive Counsel Special Victims Division, New York City Police Department*

Kathleen Baer is currently the Director of the Special Victims Division at the New York City Police Department. Director Baer began her career at the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office in 2008, where she was an Assistant District Attorney in the Crimes Against Children Bureau. In 2010, Director Baer joined the first Sex Trafficking Unit created in the five boroughs of New York City and was promoted to Senior Investigative Assistant District Attorney. In 2016, Director Baer joined the Bronx County District Attorney's Office, Child Abuse and Sex Crimes Bureau, where she handled and supervised investigations and prosecutions into sexual and physical abuse of children, as well as sex crimes involving adults. Director Baer was an Assistant Adjunct Professor at the City University of New York - Hunter College where she taught Women and the Law for the Political Science Department. In 2023, Director Baer accepted a position as the first Executive Counsel for the City-wide Special Victims Division at the New York City Police Department and was promoted to Director of Special Victims Division this year. Director Baer received her undergraduate degree from St. John's University in 2004, and her law degree from St. John's University School of Law in 2007.



### **Kavita Mehra (she/her)**

*Executive Director, Sakhi for South Asian Survivors*

Kavita is an intersectional feminist dedicated to advancing economic, gender, racial, and survivor justice. She joined Sakhi as an intern in 2002, driven by a passion for dismantling systems of oppression and supporting marginalized communities, and became the organization's sixth Executive Director in June 2017. Under Kavita's leadership, Sakhi has embraced a more inclusive and intersectional approach, resulting in a 2024 name change and over 800% growth, with expanded services including trauma-informed mental health, housing, and food justice initiatives. Kavita's deep commitment to building a survivor-centered, anti-racist movement led to the opening of Sakhi's second office in Queens, NY, in March 2020 and its third office in Brooklyn, NY, in 2023, as she guided the organization through crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. In her role at Sakhi, Kavita was also pivotal in co-founding South Asian SOAR, securing \$1 million in funding and supporting over 40 member organizations nationwide. Kavita's advocacy is featured in various media and at prominent forums such as The Associated Press, WNYC's The Takeaway, NowThis, CNN, The New York Times, and Vice. With over two decades of experience in the non-profit sector, Kavita has held leadership positions at the Boys & Girls Club of Newark, GlamourGals Foundation, and South Asian Youth Action. Her work has earned her several accolades, including the Emerging Indian Global Leaders, the 2021 Changemaker Award from the Institute for Nonprofit Practice, the 2022 Social Impact Women to Watch by Nonprofit HR, and the 2023 Epic Women's Award from the New York Bar Association. Kavita holds degrees from NYU and Columbia University and has further honed her leadership skills through executive programs at Harvard Business School, Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management, and Columbia Business School. A proud New Jersey native, Kavita resides in Jersey City with her life partner and son, and she remains committed to fostering a world where survivors of violence and oppression can heal and thrive in safe, equitable communities.



### **Kimberly Haight (she/her)**

*Director of Advocacy & Membership Support, New York State Children's Alliance*

Kimberly Haight, MPA, is the Director of Advocacy & Membership Support for the New York State Children's Alliance (NYSCA), joining the organization in February 2023. Before joining the team at NYSCA, Kimberly served as the Executive Director at The Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse for 6 years, a nonprofit that is home to the Dutchess County Child Advocacy Center, as well as Parenting and Sexual Abuse Prevention programs. While she thoroughly enjoyed working with her team to improve the lives of children and families in Dutchess County, she joined NYSCA to make a statewide impact by advocating for increased funding for all Child Advocacy Centers, and stronger laws to protect children. Kimberly was raised in Burnt Hills, New York and moved to the Hudson Valley to attend Marist College, where she attended Marist College and earned her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and her Master's Degree in Public Administration. Kimberly has dedicated her career to advocating for children and families and has done so working in the nonprofit sector for the past 20 years. She continues to reside in the Hudson Valley with her husband, three children, and two dogs.

**Kimmi Herring (she/her/hers)**

*Associate Vice President of Community Programs, Safe Horizon*

Kimmi Herring, LMSW (she/her/hers) is the Associate Vice President of Community Programs at Safe Horizon, the nation's leading victim assistance organization. She provides administrative support to the Staten Island Rape Crisis Program Coordinator, three Community Program Directors who manage programs city-wide, addressing the needs of individuals, families, and communities impacted by violence and abuse, and oversees the support provided students, faculty, and staff at Wagner College and the College of Staten Island, around issues of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Kimmi is a co-chair of the Safe Horizon Anti-Racism Steering Committee where she plays an active role in the agency's efforts to be a more racially equitable and inclusive workplace, and to strengthen service delivery to racially and socio-economically diverse communities. Kimmi believes in building the capacity of BIPOC youth in their efforts to effect change in their environments. She serves as a mentor to new and aspiring social workers and sits on the Advisory Council of the Master of Social Work Program at CUNY York College. During her 20-year career, Kimmi has presented at several national and state conferences, and facilitated countless trainings for social service agencies, schools, healthcare professionals, and personnel from the criminal justice fields on issues such as bereavement for co-victims, parental and sibling grief, and navigating the criminal justice system. She regularly participates in city-wide task forces and coalitions representing Safe Horizon. Kimmi is a trained grief educator, mediator, and trauma counselor. She provides comprehensive, direct services including individual and group counseling across a range of victimizations including Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), Intra-Family Violence, Rape and Sexual Assault, and Homicide. She is a staunch victim advocate, supporting victims of crime along their individual journeys to trauma recovery and healing. Kimmi holds a bachelor's degree in human relations from Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, and a Master of Social Work from the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College. She is licensed to practice in the State of New York.

**Lana Ramjit (she/her)**

*Director, Clinic to End Tech Abuse Cornell*

Lana Ramjit is the Director at the Clinic to End Tech Abuse of Cornell Tech, a program which provides free digital privacy and security services to survivors of intimate partner violence experiencing technology-facilitated abuse in New York City. As an expert in digital safety and cybersecurity threats against individuals, she engages in research, advocacy, and training to combat digital abuse. She was awarded a 2021 Computing Innovations Fellowship and was a 2024 Aspen Ideas Fellow. She earned her PhD and BA in Computer Science at UCLA and Columbia respectively.

**Lori Legano, M.D. (she/her)**

*Medical Doctor, Bellevue Hospital/ NYU Langone Health*

Director of Child Protection Services of the Department of Pediatrics of New York University Grossman School of Medicine. Medical Director and Director of Education for the Frances L. Loeb Child Protection and Development Center at Bellevue Hospital and Medical Director of the Safe Center Long Island. Dr. Legano is a senior medical consultant for the Clinical Consultation Program of New York City Children's Services, a program which provides support for caseworkers. She is also an Associate Fellowship Director of Maimonides Infants and Children's Hospital of Brooklyn Child Abuse fellowship.

**Madeleine Skaller (she/her)**

*Lawyer, Levy Konigsberg LLP*

Madeleine Skaller is an associate at Levy Konigsberg, LLP where she specializes in litigating on behalf of victims of child sexual abuse. Madeleine's litigation experience covers an extensive range of personal injury claims with an emphasis on childhood trauma.

**Margarita Guzman (she/ella/they/elle)**

*Executive Director, VIP Mujeres*

Born in El Paso, Texas, Margarita Guzman is a queer Chicana and survivor of intimate partner violence. She holds a bachelor's degree from Georgetown University and a law degree from George Washington University School of Law. She has spent 20+ years providing services to low-income New Yorkers and survivors of gender-based violence. She currently serves as Executive Director at Violence Intervention Program, an organization dedicated to supporting Latinx survivors of domestic and sexual violence. As a survivor and a lawyer, Margarita has lived the limits of criminal and civil legal responses to violence and seeks to increase restorative and transformative justice practices to support survivors and change communities.

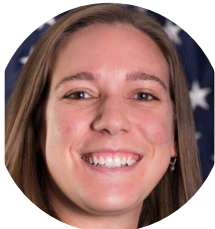




### **Maureen Curtis (she/hers)**

*Vice President of Criminal Justice Programs, Safe Horizon*

Maureen Curtis is responsible for development and oversight of Safe Horizon's Criminal Justice Programs with a staff of more than 200 co-located in family court, criminal court, Family Justice Center and precinct locations citywide. She has worked for more than 35 years in the field of victimization and has extensive knowledge of victims' rights within the criminal justice and housing systems. Maureen provided assistance for victims of September 11th that included trauma informed supportive services and helping victims navigate various government systems to secure their rights. Lastly, Maureen was a facilitator and instructor for the Safe Horizon Domestic Violence Accountability Program (DVAP) and helped create the curriculum that was used to educate participants about domestic violence and its impact on survivors and children. Maureen is a licensed social worker and also holds a Masters in Public Health.



### **Melissa O'Leary**

*Deputy Bureau Chief, Special Victims Bureau Assistant District Attorney, Richmond County District Attorney*

Melissa O'Leary is the Deputy Bureau Chief of the Special Victims Bureau at the Richmond County District Attorney's Office. She began her career at the Bronx County District Attorney's Office, where she served in the Criminal Court Bureau, Intake Bureau, and Special Victims Bureau. In 2016, Melissa joined the Richmond County District Attorney's Office as part of the Special Victims Bureau. She later became the Deputy Bureau Chief of the Criminal Court Bureau before returning to the Special Victims Bureau in her current role as Deputy Bureau Chief. Melissa is a graduate of Fordham University School of Law and Seton Hall University.



### **Melissa Belz (she/hers)**

*PREA Program Manager, New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault*

Melissa Belz is the PREA Coordinator at the New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault, where she focuses on advancing the safety and rights of individuals affected by sexual violence. With a background working in gender-based violence and on victim advocacy, Melissa has developed a deep understanding of the complexities that survivors face. In her current role, she is responsible for implementing the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) standards, providing training for staff, and creating resources that enhance the safety of advocates and individuals in both state and county facilities. Melissa is passionate about advocating for systemic change and fostering an environment that prioritizes the well-being of all individuals. Melissa is always seeking ways to deepen her connection to her community and the issues she cares about. Melissa's commitment to her work and the people she serves is evident in everything she does.

**Michael Polenberg (he/him/his)**

*Vice President of Government Affairs, Safe Horizon*

Michael joined Safe Horizon in 2008. He is responsible for directing the agency's legislative and budget advocacy on the federal, state and local levels. Michael draws on his over 30 years of advocacy work in New York to reduce barriers that victims and survivors face when charting paths to safety and healing. He has worked at several nonprofit human services organizations and at the New York City Council. The relationships and partnerships Michael has forged over more than three decades of advocacy work allow him to achieve meaningful change for victims and survivors across the state. Michael received a B.A. in History from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**Michelle Kaminsky (she/her)**

*Chief of Gender Based Violence Division, Kings County District Attorney*

Michelle Kaminsky is Chief of the Gender Based Violence Division at the Kings County District Attorney's Office. As Division Chief, Michelle oversees the Domestic Violence and Special Victims Bureau as well as the Human Trafficking, Crimes Against Children, Elder Abuse and Victim Services Unit. She advises prosecutors on their investigations and trials; coordinates all gender-based violence policy initiatives on the local, state and federal level; and works closely with victim advocacy and women's rights organizations. Michelle has also written a book on her experiences prosecuting domestic violence cases and her recommendations for reform.

**Nancy Harris (she/her)**

*Medical Manager, Regional Child Advocacy Centers/ SPHP*

Nancy Harris is a Nurse Practitioner with over 40 years of experience in the nursing field and 30 years of experience in the Care of a Sexual Assault patient. Currently she is the Medical Manager for St Peter's Health Partners covering medical services for 30 Child Advocacy Centers in NYS. She is also the co-founder and Medical Manager for the NYS TeleSAFE program. Nancy is a member of numerous MDT's (multidisciplinary team), Child fatality Review teams, and a member of the NYS Medical workgroup. She is active with many local and international organizations.

She has provided medical sexual assault exams for over 2000 children and assisted in the training of many nurses locally and internationally. Nancy has been the recipient of the "TEAL" award in 2020 which was presented by Albany County SART Team, "Making a Difference" Award in 2022 presented by NYSCA and in 2023 the "Distinguished Fellow" award from IAFN (International Association of Forensic Nursing).

**Natasha Johnson (she/her/unicorn)***Founder, Globalizing Gender*

Natasha is an activist (activist + artist), advocate, academic, attorney, entrepreneur, technologist and yoga instructor. She has been an educator and attorney for 22 and 16 years, respectively as reflected in her efforts writing the Solomon Islands first draft of their anti-human trafficking law and having created the only holistic legal services program to date in NYC for continental African survivors of domestic violence. She creates and leads several programs and organizations creating long-term interventions against gender-based violence. In 2015 she founded Globalizing Gender (GG), whose mission is to create a 'Gender Just' world. GG educates, prevents, and reforms Gender-Based Violence (GBV) through capacity building, rule of law, governance, and awareness. Tackling FGM/C in the US, Natasha organized NYC's inaugural march to end FGM/C in the United States and is a contributing author/advocate to NYC's first legislation creating an FGM/C-specific task force in the Mayor's Office. Natasha is also an entrepreneur, having created a line of inclusively-sized yoga mats raising FGM/C awareness and an app to assist survivors of abuse connect the 'dotzz' to their safety. Natasha is a recipient of an Equal Justice Works Fellowship, a Fulbright Specialist Fellowship, a TEDx Flatbush speaker, and a host of other awards. As an artist she curates public forums and creates editorial-styled work that critiques and raises awareness of GBV. She lectures and consults locally, nationally, and internationally on issues of GBV, art and the law; including a cameo appearance in the final episodes of Surviving R Kelly on Lifetime TV. Natasha earned her Juris Doctorate from CUNY School of Law, her yoga certification from Breathe for Change, and her Bachelor's Degree from Columbia University.

**Quadira Coles (she/her)***Director of Policy, Girls for Gender Equity*

Quadira Coles (she/her), born and raised in New Jersey, works as the Director of Policy at Girls for Gender Equity and also serves as the President of the New Jersey Abortion Access Fund. Her work focuses on reproductive and sexuality justice and addressing issues of gender and racialized violence amongst queer, black and young people. Her start in advocacy started when she began working directly with system-impacted youth and then working on political campaigns in her local community. She has her Masters in Public Administration from John Jay College of Criminal Justice and Bachelors in Criminal Justice from Penn State University.

**Rachel Sullivan (she/her)**

*Supervisor, New York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center*

Rachel Sullivan, LCSW is the Supervisor of the Victim Intervention Program at New York-Presbyterian (NYP) Weill Cornell Medical Center. Rachel began working for NYP in 2015 as a Social Worker with the Victim Intervention Program, providing direct services to survivors of crime, specializing in trauma-focused psychotherapy and advocacy for survivors of sexual abuse and intimate-partner abuse. She has held roles coordinating the volunteer Rape-Crisis Advocate Program and Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) Program and was promoted to Advanced Clinician in 2020. In these roles, she onboarded and oversaw dozens of volunteers and medical providers trained to provide emotional support and forensic care for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. She is a regular guest speaker at the citywide 40-Hour SAFE course, instructing nurses and providers from different hospitals on best practices for interdisciplinary collaboration in sexual assault care. Rachel is now the Supervisor of the Victim Intervention Program and leads the hospital response for patients impacted by intimate-partner abuse and sexual violence at NYP Weill Cornell. Outside of her work with the hospital, Rachel has had a private psychotherapy practice since 2020, providing individual therapy for adults and adolescents struggling with depression, anxiety, and psychological trauma.

**Rachelle Obusan-Gonzalez (she/her)**

*PA-C, SART Coordinator, NYC Health + Hospitals at Elmhurst & Queens Hospitals*

Rachelle Obusan-Gonzalez serves as the SART Coordinator for Queens, working with NYC Health + Hospitals since December 2019. Her background prior to this role is in Emergency Medicine, where she has worked as a Physician Assistant. Since 1997, she has provided care in the Emergency Department at Elmhurst Hospital, where her 20+ years of experience have enabled her to care for patients from diverse ethnic backgrounds and varying socioeconomic conditions. As the SART Coordinator, she oversees the program in both Elmhurst and Queens Hospitals. The program includes about 15 NYS DOH-certified SAFE examiners available on call to support any patient seeking treatment for sexual assault. In representing the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners from Queens, Obusan-Gonzalez values the strong partnerships developed with local rape advocacy services, law enforcement, and prosecutors. Through quarterly meetings of the sexual assault task force, she ensures consistent collaboration with SART members, all dedicated to meeting community needs and providing top-quality trauma-informed care. She also instills in her SART team the importance and privilege of being there for patients at the start of their healing process.

**Rama B. Rao, M.D. (she/her/hers)**

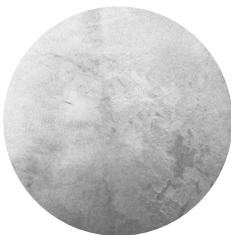
*Medical Director SAFE Program, New York Presbyterian Weill Cornell*

Rama B. Rao, MD FACMT is the Chief of the Division of Medical Toxicology and SAFE Medical Director in the Department of Emergency Medicine, NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, for Weill Cornell and Lower Manhattan Hospitals.

**Samantha Max (she/her)**

*Public Safety Reporter, WNYC/Gothamist*

Samantha Max covers public safety and the courts for WNYC/Gothamist. Earlier this year, she co-reported an investigation into hundreds of allegations of sexual abuse on Rikers Island over the last half century. That reporting has prompted calls for an independent investigation and also led the Bronx district attorney's office to commit to reviewing hundreds of lawsuits filed by people who said they sexually assaulted while in city custody. Before coming to WNYC/Gothamist, Samantha spent three years covering the criminal justice system in Tennessee for Nashville Public Radio. Her reporting on Nashville's police department received multiple awards, including the Daniel Schorr Journalism Prize. Samantha was also part of the inaugural class of Report for America, a service journalism program that sends up-and-coming reporters to local newsrooms across the country. Samantha is a Northwestern University grad, a Baltimore native and fluent in Spanish.

**Shannon Lacey**

*Deputy Chief, Special Victims Division, Manhattan District Attorney's Office*

Shannon joined the Manhattan District Attorney's Office in 2000. In that role as an Assistant District Attorney, Shannon has worked on thousands of cases. In 2014, she was appointed Deputy Chief of the Sex Crimes Unit. As part of her deputy role, Shannon supervised many sensitive and complex matters, and lectured regularly to the advocate, school, law enforcement, and medical community about sexual assault awareness. For years, Shannon taught a seminar on Child Abuse and Gender-Based Violence at Cardozo Law School. In 2023, Shannon was appointed Deputy Chief of the Special Victims Division, which is comprised of the Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Bureau, including the Sex Crimes Unit, Human Trafficking Unit, Child Abuse Bureau, and Elder Abuse Unit. In addition to supervising, Shannon continues to try complex cases, including Murder and Predatory Sexual Assault; she is currently retrying Harvey Weinstein for multiple counts of Rape.

**Silva Sergenian (she/her)**

*SAFE Program Coordinator & Volunteer ED Advocate, Mount Sinai and VIP*

Silva Sergenian is the Manhattan Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) program coordinator and Volunteer Emergency Department Advocate Coordinator for the Mount Sinai Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program. Silva completed her master's degree in forensic psychology at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice at the City University of New York and additionally holds bachelor's degrees in criminal justice and psychology. During her academic studies, Silva focused on cognitive behavioral therapy in working with both adult and youth sexual offenders. During this time Silva also developed a greater interest in serving survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence. Having people close to her who were victimized in these ways and not wanting any survivors to have to experience their follow up care alone, Silva began her tenure with SAVI in 2007 as a volunteer advocate. Additionally, she volunteered with SAVI as a training facilitator and troubleshooter before becoming the coordinator in 2016. Silva has enjoyed working with many survivors, volunteers, and SAFEs over the last 17 years. Silva believes that the SAFEs and Advocates that she works with are some of the best people, who really make a significant, positive impact on the New York City community.

**Sydney Zazzaro (she/her)**

*Associate Attorney, Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward & Maazel LLP*

Sydney Zazzaro is an Associate Attorney at ECBAWM. Prior to becoming an Associate, Sydney worked at the firm as a Justice Catalyst Fellow focusing on creating survivors-favorable precedent through civil sexual assault litigation brought under the ASA. Prior to joining the Firm, Sydney graduated from Boston University School of Law.

**Tracia "Trae" Banuelos-Rovaris**

*Training & Technical Assistance Consultant, New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault*

Tracia Banuelos-Rovaris, MS (she/they), is a researcher, facilitator, and TTA Consultant with the NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault, supporting Enough is Enough Providers. She organizes with the Audre Lorde Project and serves as VP of Abortion Conversation Projects. She has been supporting violence prevention efforts since 2015.

**Verena Salvi (she/her)**

*SAFE Coordinator, DOVE, Columbia/Presbyterian*

Verena Salvi has worked with survivors of trauma and injustice for over 15 years and specializes in interpersonal and gender-based violence. She is a clinical social worker at the Domestic and Other Violence Emergencies (DOVE) Program at New York Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia University Medical Center, where she oversees the operation of the SAFE program and provides crisis intervention and trauma-focused psychotherapy to survivors of sexual violence and intimate partner violence. Ms. Salvi is also a clinical partner with Headstrong where she provides psychotherapy to veterans who experienced military sexual trauma, and maintains a private practice in Manhattan. Ms. Salvi holds faculty positions at the Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy and Columbia University School of Social Work.

**Zach Evenson (he/him)**

*Licensed Clinical Social Worker*

Zach is the DOVE Social Worker at NYP-Lower Manhattan. In this role, he engages those who've been impacted by interpersonal violence. He provides crisis counseling, safety planning, individual counseling and connection to community-based resources. He's delighted to partake in some of compelling & earnest conversations taking place here today.



## SPEAKERS



### **Zoë Loewenberg (she/her)**

*PREA Therapist, Crime Victims Treatment Center*

Zoë Loewenberg is a PREA Therapist at CVTC. She provides direct services to incarcerated survivors of sexual violence, including crisis intervention, advocacy, correspondence, and time-limited trauma-focused therapy.