

**Congressional Issue Briefing:  
Addressing the Mental Health Impact of Violence and Trauma on Children**

## **SPEAKER BIOS**

### **Elizabeth Hudson, LCSW**

Elizabeth Hudson is employed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's School of Medicine and Public Health and partners with the Wisconsin's Department of Health Services to integrate trauma-informed care into mental health and substance abuse systems, child welfare, school settings, homelessness services, and correctional settings. In 2009, Hudson and her supervisor, Marie Danforth, accepted the Wisconsin's Association of Family and Children's Agency's *John R. Grace Outstanding Leadership Award* for the Department of Health Services' work in promoting trauma-informed care and the reduction of seclusion and restraint. Hudson has worked in the field of trauma prevention and treatment for 20 years as an advocate, clinician, supervisor, and administrator. Hudson received the National Association of Social Workers' Award for Distinguished Service while working as a child and family therapist specializing in trauma work with children under the age of eight. She is a founding member of the national organization, Coalition Addressing Trauma, and regularly participates in national discussions regarding the integration of trauma-informed care across multiple human service systems.

### **Helga Luest, MIM**

Helga Luest is a recognized expert in the field of trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder, trauma-informed care, behavioral health responses to trauma, vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue, the healing process, navigating the criminal justice process for victims, victim rights, and the needs of friends and families of survivors. She is a national keynote presenter and trainer. Luest survived an attempted murder in 1993 and, more recently, domestic violence. As the founder and President/Chief Executive Officer of Witness Justice, Luest leads advocacy, program development, and contract initiatives, including subcontracts to provide communication and outreach activities for numerous federal agencies. She spearheaded the creation of the Coalition Addressing Trauma, an advocacy group aimed at bringing survivors of abuse, neglect, violence, disaster, terrorism, and war together with organizations and advocates to collectively address trauma as a public health crisis. Luest lead a statewide campaign in Wisconsin to promote trauma-informed care and is currently working on a national trauma campaign aimed at families for the Center for Mental Health Services, SAMHSA/DHHS. Witness Justice created the first e-learning facility for the Office on Violence Against Women, DOJ, called TrainingForums.org, where Luest developed curriculum on topics relevant to providers of domestic violence and other human services. Luest works with Artist Nick Kline on the GlassBook Project, an art-based initiative to address mental health stigma and discrimination, which was named one of the top five mental health innovations in the country by *Mental Health Weekly*. In 2011, Luest received the distinguished U.S. Congressional Eva Murillo Unsung Hero Award for her innovation, efficacy and advocacy, and was also ranked sixth in the top ten "most interesting people" by *DC Spotlight Newspaper*. Luest holds a BS in Marketing from American University and an MIM in International Management from the University of Maryland University College. She also has certification in private investigation and women's self defense.

### **A. Kathryn Power**

A. Kathryn Power, M.Ed. is the Director of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an operating division of the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). CMHS provides national leadership in mental health promotion, mental illness prevention, and the development and dissemination of effective mental health services. Director Power leads a staff of professionals in facilitating the transformation of our nation's mental health care system into one that is recovery-oriented and consumer-centered.

### **Bryan Samuels**

Bryan Samuels is the Commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF). Samuels has spent his career formulating service delivery innovations and streamlining operations in large government organizations on behalf of children, youth, and families. As Chief of Staff for Chicago Public Schools (CPS), Samuels played a leadership role in managing the day-to-day operations of the third largest school system in the nation with 420,000 students, 623 schools, 44,000 employees, and a \$5 billion budget. Prior to this role, from 2003 to 2007, Samuels served as the Director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). While Director, he moved aggressively to implement comprehensive assessments of all children entering care, redesigned transitional and independent living programs to prepare youth for transitioning to adulthood, created a child location unit to track all runaway youth, and introduced evidence-based services to address the impact of trauma and exposure to violence on children in state care. As a result of his efforts, DCFS established the lowest caseload ratios for case managers in the nation; reduced the number of youth "on run" by 40 percent and number of days "on run" by 50 percent; decreased the use of residential treatment or group homes by 20 percent; and eliminated the number of past due child protection investigations by 60 percent. Prior to 2003, Samuels taught at the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration. Samuels holds a Master's Degree from the University of Chicago, Harris School of Public Policy Studies and a Bachelor's of Arts Degree from the University of Notre Dame.

### **David A Washington, LGSW, LCADC, AD/PC Sup**

David A. Washington MSW, AD-PC Supervisor, is the Program Coordinator for a facility where he oversees a Jail Substance Abuse Program, Pharaoh Program, Rewriting Inner Script (RISE) Retreats, and the TAMAR Program (Trauma, Addictions, Mental Health, And, Recovery). He has been in the field of substance abuse since 1989, working for such agencies as The Johns Hopkins Hospital Program for Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependences. In 2000 he was hired as a Trauma Specialist in Maryland. Since that time, Washington has worked to advance the field of trauma services in the criminal justice system. He has presented on trauma informed services at numerous conferences and trainings. Most notable presentations: The Gains Conference; The Police and Correctional Training Commissions and Specialized Training; Illinois Department of Human Services; Office of Forensic Services; Ohio Department of Mental Health; and regional trainings throughout California (2009) and Florida (2010). Washington completed a 90-hour post-graduate trauma studies certificate program with Bessel van der Kolk PhD in May 2011. While Washington conducts group therapy for both men and women, he has specialized in working with men in the criminal justice systems that have a history of adverse childhood trauma. He is currently excited to be amidst one of the first treatment providers in Maryland to be implementing the curriculum "Sexual Health in Drug and Alcohol Treatment." David is a survivor of childhood rape and sexual abuse and has been in the process of recovery for 20 years. Washington sees his healing from trauma as a process. He still works through trauma triggers 30 years after the violence and abuse.