



Embracing Togetherness

South Central Minnesota Mental Health Conference

The South-Central Minnesota Mental Health and Wellness Conference envisions a world where mental health is openly discussed, understood, and supported without stigma. Our conference aims to create a safe and inclusive environment where individuals from all walks of life can come together to share experiences, gain knowledge, and build a supportive community.

This second annual conference is being coordinated by the Brown County Mental Health and Wellness Action Team (MHWAT), which works throughout Brown County to reduce the stigma of mental health, increase resiliency and improve access to mental health treatment and services.

Details

DATE: May 7, 2025
8:00 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

LOCATION: Sleepy Eye Event Center
110 12th Ave NE
Sleepy Eye, MN 56085

COST: FREE

Registration

tinyurl.com/EmbracingConf



For sponsorship opportunities, contact Jennifer Maurer at 507-217-5226 or Jennifer.Maurer@allina.com

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**Heart of
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Supporting a culture of wellness

*Brown County
Mental Health
and Wellness
Action Team*

Keynote Speakers

(See full schedule on next page)

Dr. Terry Wu (2 keynotes)

“Conquer Burnout, Outsmart Your Stressors with Neuroscience”



Dr. Wu’s groundbreaking presentation addresses chronic stress and burnout, offering a Neuroscience-powered approach to shift from surviving to thriving. It explores the detrimental effects of chronic stress on the body and brain while teaching strategies to mitigate stressors effectively. Through engaging storytelling and actionable insights, Dr. Wu introduces a science-proven framework to proactively

manage life and work stressors. This framework fosters healthy coping mechanisms and sustainable well-being practices, helping individuals improve health, productivity and relationships. Designed for leaders, professionals and anyone navigating uncertainty, this transformative session equips participants with the tools to enhance mental and physical health for peak performance.

“Shift from Us vs. Them to Belonging”

Why is America facing deepening conflicts over race, politics, religion, gender, and socioeconomic status? Have conventional DEI approaches failed to tamp down divisions and hostilities in an era of increasing polarization? In this game-changing, Neuroscience-powered keynote, Dr. Wu offers a fresh and vital perspective on human divisions. He reveals the brain’s innate drive for group affiliation and identity. He unveils how our desire for belonging can be exploited to sow distrust and hostility between Us and Them. More importantly, he provides science-powered solutions to foster understanding and a sense of belonging to bring people together.

Ulises Valdez

“Breaking Barriers: A Story of Transformation and Community Impact”



As a first-generation Mexican American raised by a single parent in Texas, Ulises Valdez became easily influenced by the criminal lifestyle in his community. He struggled to find a clear direction in life, and after a series of bad choices, he ended up serving nearly a decade in federal incarceration for drug distribution. Upon release, Ulises earned his bachelor’s degree, started a company, and has been

giving back to the community by assisting in reentry/transitional educational programs and doing street outreach. Ulises will share his life story while explaining the struggles and the strengths he gained along the way and shining light on how we can better understand ourselves through our traumas and our differences.

Full Conference Schedule

8:00 – 8:30 a.m. **Registration and Vendor Booths**

8:30 – 8:40 a.m. **Welcome and Introductions**

8:40 – 10:10 a.m. **Keynote – Dr. Terry Wu — “Conquer Burnout, Outsmart Your Stressors with Neuroscience”**

10:10 – 10:30 a.m. **Movement Break with Lindsay Archer; Browse Vendor Booths**



Lindsay Archer, LPCC, LADC is a psychotherapist in private practice at Minnesota Mental Health Services. She practices Movement Therapy, which is an innovative way to process psychological experiences by incorporating talk therapy with bodily movement.

10:30 – 11:30 a.m. **Breakout Sessions**



“Removing the Obstruction to Intimacy” — Andrew Archer

Andrew Archer is the founder of Minnesota Mental Health Services where he has practiced Zen Therapy since 2017. In an engaging fireside chat, Andrew will discuss Zen Therapy and its transformative approach to removing obstacles to intimacy in our lives. This interactive

session will provide participants with the chance to dive deeper into the practice, ask insightful questions, and engage in a dynamic dialogue throughout the discussion.



“What You and Your Family Need to Know About Fentanyl” — Kim Gustavson

After losing her 21-year-old son Travis James Gustavson to fentanyl poisoning, Kim and her family have made it their mission to make other families aware of this dangerous, deadly disease that is

killing so many in our country.

The Travis James Gustavson Foundation was created so the family can continue their mission of spreading awareness of fentanyl and other illicit substances while connecting with families so they know they are not alone and there is help.

11:40 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **Keynote – Ulises Valdez — “Breaking Barriers: A Story of Transformation and Community Impact”**

12:30 – 1:10 p.m. **Lunch; Browse Vendor Booths**

1:10 – 2:10 p.m. **Breakout Sessions**



“Let’s Fix What We Can By Sharing Our Stories” — Mindy Greiling

Mindy Greiling served in the Minnesota House of Representatives for 20 years where she initiated the first state bipartisan mental health caucus after her son Jim was diagnosed with schizophrenia. She served on the state and national NAMI boards and was president of NAMI

Ramsey County from 2020-2022. She’ll share her powerful story of navigating her son’s schizophrenia, her efforts to change policies that hindered her ability to help him, and her personal journey of overcoming fear and stigma.



“Navigating the Virtual Playground: Healthy Choices & Worrisome Pitfalls for Today’s Youth” — Alison Feigh, Jacob Wetterling Foundation

As technology grows and adapts, children are growing and adapting right along with it. The online highway can have some steep learning curves for students and for parents. Youth can find themselves in over their head as technology choices move faster than their developmental abilities. Technology isn’t a bad thing, but young people need help in navigating this tool so that their empathy and sense of self can also grow and develop. This presentation details the risks students are facing, and practical, positive ways that adults can respond.

2:15 – 2:30 p.m. **Movement Break with Lindsay Archer; Browse Vendor Booths**

2:30 – 4:00 p.m. **Keynote – Dr. Terry Wu — “Shift From US vs. Them to Belonging”**

4:00 – 4:15 p.m. **Closing Remarks**

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