

NACC's Inaugural Race Equity Virtual Training Series

Join us **March 1 - 3, 2023** for NACC's Inaugural Race Equity Virtual Training Series!

The goals of this 6-webinar virtual series (90 minutes each) are to:



- ❖ Connect bold and progressive ideas, concepts, and theories around race and racism to practical and concrete skills and takeaways that can be incorporated into daily practice, in and outside of court.
- ❖ Deliver concrete tips to check for and interrupt individual, attorney, judicial, and systemic bias, practice through a culturally humble and antiracist lens, and improve outcomes for youth, parents, and families who are disproportionately impacted by systems involvement.
- ❖ Advance and continue the conversation around race and racism in child welfare.

Training series sessions are designed for a national audience, to expand attendees' understanding of race equity, antiracism, and racial justice, to provide practical tools and resources to support legal advocacy, and to share information and strategies for systems improvement. Webinars are applicable to attorneys who represent children, parents, agencies, and kinship caregivers, as well as multidisciplinary professionals working in child welfare.

Agenda At-A-Glance

Wednesday, March 1

- 12:00 - 1:30pm ET** **Curb Your Bias and Racism: Protecting Parents from the Adverse Impacts of Systemic and Individualized Bias in the Child Welfare Process**
- ❖ Diana Rugh Johnson, JD, MS, CWLS – Judicial Council of Georgia/Administrative Office of the Courts
 - ❖ Amber Walden, JD – Family Law Office of Training and Education Services, LLC
- 3:00 - 4:30pm ET** **African American Child Discipline: Promoting Culturally Responsive Legal and Clinical Practices**
- ❖ Carla Adkison-Johnson, PhD – Western Michigan University
 - ❖ E. Dorphine Payne, JD – Payne Law Office

Thursday, March 2

- 12:00 - 1:30pm ET** **How Redefining Neglect Through an Equity Lens on a Systemic and Case Level Can Shift Outcomes for Children, Youth, and Families**
- ❖ Louis (Louie) Gasper, BA – National Advisory Council on Children's Legal Representation
 - ❖ Josh Gupta-Kagan, JD – Columbia Law School
 - ❖ Jey Rajaraman, JD – Family Integrity & Justice Works at Public Knowledge
- 3:00 - 4:30pm ET** **Diaries of a Black Girl in Foster Care and the Truth Behind the Adultification Bias that Affects Their Black Lives**
- ❖ Amnoni Myers, MPA – Amnoni Motivates
 - ❖ Tashia Roberson-Wing, MSW, MPA – Congressional Black Caucus Foundation

Friday, March 3

- 12:00 - 1:30pm ET** **Cultural Humility in Child Welfare Cases: Through an Indigenous Lens**
- ❖ Michelle Castagne, JD – California Tribal Families Coalition
 - ❖ Kimberly Cluff, JD – California Tribal Families Coalition
 - ❖ Geneva Shaw, MSW – California Tribal Families Coalition
- 3:00 - 4:30pm ET** **Ending The Unnecessary Destruction of Black Families**
- ❖ Corey Best – Mining for Gold
 - ❖ Christopher Church, JD, CWLS – University of South Carolina School of Law
 - ❖ Vivek Sankaran, JD, CWLS – University of Michigan Law School

Session Details and Presenter Biographies

Wednesday, March 1

Curb Your Bias and Racism: Protecting Parents from the Adverse Impacts of Systemic and Individualized Bias in the Child Welfare Process (12:00 - 1:30pm ET)

Bias and racism have a detrimental impact on parents in dependency cases. Bias (implicit and explicit) can be based on race, culture, poverty, literacy level, substance use, or mental health diagnoses. Racism arises out of a notion of superiority and entitlement or dominion over another group that is perceived to be inferior. Biases and/or racism can interfere with attorneys representing their clients and skew the way providers and case managers convey information in reports and assessments, with inflammatory phrasing of allegations and misleading depictions of parents in court documents. This culminates in overburdensome tasks and incongruous services for parents, which causes us to lose sight of the issues that the parent really needs addressed and hinders the goal of family reunification. This webinar will help participants identify and reduce bias in themselves and others and learn out-of-court and in-court advocacy strategies to reduce the impact of racism.

❖ **Diana Rugh Johnson, JD, MS, CWLS – Judicial Council of Georgia/Administrative Office of the Courts**

Diana Rugh Johnson is the Director of Georgia's Court Improvement Program. Before taking that position in 2021, she served for six years as a Judge Pro Tempore in the DeKalb County Juvenile Court and practiced law in the areas of child welfare, disability, adoption, and custody. Diana was one of the first attorneys in Georgia to be certified as a Child Welfare Law Specialist. She serves on the Steering Committee of the American Bar Association's National Alliance for Parent Representation.

❖ **Amber Walden, JD – Family Law Office of Training and Education Services, LLC**

For the past fifteen years, Amber D. Walden, Esq. has been committed to zealous advocacy in her representation of parents and children involved in the child welfare system. For the past six years, in the state of Georgia and nationally, Ms. Walden has conducted trainings, workshops, and presentations involving matters of the child welfare system, bringing awareness of complex issues, and increasing the availability and accessibility of information and resources to attorneys and stakeholders.

African American Child Discipline: Promoting Culturally Responsive Legal and Clinical Practices (3:00 - 4:30pm ET)

This webinar provides a framework for clinicians, child welfare workers, and legal professionals to thoroughly explore the child discipline practices of African American parents. Many African American parents are under surveillance or policed by judicial and child welfare personnel, who often subscribe to the automatic assumption that parenting while Black equals children are at risk of harm. Most African American children will undergo a CPS investigation at some point in their childhood which has been identified as the stop-and-frisk of African American families. This webinar will prepare judicial personnel and supervisors to work successfully with African American mothers and fathers when tending to the question of child discipline. Attendees will learn how to address bias, call culturally competent expert witnesses, and use disciplinary best practice factors to examine cases involving child discipline.

❖ **Carla Adkison-Johnson, PhD – Western Michigan University**

Dr. Carla Adkison-Johnson is a Professor at Western Michigan University and an expert witness. She is the current Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development. Dr. Adkison-Johnson is nationally known for her research on African American child discipline. Her 2021 book, *Child Discipline in African American Families: Culturally Responsive Policies* critically examines the child disciplinary practices of African American mothers and fathers with school age children in the home.

❖ **E. Dorphine Payne, JD – Payne Law Office**

Attorney Payne is a proud Notre Dame Law grad, whose passion and calling led her to Indigent Defense work, with a drive to fiercely represent clients in criminal and CPS cases. Currently, she has oversight responsibilities serving as Board President of Kalamazoo (indigent) Defenders, Inc, the indigent defense firm representing 90% of the criminally accused in Kalamazoo County. She co-authored *Child Discipline in African American Families: Culturally Responsive Policies*.

Thursday, March 2

How Redefining Neglect Through an Equity Lens on a Systemic and Case Level Can Shift Outcomes for Children, Youth, and Families (12:00 - 1:30pm ET)

This webinar is targeted for lawyers, judges, and child welfare staff working on the identification of neglect on an individual or systemic level, including lawyers and judges faced with real-time decisions regarding whether something should be classified as neglect or whether there may be other considerations for equity (i.e., poverty, cultural considerations, racial bias). This webinar will cover legal statutory definitions of neglect, including what those mean for families and jurisdictional trends; how to be an anti-racist defender within current legal definitions and standards; and systemic reforms that could establish more concrete legal standards. After TED Talks focused on each topic, the presenters will discuss potential next steps, being mindful of jurisdictional differences and real-time needs.

❖ **Louis (Louie) Gasper, BA – National Advisory Council on Children's Legal Representation**

Louie Gasper is an experienced child welfare consultant, project coordinator/manager, and advocate with a decade of professional experience since beginning through advocacy, as well as 10 years of lived experience in the foster care system (including extended foster care). Louie has led and engaged in policy and practice improvement efforts for child welfare agencies, large-scale companies, and non-profits such as the National Association for Counsel of Children (Legal Representation Council).

❖ **Josh Gupta-Kagan, JD – Columbia Law School**

Josh Gupta-Kagan is the director and founder of the Family Defense Clinic at Columbia Law School. He has represented parents, children, and kinship caregiver in juvenile and family courts in New York, Washington, DC, South Carolina, and Missouri. His scholarship on the family regulation/child protection and juvenile justice systems has been featured in the New York Times Magazine and The Imprint. He is lead editor of the Fourth Edition of the Red Book.

❖ **Jey Rajaraman, JD – Family Integrity & Justice Works at Public Knowledge**

Jey Rajaraman joined Family Integrity & Justice Works in January 2022. Prior to that, she served as Chief Council and a supervising attorney of Legal Services of New Jersey's Family Representation Project (FRP). FRP provides parents in child abuse or neglect and termination of parental rights litigation with information, advice, and representation.

Diaries of a Black Girl in Foster Care and the Truth Behind the Adultification Bias that Affects Their Black Lives (3:00 - 4:30pm ET)

Research conducted by the Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality reveals that society perceives Black girls to appear more adult-like and not as innocent as White girls. Adultification can play a role in how child welfare providers protect and serve Black girls, increasing disparities. The presenters will explore how adultification bias may impact Black girls in the foster care system and how it may be illustrated and played out in their lives. The presenters will provide engaging activities and open conversation that provide opportunities to identify culturally competent ways to engage Black girls.

❖ **Amnoni Myers, MPA – Amnoni Motivates**

Amnoni Myers (pronounced Ah-mon-knee) is a dynamic child welfare advocate, public speaker, consultant, and #1 Best Seller of her recent book *You Are The Prize: Seeing Yourself Beyond the Imperfections of Your Trauma*. A native of Boston, Massachusetts, Amnoni now resides in Tulsa, OK, where she relocated from California in November 2021. In 2017, Amnoni received her MPA degree from the National Urban Fellows Program in Manhattan, New York. Amnoni is a compassionate and driven individual dedicated to reshaping policies affecting divested populations.

❖ **Tashia Roberson-Wing, MSW, MPA – Congressional Black Caucus Foundation**

Tashia Roberson-Wing graduated from Indiana University, majoring in Human Development and Family studies. She recently received a Master's of Social Work and Master's of Public Administration from The Ohio State University. While completing her studies, Tashia served as a policy and community outreach intern with the Columbus City Attorney's Office. She formerly served as a Project Coordinator for the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience and the Child Welfare Review Project at JBS International Inc.

Friday, March 3

Cultural Humility in Child Welfare Cases: Through an Indigenous Lens (12:00 - 1:30pm ET)

This webinar will provide practical skills for participants on tribal engagement and train participants how to exercise cultural humility when working with tribal children, families, and communities, all in the context of state child welfare cases. The training will focus on reimagining and humanizing Indigenous people who are overrepresented in child welfare systems nationally and providing tangible information on how attorneys can and should partner with tribes to improve outcomes for all parties in child welfare cases. Participants will learn how to examine their own lens on child welfare practice, compare it with an Indigenous worldview (understanding all tribes are sovereign and unique), and how to shift the paradigm in which they are determining success in child welfare cases.

❖ **Michelle Castagne, JD – California Tribal Families Coalition**

Michelle Castagne is the Co-Executive Director of the California Tribal Families Coalition. The mission of the California Tribal Families Coalition is to promote and protect the health, safety and welfare of tribal children and families, which are inherent tribal governmental functions and are at the core of tribal sovereignty and tribal governance. Michelle graduated with a JD from the Sandra Day O'Connor School of Law at Arizona State University in 2021.

❖ **Kimberly Cluff, JD – California Tribal Families Coalition**

Since becoming a member of the California Bar in 1998, Ms. Cluff has worked exclusively in the field of Indian law. She is the Legal Director for California Tribal Families Coalition and, prior to this, was the In-House General Counsel for the Morongo Band of Mission Indians. Ms. Cluff's career has always focused on advocating for tribes and native non-profits. Ms. Cluff extends her advocacy to state and federal legislative efforts, for example spearheading the California Tribal Customary Adoption Act and working with lawmakers to secure federal resources for Indian Country.

❖ **Geneva Shaw, MSW – California Tribal Families Coalition**

Geneva Shaw (Hoopa Valley Tribe), MSW, is the Training and Curriculum Development Director at the California Tribal Families Coalition. Geneva Shaw earned her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Social Work degrees from Cal Poly Humboldt (CPH). Since 2014 she has been a full-time Social Work Department faculty member at CPH. She has spent the last 14 plus years working as an administrator, direct practitioner, educator, trainer, and technical assistance provider of social work in Tribal communities.

Ending The Unnecessary Destruction of Black Families (3:00 - 4:30pm ET)

Rooted in the foundations of America's child welfare system is the notion that to protect children and give them permanency, we must destroy their families. This webinar will directly challenge this narrative, which we believe is rooted in white saviorism, and will give advocates a new perspective on how to think about terminating parental rights. The presenters will use stories, data, caselaw, and social science research to rethink whether the system should ever terminate a child's relationship to their parents.

❖ **Corey Best – Mining for Gold**

Corey Best is a dedicated father, and the founder of Mining For Gold; the curator of community experiences. Mining For Gold is a platform where leaders from social institutions think, stretch, and grow alongside other leaders who have experienced systems of oppression first-hand. The Mining For Gold movement of longing for justice, liberation, and belonging is rooted in thinking culturally, not strategically. Mining For Gold has a laser focus on preventing and dismantling all forms of racism.

❖ **Christopher Church, JD, CWLS – University of South Carolina School of Law**

Christopher is an Academic Affiliate and Pro Bono Attorney with the CHAMPS Clinic at the University of South Carolina School of Law, a pediatric medical-legal partnership. Christopher holds an MS in Mathematics from the University of North Texas and a JD from Gonzaga University School of Law. He completed undergrad at Concordia College in New York. He is licensed to practice law in Georgia and South Carolina, and is South Carolina's first CWLS.

❖ **Vivek Sankaran, JD, CWLS – University of Michigan Law School**

A clinical professor of law at the University of Michigan Law School, Sankaran directs both the Child Advocacy Law Clinic and the Child Welfare Appellate Clinic, through which law students represent children and parents in trial and appellate proceedings. Sankaran has written numerous articles focused on improving the child welfare system and has litigated cases before the Michigan Supreme Court. In addition, he conducts state and national trainings and works on child welfare initiatives.