

MLPAA Event

Compassion as Policy: Enhancing Our Response to Trauma

October 16, 2025

Panelists and Bios



Mary Beth Fisk – CEO, The Ecumenical Center

Mary Beth Fisk has more than 40 years' experience in the nonprofit sector as a visionary, executive, clinical research scientist, and community builder. She serves as the CEO of The Ecumenical Center. The Center has 45 offices serving communities throughout Texas with counseling, peer support and trauma informed certification.

As the former president and chief operating officer of South Texas' largest blood, tissue, and cellular therapy center, Mary Beth initiated and implemented meaningful programs that still stand today, including Gencure (a cellular therapy & tissue engineering program involving umbilical-cord).

Over the years, Mary Beth founded and directed a nonprofit foundation, developed an international tissue donor bank, and was an active instrument in shepherding new legislation for medical needs at both the state and national level, as well as authored numerous scientific and peer-reviewed journal articles.



Cori Kurth - Director of Resident Care, Magdalena House

Corinne "Cori" Kurth is a Licensed Professional Counselor who has dedicated her 27-year career to supporting vulnerable populations. She graduated with a Master of Arts in Counseling from University of Texas at San Antonio.

Experiencing the death of her brother at just 9 years old, Cori went into the field of counseling with the intention of supporting families who had also experienced unimaginable loss. She quickly learned that she had a passion for helping others even outside of bereavement work.

She has worked with at-risk students in school settings, homeless individuals with mental illness, children and adolescents in an in-patient psychiatric treatment program, private practice, and has extensive training in understanding the impacts of trauma.

Ultimately, in 2017, she has landed in her current role as Director of Resident Care at Magdalena House, a long-term transitional living program for women with young children, who are fleeing dangerous situations such as trafficking and domestic violence. She holds strongly to her belief that every person deserves dignity, respect and an opportunity to make their visions of a safe, successful and flourishing life a reality.

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Patricia Moj dara - MS, MA, PhD, Clinical Psychologist, The Ecumenical Center

Patricia “Patti” Moj dara is a senior clinician and expert in clinical neuropsychology based in Texas. She has an extensive academic background and decades of experience providing cognitive and psychological guidance to a wide range of clients. Patti has served in Uvalde providing support after the Uvalde Shooting and currently as a psychologist serving in the Texas Hill Country following the devastating floods through The Ecumenical Center.



Khristan Taylor - Housing Resources Coordinator, THRU Project

Khristan Taylor is a dedicated advocate for individuals with a history of foster care and has a passion for trauma-informed practice, with lived experience that fuels her mission to create systemic change.

A proud graduate of The University of Texas at San Antonio, she holds a bachelor’s degree in psychology and brings a unique perspective shaped by her own journey as a former foster youth. Her path in non-profit began as a participant in the THRU Project’s housing and mentoring program. These are just a few of the resources THRU Project offers to youth and young adults with a history of foster care.

Today, she has come full circle and works as a Housing Resource Coordinator at THRU Project, helping former foster youth secure safe, stable housing and build self-sufficiency. She also co-leads the organization’s Trauma-Informed Care Committee, working to ensure that compassionate, research-based practices are embedded across all levels of service. Through this committee, THRU Project became Level 1 Trauma-Informed Certified.

With a deep commitment to advocacy, equity, and healing, Khristan continues to be a voice for youth who too often go unheard transforming her personal story into a source of strength, leadership, and positive change.

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Ryan Westerhoff - Lieutenant, San Antonio Fire Department

Ryan Westerhoff is third-generation San Antonio Fire Fighter with over 25 years of service.

While he spent the first 24 years of his career as a firefighter, paramedic, and company officer, he now spearheads the SAFD's internal mental health program, with a focus on both improving firefighter resilience and the department's Peer Support program.

As a peer supporter, Ryan spent time at the Uvalde school shooting as well as the Kerrville floods, using his peer support training to mitigate the stress of his fellow first responders on the front lines. Born and raised in Nebraska, Ryan is an avid fan of all things Cornhusker and of course, the Spurs.

We gratefully acknowledge our guest panelists and their organizations for their contributions to this program.

