

Speaker Bios

Healing The Hidden Pain: Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention 2019

Speaker: Healing the Hidden Pain

**Keynote Speaker*

Chaplain (Rabbi) Lowell S. Kronick, MHL., BCC



Chaplain (Rabbi) Lowell S. Kronick joined the National V.A. Chaplain Center in Hampton VA as an Associate Director in October 2001 after thirty years of distinguished service as a private-sector health-care chaplain and synagogue executive in New York City. In 2005, he was appointed Associate Director for Education at the National V.A. Chaplain Training Center.

Chaplain Kronick was ordained as a rabbi in 1970 by the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University.

His career led him to positions as an assistant pulpit rabbi for one year, a chaplain and director of public relations for the Bialystoker Home and Infirmary for the Aged for ten years, a synagogue administrator for two years, and Director of Pastoral Services at Parker Jewish Institute for Health Care and Rehabilitation, a 527-bed major rehabilitation and long-term-care facility in New Hyde Park, N.Y. for eighteen years. He has provided clinical pastoral care and support to thousands of patients, families, and staff, as well as to many dying patients.

Determined to pursue continuing education throughout his professional life to refine his pastoral and clinical skills, he completed specialty training and education in advanced pastoral studies; family, marital, and bereavement counseling, and earned four units of Clinical Pastoral Education. In addition, he received certification as a clinical bioethics consultant from the Certificate Program in Bioethics and Medical Humanities under the joint auspices of Montefiore Medical Center Department of Epidemiology and Social Medicine, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons Center for the Study of Society and Medicine in New York City.

Chaplain Kronick served as the first President of the Association of Orthodox Jewish Chaplains in Long Term Care. He was the Chair of Parker Jewish Institute's Bioethics Committee from 1992-2001, Chair of its Human Subjects Review Committee (IRB) from 1998-2001, and Chair of its Pain Management and Palliative Care Process Improvement Team from 1999-2001. Chaplain Kronick's special interests are

spiritual issues in long-term-care, palliative-care and hospice ministry, bereavement counseling, clinical bioethics consultation, and chaplaincy education. He has been a much sought-after lecturer and presenter on these topics. He has participated in developing new curricula and literature searches with respect to Veterans' Homelessness, Suicide Awareness and Prevention, and Women Veterans' Issues, the latter to be offered in 2012.

At the National Chaplain Center, he plays a significant role in helping to devise major policy initiatives and responses of import to VA Central Office and the chaplain field. He was a member of VAMC Hampton's Ethics Committee and presented monthly educational forums to Committee members and Medical Center staff. He is a member of the National V.A. Ethics Committee. In 2008, he was awarded the William A. Nelson Award for Excellence in Health Care Ethics by the VHA National Ethics Center in Health Care. The award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated a long-term commitment to promoting ethical health care practice in the Veterans Health Administration, through excellence, dedication, and accomplishment in the field of health care ethics.

Chaplain Kronick is a board-certified chaplain by the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC), the National Association of Veterans Affairs Chaplains (NAVAC), and the National Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC). He served as NAJC's Certification Commission Chair from 2004-2007, as well as NAJC President from 2008-2010.

Throughout his pastoral ministry, Chaplain Kronick has sensitively addressed and been committed to providing excellent, culturally competent spiritual care to patients of diverse faith groups. As part of his contribution to the V.A. National Chaplain Service, he works on behalf of pluralistic and inclusive spiritual care delivery for all care recipients, collaborating with his colleagues to enrich and expand educational opportunities for V.A. chaplains, and providing representation for Jewish chaplains and stakeholders. He is endorsed by the Jewish Chaplains Council of the Jewish Welfare Board.

Speaker: Caregiver Postvention

**Keynote Speaker*

Dr. Sarra Nazem, Ph.D.



Dr. Sarra Nazem is a Clinical Research Psychologist at the Rocky Mountain MIRECC for Suicide Prevention at the Rocky Mountain Regional VAMC and an Assistant Professor in the Departments of Psychiatry and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. Dr. Nazem completed her clinical internship at the VA Palo Alto, earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from West Virginia University, and completed a two-year advanced fellowship at the Rocky Mountain MIRECC. Dr. Nazem's research has focused on identifying mechanisms associated with increased risk for suicide, including an active grant-funded line of research on sleep interventions as an upstream suicide prevention approach. Dr. Nazem is also a consultant for the VA Suicide Risk Management Consultation Program and is leading efforts behind the development and dissemination of new suicide postvention resources for the VA.

Speaker: Suicide Prevention Competencies for Faith Leaders

Chaplain Carol E. Carr, M.Div., BCC

Chief of Chaplain Service
Cheyenne VA Medical Center



Chaplain Carol Carr has served the Cheyenne VA since 2001 and as Chief of Chaplain Service since 2007. Chaplain Carol and her team of chaplains collaborate with Vet Centers, the National Guard and other community partners to bring programs such as Warrior to Soul Mate, Community Clergy Training, Moral Injury Groups and other upstream Suicide Prevention activities to several states. She is an active member of several county and state Suicide Prevention coalitions. She established and leads the No Veteran Dies Alone program which has trained over 150 volunteers to serve dying veterans since 2012. Under her leadership, the chaplain team at the Cheyenne VA has received three National Best Practice Awards. Carol serves as a Field Member on the National Chaplain Center (NCC) Field Advisory Council and as an NCC Subject Matter Expert in Suicide Prevention. She serves on the National Association of VA Chaplains (NAVAC) as the Specialty Certification Chair (SCC) for the

Suicide Prevention and the Hospice and Palliative Care Specialties. She has recently teamed up with the Rocky Mountain MIRECC Center for Excellence in Suicide Prevention to pilot Postvention Teams in 10 VA Facilities, in conjunction with the VA Mental Health and Chaplaincy Dynamic Diffusion Network. Carol is ordained and endorsed by the American Baptist Churches of USA, and NAVAC Board Certified with a specialty in Hospice and Palliative Care. Carol has a Master of Divinity, Chaplaincy Specialty (2000) from Denver Seminary, and a Bachelor of Applied Science in Geotechnical Engineering (1979) from the University of British Columbia. She served honorably as a Private in the Canadian Armed Force Reserve Communications Squadron from 1974-1977 and was an Engineering Manager for a multinational oil and gas company for 18 years prior to entering fulltime ministry. She is the recipient of the 2003 VA Secretary's Award for Excellence in Chaplaincy and the 2016 Military Chaplain Association's Distinguished Service Award.

Speaker: Assessing the Unspeakable

Chaplain David McElwain, M.Div., BCC



Reverend David McElwain was ordained in 1986 in the American Baptist Church, and he transitioned into the Episcopal Church in 2008. He was commissioned in the U.S. Navy, Chaplain Corps, on March 17, 1989. Naval service has taken Chaplain McElwain around the world. He served on USS PHILIPPINE SEA (CG-58) and USS NASSAU (LHA-4); with Marines, he deployed for OIF. His service included Naval hospitals and Navy Chapels. He also provided retreat ministry in the Navy's CREDO program. Through the Navy's Pastoral Care Residency he developed integral skills in dealing with the human response to combat-related trauma, as well as natural and interpersonal trauma.

Chaplain McElwain has specialty training in Pastoral Care, Mental Health Integration for Chaplain Services, and he is a board certified chaplain. Upon retirement from the Navy in December 2010 he moved to Cheyenne Wyoming. He currently serves at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Cheyenne.

Speaker: Assessing the Unspeakable

Dr. Tim Parker, Ph.D., LMFT

Cheyenne VA Medical Center



Dr. Tim Parker currently serves as the Suicide Prevention Coordinator for Northern Colorado with the Cheyenne VA Medical Center. He has worked with the VA for 7 years, starting at the Michael E. DeBakey VA in Houston, TX before transferring to beautiful northern Colorado. Prior to serving as Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Dr. Parker served as the couples therapist for the Cheyenne VA. Dr. Parker received his PhD in Marriage and Family Therapy from Texas Tech University and his M.MFT from Abilene Christian University. He is licensed as an LMFT in Colorado and an LMFT Supervisor in Texas. Dr. Parker has a special interest in discovering the systemic factors that contribute to suicide.

Speaker: Care After the Call

Linda Benson, LCSW

Linda Benson is the Acting Suicide Prevention Coordinator at the Cheyenne VA. Linda has thirty-eight years of experience in mental health, in multiple settings, primarily in the New York State Department of Mental Health and as a Private Practice Psychotherapist for twenty-five years. She began her journey with the VA in 2010 where she worked in Outpatient Mental Health, and served at-risk Veterans who were transitioning from combat deployments.

In addition to all of this, Linda has specialty training and has held leadership roles in the areas of Rural Social Work, Brief Solution Focused Therapy, and for the Dually Diagnosed. Linda's experience working with the NY State Office of Mental Health and the NY state Department of Education created an opportunity for her to learn the value of interagency collaboration. She carries the value of this learning with her still today.

Linda has a keen interest in suicide prevention as it relates to Veterans, and she is currently interested in suicide prevention in the general population. She values the opportunity to collaborate with other human services and community agencies to more effectively confront the high incidence of suicide, regionally.

Speaker: Care After the Call

Chaplain Donald Blomberg, M.Div.



Outpatient Chaplain at Cheyenne VA Medical Center for the past seven-and-a-half years. Master of Divinity degree and Certificate of Chaplain from Denver Seminary, along with completion of 4 units of Clinical Pastoral Education. Married for 40 years and have 4 grown children. Have helped to start and facilitate 5 Combat Trauma/Moral Injury Spirituality Groups. Have helped to start Grief Groups at the Loveland and Fort Collins VA Clinics. Facilitate our Warrior to Soul Mate W2SM Couples Workshops and train Trainers for this program. Collaborate with MH and local Vet Centers providing support for our Veterans. Additional training includes: Basic Chaplaincy Orientation, Suicide Prevention and Risk Management, From the War Zone to the Home Front, PTSD and Moral Injury, Community Clergy Training, Asymmetric Therapist, and Tele-chaplaincy; Enjoy gardening, walks with wife, hunting and the outdoors as a means of relaxation and personal Mental Health.

Speaker: Community Round Table

Chaplain Allison Bollegar, M.Div., BCC



Chaplain Allison Bollegar currently serves the Cheyenne VA. Her role is to care for Veterans through individual and group spiritual counseling and support, and chaplain-specific administration.

In the past, she has provided spiritual care as a chaplain for civilian and criminal psychiatric patients in Colorado State hospitals. Chaplain Bollegar has done contract work through a detention center where she provided spiritual support for US Marshal detainees, and she has worked in private medical centers. Prior to her work in the field of chaplaincy over the past three years, she worked with local churches to establish safe ministries of prayer and helpful boundaries for emotional and spiritual support. Her work in ministry development began locally, in 2007, and extended to the Philippines. Chaplain Bollegar enjoys working on teams, community engagement, and thinking creatively to meet the spiritual needs of all people.

Speaker: Hospice Suicide Prevention and MAJD

Dr. Laura Eaton, Ph.D.



Laura Eaton, Ph.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist: Dr. Eaton obtained her masters in Clinical Psychology from The University of Colorado at Colorado Springs in 2002, and earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology (with an emphasis on aging) from The University of Alabama in 2007. She completed her pre-doctoral internship at the Pittsburgh VA Healthcare System. Her post-doctoral training was at the South Central MIRECC where she focused on evidence-based interventions for anxiety and depression (primarily geriatric) in primary care and rural health settings. Dr. Eaton has broad experience as a clinician and administrator in a variety of outpatient, inpatient and residential settings within the VA Healthcare System. She joined the Cheyenne VA system in 2017, and has worked in the Community Living Center (Nursing Home), Hospice, and Palliative Care.

Currently she is the Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) psychologist for Northern Colorado and enjoys working with families as they navigate later life. Her primary interests are interdisciplinary teams, geropsychology, suicide prevention, quality of care for Veterans in late life and helping Veterans achieve peace at the end of life.

Speaker: Hospice Suicide Prevention and MAJD

Dean L Fernandez, RN



Dean Fernandez has worked in the Denver medical community for the past 35 years, starting at age 16 in a north Denver skilled nursing facility and was one of the first state certified CNA's in Colorado. Dean has been a nurse and leader for the past 17 years with a focus on emergency and critical care, prior to starting his journey in hospice and palliative care. Currently Dean is the Director of Clinical Services for the Denver Hospice and Optio Health Services. Through his work and personal life, Dean has found a passion and purpose in end of life care. With expertise in critical care, hospice and palliative care as well as end of life conversations, Dean has provided education and support throughout the Denver community. Attending over 500 deaths in his career and personal life, along with countless other end of life conversations, Dean has established himself as an end of life expert.