

CHALLENGING YOUTH SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY CASES, UNDERSTANDING ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND DEVELOPING RESILIENCY FOR ATTORNEYS

SPEAKER INFORMATION

MELANIE HENDRICKS, LISW-CP, ACSW

Melanie Hendricks, LISW-CP, ACSW, is a Licensed Independent Social Worker-Clinical Practice/Supervisor and member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers. She has over 25 years' experience in the treatment of Juvenile Justice youth with mental health problems and serious emotional disturbance. In addition to a Master of Social Work, she also obtained a Master of Science in Public Health (Epidemiology), both from the University of South Carolina. Melanie has worked extensively in both clinical and managerial roles, and in her capacity at the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice, she has overseen Health Services, Psychology Services, Social Work Services, Trauma-Informed Services, and Interagency and Classification Services. Currently, she is the Deputy Director of the Division of Community Treatment Services at SCDJJ and is focused on expanding treatment options for youth in the community and bringing evidence-based practices to Juvenile Justice youth.

As a clinician, her professional expertise is in the assessment and treatment of adolescents with sexual behavioral problems; she led one of the few outpatient sex offender treatment programs in the state mental health system for adolescents. She has been an expert witness in Family Court proceedings throughout the state pertaining to adolescent sex offenses as well as in cases related to Juvenile Justice youth with mental health concerns. She is a nationally-rostered trauma clinician, a Fellow of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA), and has been a featured presenter on the local, regional, and national level.

Melanie is passionate about the rehabilitation of our youth and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to her work in the state Juvenile Justice system.

MARJORIE LOEWER, Ph.D.

Marjorie Loewer received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology in 2004. Has worked at the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice since 1991, first as a Campus Psychologist, then as the head of the Sex Offender Treatment Program for youth committed to SC DJJ, then as the agency-wide manager of sex offender services and finally as statewide coordinator for youth with 'Special Needs,' which includes youth with mental illness, cognitive or physical disabilities, youth in state custody and youth with specific treatment needs, including youth in need of sex offender specific treatment. Via a grant, arranged for statewide training from two leading researchers in the area of adolescents with sexual behavior problems: Barbara Bonner and Mark Chaffin; also supported their initiative for developing outpatient sex offender treatment groups in parts of low country South Carolina. Developed a research-based template for a Psychosexual Assessment, to be included as Court-ordered as part of the SC DJJ psychosocial evaluation for adjudicated youth with sex offender issues. Provided periodic trainings on the current state of adolescent sex offender research for staff from DJJ and other child-serving agencies. Provided training

for defense attorneys and others in the use of ‘pled-down’ charges for youth with sexual behavior problems as a means of bypassing Sex Offender Registry, which by all available research measures is inappropriate for youth. Retired from SC DJJ in 2014, but continues to provide consultation, training and psychosexual evaluation report editing services on a contractual basis.

AMANDA POWELL

Attorney, Trainer, Juvenile Defense Consultant
Gault Center

Amanda Powell is an attorney, trainer, and youth defense consultant to The Gault Center, formerly The National Juvenile Defender Center. After graduating from Capital University Law School in 2003, Amanda was with the Office of the Ohio Public Defender until 2016. While there, she supervised attorneys in the youth appeals section and litigated more than 120 appeals, including eight cases argued in the Supreme Court of Ohio, for children with delinquency adjudications or those transferred to adult court. As a consultant, Amanda has assisted with litigation strategies for youth in jurisdictions across the country, including authoring and coauthoring The Gault Center’s amicus briefs in the Supreme Courts of Missouri and Ohio. Amanda has been a proud certified trainer for The Gault Center’s Youth Defender Advocacy Program (formerly JTIP) since 2014 and has trained youth defenders in nearly 1000 training sessions across 29 states and the District of Columbia.

NINA SPINELLI

Juvenile Arbitration Director, Second Judicial Circuit

Nina Spinelli is Director of the Juvenile Arbitration Program for the Second Judicial Circuit. She received her B.A. in Political Science from USC Aiken in 2006 and her M.P.A. from Augusta State University in 2011. Her professional experience includes: Government Liaison and Disaster Assessment, American Red Cross (September 2005 – Present); Intern and Volunteer Juvenile Arbitrator, Office of the Solicitor – 2nd Judicial Circuit (December 2007 – August 2012); Board Member Chair (Last Term), Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board (January 2012 – January 2018); Foster Care Review Board Program Coordinator, Governor’s Office of Executive Policy and Programs (August 2012 – 2015); and Director Of Juvenile Arbitration and Community Diversion, Office of the Solicitor – 2nd Circuit (August 2015 – Present). Nina is a member of Gamma Beta Phi Honor Society (Pi Gamma Mu). She is also involved in numerous community activities including Help Line of Aiken County (United Way 2-1-1), Board Member (2006 – Present); Friends of the Lexington Main Library, Board Member (2012 – 2018); Substance Abuse Free Environment Team, Vice-Chair, Aiken Center (2015 – Present); Guardian ad Litem, Department of Administration (2015 – Present); Citizen Review Panel, Children’s Law Center of USC, Panel Member (2015 – Present); Suicide Coalition of Aiken County, Committee Member (2016 – Present); Eat Smart-Move More Coalition, Committee Member, South Carolina Department of Health (2018 – Present); and South Carolina Advisory Council for Educating Students with Disabilities (2019 – Present).