



2023 ANNUAL RIGHTS CONFERENCE

***National Association for
Rights Protection and Advocacy
September 6 – 9, 2023
New Orleans, Louisiana***

Program for the Annual Rights Conference

The Annual Rights Conference of the
National Association for Rights Protection and Advocacy
Wednesday, September 6 to Saturday, September 9, 2023

Embassy Suites by Hilton New Orleans

NARPA Mission Statement

NARPA's mission is to promote policies and pursue strategies that result in individuals with psychiatric diagnoses making their own choices regarding treatment. We educate and mentor those individuals to enable them to exercise their legal and human rights with the goal of abolition of all forced treatment.

NARPA Board of Directors

Kwamena Blankson, President
Kathy Flaherty, Vice President
Steve Stone, Treasurer
Tom Masseur, Secretary
Nancy Alisberg
Arthur Baer
Kristina Kapp
Vesper Moore
Imari Nuyen-Kariotis
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<http://www.narpa.org>

**Visit us on Facebook
& YouTube. Access
our Instagram account.**

Bill Stewart, 2023 Conference Committee Chairperson
Ann Marshall, NARPA Administrator

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT FOR ALL ATTENDEES

- **All attendees at NARPA's 2023 annual conference must have Proof of Covid-19 Vaccination.**
- **Wearing of masks is strongly encouraged in conference meeting rooms and the surrounding public areas.**
- **Anyone experiencing symptoms of illness or fever should avoid conference activities. Covid tests and masks will be available; please notify the NARPA registration desk and they will be delivered to your room.**

Masks and distancing protocols help reduce the spread of respiratory illnesses (flu and RSV as well as Covid) and protect attendees who may be immunocompromised or at greater risk for serious illness.

OTHER CONFERENCE INFORMATION

Continuing Legal Education Credits (CLEs)

Please check in at NARPA Registration Desk regarding certificates for CLE-eligible workshops.

Evaluation Forms

Please leave completed forms in the box at the NARPA Registration Desk.

Name Badges

If you wish to recycle your badge, leave it at the NARPA Registration Desk.

Internet Access

Please check with the NARPA registration desk if you are having problems with access.

For our future NARPA generations,
NARPA wishes to “go green” and be ecologically responsible.

For the NARPA program with times and locations, scan the QR code at the Registration Desk. The schedule is also available with workshop descriptions, presenter bios, and other details on the website at www.narpa.org. Also, copies of the schedule will be posted at the Registration Desk.

If provided by speakers, workshop handouts are on the NARPA website conference schedule. Others will be added to the website after the conference.

DAILY SCHEDULES AND WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

Workshop descriptions, biographical information about presenters, and handouts (if provided) are listed in the Full Conference Schedule on our website at www.narpa.org.

Wednesday, September 6, 2023

1 – 5 PM

Fontainebleau 2

[Pre-Conference Institute for PAIMI Council Members](#)

4 – 6 PM

Prytania

Conference Registration Desk Open

5:30 – 7 PM

Prytania

NARPA Reception

Bill Stewart, Conference Chairperson
Welcoming Remarks

Kwamena Blankson, NARPA President
NARPA's Mission & Status

Thursday, September 7, 2023

6:30 – 10 AM

The Atrium

Cooked to Order Breakfast

7:30 - 8 AM

Fontainebleau 3&4

Virginia Knowlton-Marcus, J.D.
CEO Disability Rights North Carolina

[Mindfulness –
Accessible Yoga Practice](#)

A workshop for improving head and heart space with accessible yoga. Virginia completed her RYT-200 yoga instructor training in 2016 and became involved in the accessible yoga movement, advocating to make yoga practice accessible to everybody.

8 AM – 4 PM

Fontainebleau 3&4

Registration Desk Open

8:30 – 9:45 AM

Fontainebleau 3&4

Opening Remarks

Keynote Address

Robert Dinerstein, J.D.

Professor of Law and Director of the Disability Rights Clinic
American University's Washington College of Law

[Significant Developments in Mental Health Law – 2023](#)

This presentation, always a popular one at NARPA, will review and analyze leading mental health law and ADA cases of the last year. The discussion will center on potentially successful areas of litigation in the coming year, important legal issues that remain to be resolved, and the kinds of arguments that are likely to be persuasive with courts at this time.

9:45 – 10 AM

Break

10 - 11:15 AM

Fontainebleau 1

Workshops

Thomas Brown, M. Ed., and Sarah Yousuf, J.D.

[Legislative Advocacy for Individuals with Lived Experience](#)

Fontainebleau 2

Tom Behrendt, Kwamena Blankson, Aaryce Hayes, & Bill Stewart
[NARPA Chat](#)

Conference attendees who are participating in their first or second annual event are sometimes overwhelmed and confused by the amount of information available. Long term NARPA members tend to use verbal shorthand in references to cases, books or agencies. This workshop is an informal discussion of the history, mission and current status of the organization. Questions and comments are encouraged. Bill Stewart and Tom Behrendt are former board members and Kwamena Blankson is the current president.

Fontainebleau 3&4

Monica Porter, J.D., Anashua Dutta, J.D., Maia Goodell, J.D., and Harrison “Harry” Fowler

[Mental Health in Higher Education: A Discussion of Students’ Rights, Colleges’ Responsibilities, and Landmark Litigation](#)

Prytania

Arthur Baer, J.D.

[Involuntary Commitments: From Cure to Control, the Lapse of First Principles, and Decline of Justification for Civil Incarceration](#)

11:15 AM – 1 PM

Lunch On Your Own

Fontainebleau 2

Grab & Bring Lunch to Participate in a Roundtable Discussion Led by Aaryce Hayes, L.C.S.W., and Virginia Knowlton Marcus, J.D.

[Responding to State Threats to Mental Health Rights](#)

Space is limited. Sign up at the Registration Desk for this activity.

1 – 2:15 PM

Fontainebleau 3&4

Keynote Address

Ira Burnim, J.D.

Looking Forward, Looking Back

2:15 – 2:30 PM

Break

2:30 – 3:45 PM
Fontainebleau 1

Workshops

Ephraim Akiva, Sarah Yousuf, J.D., and Thomas Brown, M. Ed.
[**An Alternative to Involuntary Outpatient Commitment: The Push to Create the First LGBTQIA+ Peer Respite in the World in Massachusetts through the Legislative Process**](#)

Fontainebleau 2

William Brooks, J.D.
[**Litigating Federal Civil Rights Claims for Both Equitable Relief and Damages – Part I**](#)

Fontainebleau 3&4

Ann Rider M.S.W. and Vesper Moore
[**Effective Activism: A Lifetime of Learning**](#)

Prytania

Mitzy Sky
[**Beyond The Story Project: Letting Go of Internalized Oppression – Compassionate Activism Building for Personal and Social Change**](#)

3:45 – 4 PM

Break

4 – 5:15 PM
Fontainebleau 1

Workshops
Ann Kasper, M.A., P.S.S.
[**Mental Health in Cyberspace and Digital Rights**](#)

Fontainebleau 2

William Brooks, J.D.
[**Litigating Federal Civil Rights Claims for Both Equitable Relief and Damages – Part II**](#)

Fontainebleau 3&4

Jane Moore, Carly Mahaffey, and Mark Joyce J.D.
[**Peer Support Specialists as P&A Advocates: A Powerful Combination**](#)

Prytania

Vanessa Ramos, Keris Myrick, and Vesper Moore
[**The Fight for Resistance: The Struggle against Involuntary Psychiatric Intervention**](#)

5:30 – 7 PM
The Atrium

Complimentary Manager’s Reception with free drinks and snacks

6:30 – 10 AM
The Atrium

Friday, September 8, 2023

Cooked to Order Breakfast

7:30 - 8 AM
Fontainebleau 3&4

Virginia Knowlton-Marcus, J.D.
CEO Disability Rights North Carolina
[Mindfulness – Meditation Practice](#)

8 AM – 4 PM
Fontainebleau 3&4

Registration Desk Open

8:30 – 9:45 AM
Fontainebleau 3&4

Keynote Panel
Brenita Softley, J.D., Anil Mujumdar, J.D., and
Kwamena Blankson, J.D.
[Working for Racial Justice and Equity](#)

9:45 – 10 AM

Break

10 – 11:15 AM
Fontainebleau 1

Workshops
Ebony Flint, Bevin Croft, Ph.D., and Sera Davidow
[\(Re\)Defining Person-Centered Planning](#)

Fontainebleau 2

Susan Stefan, J.D., and Kwamena Blankson, J.D.
[Litigating Race in Civil Commitment Cases](#)

Fontainebleau 3&4

Dana Lloyd, Stephanie Diaz, and Devon Orland, J.D.
[Tools for Increased Autonomy: Supported Decision-Making
and Psychiatric Advance Directives](#)

Prytania

Leigh Nathan, M.D., and Kimberly Horowitz, J.D., R.S.S.
[Implementing the World Health Organization’s Quality Rights
Guidance at a Hospital In Connecticut: How it Started, How
it’s Going](#)

11:15 AM – 1 PM

Lunch on Your Own

Fontainebleau 2

Grab & Bring Lunch To Participate in a Roundtable Discussion
Led By Arthur Baer, J.D.
[Treatment Over Objection](#)
Space is limited. Sign up at the Registration Desk for this activity.

1 – 2:15 PM
Fontainebleau 3&4

Keynote Address
David Cohen, Ph.D.
[Past, Present, And Future of Coercive Mental Health](#)

2:15 – 2:30 PM

Break

2:30 – 3:45 PM
Fontainebleau 1

Workshops
Shari Myers, Melissa Marshall, J.D., and Imari Kariotis
[Protecting our Rights During and After Disasters](#)

Fontainebleau 2

Sarah Fatemeh Porter, Nev Jones, Ph.D.,
and Jess Stohlmann-Rainey
[988: Three Forms of Policy and Peer Role Utilization](#)

Fontainebleau 3&4

Lewis Bossing, J.D., Leslie Napper, J.D.,
and Oscar Daniel Lopez, J.D. .
[Disability Rights Advocacy to Prevent Unnecessary
Institutionalization](#)

Prytania

Melissa Cyril, Molly Paris, J.D., and Karen Kirby, R.N., M.S.N.
[Effectively Advocating for Change: The Use of Consulting
Experts to Advocate for Positive Change for Individuals
Receiving Psychiatric Care](#)

3:45 – 4 PM

Break

4 – 5:15 PM
Fontainebleau 1

Workshops
Sera Davidow
[Suicide through a Harm Reduction Lens](#)

Fontainebleau 2

Jim Probert, Ph.D.
[Moving Toward a Human Rights Approach to Mental Health
on Campus and Beyond](#)

Fontainebleau 3&4

William Brooks, J.D., Gina Teixeira, J.D., and Tom Behrendt, J.D.
[The Illusory Right to Counsel: Challenging Systemic
Ineffective Assistance of Counsel in Civil Commitments](#)

5:30 – 7 PM
The Atrium

**Complimentary Manager's Reception with free drinks
and snacks**

Saturday, September 9, 2023

6:30 – 10 AM
The Atrium

Cooked to Order Breakfast

8 – 10 AM
Fontainebleau 3&4

Registration Desk Open

9 – 10:15 AM

Workshops

Fontainebleau 1

Vesper Moore, Lindsey Vezina, and Brenda Vezina
[Mental Health and Civil Rights: Anti-Oppression, Cultural Humility, And Peer Support](#)

Fontainebleau 2

Jennifer Mathis, J.D.
[Disability Rights Priorities of the U.S. Department of Justice](#)

Fontainebleau 3&4

Peter Stastny, M.D., Ruth Lowenkron, Esq.,
and Kathy Flaherty, J.D..
[Stripping Doctors of Police Powers](#)

10:15 - 10:30 AM

Break

10:30 – 11:45 AM
Fontainebleau 3&4

Closing Keynote Panel
Lewis Bossing, Esq., Vania Mendoza, Dom Kelly, Barksdale
Hortensine, J.D., Hon. Marcus O. DeLarge. and Mitzy Sky,
Moderator
Innovative Non-Police Responses in Crisis Situations

11:45 AM -- Noon
Fontainebleau 3&4

Closing Remarks
Kwamena Blankson, J.D. and NARPA President

Conference Adjourns

See you next year!

CONGRATULATIONS TO NARPA's 2023 AWARD RECIPIENTS

AWARDS WILL BE PRESENTED DURING THE CONFERENCE

THE PEARL JOHNSON AWARD

NARPA presents this award to advocates of color exemplifying the spirit of Pearl Johnson, one of the nation's leading psychiatric survivor activists and a passionate supporter for the rights of individuals of color.

THE RAE UNZICKER AWARD

NARPA gives this award each year in honor of NARPA's founder Rae Unzicker. The recipient shares her passionate dedication to protecting the rights of individuals labeled with psychiatric illness.

THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD

NARPA honors one of its own each year by presenting this award for outstanding service and dedication to the principles and mission of NARPA to protect the rights of individuals labeled with psychiatric illness.

SPECIAL THANKS

NARPA Wishes To Thank

Connecticut Legal Rights Project

**for invaluable assistance in providing scholarships for individuals
with lived experience to attend our New Orleans Conference**