



NATIONAL CENTER for  
**YOUTH ISSUES**

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## *Speakers Bureau*

# Paul Harris

SCHOOL COUNSELOR, PROFESSOR, AND TRAINER



Dr. Paul C. Harris is a scholar-practitioner committed to building a just world where all are seen, heard, and valued. He has 20+ years of experience as K-12 school counselor, teacher, administrator, and professor. He is currently an associate professor in the counseling and special education department at Virginia Commonwealth University. He is the former president of the Virginia School Counselor Association and formerly served on the American School Counselor Association Board of Directors. He earned his Bachelor's degree in Health & Physical Education with a concentration in Sports Medicine and his Master's degree in School Counseling from the University of Virginia, and his Ph.D. in Counselor Education from the University of Maryland. He holds a Master of Divinity degree from Virginia Union University.

### A BRIEF LOOK AT PAUL'S KEYNOTE/WORKSHOP SESSIONS

#### **Building Just Schools**

Every leader shapes culture — intentionally or not. Dr. Harris calls educational leaders to embrace their role as culture builders who value and celebrate strengths, repair harm through restorative leadership, and hold space for difficult truths as a pathway to healing and thriving. Through compelling personal stories and relevant research, details how to build communities full of connection and hope and create spaces where students and staff alike feel seen, heard, valued, and empowered.

#### **Using CliftonStrengths to Promote Student Success**

How can we intentionally aim our strengths to accomplish our individual and collective goals? What are the critical components of a strengths-based culture? How might strengths be integrated to increase engagement and productivity? Dr. Harris' engaging multimedia presentation provides nuanced answers to these questions by drawing on CliftonStrengths research and the unique impact it can have on school culture.

#### **Restorative Practices for Educators**

What are proactive ways to strengthen relationships and connections within communities? How do we respond to an incident of wrongdoing or harm in our community? What are critical components of proactive and responsive circles and how do we know they are effective? How can affective questions be used to repair harm and restore relationships? Dr. Harris details the fundamental tenets of restorative practices and provides practical application strategies in this engaging and practical presentation.

#### **Supporting Neurodivergent Students and their Families**

What is the schooling experience like for neurodivergent students? What might it feel like in a neuro-normative society to learn that your child is neurodivergent? How can we reduce or eliminate common barriers that neurodivergent students experience in school? What does it look like to incorporate student and family strengths into support efforts? Dr. Harris addresses these questions and more using personal narratives and professional insights to facilitate increased empathy, understanding, and self-efficacy of participants.

#### **An Antiracist, Strengths-Based Framework for Black Student Success**

What does it look like to illuminate strengths as cultural assets? How can we cultivate action through a strengths-based identity? How do we use strengths in data-driven, antiracist work? This session introduces an antiracist, strengths-based framework designed to help educators across roles reimagine how they support Black students. Participants will leave with practical tools for reframing narratives, leveraging student assets, and advancing systemic change.

Contact Robert Rabon at [rrabon@ncyi.org](mailto:rrabon@ncyi.org) or 423-309-4300 to engage Paul for your event