



NATIONAL CENTER for  
**YOUTH ISSUES**

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*Speakers Bureau*



# Sarah Bazemore

STATE COORDINATOR OF SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH AND STUDENT SAFETY, CONSULTANT, ADJUNCT PROFESSOR, AND TRAINER

Sarah Bazemore has more than 20 years of experience in education and has served as a school counselor, school counseling coordinator, behavior interventionist, special education teacher, and middle school math teacher. She was recognized as the 2019 Virginia School Counselor of the Year and has also served as an adjunct professor at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Currently, Sarah is the Coordinator of Behavioral Health and Instructional Supports at the Virginia Department of Education, where she leads statewide efforts to strengthen comprehensive school behavioral health systems. In this role, she oversees school counseling, school psychology, and school social work, as well as statewide initiatives focused on school safety, social-emotional learning, and the prevention of suicide, bullying, and substance misuse.

Sarah's presentations and workshops are designed to empower educators to foster relationships, understand student behavior, create effective systems, and learn practical strategies to make a meaningful impact.

## A BRIEF LOOK AT SARAH'S SESSIONS

### **The Power of Feeling Understood: Creating Meaningful Student Connections**

Every behavior tells a story, and feelings are often the narrator. This engaging and practical session explores how feelings and emotions shape the way students interpret the world around them and why those interpretations are powerful drivers of behavior. Participants will gain a foundational understanding of feelings and emotions, how they influence decision-making and reactions, and why recognizing the "why" behind behavior matters in schools. Beyond the basics, this presentation equips educators with practical strategies and real-world approaches for responding to students in ways that build connection, foster regulation, and support positive outcomes. Attendees will leave with tools they can immediately apply to strengthen relationships, improve interactions, and better support the emotional and behavioral needs of students.

### **Systems That Stick Workshop: Building Sustainable School Mental Health Supports**

Comprehensive school mental health is about more than adding programs; it's about creating intentional systems that make support sustainable, effective, and efficient. This engaging session explores the essential components of a strong Comprehensive School Mental Health framework, including resource mapping, data-informed decision-making, effective teaming structures, universal screening, progress monitoring, and coordinated supports. Participants will learn how investing in systems that strengthen and organize practices leads to a greater return on investment, reduces duplication of effort, and protects one of the most valuable resources in schools: time. Attendees will leave with practical strategies and tools to build aligned systems that improve outcomes for students while increasing staff capacity, collaboration, and impact.

- Session 1: Building the Foundation – Understanding the "Why" Behind Systems Work
- Session 2: Using Data to Drive Action – Making Decisions with Purpose and Precision
- Session 3: From Planning to Implementation – Creating Systems That Last

Participants will leave the workshop series with practical tools, planning strategies, and a clearer roadmap for building coordinated, sustainable systems that improve student outcomes while supporting staff capacity and well-being.

Contact Robert Rabon at [rrabon@ncyi.org](mailto:rrabon@ncyi.org) or 423.309.4300 to engage Sarah for your event

## Moments that Matter: Turning Critical Moments into Connection Opportunities

When a student returns from suspension, do you already have a plan of support ready to go? When a student enrolls midyear, are there prepared supports that can be implemented immediately to help them feel connected and successful? If you learn a student has experienced a significant loss or major family change, what can your school offer right away to help them navigate the transition?

Some of the most important opportunities to support students are also the most predictable. Every school year brings “moments that matter,” critical transitions and life events that can significantly impact a student’s sense of connection, safety, and success in school. Whether a student is returning from suspension, enrolling midyear, experiencing a family divorce, grieving a loss, returning from hospitalization, entering foster care, or navigating a parent deployment, these moments create both risk and opportunity.

This interactive session will help school mental health professionals move from reactive responses to proactive planning by first identifying common “moments that matter” that occur in their school, then learning how to design practical, ready-to-implement Tier 2 supports that can be quickly implemented when students need them most. Attendees will leave with identified moments specific to their school, along with strategies, tools, and intervention ideas that strengthen connection, increase responsiveness, and ensure students receive meaningful support during pivotal moments. Because these moments are opportunities to make a lasting difference that we don’t want to miss.

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## What Happens After “Tell an Adult”?: Turning Bullying Prevention into Action

Bullying prevention starts with a shared understanding—not just of what bullying is, but of how it shows up in schools, how it is reported, and how adults respond. This foundational session, Bullying Prevention 101, is designed for school and division leaders who want to strengthen their systems for prevention, reporting, and response in practical and sustainable ways. Participants will build a clear understanding of the basics of bullying, including definitions, dynamics, and the difference between conflict and patterns of targeted behavior.

Beyond identification, this session focuses on what schools can do. Leaders will explore how to design reporting systems that are accessible, trusted, and actually used by students and staff, as well as how to ensure those systems lead to meaningful action. The session will also examine how to build responsive supports for both students who are targeted and those who are engaging in bullying behaviors, recognizing that effective prevention requires intervention on both sides.

Attendees will leave with actionable strategies to strengthen schoolwide consistency, improve reporting and follow-through, and create supportive systems that promote safety, accountability, and positive school climate.

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## Running on Empty: Reclaiming Time and Presence

Educators are often expected to operate in a constant state of “busy,” moving from task to task, meeting to meeting, and demand to demand without pause. Over time, this pace becomes not only normalized but even celebrated in school culture, where exhaustion can be mistaken for effectiveness and “there’s never enough time” becomes the default narrative. Yet when we are always rushing, we risk missing the very moments that matter most: meaningful connections with students, authentic collaboration with colleagues, and the opportunity to fully experience the work we care deeply about.

This session invites educators to rethink what time management really means in the context of school life. Participants will explore how shifting out of constant urgency can create space for greater clarity, presence, and impact. The presentation examines how intentional prioritization and slowing down can actually improve effectiveness, relationships, and well-being. Attendees will leave with practical strategies to disrupt the cycle of busyness, reclaim time in meaningful ways, and create more sustainable and connected professional practice.

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## Brief, But Powerful: Everyday Micro-Interventions

*One good conversation really can make a difference!*

This practical, hands-on session explores how small, intentional interactions can “move the needle” in school settings by quickly building connections, elevating student voice, and creating space for reflection, problem-solving, and skill-building. Participants will leave with simple, ready-to-use strategies they can keep “in their pocket” and deploy at a moment’s notice throughout the school day to strengthen relationships, empower student voice, increase engagement, and respond to student needs in real time.

Many of these micro-interventions naturally include brief, supportive teaching moments that offer students short, focused insights into stress, emotions, motivation, or coping skills, so they leave with something practical they can use right away. These brief but intentional strategies can stand alone as quick supports or be used alongside broader school-based systems of care when students need additional help.

At their core, micro-interventions are structured, relational, and intentional; designed to ensure that students leave with something helpful they can carry forward.

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## Beyond the Threat Assessment: Building Meaningful Student Support Plans After Threat and Suicide Risk Assessments

When a threat or suicide risk assessment is completed, school teams take critical steps to ensure immediate safety, but that moment is just the beginning. It’s the beginning of meaningful, ongoing support for the student.

This session explores how to move from assessment to action by designing thoughtful, individualized support plans that extend beyond immediate response. Participants will learn how to build plans that include ongoing supports, progress monitoring, and targeted interventions aimed at reducing the risk of future self-harm or violence.

This presentation focuses on going beyond the threat assessment to understand “why it’s happening” by exploring root causes and identifying practical, school-based strategies to address underlying needs. Attendees will leave with strategies to better understand the root cause of the behavior and tools to create support plans that are proactive, coordinated, and designed to promote long-term safety, stability, and student well-being.

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