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NYSSCA
NEW YORK STATE
SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION

2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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November 11-13, 2026 • Turning Stone Casino • Verona, NY

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Preconference sessions are an opportunity for more professional development. These sessions cover more in-depth information and allows an additional opportunity for discussion. Preconference sessions are not included in the main conference registration fee. These sessions run concurrently, once in the morning at 8:30 a.m. and once in the afternoon at 12:30 p.m. You may only choose one session per time slot.

PRE-CONFERENCE MORNING SESSIONS

NEW YORK STATE SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION

November 11, 2026 | 8:30 a.m.

1. AI Powered School Counseling

Hanna Mick

ABOUT THIS SESSION: Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping education—and school counseling is no exception. This keynote will explore the opportunities and challenges AI brings to our field, with a focus on how it can enhance student support, streamline counselor practices, and prepare young people for the future. Through real-world examples, practical tools, and thought-provoking discussions, attendees will gain a big-picture view of AI's role in school counseling today and where it's headed tomorrow.

SPEAKER BIO: Hanna Mick supports students and drives change in school counseling through dynamic leadership and innovative practices. Recognized for her contributions to school-based mental health, Mick was named 2024 Kansas School Counselor of the Year and was a finalist for ASCA School Counselor of the Year. As Dean of Elementary Counseling and Counselor Leader Coordinator for the Kansas State Department of Education, Mick leads impactful, data-driven initiatives that enhance school counseling across the state. She is known for her engaging, technology-infused lessons and use of AI and co-hosts "Kickin' it with KSCA," a podcast that empowers school counselors nationwide. A sought-after national presenter and keynote speaker, her energetic sessions are filled with practical strategies, project-based learning ideas, and ready-to-use tools, inspiring educators to rethink the possibilities of school counseling.

2. Lean Into the Discomfort: Trauma-Informed Conversations That Move Students from Resistance to Readiness

Loren Dittmar

ABOUT THIS SESSION: Participants will deepen their ability to see beyond student behavior and respond with clarity, empathy, and intention. This interactive session integrates trauma-informed practices with Motivational Interviewing strategies to help educators engage students who feel resistant, overwhelmed, or disconnected. Through real-world application, reflective practice, and skill-building, attendees will learn how to create safer, more connected environments and have conversations that move students from resistance to readiness. Participants will leave with practical tools to support student growth while strengthening their own confidence and effectiveness.

SPEAKER BIO: Once an at-risk youth, Loren Dittmar, PhD, is now a nationally recognized speaker and consultant specializing in school mental health, suicide prevention, and the well-being of the adults who serve youth. He partners with schools and organizations nationwide to expand mental health supports, strengthen staff resilience, and build cultures where people feel seen, supported, and empowered to live authentically.

With over 25 years of combined experience in clinical and educational settings, Loren brings a rare blend of frontline insight and scholarly depth. His background includes five years in the mental health field, 18 years as a school counselor, including service as a Director of School Counseling, and 13 years as an adjunct professor. He served as a Lead Professional Learning Specialist with Hatching Results, supporting districts in implementing data-driven, ASCA-aligned comprehensive school counseling programs. He was also the lead expert for the mental health section of the international resource covid19k12counseling.org. Loren has held various leadership roles within multiple state school counselor associations and currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Palmetto State School Counselor Association.

Through courageous conversations and healthy vulnerability, Loren equips audiences to ignite purpose, inspire change, and transform the way they lead, live, and connect.

Loren will also be presenting a breakout session.

3. Legal Literacy and Ethical Practice in the Complex World of School Counseling

Carolyn Stone

ABOUT THIS SESSION: School counselors must negotiate the competing interests of the overregulated school environment, student's need for confidentiality and the legal rights of parents to be the guiding voice in their children lives. Updates on these competing interests will be discussed through 10 primary court rulings that guide legal work of counselors in schools. Legal rulings will be highlighted in areas such as sexually active students, bullying, academic advising, child abuse, educational records, sexual harassment, first amendment rights, and transgender youth. Particular attention will be given to the developing laws regarding off-campus cyber speech and other uses of social media that are difficult to address without offending the first amendment. Through case study and the application of federal, state, and judge made laws, participants will actively dialogue in a lively forum. The goal is to facilitate participants' legal literacy and provide guiding principles to support best ethical practice.

SPEAKER BIO: Carolyn Stone, Ed.D., is a Professor Emeritus of Counselor Education at the University of North Florida (UNF). Dr. Stone is a Past President of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), and in 2010 was presented the ASCA Lifetime Achievement Award. Prior to coming to UNF, Dr. Stone spent 22 years with Jacksonville, Florida's Public Schools as an elementary and high school counselor, middle school teacher and Supervisor of Guidance Services. She supervised 225 school counselors. Dr. Stone was ASCAs Ethics Chair from 2002 to 2022 and chaired the last four revisions of the ethical standards.

4. Unlock the Potential of AI: Supporting Comprehensive School Counseling and the NYSED Regulations

Carol Dahir

ABOUT THIS SESSION: Generative AI tools are supposed to make our professional lives easier. These tools can help us design a survey, an exit ticket for school counseling lessons, and gathering and interpreting data. It is suggested that using AI enhances school counselor effectiveness and efficiency to support students. Can AI also help us design and/or revise our comprehensive school counseling program as required by the amended school counseling regulations? Can it help us better understand the ASCA National Model 5th edition?

As AI is used more extensively by principals and teachers to develop programs and enhance curriculum, where does school counseling fit in? Let's explore how to channel the power of AI to ensure ethical applications in our work with students and better address school needs with fidelity and integrity. Please bring a device to participate in hands-on activities and your school district policy/guidelines, if you have one!

SPEAKER BIO: Dr. Carol A. Dahir is a renowned educator, author, and researcher with over four decades of leadership in school counseling and educational policy. The retired Chair of the School Counseling Department at the New York Institute of Technology (NYIT), she currently serves as part-time faculty at both NYIT and New York University. Internationally recognized for her expertise in counselor accountability and program framework development, she previously served as the National Standards Project Director for the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and has advanced global counselor education as a twice-appointed Fulbright Specialist in Japan and Turkey.

A prolific scholar, Dr. Dahir is the co-author of several foundational textbooks, including *The Transformed School Counselor*. Her award-winning research focuses on social justice, school counselor-principal collaboration, and the integration of AI in counseling. She holds a Doctor of Education from Hofstra University and has been honored with numerous accolades, including the Life Career Achievement Award from the New York State School Counselor Association.

Carol will also be presenting a breakout session.

November 11, 2026 | 12:30 p.m.

5. AI Powered School Counseling

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6. Groups, Groups, Groups!!! The Key to Comprehensive School Counseling!

Loren Dittmar

ABOUT THIS SESSION: Counseling groups are one of the most effective ways school counselors can reach more students, yet many face barriers such as time, competing demands, or lack of confidence. This practical session provides clear structures and ready-to-use tools that make group implementation realistic, sustainable, and impactful, helping counselors expand student support while strengthening their overall program effectiveness.

SPEAKER BIO: Once an at-risk youth, Loren Dittmar, PhD, is now a nationally recognized speaker and consultant specializing in school mental health, suicide prevention, and the well-being of the adults who serve youth. He partners with schools and organizations nationwide to expand mental health supports, strengthen staff resilience, and build cultures where people feel seen, supported, and empowered to live authentically.

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Carol will also be presenting a breakout session.

Visit **40+ Exhibitors** at the Conference!



Thursday, November 12 | 8:15 a.m.

Morning Keynote Session Speaker



Your Mental Health Matters: Living and Leading with Intention

Loren Dittmar

ABOUT THIS SESSION: A powerful, uplifting and interactive keynote that equips participants with practical tools to protect their own well-being, maintain balance, and stay grounded—so they can continue showing up with compassion, energy, and joy for the individuals and families they support.

SPEAKER BIO: Once an at-risk youth, Loren Dittmar, PhD, is now a nationally recognized speaker and consultant specializing in school mental health, suicide prevention, and the well-being of the adults who serve youth. He partners with schools and organizations nationwide to expand mental health supports, strengthen staff resilience, and build cultures where people feel seen, supported, and empowered to live authentically.

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Loren will also be presenting a breakout session.

Friday, November 13 | 8:00 a.m.

Morning Keynote Session Speaker



The Power of a Ripple Effect for ALL Students

Terri Tchorzynski

ABOUT THIS SESSION: Ripple effects are created by small disruptions that have the power and potential to continue to spread far beyond the starting point. In education, we are given daily opportunities to begin ripple effects with our students that have the power and potential to transcend the walls of our schools and positively impact their life trajectory. These are opportunities that we should not take lightly and should be done with thoughtfulness and intentionality.

Discover proactive strategies that are designed to reimagine systems and processes that are centered on student outcomes. From the integration of student mental health and well-being to academic achievement, to transformational teaming that is centered on data-informed decisions, to the development of a multi-tiered system of support that is designed to meet the needs of ALL students. Each of these strategies will encourage us to think differently about how we can best support the students we serve and is centered around this guiding question – "what 'ripple effects' are you hoping to start with your students and how do you hope they spread far beyond the walls of our schools?"

SPEAKER BIO: Terri is a nationally recognized school counselor, educator, and passionate advocate for comprehensive, data-informed programs that emphasize intentional, proactive systems. With nearly 25 years of diverse experience that encompasses classroom instruction, school counseling, professional coaching/consultation, and leadership at both state and national levels, she has earned a reputation as a go-to speaker for impactful, practitioner-focused strategies that drive immediate implementation and results.

As a former National School Counselor of the Year and a pioneer in leading the transformation of her department from a reactive program into one of Michigan's first schools recognized as an ASCA Model Program (RAMP), Terri possesses a wealth of expertise and experience. Her approach is rooted in repositioning current realities and challenges to develop solution-focused strategies that deliver immediate results.

Guided by her passion for fostering educational excellence, Terri thrives on facilitating professional learning by equipping school counselors and educators with practical strategies, best practices, and resources to positively impact student outcomes. She is dedicated to redesigning systems to be more equitable and inclusive, ensuring they reflect the diversity of the entire school community. She is committed to developing accountability frameworks that place students at the heart of desired outcomes.

Terri will also be presenting a breakout session.

~ TENTATIVE SCHEDULE ~

Wednesday, November 11, 2026

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Registration and Information Center Open
8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Preconference Morning Session
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Lunch
12:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Preconference Afternoon Session
12:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Exhibits Open
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Evening Event (open to all attendees)

Thursday, November 12, 2026

7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Registration and Information Center Open
7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Exhibits Open
7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
7:45 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	Sponsor Presentation
8:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.	Welcome Conference Opening
8:15 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	Keynote – Loren Dittmar
9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Workshop Session 1
10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Break and Exhibits
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Workshop Session 2
12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:45 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.	Workshop Session 3
2:45 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	Exhibitor Rally / Break / Raffle Winners
3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.	Workshop 4
4:20 p.m. – 5:20 p.m.	Level Networking
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Awards Presentation and Reception
7:00 p.m.	Dinner on your own

Friday, November 13, 2026

7:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Registration and Information Center Open
7:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Exhibits Open
7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
7:45 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.	Sponsor Presentation
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Keynote – Terri Tchorzynski
9:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.	Annual Membership Business Meeting
9:45 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Coffee Break and Exhibits
10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Workshop Session 5
11:40 a.m. – 12:40 p.m.	Workshop Session 6
12:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Lunch and Closing Remarks
2:00 p.m.	Conference Closes

All intellectual property rights in and to the New York State School Counselor Association (NYSSCA) Annual Conference ("the Event"), the content and all materials distributed at or in connection with the Event are owned by NYSSCA and/or the Event sponsors or speakers presenting at the Event. You may not use or reproduce or allow anyone to use or reproduce any trademarks or other trade names appearing at the Event, in any Event content and/or in any materials distributed at or in connection with the Event for any reason without the prior written permission of NYSSCA or the presenting speaker."

REGISTRATION

NEW YORK STATE SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION

(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

NAME (as it should appear on name badge) _____

ATTENDEE EMAIL (REQUIRED FOR CONFIRMATION) _____

JOB TITLE - (REQUIRED PLEASE) _____

ORGANIZATION/SCHOOL DISTRICT _____

WORK ADDRESS _____ COUNTY _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

CELL PHONE ( ) _____ WORK PHONE ( ) _____

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS: ❑ GLUTEN FREE ❑ VEGETARIAN ❑ VEGAN ❑ DAIRY-FREE ❑ OTHER: _____

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS: ❑ MOBILITY/NEEDS ❑ LANGUAGE/INTERPRETER ❑ OTHER: _____

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:

❑ ELEMENTARY ❑ MIDDLE SCHOOL ❑ HIGH SCHOOL ❑ ADMINISTRATOR ❑ DIRECTOR ❑ GRAD STUDENT ❑ COUNSELOR EDUCATOR

ARE YOU AN ASCA MEMBER? ❑ YES ❑ NO

PREFERRED T-SHIRT SIZE (MEN'S SIZES) ❑ SMALL ❑ MED ❑ LARGE ❑ X LARGE ❑ XX LARGE ❑ XXX LARGE

ARE YOU A FIRST TIME CONFERENCE ATTENDEE? ❑ YES ❑ NO ARE YOU A MILITARY VETERAN? ❑ YES ❑ NO

	Professional/Affiliate Member*	Professional/Affiliate Non-Member	Graduate Student
A. MAIN CONFERENCE	PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR SELECTION(S) BELOW		
ATTEND THURSDAY AND FRIDAY (NOV. 12-13)			
Early Registeration** (by Sept. 30)	$290	$340	$195
Regular Registration (after Sept. 30)	$305	$355	$210
ATTEND THURSDAY ONLY (NOV. 12)			
Regular Registration Only	$235	$285	$115
ATTEND FRIDAY ONLY (NOV. 13)			
Regular Registration Only	$200	$250	$95
PRE-CONFERENCE (WEDNESDAY ONLY, NOV. 11) PICK ONLY ONE PER TIME SLOT			
B. MORNING SESSION, 8:30 A.M.			
❑ 1. **AI Powered School Counseling** (Mick)	$75	$125	$75
❑ 2. **Lean Into the Discomfort** (Dittmar)			
❑ 3. **Legal Literacy and Ethical Practice** (Stone)			
❑ 4. **Unlock the Potential of AI** (Dahir)			
C. AFTERNOON SESSION, 12:30 P.M.			
❑ 5. **AI Powered School Counseling** (Mick)	$75	$125	$75
❑ 6. **Groups, Groups, Groups!!!** (Dittmar)			
❑ 7. **Unlock the Potential of AI** (Dahir)			

Become a member and SAVE!
Visit www.nyssca.org.
To check NYSSCA membership, email membership@nyssca.org

Total (A+B+C)

$ _____

* Your NYSSCA membership must be good November 13, 2026 to qualify.

** To qualify for the Early Registration Rate, your registration form AND payment (copy of your purchase order, check, or credit card) must be received or postmarked by the Early Registration cutoff date.

REGISTRATIONS CANNOT BE PROCESSED WITHOUT PAYMENT. PLEASE SEND PAYMENT AND REGISTRATION FORM(S) TOGETHER.

How and Where Do I Pay?

	WEBSITE	EMAIL	FAX	PHONE	MAIL
CREDIT CARD	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
PURCHASE ORDER		✔	✔		✔
CHECK					✔

WEBSITE: www.ncyionline.org/nysscac

EMAIL: registrations@ncyi.org

FAX: 423-899-4547

PHONE: 866-318-6294

MAIL: National Center for Youth Issues
P.O. Box 22185
Chattanooga, TN 37422-2185

Please make your check or purchase order payable to: ***National Center for Youth Issues****.*

A W-9 is available on the website.

PLEASE NOTE: The attendee will receive a confirmation to the email address provided when their registration is processed (make sure to check Junk/Spam folders). Please allow ample time for processing.

PAYMENT METHOD

☐ **PURCHASE ORDER** A COPY OF THE PURCHASE ORDER IS REQUIRED.
(PAYABLE TO NATIONAL CENTER FOR YOUTH ISSUES, P.O. BOX 22185, CHATTANOOGA, TN 37422-2185)

☐ **CHECK ENCLOSED** (MADE PAYABLE TO NATIONAL CENTER FOR YOUTH ISSUES)

☐ **CREDIT CARD** ☐ PERSONAL ☐ CORPORATE

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CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE _____ EMAIL _____

CANCELLATION POLICY: If we are forced to cancel the NYSSCA Conference because of a "force majeure" event, such as a government restriction on large gatherings that cover the intended size of the conference, then we will issue full refunds of the registrations. Otherwise, our normal cancellation policy will be upheld: There will be no refunds after October 11, 2026. All cancellations before October 11, 2026 will be refunded less a $25 handling fee. You may however substitute a colleague at no additional cost. The association is not responsible for and cannot give refunds due to problems beyond its control, such as weather and school closings. The sponsors of the conference receive registrant contact information.

On social distancing and other health and safety measures, the regulations/guidelines that apply to hotels and conference centers may change. The NYSSCA Conference will conform to all necessary regulations/guidelines that are in place as of the date of the conference.





Turning Stone Resort Casino

5218 Patrick Rd • Verona, NY 13478

Make Hotel Reservations Early! Limited Availability!

All events of the conference will take place at the Turning Stone Resort Casino. Choose to stay at either The Tower or The Brook. Standard rooms at either hotel may be reserved at a special conference rate of **$152 plus tax**. This rate is valid through **October 15, 2026**, while rooms are available.

To make hotel reservations:

Book online: Visit **www.ncyionline.com/nysscac** and scroll to "Accommodations" to book a room.









Come Learn and Play.

Turning Stone is home to dozens of restaurants and bars. Enjoy dinner at TS Steakhouse, Pino Blanco, or Peach Blossom. Get some retail therapy at Turning Stone's Commons and Shoppes, featuring boutique shopping and unique gifts. Experience the excitement and live music at Tin Rooster, Turquoise Tiger, or The Gig. Unwind and be rejuvenated in their spas, Ahsi and Skana. Turning Stone has a variety of options for your entertainment.









We hope this conference will educate and equip you to do your job well, and we also hope you will take advantage of the wonderful ways you can relax and be refreshed!