



# **2026 Georgia Speech-Language-Hearing Association Annual Convention Full Program**

**March 27-28, 2026**

**The UGA Center for Continuing Education and Hotel  
1197 S. Lumpkin St., Athens, GA 30602**

## **Friday, March 27, 2026: Day 1**

7:00 AM-4:00 PM Registration open

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8:00 AM-8:30 AM

ROOM: Master's Hall

Level: Introductory

Title: Acquired Apraxia of Speech

Speaker: Lana Snyder, M.Ed., CCC-SLP

Biography: Lana graduated with a B.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders in 1989 and M.Ed in Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) in 1991

both from the University of Georgia (Athens, GA). She completed her Clinical Fellowship at Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville, GA and stayed for two years before coming to the Gwinnett Hospital System in 1993. At Gwinnett, Lana worked throughout the system covering a variety of settings from NICU through geriatrics but maintained a love for neurological speech-language disorders.

Currently, Lana is the SLP Clinical Coordinator for Northside Gwinnett, Duluth, and Joan Glancy campuses, supervising and mentoring a team of SLPs in acute, outpatient, and inpatient rehab settings. She serves on both Gwinnett and Duluth Stroke Teams. Lana lives in Winder, GA with her husband Dana and dog Kala.”

Abstract: Apraxia of Speech can be difficult to diagnose and treat as the underlying neurological cause is fundamentally different than other, more common, motor speech disorders. The goal of this presentation is to provide Speech Language Pathologists with information to improve the care of patients with AOS. Presentation will cover common causes, comorbidities, and differential characteristics of AOS.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Identify common causes associated with apraxia of speech
2. Identify common comorbidities of apraxia of speech
3. Identify characteristics of apraxia of speech and differential characteristics from dysarthria and aphasia

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-financial disclosures: Lana currently sits as the Parliamentarian on the GSHA executive board

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8:00 AM-9:30 AM

ROOM: F/G

Level: Introductory

Title: Makeup Time or Compensatory Services?

Speakers: Jill Barton, CCC-SLP

Biography: Jill Barton has spent the last 25 years working in various settings across the United States, including public schools, pediatric rehabilitation, higher education, and private practice. She is currently working in Atlanta Public Schools. She has presented nationally, regionally, and locally on various topics, including School- Based issues, Private Practice, & Leadership. She previously served as the President of the Georgia Speech Language Hearing Association in 2015, the American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA) as a Coordinating Committee Member of ASHA SIG 11 for Administration & Supervision, and as the Chair of the 2020 & 2023 ASHA Connect Schools Poster Selection Committee. Jill currently serves on the GSHA Executive Board as ASHA's State Education Advocacy Leader (SEAL) for Georgia, the GSHA Strategic Planning Chair, and ASHA's Council of Academic Accreditation (CAA) Practitioner Site Visitor Team Member.

Abstract: Help me, I'm new here! I have over 55 students on my caseload roster! How am I going to serve this many students? Where am I going to find extra time in the schedule to provide the extra services my students are entitled to, since they have been without an SLP? The school-based Speech Language Pathologist works hard with each student to achieve success, but when new caseloads are acquired, each student may need makeup or compensatory IEP minutes. This session will examine the definitions of makeup time and compensatory time, explore and discuss case law and state requirements, and provide activities for participants to collaborate with peers using various scenarios.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Discuss definitions of makeup time and compensatory time.
2. Explain case law and state requirements for compensatory services.
3. Implement strategies for compensatory services based on case study activities.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-financial Disclosures: ASHA State Education Advocacy Leaders (SEAL) member GA ASHA Council of Academic Accreditation – Site Visitor GSHA Strategic Planning Committee Chair

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8:00 AM-9:30 AM

ROOM: E

Level: Intermediate

Title: Barriers to Learning: SLP's Role in the Literacy Promise

Speakers: Sucheta Kamath, MA, MA, CCC-SLP, BC-ANCDS, Garry McGiboney, Ph.D.

Biographies: Sucheta Kamath is an award-winning speech-language pathologist, an author, a Professor of Practice at Amrita University, a two-time TEDx speaker, a Host of Full PreFrontal: Exposing the mysteries of Executive Function Podcast, a Certified Mindfulness Meditation Teacher and a Founder/CEO of ExQ® (Executive Function curriculum). She's the 2025 Georgia's Education Policy Fellow and her advocacy has garnered bipartisan support for statewide recognition of March 26 th to be Executive Function Day.

Garry McGiboney, Ph.D., is the Chief Operations Officer for Health Security Dynamics Consulting. He serves on the Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission, Georgia Supreme Court's Justice for Children Committee, Council on Alcohol and Drugs Board of Directors, Georgia Parent Support Network Board and the Dept of Juvenile Justice State Board. Dr. McGiboney has written seven books and 40 articles and is a recipient of numerous local, state, and national awards.

Abstract: Literacy is the foundation of academic success and lifelong participation in society, yet barriers such as poverty, tech inequities, chronic health conditions, and mental health struggles often derail progress. At the center of these challenges is language—the missing link that connects early communication to reading readiness and broader learning outcomes. Without strong language skills, literacy development falters, limiting opportunity and widening inequities. SLPs play a critical role across all three tiers of prevention and intervention: at Tier 1, shaping language-rich

classrooms and universal supports; at Tier 2, providing targeted interventions for students at risk; and at Tier 3, delivering individualized, intensive services. This presentation will explore how SLPs, working collaboratively with educators/families/communities, can strengthen GA's collective effort to overcome barriers and ensure that every child has the foundation necessary to thrive in school and in life.

**Learning Objectives:** As a result of this course, participants will be able to:  
Explain what the Statewide Literacy Initiative is all about.  
Identify barriers to learning that impacts early communication to reading readiness and broader learning outcomes.

**Financial Disclosures:** Sucheta is the founder and CEO of ExQ.

**Non-financial Disclosures:** Sucheta is the president of GSHFoudation

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**8:30 AM-9:30 AM INVITED SPEAKER**

**ROOM:** Master's Hall

**Level:** Intermediate

**Title:** Neurologic and Neuropsychiatric Care With SLP: Speech Language Cognition Evaluation and Treatment of "Concussion + Plus"

**Speaker:** L.D. Empting, M.D.

**Biography:** Dr. Empting is currently the Director, Independent Neurodiagnostic Clinic in Atlanta, Georgia as well as the Director of the Center for Prospective Outcome Studies. He received his medical degree from University of Minnesota, completing residencies at The Johns Hopkins Hospital. Dr. Empting is Board Certified from the American Board of Psychiatry & Neurology. He has had multiple publications in various medical journals as had been an invited speaker in various seminars and conferences across the United States.

**Abstract:** Speech Language Cognitive evaluations are invaluable in the Neuropsychiatric assessment and treatment of community based head trauma with mTBI. Brain trauma/impairment is best assessed by: 1) Neuro-psychiatric clinical history and exam. 2) Structural Brain Imaging and 3) Functional SLP assessment of impaired and compensatory brain

abilities. SLP cognitive clinical work needs to be more fully integrated into outpatient traumatic head/brain injury care. This presentation will go through the phenomenology of "Concussion Plus" head/brain trauma Workers' Compensation and Personal Injury cases with particular emphasis on where Speech Language Cognitive/SLP fits in within the outpatient community based clinical environment and how to facilitate an expanded SLP clinical role.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Review of the "head/brain" trauma clinical evaluation - "Concussion + Plus" in WC and PI.
2. Understand where SLP cognitive assessment fits within the: Clinical/Structural/Functional mTBI setting.
3. Review of facilitations for integration of SLP considering WC and PI medical/procedural/legal processes.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-financial Disclosures: None

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8:30 AM-9:30 AM

ROOM: D

Level: Introductory

Title: From Burnout to Breakthrough: Using AI to Enhance Clinical Practice

Speakers: Ainsley P. Vergara, M.Ed., CCC-SLP, Alison K. Morrison, Au.D., CCC-A

Biographies: Ainsley Vergara, M.Ed., CCC-SLP is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the department of Communication Sciences and Special Education at the University of Georgia. She supervises graduate clinicians in the university clinic and off-site practicum sites, teaches clinical and AAC courses, and mentors undergraduate and graduate students. She is currently a member of the GSHA Leadership and Mentoring Academy planning team.

Alison K. Morrison, Au.D., CCC-A is a Clinical Associate Professor in the

Department of Communication Sciences and Special Education at UGA and a pediatric audiologist at the UGA Speech and Hearing Clinic. She is a 2025 Generative AI in Teaching Fellow at UGA. She teaches undergraduate courses in the specialty area of audiology, supervises students in clinical practicum, and serves in various roles throughout the state to help improve outcomes for Georgia's children with hearing loss.

Abstract: The emergence of easily accessible generative AI (GAI) tools offers new opportunities for professionals in the communication sciences disorders field to improve efficiency, allowing for more time to connect with others in our professional community. This session explores how AI can improve efficiency, support clinical decision-making, and enhance clinical instruction. Through demonstrations and interactive exercises, attendees will experience how AI can streamline clinical practice, with examples ranging from creation of individualized therapy materials to reduced time spent on clinical documentation. Strategies for developing AI literacy while practicing ethically will be woven throughout. No technical background is required. Attendees will leave with practical, no- or low- cost AI tools they can immediately integrate into clinical practice.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Identify at least three practical ways AI can be used to improve efficiency and support clinical decision-making in speech-language pathology and audiology practice.
2. Demonstrate how to use at least one generative AI tool to create at least one individualized therapy material.
3. Describe two ethical considerations related to the use of AI in clinical practice and explain strategies to address them.

Financial Disclosures: Ainsley and Alison are both UGA employees

Non-financial Disclosures: Ainsley is the current Chair of GSHA Continuing Education Committee, Member of GSHA Leadership and Mentoring Academy Planning Team, & Member of GSHA Higher Education Committee

Alison is Commissioner, Georgia Commission for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing Member, AAA Coding and Reimbursement Committee Member, AAA Learning Labs and Grand Rounds Subcommittee

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9:30 AM-10:30 AM

ROOM: Master's Hall

Level: Introductory

Title: Member-Driven Advocacy

Speakers: Lou Malerba, M.A., CCC-SLP, ASHA Vice President for Government Affairs and Public Policy

Biography: Lou is a retired Assistant Superintendent for Special Education who began his career as a speech-language pathologist working with students with diverse abilities. He later served as an adjunct professor in the School of Professional Development at Stony Brook University, where he taught special education courses for individuals preparing to enter the field as general educators.

Lou has held numerous leadership roles within the profession, including service on the Boards of Directors for NYSSLHA, LISHA, and CASE. At the national level, he served as a member and Chair of the ASHA School Finance Committee, as well as on the Government Affairs and Public Policy Board. He currently serves as ASHA's Vice President for Government Affairs and Public Policy.

Abstract: Effective advocacy and engaged volunteerism are essential to advancing the professions of audiology and speech-language pathology and to ensuring access to high-quality services for the individuals and families we serve. This presentation will highlight the critical role of member-driven advocacy at the state and federal levels. Attendees will gain an overview of current legislative and regulatory priorities affecting the professions, including workforce issues, reimbursement, licensure, and service delivery across educational and healthcare settings. The presentation will also emphasize how volunteer leaders and grassroots advocates shape policy outcomes through strategic engagement, coalition-building, and effective communication with policymakers. Practical examples will illustrate how ASHA members and state association

volunteers can translate professional expertise into meaningful advocacy action. Participants will leave with a clearer understanding of how to get involved, why their voices matter, and how sustained volunteerism strengthens both the professions and the communities they serve.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the Public Policy Agenda
  - a) Define the components of a Public Policy Agenda.
  - b) Identify the three priority areas in the Public Policy Agenda:
    - Workforce Priorities
    - Payment & Coverage Priorities
    - Service Delivery & Access Priorities
2. Analyze Goals Within Priority Areas
  - a) Identify one specific goal within each of the three priority areas.
  - b) Explain the significance of each goal for professional practice and policy impact.
3. Advocacy Strategies and Tactics
  - a) Discuss the key elements that contribute to successful advocacy efforts (“winning advocacy”).
  - b) Describe three essential member actions for effective advocacy, including:
    - Engaging in grassroots state and federal advocacy
    - Organizing municipal/district advocacy initiatives
    - Participating actively in ASHA advocacy opportunities
4. Apply Advocacy Knowledge
  - a) Design a brief advocacy action plan targeting one goal from the Public Policy Agenda.
  - b) Demonstrate strategies for mobilizing peers and stakeholders to support advocacy efforts.

Financial Disclosures: The presenter has no relevant financial relationships to disclose.

Non-financial Disclosures: The presenter serves as Vice President for Government Affairs and Public Policy of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

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10:30-11:00

Break with Vendors

Pecan Tree Galleria

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11:00 AM-12:00 PM

ROOM: Master's Hall

Level: Introductory

Title: Total Laryngectomy: Understanding the SLP's Role

Speakers: Rosa Ilyayeva, MS, CCC-SLP

Biography: Rosa Ilyayeva completed her Master of Science in CSD at MGH Institute of Health Professions (Boston, MA) with a concentration in Medical Speech Pathology. Rosa has practiced across the continuum of care, including acute care, inpatient rehabilitation, and outpatient clinic. Rosa is currently a member of the Head & Neck Team at Emory Winship Cancer Institute. Rosa specializes in the management of dysphagia, pulmonary rehabilitation, and voice restoration following total laryngectomy.

Abstract: The speech language pathologist (SLP) plays an instrumental role in the care of patients undergoing a total laryngectomy. A total laryngectomy may be indicated in the management of advanced laryngeal cancers. This surgery involves the removal of the larynx and creation of a permanent stoma in the neck; there is a complete separation of the respiratory and digestive tracts, with subsequent implications on breathing, communicating, and swallowing. The SLP plays a critical role in counseling, management, and advocacy for laryngectomees. SLPs address pulmonary rehabilitation, alaryngeal communication, and dysphagia management from baseline through post-operative recovery and onward. SLPs can play a crucial role in advocating for laryngectomees and educating the healthcare team on the unique needs of this population. This presentation aims to provide information about the care of this population and suggestions for SLPs who may encounter laryngectomees along the continuum of care.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Define changes to anatomy following a total laryngectomy.

2. Describe the impact of a total laryngectomy on airway, communication, and swallowing.
3. Describe the role of the SLP in assessment, treatment, and management of airway, communication, and swallowing for laryngectomy patients across the continuum of care.

Financial Disclosures: Employed by Emory Healthcare

Non-financial Disclosures: None

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11:00 AM-12:00 PM

ROOM: F/G

Level: Introductory

Title: Teaching not Testing; Developing Deep Comprehension Skills

Speakers: Erin Spence, M.C.D., CCC-SLP, WDP, Allison Perez, M.S., CCC-SLP, WDP

Biographies: Erin Spence, CCC-SLP, is Lead SLP at the Learning Hub of the Atlanta Speech School, where she has served for three years. Previously, she spent 10 years pushing into classrooms at the Wardlaw School, supporting children with language-based learning disabilities. She specializes in school-aged language, literacy, and collaborative classroom practice.

Allison Perez, CCC-SLP, is Lead SLP at the Learning Hub of the Atlanta Speech School. She previously served as an SLP and Lead Teacher in the Stepping Stones Preschool, supporting young children with language delays. Allison brings expertise in early language, intervention, and fostering strong foundations for literacy success.

Abstract: Too often, comprehension instruction becomes a cycle of questioning that tests what students know rather than teaching them how to understand. This session, Teaching Not Testing: Developing Deep Comprehension Skills, will provide SLPs with practical strategies for explicitly supporting the language and cognitive processes that underlie listening and reading comprehension. Key topics include building and assessing background knowledge, selecting and teaching high- impact

vocabulary for depth and flexibility, and breaking down complex sentence structures. Participants will also learn guided questioning techniques to help students make meaningful connections across ideas. Attendees will develop strategies for writing functional goals, pinpointing breakdowns, and monitoring scaffolding needs. With a focus on explicit instruction, SLPs will leave with evidence-based strategies to foster lasting comprehension growth that extends beyond the therapy room.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. List language systems and cognitive processes involved in the comprehension of oral and written language.
2. Identify background knowledge, vocabulary, sentence structure, and text structures that should be explicitly taught and corresponding strategies for instruction.
3. Apply guided questioning and prompting strategies for developing student's deep comprehension.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-financial Disclosures: None

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11:00 AM-12:00 PM

ROOM: E

Level: Introductory

Title: Low-Tech AAC: Global Lessons for Local Practice

Speakers: Ashlyn Joyner

Biography: Ashlyn Joyner is a senior at the University of Georgia, studying Communication Sciences and Disorders. Her interests focus on augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and supporting individuals with complex communication needs. She has experience creating and implementing low-tech AAC supports in rural Thailand, engaging in undergraduate research on speech development, and completing a variety of clinical observations with both children and adults.

Abstract: Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) provides individuals with complex communication needs access to communication.

However, implementation can be challenging in underserved rural communities. This session draws on the presenter's experience developing and modeling low-tech AAC boards in rural Thailand, showing how simple, low-cost supports can expand communication opportunities. Building on these lessons, the presentation connects international insights to U.S. rural settings with similar barriers, including limited budgets, shortages of AAC specialists, and cultural and linguistic diversity. Georgia-specific examples will highlight how these challenges appear locally, and attendees will receive practical tools and a resource guide to create, adapt, and implement AAC supports in their own communities.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Identify the steps to design and implement low-tech AAC supports.
2. Describe at least three common barriers to AAC use in rural or underserved settings.
3. Identify at least three low-cost strategies and tools to support AAC.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-financial Disclosures: This session includes mention of Therapy Abroad as part of the presenter's personal experience. The presenter is not, and has never been, employed by or financially compensated by Therapy Abroad.

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11:00 AM-12:00 PM

ROOM: D

Level: Introductory

Title: From Phonemes to Practice: Using Flipped Classroom and Simulation to Prepare: First-Semester Graduate Students for Clinical Success

Speakers: Afua Agyapong, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Tiffany Prescott, Ph.D, CCC-SLP

Biographies: Afua Agyapong, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, is an Associate Professor at Augusta University. She has extensive experience in voice disorders and dialectal differences research. Dr. Agyapong is passionate about teaching and is dedicated to enhancing student learning through innovative

methods. She contributes to curriculum development and mentors students, fostering academic excellence and clinical competency in speech-language pathology.

Tiffany Prescott, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, is the Director of Clinical Education and an Assistant Professor at Augusta University. With over 20 years of clinical and academic experience, she specializes in school-based and medical speech-language pathology. Dr. Prescott is dedicated to advancing interprofessional education and plays a key role in leading accreditation efforts for Augusta University's new speech-language pathology program, supporting student success and program excellence.

Abstract: Speech-language pathology graduate programs face increasing demands to prepare students for clinical practice within limited timeframes. In the flipped classroom model, students review foundational material before class, which allows in-class time for higher-order application. Simulation, a high-fidelity experiential tool, enhances clinical decision-making and communication skills. This project integrates flipped classroom and simulation in a first-year Speech Sound Disorders course for 23 students. Pre-class materials include lectures and quizzes; in-class time focuses on problem-solving and case analysis. Simulations involve role-plays and structured encounters with trained simulated caregivers, followed by debriefing. The project is in its first week; formal data collection has not begun. Early observations show positive student engagement. Ongoing evaluation will assess confidence and clinical reasoning. Completion is expected by the Georgia Speech-Language-Hearing Association convention, providing insights into best practices for early clinical skill development.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the principles and benefits of integrating a flipped classroom with simulation in a first-year Speech Sound Disorders course.
2. Identify practical strategies for designing and implementing simulation activities that promote clinical reasoning and applied learning.

3. Analyze how early experiential learning can enhance student confidence and readiness for clinical practicum in speech-language pathology education.

Financial Disclosures: Afua and Tiffany are both salaried faculty members at Augusta University

Non-financial Disclosures: None

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12:00 PM-1:30 PM

ROOM: Dogwood Hall

Presidential Luncheon

Business Meeting

Awards

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1:30 PM-3:30 PM

ROOM: Master's Hall

Level: Introductory

Title: Living With Aphasia: Voices From the Community — A Person-Centered Panel Discussion

Speakers: Ariella Kaplan, M.Ed., CCC-SLP, CBIS

Biography: Ariella is a speech-language pathologist and certified brain injury specialist. She resides in Grant Park where she founded her private practice, Atlanta Speech & Wellness. Ariella received her undergraduate degree in communication sciences & disorders from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and her masters from the University of Georgia. Ariella is a native Atlantan and is passionate about helping individuals living with brain injuries as they navigate barriers and reintegrate into their communities.

Abstract: This interactive panel brings together individuals living with aphasia to share their personal stories, rehabilitation journeys, and perspectives on what truly supports meaningful communication recovery. Representing a range of aphasia types, ages, and backgrounds, panelists will discuss strategies that have helped them the most and what they want SLPs, students, and caregivers to understand. Moderated by an SLP, the

session includes prepared presentations, guided conversation, and an open Q&A, offering attendees a unique opportunity to learn directly from those with lived experience.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the lived experiences of individuals with different types of aphasia across ages, backgrounds, and recovery stages.
2. Identify key supports, strategies, and clinical approaches that individuals with aphasia find most meaningful in their rehabilitation and everyday communication.
3. Apply person-centered principles to clinical practice by integrating insights from individuals with aphasia regarding what they want SLPs and future clinicians to understand about their challenges, strengths, and needs.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-financial Disclosures: Ariella is the current president of GSHA

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1:30 PM-3:30 PM

ROOM: F/G

Level: Intermediate

Title: Application of a Strengths-Based Assessment for School-Age Children who Stutter

Speakers: Danielle Werle, PhD, CCC-SLP, Kia Noelle Johnson, PhD, CCC-SLP, Courtney Byrd, PhD, CCC-SLP

Biographies: Danielle Werle, Ph.D., CCC-SLP is the Associate Director of Educational and Professional Development at the Arthur M. Blank Center for Stuttering Education and Research - Atlanta Satellite through The University of Texas at Austin. Her research program investigates evidence-based practices for children and adults who stutter, and mitigation of stereotype threat. She is also dedicated to enhancing clinical training in stuttering for undergraduate and graduate students, as well as speech-language pathologists.

Kia Noelle Johnson, PhD, CCC-SLP, Fellow is Director of the University of Texas at Austin's Arthur M. Blank Center for Stuttering Education and Research – Atlanta Satellite. She specializes in stuttering with interest in culturally diverse communities. She is a member of the ASHA Board of Ethics and NIH-NDCD Advisory Council.

Courtney Byrd is a Professor, Associate Chair, and Graduate Advisor in the Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences. She also serves as Founding and Executive Director of the Arthur M. Blank Center for Stuttering Education and Research, which includes three core branches: the Michael and Tami Lang Stuttering Institute, the Dealey Family Foundation Stuttering Clinic, and the Dr. Jennifer and Emanuel Bodner Developmental Stuttering Lab, as well as a satellite center in Atlanta, Georgia. She has 100+ publications and has dedicated her life's work to developing the CARE Model (and the related intensive dosage “Camp Dream. Speak. Live.”) a strengths-based approach to the assessment and treatment of stuttering.

Abstract: The present seminar will provide an overview of the CARE Assessment, the first strengths-based, non-ableist framework for determining functional outcomes and short-term goals for treatment with school age children. Authors will demonstrate how the application of the CARE Assessment changes the stigma-inducing conversations that commonly surround the school-age child who stutters, and ensures that the natural way that they talk does not prevent them from realizing their full potential.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Discuss rationale for shifting away from the paradigm of fluency as a meaningful measure to a strengths-based approach to assessment and treatment.
2. Implement procedures for assessing skills related to each component of CARE (communication, advocacy, resiliency, and education).
3. Describe functional outcomes and related short-term goals to facilitate progress across each component of CARE.

Financial Disclosures: Danielle, Kia and Courtney are salaried employees of The University of Texas at Austin.

Non-financial Disclosures: Kia is a past member of the NBASLH Board of Directors Current member of the ASHA Board of Ethics Current member of the NIH-NDCD Advisory Council. Courtney holds a non-salaried leadership position with the Blank Center for Stuttering Education and Research Non-salaried leadership position with the World Stuttering and Cluttering Organization

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1:30 PM-3:30 PM

ROOM: E

Level: Introductory

Title: Early Identification, Screening, and Evaluation of Dyslexia: SLP Connections

Speaker: Meagan G. Gordon, Ed.S., CCC-SLP

Biography: Meagan Gordon, Ed.S., CCC-SLP, is a dually trained speech-language pathologist with 20 years of experience in language and literacy. She is the Director of Clinical Services at the Atlanta Speech School, an adjunct professor at Georgia State University, and owner of Eloquenty Stated, LLC, serving clients with language-based learning disabilities.

Abstract: Children with speech-language impairments are at increased risk for reading difficulties and dyslexia due to the strong connection between oral and written language. Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) are uniquely positioned to support early identification, screening, and evaluation of dyslexia. This session explores the research-based links between language and literacy, the roles and responsibilities of SLPs in literacy development, and how SLPs can collaborate within interdisciplinary teams to support early diagnosis and intervention. By fostering shared understanding and effective screening practices, SLPs help create stronger communities of support for children at risk for reading disorders.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Identify early signs of dyslexia in children with speech and language impairments.
2. Describe the relationship between oral language development and literacy acquisition.
3. Differentiate between screening and evaluation tools appropriate for identifying dyslexia.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of comprehensive language and literacy evaluations, including key assessment areas and their role in identifying dyslexia.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-financial Disclosures: None

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1:30 PM-3:30 PM

ROOM: D

Level: Introductory

Title: Hot topics in Supervision

Speakers: Debra Schober-Peterson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Kelsey Wells, A.B.D., CCC-SLP

Biographies: Debra Schober-Peterson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP is a Clinical Professor at Georgia State University. In addition to her role as a faculty member, she serves as the Director of Clinical Education for the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders and as the Director of the Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic-Atlanta Campus. She is a Board-Certified Specialist in Child Language. In 2023, she was named a Fellow of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). She has been a speech-language pathologist for more than 30 years and specializes in language development, pediatric language disorders, and speech sound disorders. She has been an active member of ASHA's Special Interest Group (SIG) 1: Language, Learning and Education and SIG 11: Administration and Supervision. From 2019-2023, she was a member of ASHA's Board of Ethics and currently serves on ASHA's Council for Clinical Certification.

Kelsey Wells, A.B.D., CCC-SLP is a Clinical Instructor at Georgia State University. In addition to supervising graduate clinicians at GSU for the past 3 years, she has supervised graduate clinicians during their medical internships. She is currently completing her clinical doctorate in speech-language pathology at Valdosta State University with a focus in dysphagia and dementia. She also specializes in providing teletherapy for school-aged children with speech sound, language, and fluency disorders.

Abstract: Supervising graduate clinicians, clinical fellows, and employees in communication sciences and disorders presents evolving challenges that require supervisors to adapt their practices with intention and skill. This session addresses current hot topics in supervision, including integrating cultural humility to foster equitable learning environments, supporting neurodivergent students through individualized, strengths-based approaches, and understanding the expectations and communication styles of Generation Z learners. Additionally, the session examines the ethical and effective use of artificial intelligence in supervision, highlighting strategies to enhance feedback and efficiency while maintaining professional standards. Participants will gain practical guidance for navigating these emerging issues with confidence and competence.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe current challenges in supervision, including issues related to cultural humility, neurodivergent learners, Generation Z learning styles, and emerging technologies.
2. Implement strategies for applying culturally responsive, neurodiversity-affirming, and generation-informed supervision practices.
3. Explain ethical guidelines and apply practical methods for integrating artificial intelligence into clinical supervision.

Financial Disclosures: Debra and Kelsey are employees of Georgia State University

Non-financial Disclosures: Debra is a member of the GSHA Higher Education Committee. She is currently serving on ASHA's Council

for Clinical Certification. Kelsey is a member of the GSHA Convention Committee.

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3:30 PM-4:00 PM

Break with Vendors

Pecan Tree Galleria

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4:00 PM-5:00 PM

ROOM: Master's Hall

Level: Introductory

Title: The Estrogen Effect: Voice, Brain, and Clinical Practice

Speaker: Valeria Gary, M.A., CCC-SLP

Biography: Valeria Gary, M.A., CCC-SLP is a medical speech-language pathologist with 36 years of experience in neurogenic disorders, specializing in Parkinson's disease and cognition. She is also a copywriter and certified nutrition coach. As a public speaker, Valeria combines clinical expertise with behavioral change strategies to achieve improved patient outcomes. Outside of speech pathology, she enjoys traveling, competitive powerlifting, and managing her own brain fog.

Abstract: Menopause affects 1.3 billion women globally, yet its impact on communication remains underrecognized in clinical practice. Research demonstrates that estrogen decline causes measurable changes: fundamental frequency drops 10-13 Hz, vocal fold edema occurs, and 60% of women report cognitive complaints, including "brain fog." These changes often mimic pathological conditions, leading to misdiagnosis. As a female-dominated field, speech- language pathologists are uniquely positioned to understand these effects, as many experience identical symptoms while treating menopausal patients. This fosters an unexpected sense of community between clinician and client through shared hormonal experiences. This evidence-based presentation examines the neurobiological mechanisms underlying the relationships between estrogen, voice production, and cognition. Attendees will learn to recognize signs that differentiate menopausal changes from pathological conditions, apply research findings to clinical assessments, and leverage personal

insights to enhance therapeutic relationships. Case studies demonstrate practical applications for voice therapy and cognitive intervention. By recognizing menopause as a communication consideration, SLPs can provide more comprehensive, empathetic care while building meaningful connections with patients navigating similar challenges.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Identify acoustic and physiological voice changes associated with menopause.
2. List cognitive symptoms of menopause that may mimic or coexist with neurological conditions in clinical practice
3. Explain the relationship between hormonal changes and communication symptoms to patients

Financial Disclosures: Employee Wellstar Health System, Contractor Medical SLP Collective, Owner Thrive Collective Coaching

Non-financial Disclosures: None

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4:00 PM-5:00 PM

ROOM: F/G

Level: Intermediate

Title: Equitable CARE: Enhancing Stuttering Services Through Cultural Responsiveness and Empowerment

Speakers: Kia Noelle Johnson, PhD, CCC-SLP,, Danielle Werle, PhD, CCC-SLP, Courtney Byrd, PhD, CCC-SLP

Biographies: Kia Noelle Johnson, PhD, CCC-SLP, Fellow is Director of the University of Texas at Austin's Arthur M. Blank Center for Stuttering Education and Research – Atlanta Satellite. She specializes in stuttering with interest in culturally diverse communities. She is a member of the ASHA Board of Ethics and NIH-NDCD Advisory Council.

Danielle Werle, Ph.D., CCC-SLP is the Associate Director of Educational and Professional Development at the Arthur M. Blank Center for Stuttering Education and Research - Atlanta Satellite through The University of Texas at Austin. Her research program investigates evidence-based practices for children and adults who stutter, and mitigation of stereotype threat. She is

also dedicated to enhancing clinical training in stuttering for undergraduate and graduate students, as well as speech-language pathologists.

Courtney Byrd is a Professor, Associate Chair, and Graduate Advisor in the Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences. She also serves as Founding and Executive Director of the Arthur M. Blank Center for Stuttering Education and Research, which includes three core branches: the Michael and Tami Lang Stuttering Institute, the Dealey Family Foundation Stuttering Clinic, and the Dr. Jennifer and Emanuel Bodner Developmental Stuttering Lab, as well as a satellite center in Atlanta, Georgia. She has 100+ publications and has dedicated her life's work to developing the CARE Model (and the related intensive dosage “Camp Dream. Speak. Live.”) a strengths-based approach to the assessment and treatment of stuttering.

Abstract: Continuous growth in cultural and linguistic diversity across the globe influences how services are delivered to individuals who stutter. To move beyond equality toward equity, clinicians must be prepared to address these complexities by integrating the Blank Center’s CARE Model—Communication, Advocacy, Resiliency, and Education. Grounded in cultural responsiveness, Equitable CARE emphasizes understanding the whole person and their unique intersectionality, while also empowering voices and breaking barriers to communicative access. This session highlights parallels across cultural variables associated with bias, stereotypes, stigma, and microaggressions, and explores how systemic inequities shape intervention outcomes. Attendees will gain valuable insights into how Equitable CARE improves outcomes and strengthens advocacy. Practical strategies and foundational principles will be provided to empower clinicians to implement these approaches effectively and confidently in diverse clinical settings.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Distinguish between equal and equitable approaches in stuttering intervention by applying principles of cultural identity, intersectionality, and the CARE Model.

2. Analyze the influence of personal and systemic bias, stereotypes, and stigma on the treatment of individuals who stutter.
3. Compare the concepts of cultural humility, cultural competence, and equitable responsiveness in the context of speech-language pathology.
4. Evaluate how privilege, systemic inequities, and societal power structures affect service delivery and barriers to communicative access.
5. Identify strategies rooted in Equitable CARE (Communication, Advocacy, Resiliency, and Education) to foster cultural responsiveness, empower voices, and reduce barriers in clinical practice.

Financial Disclosures: Kia Danielle and Courtney are salaried employees of The University of Texas at Austin.

Non-financial Disclosures: Kia is a past member of the NBASLH Board of Directors Current member of the ASHA Board of Ethics Current member of the NIH-NDCCD Advisory Council. Courtney holds a non-salaried leadership position with the Blank Center for Stuttering Education and Research Non-salaried leadership position with the World Stuttering and Cluttering Organization

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4:00 PM-5:00 PM

ROOM: E

Level: Introductory

Title: Neurodiverse Inclusion and Belonging

Speakers: Jenna Sommer, MA CCC-SLP

Biography: Jenna founded Neurodiverse at Camp to bring the lens of Neurodiverse Inclusion to summer camps and youth-facing organizations. Jenna is a certified Speech Language Pathologist and Learning Specialist with over a decade of professional experience identifying and delivering services to children, adolescents, and young adults with all sorts of needs. She has partnered with numerous organizations and communities (including camps, public school systems, athletics organizations, independent education communities, and individual families) to build understanding and empathy around neurodiversity and neurodivergence and plan for accommodations. Jenna believes that each and every one of

us thinks, learns, communicates, and perceives the world in our own unique ways, that "teachable moments" are everywhere if we are flexible enough to find them, and that the most valuable learning and growing often happens outside of the classroom. She is committed to ensuring that learners felt empowered to advocate for their own needs in the world; she is also committed to working within larger systems and structures to build a world that works for all brains. In her spare time, Jenna enjoys listening to podcasts, hiking, testing out new fidgets, and spending time with her husband, newborn daughter, and rescue dog. Jenna identifies with the HSP (Highly Sensitive Person) label, and is most often overloaded by fluorescent lights, motion sickness, and the seams of socks. The best compliment she has received lately is that her practice of dimming lights and opening blinds is a "serious green flag."

Abstract: This session will share success stories of Neurodiverse Inclusion from many different settings. Participants will leave the session with tangible strategies and shared language for neurodiverse inclusion.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Define neurodiverse inclusion.
2. Discuss the guideposts of neurodiverse inclusion.
3. Apply tangible strategies to their setting.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-financial Disclosures: None

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4:00 PM-5:00 PM

ROOM: D

Level: Introductory

Title: Living, Learning, Working, Playing: Georgia's AT Act Program in Action

Speaker: Hunter McFeron, M.Ed., CCC-SLP

Biography: Hunter earned his Master's in Communication Sciences and Disorders from the University of Georgia in 2017. He has extensive experience across educational

and medical settings and now oversees direct services and the lending library for Georgia Tech's Tools for Life program, helping individuals explore and access assistive technology. His interests include education tools, AAC, and adaptive gaming.

Abstract: This presentation highlights Georgia Tech's Tools for Life (TFL) program and the core services of the Assistive Technology (AT) Act. TFL supports individuals with disabilities by promoting access to assistive technology that fosters independence, inclusion, and improved quality of life, all free of charge! Participants will learn how AT Act programs operate, how to connect with their local programs, and the broader impact of these services. Case scenarios will illustrate outcomes such as greater participation in meaningful activities, reduced AT abandonment, and cost savings. Attendees will leave with practical strategies to help others access AT resources and a clear understanding of how AT programs maximize independence, inclusion, and positive outcomes for people with disabilities.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe two (2) core services offered by the AT Act Programs that increase awareness of and access to AT.
2. Identify three (3) low/light-tech, mid-tech, or high-tech assistive technology solutions for use in any setting.
3. Summarize two (2) measurable outcomes of assistive technology use (e.g., increased participation, reduced abandonment, or cost savings).

Financial Disclosures: Hunter receives a salary from the Georgia Institute of Technology, which houses the Tools for Life program.

Non-financial Disclosures: Hunter serves as an advisory board member for the Georgia Technology for All project.

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END DAY ONE

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**Saturday, March 28, 2026: Day 2**

Registration open 7:00 AM-4:00 PM

8:00 AM-10:00 AM

ROOM: E

Level: Introductory

Title: The A-Z's of Speaking Valves and Tracheostomies

Speakers: Annie Chow, M.Ed., CCC-SLP

Biography: Annie is a speech language pathologist at The Shepherd Center in Atlanta, Georgia, where she works with patients with acquired brain and/or spinal cord injuries. She has worked in the acute, inpatient, and day program settings. As a former educator, she brings a unique perspective to her work and is passionate about fostering patient autonomy, independence, and joy through functional, person-centered treatment.

Abstract: This course is designed to provide a general overview of speaking valves and tracheostomies to help SLPs gain confidence working with this complex patient population. You'll leave with practical tools, scripts, and resources to support your patients in their swallowing, voicing, and respiratory journey —from evaluation and treatment to potential decannulation. This course is ideal if you are a new clinician, thinking about moving from a school to a medical setting, or simply want to build more confidence and skill with speaking valves.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Identify anatomical and physiological changes following tracheostomy placement
2. Explain the causes for a tracheostomy, types of tracheostomy tubes, and functionality of speaking valves
3. Understand respiratory, voicing, and swallowing evaluation and treatment in the tracheostomy population

Financial Disclosures: Employee of The Shepherd Center

Non-financial Disclosures: None

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8:00 AM-10:00 AM

ROOM: F/G

Level: Introductory

Title: Stutter-Affirming Therapy: Clinical Decision Making and Applications

Speakers: Margaret Miller, MA, CCC-SLP

Biography: Margaret is a speech-language pathologist at the Atlanta office of the American Institute for Stuttering, where she treats people who stutter of all ages. Margaret runs groups and workshops for adults and teens, and regularly attends conferences and meetings in the stuttering community. She is a Spero Ally of Stuttering.

Abstract: A 2025 ASHA Leader article summarized a decades-long shift in our field away from fluency shaping and toward stutter-affirming therapy, as research shows that attempting to conceal stuttering is the strongest predictor of negative life impact. This seminar makes it easy for participants to start providing stutter-affirming therapy that addresses the affective, cognitive and behavioral aspects of stuttering. Drawing from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and CBT, we'll show how to help clients address negative thoughts and attitudes about stuttering. We'll learn to transform the client's vasovagal response to stuttering from "fight or flight" to grounded, mindful reactions. Finally, we'll share the latest in how Avoidance Reduction Therapy for Stuttering techniques address the physical stutter by deepening the client's understanding of their learned struggle behaviors, while supporting clients in making positive choices around avoidance/escape behaviors.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Summarize the core principles of a stutter-affirming therapy approach with children and adults who stutter.
2. Implement evidence-based therapy techniques to address the affective, behavioral, and cognitive components of the stuttering experience.
3. Provide examples of successful stutter-affirming therapy outcomes for clients who stutter.

Financial Disclosures: Salaried employee of the American Institute for Stuttering

Non-financial Disclosures: None

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8:00 AM-10:00 AM

ROOM: D

Level: Intermediate

Title: Bridging the Gap: Instrumental Swallowing Assessments – CHOA to the Community

Speakers: Jennifer Muniz, MA, CCC-SLP, Rebecca Ragland, M.S., CCC-SLP, CNT, Kaitlyn Sigmon, M.S., CCC-SLP

Biographies: Jennifer Muniz is a licensed Speech-Language Pathologist with over a decade of experience specializing in medical speech therapy. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Florida State University in 1992 and her Master of Arts degree from The College of New Jersey in 1994. Jennifer currently practices full time at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta where she serves as an acute care therapist. She works with patients from birth through age 21, including those in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU). Her clinical specialties include feeding and swallowing disorders, craniofacial anomalies, voice disorders and early language development. Certified in the Modified Barium Swallow Impairment Profile (MBSImP), Jennifer has focused her work in the field of medical speech-language pathology since 2011. She is dedicated to providing evidence-based, compassionate care to medically complex pediatric populations.

Rebecca Ragland, M.S., CCC-SLP, CNT, is a speech-language pathologist at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta with 13 years of clinical experience. She has served in a variety of medical settings, helping patients across the lifespan. She specializes in pediatric and infant feeding, with a particular passion for supporting medically complex infants and their families in the NICU and beyond. Rebecca became a Certified Neonatal Therapist (CNT) in March 2023, reflecting her commitment to evidence-based, developmentally supportive care. She is dedicated to fostering

collaborative, family-centered practices and helping bridge the gap between hospital-based services and community-based therapy.

Kaitlyn Sigmon is a dedicated pediatric Speech-Language Pathologist currently working at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, a role she began in February 2024. She graduated with her Master of Science degree from Georgia State University in 2021. With a passion for supporting the communication and developmental needs of children, Kaitlyn specializes in a variety of areas, including feeding and swallowing disorders, voice disorders, craniofacial differences, cognitive development, and early language skills. Her clinical expertise spans working with children facing a range of challenges, from developmental delays to complex medical conditions, providing tailored interventions to help them acutely recover and discharge safely. Kaitlyn's approach emphasizes compassionate care, combining evidence-based practices with a deep commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of her young patients and their families.

Abstract: Transitions in care following hospital discharge can present challenges for patients requiring continued therapeutic intervention, particularly in the area of swallowing and dysphagia management. This presentation aims to address the disconnect that can occur between inpatient instrumental swallow assessments and subsequent community-based therapy. By providing education on the scope, interpretation, and implications of hospital-based assessments, we seek to empower community clinicians with the knowledge necessary to deliver more targeted and effective treatment. Our goal is to foster improved communication, continuity, and clinical outcomes for patients navigating the transition from acute care to outpatient or home-based therapy services.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Explain the difference between pediatric and adult OPMS evaluations.
2. Determine when to refer for an instrumental swallowing assessment.
3. Analyze an instrumental swallowing evaluation report.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-financial Disclosures: None

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10:00 AM-10:30 AM

Break with Vendors

Pecan Tree Galleria

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10:00 AM-11:30 AM **POSTERS**

ROOM: T/U

Level: Intermediate

Title: Hormone Replacement Therapy Voice Index

Speakers: Angel Summerour, Madison Rambo, Cory McCann

Biographies: Angel Summerour is a Communication Sciences and Disorders graduate student at Valdosta State University and proud to call Athens, Georgia her hometown. She is dedicated to helping others and has a strong interest in serving adults in a medical setting, maybe a hospital or skilled nursing setting.

Madison Rambo is a graduate student in Communication Sciences and Disorders at Valdosta State University, with a strong interest in working with children in either a school-based or private practice setting.

Cory McCann is a 24-year-old graduate student in the Communication Sciences and Disorders program at Valdosta State University. Cory is undecided in the exact age population he wants to work in but has interests in working with school-aged children in the school systems or working in a hospital with the geriatric population with feeding and swallowing disorders.

Abstract: Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is commonly prescribed to alleviate menopausal symptoms, but its impact on vocal quality is not well understood. This study investigated the effects of HRT on the post-menopausal female voice through surveys and a review of existing literature. Twenty-one women completed questionnaires on their vocal experiences before and after initiating HRT. Results revealed that 81%

reported perceivable voice changes following therapy, most commonly dryness, reduced range, and lower pitch. Despite these symptoms, the majority maintained strong communication confidence and did not pursue medical consultation. Findings highlight the sensitivity of the voice to hormonal shifts and the importance of including vocal health in discussions of HRT. Clinicians and voice professionals should inquire about HRT during evaluations and educate clients on potential vocal effects. These results underscore the need for continued research integrating both subjective and objective measures to clarify HRT's role in vocal outcomes.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the physiological effects of menopause and hormone replacement therapy (HRT) on the female vocal mechanism.
2. Analyze survey data and research findings that illustrate how HRT influences vocal pitch, range, and overall quality in postmenopausal women.
3. Apply evidence-based strategies to counseling and assessment practices for clients who report voice changes associated with HRT.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-financial Disclosures: None

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Level: Intermediate

Poster Title: Examining the Relationship between Voice Surveys among SLP Graduate Students

Presenters: Ava Grace Gainous, Savannah Stewart

Biographies: Ava is a graduate student in Communication Sciences and Disorders at Valdosta State University.

Savannah Stewart is a graduate student in Communication Sciences and Disorders at Valdosta State University.

Abstract: Certain populations are at an increased risk of developing voice disorders due to the high vocal demands of the profession, including speech-language pathologists (SLPs) as well as singers and teachers. This

trend includes students as well as practicing professionals (Gottliebson et al., 2007; Searl & Dargin, 2021; Tafiadis et al., 2017; van Lierde et al., 2008). Surveys are frequently used to assess the impact of voice difficulties on quality of life and general functioning. Students may answer questions differently based on the title of the questionnaire, e.g., “vocal fatigue” has a different connotation than “voice handicap” or “quality of life.” Participants included 19 female graduate students, 22-28 years old. Participants completed the Voice Handicap Index (VHI; Jacobson et al., 1997); the Voice Related Quality of Life (V-RQOL; Hogikyan & Sethmuran, 1999), and the Vocal Fatigue Index (VFI – Nanjundeswaran et al., 2015). Moderate correlations were found between the three surveys, ranging from  $r_s = .637$  to  $r_s = .719$ . The strongest correlations were related to strained, effortful voice production and decreased socialization.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe risk factors associated with voice disorders among SLP graduate students.
2. Discuss the use of various surveys to assess the impact of voice disorders on quality of life.
3. Describe the application of various surveys to the assessment of voice disorders among SLP graduate students

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

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Level: Introductory

Title: Stress and Gastroesophageal Reflux: Beginner vs Advanced Graduate Clinicians

Speakers: Rondesha Rose, Julia Wright

Biographies: Rondesha Rose is a graduate student at Valdosta State University.

Julia Wright is a graduate student at Valdosta State University.

Abstract: Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) refers to the movement of stomach contents into the esophagus; common symptoms include heartburn, regurgitation, and globus sensation. Heartburn refers to chest pain while regurgitation refers to fluid moving up and down in the chest. A globus sensation is defined as the perception of food sticking in the chest (Clarret & Hachem, 2018; Kahrilas, 2013). In addition to lifestyle factors, stress and anxiety can contribute to GERD (He et al., 2022; Sadafi et al., 2024). Graduate school is associated with increased stress due to academic and professional responsibilities (Allen et al., 2022). Ellis and Briley (2018) found that SLP graduate students report high stress levels but the incidence was higher among second year students. This study compared GERD symptoms of SLP students during their first and last semesters of graduate school. Thirteen students completed the Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease – Health Related Quality of Life (Velanovich, 2007) during the first and last semester of classes. Six participants increased their overall score and reported higher stress levels from the first semester to the last semester.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the symptoms associated with gastroesophageal reflux disease.
2. Discuss the use of the GERD-HRQL in assessing reflux-related symptoms.
3. Describe the relationship between self-reported reflux symptoms of SLP graduate students during the first and last semesters of graduate school.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-financial Disclosures: None

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Level: Introductory

Poster Title: Mentorship: Cultivating CMSD Success Through Student-Faculty Partnerships

Presenter: Maggie Lyon, B.S.

Biography: Maggie Lyon is a dedicated fourth-year Communication Sciences and Disorders major at the University of Georgia, preparing for graduate study in speech-language pathology. Through the UGA Mentor Program, she actively pursues professional growth and career development. Her interests center on advocacy for AAC users and early language development, and she values mentorship as a way to build the skills, connections, and cultural awareness needed to become an effective clinician.

Abstract: Mentorship is essential to developing CMSD scholars and future clinicians, serving as a cornerstone for professional growth and academic success. This presentation highlights the impact of my experience in the UGA Mentor Program, showing how intentional, individualized guidance fosters career readiness, resilience, and belonging. Effective mentorship requires active mentee engagement through self-assessment, accountability, and openness to feedback. The relationship balances a culture of care with high expectations for growth. Benefits included clinical exposure through volunteerism, support with graduate applications, and personal development. Research shows that quality mentorship thrives on shared values and cultural awareness, enhancing self-efficacy and academic achievement while promoting lifelong learning and collaboration in speech-language pathology.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Identify unique professional and personal benefits gained from mentorship specific to Communication Sciences and Disorders (CMSD) students, such as network growth, clinical exposure, and career navigation strategies.
2. Apply strategies for current students to actively engage as mentees in mentorship dynamics, including proactively defining specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals and initiating opportunities for growth.
3. Explain how intentional student-faculty mentorship supports the teaching relationship, promotes a culture of care, and sets a standard of professionalism and lifelong learning within the clinical field.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

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Level: Introductory

Poster Title: Expanding AAC Access Through Funding and Advocacy

Presenters: Ashlyn Joyner, Abby Richardson

Biographies: Ashlyn Joyner is a senior at the University of Georgia studying Communication Sciences and Disorders. Her interests focus on augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), accessibility, and creating inclusive opportunities for individuals with complex communication needs. She serves as Co-President of CommunicAID+ Nation, helping lead community outreach and advocacy efforts that promote equitable access to communication for all.

Abby Richardson is a senior at the University of Georgia pursuing a degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders. Her interests are in augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and increasing engagement in advocacy efforts for individuals with complex communication needs. She serves as Co-President of CommunicAID+ Nation and as a student ambassador for the Mary Frances Early College of Education, leading efforts to promote inclusivity and equal access to communication for all.

Abstract: Financial barriers are often what prevent individuals with complex communication needs from gaining access to augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, limiting their ability to connect, learn, and participate fully in their communities. This presentation covers the real world impact of funding and advocacy on AAC accessibility, highlighting solutions that make communication more inclusive. Attendees will discover practical solutions to work with funding systems, obtain resources on advocating for coverage, and learn about organizations such as CommunicAID+ Nation attempting to fight these cost barriers. A featured case example will illustrate how securing an AAC device through community fundraising transformed one individual's daily life, highlighting

how financial access has a direct impact on empowerment and inclusion.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe financial barriers that limit access to AAC devices
2. Explain how financial access influences AAC implementation and communication outcomes
3. Identify effective strategies and resources for advocating for AAC funding

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: Ashlyn and Abby are co-presidents of the student led branch of CommunicAID+ Nation at the University of Georgia

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Level: Introductory

Poster Title: Bilingual Low-Tech AAC Devices to Improve Equitable Patient

Presenters: Jennifer Johana Gomez, Lama K. Farran, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

Biographies: Jennifer Gomez is a senior undergraduate Speech Language Pathology student at the University of West Georgia and President of her university's NSSLHA chapter. She is also involved in the American Sign Language club on her school campus as the Vice President. She is passionate about advocating for underserved communities and providing communication resources for those in need. She is committed to advocacy and providing equity and inclusion as a future SLP.

Lama K. Farran, Ph.D., CCC-SLP is a Professor of Speech-Language Pathology at the University of West Georgia and ASHA-certified speech-language pathologist. She earned a doctorate in early childhood education with an emphasis in neuroscience from Georgia State University in 2010. Her research examines the early development of speech and language as a basis for reading in infants and children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, with and without disorders. She is most interested in translational research using a preventive, multifactorial framework. Dr. Farran contributes to several initiatives that focus on the early detection of language and reading difficulties. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the International Dyslexia Association in Georgia. Dr.

Farran is committed to improving young children's language, reading, and overall developmental outcomes.

Abstract: A service project conducted through GSHA's Georgia Leadership and Mentorship Academy student program, focused on improving communication access for hospital patients with impacted or limited communication abilities. The project entailed creating and donating low-tech, bilingual AAC devices in Spanish and English that were suited to Dalton, Georgia's observed needs and demographics. By lowering barriers to communication, these tools facilitate effective communication between patients, families, and healthcare professionals. The results highlight the value of service initiatives in advancing inclusive and equitable healthcare services as well as the effects of offering linguistically and culturally responsive care.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Analyze how cultural and linguistic community demographics can influence and contribute to AAC accessibility and use.
2. Apply strategies to implement and develop bilingual AAC devices to meet and fulfill various community specific needs.
3. Describe the importance of implementing culturally and linguistically responsive AAC devices in healthcare settings.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

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Level: Intermediate

Poster Title: Impact of Caregiver Responsiveness in Infants With/Without Histories of OM

Presenters: Fangfang Chen, MEd, Sandie Bass-Ringdahl, PhD, Nandita Bhat, Julia Kellerman

Biographies: Fangfang Chen (Janice) is a doctoral candidate in the Special Education and Communication Disorders program at the University of Georgia. Her research investigates speech and language development in children who are hard of hearing, with a particular focus on the segmental

and suprasegmental features of speech production in children using hearing aids or cochlear implants. Prior to joining UGA, she contributed to early childhood intervention projects in Dr. Barton's lab at Vanderbilt University. Since beginning her doctoral studies, she has been actively involved in research within Dr. Bass-Ringdahl's Pediatric Auditory Early Speech Development Lab. Fangfang currently serves as a Graduate Teaching Assistant and is committed to advancing evidence-based practices that promote speech and language acquisition among children who are hard of hearing.

Sandie Bass-Ringdahl, PhD, CCC-A is a Clinical Professor in the University of Georgia's Communication Sciences and Disorders program. Her research and teaching interests revolve around speech/language emergence and acquisition in pediatric populations, including children with hearing impairment and/or developmental disabilities including autism spectrum disorders. She has conducted research on the impact of interventions, including assistive devices (cochlear implants and hearing aids) and behavioral interventions (functional communication training), and how they impact these processes.

Nandita Bhat is a senior majoring in Communication Sciences & Disorders and Psychology at the University of Georgia. She is actively involved in Minorities in Communication Sciences and Disorders, UGA Sadhana, and Camp Kesem. She is also an Honors Ambassador, a supporting teacher at the Child Development Lab at the McPhaul Center, and a research assistant in the Pediatric Auditory Early Speech Development Lab with Dr. Bass-Ringdahl. Her professional interests include early intervention, bilingual language development, and neurogenic communication disorders. She plans on attending graduate school to become a Speech-Language Pathologist.

Julia Kellerman is pursuing a BSED in Communication Sciences and Disorders with a minor in American Sign Language at the University of Georgia. She intends to graduate in May 2026 and attend graduate school for speech-language pathology starting Fall 2026. On campus, she is a

member of NSSLHA, Alpha Gamma Delta, the leadership board for UGA Miracle and a student ambassador for the Mary Frances Early College of Education. Her interests mainly focus on the pediatric population, including children with communication or developmental disabilities. She is eager to pursue opportunities that foster the development of clinical competencies while contributing to enhancing the lives of individuals through tailored speech and language interventions. Starting in Fall 2024, she has participated and assisted Dr. Bass-Ringdahl in her research on vocal development and parent-child interaction in children with otitis media.

Abstract:

Early vocalization follows a predictable developmental trajectory, progressing from immature sounds such as vegetative noises at birth to quasi-vowels and fully resonant vowels and consonant-like productions around 2–4 months of age, then to speech-like sounds featuring consonant–vowel (CV) syllables. By approximately 10 months, infants typically enter the canonical babbling stage, in which 15–20% of their vocalizations are CV productions. By 12 months, they produce reduplicated and variegated babbling, proto-words, and the first true words. Differentiating vowel-like from CV vocalizations is important, as the latter precedes the onset of word production (Gros-Louis & Miller, 2017). Speech and language development heavily depends on feedback during caregiver–infant interactions, where vocal imitation and other social responses from parents (Coffey & Snedeker, 2025) serve as primary sources of phonetic and phonological structure (Gros-Louis & Miller, 2017). From an operant-conditioning perspective (Rheingold et al., 1959; Weisberg, 1963), contingent social reinforcement—especially maternal vocal imitation (Pelaez et al., 2011)—elicits more advanced vocal patterns. Recent studies also emphasize the importance of timing in parental speech input for supporting infants’ imitative learning (Conboy et al., 2015). Responses delivered within two seconds of an infant’s vocalization are linked to better speech outcomes. Multiple studies show that contingent parental vocalizations increase infants’ attention to input, thereby aiding the mapping of acoustic signals to referents (Elmlinger et al., 2019; Goldstein &

Schwade, 2008; Athari et al., 2021). Most research on contingent responsiveness focuses on typically hearing populations. The paucity of research on children who are hard of hearing may stem from parents of children with hearing loss being less responsive and more directive than parents of typically hearing children (Roberts et al., 1995), as well as the co-occurrence of hearing loss with delayed speech development. St. John et al. (2020) reported that 58% of children with permanent hearing loss had a speech disorder, with phonological delay being the most common subtype (49%). Some evidence suggests that parents of children with hearing difficulties tend to respond quickly and sensitively to infant vocalizations (Erbasi et al., 2018). It has also been shown that parental responsiveness to children with hearing difficulties and middle ear infections with effusion predicts later language performance (Roberts et al., 1995). We believe that, although verbal communication between parents and children is complex and context-dependent, contingent parental response remains a promising intervention associated with improved long-term speech and language development for both children with and without hearing difficulties. This study aims to contribute to current literature by including both children with typical hearing and children with hearing difficulties, such as otitis media, and by investigating whether parents' contingent responses to vowel (V) and consonant–vowel (CV) vocalizations increase infants' subsequent production of these vocalization types. The study was conducted at the Department of Communication Sciences and Special Education/University of Georgia Speech and Hearing Clinic. Participants ranged in age from 9 to 12 months including children with and without hearing challenges. No other exclusion criteria were applied. Parents and their children participated in one or two data collection sessions based on the preference of the parent and state of the infant. The total visit time was approximately two hours. Upon arrival, participants received information about the study and provided informed consent if they chose to participate. The researcher then interviewed the parent about their child's early birth, hearing, speech, and language development using a general history form, and helped them complete three questionnaires: 1) Family Interview: Vocal Development Landmarks, 2) IT-MAIS: Auditory milestone questionnaire, and 3) LittleEars: Auditory

milestone questionnaire. These questionnaires, along with a baseline vocalization session, served as diagnostic tools for assessing child early auditory and vocalization status. Infants received a complete audiological evaluation which involved: (1) The parent sitting in the sound booth with their child on their lap. Visual Reinforcement Audiometry using sound field or insert earphones was performed following standard audiological procedures to assess responses to pure-tone frequencies and speech, as well as lateralization/ localization ability. (2) Otoloscopic examination and tympanometry was obtained using standard procedures. The otoscopic exam noted eardrum landmarks, cone of light, PE tube, and any redness, bubbles, or fluid line. This information complemented the overall diagnostic battery, including tympanograms and OAEs, to help determine if results suggested effusion or otitis media, and whether medical care was needed. (3) Otoacoustic emissions testing was also conducted to further assess the child's auditory system. During these tests, the child sat on the parent's lap while the procedures were carried out, with a soft tip inserted into the ear canal to measure its status. Finally, the researcher brought the child and parent into a playroom. The parent-child interaction session started with a 10-minute baseline period, during which the parent was instructed to sit close to the child and engage in natural play with age-appropriate toys. This baseline assessed both parental responsiveness and the child's vocal behavior. The response phase consisted of three periods: a 10-minute vowel (V) phase, a 10-minute CV/word phase, and a final 10-minute vowel (V) phase. During each period, the researcher prompted the parent to respond within two seconds of the offset of the child's vocalization. The data were coded focusing on two aspects of the parent-child interaction to evaluate the effect of contingent feedback as a reinforcement mechanism for enhancing vocal learning and production. Relationships between children's vocal patterns, timing, and types of parental utterances were analyzed. Results from this condensed investigation add to the evidence suggesting that contingent parental verbal responses boost vocalizations in children with and without otitis media and highlight the need for further research on children with other types of hearing loss and a larger, more comprehensive study.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the stages of infant vocalization development.
2. Explain the real-time influence of contingent responses on infant vocalizations.
3. Detail the impact of otitis media on infant auditory and early vocalization development.

Financial Disclosures: Dr. Bass-Ringdahl is a professor and audiologist in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. Nandita is a student worker in the Child Development Lab at the McPhaul Center at the University of Georgia

Non-Financial Disclosures: Fangfang is a graduate assistant in the Department of Communication Sciences and Special Education.

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Level: Introductory

Poster Title: Lifelong Learning Begins at Home: Athens Literacy Project

Presenters: Ainsley P. Vergara, M.ED., CCC-SLP, Elizabeth H. Stewart, M.Ed., CCC-SLP, Anna Miles, Ashlyn Joyner

Biographies: Ainsley Vergara is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the department of Communication Sciences and Special Education at the University of Georgia. She supervises graduate clinicians in the university clinic and off-site practicum sites, teaches clinical and AAC courses, and mentors undergraduate and graduate students. She is currently a member of the GSHA Continuing Education and GSHA Higher Education committees.

Beth Stewart is a Clinical Assistant Professor and Clinical Education Coordinator in the Department of Communication Sciences and Special Education at the University of Georgia. She trains future speech-language pathologists through evidence-based instruction and mentors graduate students with a focus on family and community engagement to support meaningful and lasting impact in the communities they serve.

Anna Miles is an undergraduate student majoring in Communication Sciences and Disorders at UGA. She aspires to work as a Speech-Language Pathologist in Augmentative and Alternative Communication, early language intervention, and literacy development. Various academic and clinical opportunities have strengthened her understanding of how to best support communication. She believes firmly that access to literacy and communication is essential for fostering independence and life-long learning.

Ashlyn Joyner is a senior at the University of Georgia studying communication sciences and disorders. Her interests include early language and literacy development, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), and supporting individuals with complex communication needs. She has experience engaging in undergraduate research on early speech development, observing in many different clinical settings, and exploring strategies that promote meaningful communication and learning.

Abstract: This poster highlights a community-based literacy project distributing 100 literacy kits with books, low-tech AAC supports, and caregiver guides to families in Athens, Georgia. We share the development process, caregiver strategies, and outcome measures, emphasizing practical methods SLPs can use to empower families and build children's early language skills.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the components of literacy kits that support caregiver-led language and literacy development.
2. Identify barriers to measure caregiver engagement and literacy outcomes in community-based projects.
3. Identify practical ways to measure caregiver engagement and literacy outcomes in community-based projects.

Financial Disclosures: This community impact project was completed thanks to the generosity of the GSHFoundation, through a Community Impact grant.

Non-Financial Disclosures: Ainsley is the GSHA Continuing Education Committee Chair; GSHA Higher Education Committee member. Beth is GSHA Continuing Education Committee Member

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Level: Introductory

Poster Title: Developing a Pediatric Feeding Screening Program: A University-Preschool Collaboration

Presenters: Levi C. Ofoe, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Jenny Gordon, Ed.S, CCC-SLP

Biographies: Levi C. Ofoe, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, is an assistant professor in the Department of Counseling, Higher Education, & Speech-Language Pathology at the University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA. He teaches Anatomy & Physiology, Dysphagia, Adult Neurogenic Communication Disorders, and Stuttering.

Jenny Gordon is a clinical supervisor at the University of West Georgia. She has experience across the lifespan, including school systems (working with early intervention age 3 spanning to high school age 22), home healthcare, private practice, and supervisor for school interns. Her research interests include Early Intervention and AAC.

Abstract: Pediatric Feeding Disorder (PFD) describes a complex disruption in the oral nutrient intake, associated with medical, nutritional, feeding skills, and psychosocial dysfunction (Sharp et al., 2022). Signs include food refusal, extended mealtimes, coughing, stuffing, and poor weight gain, which impact physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development (Dodrill & Gosa, 2015; Goday et al., 2019). Despite existing screening tools, SLPs report low confidence in managing PFDs due to limited education, clinical experience, and support (Neubauer & Singleton, 2023). Training graduate students can enhance clinical competence. Faculty at the University of West Georgia developed a PFD program in collaboration with teachers at the Early Learning Center. Trained graduate students will complete classroom training on pediatric feeding screening. Subsequently,

students will conduct on-site feeding screenings of the preschool children using a standardized pediatric feeding questionnaire and complete a reflection paper. Parents of preschoolers will also complete the feeding questionnaire. The discussion will focus on pre- and post-assessments of students' knowledge and skills, as well as the correlations between students' and parents' responses to feeding-related questions, and lessons learned.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Evaluate different pediatric screening tools
2. Explain the impact of hands-on pediatric feeding training on graduate students' competency and clinical readiness
3. Discuss students' perspectives regarding pediatric feeding interventions.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

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Level: Introductory

Poster Title: Culturally Responsive Approaches to Person and Family Centered Practice in Stuttering and Beyond

Presenters: Jairus-Joaquin Matthews, PhD, CCC-SLP, Levi Ofoe PhD, CCC-SLP, Valencia Valestin, B.S.Ed

Biographies: Jairus-Joaquin Matthews, PhD-CCC-SLP, is a certified and licensed speech- language pathologist and associate professor in Speech-Language Pathology. He has practiced in public schools, geriatric home health, private practice, and hospital settings. He has also worked with business professionals on accent training and with professional athletes on communication performance. Dr. Matthews teaches courses in assessment of communication disorders, counseling in communication disorders, communication disorders in global and cross-cultural contexts, neurogenic communication disorders, and voice disorders. His teaching is grounded in preparing students for practice in varied settings by integrating applied clinical skills with reflection on social, cultural, and systemic factors

that influence communication and service delivery. His research focuses on culturally responsive approaches to assessment, pathways to expand representation in the communication sciences workforce, and strategies for supporting student recruitment, retention, and success. His work demonstrates his commitment to broadening participation in professional fields, cultivating mentoring relationships, and strengthening career readiness for historically underrepresented groups.

Levi C. Ofoe is an assistant professor at the University of West Georgia in Carrollton. He earned his M.A. in Communication Sciences and Disorders from the University of Florida, Gainesville, and his Ph.D. in Speech and Hearing Sciences from Indiana University, Bloomington. He is a member of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and the National Black Association of Speech-Language and Hearing Professionals. His research interests include the intersection of spoken language production, cognitive processes, and speech disfluencies in individuals who do and do not stutter.

Valencia Valestin is a graduate of the speech-language pathology program at the University of West Georgia where she served as the president of NSSHLA. She is a participant in the Georgia Mentoring and Leadership Academy.

Abstract: Person and family-centered care (PFCC) is now a central standard for speech-language pathology and audiology practice. PFCC emphasizes respect for client and family values, preferences, and cultural-linguistic backgrounds, while ensuring that care decisions are made collaboratively. This presentation explores how PFCC can transform assessment and intervention practices in stuttering and other communication disorders. Traditional diagnostic characteristics of stuttering have been largely developed from monolithic, majority-culture perspectives, limiting their relevance for culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Presenters will examine how PFCC invites clinicians to rethink assessment markers, therapy goals, and family engagement in ways that foster inclusive, community-building practices. The session will also consider

parallels in other practice areas, highlighting the opportunities and challenges of aligning PFCC with real-world clinical service delivery.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the core principles of person and family-centered care and their implications for speech-language pathology practice.
2. Analyze how traditional diagnostic criteria in stuttering may reflect majority-culture biases and limit cultural relevance.
3. Apply lessons learned from stuttering to other practice areas to promote inclusive and culturally responsive care.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

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Level: Introductory

Poster Title: Diagnostic Use of the DAYC-2 Communication Domain Subtest in Preschoolers

Presenter: Kathy King, SLP.D., CCC-SLP

Biography: Dr. Kathy King is a Speech-Language Pathologist with 25 years of experience working in the public school system, mainly with the preschool population. For the past 14 years, she has conducted initial eligibility testing as a diagnostician on a multidisciplinary team within her district's special needs preschool department. Her extensive focus on testing within this population provided a valuable background for completing her applied dissertation, which is presented today.

Abstract: Early identification of language disorders in young children is crucial for the effective implementation of intervention. This presentation summarizes my applied dissertation investigating the validity of the Communication Domain subtest of the DAYC-2 in diagnosing language disorders among preschoolers. Data from 105 children were analyzed, comparing the DAYC-2 with the PLS-5, a widely accepted diagnostic tool. Reliability was high for both tests, and significant positive correlations were found across all subdomains, supporting concurrent validity. Results show that scores on the DAYC-2 generally align with those on the PLS-5 across

domains, severity levels, gender, and age. These findings indicate that the Communication Domain subtest of the DAYC-2 is a valid alternative for diagnosing language disorders when the PLS-5 cannot be used due to practical constraints. Attendees will gain insight into test selection, validity, and clinical implications of these measures.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the importance of appropriate test selection in the diagnostic process.
2. Explain the correlation between the DAYC-2 Communication Domain subtest and the PLS-5.
3. Summarize possible clinical applications and limitations of the study results.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

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Level: Intermediate

Poster Title: Correlation of the GERD-HRQL to Videolaryngoscopic Evidence of Reflux

Presenters: Michala Pointer and Nia Hedgeman

Biographies: Michala and Nia are graduate students at Valdosta State University.

Abstract: Acid reflux occurs when stomach acid moves upward into the esophagus or beyond. Several factors can contribute to reflux, including obesity, dietary habits, and smoking. When acid reflux reaches the pharynx and larynx, it's referred to as laryngopharyngeal reflux and may result in vocal changes or throat irritation in addition to other symptoms (Muddaiah et al., 2023; Shilpa et al., 2018).

Learner Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the symptoms associated with reflux.
2. Discuss the use of the GERD-HRQL in assessing reflux-related symptoms.

3. Discuss the use of videolaryngoscopy in assessing reflux-related symptoms.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-Financial Disclosures: None

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11:30 AM-1:00 PM

ROOM: Dogwood Hall

GSHFoundation Luncheon

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1:00 PM-2:00 PM

ROOM: Master's Hall

Level: Introductory

Title: Creating Meaningful Connections: Getting Started with Community-based Aphasia Programming

Speakers: Lorelei Benham, M.Ed., CCC-SLP, Michelle K. Hart, M.A., CCC-SLP, Tori Sowell, M.Ed., CCC-SLP, Claire Hampton, M.Ed., CF-SLP, Leila L. Hartley, Ph.D., CCC-SLP and Dylan Williams

Biographies: Lorelei, is a respected speech-language pathologist specializing in neurological disorders and brain injuries. A Georgia native, she earned her undergraduate degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders from the University of Georgia, followed by a master's degree in speech- language pathology from the University of West Georgia. Early in her career, she worked in Boulder, Colorado, serving pediatric clinics and elementary schools. In 2015, she returned to Georgia and joined the Shepherd Center in Atlanta, where she focused on acquired brain injuries and multiple sclerosis, emphasizing functional therapy and patient-centered care. Lorelei Benham is also the co- owner of Atlanta Speech & Wellness, LLC, with partner Ariella Kaplan, where they help patients improve speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing skills after a brain injury or neurological disease diagnosis. She serves as co-founder and Chair of the Georgia Aphasia Project, advocating for individuals with aphasia through communication groups, educational webinars, camps, and family training. She was a presenter at the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine in 2019 and 2022, she also guest lectures for graduate speech- language

pathology programs. Additionally, Lorelei volunteers with CAN DO® Multiple Sclerosis, offering education and support worldwide.

Michelle is a Speech-Language Pathologist and PhD student at Georgia State University where she is a member of the Aphasia and Motor Speech Disorders Lab. Michelle has been a speech-language pathologist for 5 years and has experience in both inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation. Michelle has a special passion for improving quality of life in people with aphasia.

Tori is a speech- language pathologist with 8 years of experience working in post- acute neuro rehabilitation. She started her career with the Shepherd Center, where she served on a multidisciplinary outpatient team for 5 years before transitioning to the SHARE Military Initiative providing cognitive rehabilitation for first responders, active duty service members, and veterans with acquired brain injury. She now works in outpatient neuro rehabilitation through the Wellstar Health System at Kennestone. She has experience serving on the Brain Injury Association of Georgia (BIAG) volunteer board from 2020- 2023, helping facilitate a weekend- long camp for brain injury survivors in 2022. In summer of 2025, she helped the Georgia Aphasia Project's camp program committee initiate and run Georgia's first week-long camp for adults with aphasia. Her clinical interest areas are motor speech for Parkinson's, mindfulness in cognitive rehab, and aphasia intervention.

Claire Hampton, M.Ed., CF-SLP is a clinical fellow speech-language pathologist and is completing her CFY with Atlanta Speech and Wellness, a private practice that specializes in neurological rehabilitation for adults and adolescents with brain injuries and neurological diseases. Claire completed her graduate school internships in outpatient and inpatient rehabilitation, and she is passionate about working with individuals with acquired brain injuries.

Dr. Leila Hartley received her Doctorate in communication sciences and neuropsychology from the University of Florida. She has over 50 years of

clinical experience with adult neurogenic communication disorders. She is the author of *Cognitive-Communicative Abilities Following Brain Injury: A Functional Approach* and other publications in the areas of discourse abilities, functional approaches to rehabilitation after brain injury, and aphasia rehabilitation in adolescents. She has presented at many state, national and international conferences. She served as an adjunct faculty member at Georgia State University, teaching cognitive rehabilitation and neuroscience. She retired in 2023 from a private practice specializing in cognitive and aphasia rehabilitation for adults in Atlanta. She continues to serve on professional boards and performing volunteer work in the field of speech-language pathology.

Dylan is a senior at Georgia State University majoring in Biomedical Science with a minor in Chemistry. His research interests include aphasia, dyslexia, and language processing, with current projects ranging from a questionnaire study on communication in people with aphasia to brain stimulation and reading research. After graduation, he plans to pursue medical school, with career interests in psychiatry or pediatrics.

Abstract: The psychosocial impacts of aphasia are widely documented; PWA are at an increased risk of depression (Zanella et al., 2022), social isolation (Northcott & Hilari, 2011), and reduced quality of life (Spaccavento et al., 2013). In the early 2000s, the Life Participation Approach to Aphasia (LPAA) was introduced as a service-delivery model that prioritizes participation and re-integration into life activities for PWA (Chapey et al., 2000). LPAA highlights the traditional role of communication as well as its role in preserving social connections. Unfortunately, few programs exist for individuals with chronic aphasia in Georgia. The Georgia Aphasia Project (GAP) is a non-profit organization that aims to reduce this gap by providing services to PWA. Recently, GAP held its first CAMP which integrated LPAA into a week-long program for 12 PWA. Results suggested that CAMP had a very large effect on aphasia impact as measured by the Aphasia Impact Questionnaire (Swinburn et al., 2018).

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe key principles of the Life Participation Approach to Aphasia (LPAA).
2. Participants will be able to describe logistical considerations for developing community-based programming for people with aphasia.
3. Participants will be able to identify and discuss a Patient Reported Outcome Measure for people with aphasia.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-financial Disclosures: Lorelei is the current GSHA HC&PP Committee Chair. No other presenters have non-financial disclosures

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1:00 PM-2:00 PM

ROOM: F/G

Level: Introductory

Title: Using Sensory Supports to Increase Young Clients' Engagement

Speakers: Lindsay Vanderhoogt, OTR/L, Julianne Smith, M.A. CCC-SLP

Biographies: Lindsay Vanderhoogt is an Occupational Therapist (OT) currently working in the Stepping Stones Preschool program of the Atlanta Speech School with young children diagnosed with speech-language delay in a therapeutic preschool setting.

Julianne Smith is a Speech-Language Pathologist and the Director of the Stepping Stones Preschool program of the Atlanta Speech School. The Stepping Stones Preschool is a therapeutic preschool program that uses a multi-disciplinary model of intervention.

Abstract: Research supports the interprofessional collaboration between speech-language pathologists and occupational therapists; however, opportunities to co-treat can be impacted by insurance coverage. This Occupational Therapist-led presentation will provide information about sensory processing and sensory-based supports to increase young clients' engagement during speech-language therapy sessions.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Explain the benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration between OTs and speech- language pathologists.
2. Describe sensory processing foundations and how they impact a young client's regulation and attention.
3. Discuss sensory-based regulatory strategies to increase a young client's engagement during speech therapy sessions.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-financial Disclosures: None

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1:00 PM-2:00 PM

ROOM: E

Level: Intermediate

Title: Bidirectionality of Executive Function: Preventing Burnout Amidst Everyday Challenges

Speakers: Sucheta Kamath, MA, MA, CCC-SLP, BC-ANCDS

Biography: Sucheta Kamath is an award-winning speech-language pathologist, an author, a Professor of Practice at Amrita University, a two-time TEDx speaker, Host of Full PreFrontal: Exposing the Mysteries of Executive Function Podcast, a Certified Mindfulness Meditation Teacher, and Founder/CEO of ExQ® (Executive Function curriculum). She's a 2025 Georgia's Education Policy Fellow and her advocacy has garnered bipartisan support for statewide recognition of March 26th to be Executive Function Day.

Abstract: Our personal success and satisfaction as a clinician/collaborator are determined by how we navigate conflict and challenges for effective clinical and personal impact. Treatment adherence is a key ingredient in successful therapeutic outcomes which results in the transfer and generalization of newly acquired skills beyond the therapeutic context. There's a delicate bidirectional interplay between clinician's and clients' Executive Function which requires sustained motivational engagement and effective adaptive strategy use to influence adherence over time and elevate impact. This presentation will discuss the framework of bidirectional self-regulation during challenging health behaviors through the lens of

psychological sciences and evidence-based Executive Function strategies that promote emotional agility and personal efficacy while reducing burnout.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Explain components of Executive Function including goal-directed persistence, emotional agility and self-regulatory failures during conflict.
2. Identify three signs of bidirectional interplay between clinician's Executive Function while addressing clients' Executive Function needs.
3. List three Executive Function strategies that clinicians can use to activate emotional agility and promote personal efficacy.

Financial Disclosures: Sucheta is the Founder/Owner of the private practice Cerebral Matters. Sucheta is the CEO of ExQ software curriculum.

Non-financial Disclosures: Sucheta is the president of GSHFoudation

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1:00 PM-2:00 PM

ROOM: D

Level: Introductory

Title: Building Future Leaders: Year 2 of the GSHA GLMA

Speakers: Ainsley P. Vergara, M.Ed., CCC-SLP, Katie Walden, M.S., CCC-SLP, Aleah S. Brock, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

Biographies: Ainsley Vergara is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the department of Communication Sciences and Special Education at the University of Georgia. She supervises graduate clinicians in the university clinic and off-site practicum sites, teaches clinical and AAC courses, and mentors undergraduate and graduate students. She is currently a member of the GSHA Leadership and Mentoring Academy planning team.

Katie Walden is a Senior Lecturer and Clinic Director at Valdosta State University with 35 years of experience in adult neurogenic disorders. She is passionate about supervision, IPP, and preparing students for professional leadership.

Aleah Brock is an associate professor and assistant chair at the University of West Georgia. Her work focuses on early language development and preparing students for evidence-based, community-engaged clinical practice.

Jenna Dekich, a senior at UGA studying Communication Sciences and Disorders, is passionate about speech therapy for individuals with disabilities. With experience supporting people with complex communication needs, she has focused on teaching Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). Through this, she discovered her passion for bridging gaps in accessible communication technology. Partnering with her faculty mentor, Mrs. Vergara, Jenna is expanding this service project in Athens.

Abstract: Now in its second year, the Georgia Speech-Language-Hearing Association Leadership and Mentoring Academy (GLMA) continues to develop future leaders in Communication Sciences and Disorders. This presentation highlights the structure, goals, and impact of the 2025-2026 GLMA cohort, including monthly webinars, faculty and peer mentorship, and capstone service projects. Projects address diverse community needs and showcase leadership in action. Members will share student perspectives, successes, plans for sustainability and future directions.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the structure and goals of the GSHA Leadership and Mentoring Academy (GLMA).
2. Identify three informational topics that support leadership development in CSD students.
3. Discuss strategies for sustaining leadership and mentoring programs at the state level.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-financial Disclosures: Ainsley is the current Chair of the GSHA Continuing Education Committee, Member of the GSHA GLMA Planning Team, Member of the GSHA Higher Education Committee.

Katie is a member of the GSHA GLMA Planning Team.

Aleah is a member of the GSHA GLMA Planning Team & Chair of the GSHA Higher Education Committee.

Jenna has no non-financial disclosures

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2:00 PM-3:00 PM

ROOM: Master's Hall

Level: Introductory

Title: Healthcare and Private Practice Forum: The Business of Caring: Navigating Challenges, Innovation, and Sustainability in Healthcare and Private Practice

Speaker: Lorelei Benham, M.Ed., CCC-SLP

Abstract: The intersection between healthcare and private practice continues to shift rapidly as reimbursement models, staffing shortages, value-based care demands, and AI technology evolve nationwide. With the increasing complexity of insurance (including prior authorization restrictions, payment delays, clawbacks, and Medicare proposed documentation rule changes), speech-language pathologists and audiologists must balance clinical excellence with sustainable business operations. Private practice offers autonomy, innovation, direct community impact, and diversified revenue models (cash pay hybrid, membership, group rehab intensives, community-based models), while healthcare systems struggle with burnout, productivity standards, and reduced therapist clinical decision-making freedom. This forum will highlight evidence-based business mindset shifts, collaboration between healthcare systems and community clinics, and strategic advocacy that ensures SLPs remain central to neurologic care, aging care, brain injury recovery, and communication access across all settings. Through open dialogue, case examples, and shared lived experiences, participants will explore how to future-proof our profession through networking, mentorship, and collective influence.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this forum, participants will be able to:

1. Identify emerging trends impacting speech-language pathology across healthcare and private practice settings, including shifts toward value-based care, technological disruption (AI), and changes in reimbursement models.
2. Discuss the implications of these trends on clinical practice, workforce sustainability, interdisciplinary collaboration, and ethical considerations affecting service delivery in Georgia.

Biography:

Lorelei Benham, M.Ed., CCC-SLP, is a respected speech-language pathologist specializing in neurological disorders and brain injuries. A Georgia native, she earned her undergraduate degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders from the University of Georgia, followed by a master's degree in speech-language pathology from the University of West Georgia. Early in her career, she worked in Boulder, Colorado, serving pediatric clinics and elementary schools. In 2015, she returned to Georgia and joined the Shepherd Center in Atlanta, where she focused on acquired brain injuries and multiple sclerosis, emphasizing functional therapy and patient-centered care. Benham is also the co-owner of Atlanta Speech & Wellness, LLC, with partner Ariella Kaplan, where they help patients improve speech, language, cognitive, and swallowing skills after a brain injury or neurological disease diagnosis. She serves as Chair of the Georgia Aphasia Project, advocating for individuals with aphasia through communication groups, educational webinars, and family training. She was a presenter at the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine in 2019 and 2022, she also guest lectures for graduate speech-language pathology programs. Additionally, she volunteers with CAN DO® Multiple Sclerosis, offering education and support worldwide.

Financial Disclosures: No relevant financial disclosures.

Non-financial Disclosures: Lorelei is a member of GSHA's current executive council

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2:00 PM-3:00 PM

ROOM: F/G

Level: Introductory

Title: Schools Forum: Practical Tips for School-Based SLPs

Speakers: Jodi Thomas, SLP

Biography: Jodi Thomas serves as a Speech-Language Pathologist for Bulloch County Schools, bringing over twenty-seven years of experience in public education across southeast Georgia. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders from the University of Georgia, with a minor in Child and Family Development. She obtained a Master's degree in Speech Pathology from Valdosta State University and an Education Specialist degree in Curriculum Instruction Management and Administration from Nova Southeastern University. Jodi achieved National Board Teacher Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in Early Childhood through Young Adulthood/ Exceptional Needs Specialist in 2003. She has undergone training in the Georgia Speech-Language Pathologist Evaluation Program and played a pivotal role in her local school district's development of an evaluation instrument for Speech- Language Pathologists. Her professional achievements include organizing and leading a variety of local professional learning workshops, implementing a local file review process, securing multiple grants for therapy resources, and establishing comprehensive policies and procedures for speech services. Additionally, Jodi has previously contributed to the Southeast Georgia Learning Resources System's (GLRS) Advisory Board for Speech-Language Pathologists and has held various roles such as Special Education Coordinator, Assistive Technology Leader, and Speech Coordinator. She is currently serving as the Lead SLP for the Southeast and Coastal GLRS Speech Consortia.

Abstract: This presentation describes how school-based Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) can thrive by using practical tips and tricks of the trade. This session will examine efficient use of time and resources available for school-based SLPs. By optimizing their use of time and resources,

school-based SLPs can significantly improve their effectiveness and the outcomes for the students they serve.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Explain practical solutions to challenges faced by school-based SLPs
2. Implement a variety of solutions to create more supportive environments for SLPs and improve outcomes for students.
3. Discuss the need for advocacy on the local, state, and national level.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-financial Disclosures: Jodi is the GSHA Schools Committee Chair

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2:00 PM-3:00 PM (CEs not available)

ROOM: D

Title: Student Forum

Moderators: Valencia Valestin, B.S., Ed.; Farzana Begum, B.S., Ed.

Biographies: Valencia Valestin is originally from Queens, New York. She is currently attending University of West Georgia, actively participating in University of West Georgia NSSLHA council, where she holds executive council roles as Vice President and diversity chair. Not only is Valencia active in her NSSLHA chapter, but she is also part of the executive board for the ASL club, where she holds the position of treasurer. She inspires to be an advocate for positive change in the CSD field. On days that she is not in school, she works as a Registered Behavior Technician and likes to explore the city of Atlanta. Valencia hopes one day to open her private practice after gaining years of experience in all areas of the CSD field.

Farzana is currently enrolled at the University of Georgia, majoring in Communication Sciences and Disorders. Post bachelor's and master's, she is planning to pursue a career as an SLP, focusing on pediatrics. Along with being the GSHA Student Affairs Committee co-chair in she is also an exec in BrainIAC UGA, a student ambassador at Experience UGA, and involved in CommunicAID + Nation, and M(minorities)-CMSD. Farzana is originally from Atlanta and commutes there from Athens. In her free time, she love to read and try new foods!

Join our Student Affairs Committee Co-chairs as they host an interactive Scavenger Hunt with prizes and give-aways. All students are welcome!

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3:00-3:30 PM

Break with Vendors

Pecan Tree Galleria

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3:30 PM-5:00 PM

ROOM: Master's Hall

Level: Introductory

Title: Dysphagia Grand Rounds

Speakers: Lauren Adams (moderator), Annie Chow, Claire Jamison, Tamatha Rutherford

Biographies: Lauren is a Speech-Language Pathologist specializing in the assessment and treatment of communication and swallowing disorders across the adult lifespan. With experience in acute care, inpatient rehabilitation, and outpatient settings, she provides evidence-based and patient-centered care. Her focus is on serving patients in rural areas to ensure they receive gold standard care. Her goal is to focus on improving quality of life, functional communication, and safe swallowing. She collaborates closely with interdisciplinary medical teams and is passionate about education, advocacy, and compassionate care.

Annie is a speech language pathologist at The Shepherd Center in Atlanta, Georgia, where she works with patients with acquired brain and/or spinal cord injuries. She has worked in the acute, inpatient, and day program settings. As a former educator, she brings a unique perspective to her work and is passionate about fostering patient autonomy, independence, and joy through functional, person-centered treatment.

Claire is an SLP at Northside Hospital Gwinnett in Lawrenceville, GA. She has 8 years experience working at a Trauma II facility with a diverse patient population. Claire has a passion for working with complex ICU and trauma

patients to rehabilitate communication and swallowing. In her personal time, Claire enjoys reading and traveling.

Tamatha Rutherford MCD,CCC/SLP has been a practicing speech-language pathologist for 34 years and a seven time Ace Award recipient. She graduated from Auburn University in 1992. She has primarily practiced in the adult population in all settings including outpatient, acute care, inpatient rehabilitation, home health and long-term care. Tamatha currently has a private practice in Macon, Ga and specializes in Head, neck and oral cancer rehabilitation and Brain injury. Tamatha has been happily married for twenty years to her husband Dallas and they have 2 college aged children and lots of fur babies!!

Abstract: This interactive presentation will feature a panel discussion of SLPs from around the state. The session will focus various SLPs presenting interesting cases in dysphagia management and will discuss common barriers and solutions to providing evidenced-based care for patients with dysphagia.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Summarize diagnostic methodology and treatment interventions during case studies of patients with dysphagia
2. Compare methodology and culture within SLP teams across the state who manage patients with dysphagia
3. Identify ways to collaborate for improved patient care across the state

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-financial Disclosures: Tamatha currently holds the charter for the SPOHNC support group "Out of the Mask" in Macon, Georgia.

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3:30 PM-5:00 PM INVITED SPEAKERS

ROOM: Room F/G

Level: Intermediate

Title: Creating Community from the Start: Graduate Level Interprofessional Education

Speakers: TJ Ragan, M.A., CCC-SLP, Hannah Krimm, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

Biographies: T.J. Ragan, M.A., CCC-SLP is a Clinical Professor and the Clinic Director for the University of Georgia Speech & Hearing Clinic. She is an ASHA certified speech-language pathologist specializing in pediatric speech, language, literacy, and feeding. She has experience in private practice, schools, early intervention programs, nonprofit agencies, and teletherapy. She leads interprofessional education and collaborative teaming events across multiple disciplines at the university.

Hannah Krimm is an Associate Professor at the University of Georgia in the department of Communication Sciences and Special Education. She earned her PhD and MS from Vanderbilt University. Her clinical experience includes working with children in public and private schools. Her research addresses the identification of children with language impairment and/or dyslexia, professional development strategies to improve identification and remediation for these children, and interprofessional education.

Abstract: Graduate students in speech language pathology master's programs are required to demonstrate skills in interprofessional, team-based collaborative practice. This presentation will describe an educational model for involving graduate students in regular multidisciplinary reflective communities via Interprofessional Education (IPE) Seminars and Grand Rounds. Authors will describe key components of IPE education at the University of Georgia, preliminary evidence for effectiveness, barriers to successful implementation, and recommendations for future directions.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the benefits of interprofessional education experiences for speech-language pathology master's students.
2. Explain components of an Interprofessional Education Grand Rounds learning activity.
3. Summarize two potential barriers to implementing reflective multidisciplinary IPE experiences for graduate students, along with possible solutions to those barriers.

Financial Disclosures: No relevant financial disclosures.

Non-financial Disclosures: No relevant non-financial disclosures.

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3:30 PM-5:00 PM

ROOM: E

Level: Introductory

Title: How to do voice therapy with 80% of your patients

Speakers: Eva van Leer, PhD, MFA, Leah Mumpower, BS, Brittany Sower, BS

Biographies: Dr. Eva van Leer is an Associate Professor at GSU where she runs the Voice Therapy Research lab, coordinates the PhD program and teaches medically oriented SLP courses. Her research on predicting and improving patient adherence to voice therapy has been funded by NIH, GaCTSA and the ASH Foundation. She collaborates closely with Dr. Gillespie (Emory Voice Center) and Dr. Anderson (Georgia Tech). In her spare time, she inline skates and updates her cat's Instagram account.

Leah Mumpower is a student in the GSU MS program in CSD. She holds an undergraduate degree in psychology and Spanish from Emory University and Henry College, and is a graduate research assistant (GRA) in the Adult Literacy Research Center (ALRC) at GSU. In addition, she completed a summer GRAship at the GSU Voice Research Lab, measuring pupil dilation as index of mental effort associated with intentional voice quality change.

Brittany Sower is an MS student at GSU in CSD. She holds an undergraduate degree in Applied Linguistics and Spanish from Union University and works as Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) in the Child Reading and Writing Lab (CRAWL). In addition, she completed a summer GRAship at the GSU Voice Research Lab, measuring pupil dilation as index of mental effort associated with intentional voice quality change.

Abstract: Voice therapy exercises and approaches are motor skills, just like rollerskating, dancing, or dunking a basket. As such, learning voice therapy

approaches requires in-person demonstration and practice. In this workshop, we will 1) review key concepts in voice production (i.e. how the sound is produced at the laryngeal level, and is amplified by the vocal tract), 2) analyze our own voices on the continua of register (from "chest" to "falsetto"), degree of adduction (e.g. from breathy to pressed) and tone focus (e.g. from "pharyngeal" to "twangy") 3) categorize voice disorders into over- and under-closure problems 4) learn several evidence-based approaches to treating overclosure and practice these as a group and in pairs 5) learn several evidence-based approaches to underclosure and practice these as a group and in pairs 6) discuss developmental and social considerations for children and 7) discuss individualizing therapy. Workshop attendees will leave with refreshed, practical skills to treat their next adult or pediatric voice patient on Monday morning.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Analyze voice production across continua of pitch register, adduction, and (resonant) tone focus.
2. Demonstrate 3 approaches to reducing overclosure (i.e. phonotraumatic voice production) and know when to apply them.
3. Demonstrate 3 approaches to managing underclosure (i.e. poor closure due to functional, neurological or tissue-based disorders) and know when to apply them.
4. Adapt common (adult) voice therapy approaches according to children by developmental play phase.
5. Adapt common adult voice therapy approaches by social/family factors.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-financial Disclosures: None

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3:30 PM-5:00 PM

ROOM: D

Level: Advanced

Title: Leveraging Implementation Science to Integrate EBPs into Practice:  
An Example of Linguistic Diversity Protocol

Speakers: Sabreen NoorAli, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

Biography: Sabreen NoorAli is an Assistant Professor at Ithaca College, New York, specializing in cultural linguistic responsiveness and implementation science. She supports children from birth to five who speak languages other than English, bridging research and practice through evidence-based interventions. Collaborating nationally and globally, she advocates for inclusive policies to ensure equitable support for linguistically minoritized communities.

Abstract: Evidence-based practices (EBPs) are essential to ensuring high-quality, effective, and equitable care in speech-language pathology. In recent years, researchers have developed and validated numerous EBPs aimed at improving outcomes for children from minoritized and multilingual backgrounds, particularly in early intervention and special education contexts (Brice & Brice, 2009; Restrepo et al., 2021). These practices are grounded in decades of research that emphasize the importance of culturally and linguistically responsive assessment and intervention. However, despite the availability of EBPs tailored to diverse populations, their consistent application in clinical and educational settings remains limited (Kohnert, 2013; Zaretsky et al., 2020). As a result, many children from racially, ethnically, and linguistically minoritized communities continue to face disparities in access to accurate diagnoses and effective treatment. This persistent “know-do” gap between what we know from research and what is actually done in practice represents a critical challenge for the field (Balas & Boren, 2000; WHO, 2013). Evidence-based innovations too often fail to make their way into routine use, particularly when they require changes to practitioner behavior, system processes, or team collaboration. This is where the implementation of science becomes vital. Implementation science is the study of methods and strategies to promote the systematic uptake of EBPs into real-world settings (Eccles & Mittman, 2006). It provides a structured approach to understanding and addressing barriers to change, identifying context-specific facilitators, and designing strategies that promote the adoption, fidelity, and sustainability of practices that improve outcomes for individuals and communities. Despite its growing application in fields such as public health and medicine,

implementation science remains relatively nascent within rehabilitation disciplines, including speech-language pathology (Wright et al., 2020). As a result, many clinicians are unfamiliar with how to systematically support the integration of EBPs into their everyday work. The first half of the session will introduce participants to the foundational principles of implementation science, emphasizing its relevance to clinical practice in speech-language pathology. Attendees will gain a working understanding of core implementation concepts, including the distinction between evidence-based interventions (the “what”) and implementation strategies (the “how”), as well as the importance of context, fidelity, and sustainability (Proctor et al., 2009; Sherr, 2023). A central concept in implementation science is its focus on three interrelated outcomes: implementation outcomes, service outcomes, and patient outcomes (Proctor et al., 2009). Implementation outcomes (e.g., feasibility, fidelity, adoption, sustainability) determine how well an EBP is integrated into a system. Service outcomes (e.g., efficiency, timeliness, effectiveness) ensure that the intervention improves clinical workflows and access to care. Ultimately, these changes must translate into patient outcomes, such as improved health, functional status, and satisfaction. However, successful implementation does not happen in isolation; context plays a critical role in shaping how EBPs are adopted. Participants will explore how contextual factors (e.g., institutional leadership, workforce capacity, and policy support) can act as barriers or facilitators in integrating new practices (Damschroder et al., 2009). The second half of the session will walk through an example of using two implementation science frameworks, the Theoretical Domains Framework (TDF) (Cane et al., 2012; NoorAli et al., 2025) and the Active Implementation Framework (AIF) to explore, develop, and implement evidence-based practices through a structured protocol leveraged as a strategy to support EBP uptake. This applied example will demonstrate how these frameworks can be used together to identify behavioral and contextual barriers and guide the behavioral integration of change into practice. Through real-world examples, attendees will learn how to apply different frameworks to structure change efforts in their own settings while ensuring that implementation efforts lead to meaningful, sustainable, and equitable improvements in speech-language services. The session will conclude by

discussing how researchers and practitioners can strategically select and apply implementation frameworks across different settings, populations, and goals to enhance the adoption, fidelity, and sustainability of EBPs.

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the core principles of implementation science and its relevance to evidence-based practice (EBP) uptake in speech-language pathology.
2. Distinguish between implementation outcomes, service outcomes, and patient outcomes, and explain how these factors influence the success of integrating EBPs into real-world settings.
3. Apply two major implementation science frameworks, Theoretical Domains Framework (TDF) and Active Implementation Framework (AIF) to develop strategies for supporting linguistically responsive practices in clinical, research, and policy settings.

Financial Disclosures: None

Non-financial Disclosures: None

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END OF DAY 2

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**Schedule subject to change**