



ARKANSAS  
REHABILITATION  
ASSOCIATION  
*Connecting Professionals Who Care*

# Quarterly Newsletter

*April 2021*

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## About the Newsletter

Our team has truly enjoyed creating this newsletter and we look forward to bringing in new and exciting content as well as more incentives to your involvement with ARA.

Since this project has already evolved drastically from our first Issue we want to give you a better idea of what to expect with the newsletter moving forward. Also, as per our announcements, if you have any ideas or suggestions for the newsletter please reach out using the Contact Us tab of the ARA website. We look forward to your feedback!

Each issue we create moving forward will have an emphasis area or "theme". This may present in announcements, the material and articles presented, interviews, or other concepts.

This month's issue will address humor in counseling, occupational therapy, and Autism Awareness all of which are celebrated in April. We are also planning to start spotlighting some community resources throughout the state and updates from other agencies, councils, and associations related to rehabilitation or a related field. Thank you for the support so far on this project!

- *The Newsletter and Outreach Committee*

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## Announcements



- ARA wants to know if you are satisfied with your membership! Please complete this 10 question survey so we can serve you better!! You can find the survey [here](#).
- May Conference Registration is OPEN. Free for members and \$25 for non- members. Click [here](#) to register or visit the ARA website.
- ARA is excited to announce we will be having an in-person conference opportunity from October 27th-29th, 2021. Stay posted for more information!
- Interviews for scholarships take place at the end of the month so stay tuned for our 2021-2022 recipients!
- If you or your organization would like to see community spotlights and/or advertise your services in our newsletter please contact Myranda Ray at [j.myranda@yahoo.com](mailto:j.myranda@yahoo.com) with the subject line ARA Newsletter.

# A Word from the President

Dear ARA Members

It is hard to believe that we are already in the month of April. This year has been flying by. In years past April and May are your board's busiest months as we work to ensure all details are in place for the annual conference. This year is a bit different, we are still working diligently to provide you the best services including a free one-day virtual conference on May 19th. As I have mentioned in the past, one of the goals of your ARA board was to offer, identify, and improve your benefits as members. For the second time in the past year, ARA is offering a Free Mini-conference to members and we are providing you the opportunities to receive Free CRCs. I would have loved to see each of you in person this May, unfortunately, we are not able to offer an in-person conference this May; But there will be an opportunity for us all to gather for an in-person conference on the horizon. I am excited to announce that Your Board has just signed a contract to have an in-person Conference at Fairfield Bay Conventions Center for October 28th and 29th. While this is not our regular location or time of year; I assure you after visiting the convention center and hotel at Fairfield Bay, you are sure to enjoy the beauty and opportunities this location provides.

As mentioned above your board has been looking at the benefits you receive for the cost of your annual dues. I have previously emailed all members a survey Monkey titled "ARA, Members Satisfaction Survey". If you have not yet completed this survey, please do so as soon as possible. We hope to review and discuss these results with you all at the Business meeting during the May 19th Mini-conference.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C5X7GNN>

Thank you all for your continued participation in ARA! Your board is dedicated to serving you. We hope you can join us Virtually for the May 19th Mini-conference and hope to see you all in person at the October in-person Conference.

Sincerely,

Christina Clausen  
ARA President



## May Conference Reminder!!

ARA is thrilled to host a virtual conference on May 19th, 2021. Mark your calendars and register today! Members will be able to attend this conference for free, and non-members will only pay \$25. [A registration link can be found on the ARA website home page.](#) This conference will offer the opportunity to earn 2 CEU's.

<b>ARA 2021 Virtual Conference Agenda</b>		
<b>Check In</b> 9:30-9:45 am	<i>The conference will start at 9:45 am.</i>	
<b>Breakout Session 1</b> 10:00am-11:00am	<i>Supported Decision Making: An Alternative to Guardianship</i>  <i>-Lindsey Parker LMSW</i>	<i>Participants will explore the complexity around decision making and have the opportunity to learn about Supported Decision Making Agreements (SDM), an alternative to full guardianship, that allows people with disabilities to retain their decision-making capacity by choosing a network of supporters to help them make informed choices</i>
<b>Business Meeting</b> 11:00am-12:00pm	<i>Presented by your ARA Board</i>	<i>ARA Updates: PRD Membership</i>
<b>Lunch &amp; Break 12:00- 1:00 pm</b>		
<b>Breakout Session 2</b> 1:00pm- 2:00pm	<i>Ethics 101: What We Always Need to Know</i>  <i>-Dr. Kristen Higgins, Dr. Brent Williams, Dr. Erin Popejoy</i>	<i>This session will provide a review of the most significant pieces and principals of both the CRC (2016) and ACA (2014) Codes of Ethics. Various case vignettes will be used to help session participants apply these ethical codes to real life situations.</i>

# Conference Information

In addition to the free virtual May conference we are excited to announce our in-person conference October 27th-29th, 2021! This will be located in Fairfield Bay at Fairfield Bay Convention Center. We will have a virtual option to accommodate the entire ARA membership. Call for Proposals and more information about registration will be out soon! If you have questions, reach out to Carrie Woodall at cdw1993@hotmail.com.

Reservations for Cobblestone Inn & Suites (501)825-3046 (3:00 pm check in/11:00 am check-out) Please see below for a list of nightly group rates.

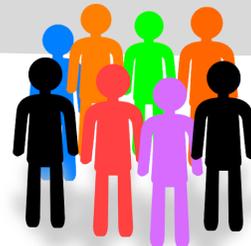
- Single/King -\$94.00
- Double Queen Room -\$94.00
- Double Queen suite -\$94.00
- Accessible Queen/Roll In Shower-\$94.00
- King Suite/Extended - \$109.00
- King Suite w/Whirlpool-\$109.00
- Accessible King-\$94.00
- VIP Condos (2br/2ba) \$188.00
- 

*\*\*Reservations for VIP condos 501-884-4202 (3:00 pm check-in/10:00 am check-out) Ask for Wilba Thompson, Conference Center Director*

*\*\*Lodging cancellations must be made 7 days prior to event to avoid penalty of first nights lodging at the group rate*

# Membership

Make sure your membership counts! There are many ways to start or continue your membership with ARA. You can pay a one time dues payment or make automatic monthly payments from your bank or on a credit card. For some time now, members who are also state employees have had the choice of a payroll deduction to take a small amount out of each paycheck. While this method has been convenient for many members, ARA has found that this payroll information has not been collected accurately by the National Rehabilitation Association which has resulted in inaccurate membership lists and gaps in membership. To minimize errors moving forward, we are encouraging any members who are currently pay dues through payroll deduct to switch to either an annual or monthly payment. You can do this by logging into your membership account on the NRA website. Thank you for your continued support!



# Student Feature

My name is Jack Christopher Elliott, and I graduated with my bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with my three areas of concentration being Music, Journalism/Communication, and Health from Arkansas State University. I have also been a licensed cosmetology instructor since 2010 after graduating Arkansas Beauty School in Conway. I have always lived by the quote by George Elliot, "It's never too late to be what you might have been."

I chose to pursue rehabilitation counseling after talking with my ARS counselor and her supervisor mentioned UALR having an online Masters in Rehabilitation counseling. I applied, and it has been the greatest decision I believe I have ever made. The faculty at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock are amazing in particular very helpful and understanding of students with disabilities. The main thing I learned is that I may be disabled but that does not mean I am handicapped. I have found knowledge and strength pursuing this degree that I did not believe was within me. I attended the ARA Virtual Conference in the Fall and found out even more about myself. I learned that my five active core values

are education, competence, challenge, creativity, and change.

I want to make my mark on the world by advocating and creatively finding a way to give people who have co-occurring disorders, like myself, a voice. I am starting a podcast to try and accomplish this goal. I am also on the National Rehabilitation Associations Legislative Committee as a student member and a student member of the AAADAC and ABSAC CIT-M to become certified to help populations with addiction and co-occurring disorders.

I also plan on getting my LAC/LPC and CRC certifications to work in the field of Rehabilitation Counseling. I believe that lending my voice to the conversation that affects my population of interest adds another dimension to it, because I am a disabled individual that is and will continue to be affected by these topics. I know what it is like to be on the other side and receive the help, so I know what it means to individuals that are seeking support.

I have honestly come a lot farther than I ever thought I would, and plan on continuing to prove myself wrong. I want to go as far as I can maybe one day possibly be the president of the NRA.

Jack Christopher Elliott  
Student Member, ARA  
Outreach Committee



# National Humor Month

Submitted by Dr Penny Willmering, Certified Humor Professional

“What did the math book tell the chemistry book? You are lucky to have solutions. I’m just full of problems.” Every time I ask Alexa for a joke this is the kind of bad Dad joke I get. I ask her every morning when I wake up and every night when I go to bed, and I still get bad jokes. Would you believe I laugh or groan at all of them?

Did you know that April is National Humor Month? It’s a good time to sit back for a moment and reflect on your humor bank. If you are running low on humor; it might be a good time to fill up. Humor strengthens your immune system, helps build resiliency against life’s stressors and strains, and generally makes life more pleasant. And, it should be a daily part of your self-care.

Who has time, and why should you bother with self-care anyway? If you won’t do it for yourself, do it for your clients, consumers, patients, or constituents. We owe it to them to bring our “A” game to work every day. Do you want to go to a grumpy hair dresser? I thought not. The truth is that when we are “feelin it”, taking care of ourselves and enjoying life, we provide enhanced services to the people who deserve our best.

But as I imagine Yoda would say, “Powerful is humor. Wisely it should be used”. According to the Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor (AATH, 2021), “therapeutic humor is any intervention that promotes health and wellness by stimulating a playful discovery, expression, or appreciation of the absurdity or incongruity of life’s situations.”

I practice it everyday by writing, reading funny stories or books, watching comedies on TV, or hanging out with my very funny husband. I also practice using it in the classroom with my students, even though sometimes they wish I wouldn’t!

So, why not use it on yourself but also on your clients? If humor is such a great thing, and as Victor Borge said, “Laughter is the shortest difference between two people”, why not yak it up with all of your clients every day? There are multiple reasons why this may be a bad idea. First, humor is a very powerful tool that must be used wisely so that it does not harm others. Not all humor is created equal and some of it can be downright mean. Second, some people, maybe even your boss, and certainly some of your clientele may be “humor impaired.”

Some people just don't seem to enjoy humor. Some may even be "humor doomers" (Morrison, 2017).

These are the folks that not only are humor impaired, they don't want anyone else to enjoy humor either. However, I suspect that for many of them, they are simply not ready. How do you know when they are ready? Of course, if they are joking with you, they likely are ready to enjoy humor. Watch for the kind of humor they use. If it's a dad joke then you know where to go. Alexa! If it's self-deprecating humor, where they poke fun at themselves, it may be that they are trying to connect with you or it could be a sign they are not feeling good about themselves. If it is mean or dark humor that may be a danger sign of anger and resentment as well.

I generally find that dad humor is a good way to test the waters. The other is to make humor a part of your daily practice, and even learn about it by joining an organization like AATH. You can keep your humor knowledge and humor bank full by also trying some of these:

- Subscribe to ajokeaday
- Read funny books or stories
- Watch funny movies or shows
- Hanging out with funny people
- Memes on social media

The main point is to allow yourself to enjoy humor and make it comfortable for others to use it with you as well. The world would be a lot funnier, and a lot kinder place for all of us!

## Community Spotlight

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is the fastest growing developmental disability in the United States. Since April is Autism Awareness month, ARA wanted to share some information and a resource guide for working with this population.

ASD can occur in all ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups. This diagnosis can present as significant social, communicatory and behavioral challenges. People who are diagnosed with ASD may communicate, interact, and learn in alternative ways. On April 5th 2021, Governor Asa Hutchinson proclaimed April to be Autism Awareness month in Arkansas. As rehabilitation professionals it is our duty to ensure individuals with Autism have access to needed support and services. Please check out this link for the [Autism Resource Center of Arkansas' Autism Resource guide](#) for more information!

# Governor Appoints New State Rehabilitation Council Members

Submitted by Dr Keith Vire

According to federal law, when a state establishes a State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), the members of the Council must be appointed by the Governor, or in some cases, when state law dictates, a state appointed entity such as the state legislature or an appointed board. In Arkansas, the Governor reserves the right to make all appointments to the council. Federal law also dictates the makeup of the SRC. The Governor is required, under the statute, to "...select members of the Council after soliciting recommendations from representatives of organizations representing a broad range of individuals with disabilities and organizations interested in individuals with disabilities." The statute also requires the Governor to "...consider, to the greatest extent practicable, the extent to which minority populations are represented on the Council."

The Council must have a minimum of 15 members, and must meet the following requirements:

- A representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council;
- At least one representative of a Parent Training and Information center (PTI);
- A representative of the Client Assistance Program (CAP);

- At least one qualified vocational rehabilitation (may serve as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Council if employed by the state rehabilitation agency (ARS);
- One representative of Community Rehabilitation Program service providers;
- Four representatives of business, industry, and labor;
- Representatives of disability groups that include:
  - Individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities;
  - Representatives of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty representing themselves or are unable due to their disabilities to represent themselves;
  - Current or former applicants for, or recipients of vocational rehabilitation services

In keeping with these requirements, Governor Hutchinson recently made several new appointments to the SRC. The new members are:

Alex Scott, Carol McDearmon, Christopher Balos – PTI representative, Dr. Charles Green, Dr. James Grover, Leigh Garvin - SILC representative, Matt Sewell – Special Ed

In addition to these new member appointments, Wesley Eddington, and Kelley Sharp were reappointed for a second term.



# ARA Division Updates

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## **Arkansas Association of Rehabilitation Technicians and Specialist: AARTS**

AARTS has no updates at this time. Stay tuned!

## **Arkansas Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns: ARCEA**

ARCEA is soliciting members! If you are a current member and or a potential member whom would like to use your talents to grow the division within ARA please contact Niketa Nash at [niketa.nash@arkansas.gov](mailto:niketa.nash@arkansas.gov). To find out more information about the organization you can visit <https://www.nationalrehab.org/>



## **Arkansas Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns: AAMRC**

Are you a highly motivated rehabilitation professional, looking to join forces with an organization that promotes the equitable delivery of and quality services to individuals with disabilities from culturally diverse populations? The National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns is looking for YOU! The National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns is a professional association of dedicated individuals, whose mission is promoting cultural diversity and disability through advocacy for excellence and equity in rehabilitation research, education, and practice. The Arkansas chapter is looking to join forces with highly motivated individuals with a passion to serving multicultural individuals with disabilities in our community. For more information about membership, please contact Darlene Owens, membership chair at [Darlene.owens@arkansas.gov](mailto:Darlene.owens@arkansas.gov)

# OT, PT, and Speech, Oh my!

Submitted by Alisha Yarberry

Occupational Therapy is a pivotal step when working in rehabilitation. It is easy to become so consumed in the process of building resumes, securing interviews, and continuously job hunting that the pre-steps to job placement are forgotten. Learning from the perspective of a professional allows us to step into our clients' shoes and learn about the aspects of rehabilitation we do not see. Laura Winters is the clinic supervisor at Jarvis Pediatric Therapy in Springdale, AR. Jarvis Pediatrics serves the Northwest Arkansas community for Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Speech Therapy. Their client's ages range from 2-3 months all the way to 21 years old, based on level of need and what is clinically necessary for their success. Laura obtained her master's degree in 2018 from MUSC in South Carolina. During her time at MUSC, she worked in the NICU helping infants reach milestones.

Interviewing Laura, it was easy to see the passion she has for helping kids achieve their goals in treatment, as well as her emphasis and vision on working towards future goals to go above and beyond what OT has to offer. She sees a lot of hope and determination working with this population at this age, pointing out

that early interventions are monumental for kids with Autism and Developmental Delay. Laura also discussed celebrating successes and building self-esteem daily when clients reach their goals, which is a huge motivator for her staff to continue to work hard for their clients.

She told a story about a client who had been struggling with some soft skills for a while. Feeling stuck, her team began to dig deeper into what new motivating factors could exist that would push this client to reach certain treatment goals. They found out that he had an interest in cars and wanted to be a mechanic when he graduated high school. Laura and her team had finally found a focus and passion to specialize his skills in a way that motivated him because it was something he loved. This client went on to quickly reach his goals, arguably much quicker than compared to a more traditional approach. In every field, truly getting to know your client and seeking out their motivators should not be steps that are overlooked or underestimated. As Laura and her team demonstrated, these steps are critical and can really give clients the push that they need to continue reaching their goals and maintaining their motivation.

Laura sees many referrals from Doctors, but mostly from parents seeking out resources to help develop skills for their kids. Contrary to popular belief, OT is not an exclusive luxury that is only available to populations within certain socioeconomic demographics. Laura says she sees many clients who have Medicaid in populations that have not always had access to these services.

So, what does all of this have to do with Rehabilitation Services? Occupational, Physical and Speech therapy play a vital role in the development of job-related skills such as reading levels, grades at school, social and emotional skills, and physical development. Developing these important job-related skills early means a higher rate of job placement success.

Each client has specific needs and goals for treatment. Each treatment plan is tailored to develop skills that are well-rounded, which is a major benefit of having OT, PT and Speech under one roof.

Graduates of the program must meet treatment goals in all areas that are necessary for developing appropriate skills. As a result, they will be more prepared for jobs out of high school.

Laura wants people to know that OT involves more than most people realize. OT is integrated and must have aspects of speech skills, physical skills, and behavioral/emotional skills. A more integrated approach to Rehabilitation services only serves clients better and in a more rounded way. Having multiple resources in one clinic allows each professional to work alongside each other towards the common goal of ensuring that clients have necessary skills needed for future occupational success.

Is there something you would like to see in the newsletter? Suggestions for accessibility? An organization, topic, or professional? Reach out to the newsletter team on the ARA website via the contact section.

# Board of Directors 2020-2021

President	.....	Christina Clausen
President-Elect	.....	Myranda Ray
Vice President	.....	Carrie Woodall
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Treasurer	.....	Heather Grigsby
ARCEA Representative	.....	Niketa Nash
AAMRC Representative	.....	Tyneshia Ivory
AARTS Representative	.....	Carrie Woodall
Student Representatives	.....	Candice Moore
Southwest Regional Representative	.....	Shane Bronson
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	Ashley Tougaw	Kylee Hanson
	Brian Sanders	Laura Allen
	Cassandra Daughtrey	Penny Willmering
	Christy Lamas	Shane Bronson
	Janie Crafford	Stacy McKisick
	Julie Valez	Yolanda Graves
	Keondra Hampton	

*For contact information, please visit <http://www.arrehabassociation.org/>  
If you're interested in being involved with ARA committees, please contact Myranda Ray*