



Breakout Sessions | 10:30 a.m. – 11:10 a.m.

Breakout Session 1

Integrating Mental Health Services to Enhance Program Success

Johns Hopkins

Poor mental health significantly affects the success of various programs, from physical health initiatives to economic and social development efforts. This session will highlight the crucial need for integrating mental health care and psychosocial support into primary health care and community-based programs.

Speakers

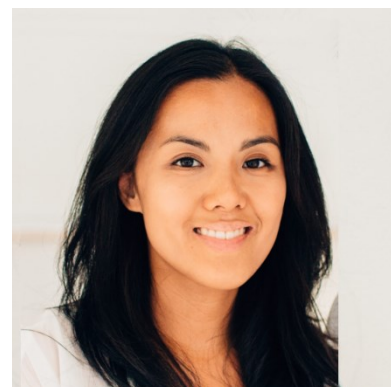
Paul Bolton, Senior Scientist, Johns Hopkins University

Paul Bolton MB BS MPH MSc is a Senior Scientist in the Department of Mental Health at the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health. Dr. Bolton has 25 years of experience in global mental health working in program design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation with international and local NGOs and governments. He has led programs and research in Europe (former Soviet Union), South-East Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East, and the Pacific region. His research includes randomized controlled trials exploring effectiveness and implementation practices for MHPSS interventions, as well as qualitative studies of population-specific needs and the development and testing of valid assessment instruments. Dr. Bolton focuses on collaboration with partners in low- and middle-income countries to integrate mental health and psychosocial support into development and humanitarian programming, based on evidence that mental health is a major factor in health, wellbeing, and prosperity.



Joanna Lai, Health Specialist, UNICEF

Joanna Lai DrPH, MPH, MS. ED is a health specialist at UNICEF Headquarters Health Section, where she serves as the technical focal point for adolescent, school, and mental health. She is a public health practitioner with a background in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of health, and counseling services for children and adolescents through schools, community platforms, and clinical settings. Dr. Lai currently supports national and sub-national health strategy development, planning, and programming for adolescent health and mental health through primary care facilities, school, community, and digital platforms. Additionally, she focuses on workforce capacity building and training of non-specialists on MHPSS intervention delivery for adolescents and their caregivers.



Themes

Mental Health

Innovative Programming





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Breakout Session 2

Advocacy 101: How to Do it Better

InterAction

As foreign assistance budgets are shrinking and programs and ways of working undergo increased scrutiny, it is now more important than ever for NGOs to advocate for themselves and shared priorities. The bipartisan success of the FY24 supplemental—which secured \$9.2 billion in additional global humanitarian funding—marked a key victory in the face of these difficult challenges and speaks to a fundamental truth about the sector’s work: advocacy is stronger when presented with a collective, unified voice to law and policy makers.

This session will examine the fundamentals of policy advocacy in Washington, D.C., the importance of developing and using a collective voice, and allow InterAction Members to hear directly from former congressional and administration staff about what works and what doesn’t.

Speakers

David Cronin, Government Affairs Specialist, Catholic Relief Services

Based on Capitol Hill, Dave advocates for Catholic Relief Service’s legislative priorities, including the U.S. foreign aid budget and policies tied to Central American migration and human trafficking.

Prior to joining CRS, Dave worked in campus ministry at St. Joseph's University and served as a Jesuit volunteer at Homeboy Industries.

Dave has a master’s in human security and development economics from Tufts University’s Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and bachelor’s degrees in history and theology from Boston College.



Liz Leibowitz, Senior Director of Government Relations, ONE Campaign

Liz Leibowitz currently serves as the ONE Campaign’s Senior Director of U.S. Government Relations, where she leads the organization’s engagement with Congress, the Administration, and the U.S. stakeholder community. She is also the Co-Chair of InterAction’s Budget and Appropriations Working Group.

Most recently, Liz was a member of the Biden Administration at USAID, serving as the Acting Deputy Director, Senior Advisor, and Strategic Engagement Lead in the Office of Budget and Resource Management and as the Pillar Lead for Policy and Engagement on the agency’s COVID-19 Taskforce. Prior to USAID, she served as Senior Foreign Policy Advisors to Senator Ben Cardin of Maryland and Representative Nita M. Lowey of New York, where Liz spearheaded the drafting, negotiation, and passage of multiple pieces of legislation. Liz has also held positions at the Jewish Federations of North America, the Office of Representative Bob Brady of Philadelphia, Rabinowitz/Dorf Communications, and the Human Rights Campaign. She is a Term Member of the Council on Foreign Relations.





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A native of the Philadelphia-area, Liz holds a Master of Public Health degree, with a focus in global health, from George Washington University and a Bachelor's degree in political science from American University.

Bob Powers, Director of Government Relations, Bread for the World

Bob Powers is a leader, politico, and former diplomat with 20 years of experience in Washington, D.C. This work includes his efforts in private industry, large corporations, government, and associations, and now at Bread for the World. He has built government affairs and sales operations from the ground up and successfully implemented new multilateral processes while serving as an appointee at USAID. He is passionate about issues revolving around food insecurity, hunger, and humanitarian efforts, both domestically and globally.



Powers has experience navigating industry and policy landscapes in Washington and internationally, with strong communications and public relations expertise. As an appointee at USAID, he served as the head of the delegation at G20 development negotiations, UNICEF board meetings at the United Nations-New York City, and as a senior diplomat at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development-Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) in Paris. Powers also attended official diplomatic meetings in both South Korea and Japan.

Bob's career accomplishments include serving as Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Bureau of Policy, Planning & Learning/USAID; Principal/CEO of Prairie Road (a government affairs and media consulting firm); Vice President of Government Relations at National Religious Broadcasters; Vice President of the Natural Foods Channel at Utzy Naturals; as well as a Senior Government Affairs Consultant to big tech, large corporations, broadcasters, and internet advertisers. His degree is in Broadcast Journalism from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

Moderator

Tom Buttry, Senior Manager for Policy and Government Relations, InterAction

Tom Buttry joined InterAction in 2015 and currently manages a cross-cutting portfolio mapping long-term trends and concerns in the NGO community. He runs InterAction's Task Force 2024, the InterAction Congressional Fellowship, and continues to engage on broader government relations and humanitarian advocacy.

Tom previously held a humanitarian affairs-focused portfolio at InterAction. Before joining InterAction, he spent six years in the U.S. Senate working on Senator Tom Harkin's legislative staff, covering foreign affairs, immigration, migration and refugee issues, international development, child labor and international labor rights, defense, veteran affairs, homeland security, and appropriations in those areas. Previously, Tom worked as an Analyst for the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves from 2005 to 2008.

Tom graduated from Marquette University in 2005 with a B.A. in Political Science.





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Breakout Session 3

Protecting Your Reputation: Mastering Crisis Response

MW Consulting

Delve into the strategic and practical aspects of managing crises within the NGO sector. Attendees explore essential techniques such as rapid message formulation, effective stakeholder engagement, and media handling under pressure. Through direct interactions and discussions, participants gain valuable insights into confidently navigating complex crises.

Speaker

Marcus A. Williams, Principal, MW Consulting

Mr. Marcus A. Williams has led business development, organizational strategy, performance management, standard operational procedures, and corporate partnerships over the last 20 years. Mr. Williams has experience in public relations, media relations, crisis management, broadcast and print media, as well as serving as a spokesman for public and private organizations, high-level senior officials, politicians, and other public figures.

He currently serves as the principal consultant and owner of MW Consulting, LLC (MWC), responsible for the overall leadership and management of MWC, outlining and guiding the firm's organizational mission, strategic and operational plans, services, and client work. Prior to MWC, he served as the founding Director of the Office of Communications for both the DC Department of Health and the DC Department of Housing and Community Development.

Mr. Williams' other employers include President Barack Obama's Administration; Booz Allen Hamilton, the U.S. House of Representatives, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform; WTAJ-TV (CBS Affiliate); The Weather Channel; DC28-TV (now known as District 99); the Government of the District of Columbia; and a host of local, regional, and national print publications.

This Washington, DC native holds a Master's degree in Corporate Communications from Georgetown University, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Broadcast Journalism from The Pennsylvania State University, and a professional certification in Strategic Communications Management from Ithaca College, Digital Excellence from Dartmouth College, and Leadership and Management from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. He recently served as a Director, Treasurer, and Chair of the Marketing Committee for the Washington DC Commission on Fashion Arts and Events and successfully completed entrepreneurial programs Project 500 and Wacif's Ascend Accelerator Programs.



Themes

NGO Leadership
Communications





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Breakout Session 4

Prioritizing Staff Mental Health and Resilience: Challenges and Opportunities

The KonTerra Group

In a time of converging global crises when humanitarian assistance is most needed, the sector is facing significant gaps between staff wellness needs and available resources. This panel brings together mental health experts and those within the humanitarian and development sectors to shed light on critical staff wellness needs, challenges in providing validated mental health services, and opportunities to leverage resources to support them. The panel will draw on insights and lessons learned to discuss why organizations should prioritize staff mental health and resilience services, why the need for quality mental health support is so high, and how organizations can leverage resources to provide adequate services.

Speakers

Justin Dunlap, Director, Business Development, Blumont

Justin Dunlap has worked in international development for more than 16 years and was raised internationally as the son of a USAID Foreign Service Officer. His program management and development portfolio has primarily focused on Latin America and the Middle East and North Africa regions, with in-country assignments including Benin, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Iraq, Libya, Macedonia, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Turkey. He has worked with development firms including Management Systems International, Chemonics, Dexis, and IBTCI, and with international NGOs including IEDA Relief and in his current role as Director of Business Development for Blumont.



As Deputy Director at Dexis Consulting Group, he led the management and growth of their USAID Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) stabilization portfolio as the IQC and Task Order manager for the START IQC, including managing teams and activities focused on Colombia, the Lake Chad Basin, Somalia, and Syria. Before his career in international development and assistance, he supported both physical and psychosocial safety during eight years serving in public safety in California.

Patricia Mira-Hunter, Deputy Director, Justice, Rights, and Security (JRS) Team, USAID Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance

Patricia (Patty) Mira-Hunter is a Foreign Service Officer (FSO) at USAID. Patty is the Deputy Director and Senior Human Rights Advisor for the Justice, Rights, and Security (JRS) Office at the Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) Bureau in Washington, D.C. Her last post was USAID Colombia, where she served as the Deputy Director of the Reconciliation and Inclusion Office. Prior to that, Patty served as Civil Society and Media Advisor in the Civil Society and Media Team at the USAID/DRG Center. She also served in the West Bank and Gaza Mission supporting conflict mitigation between Israelis and Palestinians and in the Latin America and Caribbean Bureau including working for the Haiti Task Force. Prior to USAID, she worked for the U.N. High



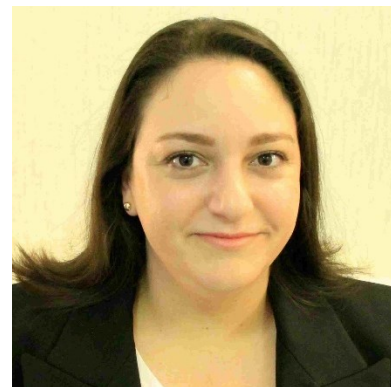


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Commissioner for Refugees and U.N. Trade and Development in Geneva. She served as a Foreign Service National at USAID/Colombia, where she managed its human rights program for five years. Prior to that, Patty worked for the Colombian Congress, the private sector, and served as a constitutional law professor for many years. Patty is a Public International Lawyer. She has a Masters in Constitutional Law and Political Science from the Center of Constitutional Studies and Political Science from Spain. Patty has a Masters in Law (LLM) with honors, from the London School of Economics.

Carly Hicks, Vice President for People Operations, HIAS

Carly Hicks is the Vice President for People Operations at HIAS and has been with the organization for seven years. She has spent the last 15 years of her career in the humanitarian and development world, mostly focused on human resources operations in Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Carly just finished her term as co-chair of the ISAC Staff Care Wellbeing Working Group. Carly's focus on staff in field offices around the world having what they need to effectively do their jobs has kept her motivated throughout her career.



Moderator

Lynne Cripe, The KonTerra Group, Chief Executive Officer

Dr. Lynne Cripe serves as Chief Executive Officer at The KonTerra Group, a leading provider of staff care and evaluation services to the international humanitarian and development community. As a social psychologist with 25 years of experience in international relief and development, she has expertise working with organizations and individuals to foster resilience in the face of challenges and crises. She has worked in more than 30 countries, primarily in high-risk environments. Lynne joined The KonTerra Group in 2011 as the Director of the USAID Staff Care Service Center. Later, as Director of Resilience Services at KonTerra, she provided strategic direction for KonTerra's staff care and organizational resilience services. Previously, Lynne served as a psychosocial technical advisor at USAID and the Director of Employee Engagement, Support & Communications at CARE USA. Lynne earned her PhD in Social Ecology from the University of California, Irvine and was a Fulbright Scholar in the Philippines.

