

## [“Yes And” Mental Health Conference](#)

September 8-10, 2017

Chicago, IL

**Mission.** Bringing together clinicians and researchers who share a desire to advance the study, understanding and integration of improvisation and mental health.

This is the first annual conference of “Improv & Psychology” being held in Chicago. This city supports both a thriving community of improvisational theaters and an offering of universities with highly-reputable programs in psychology and social work. We aim to bring these communities of skilled practitioners together to expand the conversation, share discoveries, explore the research and look towards the future of the applied sciences and application of improvisation in the mental health field.

### Schedule at a Glance

#### Day 1

5:00-9:00 p.m.....	Registration Ongoing
6:30-6:45 p.m.....	Welcome/Housekeeping: Stephanie McCullough, Psy.D.
6:45-7:45 p.m.....	Panelist Roundtable: Jimmy Carrane, Azizi Marshall LCPC, Clifton Saper, Ph.D., Nick Johne, Daniel Wiener, Ph.D., Rachael Mason.
7:45-8:00 p.m.....	Break
8:00-8:40 p.m.....	Keynote: The Therapy Players
8:45-9:15 p.m.....	Improv Jam, Hosted by Stephanie McCullough, Psy.D.

#### Day 2

9:30-11:00 a.m.....	General Session 1: Improv Master Class with Rachael Mason
11:00-12:30 p.m.....	Session 2
12:30-1:30 p.m.....	Lunch Break (Music Improv Brown Bag Optional)
1:30-3:00 p.m.....	Session 3
3:00-4:30 p.m.....	General Session 4: Improv, the Brain and Cognitive Outcome Measures
4:30-4:50 p.m.....	Break
4:50-5:30 p.m.....	Small Group Breakout
5:30-6:00 p.m.....	Come Together Wrap Around
6:00-7:30 p.m.....	Dinner Release
7:30-9:00 p.m.....	Improv Performance: The Unconscious at Play (Optional)

#### Day 3

10:00-11:30 a.m.....	Session 5
11:30-12:30 p.m.....	General Session 6: Social Theater School Performance
12:30-1:00 p.m.....	Lunch Break
1:00-3:30 p.m.....	Session 7

## Session Descriptions

### ADVANCED IMPROVISATION

#### Improv MasterClass (90 minutes)

##### General Session 1

##### **Rachael Mason**

*Faculty & Performer with The Second City*

Participants will learn the connection of improv with the practices of traditional theater and how they inform our approach today. From Stanislavski to Del Close, Rachael will bring these legendary approaches to life through improv exercises and improv coaching in this very active session, taking the “Yes And” tenet to more enhanced forms of finding truth in improv. *Learning Objectives: (1) Be able to identify the historical theater-conventions associated with improvisational models and theories (2) Learn the skill of side-coaching a participant during an improv session (3) Be able to identify six factors that contribute to the source of internal-inspiration for improv.*

#### Play for Play's Sake! (90 minutes)

##### Session 7

##### **Margot Escott, LCSW**

*National Association of Social Workers, Florida Chapter*

Play is not just beneficial for children. The benefits of play for adults include decreased stress, increased positive self-esteem, and improved social skills.

The theory of play is being researched in clinical settings and neuroscience. An important fundamental concept of playful games is that cooperation is more important than competition. Implications for Improvisational Comedy and psychotherapy will be discussed. Participants will understand the physical, emotional and spiritual benefits of play and laughter. *Learning Objectives: (1) Discuss the applications of play for clinical practice, (2) Identify current research on the therapeutic value of play, (3) Participate in games to use for group psychotherapy, (4) Identify the physiological, emotional and spiritual benefits of inclusive play for adults.*

#### Musical Improv: The Voice of the Self (90 minutes)

##### Session 7

##### **Stephanie McCullough, Psy.D.**

*Music Director with The Second City Training Center, Founder of M.I.Nt., & Founder of MCL Chicago nfp theater.*

Participants will be introduced to the fundamentals of music improvisation. Easing into the use of our singing voice in a spontaneous musical moment, participants will discover how including music activates a more immediate emotional

connection. We will focus on the creation of sounds and lines, melodies and group rhythms, movement and sound. No singing skills required. *Learning Objectives: (1) Be able to identify three essential components to engaging in music improv (2) Learn valuable physical warmups for the voice and (3) Be able to articulate the connection of one's self-psychology to one's singing voice.*

### CLINICAL APPLICATIONS OF IMPROV

#### Relational Therapy & Improv (90 minutes)

##### Session 2

##### **Daniel Wiener, Ph.D.**

*Licensed Psychologist & Professor of Counseling and Family Therapy at Central Connecticut State University.*

Participants will engage in a very active and experiential session based on Dr. Wiener's 35 years of training therapists in the application of improv in couples, family and group therapy. Attendees will try out games, exercises, role-reversals and post-improv processing techniques. *Learning Objectives: (1) Discuss the importance of designating a separate space for the improv portion of therapy, (2) Learn the process of deliberate check-in for the therapist, (3) Identify client departures and discuss how to invoke client processing and associations sparked by each enactment.*

#### Therapeutic Initiative Performance Model (90 minutes)

##### Session 3

##### **Azizi Marshall, LCPC**

*Board Certified Trainer & Registered Drama Therapist, Registered Expressive Arts Therapist, and Founder/CEO of the Center of Creative Arts Therapy.*

Looking to create a meaningful piece of work that will open the doors to healing clients and a community? Created to give structure to socially relevant performing arts, the Therapeutic Performance Initiative (TPI) model addresses the use of improv/drama, dance/movement, music, and the healing of communities. Explore the model that has ignited change within individuals, hospitals, schools, residential homes, and community agencies. Learn how you can use this model in your own work. Participants will create their own performance piece based on the TPI model through creative movement, improv, creative writing, modern dance experientials, and psychodrama techniques. Participants should be dressed to move comfortably, be open to others' backgrounds and life experiences, and be ready to learn more about themselves and the world around them. This model can be used for people of all ages in a group format.

*Learning Objectives: (1) Identify the Therapeutic Performance Initiative (TPI) model, (2) Describe how to move through the step-by-step process of creating a performance piece based on the TPI model by creating their own performance piece, (3) Evaluate how to adapt their different specializations (drama, music, dance, art, poetry) to fit within the model.*

### **The Healing Power of Improv (90 minutes)**

[Session 3](#)

**Assael Romanelli, MSW**

In this session, Assael will explore micro and macro change and growth processes in the improvisational encounter, which were reported by participants in his research study entitled "I'mprovisation". *Learning Objectives: (1) Describe different peak moments of human experience, (2) Understand what relational processes occur in the micro-moments of the improvisational encounter, (3) Understand how the improvisational encounter can help people and relationships to grow and develop.*

### **Improv & Dementia (90 minutes)**

[Session 5](#)

**Katharine Houpt, MAAT, ATR, LCPC**

*Artist and Art Therapist in private practice in Chicago.*

Katharine Houpt is an art therapist experienced in facilitating improv groups to improve quality of life for people living with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, care partners, and professional caregivers. Katharine will present an interactive workshop and discussion inspiring participants to apply improv skills to dementia care. *Learning Objectives: (1) Learn about neuroplasticity related to creativity in persons with dementia, (2) Learn parallels of improv and best practices in dementia care, (3) Discuss and practice adaptations for facilitating a strengths-based improv group including people with varied cognitive differences.*

### **Improv & Autism Spectrum Disorder (90 minutes)**

[Session 5](#)

**Nick Johne**

*The Second City Training Center Faculty*

This session explores the improv class for ASD which is designed to be taught in conjunction with a therapist, leaving the improv instructor to concentrate on just the improvisational aspects of the class. In the course of the 8 week session we created in 2012, we immediately saw how rewarding the class was for the students. Communication, flexibility, teamwork and spontaneity are all hallmarks of a study of improvisation. Along with my teaching partner, Molly Fisher, we designed the class so that there would be

little if any therapeutic elements. We wanted the class to be fun and as close to the classes offered the general population as possible. We firmly believe that at its root, improvisation is not just a mode of performance but also a life skill.

*Learning Objectives: (1) Identify how improvisation can address both verbal and non-verbal communication for the ASD population, (2) Identify & describe how improvisation can lead to flexibility of thought and action.*

## **DISCUSSION SESSIONS**

### **Panelist Roundtable (60 minutes)**

[Opening Keynote](#)

**Conference Committee Chairs & Esteemed Panelists: Jimmy Carrane, Rachael Mason, Nick Johne, Clifton Saper PhD, Azizi Marshall LCPC, Daniel Wiener PhD.**

Join us for this Welcoming event and meet the committee chairs. A roundtable discussion of veteran improvisers and clinicians will launch the conference. These esteemed panelists will share their insights, experiences, and hopes regarding the integration of improv and psychology.

### **Small Group Breakout Session (60 minutes)**

[General Session](#)

**Facilitation Leaders**

Participants will be broken into small groups (5-7) and charged with addressing open-ended questions concerning how the mental health field can continue to address, integrate, and advance our understanding of improvisation on the experience of the self and mental health. Each group will be assigned a facilitator who will assist the group in creating concrete ideas. Upon the end of the time together, all of the groups will return for a large session to share what they came up with and how they answered the questions.

## **IMPROV & PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH**

### **Improv Skills for Therapists: findings and application of five-year study (90 minutes)**

[Session 2](#)

**Assael Romanelli, MSW**

This training enables therapists to integrate theater improvisation skills into their clinical practice, regardless of previous theatrical experience or their clinical theoretical orientation. The training is built on the experiential learning model (Kolb, 2001, 2005) and includes concrete experiences of improvisation exercises, reflective observation and abstract conceptualization integrating clinical and theater

improvisation literature. 'Improv for therapists' has been taught successfully as a semester-long course in the Social Work School of the Hebrew University for over two years with extremely positive feedback. Initial qualitative and quantitative data from course alumni show increased levels of therapeutic presence (Geller and Greenberg, 2002), therapeutic charisma (Heide, 2013) and therapeutic impact (Omer, 1992). Additionally, results indicate an increase in immediacy skills (Hill, 2004) that help therapists feel more free, intuitive and challenged during their clinical work. a. Understand the experiential learning cycle. *Learning Objectives: (1) Understand the experiential learning cycle, (2) Describe the way in which to break down improv skills and how to learn them in an orderly fashion, (3) List the results of participating in improv training on therapists' perception of self and interventions in their subsequent clinical work.*

### **Improv in the Clinic: Cognitive Outcome Measures (90 minutes)**

#### **General Session 4**

*Kristin R. Krueger, PhD, Neely M. Benn, LCSW, Walter W. Swift, MPH, Ashley Curiel, PsyD, Clifton Saper, PhD & Yamile Molina, PhD.*

This multidisciplinary workshop will be divided into three sections: 1. Implementing improv into your clinical psychotherapeutic practice. We will provide practical tips on how to introduce improvisational techniques into your clinical practice and share experiences from successful programs (3 in Chicago and 1 in Los Angeles). Through experience we have found strategies that facilitate this process, including but not limited to: communicating about improv to the improv naïve, planning an improv intervention based on a theoretical rationale, and keeping momentum up in the face of a novel treatment. 2. Measuring outcomes of clinical improv. We will provide a strong rationale for measuring what improv interventions, whether it consists of tracking enrollment or submitting a full research proposal to your Institutional Review Board. We will outline practical strategies for recruitment and retention, choosing measurements, and collaborating with others. We will share research findings from our studies. 3. Improv and the brain. Participants will learn about the relationship between cognitive activity and better current cognitive functioning and a lower risk of cognitive decline. They will learn of the results of a study that engaged 18 neuropsychologists and trainees, in improv. We examined whether it is possible to classify selected, individual improv exercises into one of the primary cognitive domain as defined by Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5, 2013). We will discuss possible neural circuitry underlying the

positive effects of improv interventions. *Learning Objectives: (1) Describe how improv can be implemented into a clinical practice, (2) List three ways that a clinician can measure an intervention, (3) Explain how improv can be used as a cognitive activity, (4) Describe possible neural mechanisms responsible for positive effects of improv on cognitive functioning.*

## **LIVE DEMONSTRATIONS & PERFORMANCE**

### **Improviation Performance (75 minutes)**

#### **Opening Keynote**

#### **The Therapy Players**

We will finish the opening Keynote with a lively improv performance by Chicago's very own The Therapy Players. After their improv set, an open improv Jam will be hosted by Stephanie McCullough PsyD for anyone to join.

### **Unconscious At Play: Live Podcast Performance & Analysis (90 minutes)**

#### **Saturday Evening Performance**

#### **Sharilyn Wiskup, LPC, MEd, EdS**

*Licensed Professional Counselor in private practice in Washington, DC.*

Join us at the MCL Chicago theater Saturday evening for an Improv Show followed by a LIVE podcast recording of "Unconscious at Play" hosted by Sharilyn Wiskup LPC, MEd, EdS.. Sharilyn will process with the ensemble members some of the interactions, dynamics, and choices that were spontaneously made, facilitating an appreciation for making the unconscious, conscious, in this fun interactive show.

### **Social Theater Program: 6th and 8th grade Performance (60 minutes)**

#### **General Session 6**

#### **Shawn Amador, LCSW**

*School Social Worker & creator of Social Theater @*

Social Theatre is a program that can be utilized in many settings including in the schools, community centers, and even clinical settings. Shawn Amador, LCSW, has created Social Theatre from the ground up, collaboratively building the program, the plays, the concepts, and components along with participant ideas. Social Theatre participants collaboratively brainstorm, create, practice, and perform their own humorous skits about wacky social experiences and how to make the social experiences better the next time. Many of those who are drawn to my programs after school, in the community, and in the clinical setting have different challenges, such as spectrum disorders, communication

difficulties, attention deficit, and anxiety. The participants in my program have fun with each other while learning and practicing social skills, and have often stated they enjoy being part of Social Theatre because it does not feel like therapy. *Learning Objectives: (1) Participants will have basic knowledge of Social Theatre's collaborative play writing process (2) Participants should be able to replicate one guided theatre activity, even being able to utilize it for different social-cognitive levels.*

## Conference Session Room Assignments

	MCL Chicago	Annoyance Main	Annoyance Box
<b>09/08/2017</b>			
5:00-9:00 pm	Registration Ongoing		
6:30-6:45 pm	Conference Welcome		
6:45-7:45 pm	Panelist Roundtable		
7:45-8:00 pm	<i>Break</i>		
8:00-8:40 p.m	Keynote: Therapy Players		
8:45-9:15 p.m	Open Improv Jam		
<b>09/09/2017</b>			
<b>General Session 1</b> 9:30-11:00 am		Improv Master Class	
<b>Session 2</b> 11:00-12:30 pm		Relational Therapy and Improv	Improv Skills for Therapists: 5 yr research study
12:30-1:30 pm	<i>Lunch Break: Music Improv Brown Bag (Optional)</i>		
<b>Session 3</b> 1:30-3:00 pm		Therapeutic Initiative Performance Model	The Healing Power of Improv
<b>General Session 4</b> 3:00-4:30 p.m		Improv and the Brain: Cognitive Outcome Measures	
4:30-4:50 p.m	<i>Break</i>		
<b>Small Group Breakouts</b> 4:50-5:30 p.m		Group Breakouts: Improv & Psychology Past, Present & Future	
<b>Wrap Around</b> 5:30-6:00 p.m		Synthesis & Analysis	
6:00-7:30 p.m	<i>Dinner Release</i>		
<b>Improv Performance &amp; Live Podcast</b> 7:30-9:00 p.m	The Unconscious at Play		
<b>09/10/2017</b>			
<b>Session 5</b> 10:00-11:30 am		Improv and Dementia	Improv and ASD
<b>General Session 6</b> 11:30-12:30 p.m		Social Theater Program (6th and 8th grade performances)	
12:30-1:00 p.m	<i>Lunch Break</i>		
<b>Session 7</b> 1:00-3:30 p.m		Music Improv	Play for Play's Sake

## Presenter Information

**Shawn Amador, LCSW**, is a full time School Social Worker of 17 years who has also been practicing privately for 10 years. At Shawn's school, she began a clown program, which morphed into a sketch comedy program. She utilizes a theatrical approach in therapy, which creates an outstanding way for small groups of kids and teens to interact and practice social skills together. Shawn's background is in clowning, but has taken these skills and created an improv and sketch comedy group therapy program called [Social Theatre](#). Social Theatre's purpose is to teach social skills through improv games and the collaborative writing process. Through collaborative writing, Shawn has found that kids can benefit by learning how to work through the process of producing a common product. Moreover, being able to laugh at our social fails can help heal and reflect while also creating scenarios that demonstrate social success with more effective social skills. In Shawn's multitude of experiences, she has worked in the areas of domestic violence, child welfare, and in education. In Education, Shawn has served children of many populations, including children with learning disabilities, across the spectrum autism disorders, communication disorders, emotional and behavioral difficulties, and multi-needs. Shawn's education includes a Bachelor Degree in Psychology from North Central College, A Master Degree in Social Work from Jane Addams College of Social Work at UIC, and a second Masters Degree in School Administration from Northeastern Illinois University. Along her professional journey she has collected many different therapy tools including Social Thinking®, Mindfulness Training, Assertiveness Training, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

**Margot Escott, LCSW** graduated from the New York University School of Social Work in 1983 and has lived and practiced in Naples since 1984. She attended the Rutgers Summer School of Addiction Studies in 1987 and 1990 and have extensive post-graduate training in addiction studies and co-dependency. For over twenty-five years she has presented workshops and seminars on "[Therapeutic Value of Humor and Play](#)" on a national level. She has published several articles on humor, geriatric issues and improvisational comedy and is an active member of the National Association of Social Workers and the Florida Chapter of NASW. Margot works with PTSD, anxiety disorders and depression using techniques such as Mindfulness Meditation and Visualization. She treats various

medical issues, such as traumatic brain injuries, dialysis, and pain issues. She also works with caregivers for the chronically ill and elderly. Her professional and personal experience with pain issues and caregiving for an elderly parent with Parkinson Disease gives me a unique perspective to help others. Margot explains, "although many of our life issues are certainly not funny, by developing "humor strategies" we can confront and cope with our difficult situations, dialysis, and pain issues". Margot also maintains a podcast [Improv Interviews](#).

**Katharine Houpt, MAAT, ATR, LCPC** is a therapist providing art therapy and counseling for adults in an art studio in the East Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago, and in-home art therapy for people living with dementia. Katharine has presented workshops for the Alzheimer's Association and for years in a skilled nursing facility include accessible improv games informed by her knowledge as an art therapist and LCPC. During the most recent workshop, participants engaged in both improv games and drawing exercises emphasizing spontaneity. She has observed improved mood as seen in increased smiling and laughing, increased sociability between participants, and mental flexibility demonstrated through humor and quick responses. By including both people with an Alzheimer's dx and care partners (spouses and adult children) in workshops, Katharine notes these pairs come in with observable tension common in caregiving relationships, and leave smiling, having shared a pleasurable experience. She also done workshops for professional caregivers of people with dementia based on the [In the Moment](#) workshops (see also their [This American Life segment](#) and [Ted Talk](#)) . These emphasize the parallels between the "rules" of improv and the "rules" of communicating with people with dementia.

**Nick Johnne**, An alumnus of Toronto's award-winning Second City Main Stage cast, Nick Johnne has been teaching improvisation in various capacities since 1983. He is currently teaching at The Second City Chicago and in the Theater Department of DePaul University where he is adjunct faculty. He has performed all over the world and was an original member of the workshop production of the Tony award-winning musical The Drowsy Chaperone. Nick Johnne currently lives in Chicago with his wife and daughter. Nick and his wife Sinead have a daughter named Emma who is on

the spectrum. For about two years now Nick, along with one of his improv partners Molly Fisher, have been teaching improv classes to people who are on the spectrum. Improvisation in all forms improves wellness through encouraging teamwork and collaboration, building confidence, tying success to a model of listening and support of others, and creating a safe space to take a risk and encourage creativity. [Improv for ASD](#) is fine-tuned to help students on the autism spectrum break through various social barriers, developed in collaboration with the Newmark School in New Jersey.

**Kristin Krueger, Ph.D.**, has a private practice in a Chicago suburb with an emphasis on issues of aging. She conducts neuropsychological evaluations in an aging population, leads groups, teaches healthy aging classes, and maintains collaborations at Rush. She finds therapy groups to be a good place to use the interactive games and exercises designed to help improv practitioners become comfortable enough to engage with one another. She is an original member of The Therapy Players and she was an [APA Member Profile Highlight](#) in 2016 where she shared the integration of improv with her clinical work. Kristin is following two threads of research into the use of improv in therapy. One thread explores how improv can be used to improve mental health outcomes. For this study, patients engage in a series of psychotherapeutic improv sessions. After the sessions, the patients rate their symptoms of depression and anxiety, self-esteem, perfectionism and ability to relate to others socially. The second thread looks at improv as a cognitive activity. In this area, Krueger is working with Clifton Saper, PhD, at Amita Health, and Jeff Winer, a PhD candidate, to put together a panel of neuropsychologists who will categorize improv games according to the cognitive domains they align with.

**Azizi Marshall, MA, LCPC, RDT/BCT**, founder and CEO of [Center for Creative Arts Therapy](#). Azizi earned her BA in Film Directing at Columbia College Chicago and two Master Degrees from Northeastern Illinois University in Community Counseling and Communications, Media and Theatre. She worked in professional theatre and film for over ten years as a choreographer, dancer, director, and actor with such places as Alchemy Theatre, Theodore Roosevelt High School, Betty Hill Dance Studios, and multiple commercial and film studios before encountering drama therapy. After training in drama therapy at Kansas State University through the North American Drama Therapy Association's Alternative Training program, she created the [Therapeutic Performance](#)

[Initiative\(TPI\)](#) Model and served as the Executive Director from 1997-2004. While there she had the opportunity to work with a wide array of children and adults who had various physical and cognitive disabilities. This taught Azizi how to create theatrically therapeutic opportunities for all of her clients. She also served as the Director of Expressive Therapy with Riveredge Psychiatric Hospital, Director of Theatre Education with Alchemy Theatre, as a Drama Therapist for The Youth Campus, School of Expressive Arts and Learning, and Wellness House, and has created over 200 socially-focused, therapeutic performance initiative productions.

**Rachael Mason** of the Second City Training Center began her career in improvisation at Skidmore College, home of the National College Comedy Festival, with the Ad-Liberal Artists. After graduating with a degree in English Literature, concentrating on Shakespearean Studies, she moved to Chicago to study improv comedy with Del Close. She is now the head of Advanced Improvisation for The Second City where she created the Scenic Improv and Dramatic Improv programs as well as The History of Satire Series for The Second City Training Center. She has performed musical improv with Baby Wants Candy at The Edinburgh Fringe Festival, directed and performed at The Annoyance, played with The Hot Karl at ComedySportz, and had almost every job at iO (where she was Training Center Director for 8 years), done The Spoleto Festival with The Second City National Touring Company, and is currently in the cast of The Second City Improv All-Stars at The Up Comedy Club as well as with Second City's first resident improv show, The Boys. She is most happy when she is teaching improv.

**Assael Romanelli, MSW**, is a licensed couple & family therapist, international trainer and Playback Theater conductor, who resides in Jerusalem with his dynamic wife and two lively kids. He is the founder and director of [The Potential State Institute](#) which helps enrich relationships through therapy, arts & trainings. He is also the artistic director of the Or Chozer Playback Theater company in Jerusalem. He is currently a doctoral candidate researching effects of teaching therapists theater improvisational skills at the School of Social Work in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Former lecturer in the School of Social Work, Hebrew University he received his diploma in Psychodramatic facilitation from Hakol Kore center in Jerusalem. Assael is a mental health officer in the IDF Reserves; lecturer, trainer and facilitator in Israel and abroad



on therapy, arts and education; and previously the head of the Family therapy unit in the community mental health clinic of North Jerusalem.

**Daniel J. Wiener, Ph.D.**, is a Professor of Counseling and Family Therapy at Central Connecticut State University and in private practice in Northampton, MA as a licensed psychologist. Licensed also as a Marriage and Family Therapist in Connecticut, he is a Diplomate in Family Psychology, an AAMFT Approved Supervisor, a Registered Drama Therapist/Board Certified Trainer and a Certified Group Psychotherapist. Having founded Rehearsals! for Growth™ (RfG) in 1985, he has presented over 230 [workshops](#), nationally and internationally, at agencies, training institutes, professional conferences and as part of the [RfG Certificate Program](#). In addition to authoring numerous [professional articles and book chapters](#), Dr. Wiener has written two [published books](#): (*Rehearsals for Growth: Theater Improvisation for Psychotherapists* and *Rehearsals for Growth: Collected papers, 1991-2004*) and has edited / co-edited [three others](#) (*Beyond Talk Therapy: Using Movement and Expressive Techniques in Clinical Practice*; *Action Therapy with Families and Groups: Using Creative Arts Improvisation in Clinical Practice*; and *Interactive and improvisational drama: Varieties of applied theatre and performance*). His instructional video [Rehearsals for Growth: Couple Therapy](#) was published as “Action Methods in Couple Therapy” by Psychotherapy.net in 2011. He is the recipient of a number of teaching awards: the 1997 Zerka T. Moreno Award (by the American Society for Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama), and both the 2006 Research and 2010 Gertrud Schattner Awards by the National Association for Drama Therapy (now the North American Drama Therapy Association).

**Sharilyn Wiskup LPC, MEd, EdS**, uses a psychodynamic approach to therapy, which means that the thoughts and feelings you have can be understood through old patterns and habits - typically unconscious until pieced together and appreciated in a way that is productive for you. She enjoys working with adolescents (14+), adults and couples. Lisa Kays & Sharilyn Wiskup bring you the podcast where improvisors explore the unconscious, symbolic & socio-political meaning behind their make 'em ups.

## Conference Committee Chairs

**Stephanie McCullough, PsyD** is a twenty-year veteran of music improvisation in Chicago. She acquired her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology in 2001 while teaching and performing improvisation on a part-time basis. In 2004 Stephanie left her psychotherapist position at The Allendale Association and toured with The Second City for two years, and returned to teach music improvisation full-time at The Second City Training Center. Stephanie received a BA as a Composer from CCM and has composed and produced twenty-two original musical comedies. She is the founding director of The Therapy Players, the producer of the long-running M.I.Nt program and is the creator of the NFP Theater company MCL Chicago. Throughout her growth as an instructor of improvisation Stephanie has maintained her connection to the field of psychology and has always found the two deeply intertwined.

**Heather Markey, MSW** received her Masters in Social Work from Loyola University. She currently works with Health Leads and is a ten-year veteran of improvisation. She completed the Conservatory Program of the Second City Training Program. About this conference, Heather states “Working in social services for nearly 15 years, the most influential and important skills I developed came from my improv experience. Improv pushes me to be a better provider and better performer; this conference is an opportunity to grow on and off stage. I am thrilled to be able to learn from each other and teach one another, to share ideas and to create a community that values creativity and vulnerability”.

**Moriah Smith-Bresky, MA**, received her BA in Theater Studies and is currently obtaining her doctorate in clinical psychology from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology (4th year). She is the Professional Development Co-chair of the Chicago School Student Association, and president of the Expressive Arts Committee of The Chicago School. Moriah has produced the TCSP Conference on Expressive Arts Therapy for the last two years.

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