



## **2019 Annual Conference Presenters**

**Oren Abramowitz, SLP**, is a second-level PhD student at Adelphi University whose dissertation will focus on individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI). He is currently an adjunct lecturer at CUNY Brooklyn College and is practicing at an adult day program catering to individuals with traumatic brain injury.

**Dr. Prin X Amorapanth** is currently an Assistant Professor at Rusk Rehabilitation, NYU Langone Medical Center. He is also a fellow with the Empire Clinical Research Investigator Program (ECRIP) under the New York State Department of Health and a fellow in the Rehabilitation Medical Scientist Training Program (RMSTP) under the National Institutes of Health (NIH) / Association of Academic Physiatrists (AAP).

As an undergrad, he worked with noted emotion researcher Joseph LeDoux at NYU characterizing the neural circuits underlying conditioned fear, resulting in several publications, the most notable of which was a double dissociation of reflexive and active responses that was published Nature Neuroscience. As a combined MD/PhD student in the lab of cognitive neurologist Anjan Chatterjee at the University of Pennsylvania, he pursued training in the methodology of cognitive neuroscience, including functional imaging, neuropsychological testing, and lesion-symptom mapping, which he brought to bear on the question of how the brain represents visuospatial relationships and concepts.

**Abigail Baglione, LMSW, CIC, PBIS**, of Advocate Homecare, is a 500 hour certified yoga instructor as well as a long-time TBI survivor and former recipient of TBI Waiver services. She uses her experiential knowledge of life with a unique disability to educate individuals on the physical, emotional and spiritual benefits of this ancient practice.

**Christina Bolton**, BIANYS Director of Advocacy and Engagement has 19 years of professional advocacy experience and began working with the Brain Injury Association of New York State in September of 2019. Ms. Bolton works to increase awareness as well as campaign for public policy changes to improve and expand public policies regarding brain injury. Christina is active in the BIANYS Concussion Initiative and is driving the process to develop changes to the Concussion Management Awareness Act of 2011.

**Theresa Brayman, OTD, OTR/L**, is a Clinical Assistant Professor Of Occupational Therapy at the University at Buffalo. She has been an OT for 35 years with a strong focus in services within the public school. For the past 13 years she has experienced life as a parent of an adult child with a

disability as the mother of Jessica. After seeing the impact a volunteer experience had on her daughter, she studied the research that has been published on the value of volunteering.

**Gerry Brooks** began his career in private practice in 1979 as a speech-language pathologist specializing in cognitive and communicative disorders. Since then he has logged thousands of treatment hours with survivors of brain injury and their families in both Ulster and Dutchess Counties. He has served as a consultant to hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and school systems and on the graduate faculty at SUNY New Paltz.

In 1998 Gerry joined the Northeast Center for Rehabilitation & Brain Injury's planning team a year prior to its opening, and he has been the Center's Program Director ever since, responsible for the development and oversight of the Center's neurorehabilitation and neurobehavioral programs. Gerry has presented at local, national and international venues.

He holds Certificates of Clinical Competence from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Brain Injury Specialist Trainer from the Brain Injury Association of America, Technical Trainer from the Mandt System ® of therapeutic behavioral support, and Contemplative Care from the New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care. His primary interests are motivation, self-awareness, and life-long wellbeing.

**Ray Ciancaglini** is a former professional boxer and renowned TBI and concussion awareness advocate who is battling Parkinson's Syndrome and Dementia Pugilistica. Ray Lectures nationally at high schools, colleges, medical symposiums and TBI conferences, receiving numerous awards. His greatest award, however, is knowing he is making a difference in the lives of athletes and survivors of TBI.

**Lauren DiChiara** is a Senior physical therapist at Burke Rehabilitation Hospital-Outpatient. She is a Neurologic Clinical Specialist and one of the lead clinicians for Burke's Concussion Management Program. Having been a patient herself, she is dedicated to making sure her patients achieve their goals and improve their quality of life.

**Heidi N. Fusco, MD**, is an Assistant Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine in the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at the Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation and NYU Langone Medicine Center. She completed her medical education at New York Medical College, residency training at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation in Boston, MA, and Brain Injury fellowship at the Rusk Rehabilitation Hospital, NYU Langone Medical Center. She is board certified in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation and Brain Injury Rehabilitation Medicine. She specializes in the care of patients with brain injury at the acute, subacute and outpatient settings. Her practice skills include treating mild to severe brain injury, spasticity, pain, disorders of consciousness, sleep, cognition, mood and behavioral problems.

**Maria Kajankova, PhD**, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine and Human Performance at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. Dr. Kajankova is a licensed clinical psychologist specializing in rehabilitation neuropsychology. She provides

assessment and treatment to individuals with TBI and other neurological disorders and her research focuses on developing and evaluating interventions for individuals with TBI and their caregivers. She received her doctorate in counseling psychology from Fordham University and completed her post-doctoral training in rehabilitation neuropsychology at Mount Sinai.

**Mary Moller MSW, CAS**, works at The Center of Excellence for Alzheimer's Disease at Albany Medical Center, and in the community for over 16 years assisting caregivers. She is an author, adjunct professor and pursuing her Ph.D. Mary frequently presents at conferences on the topics of compassion fatigue, caregiver burnout and speaks to the importance of prioritizing care for the caregiver.

**Emma Nally** is the current brain injury fellow at NYU Langone Rusk Rehabilitation. She went to medical school at St. George's University in Grenada, West Indies, and completed her residency in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, National Rehabilitation Hospital in Washington, DC, where she also served as chief resident. She is board eligible in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and plans on working as a Brain Injury Psychiatrist after she completes her fellowship.

**Megan Putnam, PhD**, is a second-year postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine and Human Performance at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. Dr. Putnam is a licensed clinical psychologist specializing in rehabilitation neuropsychology. She provides comprehensive assessment and treatment to individuals with acquired neurological injury and/or neurodevelopmental disorders. Her research focuses on the impact of TBI and other psychosocial factors on juvenile delinquent behavior, including the utility of emotion regulation interventions in reducing the risk of juvenile re-offense. She received her doctorate in clinical psychology from Fairleigh Dickinson University.

**Diane Ritters, MA, CBIS**, is currently the Director of Waiver Services at Advocate Homecare. In 2007 she earned her MA in Psychology and began working with individuals with disabilities. After years of practicing, Diane recently began her 200-hour yoga teacher training and would like to focus on teaching yoga to individuals with disabilities, including traumatic brain injury.

**Margo Singer, MPA, CBIS**, is a Program Coordinator at BIANYS responsible for the oversight of the BIANYS Family Helpline, Chapters and Support Groups. Previously she administered a multi-year federal grant to develop and implement Brain Injury trainings for school districts, early childhood providers and domestic violence agencies. Prior to her work at BIANYS, Ms. Singer worked in the substance abuse field for 24 years. She holds a BA from Barnard College and an MPA from Columbia University.

**Michelle Smith, MPH, CHES**, is Assistant Research Scientist and **Olga Garduño-Ortega, BA**, is Research Coordinator in the Rusk Rehabilitation Research Department. Michelle Smith's background and interests are in health education programming and communications. Olga Garduño-Ortega has experience in public health and psychology research that aims to address health disparities.

**Dr. Adriana Steffens, BCN**, is the Clinic Director at Mind Matters Neurofeedback Centers. She has over 15 years of experience in the field of psychology and has worked with thousands of individuals from all walks of life, all types of diagnosis, and head injuries of all severity levels. She is an executive team member with Southeast Biofeedback and Clinical Neuroscience and an active clinical contributor to the Otsego County Drug Court Treatment Team.

**Erika L. Trovato, DO, MS** is Board-Certified in Brain Injury Medicine and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. Dr Trovato completed her residency in PM&R and her fellowship in Brain Injury Medicine at Rusk Rehabilitation at NYU Langone Health. She is now Co-Director of the brain injury unit and inpatient rehabilitation program at Burke Rehabilitation Hospital in White Plains, NY.

Dr. Trovato leads a multidisciplinary rehabilitation team of physical, occupational and speech therapists, as well as nurses, neuropsychologists and other rehabilitation specialists in the management of diagnoses such as traumatic brain injury, brain tumor, skull fracture, poly-trauma, intra-cerebral and subarachnoid hemorrhage, as well as ischemic stroke.

**Edward V. Wilcenski, Esq.**, is a co-owner and co-manager of the law firm of Wilcenski & Pleat PLLC, with offices in Clifton Park and Queensbury, New York. He practices in the areas of Elder Law, Special Needs Planning, and Trust and Estate Planning.

Ed is a Trustee of the NYSARC Pooled Trust and serves as a Trustee of the Wildwood Programs Pooled Trust, a trust program serving individuals with developmental and learning disabilities. In 2009 and again in 2013, he received the Marie Ivancich Memorial Award from the Brain Injury Association of New York State for professional commitment to the organization's mission of advocacy for individuals living with brain injuries.

He is a member and former President of the Special Needs Alliance, a not for profit organization of attorneys who practice in the areas of special needs trusts and public benefits. His professional affiliations include membership in the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, and the New York State Bar Association's Elder Law and Trusts and Estates Sections.

Ed is a contributing author to various publications of the New York State Bar Association, including Representing People with Disabilities, and Planning for Incapacity, and Guardianship Practice in New York State.

**Jessica Wurtenberg** sustained a severe TBI 13 years ago and has been rebuilding her life since then. She participates in structured day program in Rochester and works part time.