

Kenneth V. Hardy, Ph.D. is a Professor at Drexel University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and is the Director of the Eikenberg Institute for Relationships in New York City. He is an internationally recognized clinician, author, educator, and consultant. Dr. Hardy has provided Diversity and Racial Sensitivity training and consultations to an extensive list of Health and Human Services agencies as well as a host of educational institutions.

He is a frequent workshop presenter, trainer, and consultant on the topics of cultural and racial diversity, trauma and oppression. He has published prolifically and is the author of numerous articles and book chapters. He has co-authored the following books: *Culturally Sensitive Supervision: Diverse Perspectives and Practical Applications*; *Minorities and Family Therapy*; *Teens Who Hurt: Clinical Interventions for Breaking the Cycle of Violence*; *Revisiting Family Therapy: Race, Class, and Culture*; and *Promoting Culturally Sensitive Supervision: A Manual for Practitioners*. He is also featured in several therapy videotapes as well as a documentary devoted to slavery. His videotape "The Psychological Residuals of Slavery" has been well received by both the professional and lay communities for serving as a catalyst to promote conversations about race relationships.

Dr. Hardy has received considerable acclaim for the contributions that his publications and videotapes have made toward challenging our field to think critically about issues of diversity, trauma and oppression. He has been a frequent contributor to the popular media and has been featured on Dateline NBC, 20/20, the Discovery Health Channel, and the Oprah Winfrey Show. Dr. Hardy maintains a practice in New York, New York.

Victor Incerti is a Connecticut native who graduated from the University of Connecticut in 1977 with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. He has been working in New Britain since 1979 in Behavioral Health with The Hospital of Central Connecticut. He was awarded his Master's Degree in Community Psychology from The University of New Haven in 1987. He continued to work in Behavioral Health and was licensed as an LPC in 1989. He joined Community Mental Health Affiliates in 2000. Since 2008 he has been in the position of Chief Program Officer for the agency overseeing integrated behavioral health services for people across the life span while also serving as the client Grievance Officer and The Chair of the Valuing Diversity Committee.

Tina L. Jefferson, LMSW, Regional Administrator, State of Connecticut, Department of Children and Families (DCF) Region 6 – Central Region. Ms. Jefferson has been with DCF for over 23 years in various positions. Prior to joining DCF, she was a Family Advocate for CRT Head Start and a Social Worker for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DHMAS). During her time at DCF, Ms. Jefferson considers herself a change agent having served as co-chair for several committees including; the Diversity Action Team, the Greater Hartford Domestic Violence Collaborative, the Fatherhood Engagement Leadership Team and the Statewide Change Management Team. Ms. Jefferson has been an active member of the DCF Statewide Racial Justice committee since its inception. Ms. Jefferson holds a BS in Human Development and Family Relations and a Master of Social Work from UCONN.

Commissioner Joette Katz was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York and graduated from Brandeis University in 1974 and the University of Connecticut, School of Law in 1977. Following her admission to the Connecticut bar, she worked briefly in a small private law firm and then for eleven years as a public defender, serving as both a trial and appellate lawyer. Additionally, she was the Chief of Legal Services for the State of Connecticut Division of Public Defender Services, where she supervised all public defenders handling appeals. She was appointed to the Connecticut Superior Court by Governor William O'Neill in 1989. In 1992, she was elevated to the Connecticut Supreme Court by Governor Lowell P. Weicker, Jr. In her eighteen plus years on that court, she sat on over 2000 cases, and authored over 430 majority opinions, as well as nearly 100 dissenting and concurring opinions. She also served as the Administrative Judge of the Appellate System for the State of Connecticut.

Justice Katz retired from the Connecticut Supreme Court in January 2011. Since that time she has served as the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families for the State of Connecticut where she is responsible for over 4,000 children for whom the department has custody and guardianship and oversees services to 36,000 children and 16,000 families that need society's help. In her current capacity she is a frequent lecturer on issues related to the mission of her agency that range from child welfare, adolescent brain development, juvenile justice, and family engagement. In her role as Commissioner, she has been recognized with many leadership distinctions. In 2012, *Governing Magazine*

named Commissioner Katz as a “Public Official of the Year”. In 2013, Connecticut Voices for Children presented the Commissioner with the State Policy Leadership Award for her dedication and tenacity in reforming Connecticut’s child welfare system by reducing the historic overreliance on congregate care. In 2014, she was selected to join a cohort of 25 elected and appointed women from across the country to participate in the national Women in Government Leadership Program. In 2015, Casey Family Programs honored Commissioner Katz as a Child Welfare Leader by presenting her with a Casey Excellence for Children Award.

Susan R. Smith attended Williams College and Duke University School of Law. She has worked at the Connecticut Department of Children and Families since 1995 and has managed the Department’s Systems of Care initiative for children with complex behavioral health needs, directed the Department’s procurement operations, overseen Connecticut’s private foster care system, and served as the DCF Director for the Office of Research and Evaluation.

In 2013, Ms. Smith was appointed as the Chief of Quality and Planning in the DCF Commissioner’s Office. In this capacity, she oversees the Office of Multiculturalism and Immigration Practice, Office of Performance Management, the Department’s Office For Evaluation, Risk Management Unit, Special Qualitative Reviews, Ombudsman’s Office, and Office For Administrative Case Reviews. She is also the Executive Sponsor of the Department’s Statewide Racial Justice Workgroup.

Vannessa L. Dorantes, LMSW, CT-DCF Region 5 Administrator overseeing the 43 cities and towns in the northwest CT catchment area. She has worked for DCF for the past 25years. Vannessa’s career at DCF began as a social worker then a social work supervisor. While as an Intake Program Manager, she was part of the development of what we now know as the Differential Response System (DRS). She served 4years as Office Director before her appointment as one of six Regional Administrators who report directly to the DCF Commissioner. She currently is one of three tri-chairs CT DCF’s Statewide Racial Justice workgroup which focuses on addressing disparities and reducing disproportionality from a child welfare practice framework.

Dorantes is also an adjunct faculty member at Central CT State University where she has taught 8 core competency & elective social work courses. She is also a member of both Central Connecticut State University & Western Connecticut State University Social Work Advisory Boards.

Dorantes received a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Post University & Master's from the UCONN School of Social Work with a casework major and community organization minor. She is certified in field placement supervision by Southern CT State University.

Jen Agosti provides consulting services focused on the transformation of organizational cultures in child and family service organizations. She helped adapt the Breakthrough Series Collaborative methodology from the health care arena to child welfare in 2001 and worked closely with the National Child Traumatic Stress Network in 2005 to further adapt the model for the field of child trauma. By facilitating brave spaces, authentic and challenging dialogues, strategic thinking, small tests of change, self-reflection and experiential learning, all of those involved in and affected by these systems are able collaborate in their efforts to change and improve the systems. Jen serves as a consultant to and partner in Breakthrough Series Collaboratives, Learning Collaboratives, and change initiatives being conducted by public and tribal child welfare agencies, child trauma agencies, health care organizations, and non-profits across the country.

Most importantly, Jen believes that no child and family-serving system can improve unless it explicitly and intentionally addresses issues of racial and social injustice. This must be foundational work for all agencies and organizations striving to improve practices and their work with children, families, and communities. True system transformation is never possible without understanding and addressing the structural and institutional racism that currently exists within all of our systems as well as the conscious and unconscious biases that impact our daily decision-making.

Sarah Lockery, LMFT, Co-Chairs the DCF Statewide Advisory Council and the South Central Network of Care in Region 2. She is also Chairperson of the DCF Region 2 Advisory Council. Sarah is helping to establish a provider forum that focuses on the CLAS standards and is a member of the Region 2 DCF Racial Justice committee. She is employed by The Children’s

Center of Hamden as Director of Development and Community Engagement where she coordinates efforts towards having an agency Health Equity Plan that promotes equitable access, service delivery and outcomes for all.

Youth Advisory Board Panel

Joshua Fisher is a quality improvement social worker in the DCF New Haven office. Joshua coordinates DCF's Statewide Youth Advisory Board, collecting feedback from adolescents placed in foster care to improve agency policy and practice. Joshua recently graduated from the University of Saint Joseph MSW program, focusing his studies on the implementation of the DCF Racial Justice Case Consultation model. Additionally, Joshua is a DCF Mandated Reporter trainer and the DCF Region 2 liaison for Adolescent Re-Entry Services.

Vincent Espino is currently an Adolescent Social Worker in the DCF Danbury Office. Vincent received DCF services for eight years before graduating with his Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from Western Connecticut State University in 2018. Vincent is a national leader in foster youth advocacy as the 2017 recipient of the Connecticut Voices for Children *Youth Voice Award* and co-author of the New England Youth Coalition's work to define and offer normalcy standards for youth in foster care.

Elizabeth Flores from New Britain is a junior studying social work at Central Connecticut State University. Elizabeth has received services from DCF for 19 years and her educational goals include earning her Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and eventually completing a Doctorate utilizing research and application. Elizabeth's mission is to advocate "for the foster youth who are not at the table."

Jaquan Harris from Bridgeport recently graduated from Curry College in Massachusetts with a B.A. in Communication and concentrations in theatre and film. Jaquan has served as President of the DCF Bridgeport Youth Advisory Board. Jaquan is currently searching for employment and plans to continue pursuing his passion for the theatre with local companies.

William Rivera is the Director of Office of Multicultural Affairs and Immigration Practice for the Connecticut Department of Children and Families. He is responsible for creating and sustaining ongoing diversity initiatives designed to promote a culturally and linguistically competent child welfare system. He is also one of the tri-chairs of the DCF Statewide Racial Justice Workgroup.