

# NEW ENGLAND CLINICAL CONFERENCE 2024



## *Teaching and Practicing Resilience in an Age of Hyperawareness*

### **Thursday, November 7**

- 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.      **Cocktail Reception**  
Arch Street Tavern, 85 Arch Street, Hartford
- 7:30 p.m.              **Small Group Dinners** (optional) – [please sign up here](#)

### **Friday, November 8**

- 8:00 – 9:00 a.m.      **Registration and Breakfast**, UConn School of Law, Starr Hall, Reading Room
- 8:10 – 8:55 a.m.      **Workshop for New Clinicians**, Starr Hall, Room 204  
*Beth Locker*, Associate Dean for Experiential Learning, Vermont Law & Graduate School  
*Alan Minuskin*, Associate Clinical Professor, Boston College School of Law  
*Brian Wilson*, Senior Lecturer and Clinical Instructor, Boston University School of Law
- 9:05 – 9:15 a.m.      **Welcome from UConn School of Law**, Starr Hall, Reading Room  
*Eboni Nelson*, Dean and Professor of Law, UConn School of Law  
*Rachel Reeves*, Associate Clinical Professor of Law, UConn School of Law
- 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.    **Concurrent Sessions #1**
- Building Well-Being into the Law School Experience: The Unique Opportunities of Law Clinics and Externships**, Starr Hall, Room 204  
*Traci Cipriano*, JD, PhD, Assistant Clinical Professor, Yale School of Medicine  
*Carolyn Kaas*, Associate Dean for Experiential Education, Quinnipiac School of Law  
Dr. Cipriano, author of “The Thriving Lawyer,” will set the stage by introducing her model of well-being which can be utilized as a guide for building resiliency and healthy practices into the law school clinical experience, along with providing recommendations. Carrie Kaas will then use the model as a framework for digging deeper into the demands, pressures and stressors of law school clinic and externship experiences, and brainstorm with participants how we might turn them into opportunities for improving well-being.
- Getting Gritty: Failure and Growth Mindset in the Clinical Classroom**, Starr Hall, Room 108  
*Christina Miller*, Assoc. Director of Clinical Programs, Suffolk University Law School  
*Kelly Vieira*, Clinical Fellow, Suffolk University Law School

Studies have found that students and professionals who bring a growth mindset to challenging new endeavors or high stress situations were more successful because they used mental “grit” to overcome obstacles and maintain effort. For example, when a student with a fixed mindset struggles with answering a judge’s question during a hearing, they may decide they should pursue a transactional law practice because they believe they are a bad oral advocate. A student with a growth mindset in the same situation may see the “failure” as an opportunity to improve through learning the answers and later applying their new-found knowledge. Experiential clinics provide a pathway for students to use a growth mindset as a foundational skill. Presenters will delve into the continuum of fixed and growth mindsets by exploring the research. Presenters will lead attendees through their own pedagogical approaches to teaching students how they can develop a growth mindset.

**Navigating Critique Versus Criticism in Court, in a Predicament, and in the Moment,**  
Starr Hall, Reading Room

*Shira Diner*, Lecturer and Clinical Instructor, Boston University School of Law

*Angelo Petrich*, Clinical Associate Professor, Boston University School of Law

*Brian Wilson*, Senior Lecturer and Clinical Instructor, Boston University School of Law

As clinicians we’re well familiar with the importance of offering feedback to our students in ways that are both supportive and, where necessary, constructively critical. Yet in a fast-paced litigation context where a student’s in-court performance can have serious consequences for their client or others, carefully navigating the in-the-moment feedback process can be particularly difficult. When we see an already anxious student make a mistake that demands our immediate attention and we have mere minutes, or perhaps seconds, to help them fix the problem, how do we balance the need to offer frank, critical feedback with the need to help maintain their confidence in the moment—especially where there’s no time to offset it through positive reinforcement? Through an engaging conversation, we’ll discuss ways in which we can critique our students in the moment without appearing overly critical, how we can prepare them for that possibility by explaining why we may need to do so, and how we can focus our debrief on offering the positive feedback we didn’t have the opportunity to give earlier. We’ll further explore how doing so promotes resilience and prepares our students to receive critique—even less tactful than we give—in their postgraduate practice.

10:45 – 11:45 a.m.

**Concurrent Sessions #2**

**Enhancing Student Clinical Experience Through Court Participation,** Starr Hall,  
Room 204

*Courtney Beer*, Associate Professor of Law, University of Maine School of Law

*Melissa Davis*, Clinical Associate Professor of Law, UNH School of Law

*Shira Diner*, Lecturer and Clinical Instructor, Boston University School of Law

*Rachel Reeves*, Associate Clinical Professor of Law, UConn School of Law

*Brian Wilson*, Senior Lecturer and Clinical Instructor, Boston University School of Law

One of the keys to building supportive, student-centered clinical education in litigation practice areas is the ability of students to not only work with clients outside of court but also to stand up in court and other proceedings. Restrictions on those in-court opportunities cause students to miss out on a critical component of clinical experience and deny them the opportunity to view themselves as fully representing their clients and

others. Clinic programs need to understand where that authority comes from and how it may be in jeopardy. This session will explore how state student practice rules and norms vary in terms of what students may do in court, how judges may exercise discretion to limit their participation, and how law schools may maximize their opportunities to grow as zealous advocates and effective practitioners in court.

**Tarot for Lawyers** (30-minute lightning session), Starr Hall, Room 108

*Ari Lipsitz*, Lecturer and Clinical Instructor, Boston University School of Law

Legal practice relies upon a lawyer's judgment in the face of incomplete information. For that reason, clinical educators promote a wide array of interventions and tools to encourage development of self-reflection, creativity, and intuition-building. Tarot reading can be one such tool. Through its system of symbolic narrative, tarot enables practitioners to delve into abstract questions of meaning, connection, relationship-building, creativity, stability, and flow. These concepts should resonate deeply within legal practice, with its delicate interplay between structured knowledge, improvisation, complex relationships, equity, and justice. Tarot also promotes consideration of duality, inviting practitioners to inhabit and reflect upon contradiction and paradox. This, too, is a natural fit for legal self-reflection, as legal practice is a collision between conservative risk avoidance and imaginative problem-solving. This presentation will explore the benefits of tarot reading, apply a reading to examples in legal practice, and articulate a vision for a new pedagogical project: a tarot deck written just for lawyers.

**Teaching Resilience Through Community Building**, Starr Hall, Reading Room

*Sara Cressey*, Visiting Professor of Law, University of Maine School of Law

*Linsey Ruhl*, Associate Professor of Law, University of Maine School of Law

*Anna Welch*, Professor of Law, University of Maine School of Law

Community building requires intentional action to foster supportive spaces where the participants have a sense of belonging. For lawyers, recognizing the value of community building in our professional spaces and taking intentional action to find or create supportive work environments can be a key tool in our arsenal for developing professional resilience. This presentation will focus on community building in the clinical setting. We will begin the session with a large group discussion where the presenters provide an overview of the practical tools that clinical faculty at Maine Law use to instill in students the importance of community building as a strategy for developing professional resilience, but will also create space for collaborative discussion amongst the participants about how other clinicians incorporate this tool into their teaching.

12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

**Lunch - Redefining Success to Survive and Thrive**

*Sarah Branch*, Visiting Professor of Law, University of Maine School of Law

*Melissa Davis*, Clinical Associate Professor of Law, UNH Franklin Pierce School of Law

*Suzy Harrington-Steppen*, Clinical Professor of Law, Roger Williams School of Law

1:45 – 2:45 p.m.

**Concurrent Sessions #3**

**Democratizing Clinical Education Through Student Leadership**, Starr Hall

Reading Room

*Emma Sokoloff-Rubin*, Director and Lecturer-in-Law, Yale Law School

*Ashlee Fox*, Student Director, Yale Law School

*Otelo Reggy-Beane*, Student Director, Yale Law School

*Danny Rodriguez*, Student Director, Yale Law School

*Joe Servidio*, Student Director, Yale Law School

Our presentation will highlight the distinctive approach of Yale Law School's San Francisco Affirmative Litigation Project (SFALP). Under faculty guidance, SFALP allows student directors to take significant leadership roles in managing the clinic alongside practicing attorneys. The presentation will explore (1) the democratized classroom environment where students are encouraged to engage one another as speakers and listeners, rather than having conversations flow through a formal instructor; (2) the student director role in fostering community and mentorship; (3) the collective working-group structure that helps students develop their distinct legal voices in chorus with their peers'; and (4) how SFALP builds a lasting professional community beyond the three years of law school. SFALP's long-standing collaboration with the San Francisco City Attorney's Office encourages students to engage in live litigation, gaining practical experience while learning to navigate systems both within and outside of traditional legal frameworks.

**Embodied Well-Being: Integrating Contemplative Practices, Play, and Laughter into the Clinical Curriculum**, Starr Hall, Room 108

*Kara McCarthy Perry*, Affiliated Law Faculty, Quinnipiac University School of Law

In a time when law students and faculty are facing unprecedented stress and societal challenges, integrating embodied well-being practices into the clinical curriculum offers a transformative way to foster resilience, adaptability, and joy. This session suggests an innovative approach to integrating contemplative practices—such as mindfulness, movement, and reflective exercises—into clinical law courses to promote both professional and personal resilience. These practices, when combined with play, fun, and laughter, can foster a sense of joy and creativity that is often missing from the rigorous environment of law schools. This session will explore a holistic approach to legal education that honors the whole person and encourages playful collaboration with adaptable tools and strategies for integrating these practices into clinical law courses. From structured mindfulness exercises to playful interventions, we will explore how faculty can model and teach resilience and well-being through embodied practices.

**Teaching Students to Manage Difficult Conversations with Clients, Colleagues, and Supervisors**, Starr Hall, Room 204

*Deeya Halder*, Associate Professor of Law, Villanova University School of Law

*Caroline Wick*, Practitioner in Residence, American University Washington College of Law

This presentation will cover two skills that are often overlooked in the clinic seminar: managing vicarious trauma and engaging in difficult conversations. Conversations with clients can be hard because of the content that a client shares. Prof. Halder, who teaches in a civil clinic that focuses on representing domestic violence victims, will present on how she teaches students to manage vicarious trauma. Conversations can also be hard because they require saying something difficult to a client, colleague, or supervisor. Prof. Wick will present on a class she designed to help students develop the skills to engage in difficult conversations. After providing examples from our clinics, we will give attendees an opportunity to work in small groups to develop exercises that are applicable to their own clinics.

3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

#### **Concurrent Sessions #4**

##### **Battling the Storm: Teaching Public Policy Advocacy Skills to Foster Student Attorney Resilience**, Starr Hall, Reading Room

*Katie Gannon*, Practitioner in Residence, Suffolk University Law School

*Cara Libman*, Practitioner in Residence, Suffolk University Law School

*Danielle Pelfrey Duryea*, Lecturer and Clinical Instructor, Boston University School of Law

In the traditional direct service clinic model, students are faced with the lived realities of individuals facing systemic injustice. It can feel overwhelming, defeating and difficult for students to feel like they are moving the needle towards finding resolution for a given cause. Drawing from medical research of compassion fatigue, defined as a combination of burnout and secondary traumatic stress, this presentation provides tools to help student attorneys to overcome this experience. Through the incorporation of public policy in clinic curriculum and case rounds, students can hone their advocacy skills and feel empowered to use those skills for both clients and personal causes.

##### **#ExternshipGlowUp! Transforming and Improving Our Externship Programs with Fresh, Cutting-Edge Ideas That Ensure Programs are Relevant and Dynamic for Students and Placements, Today and Tomorrow**, Starr Hall, Room 204

*Cecily Banks*, Senior Lecturer, Boston University School of Law

*Suzy Harrington-Steppen*, Clinical Professor of Law, RWU School of Law

Even externship programs need a “glow-up,” social media parlance for positive, forward-thinking transformation to ensure next-level programs that are more exciting, attractive, meaningful, and impactful – in other words, epic. We’re on a massive wave of transformation, and we need to be extra. It’s about taking something good and making it something better in a noticeable way – it’s about positivity in action! Our students are looking for a vibe check of real-world impact, connection, and action-oriented collaboration, and we can design our programs to resonate with the realities of today’s youth, trends, and modes. We can level up with fresh, innovative ideas so students are ready for the future of legal work while developing meaningful skills that allow them to solve today’s complex problems from day one on the job. We can remix our programs around AI integration, DEI design, data collection and analysis in problem-solving, cross-disciplinary collaboration, integration into non-legal ecosystems and stakeholders, systems design innovation, and ethical decision-making in trending complex spaces where there isn’t much guidance. On the program admin side, we need to slay it with remote supervision models and new digital tools for evaluating student engagement and learning. In the process, we can set ourselves up to deliver confidence and empowerment that makes sense to this rad generation to help shape their futures.

##### **Self-care 2.0**, Starr Hall, Room 108

*Miriam Marton*, Associate Professor of Law, UDC School of Law

This presentation will first discuss where we started with self-care for lawyers and law students – recognizing the extraordinary stress of our profession and the serious consequences for paying no mind to our mental health. The presentation will then move on to discuss that today’s world requires a different and expanded approach to self-care: Self-care 2.0. A new self-care model will consider how today’s law students are bombarded daily with extreme levels of traumatic events and environments, and yet

how, simultaneously, there is a “feel no pain” philosophy that has developed that the presenter will argue robs our students of trauma response coping mechanisms that can work against burnout. Finally, the presentation will discuss that any self-care model must also examine how much of its philosophy developed with little consideration for students who share identities and life experiences with the communities clinics serve, and ask the question how we build inclusive self-care models for law students.

4:00 – 4:15 p.m.

**Wrap Up and Farewells**, Starr Hall, Reading Room