

2026

Alabama Behavioral Healthcare Conference

November 4–5, 2026

Sheraton Birmingham Hotel · Birmingham, Alabama

ACBH Alabama Council for Behavioral Healthcare
Solutions for Healthy Minds and Whole Health

Welcome

On behalf of the Alabama Council for Behavioral Healthcare, welcome to the 2026 Alabama Behavioral Healthcare Conference! This event is meant to strengthen our field by offering quality continuing education and a chance to connect with colleagues who share a commitment to improving behavioral healthcare across Alabama. We thank our attendees for investing their time, our speakers for sharing what they know, and our exhibitors for their support and the resources they bring. We hope you leave with new insights, new connections, and renewed energy for the work you do.

Learn more about ACBH and our conferences

alabamacouncil.org

Wednesday Agenda

Wednesday, November 4, 2026

2:30–2:50 PM

Registration Opens

Exhibit Hall Lobby

3:00–4:00 PM

Opening Plenary featuring Kody Green

Ballroom I, V & IX

4:00–5:30 PM

Welcome Reception

Exhibit Hall

Join us for snacks and drinks, and connect with colleagues.



OPENING PLENARY · 3:00 PM

Kody Green

Author and Motivational Speaker

Kody Green (He/Him) is an individual who was diagnosed with schizophrenia at 21 years old. He is an author, motivational speaker, and content creator with a following of over 2 million across social media. Kody's journey has included challenges with drug addiction, incarceration, and serious mental health struggles. To deepen his impact as an advocate and speaker, Kody trained as a peer support specialist, recovery coach, and suicide prevention specialist. Today, he shares his personal experiences and insights on overcoming adversity, navigating mental health challenges, and rebuilding life after incarceration. Kody's dedication to mental health advocacy, schizophrenia awareness, drug recovery, and second-chance opportunities is fueled by his own lived experiences.

Thursday at a Glance

Thursday, November 5, 2026 · Sheraton Birmingham Hotel

REGISTRATION
Opens 7:30 AM
Exhibit Hall Lobby

	Mental Health & Substance Use Ballroom I, V & IX	Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities Ballroom III & IV	Executive Leadership INVITE ONLY Ballroom XI & XII
8:30 AM	**Navigating Mental Health, Ethics, and Practice in the Age of AI** Dr. Connie Couch, PhD, LPC University of Montevallo	**Beyond the Behavior: Understanding Autism, Anxiety, and Challenging Behaviors** Dr. Stacy Ladden, Psy.D., BCBA-D, LBA Behavioral Pediatric Institute of Alabama	**From Screening to Sustainability: Building Person-Centered Care Through the CCBHC Model** Liz Remillard, MPH National Council for Mental Wellbeing
	Visit with Exhibitors · ***Exhibit Hall***		
10:15 AM	**Brief Interventions that Fit the Real World: Relaxation Skills for Mental Health Care** Dr. Kevin Karl, PhD University of Alabama at Birmingham	**Clinical Pearls in IDD Healthcare: Understanding Behavioral Clues** Daleigh Tallent, MSN, RN, CDDN IntellectAbility	**Leading with Purpose: Inspiring the Next Generation of Behavioral Health Leaders** Dr. Yanick Hicks, PharmD Healthcare Leadership and Resilience Speaker
	Visit with Exhibitors · ***Exhibit Hall***		
11:45 AM	**Lunch for All Attendees** Ballroom I, V & IX	**12:45 PM · Professional Awards Ceremony and Door Prizes**	
	Visit with Exhibitors · ***Exhibit Hall***		
1:15 PM	**School-Based Mental Health Care and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support** Dr. June Preast, PhD, NCSP University of Alabama	**Applied Behavior Analysis Shifts Toward Trauma-Assumed Care** Cory Johnson, M.Ed., BCBA, LBA Glenwood, Inc.	**Transforming the Care Journey Through Connected AI + Automation** AJ Peterson Senior Vice President & General Manager, Netsmart
	Visit with Exhibitors · ***Exhibit Hall***		
3:00 PM	**Jobs Worth Having, Keeping, and Growing In: Building Alabama's Workforce** Dr. Kelsey Brock, Ed.D., LPC-S National Council for Mental Wellbeing	**Using Genes to Guide Better Care: The Role of Genomic Medicine in Adults with IDD** Dr. Pongtawat Lertwilaiwittaya, MD, FACMG University of Alabama at Birmingham	**Fireside Chat featuring Sarah Stockton** Senior Vice President, BHA Strategy; former Communications Director, Tennessee Dept. of Health and TennCare
4:30 PM	**Conference Adjourns**		

Mental Health & Substance Use Track

Ballroom I, V & IX



8:30 AM

Navigating Mental Health, Ethics, and Practice in the Age of AI

Dr. Connie Couch, PhD, LPC · The University of Montevallo

As AI becomes increasingly integrated into mental health settings, clinicians must navigate emerging opportunities, ethical considerations, and potential risks. This session will introduce foundational AI terminology and concepts, and explore current and emerging applications in clinical practice, including potential benefits, limitations, and ethical implications.



10:15 AM

Brief Interventions that Fit the Real World: Relaxation Skills for Mental Health Care

Dr. Kevin Karl, PhD · The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Community mental health clinicians are often asked to create meaningful change in limited time, without the luxury of delivering a full psychotherapy protocol. This session will introduce a focused brief-intervention framework drawn from CBT, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Motivational Interviewing (MI), and relaxation-based approaches. Emphasis will be placed on interventions that clinicians can begin using immediately, including rapid goal clarification, behavioral activation, brief cognitive strategies, values-based action, working with ambivalence, deep breathing and relaxation, and developing a concrete next-step plan.



1:15 PM

School-Based Mental Health Care and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

Dr. June Preast, PhD, NCSP · The University of Alabama

Many children and youth who receive mental health care are first identified at and receive supports in schools. This session will introduce multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) as the shared framework schools use to organize academic, behavioral, and mental health supports for children and youth. Drawing on resources and research, participants will learn how community mental healthcare providers can work collaboratively with schools and school personnel to improve outcomes for children and youth.



3:00 PM

Jobs Worth Having, Keeping, and Growing In: Building Alabama's Workforce

Dr. Kelsey Brock, Ed.D., LPC-S · Senior Advisor, The National Council for Mental Wellbeing

Participants will examine workforce data, compare behavioral health careers with other employment sectors, and explore ways to communicate the value and growth opportunities of behavioral health work to current and prospective staff. The session will address practical, team-level approaches to clinical supervision, caseload and scheduling practices, burnout prevention, staff well-being, and career advancement, drawing on examples and lessons learned from other states. Participants will identify actionable strategies they can apply within their own teams to support professional growth, reduce turnover, and sustain accessible, high-quality services for clients and communities.

Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities Track

Ballroom III & IV



8:30 AM

Beyond the Behavior: Understanding Autism, Anxiety, and Challenging Behaviors

Dr. Stacy Ladden, Psy.D., BCBA-D, LBA · Behavioral Pediatric Institute of Alabama

When a child exhibits challenging behavior, they are often communicating that they are struggling. To support them effectively, we must look beyond the behavior itself. This interactive session explores the powerful connection between autism, anxiety, and challenging behaviors. Using a Conscious Discipline framework, we will shift our focus from compliance to connection and examine how missing skills, environmental demands, and stressors contribute to and exacerbate difficult moments.



10:15 AM

Clinical Pearls in IDD Healthcare: Understanding Behavioral Clues

Daleigh Tallent, MSN, RN, CDDN · IntellectAbility

Clinical pearls are valuable insights or practical tips gained through firsthand experience or careful observation in clinical practice. This presentation will focus on a number of clinical pearls learned “the hard way,” so that you don’t have to. This session includes discussions on a range of topics and shows how the book *Clinical Pearls in IDD Healthcare* can be used for in-service staff training, sharing information with families, and educating clinicians about important topics that can improve the level of healthcare they deliver to people with IDD.



1:15 PM

Applied Behavior Analysis Shifts Toward Trauma-Assumed Care

Cory Johnson, M.Ed., BCBA, LBA · Glenwood, Inc.

Attendees will leave this session with an understanding of basic principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA), including function-based treatment, punishment, and reinforcement, and be able to describe one way ABA has become more trauma-assumed in the past five years.



3:00 PM

Using Genes to Guide Better Care: The Role of Genomic Medicine in Adults with IDD

Dr. Pongtawat Lertwilaiwittaya, MD, FACMG · The University of Alabama at Birmingham

This clinically oriented presentation will discuss the role of clinical genetics in the evaluation and management of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Attendees will be able to recognize clinical features and indications that warrant genetic evaluation in adults with IDD and describe current genetic testing recommendations for evaluation of undiagnosed IDD.

Alabama Service Providers Association

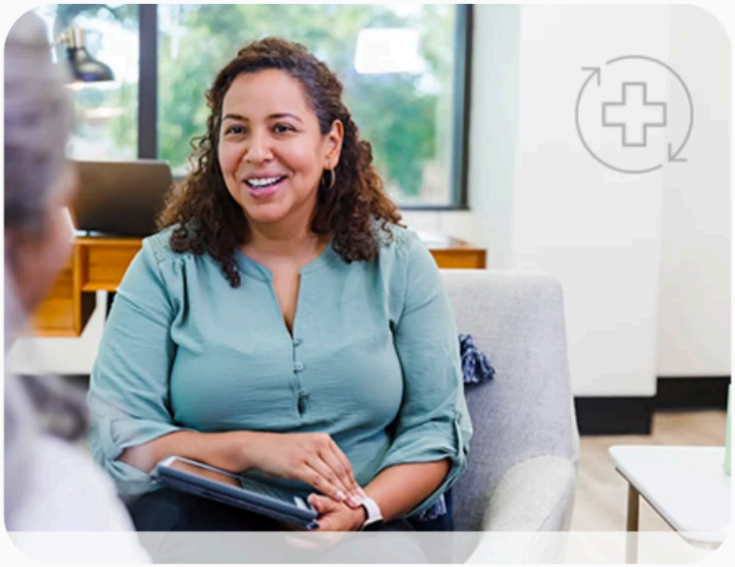
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We gratefully acknowledge the **Alabama Service Providers Association (ASPA)** for their support and co-sponsorship of this track.

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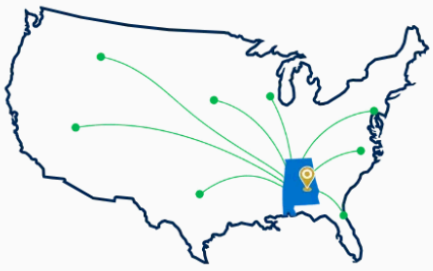
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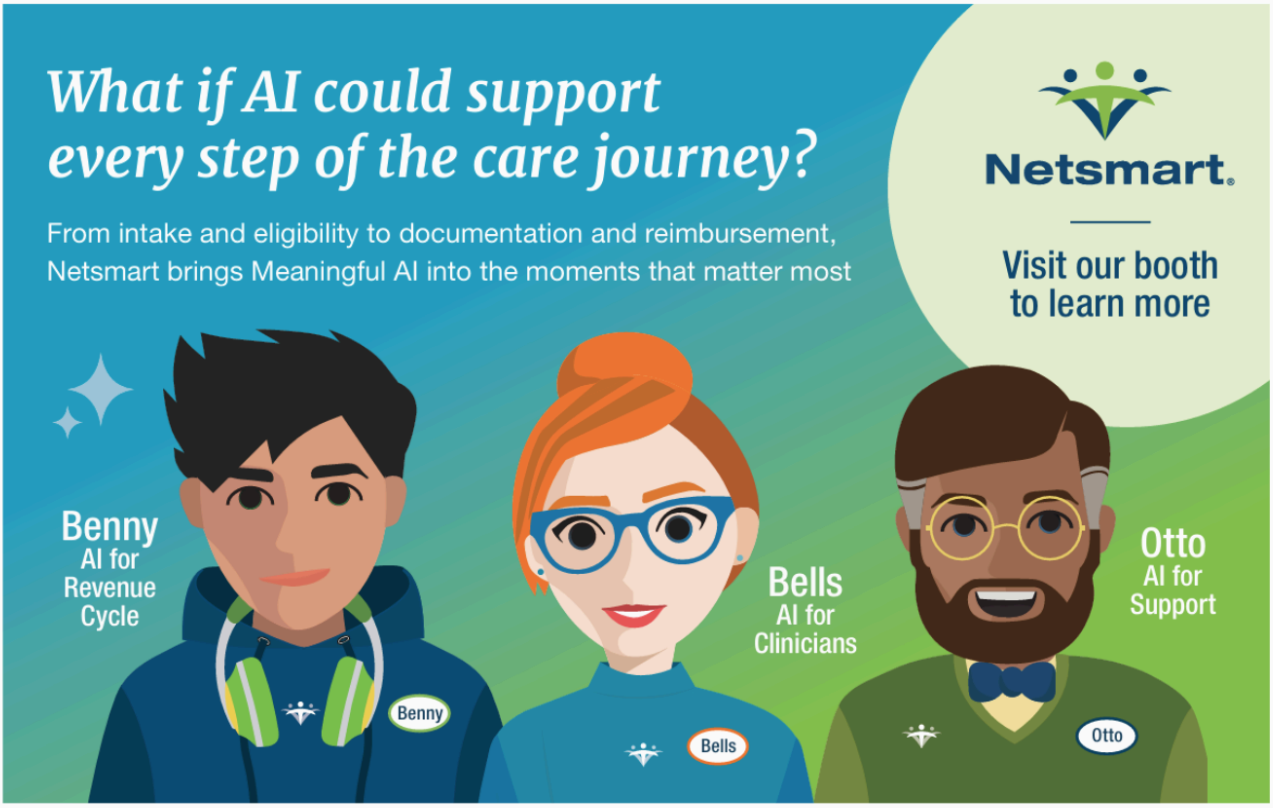
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Don't forget to visit the Narcan booth!

Scan the QR code to request additional Narcan from the Alabama Department of Mental Health.

NOTES

Continuing Education

Alabama Council for Behavioral Healthcare
Fall 2026 Conference Program Evaluation

SCAN FOR THE CEU APPLICATION

1. **Sign in upon arrival and sign out upon departure at the registration tables.**
2. **Scan the QR code to complete the application form for CEUs.**
3. **JBS will accept application forms starting 11/5/2026 at 4:30 PM until 12/5/2026 at 4:30 PM.**

This program is co-sponsored by JBS Mental Health Authority. JBS Mental Health Authority has been approved by the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) as an Approved Continuing Education Provider.

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