

Substance Use, Overdose Prevention, and the Courts A Citywide Collaboration

September 19, 2023

Meet the Speakers

Daniel Ades

Director of New York Legal Policy, Center for Justice Innovation

Daniel Ades is the Director of New York Legal Policy at the Center. He was a public defender in Brooklyn for nine years before serving as Counsel to the Committee on Public Safety at the New York City Council and Deputy Chief of Staff at the Department of Correction. His pragmatic, consensus-based approach to policy work derives from this unique experience as a practitioner, legislative policymaker, and agency official, touching on all aspects of the New York City criminal justice landscape, including courts, policing, corrections, and community-based alternatives to incarceration. Currently, his work at the Center is focused on developing and implementing efficient, evidence-based court practices in partnership with the NYS Unified Court System and all criminal justice stakeholders. In addition, he is developing a model for individualized jail population review that aims to reduce the NYC jail population in order to help ensure the closure of Rikers Island, and to serve as a model for other large jurisdictions to reduce pretrial incarceration.

Julian Adler

Chief Innovation and Strategy Officer, Center for Justice Innovation

Julian Adler is the Center's Chief Innovation and Strategy Officer, and previously served as the director of policy and research and the director of the Red Hook Community Justice Center in Brooklyn, New York. He was part of the planning teams that created Brooklyn Justice Initiatives and Newark Community Solutions in New Jersey. Julian is the co-author of *Start Here: A Road Map to Reducing Mass Incarceration* (The New Press), along with a range of book chapters and articles that examine the intersections of the criminal legal system, social science, and mental health. He serves on multiple steering and advisory committees, and he is a co-chair of the advisory board for Wesleyan University's Center for Prison Education.

Elizabeth Christy

LCSW, CASAC-MC, Senior Director of Behavioral Health, Fortune Society

Elizabeth is an 18-year veteran in the social services field. In 2005, having obtained her CASAC-T, she started out in the field as a school social worker, which is where she became a fully credentialed CASAC. Since

then, her experience has included positions with inpatient, residential, and outpatient substance abuse treatment programs as both a clinical service provider and, later, an administrator. Upon obtaining her LMSW she also served as a mental health consultant for the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). Additionally, she obtained her Seminar In Field Instruction (SIFI) and worked with MSW student interns from multiple universities. Elizabeth began working at The Fortune Society in 2015 as a Clinical Supervisor of the Court-Based Intervention Resource Team (CIRT) for the Queens County Court. In 2017 she was recruited by agency management to become the Clinical Director for the agency's newly formed Health Home Care Management practice where she trained numerous staff and interns on accurately assessing individuals with chronic health conditions and appropriately connecting them to physical and behavioral health providers. While at Fortune, she obtained her LCSW and was promoted to her current position as Senior Director of Behavioral Health. It is here that she provides clinical supervision and best practice guidance to practitioners in both the OASAS licensed outpatient treatment services clinic and the OMH licensed outpatient mental health center, both of which are exclusively focused on serving those impacted by the criminal justice system. Elizabeth holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Queens College and a master's degree in social work from Long Island University where she graduated Summa Cum Laude. Presently she is working on her Doctor of Social Work (DSW) from Simmons University with a research focus on intergenerational trauma and the predisposition towards re-traumatization based on

systemic oppression, specifically within the criminal justice impacted population. Her anticipated graduation is in 2024.

Dr. Allan Clear

Director, AIDS Institute Office of Drug User Health, New York State Department of Health

Mr. Clear is the Director of the New York State Department of Health, AIDS Institute's Office of Drug User Health where he is responsible for program planning, design and implementation related to drug user health, including overdose, HIV and HCV prevention, low threshold buprenorphine and access to care including medical care and mental health services. Mr. Clear has worked in the field of drug user health since 1990. He was the Executive Director of the Lower East Side Harm Reduction Center, one of the first syringe exchange programs in New York State, and of the National Harm Reduction Coalition. Mr. Clear has served on both local and international advisory bodies, including the advisory board of the North American Syringe Exchange Network, Governor Cuomo's End the Epidemic Task Force in 2015 and the United Nations Civil Society Taskforce on Drugs.

Hon. Marcia Hirsch

Presiding Judge, Queens Drug Treatment Court

Hon. Marcia P. Hirsch is the Presiding Judge of the Queens Drug Treatment Court, the DWI Treatment Court, the Mental Health Court, the Veterans Court, the Gun Diversion Court, and the Drug Diversion Court. She was appointed to the New York Court of Claims in March, 2005 and was assigned

to Queens Supreme Court, Criminal Term. She presided over hearings and trials before she was assigned to the therapeutic courts in October, 2005. Judge Hirsch has lectured extensively on therapeutic justice, treatment courts, trauma-informed courts, and procedural justice. She has provided technical assistance to treatment court teams, law enforcement, behavioral health professionals working with justice populations, and more. She is a board member and the current president of the New York Association of Treatment Court Professionals. She is also the president of the New York Chapter of the National Association of Women Judges. She joined the faculty of the National Drug Court Institute in 2019. She is also a consultant for SAMHSA's GAINS Center for Behavioral Health and Justice Transformation. Judge Hirsch is a graduate of Union College, where she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and a graduate of Syracuse University College of Law. She served for nine years on the Rockville Centre School Board and also was a member of her community's Drug & Alcohol Task Force. Prior to taking the bench, Judge Hirsch was the General Counsel and Deputy Commissioner at the New York State Division of Housing & Community Renewal. Before that, she was in private practice for many years.

Florence Hutner

NY-NJ HIDTA, and Senior Director for Special Projects, New York Law School

After a distinguished thirty-year career as a lawyer for the City of New York, Florence Hutner is now Senior Director for Special

Projects at New York Law School. During her City career, Ms. Hutner litigated for the City Law Department's Affirmative Litigation Division; she subsequently served as General Counsel to multiple City agencies including the Departments of Correction and Probation, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (now ENDGBV), and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME). She also participated in relief efforts in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, and of Hurricane Sandy in 2012. At OCME, Ms. Hutner advised the agency and RxStat on the formation of the Overdose Fatality Review Committee (OFR) and, in her capacity as special consultant to RxStat, has continued to assist the OFR and RxStat in strategic planning and organization. She holds a JD from Columbia Law School, an MFA from NYU's Institute of Fine Arts, and an AB from Princeton University.

Jessica Kay

Senior Policy Advisor, Alternatives to Incarceration, Center for Justice Innovation

Jessica Kay is the Senior Policy Advisor on the New York Legal Policy team. Jessica joined the Center in 2008 as a social worker at the Red Hook Community Justice Center. Over the years, she has held numerous positions in different departments at the Center, including deputy director of court reform programs, senior associate director on the national training and technical assistance team, and founding director of Brooklyn Justice Initiatives. Jessica holds her MSW from the Silver School of Social Work at New York University.

Toni Mardirossian

Deputy Division Chief of Pathways to Public Safety Division, New York County District Attorney's Office

Toni Mardirossian currently serves as the Deputy Division Chief of the Pathways to Public Safety Division at the New York County District Attorney's Office. In this role, she oversees day to day operations in the Division which screens, refers, and monitors hundreds of participants each year in Manhattan's felony problem-solving courts including the Felony Alternatives to Incarceration Part, Felony Drug Court, Manhattan Mental Health Court, and Veterans Treatment Court. She joined the District Attorney's Office in 2007 and served for several years as a trial assistant prosecuting general misdemeanors and felonies before transitioning into Drug Court in 2013. She has previously served as Attorney-in-Charge of Drug Courts and Chief of the Alternatives to Incarceration Unit. She was promoted to Deputy Division Chief of the newly created Pathways to Public Safety Division under DA Bragg in 2022. Prior to attending law school, she served as a New York City public school teacher. She received her undergraduate degree from Boston College, her MS in Teaching from Pace University, and her law degree from the University of Notre Dame.

Claudia Montoya

Attorney, Legal-Aid Society, MICA Project

Ms. Montoya is a staff attorney at The Legal Aid Society. She is an original staff member of the MICA Project, the first of its kind in the nation which partnered a mitigation specialist with an attorney, to provide legal representa-

tion and social services for those living with behavioral health concerns. Ms. Montoya is a resource for attorneys and community providers seeking advice on best practices in representing clients with mental health concerns. She has been very involved in the Bronx Mental Health Court, being a formal stakeholder, who is called upon to consult with those interested in the mental health court model. Since 2014, Ms. Montoya has been a member of the Legal Executive Committee, for The Academy of Justice Informed Practice at CUCS, an initiative to provide free trainings on best practices for attorneys representing individuals with behavioral health needs in the criminal justice system. She trains annually at local law schools, as well as at local and national conferences. Ms. Montoya was the Orison S. Marden Award recipient and has been honored in Bronx Veteran's Court for her advocacy.

Chauncey Parker

Director, NY/NJ High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area

Chauncey Parker serves as the Director of the New York/New Jersey High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), a federally-funded program that invests in public safety and public health partnerships designed to build and healthy communities. He also serves as Deputy Commissioner for Collaborative Policing at the New York City Police Department. A veteran of almost 40 years in public service, prior to his appointment at the NYPD, Parker has served as a prosecutor in the Manhattan District Attorney's Office and the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York,

as well as Director of Criminal Justice and Commissioner of the Division of Criminal Justice Services for New York State.

Dr. Kelly Ramsey

Chief of Medical Services, OASAS

Dr. Kelly S. Ramsey is an internal medicine physician who has treated substance use disorder since 2004. She is board certified in internal medicine and addiction medicine. She also has an MPH (Master of Public Health) in epidemiology and an MA (Master of Arts) in bioethics. Dr. Ramsey currently works as the Chief of Medical Services at NYS OASAS (Office of Addiction Services and Supports). Dr. Ramsey has provided expert advice to the New York State Department of Health (DOH) AIDS Institute by serving on numerous committees for over a decade. Dr. Ramsey was the recipient of the NYS DOH Commissioner’s Special Recognition Award for contributions to drug user health in NYS in 2018. Dr. Ramsey is the President for the NYSAM (NY Society of Addiction Medicine) Board of Directors. Dr. Ramsey sits on the ASAM (American Society of Addiction Medicine) National Board of Directors, as the Region I Director, representing NYS. Dr. Ramsey is a Council Board Member for NYACP (NY Chapter of the American College of Physicians), an internal medicine physician professional organization. In 2017, Dr. Ramsey was a Laureate Award Recipient, awarded by the American College of Physicians (ACP) to “members, who have demonstrated by their example and conduct, an abiding commitment of excellence in medical care, education, or research, and in service to their community, their region, and the ACP.” In 2023, Dr. Ramsey received the Distinguished

Contributions to Behavioral Medicine Award by the American College of Physicians (ACP) for “distinguished contribution to the integration of behavioral medicine with traditional medicine. This award recognizes an individual who has furthered the care of patients by recognizing the importance of caring for the whole patient, both mind and body. This can be through research or clinical innovations.” Dr. Ramsey is a Fellow of ACP and a Distinguished Fellow of ASAM.

Dr. Virginia Barber Rioja

Senior Clinical Policy Advisor, Center for Justice Innovation

Virginia Barber-Rioja obtained her Ph.D. in clinical forensic psychology from John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City University of New York. For 7 years, she worked in the NYC jail system holding the positions of Co-Chief and Clinical Director of Mental Health, and Assistant Chief of Forensic Services for Correctional Health Services/NYC Health + Hospitals, which provides mental health treatment to the NYC jails and forensic assessment services to the NYC courts. She is also an adjunct assistant professor in the Psychology Department of New York University and the Department of Counseling and Clinical Psychology of Teachers College, Columbia University. She has over 20 years of experience working in correctional and forensic contexts, including jails, forensic hospitals, and alternative to incarceration and reentry programs. She also worked as a consultant for the juvenile correctional facilities in Puerto Rico. She has published several articles in peer-reviewed journals and provided trainings nationally and internationally. She is the first author of the book

“Mental Health Evaluations in Immigration Court: A Guide for Mental Health and Legal professionals” published by NYU Press, and the first editor of the “Handbook of Mental Health Assessment and Treatment in Jails” to be published by Oxford press in the Summer of 2023. Currently, Dr. Barber Rioja consults for the Center for Justice Innovation as a Senior Clinical Policy Advisor and maintains an independent forensic practice involving consulting, training and forensic assessment in immigration, state, and federal court cases. She is an elected Member-At-Large of the American Psychology Law Society (APLS), a board member of the Asociación Iberoamericana de Justicia Terapéutica (Iberoamerican Association of Therapeutic Jurisprudence) and a former elected member of the American Psychological Association’s Committee on Legal Issues (COLI).

Hon. Toko Serita

Statewide Coordinating Judge for Problem Solving Courts, Division of Policy & Planning, Office for Justice Initiatives

Acting Supreme Court Justice Toko Serita was the first Asian American woman appointed to the New York City Criminal Court in 2005 and the first Japanese-American judge in New York State. She is an experienced treatment court judge and has presided over various problem-solving courts since 2008, including an adult drug treatment court, a mental health recovery courts, and the Human Trafficking Intervention Court in Queens County. She is considered a leading judicial expert on human trafficking and has overseen one of the oldest and largest courts in this state solely dedicated to serving trafficking

victims and survivors. The Queens HTIC subsequently served as the model in 2013 for the creation of similar trafficking intervention courts throughout NY State. In 2015, Justice Serita became the Chair of the NYS Judicial Committee on Human Trafficking, whose judicial members represent each of the 11 trafficking intervention courts, including the five counties comprising New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Westchester, Suffolk & Nassau Counties. In 2022, Judge Serita was appointed to the newly created position of Statewide Coordinating Judge for Problem-Solving Courts and works closely with the Division of Policy & Planning, one of several divisions of the Office for Justice Initiatives, led by Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Edwina Richardson-Mendelson. In that capacity she helps oversee the more than 300 problem-solving courts throughout NY State, including drug courts, mental health courts, domestic violence courts, DWI courts, etc.

Prior to becoming a judge, Justice Serita served as the Executive Assistant to two Administrative Judges of the Supreme Court Queens County: first, to the Hon. Steven W. Fisher, and then the Hon. Leslie G. Leach. Judge Serita has dedicated her life to public service and started her career as a criminal appellate attorney for the Legal Aid Society, Criminal Appeals Bureau, where she argued before the New York State Appellate Division, First and Second Departments, the New York Court of Appeals, and the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. She is a co-founder and past president of the Asian American Judges Association of New York (AAJANY), a former co-chair of the National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum (NAPAWF), as well as a former member of the Editing Commit-

tee of the NYS Criminal Jury Instructions Committee. Judge Serita has been on the board of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) since 2018. She is a graduate of Vassar College and the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law.

Amanda Wexler

Clinical Director of Diversion and Victim Services, Richmond County District Attorney's Office

Amanda Wexler (LCSW, CASAC) serves as RCDA's Clinical Director of Diversion and Victim Services. Amanda has dedicated her career to support individuals suffering from substance use and behavioral health concerns on Staten Island. She began her career at the YMCA Counseling Service and there she took a special interest in working with individuals struggling with heroin and opioid use. She became an advocate for treatment, other services, and medication to assist with recovery. Amanda maintained a private therapy practice and has worked as an adjunct professor. She came to the Richmond County District Attorney's Office in 2017 to lead the HOPE Program; an innovative pre-arraignment diversion program for individuals charged with drug possession. She was promoted to Clinical Director of Diversion and Victim Services in 2019, where she currently serves as the lead clinician for the Alternatives to Incarceration Unit and the Victim Services Unit. Ms. Wexler is a doctoral candidate (expected completion in May 2024) and on a personal note, she mothers two children, one husband, and one tortoise.