

MIND THE GAP SERIES

Session #2: Presenter Bios

Learning, Leading, Changing

Harkmore Lee, MSW, is the Director of the Center on Child Welfare at California State University, Los Angeles (Cal State LA). The Center is part of Cal State LA's School of Social Work and is a member of the University Consortium for Children and Families (UCCF), which consists of seven local schools of social work who provide professional development training, research, and evaluation to the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. Mr. Lee has worked in the fields of child welfare, domestic violence, and sexual assault for over 15 years in various capacities – including working as a County children's services social worker, nonprofit agency senior executive, and a state and national trainer. At Cal. State LA, Mr. Lee designed and built the first Residential Simulation Lab in California that provides simulation training, space, and education to county child welfare social workers, as well as to undergraduate and graduate social work students at Cal State LA's School of Social Work. Mr. Lee received both his B.A. and M.S.W. degrees from the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor.

Heidi Staples, MSW/BSW, is the Director of the Center on Child Welfare at UCLA, which provides professional development training, research, and evaluation to the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services as part of the University Consortium for Children and Families (UCCF). The Center also oversees field training of master's level interns who agree to become employees of DCFS in exchange for tuition reimbursement. The Center is part of the Department of Social Welfare at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, where Ms. Staples also teaches child welfare policy. Ms. Staples previously served as National Adoption Specialist for the federal government at the Children's Bureau, overseeing national training centers and leadership institutes as well as federal grants to assist states and counties in improving their child welfare systems; has been a professional trainer for over 20 years at the county, state, and national level; and worked for 25 years in San Diego County Child Welfare Services in a variety of programs as a social worker, supervisor, and manager, the last seven as Adoptions Administrator. She authored the CA state core curriculum for all public child welfare social workers on *Identification of Child Maltreatment* and has developed and delivered numerous other child welfare training curricula. She has been an active participant in simulation training, development, and implementation.

Tamera Pruitt, Esq. is an attorney for the Los Angeles County Counsel's Office and has practiced Dependency law for her entire career. She obtained a Bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Radford University in Virginia and earned her JD from Whittier Law School. Tamera began her career as a minor's attorney at the Children's Law Center of Los Angeles representing children in the Dependency Court system in 2000. In addition to her duties as a trial attorney there, she served as the state coordinator of the Pew Grant entitled "Home At Last." In 2006, Ms. Pruitt began working for the Los Angeles County Counsel's Office as a trial attorney. She is currently assigned as an Outstation County Counsel in the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) local offices, providing legal advice to DCFS onsite in the DCFS offices as well as serving as a principal trainer for all County Counsel and DCFS coordinated trainings throughout the county. She provides trainings to both

attorneys and social workers on a variety of topics, ranging from legal duties to extended foster care. Further, Tamera acts as legal counsel and sometimes role player for simulation trainings, providing real time expert consultation on legal issues related to training activities and questions that arise in simulations.