

CARAS Conference on Leather-Kink Research and Clinical Knowledge (C2C)

C2C-West 2023 Program Summary

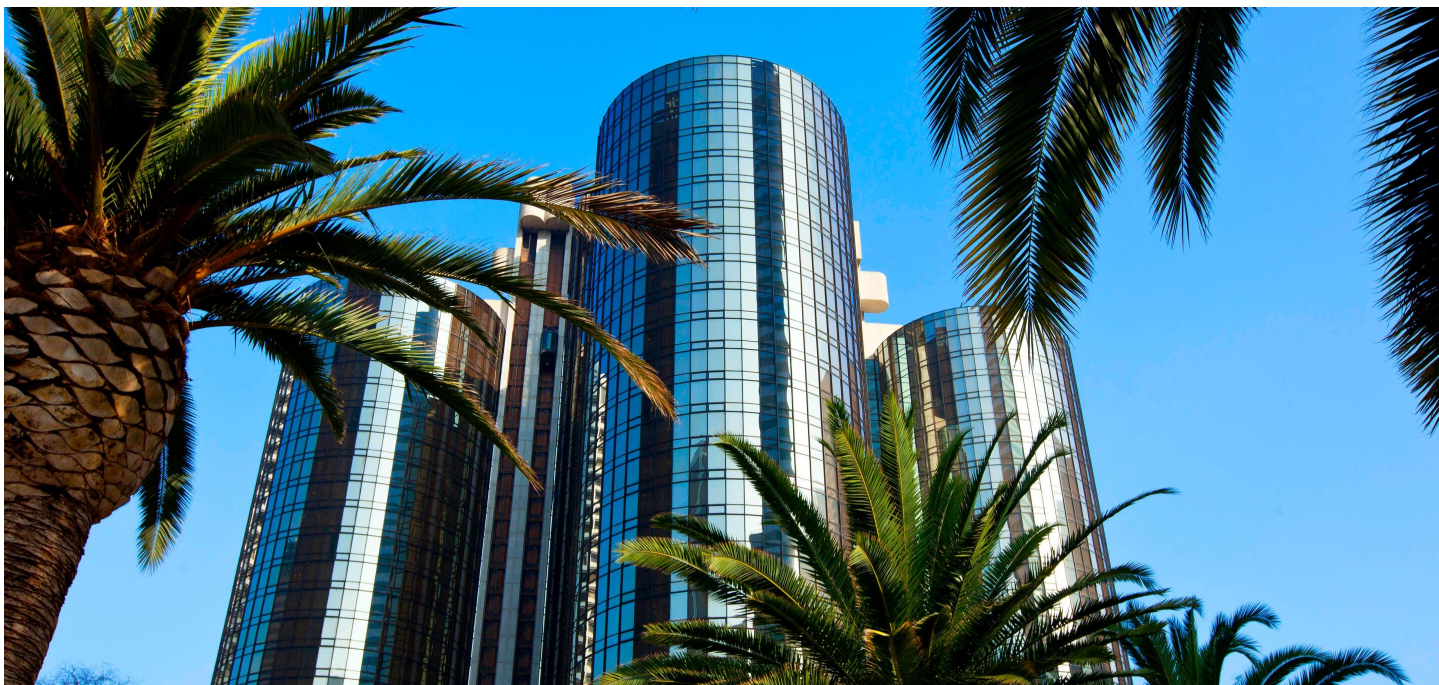
November 24-26, 2023
Los Angeles, California

Program Summary Version: 18 November 2023

For updates, please visit: <https://carasresearch.org/c2c-west>

CARAS is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. CARAS maintains responsibility for this program and its content.





About the C2C

The Community-Academic Consortium for Research on Alternative Sexualities (CARAS) is excited to continue a unique collaboration between CARAS and the Cleveland Leather Annual Weekend (CLAW): the CARAS-CLAW Conference: Leather-Kink Research and Clinical Knowledge (C2C).

Join fellow researchers, health care professionals, educators, students, advocates, and others for an engaging intellectual and professional experience in a unique venue. For psychologists and other health professionals who require Continuing Education (CE) for licensure, C2C attendees may earn up to 5 CE credits, as indicated in the program. All CE sessions include content at the introductory level.

This community-academic collaboration is a first example of how an academic-research-clinical conference can be embedded in a major community event. Now in our fifth iteration, the C2C has demonstrated that academic conferences do not have to be boring affairs!

Special thanks to Bob Miller, Carolyn Meeker, Robert Bienvenu, Andrea Echols, and Vivienne Kramer for their leadership and efforts to make this conference a reality!

For More Information:

For current information regarding the C2C, please visit <https://carasresearch.org/c2c-west>

To download the current version of this program, please visit: https://caras-researchlink.org/c2c_west_2023_program

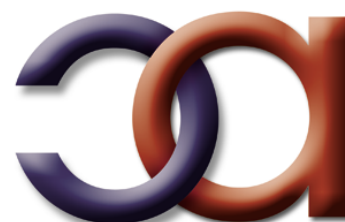
For Continuing Education (CE) program information and procedures, please visit: https://caras-researchlink.org/c2c_west_2023_ce-info

To subscribe to CARAS, please visit <https://www.carasresearch.org/subscribe>

For information about the C2C-East 2024, April 12-14, 2024, please visit: <https://www.carasresearch.org/c2c-east>

For questions regarding the C2C, please email c2c@carasresearch.org

CARAS
PO Box 699
College Park, MD 20741



C2C-West 2023: Schedule at a Glance

TIME	SESSION	LEAD PRESENTER(S)
	Thursday, November 23, 2023	
8:00-9:00pm	Meet the Faculty, Leather Getaway 2023 Westin Bonaventure Hotel (location to be announced)	
	Friday, November 24, 2023	
9:00-9:30am	Friday, Nov 24, 2023: C2C Kickoff! Note: C2C educational sessions Friday-Sunday are in the San Bernardino room	Carolyn Meeker & Rob Bienvenu
9:30-10:30	Kink Studies: Update on the Development of the Field (1 CE)	Rob Bienvenu
11:00am-12:15pm	Jungian and Archetypal Perspectives on BDSM (1 CE)	Douglas Thomas
12:00-4:00pm	<i>CARAS Booth at the CLAW Vendor Mart</i>	
2:00-4:00pm	Financial Domination - FinDom	Kali Williams
4:30-5:30pm	The Historical Arc of Sexual Asymmetry: A Transdisciplinary Analysis of Sexual Dominance and Submission in Western Culture	Barbara Bowley Lee Clark
	Saturday, November 25, 2023	
9:30-10:30am	Get Off On Pain: A Philosophical and Neurophysiological Discourse of Pain in Kink Practices (1 CE)	Shuyu Lin
11:00am-12:15pm	Leather Hall of Fame (LHOF) and CARAS Leather History Panel	Rob Bienvenu (moderator) and Panelists
12:00-4:00pm	<i>CARAS Booth at the CLAW Vendor Mart</i>	
2:00-4:00pm	Introduction to Erotic Humiliation, Embarrassment, and Degradation	Kali Williams
4:30-5:30pm	The DungeonMaster: Anthony F. "Tony" DeBlase and the Making of American BDSM Culture (1CE)	Anthony Carey
	Sunday, November 26, 2023	
10:00-11:30am	Soft Skills for Success in the Workplace and Kink Communities (1 CE)	Carolyn Meeker
12:00-2:00pm	<i>CARAS Booth at the CLAW Vendor Mart</i>	
12:00-2:30pm	Leather Hall of Fame Brunch and Inductions Ceremony (Note: some C2C participants will be presenting at the LHOF event!)	
2:00-3:30pm	The CARAS Mentoring Program	Carolyn Meeker & CARAS Mentoring Program Alumni

For additional information about C2C West 2023 Continuing Education (CE) sessions, and the CARAS CE program, and please visit the URL below or QR code to the right:
https://caras-researchlink.org/c2c_west_2023_ce-info



Kink Studies: Update on the Development of the Field

Robert Bienvenu, Ph.D.

Today there is institutional support and a multidisciplinary body of scholarly literature addressing sexualities that fall under the diverse rubrics of LGBTQI+. The creation and institutionalization of these areas of scholarship has been a multi-generational process, characterized by on-going struggles for scholarly credibility, creation of supporting organizations and institutions, activism challenging discrimination and for political rights, and access to funding to address health and other issues. However, the various sexual minority communities found within the broad LGBTQI+ umbrella, including kink/BDSM/leather, do not share the same level of recognition, scholarship, and institutional development.

This session extends and updates a discussion initiated by CARAS in 2021 that posits a new, interdisciplinary field of "Kink Studies" and attempts to define a framework for understanding how the field of Kink Studies may be conceptualized and institutionalized. In this session we will examine attributes of a unique field of Kink Studies and its relationship to established LGBT scholarship. We will look at metrics that are appropriate for assessing the status of Kink Studies as an emerging field of scholarship. We will also examine institutional pathways and some potential barriers to the development of the field of kink studies.

Join us to engage in this discussion and envision the path forward to a future of enhanced health, human rights, and multidisciplinary scholarship supporting members of kink/BDSM/leather communities!

Please note: the session may be professionally video recorded. The video recording will focus on the presenter.

Details

San Bernardino Room, Westin Bonaventure Hotel

Friday, Nov. 24, 2023

9:30 - 10:30 am

CE Credits: 1

Learning Objectives

1. Define two attributes of a field of "Kink Studies" that are distinct from established LGBT scholarship.
2. Describe metrics appropriate for assessing the current status of Kink Studies as an emerging field of scholarship.
3. Identify two current institutional barriers impeding the development of a field of Kink Studies.

Jungian and Archetypal Perspectives on BDSM

Douglas Thomas, Ph.D., LCSW

The depth psychology of C. G. Jung and James Hillman provide unique perspectives on the meaning and psychological value of BDSM activities and relationships. BDSM practitioners can benefit from Jung's and Hillman's psychological language, which honors the value of transgression as a necessity for psychological growth. Clinicians can gain fresh insights regarding the deeper psychological meaning of participating in the world of BDSM and leather by applying Jungian concepts such as the Shadow, the Syzygy, and the psychoid.

The presentation will discuss the collective archetypal sources of historical trauma which have provided inspiration to some of the more disquieting aspects of BDSM, and we will consider how the deep psychology of BDSM creates a space in the modern world to ethically engage these primal psychic forces.

Details

**San Bernardino Room, Westin
Bonaventure Hotel**

Friday, Nov. 24, 2023

11:00 am - 12:15 pm

CE Credits: 1

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the Jungian concepts of the Shadow, the Syzygy, and the psychoid, and their relevance to the activities and relationships of BDSM.
2. Describe the difference between the personal developmental model of psychology and Hillman's image-centered archetypal model, and discuss the clinical implications.
3. Analyze the relevance of intersectionality to clinical work that addresses the archetypal dimension of intergenerational trauma, race, social justice, and erotic reclamation.

Financial Domination

Kali Williams

Financial fetish and domination is one of the most misunderstood power play experiences, even by those who practice it. Like any expression of power, it has the potential for abuse and has gotten a rather bad rap because of the exploitation possibilities.

Discover a deeper understanding of the intersection of money, kink, and control with world-renowned expert and author, Princess Kali.

Learn about financial domination with personalized insight, an environment of encouragement and support, and the opportunity to develop an authentic, ethical approach to exploring financial fetish.

Details

San Bernardino Room, Westin
Bonaventure Hotel

Friday, Nov. 24, 2023

2:00 - 4:00 pm

CE Credits: n/a

Learning Objectives

1. Define financial fetish and domination.
2. Describe key elements of ethical financial domination.
3. Describe way to distinguish ethical from exploitative and potentially harmful financial domination.

The Historical Arc of Sexual Asymmetry: A Transdisciplinary Analysis of Sexual Dominance and Submission in Western Culture

Barbara Bowley
Lee Clark

By examining key Western European historical texts, we argue that there is a biological basis, rooted in physical pleasure, that supports Western European social power dynamics in the economic, religious and political domains. We touch upon how current kink/BDSM dynamics elevate these phenomena to a level of awareness among practitioners that is humanistic, intentional and manipulable for many types of pleasure, while remaining connected to its biological roots. Furthermore, consistent with this explanatory approach, by playing with sexual dominance and submission, kinksters access the pleasurable psychological states of Top space and subspace.

We assess the proposal that the physical act of penetration and its corollary, surrender to penetration, is fundamental to the nature of human sexual pleasure, situated independently of sexual orientation, gender, or kink dynamics.

Our method of transdisciplinary inquiry enables us to take a perspective that embraces multiple types of evidence that a single discipline or even an interdisciplinary approach is not adequate to provide. Transdisciplinarity analysis is: 1) a method of examining social phenomena that integrates perspectives from multiple relevant disciplines; and 2) includes the values and perspectives of non-academic sources to create understanding. This approach moves beyond the boundaries of disciplines to a holistic, associative analysis that seeks the contributions of both academic and non-academic stakeholders as co-creators of understanding and insight. Transdisciplinarity analysis provides a way of accessing the perspectives of kink practitioners to gain a full understanding of this human phenomenon.

Details

San Bernardino Room, Westin
Bonaventure Hotel

Friday, Nov. 24, 2023

4:30 - 5:30 pm

CE Credits: n/a

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the two main features of transdisciplinary inquiry.
2. Describe the theoretical and cultural basis for framing sexual submission as a biologically rooted phenomenon.
3. Describe how sexual submission has been used historically in Western European culture to support social inequities.

Get Off On Pain: A Philosophical and Neurophysiological Discourse of Pain in Kink Practices

Shuyu Lin

This presentation critically examines the science behind pain and pleasure as experienced in consensual sadomasochism (SM) practices, exploring the question of how kink practitioners may transform sensations of pain into pleasure.

I will draw from current neurobiological science to understand the physiology of having pleasurable sensations distinct from painful experiences through examining the role of neurotransmitters like endorphins, serotonin, dopamine, and oxytocin in modulating pain perception and transforming it from an ordinarily aversive experience into a pleasurable one under specific conditions. Additionally, I will compare and contrast the experience of euphoria in other activities, like distance running.

Consistent with these insights from neurobiological science, drawing on Timothy Schroeder's desire theory I propose a model in which participants in SM practices are motivated by a multi-faceted desire for pain. I argue that Schroeder's framework of desire is applicable for the pursuit of pain, which is then recognized as an emotional and physical desire. The action of pursuit activates biological responses that convert the experience of pain into one of pleasure, rewarding the participants physically, emotionally, and relationally.

Understanding the unique dimensions of pain in SM practices may have broad applicability to and beyond the scientific community. For kink participants, it may expand their understanding of human psychological and the physiological basis for their experiences in kink. It can also help healthcare professionals understand their kinky clients and better work on clinical pain management.

Details

San Bernardino Room, Westin Bonaventure Hotel

Saturday, Nov. 25, 2023

9:30 - 10:30 am

CE Credits: 1

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the four primary neurotransmitters involved in mediating the pleasure response to pain and explain their individual role.
2. Describe three key elements of Timothy Schroeder's theory of desire.
3. Describe how desire could mediate the experience of pain and pleasure in consensual SM practices.

Leather Hall of Fame (LHOF) and CARAS Leather History Panel

Rob Bienvenu (Facilitator)

Panelists

Derek Cohen

Rob Eagle

Rostom Mesli

Bob Miller

Additional panelists to be announced

and Audience Members!

In this panel discussion we have two primary objectives: first, to clarify what is meant by "leather history" and the "leather community"; and second, to discuss how the Leather Hall of Fame (LHOF) annually inducts three key contributors to this history and community. We will provide a short overview that suggests a way of thinking about leather history that recognizes and is inclusive of the varying groups that comprise the leather-kink community, and we will highlight some ways that leather-kink history is being preserved today.

Panelists include individuals who are currently involved in the LHOF, and also discussion of the current (2023) selectees to the LHOF.

We invite the active participation of audience members in this discussion!

Details

San Bernardino Room, Westin
Bonaventure Hotel

Saturday, Nov. 25, 2023

11:00 am - 12:15 pm

CE Credits: n/a

Learning Objectives

1. Describe historical and social considerations that are relevant to any definition of the modern "leather" community.
2. Identify at least one representative inductee to the LHOF that fits into the each of the following groups within the leather-kink communities: gay leather, het, lesbian, U.S., European, Australian, pre-1950.

Introduction to Erotic Humiliation, Embarrassment, and Degradation

Kali Williams

What exactly is erotic humiliation, and why do many kinky adults find it sexually arousing and emotionally freeing? Misperceptions and stereotypes, even within the kink world, contribute to the widespread assumption that this kind of play is abusive by its very nature. Even the most kink-friendly therapists are often baffled by how to separate harmful behaviors from unorthodox preferences to help clients process and explore these desires and experiences.

This workshop will unpack the psychological, emotional, and erotic desires around consensual psychological and emotional torment play by exploring its motivations, behaviors, levels of intensity, and language, as well as identifying common ways to play.

During this workshop, you will learn:

Motivations and cultural foundations behind the desire for exploring psychological torment from both the dominant and submissive perspective

Stereotypes that are commonly associated with erotic humiliation

The five core differences between abusive and healthy desires

Popular ways to play with erotic embarrassment, humiliation, and degradation

Details

San Bernardino Room, Westin Bonaventure Hotel

Saturday, Nov. 25, 2023

2:00 - 4:00 pm

CE Credits: n/a

Learning Objectives

1. Describe popular forms of erotic embarrassment, humiliation, and degradation.
2. Identify five core differences between harmful and healthy desires in erotic humiliation.
3. Discuss the role of culture in motivating particular forms of erotic humiliation, from both the dominant and submissive perspective.

The DungeonMaster: Anthony F. “Tony” DeBlase and the Making of American BDSM Culture

Anthony Carey, Ph.D.

Anthony F. “Tony” DeBlase, Ph.D., (1942-2000), a 2010 inductee to the Leather Hall of Fame, was one of the major contributors to the modern leather community in the latter decades of the 20th century.

DeBlase, a doctorally trained zoologist, spent most of his adult life in Chicago, San Francisco, and Portland. Before he became a professional leatherman, he studied bats, writing scholarly manuscripts and working at Chicago’s renowned Field Museum of Natural History. His primary pseudonym as a pornographer, editor, and publisher was Der Fledermaus, or usually just Fledermaus—German for bat. During the 1980s, as he left his museum job behind and built his leather reputation, he increasingly used his real name.

DeBlase made significant contributions in multiple areas. He was an author and publisher, producing *Drummer*, *Dungeon Master*, and *The Sandmutopia Guardian*, among others. As a community leader, he was involved in organizations including the Chicago Hellfire Club, National Leather Association, and GMSMA. DeBlase was a co-founder of Chicago's Leather Archives and Museum. He was involved in some of the most important events in the history of the community including the 1987 March on Washington. He designed the Leather Pride Flag, now widely adopted within the community.

DeBlase was an intellectual, academic, activist, gourmet cook, entrepreneur, and also a player. Tying up a hunky guy, torturing his cock and balls, beating him until his body ached, and bringing him off with an aggressive handjob was DeBlase’s idea of a great time. He never lost sight of the sensual intensity and pleasure that is the basis of leather sex. His teaching and writing addressed sensuality, skillful technique, safety, and consent - all components of what is today recognized as ethical BDSM play, and which distinguish modern BDSM from other, abusive and potentially harmful activities.

Through focus on one of its exemplary leaders, this presentation will provide information about the development of cultural norms and current practices within the BDSM community that is relevant to clinicians working with clients, of various sexual and gender orientations, whose sexual identity and/or practices are connected with modern BDSM communities.

Details

San Bernardino Room, Westin Bonaventure Hotel

Saturday, Nov. 25, 2023

4:30 -5:30 pm

CE Credits: 1

Learning Objectives

With reference to DeBlase's work:

1. Identify at least three major contributions to the development of American BDSM culture.
2. Contrast a community perspective on the meaning of BDSM to "sex-negative" perspectives that may be found in the behavioral and biomedical sciences literatures today.

Soft Skills for Success in the Workplace and Kink Communities

Carolyn Meeker, Ed.D., SHRM-CP

Let's talk about what are "soft skills," and how we can apply them in both Kink community and workplace contexts. These soft skills include interpersonal, intellectual, and practical skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, creativity, planning, time management, self-awareness, self-confidence, ethical understanding, ability to cope with uncertainty, and willingness to accept responsibility.

We will discuss how this information is applicable to both professional workplace and community settings. This presentation will provide an overview of the scholarly literature on soft skills and related resources focused on workplace training and development. On the community side, we'll examine how these same concepts are embraced and taught in kink community educational settings such as the Leather Leadership Conference, CLAW, and other venues.

This presentation will enhance the cultural competency of clinicians who work with members of kink communities by highlighting the applicability of existing, clinically relevant approaches to problem solving present within kink communities, and helping to bridge "vanilla" and kink approaches to living a healthful and productive life.

Details

San Bernardino Room, Westin Bonaventure Hotel

Sunday, Nov. 26, 2023

10:00 -11:30 am

CE Credits: 1

Learning Objectives

1. Define soft skill.
2. Describe three types of soft skills that are taught to members of the BDSM/kink/leather community.
3. Describe at least two examples of soft skills may be used in both a workplace and community context.

The CARAS Mentoring Program

Carolyn Meeker, Ed.D., SHRM-CP

In 2015, CARAS began a mentoring program to help connect graduate students and early career professionals with more experienced researchers, faculty, and professionals. The goal of the program is to encourage the full development of the next generation of scholars and researchers addressing alternative sexualities communities, relationships, and family structures, and to help prepare professionals in health and other fields serve the needs of members of alternative sexualities communities. The mentoring program has also matched community members engaged in scholarly or professional projects (e.g., public health initiatives) that would benefit from a mentoring relationship.

This meeting is open to anyone who is interested in learning more about the CARAS Mentoring Program. We'll talk about program expectations and meet some current and former mentors and mentees. We will answer your questions about the program, and at the end of the session you should have an idea of how the CARAS mentoring program might benefit your current work addressing kink/BDSM/leather, related sex work, and consensual non-monogamies. If you think you might be interested in the program as a mentee or mentor, come join us!

Applications for the 2024 CARAS Mentoring Program are now open! For current information and to apply, please visit:

<https://www.carasresearch.org/mentoring>

Details

San Bernardino Room, Westin Bonaventure Hotel

Sunday, Nov. 26, 2023

2:00 -3:30 pm

CE Credits: n/a

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the goals of the CARAS Mentoring Program.
2. Describe expectations for mentors and mentees participating in the CARAS Mentoring Program.

Presenter Biography

Robert Bienvenu, Ph.D.	Rob Bienvenu, Ph.D. is a sociologist with over twenty years of federal research, research management, and regulatory affairs experience. His research has focused on two areas: health, and the history and social organization of kink communities. Rob is a co-founder of CARAS and serves as its Executive Director. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Leather Archives and Museum, and a member of the selection committee of the Leather Hall of Fame.
Barbara Bowley	Barbara Bowley is a retired Professor of anthropology completing her SHA certification in sexuality coaching and consulting.
Anthony Carey, Ph.D.	Professor Anthony Gene Carey teaches at Appalachian State University. He is working on a book, "Coming Out to Play: BDSM Culture in the United States from the 1960s to the 1990s."
Lee Clark	Lee Clark is a technology executive and founder of Logikbar, a Managed Service Provider for alternative art, thought and media. Co-presenters Barbara and Lee are active kinksters, bringing theory-informed participant/observer perspectives to kink.
Derek Cohen	Derek Cohen has spent over 40 years as an SM practitioner, educator and activist. He founded LHOFF Inductee SM Gays in 1981. Through that and as a trustee of The Spanner Trust he has been involved in campaigns to change the UK law on consensual BDSM and extreme pornography. Currently he manages a large online chastity community and, under the pseudonym Jacob Morrison, authored a BDSM erotic novel. Now retired, he has returned to university where he has completed a Masters; his dissertation was on the motivations and fallacies behind the search for the "gay gene". He is hoping to do a PhD researching the effect of current affairs and social media on the welfare of the parents of trans/gender-diverse children.
Rob Eagle, Ph.D.	Dr. Rob Eagle is a researcher, lecturer and director of documentary film and immersive media. He is currently a Teaching Fellow in Cultural and Creative Industries in the School of Performance and Creative Industries at the University of Leeds in the UK. His research has involved ethnographic research with young adults in the UK and Kazakhstan and has focused on representations of gender and queer sexualities in documentary. He is currently finishing post-production on 69, his first feature-length documentary as director, about the UK's oldest gay men's leather group, the Sixty Nine Club. To learn more about Rob, please visit https://robeagle.art/films and https://twitter.com/Rob_Eagle_
Shuyu Lin	Shuyu Lin received her BA in cognitive neuroscience from Washington University. She is interested in understanding how pain influences our perception of body, relationship and society. Her current research project is about the biopsychosocial model of pain in kink context.
Carolyn Meeker, Ed.D.	Carolyn Meeker, Ed.D. (she/her) serves as the Mentoring Program Director for the Community-Academic Consortium for Research on Alternative Sexualities (CARAS) and is active in the South Florida kink community. Carolyn also works as a corporate trainer for a law firm, after 20 years in higher education administration. Carolyn has an AA in Humanities from College of the Canyons, a BA in Spanish and an MEd in Counseling in Student Affairs from UCLA, and an EdD in Adult Education and Human Resource Development from Florida International University.
Rostom Mesli, Ph.D.	Rostom Mesli completed his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor in 2015. His dissertation and publications have focused on the articulation of sexuality and progressive politics in 1970s movements, particularly women's liberation, Black feminism, gay and lesbian liberation, and SM liberation. In 2010, he edited and co-translated the first collection of the works of Gayle Rubin, published in France under the title <i>Surveiller et Jouir</i> . Rostom is also a leather community member with keen interest in LGBTQ politics, and has served since 2018 as the Managing Director of the Leather Hall of Fame.

Bob Miller

Bob Miller, Esq., is the President and co-founder of CLAW Corp, and the founder and Director of the Leather Hall of Fame. He serves on the Boards of Leather Archives & Museum, International Mr. Leather and CARAS, and is the General Manager of Alphatribe USA. In 2016, Bob was awarded a life-time achievement award by the National LGBTQ Task Force for his years of service to the leather community. He is a lawyer, writer and a grass- roots progressive political organizer. He lives in Desert Hot Springs, California.

Douglas Thomas, Ph.D., LCSW

Douglas Thomas, PhD, LCSW is a Jungian-based psychotherapist specializing in LGBTQ+ issues, alternative sexualities, and dream therapy. He teaches as adjunct faculty at Pacifica Graduate Institute in Carpinteria, California. His new book, *The Deep Psychology of BDSM and Kink: Jungian and Archetypal Perspectives on the Soul's Transgressive Necessities* is now available from Routledge.

Kali Williams

One of the kink community's premier speakers and entrepreneurs, Kali Williams is the founder of KinkAcademy.com and the author of ten books and workbooks including *Enough to Make You Blush: Exploring Erotic Humiliation*. For twenty years, Kali has been deeply engaged in exploring the whys and hows of erotic humiliation and other misunderstood forms of kink play. Kali is a member of the CARAS Research Advisory Committee, and in 2022 was inducted into the Dominatrix Hall of Fame. With an international reputation among lifestyle and professional kinksters, she has dedicated her life to creating unique educational tools, workshops, and retreats to help consenting and creative adults explore sexual expression safely. You can discover more about her work at CoachingByKali.com

History of the C2C

Leather and Kink community events have long had an educational mission, dating from the first public SM organizations in the early 1970's, and from their beginnings these community events have included presentations by researchers, clinicians, and other scholars. Also, scholars interested in kink-leather communities have presented on these groups at various academic conferences since the late 1960's. More recently, academic conferences focused on alternative sexualities have had educational sessions or special-interest group meetings at concurrent leather community events, such the MOTE conference and International Mr. Leather (IML) in Chicago in 2019. However, prior to the C2C there has never been a complete integration of a major academic conference and a major community event, and CARAS is proud to have taken the lead, on the academic side, to make this possible.

The idea for the C2C originated in a series of conversations primarily between Bob Miller and Rob Bienvenu. Bob Miller, as co-founder and President of CLAW, and also Chair of the CARAS Board of Directors, was uniquely positioned to recognize the importance of this kind of collaboration and facilitate discussions between the two organizations. Rob Bienvenu, a co-founder and Executive Director of CARAS, saw this collaboration as a tremendous opportunity to implement the community-based model of research that has been part of the core mission of CARAS since its founding in 2005. We're very proud of the C2C, and look forward to further learning and development of the C2C over time, and to others adopting and expanding this model of community-academic collaboration!

C2C-West 2021, November 26-28, 2021, Los Angeles

Over Thanksgiving weekend 2021, integrated into the CLAW 21 event, CARAS hosted the first C2C. The event was held at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles, between Friday and Sunday, November 26-28, 2021. Vivienne Kramer, a CARAS Board member and distinguished community leader, managed the first C2C event. The conference was a great success, both professionally rewarding and fun for the participants, and from a practical organizational-logistical perspective demonstrated the viability of the concept. With this experience "under our belt," CARAS and CLAW agreed to continue the C2C collaboration in 2022. The event program can be downloaded from: https://caras-researchlink.org/c2c_west_2021_program

C2C-East 2022, April 29-May 1, 2022, Cleveland

In late 2021 CARAS assembled a team to plan and execute a second C2C as part of the CLAW 22 event in Cleveland. Carolyn Meeker, Director of the CARAS Mentoring Program, volunteered to serve as Project Coordinator for the C2C, with support from CARAS staff and volunteers as well as the superb CLAW team. It was another successful event, during which CARAS was designated as CLAW's Organization of the Year! The event program can be downloaded from: https://caras-researchlink.org/c2c_east_2022_program

C2C-West 2022, November 25-27, 2022, Los Angeles

In partnership with the the new CLAW Leather Getaway event, CARAS returned to Los Angeles to host the C2C over Thanksgiving weekend, 2022. The event program can be downloaded from: https://caras-researchlink.org/c2c_west_2022_program

C2C-East 2023, April 7-9, 2023, Cleveland

We welcomed Andrea Echols, who joined to CARAS team as a C2C Coordinator. The event program can be downloaded from: https://caras-researchlink.org/c2c_east_2023_program

C2C-West 2023, November 24-26, 2023, Los Angeles

Our current event! Please visit <https://carasresearch.org/c2c-west> for additional information.

C2C-East 2024, April 12-14, 2024, Cleveland

Forthcoming. To submit proposals and for more information, please visit <https://www.carasresearch.org/c2c-east>

About CARAS

Founded at the Leather Leadership Conference in 2005, CARAS is the leading community-based organization that actively supports leather & kink focused research across multiple scholarly disciplines, from clinical research to the humanities and fine arts. Some current CARAS programs are highlighted below. You can support CARAS by subscribing and volunteering — join the CARAS team to learn about and promote alt-sex research! Community members, students, academics, researchers, and clinicians are welcome.

For more information, please visit our website at <https://carasresearch.org>.

CARAS Mentoring Program

The CARAS Mentoring Program involves an eight-month one-on-one mentoring relationship. The program matches graduate students and early-career professionals in academic, research, counseling, and other alternative-sexualities related career paths with more advanced scholars and professionals. Mentors and mentees commit to talking at least once a month by video conference (e.g., Zoom), phone, or email during the eight-month duration of the mentoring program. Starting in 2023, CARAS will facilitate one mentoring cohort each year. The next cohort will commence in early 2024.

For more information and to apply, please visit: <https://carasresearch.org/mentoring>

CARAS History and Theory of Kink-BDSM Reading Group

The CARAS History and Theory of Kink-BDSM Reading Group meets monthly to discuss readings ranging from classical texts in sexological theory and literature addressing kink/BDSM, to modern topics including the DSM and current kink/leather communities. A cross between a literary salon and a graduate seminar, the reading group focuses on these texts and ideas from a unique angle in the study of sexualities. Join a diverse group of community members, students, academics, and clinicians to engage some of the most important and challenging texts in the history and theory of kink! Beginning in 2023, CARAS will host two distinct "semesters" of the Reading Group: a Modern semester starting in January-February to May-June, and a Classics semester, from August-December. The Classics semester offers Continuing Education (CE) credit for healthcare professionals.

For more information, please visit:

<https://caras-researchlink.org/reading-group-classics>

<https://caras-researchlink.org/reading-group-modern>

CARAS Education Program

The CARAS Education Program provides webinars and in-person educational sessions, organizes educational conferences such as the C2C, and co-sponsors educational events with other organizations. CARAS offers a webinar program that includes research and clinical topics, as well as presentations and workshops by community experts on a wide variety of topics that are of interest to alt-sex community members and scholars. Many CARAS webinars offer Continuing Education (CE) credit.

For more information, please visit: <https://caras-researchlink.org/education>



**Join us for the C2C-East 2024,
April 12-14, 2024 in Cleveland, Ohio!**

The Call for Proposals is open!

For more information, please visit:

<https://carasresearch.org/c2c-east>

