

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

C2C-East 2024 Program Summary

April 12-14, 2024
Cleveland, Ohio

Program Summary Version: March 23, 2024

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

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 7 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 sixth 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://www.carasresearch.org/c2c-east>

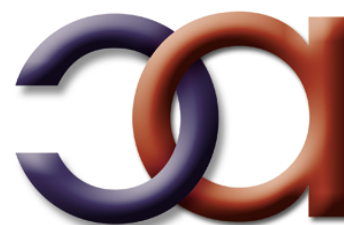
To download the current version of this program, please visit: https://caras-researchlink.org/c2c_east_2024_program

For Continuing Education (CE) program information and procedures, please visit: https://caras-researchlink.org/c2c_east_2024_ce-info

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

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

CARAS
PO Box 699
College Park, MD 20741



C2C-East 2024: Schedule at a Glance

TIME	SESSION	LEAD PRESENTER(S)
	Thursday, April 11, 2024	
8:00-9:00pm	Meet the Educators, CLAW 24 Renaissance Cleveland Hotel. Forest City Ballroom (3rd Floor)	Hosted by CLAW
	Friday, April 12, 2024	
9:00-9:30am	Friday, Nov 24, 2023: C2C Kickoff! Note: C2C educational sessions Friday-Sunday are in the Halle room, fourth floor of the Renaissance Cleveland Hotel.	CARAS Staff
9:30-10:30am	Theological Reflection as Methodology: Implications for Alternative Sexualities	Matt Sevier
11:00am-12:30pm	Kink, Aging, and Age-Discrepant Relationships: What are the issues? (1 CE)	Katherine King
12:00-4:00pm	<i>CARAS Booth at the CLAW Vendor Mart</i>	
2:00-4:00pm	Disentangling the Axes of BDSM (2 CE)	Brad Sagarin
4:30-6:00pm	CARAS and C2C Research: Community-Engaged Research Addressing Leather-Kink-BDSM-CNM Today.	Rob Bienvenu Katherine King
	Saturday, April 13, 2024	
9:30-10:30am	Radical Sexual Acceptance: A Novel Coaching Methodology Designed to Address LGBTQIA+ Challenges	Ezra Pryor
11:00am-12:30pm	Kink-Aware Therapy: How Do We Engage Geographic and Associated Cultural Diversity? (1 CE)	Andrea Echols
12:00-4:00pm	<i>CARAS Booth at the CLAW Vendor Mart</i>	
2:00-4:00pm	Exploring the World of Adult Male Spanking (2 CE)	Justin
4:30-6:00pm	The Death of Queer Community (But Can Sex Save It?)	James Laidler
	Sunday, April 14, 2024	
9:30-10:30am	Soft Skills for Success in the Workplace and Kink Communities (1 CE)	Carolyn Meeker
11:00am-12:30pm	I Like to Hurt: Reflections on Melanated Pain, Abjection, and Pleasure	Cristal Alba
12:00-2:00pm	<i>CARAS Booth at the CLAW Vendor Mart</i>	
2:00-3:30pm	Erotic Disgust	Mia Action
Poster	Re-Imagining Parallels of BDSM and Dance: The Impact of Care and Ethics of Consent	Surmani Sanford
For additional information about C2C East 2024 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_east_2024_ce-info		

Theological Reflection as Methodology: Implications for Alternative Sexualities

Matt Sevier, Ed.D., APRN-BC

This presentation will provide instruction in the use of theological reflection as a methodology for qualitative research with alternative sexuality populations. Works by Deleuze and Guattari, and Althaus-Reid will be presented as a theoretical basis. Selected examples from the literature will be used to show how theological reflection has been used to advance knowledge among populations including leather, ABDL, and BDSM from the viewpoints of varied religious traditions in both east and west.

Details

Halle Room, Fourth Floor,
Renaissance Cleveland Hotel

Friday, April 12, 2024

9:30 - 10:30 am

CE Credits: n/a

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the steps of doing theological review.
2. Explain Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "becoming."
3. Describe two elements of the "indecent theology" of Marcella Althaus-Reid.

Kink, Aging, and Age-Discrepant Relationships: What are the issues?

Katherine King, Psy.D.

Age is one of many factors that influences attraction, in part due to the many meanings ascribed to it. For many people, attitudes about age may be inextricably entwined with erotic scripts related to power, control, dependence, service, and other themes particularly common in kink, leather, and BDSM dynamics. For instance, a submissive, bottom, or other right-of-slash person may believe they could never submit to or serve a younger partner. An older Dominant, top, or other left-of-slash persons may prefer younger partners they believe they can more easily train. What attitudes or assumptions about youth and aging might be driving such preferences, and how should we relate to them in our relationships and communities?

Ageism involves prejudice or discrimination against older adults. Negative ageism shows up in demeaning attitudes, while positive or benevolent ageism tends to be idealizing (e.g., older adults are inherently wise). In contrast, adultism is reflected in beliefs that young people rightfully deserve less power or voice in society, and can show up in attitudes like “children should be seen and not heard.” Equating youth with beauty or vigor can be forms of benevolent adultism.

As with other sources of bias, ageism and adultism potentially appear within intimate romantic and sexual relationships. Age-discrepant relationships (ADRs), typically defined as relationships with a 10+ year age gap between partners, may enact such attitudes in ways that are harmful, but they may also hold clues for how to cultivate generational solidarity and overcome generational division and segregation as well.

People in age-discrepant relationships navigate significant stigma (e.g., assumptions about sexual deviance, exploitation, “mommy/daddy issues”). Research has also begun to reveal stigma management strategies used by people in such relationships as well. Less is known about the emotional, romantic, and sexual lives of people involved in ADRs, and what unique experiences, concerns, or strengths might be present.

This will be an interactive workshop where attendees will be invited to discuss their beliefs about and experiences with age-discrepant romantic and sexual relationships. Participants will explore their own age-related attitudes and assumptions, and potentially challenge their previously unexamined beliefs. We will also explore how kink, leather, and BDSM intersect with aging, and share ideas that might inform future research.

Details

Halle Room, Fourth Floor,
Renaissance Cleveland Hotel

Friday, April 12, 2024

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

CE Credits: 1

Learning Objectives

1. Evaluate how ageism and adultism may manifest within age-discrepant relationships.
2. Describe common stigma management strategies used by people in age-discrepant relationships.
3. Discuss potential moderating effects of leather-kink community context on ageism, adultism, and age-discrepant relationships.

Disentangling the Axes of BDSM

Brad Sagarin, Ph.D.

BDSM is an umbrella term that encompasses multiple axes including the role a person occupies in a BDSM scene (Top/Bottom /Switch), a person's positive relationship to pain (Sadist/Masochist), and a person's personality traits, psychological state, or relationship role (Dominant/Submissive). Although the BDSM axes are likely correlated, they are not synonymous. Thus, a Top in an BDSM scene might have a higher than chance probability of being a Sadist, but the probability is almost certainly below 1.

The goal of this presentation is to disentangle the axes of BDSM. Conflation of these axes has led to confusion among researchers and research participants, to imprecise measures, to the misclassification of participants in statistical analyses, and to weakened validity of the conclusions of our research.

I begin by defining the BDSM axes. I continue with a review of two past studies (one from our lab) in which conflation of these axes increased error in the statistical results and ambiguity in the conclusions. I then present data from a new study that examines the relationships among these axes demonstrating that, although the axes tend to correlate in expected ways, the correlations are far from perfect. Additional results suggest that one axis, sadism/masochism, isn't actually an axis at all, with sadism and masochism typically showing almost no correlation with each other.

Finally, results demonstrate that both Leaders and followers in Authority Transfer relationships show great diversity in their placement on the axes of BDSM, with a substantial number of followers reporting high levels of dominance, high levels of sadism, and a tendency to top in BDSM scenes, at least some of the time.

Details

Halle Room, Fourth Floor,
Renaissance Cleveland Hotel

Friday, April 12, 2024

2:00 - 4:00 pm

CE Credits: 2

Learning Objectives

1. Define the axes of BDSM and explain how these axes are typically assumed to be related to each other.
2. Explain two of the interpretational problems that can arise when researchers assume the axes of BDSM are synonymous.
3. Identify which axes of BDSM differ between Leaders and followers in Authority Transfer relationships and what the distributions of scores on the axes look like within each group.

CARAS and C2C Research: Community-Engaged Research Addressing Leather-Kink-BDSM-CNM Today.

Rob Bienvenu, Ph.D.
Katherine King, Psy.D.

This session will provide an overview of alternative sexualities research, and an introduction to studies addressing leather/kink/BDSM/consensual non-monogamies (CNM) that are currently being conducted at CLAW, with support from CARAS.

Join us to see what cutting edge, community-engaged research addressing the leather community looks like and meet the researchers! We will be happy to address any questions you may have about research, including how to volunteer.

Details

Halle Room, Fourth Floor,
Renaissance Cleveland Hotel

Friday, April 12, 2024

4:30 - 6:00 pm

CE Credits: n/a

Learning Objectives

1. Describe two features of community-engaged research addressing alternative sexualities.
2. Describe research currently being conducted at CLAW.

Radical Sexual Acceptance: A Novel Coaching Methodology Designed to Address LGBTQIA+ Challenges

Ezra Pryor

Have you or your clients ever felt stuck or alone on the journey of acceptance? Join Mx. Ezra Pryor (AKA Sir Ezra) as they discuss the scientific background, observed trends, and the future of their work developing a novel coaching methodology called Radical Sexual Acceptance. Learn about coaching as a distinct mental health approach, and some of the particular issues that affect leather/BDSM/kink populations that are not well addressed in conventional coaching practice.

In this session we will examine coaching as a distinct health intervention. We will look at strengths and weaknesses of coaching, in terms of the training coaches may receive addressing sexualities and current practice. We will focus on mental health issues that particularly affect kink/leather/BDSM clients, and more broadly LGBTQIA+ populations. The session will include a description and discussion of on-going work, including research, to develop a coaching methodology that will better meet the needs of these populations.

Details

Halle Room, Fourth Floor,
Renaissance Cleveland Hotel

Saturday, April 13, 2024

9:30 - 10:30 am

CE Credits: n/a

Learning Objectives

1. Describe three key attributes of coaching as a distinct mental health intervention.
2. Describe two issues affecting kink/leather/BDSM populations that are not well addressed in conventional coaching training and practice.
3. Assess Radical Sexual Acceptance as a distinct approach to coaching for LGBTQIA+ populations.

Kink-Aware Therapy: How Do We Engage Geographic and Associated Cultural Diversity?

Andrea Echols, M.Ed., LPC, NCC

Effective "Kink-Aware Therapy" -- is it the same in New York City, San Francisco, and ... Birmingham, Alabama? Perhaps not, but if not what are the differences from both a client and clinician perspective? This session will provide an overview and definition of "Kink-Aware Therapy". We will focus on questions of how geographic and associated cultural differences -- such as political affiliation, religiosity, regional cultural variations on the conservative-liberal spectrum, and others -- can substantively alter the environment in which kink-aware theory is conducted. This potentially has broad implications for tailoring culturally appropriate therapeutic experiences for clients, and also for training therapists to be kink-aware with recognition that a "one size fits all" approach may not be appropriate.

The theoretical lens through which this presentation is framed is Minority Stress Theory, which provides a framework for understanding how sexual minority populations specifically are affected by environmental stressors. The Minority Stress Theory theoretical framework has been successfully applied in the study of LGBT populations, and a small, recent literature extends this to kink-leather-BDSM populations. The focus here is on effects of kink sexual minority status in a clinical setting, particularly where this has concrete implications for clients, in selecting health care providers, and clinicians, in providing therapy that is attuned to both the individual and social circumstances of the client.

This session will explore literature to highlight the current issues within healthcare -- stigma, lack of counselor training in kink counseling, and the effects of counselor's values within the therapeutic relationship. The literature discussed will be the foundation to inform attendees of the importance of effective "Kink-Aware Therapy".

At the end of this session, attendees are encouraged to offer the presenter feedback as community members and/or researchers to better inform the discussed materials.

Details

Halle Room, Fourth Floor,
Renaissance Cleveland Hotel

Saturday, April 13, 2024

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

CE Credits: 1

Learning Objectives

1. Describe two examples of Minority Stress Theory as applied to the study of kink populations.
2. Identify three current issues kink individuals experience within healthcare settings and possible effects of the current issues kink individuals experience.

Exploring the World of Adult Male Spanking

Justin and Trevor

Consultant: Katherine King, Psy.D.

This presentation provides an in-depth review of the adult male spanking kink community, informed by survey, interview, and archival data from community members. The presentation is framed by principles from the Clinical Practice Guidelines for Working with People with Kink Interests (from the Kink Clinical Practice Guidelines Project).

The presentation focuses on eight key topics: What is the relationship between spanking and other kink communities; What are the historical origins of adult male spanking as a kink; what are the personal journeys and motivations of those who engage in adult male spanking play, as they discover, understand, and participate in it; what is the relationship between pain, power, and pleasure in producing meaningful play experiences; how are issues related to safety and consent negotiated within the community, and what are best practices for safe play; what are the different typologies of spanking play, and how does each vary in its goals and practices; what are the necessary components for an effective scene (conceptualized here as trust and safety; scene setup before, during, and after play; headspace; and proficiency with technique); and how is the community expressed and represented, such as through the arts, events, social networks, and more.

Integrated through the presentation are focused discussions of application to professional practice, identifying ideas that may be of value when working with clients who express a curiosity or involvement in the community.

At the conclusion of this presentation, attendees will see the world of adult male spanking as a multifaceted community with many different forms of play, many different understandings of what it means to be a spanko, and many different types of expression.

Details

Halle Room, Fourth Floor,
Renaissance Cleveland Hotel

Saturday, April 13, 2024

2:00 - 4:00 pm

CE Credits: 2

Learning Objectives

1. Explain the historical development of the contemporary adult male spanking community.
2. Describe three factors that influence peoples' engagement with adult male spanking.
3. Evaluate the role of safety, power, pain, headspace, technique, and aftercare in adult male spanking practices.

The Death of Queer Community (But Can Sex Save It?)

James Laidler

Successive studies have shown that connection and our sense of belonging is vital to our mental health; community is at the very core of our being. However, we never hear the terms “straight community” or “white community”, so why do we use the term “queer community?” Two words that are difficult enough to define separately, let alone in combination.

In this presentation, we’ll explore how queer people’s concept of community is defined by the dominant culture, rooted in straight privilege and white supremacy, and reinforced through shame. As well as exploring the types of communities that emerge from alternate sexualities, we’ll explore how improvements in legal status and social protections have, paradoxically, served to isolate alt-sex individuals from each other.

New, emerging research will also be presented for the first time that shows a peculiar theme among gay men: A constant battle to find community yet either unable to recognize when they’ve found it or acting in ways to sabotage it.

Strategies will be shared for building authentic connection, supporting healthy community development, and harnessing alternate sexual identities for positive well-being.

Details

Halle Room, Fourth Floor,
Renaissance Cleveland Hotel

Saturday, April 13, 2024

4:30 - 6:00 pm

CE Credits: n/a

Learning Objectives

1. Define "community" and its various manifestations.
2. Identify ways that queer community has shifted and eroded.
3. Apply strategies to foster authentic connections and leverage protective factors.

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

Halle Room, Fourth Floor,
Renaissance Cleveland Hotel

Sunday, April 14, 2024

9:30 -10:30 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. Identify and discuss two soft skills used in the workplace that you can apply in a kink context, or vice versa.

I Like to Hurt: Reflections on Melanated Pain, Abjection, and Pleasure

Cristal Alba

In the past decade, queer of color scholarship has situated abjection within discussions of pleasure and sexuality. Leading the conversation, Darieck Scott asks, “is there anything of value to be learned from the experience of being defeated, humiliated, objected?” (2010, 6). This workshop seeks to explore the ways in which pain, abjection, and pleasure shift away from homonormative agendas that sanitize, cleans, and erase racialized and gendered bodies. Rather, we will focus on complicating the binary between subjectivity and objectivity to find abjecthood as an ‘other’ site for recuperating constellations of queer potentialities that shift beyond heteronormative captivity.

Centering sex and the erotic, this workshop will build on the existing work of queer of color theorists discussing pleasure and abjection to analyze the ways in which BDSM practices create opportunities for us to interrogate social and political power inequities. More importantly, shifting from theoretical considerations, this workshop will allow participants the opportunity to reflect on their own personal sexual practices, while collectively investigating the capacity for healing and care found in consented abjection and sadism.

As a practicing rope sadist and pleasure organizer, I will implement a writing collective exercise used in my seven years of erotic and community-based work. This exercise asks participants to anonymously share erotic experiences to build a collective wall constellation and exploration of power, consent, and pleasure as connected to histories of violence and harm.

Details

Halle Room, Fourth Floor,
Renaissance Cleveland Hotel

Sunday, April 14, 2024

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

CE Credits: n/a

Learning Objectives

1. Discuss complexities of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) relationships to BDSM, and its association to histories of colonization and violence.
2. Describe how BDSM may present an opportunity for exploration of selfhood.
3. Describe how to name individual desires and develop boundaries for ongoing negotiation as the first step to actualizing our desires.

Erotic Disgust

Mia Action

Disgust, fear, and shame are evolutionary mechanisms that protect us from contamination, bodily harm, and social ostracization. In regards to sex, it is theorized that “sexual arousal is a motivational state” that encourages sexual contact despite the innate risk of disease transmission.

Paradoxically, some people engage in sexual fantasies and practices that seem to contradict an evolutionary predisposition toward safety and self-preservation. These include what can be termed “disgust-based fetishes,” evoking disgust, fear, or shame, which people not only tolerate but seek out. This presentation will focus on these disgust-based fetishes, from both a community and scientific perspective.

I will describe how these interests generally manifest (whether through fantasy, roleplay, or actual behavior) via first-person accounts, as well as discuss the particular importance of context for arousal in this population.

Some people with disgust-based fetishes have to overcome their physiological disgust response mentally. In the case of “full toilet” fetishists, who desire the consumption of feces and urine, many experience a typical disgust response and develop strategies to complete their desired goal and achieve sexual gratification, while others seem to have an altered response to stimuli that would typically be perceived as “disgusting.”

Other examples include people who have a “bug chasing” fetish and seek out scenarios that create or mimic the conditions of potential disease transmission through condomless sex. Blackmail fetishists may seek gratification through activities that feel shameful and are potentially harmful to the individual’s social and material well-being.

The scientific and clinical literatures generally do a poor job of characterizing these fetishes, and we will examine how such practices and fantasies are classified in the current DSM-5-TR and ICD-11.

With all edgeplay kink, there are safety and ethical quandaries attached to these forms of sexual expression. I will unpack the implications and address the nuances involved in negotiating risk, reward, and consent. This lecture offers experience-based illustrations of these understudied and often misunderstood fetishes within a morally neutral framework.

Details

Halle Room, Fourth Floor,
Renaissance Cleveland Hotel

Sunday, April 14, 2024

2:00 -3:30 pm

CE Credits: n/a

Learning Objectives

1. Describe four examples of disgust fetishes.
2. Describe how “disgust fetishes” tend to be characterized in the current mental health literature.
3. Explain how disgust fetishists may utilize consent models and risk profiles, or the weighing of risks and rewards.

C2C Scientific Posters

Re-Imagining Parallels of BDSM and Dance: The Impact of Care and Ethics of Consent

The amount of pain that movement artists are subjected to, especially flexible bodies of color create a concern of care. When it comes to black bodies partaking in embodied practices having agency over one's body and navigating consent may be in or out of their control.

In this presentation I am challenge the ethics of consent in dance spaces particularly when it comes to black bodies. Black bodies are continuously threatened, surveilled, policed and subjected to non consensual pain everyday. Situating care for folx with intergenerational physical and psychological trauma interwoven with white supremacy requires an extreme act of repair.

The purpose for this presentation is to unpack the nuances of pain regulation and how they are quite similar to how bodies participate in BDSM/kink practices. I will be looking at parallels of consent to pain amongst the dance community in relation to the BDSM community. In addition I will be analyzing communication practices within the dance and BDSM community when it comes to consent and safety. I will be asking questions around agency, impact, and risk awareness.

Surmani Sanford

I hope to create a framework of creating more conversation around consent and risk awareness in dance studies. As BDSM does have its flaws, I would argue it leads with consent and risk awareness in the forefront of its practices because of the nature of the work that dance studies could benefit from.

Presenter Biography

Mia Action	Mia Action is a Philadelphia and South New Jersey-based Dominatrix, community organizer, and kink educator. She is the founder of The Power Exchange Roundtable, a support group for people into Dominant/submissive relationships. As an educator, Mia is passionate about sadomasochism, power exchange, and working with the public on kink literacy.
Cristal Alba	Cristal Alba is a graduate student in UCSD's PhD in Ethnic Studies Program. Their work centers BDSM and pornography in relation to BIPoC conceptions of self thru pain. Beyond their academic work, they perform and provide BDSM services under the name, Calba, specifically as a rope sadist and pornography model. They are also the co-founder of the Chicago-based BDSM collective and porn production house, House of Huitlacocho.
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.
Andrea Echols, M.Ed., LPC, NCC	Andrea Echols, M.Ed., LPC, NCC, is a kink-aware licensed professional counselor in Alabama that is working toward a Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision. She graduated with a BS in Psychology, then earned a M.Ed. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from the University of Montevallo. Currently, she is working toward a Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision at the University of Alabama. Andrea is also the Human Research Protections Program (HRPP) Coordinator for CARAS and a member of the CARAS Institutional Review Board (IRB).
Justin	Justin is a lifelong participant in the adult male spanking community and is co-author of the book, <i>Bad Lads, Strict Sirs, and the World of Adult Male Spanking</i> . He has experience in many aspects of the community, including events, mentoring, teaching, and writing.
Katherine King, PsyD	Katherine King, PsyD (she/they) is a clinical psychologist and sex therapist with advanced specialized training in geropsychology. She is an Associate Professor and Geropsychology Concentration Director in the clinical psychology doctoral program at William James College. Dr. King is a member of the American Psychological Association's Division 44 BDSM Task Force and Committee on Consensual Nonmonogamy. Dr. King is also a member of the CARAS Institutional Review Board (IRB), and a facilitator of the CARAS Reading Group.
James Laidler	James Laidler is a British Academy Award-winning journalist and certified life coach. He's founder of Pointerway, which brings together experts on queer life to provide coaching to individuals and couples/polycules, as well as training for clinicians who wish to develop their practice with LGBTQ+ people.
Carolyn Meeker, Ed.D.	Carolyn Meeker, Ed.D., SHRM-CP, (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.
Ezra Pryor	Ezra Pryor, AKA Sir Ezra Algos, is a Certified Professional Coach at AskEzra.info. They identify as non-binary, polyamorous, pansexual, and kinky. Ezra has more than 10 years experience as a polyamorous lifestyle Dominant. They also co-founded the Triskelion Scholarship for BDSM Education, which is currently in its fourth year. Ezra authored <i>Mindfucking Mindfully</i> and more recently <i>The Path Through a book of paintings and poetry on the subject of trauma and healing</i> . Ezra is the host of the Ask Ezra Intimacy Coaching Podcast. They are the founder of Radical Sexual Acceptance.

**Brad Sagarin,
Ph.D.**

Dr. Brad Sagarin is a professor of social and evolutionary psychology at Northern Illinois University and the head of the Science of BDSM Research Team (www.scienceofbds.com). Brad studies social influence, resistance to persuasion, deception, jealousy, infidelity, human sexuality, and statistics. Brad has been published in a variety of scholarly journals, has given radio, television, and podcast interviews, has consulted for radio and television programs, and has delivered invited lectures to academic and non-academic organizations. His research has been cited in newspapers and magazines, including *The Economist* and *New Scientist*. He holds Doctorate and Master's degrees in Social Psychology from Arizona State University, and a Baccalaureate degree in Computer Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Surmani Sanford

Sur's research is concerned with the amount of pain that movement artists are subjected to in dance spaces, challenge the ethics of consent and care in dance, memory of black theatrics in regard to spectacle and the power of visible/invisible bruises that create discourse amongst the black moving bodies.

**Matt Sevier, Ed.D.,
APRN-BC**

Matt Sevier, EdD, APRN-BC is a nurse practitioner and psychoanalyst from Nashville, TN with additional training from Princeton Theological Seminary. His research focuses on ageplay & ABDL, with special interests in littlespace and spiritual aspects.

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. CARAS currently facilitates one mentoring cohort each year. The next cohort will commence in early 2025.

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! CARAS currently hosts two distinct "semesters" of the Reading Group: a Modern semester from February-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 educational events include 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 educational events offer Continuing Education (CE) credit.

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

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 the 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

The event program can be downloaded from: https://caras-researchlink.org/c2c_west_2023_program

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

Our current event! For the latest information, please visit: <https://www.carasresearch.org/c2c-east>

