

# THE CONNECTIONS STAR

Connections at Project Harmony Newsletter



## DBT Skills Groups

BY CIERRA SVAGERA AND ERIKA RODRIGUEZ

Connections is offering a new group this year! Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Skills group has shown to be effective in helping youth manage difficult situations, cope with stress, and make better decisions. This group is a modified and condensed version for in school and has 12 sessions. There are 3 different track options which are: Anger/Aggression, Stress/Anxiety, and Self-harm/Suicide. This group is geared towards middle school aged youth and older. We currently have 24 therapists trained to facilitate this group.

Connections is excited to offer this new group model to our partners this year!



## Therapist Spotlight

BY JACKIE LORENSEN

Connections is honored to show off the talented therapists that contract with our program. This month we are featuring Zabrina Holmes, MA, LMHP, therapist with Release, Inc. Zabrina has contracted with the Connections program since 2021 has served approximately 30 clients. She has over 18 years of experience working with children and families and specializes in working with children with emotional disabilities, behavioral difficulties and those who have had a severe disruption in the family system. Additionally, she has extensive experience in trauma, grief and loss, suicide prevention, child sexual abuse prevention, special education and advocacy and crisis management.



In September, Connections staff and therapists were offered the opportunity to participate in a Cultural Competency training, "How Bias Impacts our Work," created and facilitated by Zabrina.

We asked a few of the Connections staff members what they thought of the training and here are some of their responses:

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**Connections**  
at Project Harmony



"Zabrina provided really good insight about things I hadn't necessarily thought about before. I definitely feel like I gained more cultural awareness, which I can now use in my work with minority families. My goal is always to serve our clients in the best way possible, and Zabrina's training made me feel more confident in my ability to do so." -Halle Stichler

"The training made me more self-aware about how our implicit biases play a bigger role in our thinking and actions. Now, being more self-aware, I can catch myself changing my behavior to a more positive one."  
-Jess Trinidad

Thank you, Zabrina, for this amazing training and for all you do to serve Connections children and families.

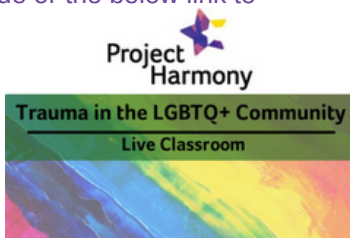
## LGBTQ+ Trainings and Resources

BY LINDSEY STEVENS

From the Stonewall Riots to marriage equality, the past few decades have been very progressive for the LGBTQ+ community. While great strides have been made, the members of the LGBTQ+ community still face many adversities. Some of these adversities can result in trauma that affects the daily lives of individuals. The Project Harmony Training team has developed a new training, "Trauma in the LGBTQ+ Community," to inform participants of best practices related to working with individuals in the LGBTQ+ community including proper terminology to use as well as recognizing and understanding community-specific traumas.

In addition to this newly developed training, the training team has developed an online resource to assist professionals and families in understanding why gender affirming language is so important. Please use the QR code or the below link to access this resource.

<https://app.7taps.com/7BArs0GwhoQ>



## Connections New Employee Spotlights

BY HALLE STICHLER

Here are some new faces at Connections.

### Morgan Berg- Individual MHC

Morgan Berg is a recent addition to the Connections program. She graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in May of 2022 with a degree in Psychology, and she is currently pursuing her Master's of Social Work at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Previously, she worked with at-risk youth at the CEDARS Emergency Shelter. In her role as an Individual Mental Health Coordinator, Morgan hopes to guide and support families, as well as assist them in getting connected with local therapists who can provide the appropriate early intervention and mental health services. Morgan is originally from West Fargo, ND. During her free time, she enjoys visiting Lake Ashtabula with her family. FUN FACT: Morgan is an avid movie watcher!



988

## Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

988 has been designated as the new three-digit dialing code that will route callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. While some areas may be currently able to connect to the Lifeline by dialing 988, this dialing code will now be available to everyone across the United States.

The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources and best practices for professionals.

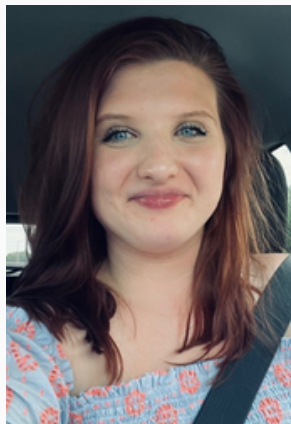
Visit [www.988lifeline.org](http://www.988lifeline.org) for more information and resources.





**Jessica Trinidad - School Liaison**

Jessica Trinidad was previously an Individual and Group Mental Health Coordinator, but has since taken on a new role within Connections as the School Liaison. While she's already been with the program for four years, she hopes that this new role will allow her to build closer relationships with schools and their personnel (more specifically, school counselors and social workers). She is hopeful that Connections clients will be better served as a result of these relationships. In her free time, Jessica enjoys hiking and walking, as well as spending time with her dog. FUN FACT: Jessica's favorite food is pizza!



**Halle Stichler - Individual MHC**

Halle Stichler is an Individual Mental Health Coordinator with Connections. She graduated in May 2022 from the University of Nebraska at Omaha with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology. Previously, she was employed with Catholic Charities of Omaha as a Domestic Violence Advocate in their emergency shelter. As an Individual MHC, Halle hopes to foster meaningful connections with families and support them as they navigate mental health services. Halle is passionate about people, and is hopeful that her commitment to her clients will result in better outcomes for them. She also hopes to build good relationships and rapport with the clinicians in Connections' provider network. In her free time, Halle loves to spend time spoiling her puppy, Willow Mae. FUN FACT: Halle is interested in studying forensic psychology, and she's a huge Taylor Swift fan!



**Montana Garcia - Connections Intern**

Montana Garcia is an Intern with Connections for the 2022-23 school year! Her preferred pronouns are she/her. As a senior at Creighton University, she studies both Social Work and Justice and Peace Studies; she joined the Connections team as part of her practicum. Previously, Montana has primarily worked with children of middle and high school ages. Now, being apart of Connections, she is excited to work with families – specifically parents of young children. While here, Montana wants to become more comfortable with working alone with clients. She also hopes to further develop the skills she's already learned while in the classroom. Her overall goal is to leave feeling more confident in her abilities as a social worker. In her free time, Montana enjoys spending time with her friends! They like to visit various coffee shops (what she refers to as "coffee shop-hopping") in Omaha to find new study spaces and hang-out spots. FUN FACT: Montana enjoys listening to music and is always curating new Spotify playlists!

# Spooky Season

BY LAURA JOHNSON

The leaves. The pumpkin spice. The crisp fall air. 'Tis spooky season around Omaha. Luckily for our community there is no shortage of free family events.

At Ditmars Orchard & Vineyard, there are free Halloween movies every Friday night.

- Oct. 14: ET
- Oct. 21 Beetlejuice
- Oct. 28: Ghostbusters

In addition to some sunset spooky movies families can enjoy several free trick-or-treat Halloween events.

- Trunk-or-Treat- Oct 13, from 5-9 PM, Quaker Steak and Lube in Council Bluffs
- Goodwill Omaha Trunk-or-Treat OCT. 15, 4:30-6 PM
  - A trick-or- treat event at Chick-fil-a on 72nd & Sorensen
- Baseballoween- Oct. 21 5-8 pm, Werner Park
- Halloween Boo Bash- Oct. 22, 3-5 p.m. at Village Pointe
- Trick-or-treat at Rockbrook Village- Oct. 29, 2-3:30 pm

In short, Omaha and surrounding areas have many free and family friendly events. Happy hauntings.