

Assessment and Treatment of Co-Occurring Severe Mental Illness and Developmental Disabilities

With Dr. Laura Anderson | Tuesday, June 16th, 2026

A FREE training presented by Alameda County Behavioral Health Department and A Better Way

Course Objectives

- 1.) Identify key differential diagnostic considerations among severe mental illness, developmental disabilities, trauma-related conditions, and neurodevelopmental disorders across the lifespan.
- 2.) Describe 3 common assessment challenges and diagnostic pitfalls, including diagnostic overshadowing and masking.
- 3.) Apply 2 adapted CBT, DBT, and integrative treatment strategies for clients with developmental delays and co-occurring psychiatric conditions.
- 4.) Discern the impact of trauma and substance use disorders within this population and identify 2 appropriate intervention approaches.
- 5.) Develop 3 practical, trauma-informed, and developmentally appropriate treatment plans for complex clients across systems of care.

This course provides clinicians with a practical, developmentally informed framework for assessing and treating individuals with complex and overlapping presentations involving severe mental illness (SMI), developmental delays and intellectual/developmental disabilities, neurodevelopmental differences, trauma-related symptoms, and co-occurring substance use disorders. Participants will explore differential diagnosis across the lifespan, with attention to how psychiatric symptoms may present differently in children, adolescents, transition-age youth, adults, and aging populations whose developmental functioning may differ from their chronological age. Special emphasis will be placed on trauma-informed assessment, adaptive functioning, and the clinical challenges that arise when developmental and psychiatric conditions coexist.

The course will integrate evidence-informed approaches for treatment planning and intervention, including adapted CBT, DBT, motivational interviewing, behavioral and sensory-informed strategies, and systems-based care coordination. Through case examples and applied discussion, participants will learn practical methods for assessing risk, supporting emotional regulation, addressing behavioral escalation, collaborating across systems of care, and tailoring interventions to meet the cognitive, emotional, and communication needs of complex clients.

Audience: Alameda County Behavioral Health Department (ACBH) clinical staff and contracted CBO providers are welcome. Capacity is limited. Open until filled.

Dr. Laura S. Anderson is a clinical child and family psychologist who is licensed in Hawaii and California, and she has worked with youth and families for over twenty years. Dr. Anderson is currently based primarily in Hawaii. Her areas of expertise include school-based behavioral health, assessment, support for adoptive families, support for gender expansive youth and their families, foster care consultation, and the provision of cross-culturally sensitive care. She is lucky to have had wonderful clinical mentors and enjoys teaching others things she has learned "in the trenches" of direct service to children, adolescents, families, schools, and various other agencies. Dr. Anderson enjoys working with kids, families, and systems as they overcome barriers, build on their strengths, and thrive.



Private code to register:

eqx3yl

Tuesday, June 16th | Presented on Zoom

10:00am-4:30pm | Online Waiting Room Opens at 9:45am

Online Course | Zoom link sent 2 days before course

5 CE's available for: LCSW, LMFT, LEP, and LPCC

TO REGISTER

Click below to sign up & register:

<https://training.abetterwayinc.net/courses/8446>

A Better Way is approved by the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT) to sponsor 5 Continuing Education for LCSW, LMFT, LPCC, LEP (62361). The California Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) recognizes CAMFT Continuing Education credit for license renewal. A Better Way maintains responsibility for this program and its content. Attendees must attend entire course for CE credit.

For accommodations or grievances, contact: Trainings@abetterwayinc.net | (510) 913-1326