

Speaker Bios/Additional Info

AnneMoss Rogers has lived the ultimate tragedy and become a mental health and suicide education expert, professional speaker, trainer, and consultant. After her 20-year-old son, Charles' to suicide as a result of depression and addiction in 2015, AnneMoss chronicled her family's tragedy in a newspaper article that went viral, and her blog, Emotionally Naked, has reached millions. She is the author of the award-winning memoir, *Diary of a Broken Mind* and the best seller, *Emotionally Naked: A Teacher's Guide to Preventing Suicide and Recognizing Students at Risk* with co-writer Dr. Kimberly O'Brien. She has been a TEDx speaker, was featured in the *New York Times*, *Variety Magazine*, and was the first non-clinician invited to speak on youth suicide at the National Institute of Mental Health. A UNC-Chapel Hill alumna, Anne Moss currently lives in Richmond, VA. Her surviving son is a filmmaker in LA.

Melisa Atkeson, LCSW - Melisa is the founder of Wise Mind Psychotherapy. She works with adolescents, adults, couples, and families. She treats people who have anxiety, depression, trauma, grief, parent-child issues, self-injury, disordered eating behaviors, and relationship difficulties. She has a special interest in people who struggle to regulate emotions. Melisa views therapy as an opportunity for people to learn, gain insight, and practice skills.

Melisa has been helping people solve problems for 30 years: first as a high school math teacher, next in tech sector sales and marketing, and for 15 years as a psychotherapist. Prior to private practice, she worked in foster and adoptive care teaching parenting classes and working with at-risk adolescents. She also worked at a local residential treatment center facilitating adolescent and multifamily therapy groups. She worked in a group practice before founding Wise Mind, where she has assembled an amazing team of therapists.

In addition to a master's in clinical social work from Virginia Commonwealth University, Melisa has degrees in Mathematics and Education from Auburn University. Melisa lives in northern Virginia with her family and a menagerie of animals.

Dona Rodgers, Co-Founder, President - Dona Rodgers, mother of Morgan, is Co-Founder, Board Chairwoman and President of Morgan's Message, Inc. She grew up in Connecticut and graduated from James Madison University where she was a member of the gymnastics team before early retirement due to injury. She had the privilege of raising three children, Austin, Aberle and Morgan, before managing The Retreat at Eastwood, an event venue in Warrenton, Virginia. She currently resides in Warrenton with her husband, Kurt.

Shannon Heath Parkin MS CPRS (she/her/hers) received the Transforming Lived Experience Award from the American Association of Suicidology in 2022. Shannon works at On Our Own Frederick County as a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist. Shannon has presented her recovery story more than 50 times across the US including speaking to multiple faith communities and in classes at Wesley Theological Seminary. Shannon co-presented with Reverend C. Michele Johns LICSW on How Faith Communities Can Welcome and Support Suicide Attempt Survivors at the MD Suicide Prevention Conference in 2021. Speaking of Suicide, Washington Post, and USA Today have published Shannon's writings.

James Harris is a licensed mental health professional (LPC), Virginia State university (VSU) adjunct professor, Army veteran, and a multi-entrepreneur. James has had previous experience working in community-based services in inner cities and currently owns The HEALing Hub (@the_healing_hub-rva) which offers outpatient therapy, massages, yoga, mindfulness, seminars (financial literacy, first time homebuying, veteran seminars, voter education, restoration of rights, LGBTQ+ to name a few) toiletry drives, school supply drives, and feed the less fortunate every third Saturday. Additionally, James started the international movement called “Men to Heal,” which assists boys/men in focusing on their overall wellness; MENTal, emotional, and physical HEALth, and has captured the attention of celebrities, athletes, and politicians. James has also authored a book titled “Man Just Express Yourself” which is an interactive guide for MEN, young and old and the creator of a board game called “Cheesy Dates,” a tool to enhance communication in friendships and relationships.

Alan Rasmussen, Prevention Manager, Encompass Community Supports - Alan has worked with ECS since October 16, 2003 with a focus on suicide and substance abuse prevention. Alan is Board of Counseling Licensed as a Qualified Mental Health Professional to work with Adults and Children. Alan has been a professor for the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies Program at the University of Virginia since 2002. He teaches two (3) liberal studies seminars entitled **Good Cop/Bad Cop**, **An Examination of the Criminal Justice System** and **Community Perspectives in Mental Health Disorders**. Alan was previously employed as Chief Probation and Parole Officer for the Virginia Department of Corrections from February 16, 1976 until he retired on September 1, 2003. He worked as the Chief Probation and Parole Officer of the Charlottesville and Culpeper Adult Probation and Parole Offices during his tenure. Alan graduated from the University of Virginia in 1975 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology and in 1977 with a master’s degree in Counselor Education.