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## PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

*The Advocacy Institute Is Pleased to Present*

### **Stress, Secondary Trauma and Race Equity Issues in Child Welfare Litigation Practice**

**November 20, 2023  
3:00 p.m. - 4:40 p.m.**

## WEBINAR

### *Program Summary*

Helping others is the backbone of the meaningful work Department of Children and Families deputies perform daily in their child welfare litigation practice. Public service gives an attorney's work purpose, but carrying the weight of their victims, cases, or other important justice initiatives such as race equity causes stress and trauma, which exacts a heavy toll on an attorney's mental and physical well-being. Secondary trauma is caused by indirect exposure to the trauma of others, and it can develop into secondary traumatic stress, which manifests itself in many ways. This presentation will cover how secondary trauma uniquely affects DCF practice group attorneys, including the risk factors for and symptoms of secondary trauma. The presenter will also provide guidance on coping strategies and institutional support that can reduce the effects of secondary trauma on DCF deputies.

### *Eligibility*

This program is only open to Deputy and Assistant Attorneys General in the DCF practice group.

### *Faculty*

**Dr. Ariane Thomas** is a licensed clinical psychologist and attorney whose work integrates the disciplines of psychology and law. Dr. Thomas' passion is providing stress management supports for individuals in the legal profession. For judges, early career attorneys, and even those with extensive experience, the challenges and stressors associated with the practice of law are distinct and can impact both their personal and professional lives. Supporting legal professionals with opportunities to debrief and process their experiences in discrete, supportive environments enhances their work satisfaction and improves their professional practice. It can also reduce stress levels, organizational discord, and turnover. Dr. Thomas' knowledge of psychology and law enables her to contribute to a healthier more functional system of justice for those she works with.

Dr. Thomas is a faculty member of the University of Pennsylvania's School of Mental Health Counseling, where she has taught a variety of courses including Counseling Ethics, an Internship Seminar and the Advanced Psychology of Women. In addition to her role as a Lecturer in Educational Practice, she is the Associate Director for Professional Training, coordinating internship placements for students training to become Licensed Professional Counselors. In her classes, Dr. Thomas emphasizes to students that issues of social justice, including ensuring that counseling services are accessible to marginalized communities, are values at the very foundation of ethical counseling practice.

Dr. Thomas also maintains a private psychotherapy practice working with individuals confronting a variety of challenges, including depression, anxiety, work stress, relationship issues, racial stress, and racial identity development. Dr. Thomas dedicates part of her time in her private practice to the cost-free treatment of military veterans with trauma disorders and other mental health issues through the organization Give an Hour. She also offers sliding scale and cost-free treatment for Black Lives Matter protesters. Dr. Thomas received an M.A. and a Psy.D. from the Institute for Graduate Clinical Psychology at Widener University, and simultaneously earned a J.D. from the Widener University School of Law in Delaware.

### *CLE Credit*

**NJ CLE Credit:** This program has been approved by the Board on Continuing Legal Education of the Supreme Court of New Jersey for 2.0 hours of Alternative Verifiable Learning Format (AVF) total CLE credit. Of these, 2.0 qualify as hours of credit for ethics/professionalism in the Diversity, Inclusion and Elimination of Bias category.

### *Registration*

Those who are eligible to apply should use the Zoom Webinar registration link in the Program Announcement email. Students who are registered will receive a confirmation email with a link to access the program.

**Students must download Zoom before the webinar in order for the AGAI to record polling responses that are required for attendance verification and CLE credit.**

The AGAI will be unable to verify attendance or grant CLE credit to students who have not downloaded Zoom before the webinar.

