



JUST conversations

— The Institute for Just Outcomes through Conversation —

About

The Institute for Just Outcomes through Conversation is hosted within the Fowler Center for Business as an Agent of World Benefit at Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management and supports the Fowler Center's goal of advancing scholarship and practice informed by Positive Organizational Science and Appreciative Inquiry.

Vision

We imagine a future where equity and justice enhances wellbeing and ignites growth for individuals, organizations, and communities.

Mission

To collaborate with others to actualize social justice within public service systems. We do this by designing programs for collaborating with and providing research to organizations and communities committed to just outcomes

Purpose

The Institute will conduct transformative research, defined by the National Science Foundation as involving "ideas, discoveries, or tools that radically change our understanding of an important existing scientific or engineering concept or educational practice or leads to the creation of a new paradigm or field of science, engineering, or education."¹ Our purpose is to:

- Generate evidenced-based strategies for hosting conversations that lead to just systems that equitably serve all people.
- Publish research outcomes in academic journals, popular press, social media, and other traditional media platforms.
- Develop evidence-based strategies and programs that support just outcomes through conversation, especially among marginalized populations.
- Be a collaborative partner, supporting other organizations working to foster just systems.

Our Values

- **Equity** - Constituents of service systems are treated with fairness and justice regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, ability, sexuality, or other discernible characteristics.

¹ https://www.nsf.gov/about/transformative_research/definition.jsp

- **Social Justice** - Awareness of individual rights within the duties of institutions throughout society in a manner that supports a fair distribution of resources and opportunities.
- **Wellbeing** - Conversations within communities and organizations support wellness, quality of life, and the ultimate good for all citizens.
- **Organizational Effectiveness** - Organizations and their people thrive when they embed diversity, inclusivity, cultural responsiveness, innovation, and professional competence.

Our Team

Michael Emmart, Ed.D., *Executive Director*, is a founding member of IJOC. He brings with him more than two decades of experience with child welfare, justice involved, and crossover youth. His most recent position before joining IJOC was with the Research Foundation for SUNY at the University of Albany, where he was a subject matter expert on loan to New York's Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) consulting on program improvement and strategic planning for child welfare and community services at the state and county level. Other roles he's filled throughout his career include professor, counselor, caseworker, and agency administrator. Michael has published several works on facilitating appreciative conversations, including as co-author of the forthcoming *Conversations Worth Having for Clinicians, Case Workers, & Coaches*. (email: michael.emmart@case.edu)

Toni Benner, MSOD, *Director of Creativity and Partnership*, is a founding member of IJOC, She is a lifelong learner and adjunct faculty with Nexus, the online and professional education at the University of Michigan College of Engineering. She is a strategic thinking partner, dynamic instructor and coach that designs and delivers experiential learning based on her 20+ years of experience in facilitation, training, team development, strategy deployment, and Continuous Improvement. Toni's work is applied in supply chain, service, automotive, and health care industries and government and non-profit. She holds a Master of Science in Positive Organization Development & Change and Coaching and Appreciative Inquiry certifications from the Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University. She is a doctoral student in the Doctorate in Organization Development and Change at Bowling Green State University. (email: toni.benner@case.edu)

Cheri Torres, Ph.D., *Chief Pollinator*, is a founding member of IJOC. She is an author and CEO of Collaborative by Design, partners with people to catalyze positive change in schools, organizations, and communities. Her work is grounded in neuroscience, positive psychology, and Appreciative Inquiry, one of the most widely used approaches for systems change. She's worked with thousands of educators, leaders and teams around the world to support high performance, engagement, culture transformation, and organizational success. She's written numerous books and articles; her most recent book is a Berrett Koehler bestseller, *Conversations Worth Having: Using Appreciative Inquiry to Fuel Productive and Meaningful Engagement*. A perpetual learner, she's accumulated a Ph.D. in Collaborative Learning, an MBA., Masters in Transpersonal Psychology, Level II certification in the Barrett Values Cultural Assessment tools, and Level II certification in Spiral Dynamics Integral. (email: cheri.torres@case.edu)

Jacqueline (Jackie) Stavros, DM , Chief Purpose and Energy Officer, is a founding member of IJOC. She is professor in the College of Business and IT at Lawrence Technological University and Advisor for David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry. Her passion is working with youth and young adults to create meaningful results for positive change. She has over 30 years of leadership, strategy, strategic planning, and organization development experience. She has authored many books and articles with two recent books: *Conversations Worth Having: Using Appreciative Inquiry to Fuel Productive and Meaningful Engagement* and *Thin Book of SOAR: Creating Strategy that Inspires Innovation and Engagement*. She has worked across all sectors, including for-profit, nonprofit, government, education, and a wide spectrum of industries in 25 countries using Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to help others thrive and increase performance. She earned a Doctorate of Management from Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University in *Capacity Building Using an Appreciative Approach: A Relational Process of Building Your Organization's Future*. (email: jstavros@ltu.edu)