



The King County  
**DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC DEFENSE  
Annual Gathering**

August 10, 2022

Fisher Pavilion,  
Seattle Center



## 9 - 9:55 | CONVERSATIONS | Indoor East and West

Book/Media clubs, guided journaling | .75 Professional/Personal Development CLE

### Guided Journaling | Alison Liu

#### Indian Child Welfare Act | Tara Urs

This Land, Season 2, <https://crooked.com/podcast/this-land-season-2-coming-august-23rd/>

#### Restitution | Katie Hurley

For Young Offenders, Restitution Debts Can Present Crippling Obstacles | <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/14/us/politics/juvenile-restitution-debts.html>

#### Fiction | Clare Riva

Speech Sounds, by Octavia E. Butler | [http://www.future-lives.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/speech\\_sounds.pdf](http://www.future-lives.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/speech_sounds.pdf)

#### Abolition | Anita Khandelwal

Finding Our Way Podcast, Season 2, Episode 12: Harm, Punishment, and Abolition with Mariame Kaba | <https://www.findingourwaypodcast.com/individual-episodes/s2e12> | Or read the transcript: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yYFz\\_97FIYu9nPf4CyXIsUWUAMjxpK5Z/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yYFz_97FIYu9nPf4CyXIsUWUAMjxpK5Z/edit)

#### Media & the 'High Utilizer' List | Julie van Arcken

Seattle city attorney's plan for repeat offenders is tired and destabilizing, public defender says | <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/seattle-city-attorneys-plan-for-repeat-offenders-is-tired-and-destabilizing-public-defender-says/>

Seattle city attorney announces new initiative to keep repeat offenders off Seattle streets | <https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/seattle-city-attorney-announces-initiative-address-high-utilizers-criminal-justice-system/ISVUI3OUIJGCHGQAU4RV5TBF54/>

New initiative identifies hundreds who have caused thousands of crimes in Seattle | <https://komonews.com/amp/news/local/new-initiative-identifies-hundreds-who-have-caused-thousands-of-crimes-in-seattle>

Seattle's city attorney launches program focused on repeat offenders | <https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle-city-attorney-crime-repeat-offenders/281-f324289b-8740-42bc-9266-f0db-7b9e2fb6>

Seattle crime: 118 repeat offenders to get special treatment in effort to protect public safety | <https://www.q13fox.com/news/seattle-crime-118-repeat-offenders-to-get-special-treatment-in-effort-to-protect-public-safety.amp>

#### Prisons | Jill Carlsen

Prison Break, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/series/m000v9t6> (Episode 2)

#### Public Defense Impacts | Danielle James

A facilitated conversation about the impacts of public defense based on her first-hand experience of the systems in which we work.

#### Small-Group Discussion | Evie Lewis-McNeil | South Lawn

Evie Lewis-McNeil, EAP mental health counselor, will help participants build connections, reflect on their experiences at DPD, and process the impact this work has on them.

## 10 - 10:55 | WELCOME AND KEYNOTE | Indoor

.75 Professional Development CLE

### Land Acknowledgement | Ken Workman, Duwamish Tribe

### Welcome | Anita Khandelwal

### Keynote Speech | David Heppard

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## 11 - NOON | BREAKOUTS

### **Building Effective Defense Teams | Thomas Brehmer, Roopali Dhingra, Pandora Eyre, Mahkaea Jackson-Sams, and Andres Mendez | Indoor West**

*1 Law and Legal CLE*

Well-functioning defense teams provide better results for our clients, and at the same time members of the team experience more workplace satisfaction. In this session, DPD staff will discuss the attributes of a well-functioning defense team and offer concrete strategies to help defense teams feel like teams. Special thanks to the presenters, as well as those who helped develop the presentation: Joey Feng, Stephanie Jones, Emily Willard, Jesus Martinez Garnica, and Lessy Valdovinos. This presentation will benefit attorney and non-attorney staff, including supervisors, looking for ways to foster a greater spirit of teamwork within the workplace.

### **The Meaning of Harm Reduction | Thea Oliphant-Wells | Indoor East**

*1 Personal Development CLE*

Thea Oliphant-Wells, manager of the county health department's harm reduction and fentanyl testing program, will discuss the history and philosophy of harm reduction. Although harm reduction is most commonly associated with substance use disorders, the concept of harm reduction and its philosophical underpinnings can have a much broader application. By developing a deeper understanding of harm reduction, public defenders and other staff can understand the benefits of offering more compassionate support to our clients, as well as the benefits of extending more grace and less judgment to ourselves.

### **Walking Meditation Mindfulness Practice | Mindfulness Northwest | Outside (start at west stairs)**

*1 Personal Development CLE*

Based on the eight-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program, which has been shown to reduce chronic pain and boost the immune system; address painful mental states like depression and anxiety; minimize emotional reactivity and promote well-being; increase flexible attention and sharpen mental focus. The session will begin with a brief introduction to mindfulness practice followed by a walk through the Seattle Center to gain practical experience with mindfulness and some movement in your day.

### **Small-Group Discussion | Evie Lewis-McNeil | South Lawn**

*.75 Professional/Personal Development CLE*

Evie Lewis-McNeil, EAP mental health counselor, will help participants build connections, reflect on their experiences at DPD, and process the impact this work has on them.

### **Improv Training | Jet City Improv | South Lawn (Note: This session is 90 minutes, from 11 to 12:30)**

*1.5 Professional Development CLE*

Improvisation is defined as having no plan or scripted words to get through a conversation, but, rather, thinking on your feet and determining what to say next based on the present person and conversation. Improvisation involves multiple skills that overlap with other domains of conversation and communication. Discover the basic vocabulary and techniques behind the art of improv through scenes, games, and exercises in a fun, supportive environment designed to help you feel more confident about speaking in public and thinking on your feet.

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## NOON - 3:30 | LUNCHTIME ACTIVITIES

### **Picnic Lunch**

#### **Beat The Geek Trivia**

Lively, fun, team-based trivia contests

- Trivia I starts at 12:30
- Trivia II starts at 2

## **Self-Organized Team-Building**

Cornhole, Connect 4, Jenga, Tumblin Dice, Dominoes, Ping Pong, and Cairn Rock Stacking.

## **Small-Group Discussion | Evie Lewis-McNeil | South Lawn | 12:30 - 1:30**

*.75 Professional/Personal Development CLE*

Evie Lewis-McNeil, EAP mental health counselor, will help participants build connections, reflect on their experiences at DPD, and process the impact this work has on them.

## **Small Group Discussion | Theo Oliphant-Wells | Poetry Garden | 2 - 3**

*.75 Professional/Personal Development CLE*

Thea Oliphant-Wells will discuss harm reduction in a small-group setting. (Seating in the Poetry Garden is mostly on large rocks or stones. Consider bringing a pillow or camp chair, if needed.)

## **3:30 - 4:30 | BREAKOUTS**

### **Public Defense Caseloads | Anita Khandelwal and Gordon Hill | Indoor West**

*1 Law and Legal CLE*

The ABA is expected to release a study this fall about public defense caseloads that relies on a Delphi methodology to determine new, recommended caseload maximums. We believe the study will recommend caseloads lower than the 150 (felony) and 400 (misdemeanor) caseload standards currently in use in Washington. Anita and Gordon will discuss the history of our existing caseload standards, how the caseload standards impact the work at DPD, the Delphi methodology, what we anticipate the new study will show, and strategies planned to lower caseloads using the new research when it is released.

### **Client Panel | Community Passageways | Indoor East**

*1 Law and Legal CLE*

Public defense clients do not get to choose their lawyer. Therefore, unlike other types of lawyers, it is incumbent on public defenders to actively solicit feedback from clients to evaluate performance. It is also important for public defenders to hear from members of our community about how we can provide the best service. This session will bring together a panel of former youth clients to share their expertise with our office.

### **Walking Meditation Mindfulness Practice | Mindfulness Northwest | Outside (start at west stairs)**

*1 Personal Development CLE*

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### **Improv Training | Jet City Improv | South Lawn (Note: This session is 90 minutes, from 3 - 4:30)**

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## SPEAKERS, GROUP LEADERS, PRESENTERS

**Thomas Brehmer** is a graduate of the University of Washington where he majored in Law, Societies, and Justice. While in school he worked with the Seattle Clemency Project, helping incarcerated people in Washington petition for clemency. He has been at ACA for over four years as a Legal Administrative Specialist in the Felony and SMC units.

**Jill Carlson** is a paralegal at ACA, where she works with the Juvenile, Kent Felony, and Family Defense units. In 2021, she was assigned to the Director's Office, supporting the department's *Blake* work. Before coming to DPD in 2020, she worked for several years in the software industry as a technical writer and content management specialist. She is thankful to now work in a profession that feels true to her and looks forward to continuing to learn about and contribute as much as she can to the work of public defense. Outside of work, she performs as a classical singer and recorder player and enjoys knitting, sewing, and gardening at her home in sunny West Seattle, where she lives with her husband and feisty kitty. She received a BA in piano performance from UW–Madison and a paralegal certification at Edmonds College in 2019.

**Roopali Dhingra**, a mitigation specialist at ACA, currently works in the division's SMC Misdemeanor Unit. She attended the University of Washington, where she earned both her undergraduate degree in psychology and a master's in social work. She became a Clinical Licensed Social Worker in 2011. Roopali has worked in several units, including Felony, Juvenile, Family Defense, KCDC, and Mental Health Court (at both the Superior Court and SMC). She has organized competency evaluations, worked on mitigation packages, connected clients to behavioral health and substance use services, and written numerous psychosocial reports in support of clients facing prosecution and/or sentencing.

**Pandora Eyre**, a Seattle native, has been an investigator for 30 years, 20 of which have been at the SCRAP Division. She graduated from the University of Washington with a BA in English. She started her career as a private investigator, working with defense attorneys on a variety of criminal cases, along with doing other types of investigative work, including insurance fraud, surveillance, and “domestic” cases. Pandora has worked with many talented attorneys over the years and always tries to be a useful and respected member of the defense team, valuing open and frequent communications with the attorneys and other staff members who are assigned to a case so as to put together a successful defense for clients. Her other interests include her family, art and design, gardening, going on long walks, pickleball, and travel.

**Gordon Hill**, the deputy director, works on operational issues, staffing and budget issues, and policy reform, and performs the duties of the director when Anita is away. He attended the University of Vermont as an undergraduate, obtained a master's degree from the University of New Mexico, and in 2005 received his JD from Seattle University School of Law. As a law student, he interned at the NDD and ACA, then nonprofit law firms. After graduating from law school, he joined ACA as a staff attorney, practicing in the Misdemeanor, Felony, and ITA units, became a supervisor of the misdemeanor unit, and was the acting managing attorney at ACA.

**Katie Hurley**, special counsel for criminal policy and practice, focuses on criminal legal issues that affect youth and adults, using her expertise and community partnerships to push for an end to the incarceration of both youth and adults. Thanks in part to her advocacy, King County adopted a trauma-informed approach to youth charged with a serious crime or facing a juvenile court prison sentence. She also helped create a diversion program that enables youth to work with skilled community navigators in lieu of criminal charges and pass an ordinance that ensures youth can access counsel prior to a custodial interrogation or a search. She has testified many times in the state legislature on laws that would help to mitigate the harm of the juvenile and criminal legal system, authored numerous amicus briefs, and worked to advance changes in court rules. Katie began her career as a public defender shortly after receiving her JD from New York University School of Law in 2006.

**Danielle James** (she/her pronouns) is a youth advocate and community educator. She has devoted the past three years of her life to advocating for marginalized communities affected by systems of oppression in the criminal and foster care systems. She has presented at the University of Washington, Seattle University, and Washington State University.

**Anita Khandelwal**, director of the department, was appointed to a four-year term by the County Executive in October 2018, then reappointed in 2022. During her tenure, she has managed the department during a global pandemic that has profoundly affected the criminal legal system, has partnered with community-based organizations to reduce the reach and impact of a system that disproportionately harms poor, marginalized, and BIPOC communities, and has developed a litigation, amicus, and legislative strategy that has advanced the rights of our clients. Anita has been engaged in public defense since 2008, when she became a staff attorney at what was then called The Defender Association, now a division within DPD. She was a Soros Justice Advocacy Fellow, a civil rights fellow at Relman & Dane in Washington, D.C., and a fellow in the Washington Leadership Institute. She clerked for Judge Dolores Sloviter, Third Circuit Court of Appeals, and Judge Wayne Justice, Western District of Texas. Anita attended Yale University for her undergraduate work and obtained her JD from Yale Law School.

**Evie Lewis-McNeil** is a licensed clinical social worker and mental health therapist with the King County Employee Assistance Program. She has a history of working in community health, with a focus on the LGBTQI+ community. Evie is committed to social justice, constantly striving to unlearn anti-blackness, racism, internalized sexism, and ableism. She is a graduate of the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration and the University of Washington's School of Social Work.

**Alison Liu** is DPD's CMS coordinator, helping with the implementation of the department's new case management system. Once the system is launched, she will provide ongoing support, including training, system maintenance, and improvements. She was previously the training program administrator for three years, where she managed DPD's internal training program, supported DPD's class of interns, and helped to produce DPD's annual conferences in 2019 and 2022. Before becoming the training administrator, Alison worked as a paralegal in the department for five years. She earned an honors degree in English from the University of Oregon and Clark Honors College.

**Andres Mendez** is a paralegal in NDD's Felony Unit; he has worked in other units as well. Andres previously worked in civil litigation, criminal, and immigration law firms. Before coming to DPD, Andres taught ESL classes to college and high school students.

**Thea Oliphant-Wells**, MSW, works for Public Health – Seattle & King County, where she is helping to expand access to harm reduction services in the community and facilitate a council of people who use drugs. Thea has been working in harm reduction programs serving people living homeless in Seattle for over a decade and brings lived experience with injection drug use, living homeless, and finding safety in harm reduction people and spaces. Using both personal and professional experience, Thea has worked to lower barriers to care for people who are experiencing homelessness, people who use drugs, and those with trauma histories.

**Clare Riva** is an attorney at NDD. She moved to Seattle from the other Washington via her fifth cross-country road trip in October 2020. Clare graduated from Claremont McKenna College and Stanford Law School and clerked for U.S. District Judge Peter J. Messitte in the District of Maryland, where she grew up. After clerking, she worked at the Constitutional Accountability Center in D.C., where she focused on Fourth and Sixth Amendment issues and qualified immunity cases.

**Tara Urs**, special counsel for civil policy and practice, training, and employee development, supports the divisions' family defense practice, supervises the training team, and coordinates the Rule 9 summer intern program. Tara has led the department's efforts to fundamentally transform dependency law in the state, drawing on our attorneys' expertise representing clients to challenge a

system that harms children and families and disproportionately harms Black and Indigenous families. Working closely with partners, she has advanced legislation that aims to prevent family separation; prioritize parents' ability to see their children when the state has separated the family; prioritize children remaining with extended families; and decrease the use of termination of parental rights and adoption. She has testified many times in the state legislature, argued on behalf of clients before the State Supreme Court, and co-authored numerous amici briefs. She previously practiced family defense at TDA and, prior to that, worked as a staff attorney at the Brooklyn Family Defense Project. Tara received her BA from Wesleyan University and her JD from New York University School of Law. She clerked for Judge Deborah A. Batts, U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of New York.

**Julie van Arcken** is a new paralegal in the SMC Unit at NDD. Her interest in challenging the criminal punishment system stems from having BIPOC family members caught in the school-to-prison pipeline and serving as a juror in a 1.5-month-long criminal trial in 2019. She has interned at the ACLU of Washington and James Bible Law Group; served on the kitchen cabinet for the campaign for state Rep. Kirsten Harris-Talley, our state's first Black queer abolitionist legislator; been named a finalist in an appointment process for the Seattle School Board; worked in many senior business and editorial roles at Amazon; and worked as a journalist in Kyiv and Prague. Julie has a BA in anthropology from the University of Washington.

## Organizations

**Beat the Geek Trivia** is a live, interactive trivia game owned by Mark Ricker, who says he started it when he was recently divorced, unemployed, and bored out of his mind. He always had a head full of trivial knowledge, but just knowing things like Albert Einstein's middle name wasn't getting him very far. He decided to put that useless knowledge to use. Running Beat the Geek Trivia is now his full time job.

**Jet City Improv** works to educate, enlighten, and entertain audiences through the art of improvisation. Since 1995, they have offered live audience-interaction shows every weekend, improv classes for professionals and novices alike and provided outreach programs to those that need laughter the most all across Western Washington

**Mindfulness Northwest**, founded in 2011, offers heartfelt, caring, evidence-based instruction to communities and organizations throughout the Pacific Northwest. Mindfulness is the simple yet powerful ability to attend more fully to present moment experience. Cultivating mindfulness can improve mental and physical health, deepen kindness and compassion, and incline the mind toward joy. Mindfulness Northwest is a nonprofit working to make top-quality mindfulness and compassion training accessible to communities and organizations in the Pacific Northwest. Internally, they strive to be true to the mindfulness principles of cultivating truth, inclusion, and compassion.



