Fall 2023 Schedule
Cullowhee, Main Campus (Wednesdays, 10am – 12pm)

September 13, 2023
Dr. John Ritchie – Conscious Aging

Biography:
John Ritchie Ph.D. is a Licensed Psychologist, and was Director of Western Carolina University’s Counseling and Psychological Services Center for almost 30 years, and in Private Practice for 40 years. He has been a member of a weekly men’s discussion/support group for over 35 years.

Presentation Outline:
“Conscious Aging” is a recent paradigm shift in thinking and practices for seniors to enhance awareness and connections for greater acceptance, appreciation, and enjoyment of senior living. This can be accomplished by utilizing internal practices, senior yearnings, natural aging processes, universal spiritual practices, “negative” experiences, and senior groups.

September 20, 2023
Dr. Chip Ferguson – TBA

September 27, 2023
Dr. Rebecca George – WCU FOREST

October 4, 2023
Marianne Martinez - Vecinos

October 11, 2023
Curtis Collins – Gut Biome Health

October 18, 2023
TBA

October 25, 2023
Dr. Wes Stone – Engineering: Inventions from WCU

November 1, 2023
Teri Cole-Smith – Building a Trauma Informed Resilient Focused Community

Biography:
I grew up in South Florida & graduated with Honors from Rollins College before moving to the
Midwest, where I earned a Master's degree in English at the University of Chicago. I next studied for a Masters in Education before returning to the South, roughing it in the Arkansas Ozarks & living in Georgia before arriving "home" in Sylva, NC 12 years ago. Among other hats I have worn, I have been a unschooling mountain mama, a Lead Educational Therapist working with kids with Severe Emotional Behavioral Disorders and Founder and Lead Facilitator of Freedom to Grow Unschool in Athens, GA. Currently, I am a member of the Compassion Jackson Coalition; a Guardian Ad Litem in Jackson County & a licensed massage therapist, as well as founder of RISE: Resources in Support of Empowerment (where I provide free advocacy and community resource navigation.) I am a trained facilitator in several Substance Use Prevention & Recovery programs, a parenting program and, pertinent to this presentation, I am a “Building a Trauma Informed Resilient Focused Community” Becky Haas trained facilitator.

**Compassion Jackson Coalition:**
The Compassion Jackson Coalition is a Jackson County Community Coalition putting compassion in action to increase our shared ability to weather the storms of life. Our goal is to bring community individuals and organizational stakeholders together to build Jackson County into a healthy, trauma-informed community, focused on building resiliency and healing. We offer Trauma Informed Care training, Resilience Building outreach, and hope to add film and art events focused on growing a positive mental health status, and more!

**Presentation Outline:**
In this presentation we will first review and come to a common understanding of the basics of trauma. We will learn about the ACE’s study (Adverse Childhood Experiences), that led to an understanding that toxic stress from ACE’s can change brain development as well as affect behavior and long term health prognoses. Next, we will learn about the more recent studies surrounding PCE’s (Positive Childhood Experiences) and the ways in which positive experiences and protective community supports can help foster resilience. Finally, we will broaden our lens and discuss the ways in which organizations benefit by adapting a trauma informed approach, both internally with staff and externally with clients and customers.

**November 8, 2023**
*John Lane – “Gullies of My People” Environmental, Sense of place, Family and personal reflection*

**November 15, 2023**
*Dr. Dan Grube – US vs. European Education Models*

**November 29, 2023**
*Dr. Todd Collins – Supreme Court*

**December 6, 2023**
*Dr. Cyndy Caravelis and Katy Allen – TBA*