

NEDACON

Connect | Learn | Heal

Lived Experiences Panel



Moderator: Stacey Lorin Merkl

Stacey Lorin Merkl is the Founder & Executive Director of Realize Your Beauty, a non-profit organization that promotes positive body image and eating disorder awareness to youth through theatre arts. Stacey is a native of Denver, Colorado and holds a BA in Theatre Arts and a BA in French from the University of Northern Colorado. She has taught theatre and music to children and teens at various arts centers in Colorado, Seattle, Paris (France) and New York City. Stacey founded Realize Your Beauty in 2010, combining her love of theatre arts with her passion for social change and education. She is a longtime volunteer for the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) and is a trained facilitator for NEDA's Body Project. Stacey is also a trained facilitator of Confident Body, Confident Child, an evidence-based resource providing parenting strategies to promote positive body image, healthy eating and physical activity in children aged 2 to 6 years. Having had the opportunity to speak at previous conferences, she's very happy to be moderating her first panel at NEDACON.



Stephanie Parker

Stephanie Parker is an award-winning journalist turned producer. Currently, she serves as a medical producer and curates international programming for SiriusXM "Doctor Radio" - a station that has been on the frontlines of medical health topics and guidelines. Prior to joining this team, Stephanie served as a Dr. Oz and Sharecare script writer and worked at a couple of other news outlets like: ABC News and the Christian Broadcasting Network. Stephanie's media career launched a decade ago when she started as an international news writer for the United Nations. In her capacity, she worked for Inter Press Service - a news agency based in Rome and The National News Service of China (Xinhua). At Xinhua she took home three awards and spent time interviewing celebrities and top global officials like the former president of Chile, Michelle Bachelet. In line with this work, she has done a variety of internationally focused women and children's health news stories for outlets like VICE, The Lancet, New York Times: Women in the World and Ms. Magazine to name a few. Stephanie's work has also been highlighted in the Cambridge University Press, World Health and Medical Policy and an NIH study on gender-based violence in refugees. Stephanie has also had an opportunity to do consulting work with the US Fund for UNICEF and contributed to the book: "The Lost Generation of Syrian Youth" by a UNICEF Middle East Official.



Ryan Walker Page

Ryan Walker Page is a professional dancer and choreographer in Los Angeles. Ryan mines his experience in recovery to address the conspiring elements of healing from shame, authenticity, and seeking connection to help others achieve a higher reach into greater identity freedoms. As a gay man in the dance world, he is well-suited to address LGBTQ populations, men, and those navigating recovery involved in body-centric or creative industries. He is a firm believer that full recovery is possible, but it requires a profound reworking of one's own interior judge and jury. There is and will always be hope.



Noor Pervez

Noor Pervez is a student organizer turned disability and LGBT+ educator, public speaker and internet researcher. He focuses on the intersections of disability, gender identity, sexuality and religion. He has bylines at Rooted in Rights and the Disability Visibility Project blog, and can frequently be found posting about his beagle, KIBBY, on Twitter at @SnoringDoggo



Sharon Maxwell

Sharon Maxwell is a mental health advocate and fat activist. After growing up in an environment that viewed and portrayed mental health issues to be sinful and shameful, Sharon is passionate about breaking down the stigma around mental health. While actively fighting for recovery from her eating disorder, she speaks out on her blog and on Instagram about hope in recovery, challenging systemic fat phobia, ditching diet culture once and for all, and walking towards body neutrality and body trust. She also creates digital art to portray powerful messages about these topics. Sharon speaks to youth and educators with the National Alliance on Mental Health about eating disorders and other mental illnesses. In her activism and advocacy, she hopes to shine light in the darkest of places, help people walk out of shame, and step into the hope of recovery. You can find more of her work at www.heysharonmaxwell.com or follow her Instagram account @heysharonmaxwell.