



## Annual Spring Conference

April 17, 2026 • 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM  
Northern Illinois University • Naperville Campus

### The Power of Pivot: Embracing Transitions in Career Development

The forces that shape one’s career development are often outside of their control or awareness. The resulting chaos may leave people feeling confused, unprepared, or even hopeless about their future careers. This year’s conference will dive into the art and science of helping professionals embrace change, respond to chance events with confidence and courage, and reframe setbacks as steppingstones. Topics will span practical coaching tools, proven support strategies, and research-backed insights into making meaning from career detours.

| <i>Conference at a Glance</i> |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 7:30 AM                       | <b>Registration</b> – Continental Breakfast Sponsored by Braven   |
| 8:00 AM                       | <b>Welcome:</b> Call to Order<br>Braven Introduction & Overview   |
| 8:30 AM                       | <b>Session One: From Chaos to Clarity: Navigating Career Development through Awareness, Agency, and Systemic Change</b> |
| 10:15 AM                      | <b>Session Two: A Purple Haze over Red States: Identifying and Treating Goal-Striving Stress in African Americans</b>   |
| 11:30 AM                      | <b>Session Three: From Campus to Career: Supporting Emerging Adults in a Contemporary Job Market</b>                    |
| 12:30 PM                      | Buffet Lunch  |
| 1:30 PM                       | <b>Reconvene: Jean M. Baer Award Presentation</b>   |
| 1:45 PM                       | <b>Session Four: From Data to Direction: Helping Clients Find Orientation before Action</b>                             |
| 3:15 PM                       | <b>Session Five: Mastering the Pivot: Navigating Career Identity and Purpose</b>  |
| 4:30 PM                       | <b>Adjournment</b>  |

| Registration Fees   |       |                           |       |
|---|-------|---------------------------|-------|
| ICDA Members  | \$100 | Non-Members of ICA & ICDA | \$130 |
| Members of ICA/<br>Non-Members of ICDA*   | \$120 | All Graduate Students     | \$25  |
| *ICA Members! Join ICDA for \$20 on the ICA website, and then register for the conference at the ICDA Member price! Total cost to you = \$120 |       |                           |       |

**THE POWER OF PIVOT**  
**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER**

Event Sponsor



Illinois Career Development Association



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# The Power of Pivot: Embracing Transitions in Career Development

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| <p><b>Session 1</b></p>  | <p><b>From Chaos to Clarity: Navigating Career Development through Awareness, Agency, and Systemic Change</b><br/>Presenters: Falguni Shah, PhD &amp; Jon-Paul deLange, MA</p> |
| <p>This workshop explores career development through the individual and environmental lenses that often shape professional growth beyond one’s awareness or control. Participants will examine how leadership behaviors, HR and hiring practices, and organizational culture, policies, and values influence career progression. The session will introduce practical career development, coaching, and leadership strategies that help professionals leverage leadership and navigate barriers and systemic challenges. Participants will explore ways to reduce disparities and contribute to systemic change that supports fair and equitable career advancement. Through interactive activities, attendees will strengthen internal readiness, decision-making quality, and clarity around their strengths, values, purpose, and personal brand to develop a meaningful career advancement strategy.</p> |  |
| <p><b>Session 2</b></p>  | <p><b>A Purple Haze over Red States: Identifying and Treating Goal-Striving Stress in African Americans</b><br/>Presenter: Noah-Christina Reed, LCPC, NCC, MA</p>              |
| <p>This presentation examines goal-striving stress (GSS) and its impact on mental health, wellness, and life satisfaction among African Americans. GSS refers to the psychological strain that arises when sustained efforts to achieve valued life goals—such as career, education, or social mobility—occur within the context of persistent social and structural barriers, shaping both emotional and physical well-being. Although not unique to this population, GSS carries particular clinical significance due to its influence on psychosocial development and cumulative stress exposure. The presentation fosters cultural competence by increasing counselors’ awareness of GSS as a contextual stressor and by introducing interventions to address the cluster-like symptoms associated with chronic goal-striving stress.</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Session 3</b></p>  | <p><b>From Campus to Career: Supporting Emerging Adults in a Contemporary Job Market</b><br/>Presenters: Martha Jarmuz, Ed.D. &amp; Lindsay Fredrick, Ed.D.</p>                |
| <p>From campus to career, the contemporary job market presents new challenges for emerging adults, including AI literacy, depersonalized employer rejection, and burnout. Counselors are in a unique position to support first-time job seekers by integrating mental health and career development counseling models. This presentation will discuss the impact of career discouragement, introduce practical strategies to reframe job search identity, and cultivate resilience.</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Session 4</b></p>  | <p><b>From Data to Direction: Helping Clients Find Orientation before Action</b><br/>Presenter: Connie Smid, Head of Program Management, Genesis Dome</p>                      |
| <p>In the fast-changing world of work, many clients aren’t sure where to look or how to make sense of what they do find. This session helps career professionals teach clients how to explore both career information and internal signals in a way that reduces overwhelm and supports clearer thinking. Participants will learn a simple approach to guiding career research, noticing meaningful signals beneath urgency or anxiety, and helping clients pause long enough for better judgment to emerge. Through simple frameworks and a live reflective exercise, attendees will leave with new language, tools, and facilitation skills they can immediately apply with clients and students alike.</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Session 5</b></p>  | <p><b>Mastering the Pivot: Navigating Career Identity and Purpose</b><br/>Presenter: Meghann M. Barnes, LCPC, NCC</p>  |
| <p>Career Pivots are not just professional shifts, they are identity moments that challenge purpose, confidence, and direction. This session explores the connection between mental health and career development, highlighting how transitions influence motivation, meaning, and decision-making when individuals navigate change. Participants will gain practical, actionable strategies that can be applied across career development settings to support individuals as they clarify values, reconnect with purpose and move forward with intention. The presentation reframes career pivots as powerful opportunities for growth, resilience and purposeful career direction.</p>   |  |

**ICA is a co-sponsor for this event.**

The ICA is an NBCC-Approved Continuing Education Provider (ACEP) and may offer NBCC-Approved Clock Hours for events that meet NBCC requirements. The ACAP solely is responsible for all aspects of the program. This program is recognized as providing CE Clock Hours for: LPC/LCPC/NCC (NBCC Provider #2014) LSW/LCSW (IDFPR license 159.001342) MFT (IDFPR license # 168.000228) and LicPsych (IDFPR license #268.000065).