

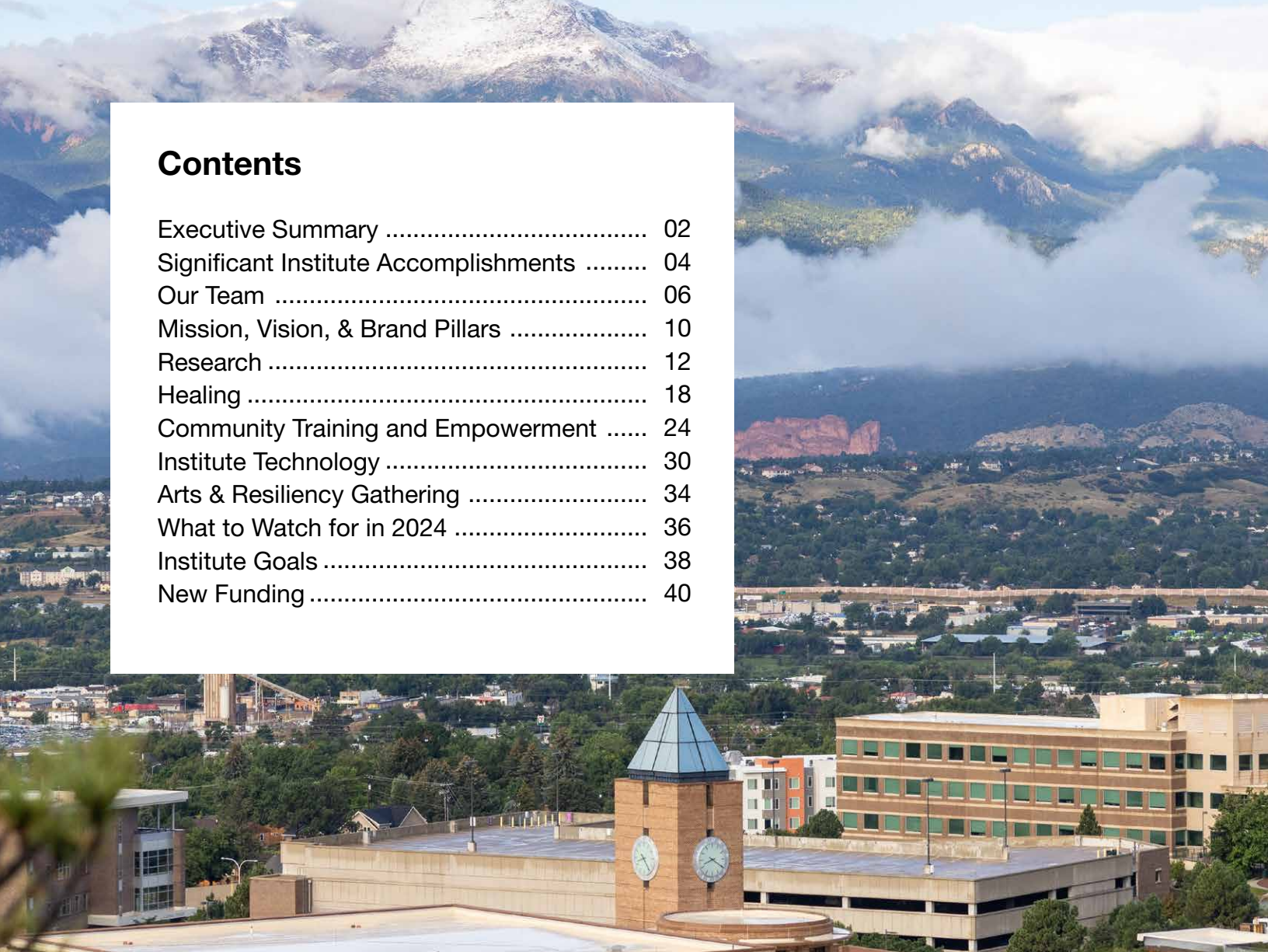
Lyda Hill
**Institute for
Human Resilience**

resilience.uccs.edu

2023
ANNUAL REPORT

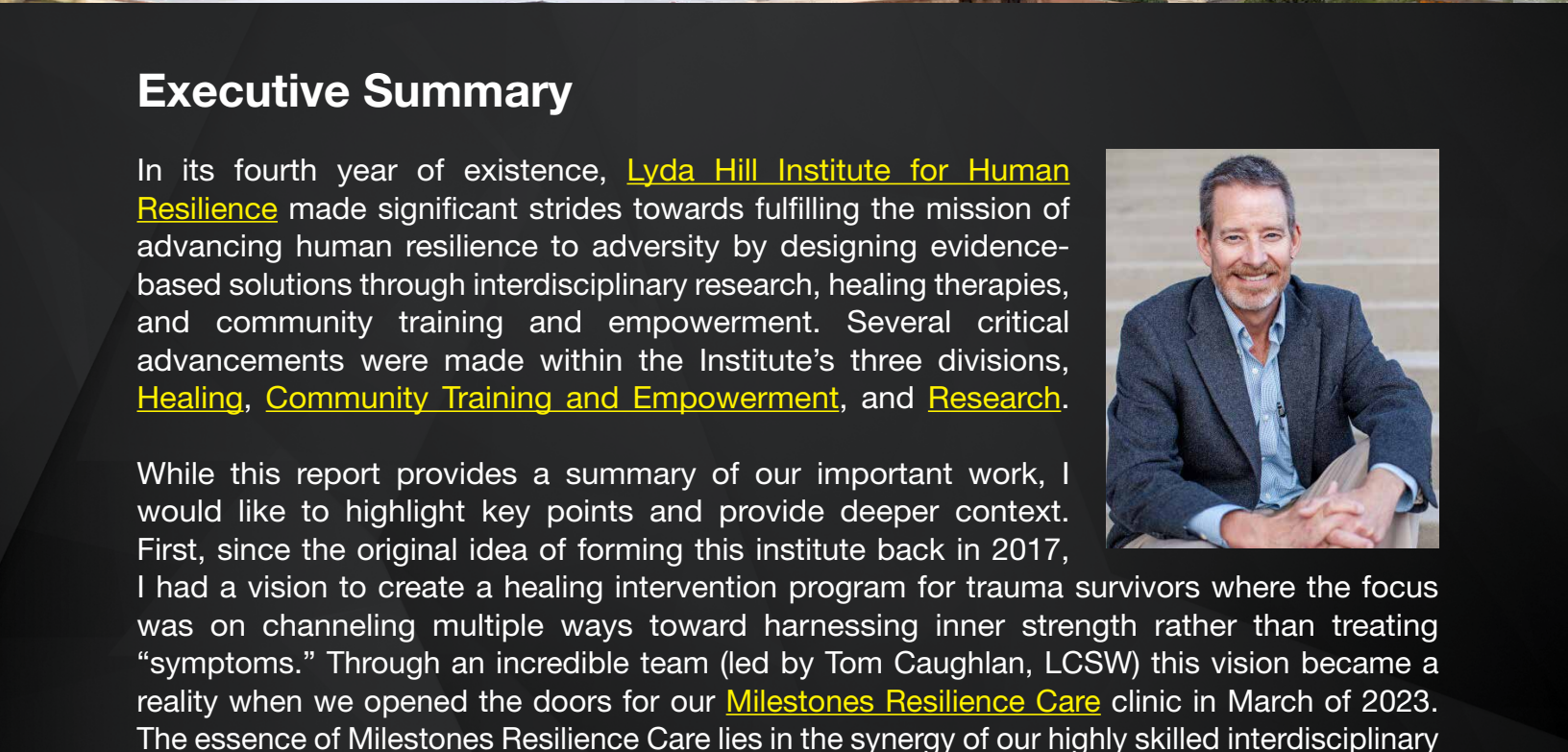


Research | Healing | Community Training & Empowerment



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Executive Summary

In its fourth year of existence, [Lyda Hill Institute for Human Resilience](#) made significant strides towards fulfilling the mission of advancing human resilience to adversity by designing evidence-based solutions through interdisciplinary research, healing therapies, and community training and empowerment. Several critical advancements were made within the Institute’s three divisions, [Healing](#), [Community Training and Empowerment](#), and [Research](#).

While this report provides a summary of our important work, I would like to highlight key points and provide deeper context. First, since the original idea of forming this institute back in 2017, I had a vision to create a healing intervention program for trauma survivors where the focus was on channeling multiple ways toward harnessing inner strength rather than treating “symptoms.” Through an incredible team (led by Tom Caughlan, LCSW) this vision became a reality when we opened the doors for our [Milestones Resilience Care](#) clinic in March of 2023. The essence of Milestones Resilience Care lies in the synergy of our highly skilled interdisciplinary



care team, which includes experts in strength-based trauma-specific psychotherapy, acupuncture, massage therapy, yoga, art therapy, equine therapy, outdoor immersion, and targeted empowerment training. Milestones prioritizes a holistic approach to working with clients and fostering both collective support and individual strength.

The first contract for Milestones was with [UCHealth Next Chapter](#), which is a state-sponsored program for Veteran suicide prevention. To date, Milestones has provided essential care for 25 Veterans, and the program evaluation data are strong. Clients report a high rate of satisfaction and appreciation for how the team is helping them to recover. A second collaboration began in 2023 with [STRATA Med](#), a wellness program at Garden of the Gods Club. We are extremely excited about this partnership and the ability to support STRATA clients who are managing trauma recovery.

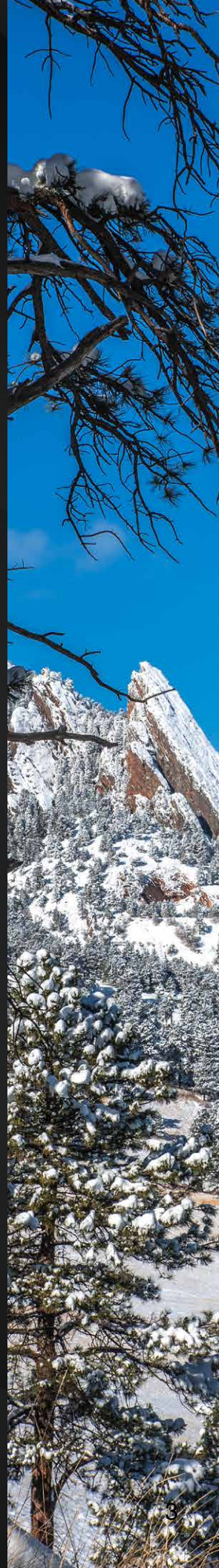
The Community Training and Empowerment (CTE) division (directed by Nicole Weis, LPC) has also had a significant impact in promoting resilience throughout Colorado and beyond. One major highlight has been our work with UCHealth Memorial Southern Region. The CTE division provides a peer support training program ([First Priority Peer Support](#)) for organizations where employees routinely experience high stress working conditions (e.g., health care, first responders, etc.).

In 2021, the Institute began working to establish this program within the UCHealth hospitals and outpatient clinics in Southern Colorado. This process was challenging due to the impact of the pandemic on healthcare workers and the system as a whole. I am extremely proud of our team and the success of this process. We now have over 200 Peer Supporters trained for UCHealth. Our peer support programs are now responsible for over 10,000 employees across Colorado.

Another highlight for CTE was the [Arts and Resilience Gathering](#), which was held in the fall of 2023. With funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Institute, and other contributors, this noteworthy event (spearheaded by Dr. Jane Rigler) showcased the intersection of how creativity and artistic expression can capture the inner experience of resilience in the, often chaotic, experience of trauma.

Lastly, the Research division (collectively led by Dr. Brooks Robinson and Dr. Heather Littleton) had an amazing year. Researchers submitted grants totaling over \$8 million. Today, the Institute has active grants totaling more than \$5 million from a wide variety of sources including the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, and others.

Importantly, the Institute will host the first Resilience Science Summit this July in Colorado Springs, bringing together leading scientists from around the world to focus on advancing the scientific exploration of individual and collective resilience. In closing, as the Executive Director of the Institute, I am convinced more than ever that our mission is critical to addressing the mounting cascade of challenges seen throughout our world every day. From senseless violence to our collective disasters and other adversities, the Lyda Hill Institute for Human Resilience is committed to making a difference for those impacted by trauma-specific mental health challenges.



SIGNIFICANT INSTITUTE ACCOMPLISHMENTS



RESEARCH

- Our [Research Affiliate program](#) boasts 52 scholars from across the U.S. and the world, including countries like Poland, Netherlands, Norway, Japan, Australia, and Israel, fostering a rich and diverse research community.
- Institute Research Affiliates made significant contributions in 2023, publishing over 180 research papers, books, and book chapters, solidifying our reputation as a leading research institution.
- The Institute's collaboration with the [START Center in the Department of Psychiatry at the Anschutz Medical Campus](#) has led to the establishment of a new research group focused on innovative biobehavioral research, showcasing our commitment to pushing the boundaries of knowledge in the field.
- The Research division has received \$1.7 million in awarded research grants in the past year.

HEALING

- The [Veterans Health and Trauma Clinic](#) is making a substantial impact, providing psychological services to hundreds of Veterans, military personnel, emergency responders, healthcare workers, and trauma survivors each year.
- [Milestones Resilience Care](#) has revolutionized trauma recovery, offering a comprehensive strength-based program that is seeing success with UCHHealth Veteran Suicide Prevention clients and concierge medicine clients.
- The Institute is playing a crucial role in educating future generations, with all Clinical Ph.D. trauma-focused students receiving training at the Veteran Health and Trauma Clinic, established with [Lyda Hill Philanthropies](#) funding in 2014.

COMMUNITY TRAINING AND EMPOWERMENT

- The [GRIT \(Greater Resilience Information Tool Kit\)](#) program has successfully trained a vast number of individuals across all 50 states in the U.S. and in 35 other countries worldwide, establishing itself as a premier virtual resilience coach training program.
- The Institute's [First Priority Peer Support program](#) has grown to support over 10,000 employees across Colorado, providing vital emotional and mental health support in workplaces.
- The [Community Training and Empowerment Division](#) empowered nearly 2,000 individuals from 17 different organizations in 2023, significantly increasing the capacity of these organizations to support their communities.
- The team provided immediate and sustained response to the Club-Q tragedy in Colorado Springs, demonstrating our commitment to swift and effective crisis intervention.

OUR TEAM



Charles C. Benight, Ph.D.
Executive Director



Heather Littleton, Ph.D.
Director of Research
Operations



Brooks Robinson, Ph.D.
Program Director,
Grants Specialist



Elyse Duncley
Finance Manager and
Research Administrator



Gabe Taylor
Communications Specialist



Megan Wendling
Research Assistant



Nicole Weis, MA, LPC, LAC
Director of Community
Training and Empowerment



Tom Caughlan
Clinical Director of the
Healing Division



John Cooke
Business Services Assistant



Carolyn Yeager, Ph.D.
Manager of Technology,
Integration, and Support



Valerie Anderson, Psy.D.
Technology Innovation
Expert Consultant

OUR TEAM



Bernard Ricca, Ph.D.
Research Associate
Professor



Timothy Doenges, Ph.D.
Staff Psychologist



Lauren Shaw, Psy.D.
GRIT Program Manager



Lisa Decker, MA, LPC
Clinician, Clinical Research
Professional



Justin D. Lincoln, Psy.D.
Staff Psychologist & Program
Dir. of Outdoor Immersion



Erin Fowler, MA, LPC
Clinician, Strategic Training
& Strategic Relations Liaison



Josef Ruzek, Ph.D.
Technology Innovation
Expert Consultant



Michael Dolezal, Ph.D.
Postdoctoral Research
Associate



Janet Fritz
Administrative Assistant



Jodi Savino
Billing & Authorization
Coordinator

MISSION


Advancing human resilience to adversity by designing evidence-based solutions through interdisciplinary research, healing therapies, and community training and empowerment



Our vision is to serve as the national model in resilience-based trauma research, healing, and community empowerment solutions.

The Lyda Hill Institute for Human Resilience has an interwoven three-fold approach to advance human resilience from adversity through Research, Healing, and Community Training & Empowerment.


Research
Transdisciplinary trauma research from a resilience framework that advances scientific knowledge to help individuals, families, communities, and systems.


Healing
An integrated healing experience for those seeking trauma care through an innovative approach.


Community Training & Empowerment
Training and education designed to translate strength-based knowledge to workable resilience resources and programming.

RESEARCH

The Research division conducts trauma research from a resilience framework that advances scientific knowledge to help individuals, families, communities, and systems.

The Lyda Hill Institute for Human Resilience is dedicated to scientific discovery related to human resilience and innovation of care models that support the human capacity to overcome, rather than reducing survivors to a set of medical symptoms. The Institute's research has a direct impact in the development and realization of therapies that are improving the quality of life and outcomes of trauma survivors.

Summary

The [Research Division](#) is beginning to realize its goal of becoming an internationally recognized hub for the science of human trauma and resilience. The past year saw both Drs. Littleton and Benight receive funding from federal sources to undertake large, multi-year research projects. Dr. Mary Hayden, one of the longest tenured Research Affiliates of the Institute, was elected to the Board of the prestigious [National Academy of Sciences](#).

And finally, the Institute is currently organizing and will be hosting a Resilience Science Summit in July 2024. This first of its kind event will see approximately 40 of the top resilience researchers from across the globe meet in Colorado Springs for two days of in-depth discussion and debate about the state of the field and needed future directions.

Grant Production

Over the past year, primary investigators at the Institute submitted 15 proposals for funding totaling more than \$8 million. The success rate of these submissions was substantially higher than in the past with 7 proposals receiving funding so far with ~\$1.7 million having been awarded. Funding has been awarded from federal sources such as the [National Science Foundation](#) and the [Bureau of Justice Assistance](#) as well as local sources such as the [Bee Vradsenburg Foundation](#). The proposals were submitted by ten different primary investigators, which again represents a large increase. More investigators choosing to submit grants through the Institute is a testament to the top-quality infrastructure for research the Institute has developed.

Publications

The research division is striving to become a world leader in the scientific exploration of psychological trauma and resilience. A stated goal of the division is to increase the number of peer-reviewed publications. In 2023, Institute affiliates published more than 180 research articles, books, and book chapters, marking the third consecutive year of increased production in this area.

A few open access examples of Institute and affiliate publications are available below.

Social cognitive mechanisms in healthcare worker resilience across time during the pandemic (C.Benight)

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00127-022-02247-5>

An ecological approach to understanding the impact of sexual violence: a systematic meta-review (H.Littleton)

<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1032408/full>

Outdoor Activity Associated with Higher Self-Reported Emotional Well-Being During COVID-19 (M.Hayden)

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10393-022-01598-4>

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

MARY HAYDEN, Ph.D.

Beyond Boundaries: Dr. Mary Hayden's Trailblazing Journey in Climate Resilience Research



[Dr. Mary Hayden, a Research Professor at the Lyda Hill Institute for Human Resilience](#), recently gained national recognition for her impactful work as the lead author of a chapter on the health and psychological impact of climate change in the 5th National Climate Assessment. [Dr. Hayden was present at the White House as the assessment was rolled out](#) and participated in a panel discussion on the impact of climate change on people living in the United States.

In addition to her contributions to the 5th National Climate Assessment, Dr. Hayden was also recently appointed to the [Board on Environmental Change and Society \(BECS\) at the National Academy of Sciences \(NAS\)](#). Dr. Hayden's research focuses on climate-related illnesses and human behavior, addressing issues like extreme heat and mosquito-borne diseases.

Dr. Hayden is the site PI on two projects that have received funding from the NSF in the past year. In one project, Dr. Hayden and colleagues at the University of Notre Dame aim to understand how humans make decisions about preventive actions against Aedes mosquito-borne diseases and how those actions in turn affect disease dynamics and subsequent individual-level decision-making. They hope to develop a mechanistic understanding of the role of behavior in infectious disease dynamics and mathematical modeling tools that are capable of accounting for those mechanisms, with the ultimate goal of enabling more effective use of public health interventions.

In a separate project, Dr. Hayden and colleagues at the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research are examining human behavior and policies connected to extreme heat. This issue continues to negatively affect the health and wellbeing of millions of people globally and the way people and policy-makers perceive heat risks is likely to influence their protective responses to extreme heat. In this project, the investigators will assess how populations perceive heat risks and engage in response behaviors and will situate these against how policy and decision makers understand their constituents perceptions and behaviors.

PILOT PROJECT

SEED GRANT PROGRAM

This year, the Institute initiated a Pilot Project Seed Grant Program to provide initial funding for promising research ideas that are in the early stages of implementation, but are likely to result in future externally funded projects. This program represents an investment in the future for our Institute Research Affiliates as well as in the growth of the research division overall.

[Dr. Kathy Prue-Owens](#)

The goal of this project is to take the [Greater Resilience Information Toolkit \(GRIT\)](#) and adapt the curriculum for a Lakota tribe located in South Dakota using input from both the elder and general population of women in that tribe. Adapting the GRIT program for Native American women offers a resiliency strategy aimed at providing culturally relevant information for a population often underrepresented when it comes to addressing mental health outcomes.

[Dr. Johanna Creswell Báez](#)

The proposed pilot project seed grant focuses on advancing human resilience to adversity by creating a virtual case management system for supporting unaccompanied immigrant youth (UJ) in the community across the United States. This interdisciplinary project will leverage technology and cross-sector collaboration to develop a culturally relevant case management intervention that can be used nationally to support migrant children who have experienced significant traumatic stress, in addition to forced migration and family separation.



RESEARCH GRANT SUCCESSES

An Online Family-based Program to Prevent Alcohol Use and Dating and Sexual Violence among Sexual and Gender Minority Youth

Dr. Heather Littleton was awarded more than \$600,000 from the [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#) to conduct this 3-year project. Research documents concerning rates of alcohol use (AU) and dating violence (DV) among sexual and gender minority youth (SGMY), likely related to a combination of population-specific risk factors (e.g., caregiver rejection, internalized homo/bi/transphobia), universal risk factors (e.g., deficits in social emotional skills and alcohol refusal skills, inaccurate perceptions of alcohol norms) and lack of protective factors (e.g., parenting and family relational skills). This project will develop and evaluate an online family-based program to prevent AU and DV among SGMY ages 15 to 18.



Injury Recovery Improvement Study (IRIS)

Dr. Charles Benight will receive funding beginning in Spring 2024 from the [National Science Foundation](#) to conduct the Injury Recovery Improvement Study (IRIS), which will begin in the spring of 2024. The goal will be to understand the psychological coping dynamics for individuals who suffer a traumatic injury. 300 injury survivors will be recruited into the study following admission and subsequent discharge from the hospital following a traumatic physical injury. Innovative multi-source data collection will be used including biosensor, self-report survey, daily electronic diary, and audio self-report data to gain detailed and real-time information on psychological functioning during recovery. The project is rooted in self-regulation shift theory (SRST), which uses a dynamical systems framework to argue that coping self-efficacy (CSE) and outcome expectancies (OE) drive critical coping thresholds leading to nonlinear shifts in psychological functioning. This project tests the self-regulatory dynamics that predict these shifts. Using novel methods and advanced nonlinear analytic techniques, this project has the potential to transform our basic knowledge of acute trauma adaptation and advance current theoretical models of traumatic stress recovery.



OTHER NOTEWORTHY DEVELOPMENTS

Understanding Rural Hurricane Survivors' Adaptation: Insights from Resilience Research

A team of researchers comprising Drs. Michael Dolezal, Heather Littleton, and Chip Benight from the Lyda Hill Institute for Human Resilience, along with Dr. Ashley Allen from the University of North Carolina Pembroke, authored a paper shedding light on the adaptation process of rural hurricane survivors post-disaster. Published in the psychology-specific scientific journal, [Anxiety, Stress, and Coping](#), the study delves into the coping behaviors, coping self-efficacy judgments, and adjustment trajectories of individuals affected by hurricanes.

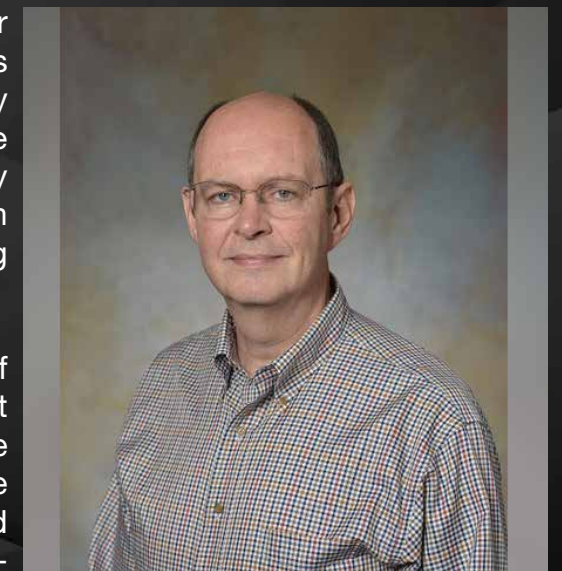


The researchers scrutinized how hurricane survivors navigated their coping mechanisms and evaluated their perceived capability to cope with the aftermath (coping self-efficacy), along with tracking their adjustment over time. Their findings unveiled a correlation between individuals who exhibited higher confidence in their coping abilities and their employment of more effective coping strategies.

Dr. Bernard Ricca Elected President of SCTPLS

[Dr. Bernard Ricca](#), Research Associate Professor at the Lyda Hill Institute for Human Resilience, has been selected as the next President of the Society for Chaos Theory in Psychology and the Life Sciences (SCTPLS). [SCTPLS](#), a society primarily composed of psychology professionals, focuses on unconventional scientific methodologies, dealing with data beyond standard statistical training.

Dr. Ricca assumed the role of Acting President of SCTPLS in January, and his official term as President will commence after the Society's Annual Conference on August 4th. His objectives as President include broadening SCTPLS's membership base and resurrecting the Datapalooza conference in the post-pandemic era.



HEALING



The **Healing division** helps individuals recover from psychological challenges associated with military service, natural disaster, domestic violence, auto accidents, sexual assault, and a wide range of other stressors and traumas.

Veterans Health and Trauma Clinic

The **Veterans Health and Trauma Clinic (VHTC)** is proud to mark the culmination of its inaugural decade as the foremost clinical institution dedicated to addressing acute and complex posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in Colorado.

Over the years, our collaborations with Veteran-centric organizations have thrived, alongside a growing responsibility to provide care for active-duty military personnel across all branches. Furthermore, VHTC's commitment extends to partnering with the **Colorado Springs Police Department**, **El Paso County Public Health**, and various other first responder organizations.

Through these alliances, we aim to diligently address the vicarious trauma experienced by the dedicated professionals in our community who are on the front lines of crisis response. As we reflect on our achievements, we remain steadfast in our mission to provide unwavering support and comprehensive care to those impacted by trauma.

Clinical Services Overview

Clients Served	
New Clients:	185
Returning Clients:	295
Total:	477
Clinical Services	7,451
Total Client Services:	36
Group Therapy Sessions:	92
Other	
CREATE Events (Wellness/Resilience):	40+





Milestones Resilience Care

March of 2023 saw the opening of the [Milestones Resilience Care](#) clinic which was the culmination of over a decade of research and clinical conceptualization by [Dr. Charles Benight](#) and others. It took over two years of intensive operational planning to bring this groundbreaking clinic to fruition.

Distinguished by its integrative team approach, the Milestones Resilience Care model offers a comprehensive care program that is based on building strength and resilience through an interprofessional team of providers. Clients benefit from having a set of providers who focus on enhancing recovery through four primary pillars of resilience: Psychological Strength, Physical Well-being, Connectedness, and Purpose/Meaning. Our team includes strength-based trauma psychotherapy, trauma informed massage, acupuncture and yoga, art therapies, outdoor experiential therapy, and equine-assisted therapy.

Central to the clinic's ethos is a 42-session care program meticulously designed to aid individuals grappling with trauma. Emphasizing the restoration of self-efficacy, this program leverages the power of group experiences to facilitate client's healing journeys. The results have been promising, with numerous Veterans finding solace and empowerment through their participation.

Excitingly, the innovative care model pioneered by the Milestones Resilience Care clinic has garnered recognition beyond its walls. The State of Colorado has embraced it as a pilot program, underscoring its potential to revolutionize trauma treatment. Ongoing assessment and research efforts promise to further refine and validate this approach, potentially opening doors to future funding opportunities.

Since its inception, the clinic has witnessed an encouraging response, with over twenty Veterans enrolling in the program.

Watch a short video on [the Milestones Resilience Care concept on YouTube here.](#)

CAMPUS SUPPORT

CREATE Program

In its successful completion of the third year, the [CREATE program](#) continues to be a cornerstone of support for UCCS faculty and staff, offering a diverse array of over 40 resilience and community-building events, free of charge. These events, ranging from cooking classes to indoor climbing, serve as essential components of mental health and wellness initiatives on campus. The acronym CREATE, which stands for Cultivating Resilience and Empowering Adaptation Through Expression, summarizes the program's mission to foster community cohesion and bolster resilience among participants.

Since its inception in 2021, the CREATE program has garnered widespread appreciation from attendees, evolving into a cherished aspect of campus life. Beyond its initial offerings, the program has expanded its offerings to include an even broader spectrum of enriching experiences, such as watercolor painting, mindfulness workshops, and nature walks. Looking ahead, there are aspirations to extend the program's reach beyond the confines of UCCS, aiming to bring these transformative workshops to interested individuals within the broader community.



VETERAN COMMUNITY SERVICE

Colorado's 4th Judicial District Veteran Trauma Court Enhancement: Trauma-Informed Interventions During Early Stages of VTC Program

Dr. Tim Doenges is the site Principal Investigator (PI) for a grant funded by the [Bureau of Justice Assistance](#). The grant will support the [Fourth Judicial District of Colorado](#) with \$604,571 over 36 months to enhance its Veterans Trauma Court (4JD-VTC). The purpose of the project will be to increase the effectiveness of the VTC program by identifying potential participants earlier, reducing the time between admission and the start of treatment, identifying mental health history and treatment needs more thoroughly earlier in the process, collecting in-depth mental health symptom information to identify and prioritize treatment for participants soon after enrollment, and increasing participant engagement with and motivation for treatment.

The goal of the program is to increase program success rates, which will benefit U.S. military Veterans and active-duty service members who are high-risk or high-need and have entered the judicial system.



Training Tomorrow's Trauma Psychologists

The [Healing division](#), in collaboration with the [Clinical Psychology program at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs \(UCCS\)](#), plays a crucial role in the community by addressing the pressing need for trauma-trained mental health clinicians. This partnership serves as an essential training ground for trauma-focused UCCS Clinical Psychology master's and Ph.D. students, offering them invaluable clinical experience essential for licensure and their future careers as trauma-trained psychologists. Currently, five doctoral students in the Trauma Psychology track are completing their fourth and fifth-year practicums at the [Veterans Health and Trauma Clinic](#), where they provide trauma-focused psychotherapy and psychological testing under the supervision of psychology faculty and clinic leadership. This hands-on experience is vital for these students, as the demand for well-educated and trained trauma psychologists is higher than ever due to a growing shortage of qualified providers and high levels of burnout among existing professionals.

The broader implications of this collaboration extend beyond the education and training of students. By providing accessible, quality mental health services to Veterans and trauma survivors, the clinic contributes to the overall well-being of the community. Trauma-informed care is crucial for those who have experienced significant psychological distress or traumatic events, and the specialized training provided at the clinic ensures that these individuals receive the support they need. Furthermore, the clinic's emphasis on evidence-based practices and continuous professional development sets a high standard for mental health services in the region, ultimately benefiting the community as a whole.

In summary, the partnership between the Veterans Health and Trauma Clinic and UCCS not only supports the education and training of future mental health professionals but also addresses a critical need for trauma-informed care, ultimately enhancing the well-being of the community.

COMMUNITY TRAINING & EMPOWERMENT



PROGRAM EXPANSION & CLIENT GROWTH

2023 saw another year of continued expansion in the services provided and individuals served by the Community Training and Empowerment division. The [First Priority Peer Support program](#) signed contracts with new organizational clients and renewed contracts with existing clients. The Trauma Training program launched a new learning management system, increasing access to a more expansive population. The Community Trainings and Workshops program presented to a variety of state and local government entities, healthcare organizations, higher education clients, miscellaneous other organizations, and the U.S. Military.

First Priority Peer Support Program

In 2023, the [Community Training and Empowerment \(CTE\)](#) division renewed contracts with the [Colorado Department of Transportation \(CDOT\)](#) and UCHealth Southern region. Additionally, a statewide Peer Support program through [CO-CARES](#) and funded through the [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment](#) (\$323,499) was started in partnership with [CU Anschutz](#). CTE will also begin a first-of-its-kind Peer Support program for the University of Colorado Colorado Springs to support faculty and staff in 2024. Over the course of the year, CTE trained 154 Peer Supporters across the various organizations supported through Institute contracts.





Trauma Training Program

In 2023, the [Trauma Training program](#) trained 59 students. The program also achieved a significant milestone by introducing a cutting-edge online learning management platform. The new platform not only facilitated a more dynamic and interactive learning experience for the participants but also widened its availability, thereby reaching a larger audience of potential students. The successful launch of the online platform marked a pivotal moment in the program's evolution, ensuring that individuals from diverse backgrounds and geographical locations can benefit from its valuable insights and trainings.

Looking ahead to 2024, the Trauma Training program is poised to extend its influence even further. The program will be made available to all [CDOT](#) employees. By integrating the Trauma Training program into the suite of resilience support services, the Institute aims to empower CDOT employees with the tools necessary to navigate and overcome challenges.

COMMUNITY TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS

The [Community Trainings and Workshops program](#) has continued to provide offerings to organizations in and out of Colorado. The trainings and workshops are customized for an organization to fit their specific needs but generally cover a variety of topics ranging from education on stress and trauma to how to work with escalated clients and perform safety evaluations. Throughout 2023, the CTE division trained approximately 2,000 individuals through this program, more than doubling the number trained in 2022.



Clients in 2023 include [U.S. Special Operations Command North](#), [Colorado Department of Transportation](#), [Colorado Department of Human Services](#), [Colorado 4th Judicial District](#), [El Paso County Public Health](#), [Colorado Springs Police Department](#), [Colorado Springs District Attorney's Office](#), Colorado Springs School Districts 2 and 11, [Colorado Springs Community Centers](#), [UCHealth](#), [Diversus Health](#), [Solace Pediatrics](#), [Jewish Family Center](#), and multiple departments within [University of Colorado \(CU\) System](#).

GRIT PROGRAM

In the Spring of 2022, the Institute was awarded an [American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\)](#) grant totaling \$396,755, allowing for the expansion of services provided through the [Greater Resilience Information Toolkit \(GRIT\)](#) program. With this funding, a dedicated GRIT program manager was hired, marketing firm AdPro was contracted, development of the [GRIT-e mobile application](#) was completed, and a community-resilience focused conference called “GRIT Resiliency in Action” was held on March 11th, 2024.

The GRIT-e app was launched at the GRIT conference and is now providing GRIT Coaches with access to important mental health resources and connecting them with other coaches. The GRIT conference was a resounding success with nearly 300 people in attendance. U.S. Olympians Amy Van Dyken-Rouen and Hunter Kemper, as well as former District Attorney Mark Yarbrough of Lamb County, Texas spoke about resilience, burnout, and overcoming adversity.

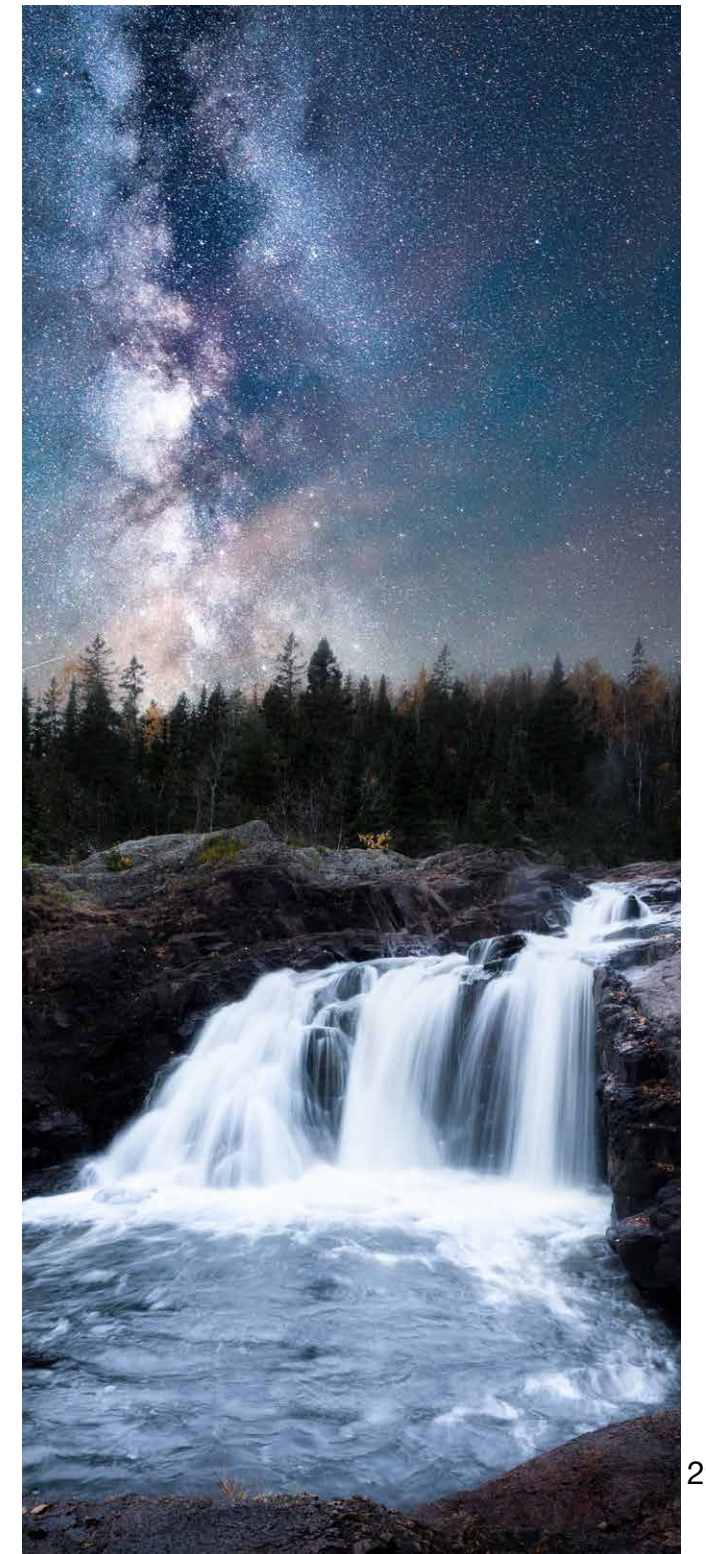
The GRIT program continued to expand throughout 2023, and had trained nearly 4,000 GRIT Coaches in all 50 U.S. states and 32 countries across the world by the end of the year.



IMPACT

Along with the previously mentioned activities, the Community Training and Empowerment division supported survivors of several major community traumas during 2023, including victims of the mass shooting at ClubQ in Colorado Springs, residents and first responders impacted by the Marshall Fire in Boulder, Colorado, and families affected by the Return to Nature Funeral Home crimes in Penrose, Colorado.

Between the First Priority Peer Support program, the Trauma Training program, the Community Trainings & Workshops program, and the Greater Resilience Information Toolkit (GRIT) program, the Community Training and Empowerment division had an outsized impact in spreading resilience to the local community and the world throughout 2023.



INSTITUTE TECHNOLOGY

Institute Created Assessment & Reporting System

2023 marked a significant step forward in the Institute's technology integration efforts. These achievements include improving client empowerment and program evaluation through an innovative assessment and reporting system, increasing GRIT Coach engagement and effectiveness through the GRIT-e application, and providing essential coping skills for trauma survivors through a digital health intervention for trauma recovery.

Assessment and Reporting System

Mental health assessment and reporting play crucial roles in empowering clients and improving services by identifying, tracking, and addressing specific mental health issues for each client. Traditional methods often fall short in providing insights and personalized feedback. The Institute-developed system addressed these shortfalls by providing an automated and tailored assessment system as well as customized reporting of results. The **Psychological Assessment of Well-Being System (PAWS)** is a HIPAA compliant clinical assessment system designed to help mental health professionals assess and monitor the psychological well-being of their clients. Because everyone is unique, PAWS offers tailored assessments to address each client's specific goals. Whether targeting personal growth, coping strategies, psychological strength, improved relationships, or overall well-being, PAWS is designed to address a wide range of psychological concerns.

PAWS Features

- Evidence-based Measures of Well-Being
- Customized Batteries
- Automated Assessments
- Customized Reporting
- Improved Program Evaluation
- Confidentiality and Privacy

GRIT-e COACHING APPLICATION



GRIT

GREATER RESILIENCE INFORMATION TOOLKIT

The GRIT-e mobile/web application was developed in 2023 to support the [GRIT \(Greater Resilience Information Toolkit\) training program](#) created by the Lyda Hill Institute for Human Resilience. The purpose of **GRIT-e** is to support and connect GRIT Coaches from around the world, offering important tools such as quick reminders of important skills, easy ways to monitor and follow up with contacts, and encouragement and success stories from other GRIT Coaches. GRIT-e also provides critical local and national resources and opportunities to get involved in other community disasters. GRIT-e will be launched in January of 2024. Figure 1 shows a portion of the coach's dashboard that provides contact management, access to the coach sourced bulletin board, and reminders of important skills.

The ultimate goal of GRIT-e is to help create a network of GRIT Coaches around the U.S. and the world, so when community disasters strike, resilience-trained populations are ready to support one another. By providing a free, accessible program, and developing tools to support and connect coaches, GRIT-e offers a solution for promoting resilience through social support during difficult times.

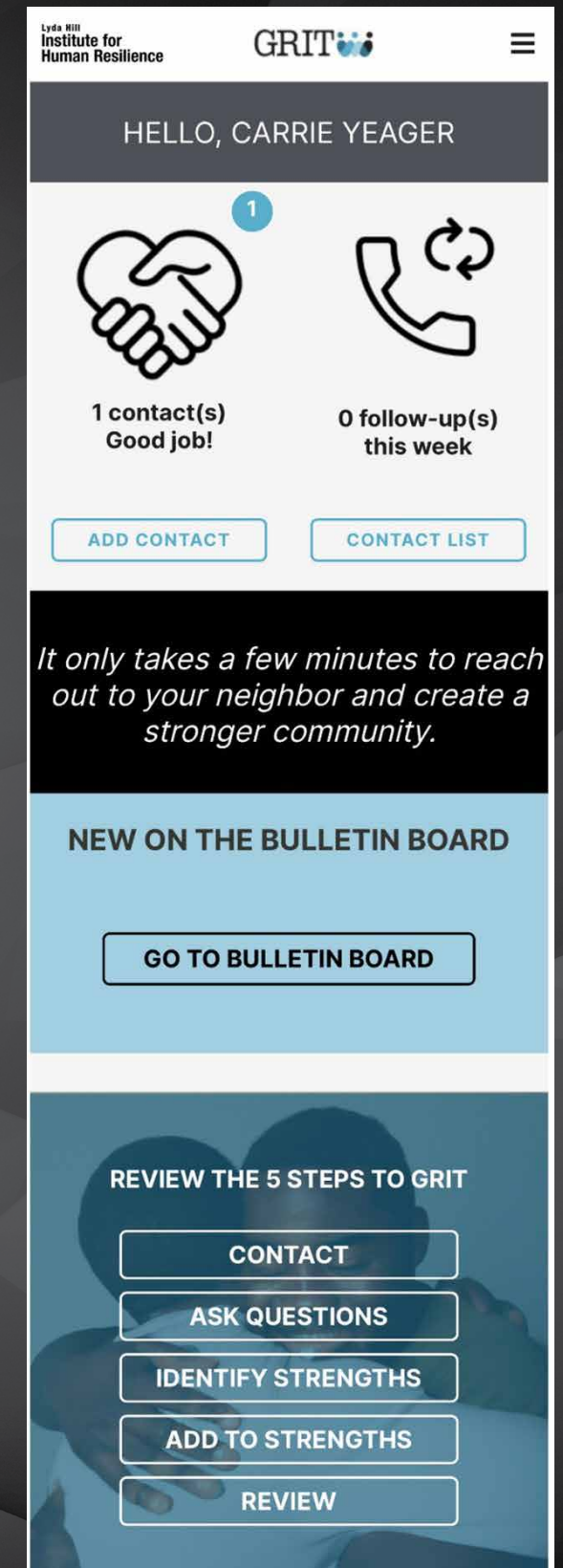


Figure 1: GRIT Coach Dashboard

TRAUMA RECOVERY DIGITAL INTERVENTION

The technology team has updated an older digital health intervention (DHI) for trauma recovery to include state-of-the-art technology. It is an accessible online self-help service developed to build resilience in those who have experienced a recent trauma.

The DHI system is designed to be customizable for any type of trauma (e.g., wildfire vs. medical trauma) and is designed to aid individuals in the process of recovering from psychological trauma. The DHI (Figure 2) supports this process by helping survivors understand traumatic stress, providing skills to improve coping and resilience-building, and offering feedback on how individuals are progressing. It also provides access to relevant resources, and if necessary, how to seek professional help. The DHI consists of several modules to help trauma survivors learn something important that may give them more control throughout the recovery process, including:

- **Relaxation:** This module focuses on reducing tension and anxiety. It helps one learn and practice 3 kinds of relaxation exercises that can help lower tension and anxiety.
- **Social Support:** As noted earlier, getting support from others is a critical part of recovery. In this module, medical trauma survivors learn how support can help, how to identify a good support person, and ways to deal with unhelpful people.
- **Self-Talk:** This module focuses on reducing worry and negative thinking patterns. Negative thinking can slow down recovery. Trauma survivors use this module to identify personal negative thoughts, learn about how to worry less, and reduce negative self-talk.
- **Triggers and Memories:** This module helps a survivor cope with memories, triggers, and reminders. After a trauma, lots of reminders of the trauma trigger distressing memories and physical reactions. This module helps survivors learn about this and how to manage triggers more effectively.
- **Unhelpful Ways of Coping:** This module helps to reduce negative coping habits. Individuals can find out what kinds of coping can make things worse and focus on reducing or avoiding bad coping habits.
- **Seeking Professional Help:** Many individuals recover more rapidly if they have counseling with a traumatic stress specialist. This module provides education on what happens in counseling and guides a person through considering some pros and cons of talking to a trauma counselor.

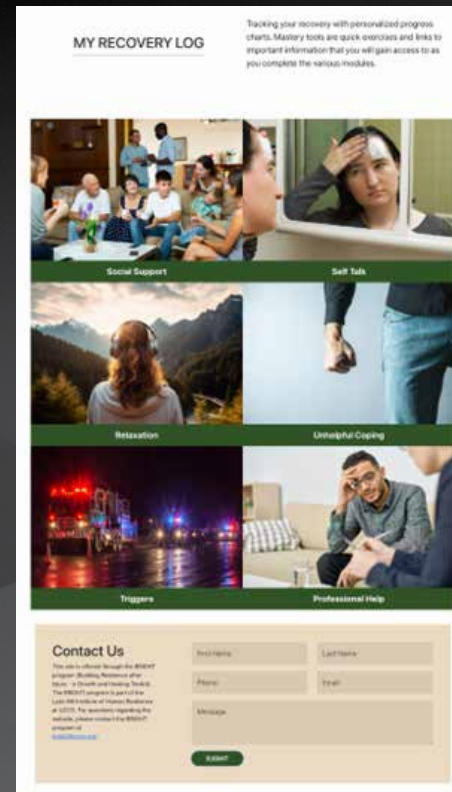


Figure 2: Digital Health Intervention

FUTURE INSTITUTE TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES

In 2024, several key initiatives are happening to expand on the successes of the Institute's technology programs. These include the testing and recent release of the GRIT-e application throughout the U.S. and the world, testing and releasing the Digital Health Intervention (DHI) for trauma recovery, and designing and developing a sensory room within the new Milestones Resilience Care clinic which will serve as a space for clients to engage in resilience-building activities using the latest technologies. The Institute will also be expanding the Psychological Assessment of Well-Being System (PAWS) to include new features such as enhanced graphical reporting, additional metrics, and an improved user experience. Finally, the technology team will be an integral part of the program evaluation efforts of the various clinics at the Lyda Hill Institute for Human Resilience.



Lyda Hill
Institute for
Human Resilience

The Arts & Resiliency Gathering

Oct 25-29

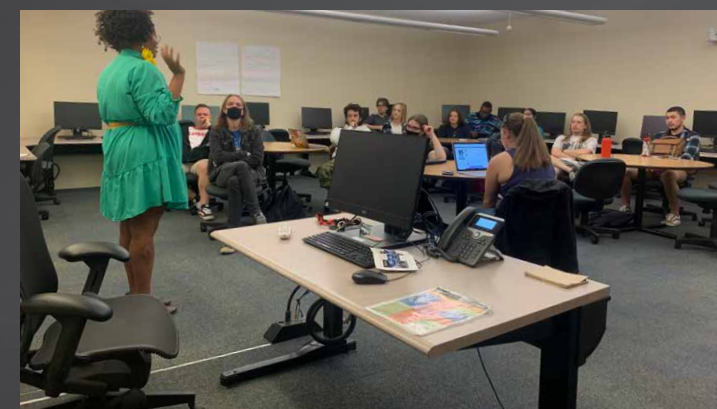
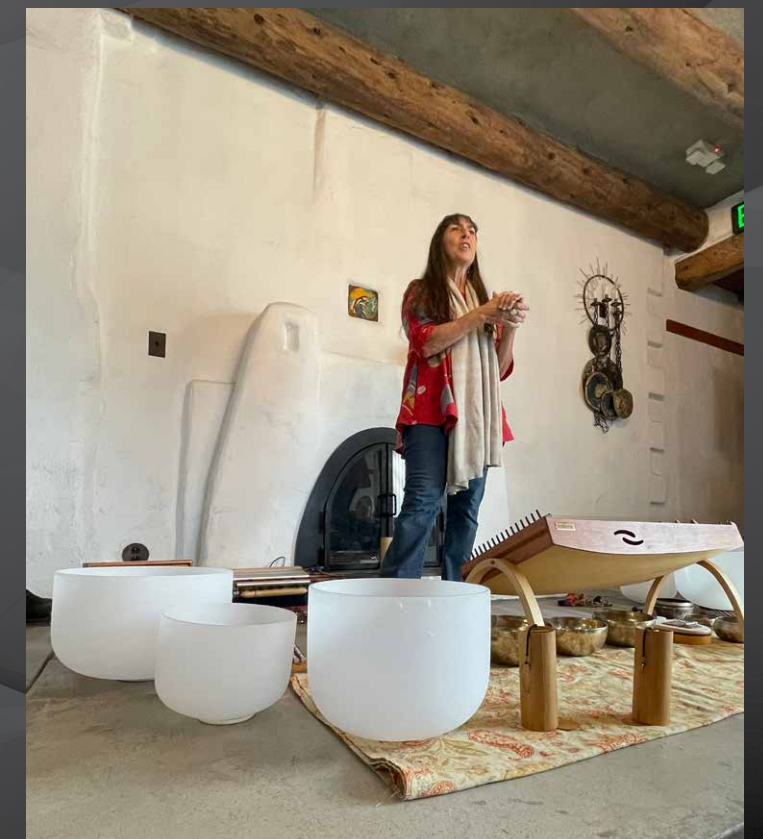


CELEBRATING RESILIENCE THROUGH THE ARTS
A WEEKEND OF DANCE, MUSIC, POETRY, & WORKSHOPS

In October 2023, the [Arts & Resiliency Gathering](#) was held on the UCCS campus, uniting acclaimed visual and performing artists from across the country, with the purpose of promoting resiliency and community well-being in the Pikes Peak region. From October 25th through the 29th, community members, faculty, staff, and students attended the three headlining performances and eighteen resilience-building workshops. A key goal of the gathering was the direct engagement of individuals in the LGBTQ+, Veteran, active military, healthcare, caregiver, and people with disabilities communities, all of whom face disproportionate stress when compared to the general population.

The event was sponsored by the [Lyda Hill Institute for Human Resilience](#), the [National Endowment for the Arts](#), the [Kirkpatrick Family Fund](#), the [Colorado College Creativity & Innovation Office](#), the [Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region](#), the [El Pomar Foundation](#), Kyle & Sally Hybl, the [Bee Vradenburg Foundation](#), [KCME 88.7 FM](#), [Green Box Arts](#), and Dr. Charles Benight. Event partners include [UCCS Visual & Performing Arts \(VAPA\)](#), [Inside Out Youth Services](#), [The Independence Center](#), the [UCCS Heller Center for the Arts & Humanities](#), and the [UCCS Department of English](#). Special thanks go to Institute Affiliate and Associate Professor at VAPA, [Dr. Jane Rigler](#), who led this effort.

There was substantial turnout for the Arts & Resiliency Gathering, with approximately 400 tickets sold for the various offerings. In surveys, the vast majority of attendees reported a positive experience, with many noting that the events brought them a sense of peace, calmness, and community. Nearly 90% of respondents said they learned something new. 75% indicated that the event "...helped show me how art can be used in my life to promote wellbeing" and 75% said they "...intend to use skills learned at this event to manage future stressors and cope with traumatic events." Overall, post-event metrics indicate that the gathering was of significant value to those who attended and provided an engaging way to build individual and community resilience.



WHAT TO WATCH FOR IN 2024

The Lyda Hill Institute for Human Resilience has curated an array of community events slated for 2024. These events offer the opportunity to engage our community in the importance of resilience building in the Pikes Peak region and beyond.

Resilience Science Summit

The inaugural Resilience Science Summit convenes in Colorado Springs on July 25th and 26th. We eagerly anticipate uniting top minds in resilience science for rich discussions and dynamic exchanges within smaller groups. Our goal is to spark creativity and address challenges inherent in resilience science. Following the event, we aim to publish a special issue featuring nine papers and accompanying commentaries.



GRIT Conference

The March, 11th [GRIT Conference](#) was the culmination of a campaign to expand the GRIT program within El Paso County, Colorado, as part of an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant provided through the County. The conference hosted a variety of influential speakers, including six-time Olympic gold medalist, Amy Van Dyken. The event served as an opportunity to celebrate resilience, reinforce GRIT resilience training, and recruit additional GRIT Coaches.

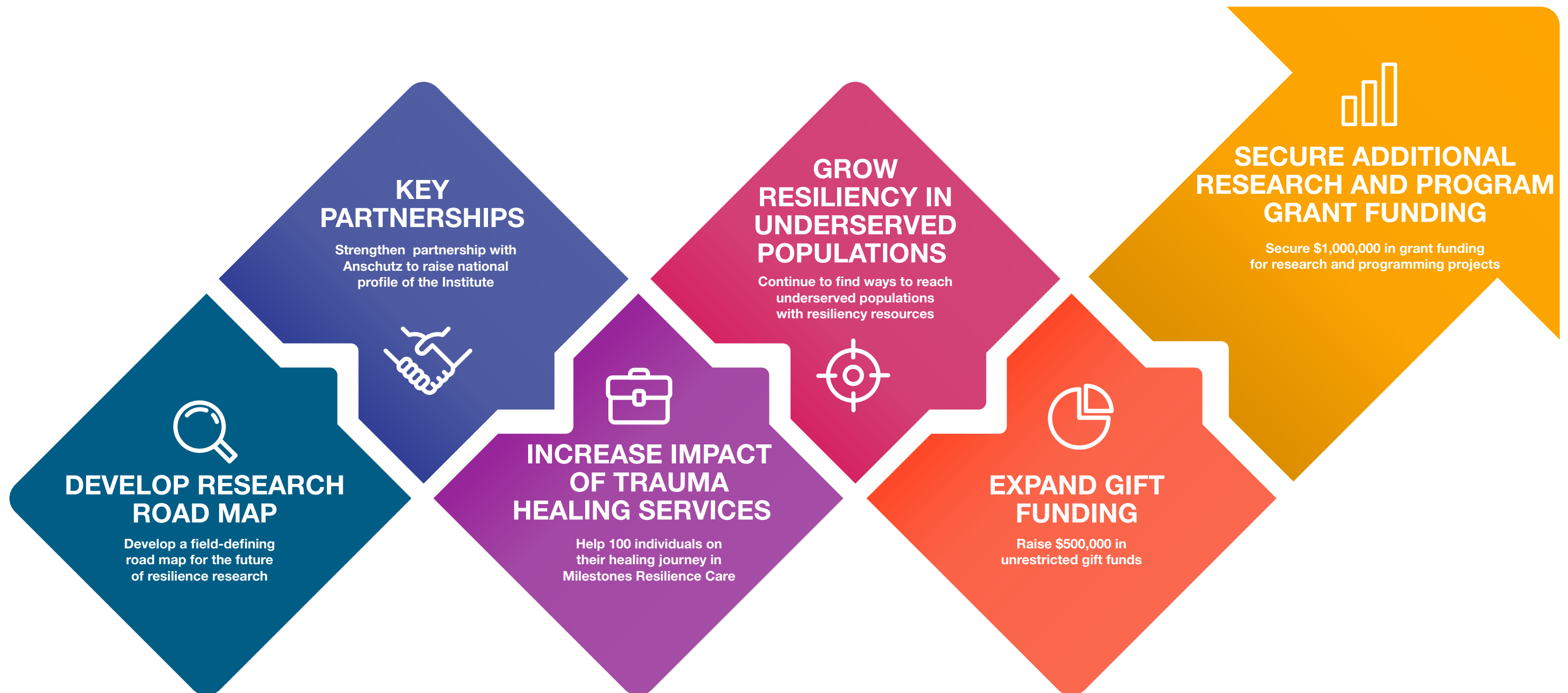


Nonlinear Dynamical Systems Workshop

The upcoming [Nonlinear Dynamical Systems workshop](#) provides an opportunity for researchers to learn how to ask new questions and derive additional understanding from their research through mathematical/statistical analysis. Led by Dr. Bernard Ricca, this workshop is designed to enrich researchers' understanding of change processes. By integrating NDS analyses, participants will gain valuable insights into how systems evolve over time.



INSTITUTE GOALS



NEW FUNDING

GRANTS AND FUNDRAISING

The Lyda Hill Institute for Human Resilience works closely with [UCCS Advancement](#) and the [Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Integrity](#) for the submission of funding proposals and administration of donations, grants, and awards.



FUNDING ACHIEVEMENTS

- Dr. Heather Littleton received a \$653,281 grant from the [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#) in the NIH. Dr. Littleton will develop and evaluate an online, family-based intervention aimed at preventing alcohol use and domestic violence among sexual and gender minority youth.
- Dr. Tim Doenges is the site PI for a grant awarded by the [Bureau of Justice Assistance](#) for \$604,571. The goal of this project will be to revamp the Veterans Trauma Court in Colorado's 4th Judicial District. Increased program success rates will benefit U.S. military Veterans and active-duty service members who are at high-risk or high-need and have entered the judiciary system.
- Dr. Steve Bistricky received the \$22,500 [Walter Katkovsky Research Grant](#) from the American Psychological Foundation. The project will examine whether changes in coping self-efficacy and self-compassion can explain posttraumatic adjustment, symptom reduction, and post-injury psychological growth following psychological trauma from physical injury.
- Dr. Bistricky is also the site PI for a [Department of Defense](#) grant (\$102,016) awarded to Institute affiliate Dr. Stephanie Agtarap at Craig Hospital. The project will look to identify resilience-related factors for psychosocial growth after a traumatic brain injury.
- The Institute received a \$9,684 in-kind gift from Joanne Bonicelli which helped to create the peaceful healing environment in the [Milestones Resilience Care](#) Clinic.
- Dr. Mary Hayden was the site PI for two awarded NSF grants (\$40,342 & \$77,025). In one project, Dr. Hayden and colleagues will investigate the dynamic and reciprocal interaction between mosquito-borne diseases, human behavior, and decision-making. In a second project, Dr. Hayden is helping to examine how human behavior and policies impact the perception and response to extreme heat.
- Dr. Jane Rigler received a \$2,000 grant from the [Bee Vradenburg Foundation](#) to help support the Arts & Resiliency Gathering that took place in October, 2023.
- The Institute has also received donations from the [Pikes Peak Fund for a Thriving Community](#) (\$5,308) and [Everett Charitable Trust](#) of Pikes Peak Community Foundation (\$6,292) to support Institute operations as well as the GRIT program.
- The Institute received a gift of \$50,000 from the Nor'wood Fund of the Pikes Peak Community Foundation that will support the upcoming Resilience Science Summit being hosted by the Institute in July.
- The Institute received a \$5,000 gift from Pam Shockley-Zalabak to support the 2024 GRIT Resiliency in Action conference.



Research | Healing | Community Training & Empowerment

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