Association of Vision Rehabilitation Therapists
2022 Annual Professional Development Conference

Squirrel in front of Oak tree

TALL TREES FROM LITTLE ACORNS GROW:
VRTS IN ACTION

Conference Logo

November 2 – 4, 2022

Embassy Hotel and Suites

Raleigh, North Carolina
# Table of Contents

Table of Contents .................................................................................................................. 2
Welcome Message .................................................................................................................. 3
A Message from the AVRT President .................................................................................... 4
A Message from Vert ............................................................................................................. 5
CEU Credit .......................................................................................................................... 5
QR Code ............................................................................................................................... 5
Agenda at a Glance ............................................................................................................... 6
  Wednesday November 2, 2022 ....................................................................................... 6
  Thursday November 3, 2022 ......................................................................................... 7
  Friday November 4, 2022 ............................................................................................ 8
The AVRT Board of Directors ............................................................................................. 8
Presentations ....................................................................................................................... 11
Our Vendors ....................................................................................................................... 17
Activities ............................................................................................................................. 18
  North Carolina Museum ................................................................................................. 18
  Confessions of a VRT ..................................................................................................... 18
  Squirrel Chats ............................................................................................................... 18
  Adaptive Painting Activity ............................................................................................ 18
Fundraisers .......................................................................................................................... 19
  Acorn Tree .................................................................................................................... 19
  50/50 Raffle .................................................................................................................. 19
  Photo Booth .................................................................................................................. 19
AVRT 2022 Professional Development Conference – CEU Attendance Verification .......... 20
Map of Hotel ...................................................................................................................... 22
Welcome Message

Welcome to the Association of Vision Rehabilitation Therapist (AVRT) annual training conference for 2022. I’m very glad that we are able to have an in-person conference again there’s something very special about being able to gather with other professionals from around the country.

As you can see, our schedule is filled with exciting presentations. These cover everything from ‘how do I…’ to a look at the future of VRT. We will have some wonderful vendors on Thursday. Directly after the vendor fair, our Adaptive Painting Activity is scheduled. For those not going to the paint activity there will be ‘squirrel chats’. Don’t be alarmed no real squirrels will be involved! This is similar to what we had last year where you can spend 2 minutes talking to someone, a bell will ring, and you’ll move on to talk to somebody else for two minutes. This is a great way to network and meet others. Raleigh offers a lot of activities and places to eat after the conference each evening. Stop by our information booth and pick up information about restaurants and other activities in town during our stay.

Also, we have our acorn tree. Each acorn is $20, and it is linked to a prize worth at least $25! Watch for our 50/50 raffle and the times our photo booth will be open.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped with this endeavor and most especially my committee. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Jessica Caswell, Lenore Dillon, and Jennifer Orrowirz, I absolutely could not have done this without you. If you have any questions or concerns, please find me or any other member of our board and we will do our best to help you.

I hope you enjoy our conference,

Linda Fugate, Ed.D., CVRT
Vice President AVRT
Conference chair
A Message from the AVRT President

Greetings and congratulations to all of you who have come to Raleigh, North Carolina to participate in the Association of Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (AVRT) 2022 professional Development Conference!

This is an exciting time in our field, which the AVRT Board of Directors believes is reflected in the stellar program assembled by our Conference Planning Committee. Not only is this the first time since our 2019 conference where we have been able to meet in person, but this year’s program provides ample opportunities to gain information that can be immediately used in your job. In addition, you will learn how AVRT and other professional organizations have been working together to both examine the profession of vision rehabilitation therapy, as well as work together to strengthen our field as we continue to put the COVID pandemic in our rearview mirrors.

I have appreciated the opportunity of being president of such a terrific organization as AVRT and look forward to having the chance to say hello to each of you while at the conference.

Be well.
John McMahon, Ph.D., CVRT
President, AVRT
A Message from Vert

Welcome to Raleigh! This is a great city, and I am glad you came to visit. I helped put together a list of restaurants and other fun places. You can get one at the information table.

I will have a photo booth so you can get a picture with me. I am only asking for donations so I can feed my kittens.

Welcome to Raleigh
Vert

Vert and the Raleigh skyline

CEU Credit

This conference has been approved for both ACVREP (11.5) and CRCC (12) credit. There will be code words at the beginning and end of each session, please record these. There is a sheet at the end of this program that you can use for that purpose if you wish. For both types of credit, the attendance verification will be part of the conference evaluation. It is our hope that this will make the process easier for everyone!

QR Code

This year we are providing you with a QR Code to access both our program and information about restaurants and activities here in Raleigh. Just scan the code below or at the registration or information tables. There are also print copies of the information list available.

Activity information          Agenda
Agenda at a Glance

Wednesday November 2, 2022

8:00 – 9:00  Coffee Hour (bring your own beverage)  Dr. Linda Fugate, Ed.D., CVRT
9:00 – 9:30  Opening Session  Dr. Linda Fugate, Ed.D., CVRT
9:30 – 10:30  Keynote  Toni Sharp
10:30 – 10:45  Break
10:45 – 12:15  The Unified Model of Adjustment:  Dr. John McMahon, Ph.D., CVRT
One Way Of Measuring Movement
Through the Adjustment Process
12:15 – 1:30  Lunch/ Business Meeting  Dr. John McMahon, Ph.D., CVRT
1:30 – 2:30  Concurrent Session 1
A. Canes to Tails  Jane Flowers
B. Seeing AI – the Swiss Army Knife of Apps  Michella Brown, Jessica Caswell
2:30 – 2:45  Break
2:45 – 3:45  Concurrent Session 2
A. Ready, Set, Work  Marge Lebrick, Dana Barber
B. Music Education for All  Laura Zierer, Justine Taylor
3:45 – 4:00  Break
4:00 – 5:00  Concurrent Session 3
A. Life Matters:  Cyndy Greenacres
Approaching Suicidality with Competence and Care
B. Lessons Learned From the FILA Assessment Pilot Training  Kendra Farrow, CVRT
5:00  Adjourn  Dr. Linda Fugate, Ed.D., CVRT
5:45  North Carolina Museum Trip (optional)  Jessica Caswell
<table>
<thead>
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<td>8:00 – 9:00</td>
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<td>9:30 – 10:30</td>
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<td>A. <strong>It's More than a CEU:</strong> Polly Abbott, CVRT</td>
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<td>Identifying the Best Options for Continuing Education</td>
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<td>B. <strong>Life-Changing Resources</strong> for Kate Frederick, Pris Rogers</td>
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<td>Consumers Who are Blind or Low Vision</td>
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<td>10:45 – 11:45</td>
<td>Concurrent Session 5</td>
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<td>A. <strong>Collaboration in Action:</strong> Meri Goldman, CVRT, Kellee Sanchez, COMS</td>
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<td>Impact Of VRT Services in Employment</td>
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<td>B. <strong>Sowing Seeds for Success:</strong> Dr. Ian Shadrick, Ed.D., CRCC</td>
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<td>11:45 – 1:30</td>
<td>Awards Luncheon</td>
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<td>1:30 – 3:00</td>
<td>Vendor Showcase Dr. Linda Fugate, Ed.D., CVRT</td>
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<td>3:00 – 5:00</td>
<td>Adaptive Paint Activity/ Squirrel Chats/VRT Confessional</td>
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Friday November 4, 2022

8:00 – 8:30  Opening Session  Dr. Linda Fugate, Ed.D., CVRT

8:30 – 9:30  The Future of VRT  Dan Norris, CVRT,  
Dr. Elyse Connors, Ph.D., CVRT  
Polly Abbott, CVRT

9:30 – 10:30  VRTs in Action: Promoting Compassionate Care for Clients with Low Vision or Blindness and Dementia  Cyndy Greenacre

10:30 – 10:45  Break

10:45 – 11:45  Don’t bite Off More Then You Can Chew. Preparing for a Cooking Class  Jessica Caswell, Michella Brown

11:45 – 12:00  Adjourn Conference  Dr. John McMahon, Ph.D., CVRT

12:00  Boxed lunch

The AVRT Board of Directors

John McMahon – President
Linda Fugate – Vice President
Ian Shadrick – Secretary
Susan Dalton – Treasurer
Lachelle Smith – Member at large
Jessica Caswell – Member at large
Elyse Henrich – Member at large
Pamela Holloway – Member at large
Jennifer Ottowitz – Past President
Vanda Pharmaceuticals is dedicated to raising awareness of Non-24-Hour Sleep-Wake Disorder (Non-24) and supporting the blindness community. Non-24 is a rare circadian rhythm disorder affecting up to 70% of people who are totally blind. People living with Non-24 experience excessive daytime sleepiness and nighttime sleeplessness, which leads to impaired social and occupational functioning. This is due to the misalignment between the internal master body clock and the 24-hour day.

COME VISIT US AT OUR BOOTH TO LEARN ABOUT NON-24 AND SIGN UP FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION!

NON-24
a circadian rhythm disorder


CALL A HEALTH EDUCATOR TOLL-FREE AT 1-855-856-2424 | 24 HOURS A DAY, EVERY DAY
Presentations

Wednesday

The Unified Model of Adjustment: One Way Of Measuring Movement Through the Adjustment Process
John McMahon
10:45 Wednesday General Session

Many blindness professionals realize the importance of the process of adjustment for our clients. At times it may be apparent when a client is or is not well-adjusted, but for the most part this is often more about our impression and less about our ability to notice and/or measure progress as clients move through the adjustment process. The Unified Model of Adjustment can be used to assist professionals in identifying where in the process clients may be, as well as how to recognize movement through this process of adjustment.

Canes to Tails
Jane Flowers
1:30 Wednesday Concurrent A

The unfortunate lack of resources across the U.S. for youth and adults who are blind or visually impaired can lead to gaps that last a lifetime. While a great deal of information is available through technology, nothing compares to firsthand experiences that highlight the life-changing potential of a K9 Buddy or a Guide Dog. Guide Dogs for the Blind has created several programs that assist youth and adults who are blind or visually impaired and their communities of support experience the unique power of the human animal bond: K9 Buddies, Camp GDB, the “Ready, Set, FORWARD” workshop series and our Orientation & Mobility Immersion program. Because guide dog travel is complex, and preparation for a successful partnership with a guide dog can start at a young age, the information, connection, and support provided by GDB for youth, adults and those who support them will help lay the foundation for individuals transitioning into adulthood or someone who wants to enhance their independence to make a well-informed decision to travel with a cane or canine when the time is right.

Seeing AI- the Swiss Army Knife of Apps
Michella Brown, Jessica Caswell
1:30 Wednesday Concurrent B

Step-by-step instructions on how use and teach the App Seeing AI. Learn what this amazing and FREE app can do to help the visually impaired. This presentation will
provide resources, such as lesson plans, demonstration items, and a scanner box craft to use this app effectively.
Even if you are using Seeing AI or teaching it to your clients, this presentation will provide some tips and tricks to make teaching this lesson a breeze. Get a list of teaching supplies and resources to provide to your clients. Learn how to make a scanner box, to make scanning easier for your clients at a fraction of the price of the ones available online.

**Ready, Set, Work**
Marge Lebrick, Dana Barber, Arneetrice Ellerman
2:45 Wednesday Concurrent A

Cock-a-Doodle-Do, Cock-a-Doodle-Do.....What is that?.....oh no I gotta get up! What to do, what to do.... I just don’t know where to begin.
You will see a consumer getting ready for her first day of work. Our presentation will focus on labeling, organizing, searching, route planning, transportation, and various helpful pieces of equipment to make starting their day easier. You will see the consumer put on makeup, find appropriate clothes and accessories, prepare a lunch, and plan their route to the jobsite.

**Music Education for All**
Laura Zierer, Justine Taylor
2:45 Wednesday Concurrent B

This session will introduce attendees to a variety of out-of-the-box solutions to aid in teaching and learning the music braille code. Summary: Learn the basics of music braille: What it looks like, why and how to teach it to your students, and available products and resources to aid in music education for all students. Come with an open mind so we can fill it with a variety of out-of-the-box solutions to teaching this code! A basic knowledge of how to read print music may be helpful but is not required. During this presentation, we will show a few music-specific products that are new to the APH catalog. The presentation will showcase inclusive activities for students of all abilities to participate in music class. We will also show ways for students with low vision to access print music.

**Life Matters: Approaching Suicidality with Competence and Care**
Cyndy Greenacre
4:00 Wednesday Concurrent A

Being VRTs, we may be in the unique position of serving people when they are at their most vulnerable. Your client may have experienced a change in health or visual status, which in a world full of stressors, as the pandemic, social and economic concerns grind on, may lead them to a dark place. Suicide is a leading cause of death in the US. Over
12.2 million adults in the US, almost 5%, had serious thoughts of suicide in 2020-21 and 0.5% of adults made a suicide attempt in 2020-21. The risk for suicide is growing, particularly for certain populations. What was once just a clinical concern is now a public health responsibility. It seems such a large, scary and ill-defined problem; what can one VRT hope to do?

Maybe more than you might think. Our specialized knowledge set, trust relationships and skill affirming field may also offer unique hope. If someone we know- or even love- is having suicidal thoughts, how can we respond in ways that are both helpful and hopeful? This presentation will offer evidence-based best practices for responding to suicidality including exploring common myths/misconception, tools to conceptualize and evaluate risk, strategies to support and help as well as resources for follow up including self-care for you as the VRT, friend or family member.

Lessons Learned from the FILA Assessment Pilot Training
Kendra Farrow
4:00 Wednesday Concurrent B

The Functional Independent Living Assessment, FILA, was developed to bring more standardization to VRT assessment and to develop a validated tool to accurately measure outcomes of services provided. The tool was validated by the CVRT subject matter expert committee in early 2021.

Training materials were then developed. This included coming up with unique scenarios that had ratings for each option of the FILA rating scale. The scenario writer shared scenarios with the research team, who reviewed and rated practice scenarios. When there was disagreement about a rating, it was discussed with the team. A set of 10 quiz questions was developed in a similar way.

The training for pilot testers of the FILA includes a 1.5 hour virtual training followed by reviewing practice scenarios. The final step is a 10-question quiz which needs to be passed with a score of 80% or higher.

VRTs from 4 states attended the training. However, some of the potential pilot testers had difficulty passing the quiz. The individuals who did not pass were asked to review the practice scenarios and take the quiz again. There were still some who did not pass the quiz. Additional training was provided, with mixed results. After reflecting on the possible reasons, the research team believes the difficulty may be the reading level of the practice and quiz materials.

The question this raises is, should the training materials be revised for a lower reading level, or should the FILA only be used by individuals who can pass at the current level? A lower reading level would ensure that any staff person could make use of the tool, but by lowering the reading level, is it lowering the educational requirements for the staff who work with older individuals?

Thursday
Life-Changing Resources for Consumers Who are Blind or Low Vision
Katie Frederick, Pris Rogers
9:30 Thursday Concurrent B

Attend this session and find out about the resources that APH and the APH ConnectCenter provide for you, consumers, and family members. The ConnectCenter offers a toll-free number to help consumers and family members find answers to questions. VisionAware provides resources you can share including the Getting Started Guide, modifications to the home environment, tips for living with vision loss, a guide to coping with and managing diabetes, information about age-related eye conditions, and much more. Additionally, VisionAware has a new section just for professionals with tips and information related to aging and vision loss. Additionally, APH offers helpful publications such as Making Life More Livable and products such as Juno, a handheld video magnifier.

Plus, use this session to give us your feedback on how we can improve VisionAware as a tool for you to use yourself as well as with consumers and their family members. So come prepared to make suggestions!

It’s More than a CEU: Identifying the Best Options for Continuing Education
Polly Abbott
9:30 Thursday Concurrent A

VRTs rely on continuing education opportunities to maintain professional skills and develop new ones. Continuing Education can stimulate but it can also lead to feelings of time that has been wasted despite gaining the all-important CEU credit for recertification. With more on-line content creation, there are more sources than ever to gain credits. However, no longer hidden is our specialized knowledge. What does this mean for CVRTs? This presentation will encourage participants to contemplate the impact of continuing education on both an individual and profession-wide scope.

Sources of free CEUs, NRTC, APH, and paid options like conferences, AER, will be discussed exploring factors that make each a good, better, or best choice. Factors include topic, format, cost/free, and rigor. Goals of the professional should be considered and include maintaining current knowledge, acquiring new knowledge, or developing knowledge or skills in an area where confidence is needed. Goals may be different for VRTs who are recently graduated compared to the veterans of the blindness field.

The presenter of this session works for the NRTC and will highlight several new CEU opportunities, Teaching Braille, Facilitating Family Support, Gearing Up for Transit and Strategies for Mentoring Interns: Developing Qualified Professionals for the Future. Participants will be encouraged to discuss their experiences and invited to share topics for desired CEU opportunities.
Collaboration in Action: A VRT, an O&M, and a Deaf-Blind Consumer
Meri Shoemaker, Kellee Sanchez
10:45 Thursday Concurrent A

The goal of the course is to have the participants leave the room empowered with knowledge and tools a VRT and O&M utilize to teach a consumer who is Deaf-Blind in the workplace and in their home. Participants and the presenters will discuss and collaborate on best methods teaching a person who is Deaf-Blind, applying past experiences that worked and skills that didn’t, and how to modify teachings to promote a successful closure. The instructors will emphasize the importance of cross-teaching and collaborating with the Orientation and Mobility Specialist for all consumers in order to serve the consumer, problem-solve, and encourage the consumer to utilize all skills taught to transfer from one task to another.

Sowing Seeds for Success: Impact of VRT Services in Employment
Ian Shadrick
10:45 Thursday Concurrent B

Sowing seeds establishes healthy roots. VRT can sow seeds in the provision of services that establish healthy roots for continued success in independence and employment practices. Vision rehabilitation therapists do not often consider ourselves employment specialists, however recent legislation, and the pandemic have reinforced the impact of VRT services in employment. This session will present methods for reevaluating assessment, service delivery, and rethinking working age clients.

Friday

The Future of VRT
Dan Norris, Elyse Connors, Polly Abbott
9:30 Friday General Session

The Vision Rehabilitation Therapy field is small in number and growing more slowly than needed to meet the expanding need for services for persons with vision loss. There has been little examination on how VRT service providers understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the profession. A group of CVRTs who originated on the Subject Matter Expert Committee of ACVREP designed and implemented a survey, with the support of Western Michigan University, to capture the views of these vision professionals. Released in early 2022, 255 Vision Rehabilitation Therapists in North America responded to the survey and provided valuable input as to their current perception of these four categories. This data will be presented in July 2022 at the Bi-Annual AERBVI Conference in St. Louis for the first time to a large group of VRTs, and the survey results submitted for consideration to the Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness. Understanding the field’s identified strengths, weaknesses,
opportunities and threats may serve as a foundation for unifying the voice of VRTs, and help coordinate a more uniform and strategic direction for growth. For the AVRT Conference, the presenters will review the findings of the survey, discuss progress with the publication, provide attendees with a summary of the action items developed during the July 2022 presentation/workshop in St. Louis, and report on any progress made on action items since the AERBVI July conference. Those present will help to identify additional actionable steps the field should be advised to take, and those results will be communicated to the field.

VRTs in Action:
Promoting Compassionate Care for Clients with Low Vision or Blindness and Dementia
Cyndy Greenacre
9:30 Friday General Session

As the population ages, statistically more of our clients with low vision or blindness are predicted to develop one or several forms of dementia. When a person has dementia and vision impairment, many routine tasks easily accomplished previously, such as mobility, communication, and daily living, become more challenging even with previous training in skills of blindness or low vision. Research suggests that people with both vision impairment and dementia experience profound disorientation and isolation, difficulties managing changes in illumination, substantially increased risk for falls, injury and mortality, less independence, misperceptions of objects, people and activities, and challenges in learning to use new equipment. Dementia itself causes changes in vision and visual perception that impact typical training methods used in low vision. This presentation will discuss common types of dementia, and their effects on vision and visual perception. Some of the techniques we as blind rehabilitation providers use naturally lend themselves to excellent care for those with dementia, while others would benefit with small modifications or tips. We will explore evidence-based and field-suggested approaches and tips to providing excellent and compassionate care for our patients with dementia.

Don't bite Off More Then You Can Chew. Preparing for a Cooking Class
Jessica Caswell, Michella Brown
10:45 Friday General Session

Step-by-step instructions on how to put together a specialized cooking class for the visually impaired. This presentation will provide details on how to prepare for, organize, and then teach cooking skills to your clients. Cooking can be intimidating for the clients, but it can also be intimidating to teach. Safety during the class and while the client is cooking independently at home, can be a
concern. Preparing and organizing is key to making a cooking class successful and safe. Come learn how we get ready for and teach our cooking classes.

Our Vendors

Vendors

Access Art
Accessible Pharmacy for the Blind
American Printing House – VisionAware
Guiding Eyes
Guide Dogs

Spirited Sapling
Vanda Pharmaceutical

Vert with giant acorn

We want to thank the following for donations:

North Carolina Museum
Maxi Aids
Barbara Lang
Lachelle Smith
Tumey’a Mardi Gras Store
Lenore Dillon
Hunter College
VisionAware
Now Soft Solutions
LS & S
Activities

North Carolina Museum

A Sensory Experience through Art and Nature

The North Carolina Museum of Art is hosting a Mindful Museum specifically for the AVRT Conference.
Join us as we use all our senses to explore nature and observe a sculpture in the Museum Park. This program is intended to be accessible for all, including those who would benefit from a sensory-style learning experience. This event is wheelchair accessible. Registration includes a small kit of sensory objects that will be provided at the event. Audio description will be available.
The event is free; however, it is limited to the first 30 people who sign up at the information table. We will leave the hotel at 5:45 PM.

Confessions of a VRT

Do you have a story to tell? One that only another VRT would understand and appreciate? Come find Dan Norris and our VRT confessional and tell all... Thursday afternoon in the Vendor area.

Squirrel Chats

Come and meet new people. This is our take on speed dating. Spend 2 minutes talking with someone matched at random and the ding, meet someone new! No actual squirrels will be present – well, maybe one.

Adaptive Painting Activity

Create this beautiful picture.

Join Jessica and Kim and experience the joy of paint.
If you did not sign up at registration, see Jessica at the information table there may still be space available.
Thursday afternoon 3 – 5 pm
Fundraisers

Acorn Tree

Crack the Nut to Discover Your Fortune
Raffle Fundraiser for the AVRT Conference

Please join us for a fun raffle for a very worthy cause – our Professional Organization (AVRT). Here’s how you can participate:

At our Raffle Table, near registration, you may purchase an acorn for $20.00. Participants will receive an Acorn Charm with a number attached. You will then be given the prize associated with your matching number. ALL PRIZES ARE GUARANTEED TO BE WORTH AT LEAST $25.00 IF NOT MORE! It’s as easy as that – and everybody wins! Acorns may be purchasing the first two days of the conference. Winners will be announced during lunch the final day.

50/50 Raffle

The Fundraising Committee is hosting a 50/50 raffle. You can purchase tickets at our Acorn Tree table during the coffee hours on Day 1 and 2 and at other times as announced. Winner will be announced during the last day opening session.

Photo Booth

Want to meet the Famous Squirrel Vert?

Here’s your chance. Come photo booth, near the can be placed in Vert’s squirrel family. You will post them on your socials get a photo with this lovable critter at our registration table. Free will offerings/donations home/tree trunk. Help Vert feed his growing take photos on your own phone, make sure to #avrtvert
# AVRT 2022 Professional Development Conference – CEU Attendance Verification

Name: ________________________________

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
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<td>Toni Sharp</td>
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<td>John McMahon</td>
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<td>Cyndy Greenacre</td>
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<td>Lessons Learned from the FILA Assmt.</td>
<td>Kendra Farrow</td>
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**Wednesday Hours Offered**: 5.5

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Life-Changing Resources for Consumers</td>
<td>Katie Frederick</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45 am – 11:45 am</td>
<td>Breakout Sessions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaboration in Action</td>
<td>Meri Shoemaker</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Session</td>
<td>Presenter</td>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Code</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30 pm – 3:00 pm</td>
<td><strong>Sowing Seeds for Success – VRT Serv.</strong> Vendor Showcase</td>
<td>Ian Shadrick</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Thursday Hours Offered</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**AVRT 2022 Professional Development Conference – CEU Attendance Verification**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 am – 9:30 am</td>
<td><strong>General Session</strong> <em>The Future of VRT</em></td>
<td>Dan Norris</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>OPEN</td>
<td>CLOSE</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30 am – 10:30 am</td>
<td><strong>VRTs in Action: Clients with Dementia</strong></td>
<td>Cyndy Greenacre</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45 am – 11:45 am</td>
<td><strong>Don’t Bite Off More Than You Can Chew</strong></td>
<td>Jessica Caswell</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Friday Hours Offered</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Hours Offered/Earned</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.5</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conference Attendee Signature:**

______________________________________________

**Email Address:**

______________________________________________
Map of Hotel

First Floor