



The Science Behind Humor  
Mary Kay Morrison

*Description of Workshop*

The impact of stress on mental health is something that doesn't get as much conversation as it deserves and unfortunately, is often times stigmatized. By acknowledging that most members of our community are coping with stress at any given time and by being better prepared to debunk that stress, we can break down the stigma. One way to do that is with humor.

Can we put humor under a microscope? Is a sense of humor found in our DNA or is it something that develops as a result of our culture? Research on the psychology and physiology of humor will be explored in this interactive session. Explore the benefits of humor and laughter in both our personal and professional lives. Participants will review strategies that can be implemented to reduce stress, improve memory and contribute to overall wellness.

Competencies/ Objectives

- Participants will review the research-based benefits of laughter and humor.
- Participants will examine the benefits of humor as a therapeutic intervention.
- Participants will explore humor across cultures.
- Participants will share how humor and laughter can be integrated into both personal and professional lives.
- Participants will be able to define several ways to cope with stress.
- Participants will learn about the use of play in the treatment of mental illness including depression and stress disorders.

*Mary Kay Morrison is the director of Humor Quest <http://www.questforhumor.com/> and has spent over 25 years teaching and promoting the benefits of healthy humor. She is author of numerous articles and books including: "Using Humor to Maximize Living" which is the text for many university humor studies classes. She is past-president of AATH (The Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor) and a faculty member of the AATH Humor Academy graduate program in humor studies. She was awarded the 2016 AATH Lifetime Achievement Award. <http://www.aath.org/>*

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