

2026 CONFERENCE THEME AND GOALS



EVER FORWARD: GROWING COMMUNITY,
CULTIVATING OUTCOMES

What is the theme this year?

The 2026 conference theme, Ever Forward: Growing Community, Cultivating Outcomes is grounded in the belief that our work cannot exist in silos. True collaboration, always requiring practice, means there is a confluence of ideas, perspectives, intentions, partnership, accountability, and a shared vision. Growing community means deepening our relationship with affected communities, including youth and families, who are not only welcome in this space, but essential partners to shape outcomes.

This year's theme invites us to ask: how are we working towards creating a system that truly cares? When people ask themselves, “Do I belong?”, and “Where do I belong?”, we are encouraged to remember the importance of community, and the implicit call to be the building blocks of the community we seek. Through engagement, we learn, reflect, reconnect, and reinvigorate essential elements in TCOM—relationships, shared growth, and meaningful advancement in all disciplines.

The theme emphasizes several pillars aligned with TCOM:

- Meaningful change is achieved through a shared vision, a shared purpose, and engagement.
- Creating welcoming and inclusive spaces which foster trust, participation, and relationships.
- Recognition that communities are the experts on their own lives.
- Reflection and self-awareness emerge through examining bias, our lens through which we view things, and our positionality.
- Communities of innovation are cultivated through psychological safety, diverse-cross functional collaboration, and inclusive leadership practices that enable creativity and progress.
- Deepening connection through service strengthens the connection to one another and to those we serve through purposeful, compassionate action.

The conference is an ideal place to transform individual pursuits—whether in research, policy, administration, direct practice, or community leadership—into what we would like to move towards: shared communities of practice.

What is the goal for this event?

Our goal is to create a transdisciplinary and inclusive environment where presenters can:

- Share impactful work related to child welfare, mental and behavioral health, education, and wellbeing
- Engage with colleagues across sectors and disciplines to spark new ideas and collaboration
- Explore how others are applying data, implementing evidence-based practices, advancing innovative methods, and activating community partnerships
- Build networks that support improved outcomes for children, youth, adults, and families

We welcome submissions from individuals at all types and levels of experience—there is no minimum level of expertise required to present.

Who is this event for?

Our goal is to offer a welcoming space for everyone.

This event is intentionally open to a wide range of voices. Whether you have lived experience, or work in academia, government, nonprofit, direct service, data science, policy, community programs, or another setting, your perspective adds value.

If you have a story, finding, or idea grounded in the principles and values of TCOM, we want to hear from you!