

BRIGHID O'SHAUGHNESSY

Licensed Social Worker, MSW, A.M., M.A.

EDUCATION

A.M. in Social Service Administration

University of Chicago · 2021
3.98 GPA · Trauma Program · Trauma-Informed Care Certificate

Graduate Certificate in Restorative Justice in Education

Eastern Mennonite University · 2024
4.0 GPA

M.A. in Applied Professional Studies

DePaul University · 2007
3.957 GPA

B.A. in Theatre

Santa Clara University · 1995
3.5 GPA

CERTIFICATIONS & TRAININGS

Nature Therapy Guide Certification

Assoc. of Nature & Forest Therapy · 2026

Fetal Alcohol Exposure Training

Families Rising · Fall 2025 · 16 hrs

Kingian Nonviolence Training

On Earth Peace · Spring 2025 · 16 hrs

Gottman Method Couples Counseling

Levels 1, 2 & 3 · June 2022

Restorative Justice Practices

Alternatives, Inc. · Fall 2021–Spring 2022
Conversations, Circles & Trauma-Responsive RJ

Mediation Certification

Center for Conflict Resolution · July 2020
40-hour program

Qoya Certified Teacher

2021

Nia Certifications

White Belt (2005, 2015) · Blue Belt (2016)
5 Stages of Healing (2017) · Moving to Heal (2018)

PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

It's a Long Way Home (forthcoming)

Lived Places Press · August 2026
True stories of adoptive families; distributed to universities & professionals worldwide

Building Resilient Communities Conference

Attachment Trauma Network · 2025
Performed adoption stories alongside keynote Dr. Bruce Perry

Birth Parent Support Alliance Annual Gala

On Your Feet Foundation · 2025

PILLAR 1

Documentary Storytelling for Social Change

Elder Project · Spring 2026

Co-Leader + Student Support

Initiative teaching Sophomore English students to ethically and thoughtfully collect stories from their parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, older siblings, coaches, teachers, or other mentors. Assisted them to transform the stories into theatrical monologues, audio/video podcasts, Ted-Talk style presentations, and visual art pieces.

Partners: Oak Park River Forest High School · Dr. Avi Lessing

Adoption Uncovered · March 2024–Present

Founder + Director

Initiative using documentary theatre and true storytelling to illuminate the hidden realities of families impacted by adoption including performances with the Attachment Trauma Network and Birth Parent Support Alliance. Book forthcoming from Lived Places Press (August 2026), distributed to universities and professionals worldwide.

Partners: Attachment Trauma Network · Birth Parent Support Alliance · Lived Places Press

Twisted Motherhood · 2025 (second iteration 2026)

Creator + Producer + Director + Play Deviser

60-minute documentary theatrical piece examining the impacts of adoption and how race, privilege, economics, and access shape placement decisions. Centers the lived experiences of actual birth mothers. Created in collaboration with Rivendell Theatre Company through their Fresh Produce Festival, Chicago.

Partners: Rivendell Theatre Co. · Fresh Produce Festival · Birth parent voices

Unearthing Our Fire · July 2019–May 2020

Creator + Co-Producer

Produced a sold-out storytelling event exploring women's health, power, and community. Partnered with a gynecologist, acupuncturist, and somatic experiencing professional. Built alliance with an international nonprofit working in women's health and economic empowerment.

Focus: Women's health · Somatic experiencing · International nonprofit

Folded Map · September 2018–December 2020

Project Lead + Director

Developed and directed a documentary theatre piece chronicling the life and work of Tonika Lewis Johnson—2025 MacArthur Genius Award winner, 2017 Chicagoan of the Year, and creator of The Folded Map Project. Led a team of artists through source material and script development.

Partners: Collaboraction Theater · Kennedy-King College · Tonika Lewis Johnson

PILLAR 2

Youth, Restorative Justice & Trauma-Informed Schools

Clinician · RJ Coordinator · Restorative Practices Coach

3+	35–40	K–8	6+
Chicago Public Schools served simultaneously	Students seen weekly at Kellman	Age range across school-based roles	Years of school-based RJ practice

Return to the Roots — Hillside Elementary · Oct 2024–June 2025

Mental Health Clinician + Restorative Practices Coach

Delivered weekly trauma-responsive therapy to K–5 students using play-based and arts approaches. Led small groups on self-awareness, healthy relationships, and leadership. Offered educator support on RJ mindset and nervous system-aware, neurodivergent-sensitive practices.

Focus: Trauma-informed · Neurodivergent support · Play therapy · Somatic awareness

Restorative Justice Consultant — Thrive Counseling Services · September 2024–March 2025

Worked alongside Dr. Rahul Sharma to offer workshops and one-on-one coaching on Restorative Justice for a behavioral health agency looking to integrate RJ mindset and practices.

Touch of Wholeness — Three Chicago Public Schools · Nov 2022–Sept 2024

Restorative Practices Coach + Mental Health Clinician

Presented adoption-related true stories in support of birth mothers

Restorative Justice Conference

Oak Park Public Library · 2024
Key presenter

AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

Dean's Leadership Scholarship

U of Chicago · 2019 & 2020
Academic merit & social justice commitment

3Arts Vision Award

2010
Artist & Nonprofit Leader Using Theatre for Mental Health

Alumna Medal Award

Regina Dominican High School · 2016

Lifelong Learning Award

DePaul University · 2015

David O. Justice Award

DePaul University · 2010

Extra Mile America Recognition · 2009

1 of 200 heroic community leaders nationally

Richard J. Meister Scholarship

DePaul University · 2005

VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

Artist/Activist/Educator Collective

Founded monthly peer support collective for artists, activists, educators & health professionals

FASD Training Organizer

Erikson Institute & Families Rising
2-day training for child welfare professionals on FASD in foster/adopted youth

Nonprofit Grant Strategy Support

Secured multi-year grants for 6 area nonprofits in arts, domestic violence prevention, FASD, birth mother support & mental health advocacy

OWL Sexuality Education Facilitator

Our Whole Lives · Grades 7–10

After-School Girls Group

Stevenson Elementary
Co-led arts, creative writing & outdoor play group for 5th graders — relationships & confidence focus

Neurodiverse Youth Coaching

Coaching & mentoring for neurodiverse elementary-aged youth and their parents

Delivered school-wide restorative practices coaching across three Chicago Public Schools on the Southwest Side. Facilitated talking circles, peace circles, restorative chats, and mediation between students and adults. Provided direct clinical therapy to 12 elementary students and psychoeducation for diverse learners and families.

Focus: Talking circles SEL integration Diverse learners

Joseph Kellman Corporate Community School · June 2021–August 2022

Restorative Justice Coordinator

Facilitated RJ practices across universal, targeted, and intensive tiers. Met with 35–40 students per week ages 5–13. Provided crisis intervention on sexual abuse disclosure, domestic violence, and physical conflict. Taught CPS Sexual Health Education to 2nd–8th graders. Co-led school's first Student Council; organized Career Day with keynote Tonika Lewis Johnson.

Focus: Crisis intervention Student leadership CPS Sexual Health Education

Joseph Kellman Corporate Community School — Clinical Social Work Intern, Year 1 · June 2019–June 2020

Juvenile Protection Association. Provided individual and small group counseling for 12 African-American students utilizing a play therapy approach.

Joseph Kellman Corporate Community School — Clinical Social Work Intern, Year 2 · June 2020–June 2021

Co-created a school-wide Social and Emotional Learning Plan. Developed a 12-member Social and Emotional Support Team with SMART goals. Spearheaded talking circles for students, families, staff, and administrators. Organized a virtual Career Day and mural collaboration with internationally known artist Rhonda Gray.

PILLAR 3

Mental Health Advocacy & Leadership

Founder · Executive Artistic Director · Erasing the Distance (2004–2016)

55,000+	175+	15	200+	250+	75+
People reached	Touring performances	World premieres	Post-show dialogues	Stories collected	Grad students trained

Erasing the Distance · 2004–2016

Founder + Executive Artistic Director

Built from the ground up an innovative nonprofit using documentary theatre to stimulate dialogue, disarm stigma, and promote healing around mental health. Grew from a one-person operation to 5 staff, a 15-person artistic company, a 7-person Board, and a 10-person clinical advisory board of LCSWs, LCPCs, Psy.D.s, and M.D.s. Produced 15 world premiere productions and over 175 touring performances reaching 55,000+ people at schools, colleges, hospitals, and Fortune 500 corporations.

Focus: Nonprofit founder Clinical advisory board Documentary theatre

Key Institutional Partnerships

Dominican University (multi-year): students created original performances on college students' mental health. Chicago School of Professional Psychology (3 years): graduate students trained in methodology—including a show on veterans' experiences featured on NPR. UIC Asian American Studies (2 years): students shaped true stories on mental health and disabilities. Al Raby High School (4 years): West Side Chicago students transformed their stories into dance, poetry, and monologues on Black youth mental health. Chicago Public Schools: performances and PD trainings for teachers and administrators on mental health awareness.

Partners: Dominican U Chicago School of Prof. Psychology UIC Al Raby HS CPS NPR

Professional Development & Training

Delivered CPS-approved training on Mental Health Basics, Self-Injury, Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Eating Disorders, Trauma, Addiction, and Shame & Vulnerability. Trained 75+ students from Chicago School of Professional Psychology and UIC in story-collection methodology. Co-designed evaluation studies to assess production impact. Supervised interns from Loyola, Northwestern, DePaul, and Wellesley.

Supervisory affiliations: Loyola Northwestern DePaul Wellesley

Key Grant Funders: Chicago Community Trust · Driehaus Foundation · Rebecca's Dream · IL Arts Council · Chicago Cultural Center

Media: WBEZ · Chicago Tribune · New City · The Reader · NPR