

# LEADER U CONFERENCE 2023: "LIGHTENING THE LOAD" ADDRESSED MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES FACED BY EDUCATORS DAILY

NASHVILLE, TN, UNITED STATES, June 14, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Keynote Speaker Renowned Psychologist, Dr. Shamender Talwar, Co-Founder of The Unity of Faiths Foundation (TUFF), Joined by PLA Media President/CEO & TUFF Ambassador Pamela L. Lewis FRSA.

The Professional Educators of Tennessee held their annual professional learning conference, Leader U, on Wednesday, June 7 at the MTSU Student Union Ballroom. This year's annual conference topic dealt with "Lightening the Load", teaching post-Covid and how to create safe environments of mutual respect and kindness in the classroom.

Dr. Talwar, renowned social psychologist and crisis counselor was joined onstage with TUFF Ambassador, PLA Media President/CEO Pamela L. Lewis, FRSA. They discussed their onsite work on March 27 assisting chaplains and first responders at the Covenant school shooting. Lewis, who has done chaplaincy work and is the daughter of a school principal & superintendent, drew on her experience and the work she and The Unity of Faiths Foundation, TUFF co-founder Dr. Talwar's directed on the Road to Nashville 2022. This global music and mental health initiative helped nearly 4,000 musicians challenged with mental health issues.



Pamela L. Lewis FRSA and Dr. Sharmender Talwar

Talwar stated, "Teachers have always been heroes, but since Covid they are now superheroes. Our new pandemic is mental health and teaching to recognize, destigmatize and treat teaching coping mechanisms, unity, social cohesion and resilience. The human spirit is far more powerful than any drug in the world, and that is what needs to be nourished with work, play, family and friendship, wonderful memories, the simplest and most beautiful things of life"

Dr. Shamender Talwar FRSA shared this principle with the attendees and added how this is central to recovery for age groups and people from all walks of life.

"Reflecting on my dad's lifelong dedication and the many lives he touched and how beloved he was to our town, I came to the realization that teaching is not a mere profession but quite simply a calling. Each day, teachers shape lives and impact communities, and we must recognize the challenging job they have chosen, champion them and give them every resource needed," said Lewis.



Pamela L. Lewis FRSA (left), President of the Professional Educators of Tennessee Cathy Kolb and Dr. Sharmender Talwar (right).



Anna Pryor (left), Daniel Xander, JC Bowman, Mike Sparks and Pamela L. Lewis FRSA (right).

Daniel Xander, Creative Director, Producer & Public Speaker, conducted a discussion and provided a PowerPoint on learning methodology and convergence. "It was an honor and a privilege to be invited to speak at the Leader U conference by the amazing team at Professional Educators of Tennessee," said Xander. "Teachers are in a unique position in that they have a direct impact on the outcomes of our future leaders, and the demands placed on them today are far greater than when I was at school. In a rapidly changing world, with AI and other technologies on the horizon, it is so important that we provide both students and teachers alike with the skills, knowledge and support they require to succeed in the years to come, and I very much look forward to supporting Leader U in future endeavors."



J.C. Bowman, CEO, Professional Educators of Tennessee, who has been involved with educational advocacy for 40 years, expressed, "Educators were given critical advice on the mental health crisis from Pam Lewis and Dr. Sharmender Talwar. Mental health issues continue to escalate post pandemic. This impacts not just the students we serve, but all school employees that are struggling with issues on their own. Self care is vital, as well as support for all students and educators. Lewis and Talwar offered solutions to the problems."



Mike Sparks and Dr. Sharmender Talwar

Additional Speakers Included: Stacia Anglin (Public Educator), Christy Ballard (General Counsel at TDOE), Jennifer Boyd (Educator), Tim Childers (Educator), René Diamond (Cognitive Coach), Lance Forman (Director of the Educational Leadership Program at Lipscomb College), Dr. Ryan Jackson (Executive Director of Leadership and Business Partner Development for Kids On Stage of Maury County), Dr. Leticia Skae-Jackson (ELA Teacher), Theresa Nicholls (Director of Strategic Partnerships at SPED Strategies), Dr. Connie Smith (Senior Director for the Mid-Atlantic Region of Cognia), Planbook Staff, Dr. BJ Worthington (Leadership Coach) and Thomas Rogers (Assistant Superintendent).

The conference was attended in person and online and was filmed and will be available online.

Previous Leader U attendees have praised the organization:

"It has been several years since I have been engaged with PET and I have missed the collegiality and support for the profession! A job extremely well done!"

"Everything was great! It was my first time attending and I look forward to coming again next year!"

"I appreciated the opportunity to attend Leader U. It is wonderful to gain insight and perspective beyond our district. It has been a highlight in my training for several years."

"Thank you for providing a quality workshop!"

#### About Leader U

Leader U is the professional learning department of Professional Educators of Tennessee. The

annual Leader U conference is an opportunity for educators from across the state to gather for an in-person day of learning and earning professional development credits. Classes for administrators are TASL accredited, but all classes are open to all attendees. Conference sessions are also recorded and added to the large library of classes in the Leader U Online Learning Portal, which is included with Professional, Support, and Student memberships from Professional Educators of Tennessee or with an annual subscription to the portal.

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#LeaderU2023

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Reasonable memberships are available for educators and associates providing much information and benefits.

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