

ON THE EDGE

Humor in the Hard Places

AATH Annual Conference & Humor Academy
May 14-17, 2026 | San Diego, CA



WEDNESDAY | May 13, 2026: Welcome Humor Academy

8:00 - 8:30 am Humor Academy Check-In | *Bayside Ballroom*

THURSDAY | May 14, 2026: Humor Academy Day

8:00 - 8:30 am Welcome (In Rooms)

8:30 - 11:30 am **Humor Academy Instruction:**
HA Level 1 Instruction w/ Tabatha Mauldin, CHP, Heather Walker, CHP, & Holly Anderson, CHP | *Point Loma*
HA Level 2 Instruction w/ Dr. Michael K. Cundall Jr. CHP | *California II-III*
HA Level 3 Instruction w/ Karyn Buxman CHP | *Seapoint*
CHP Professional Growth w/ Mary Laskin, CHP | *Bayside Ballroom*

12:00 - 1:00 pm Knox Peace Luncheon: Humor, Peace, & Good Will - Something to Chew On | *Bayside Ballroom*

1:30 - 2:30 pm **Certified Humor Professional Competency Framework: Standards for Ethical Practice of Applied & Therapeutic Humor** w/ Heather Walker, CHP and Mary Jo Neil, CHP | *Bayside Ballroom*

All Conference Attendees Invited to Attend the Afternoon HA Program

2:45 - 4:00 pm Humor Academy Project Presentations | *Bayside Ballroom*

4:30 - 6:00 pm Humor Academy Graduation | *Bayside Ballroom*

6:00 - 7:30 pm AATH Welcome Reception | *Bayside Bar & Patio*

7:30 - 9:00 pm Step Up & Stand Out Talent Show, hosted by Jim-Bob Williams CHP | *Bayside Ballroom*

FRIDAY | May 15, 2026: Conference Day 1

8:00 - 8:30 am Conference Opening | *Bayside Ballroom*

8:30 - 9:30 am ★ **Keynote: Dead Serious: Finding Light in the Darkest Times** with Dr. Melissa Mork | *Bayside Ballroom*

9:45 - 10:45 am **Breakout Sessions – Choose One:**
Start Strong with AATH: First-Year Roadmap to Connection, Growth, and Impact
w/ Roberta Gold, CHP & Todd Hart, CHP | *Point Loma*
Humorbreaking: Breaking the Ice with Humor and Play, Peacefully
w/ Jaypee Oliva, Aravilla Tan, & Oshan Gunathilake | *California II-III*
That's NOT All Folks: If You Have to Leave Them, Why Not Leave Them Laughing? with Dr. Don Baird | *Seapoint*

11:00 am - 12:00 pm **Breakout Sessions – Choose One:**
POWERPOINT®: The Musical! w/ Ronald Berk & Jocelyn Jones | *Point Loma*
Good Humor Helps Us Thrive! w/ David Fessell | *California II-III*
A Comic's Lived Experience with MS: Balancing a Sense of Humor While Trying to Balance at All
w/ Shari Short | *Seapoint*

12:00 - 12:30 pm Humor Academy Poster Walk | *Bayside Ballroom*

1:30 - 2:45 pm Research Showcase | *Bayside Ballroom*

3:00 - 4:00 pm

Breakout Sessions – Choose One:***Understanding the Psychology Behind Failed Laughter and Repairing Ruptures*** w/ Dr. Patrick Harris | *Point Loma****Are You Serious? Humour and Conflict Resolution, Really?*** w/ Dr. Anita Dorczak | *California II-III****Gelotophobia: The Fear of Being Laughed At*** w/ Louis Franzini | *Seapoint*

4:15 - 5:15 pm

★ Keynote: Ed Talks: AATH Tasks in a Politically Charged Environmentw/ Dr. Ed Dunkelblau, Karyn Buxman, CHP, Paul Osincup, CHP, and Steve Sultanoff, PhD, CHP | *Bayside Ballroom*

7:30 - 9:00 pm

The Jollytologist® Sneak-Preview Screening | *Bayside Ballroom*

8:00 - 8:30 am

Grins & Gratitude: Honoring our Scholarship and Fellowship Recipients and Sponsors | *Bayside Ballroom*

8:30 - 9:30 am

★ Humor, Laughter, & Religion: Does God Laugh? w/ Dr. Michael K. Cundall, Jr., CHP | *Bayside Ballroom*

9:45 - 10:45 am

Breakout Sessions – Choose One:***Between Tears and Laughter: Humor As a Path Through Loss*** w/ Mary Jo Neil, CHP | *Point Loma****Humor As a Psychotherapeutic Tool in Collective and Cumulative Grief*** w/ Joseph M Hepburn | *California II-III****The Ballad of Uncle G: Laughing Through the Darkness*** w/ Greg Langford | *Seapoint*

11:00 - 12:00 pm

Breakout Sessions – Choose One:***Laughing in the Dark: Finding Light, Connection, and Courage Through Edge-of-Crisis Humor***w/ Karyn Buxman, CHP | *Point Loma****Laughter & Tears: Expressive Meditation*** w/ Pragito Dove | *California II-III****Playful Power: Using Humor to Build Trust and Inclusion – No Clown Nose Required***w/ Dr. Renee Cohn Jones | *Seapoint*

12:00 - 1:15 pm

Lunch & Board Elections

1:15 - 2:15 pm

★ Humor Intelligence: Engaging Communication for Serious Contexts with Andrew Tarvin | *Bayside Ballroom*

2:15 - 2:30 pm

Say Cheese! AATH Group Picture | *Bayside Ballroom*

2:45 - 3:45 pm

Breakout Sessions – Choose One:***Your Humor Intelligence Profile: A Personal Assessment Workshop*** w/ Andrew Tarvin | *Point Loma****A Journey Through Decades of Therapeutic Humor*** w/ Steve Sultanoff, PHD, CHP | *California II-III****Finding the Light in the Darkness of Chronic Pain*** w/ Mary Laskin, CHP | *Seapoint*

4:00 - 5:00 pm

Breakout Sessions – Choose One:***Peace Fellow Stories of Humor in Hard Places*** w/ Stephanie Knox Steiner PHD, Ajmal Ramyar, Oshan Gunathilake, Kaamela Barvin, Rolando Pelicot | *Point Loma****Bringing lightness into the heavy: The power of music and humor to transform hard situations***w/ Amy Standridge, CHP | *California II-III****Cancer: Balancing the Deadly Serious with Absurd Humor*** w/ CJ Grace | *Seapoint*

6:00 - 7:00 pm

AATH Lifetime Member Reception, By Invitation Only | *Marina Room*

6:30 - 11:00 pm

AATH Reception & Awards Banquet | *Bayside Ballroom*

8:00 - 9:00 am

Laughter Yoga/Morning Stretch | *Bayside Ballroom*

9:00 - 9:30 am

Smiles Before Goodbyes | *Bayside Ballroom*

9:30 - 10:30 am

★ Keynote: Humor, Incorporated: How Humor Healed My Life, Love, & Businessw/ Dr. Heidi Hanna, CHP | *Bayside Ballroom*

10:45 - 11:45 am

★ Wrap-Up Keynote: Keep Your EDGE w/ Sporty King, CHP | *Bayside Ballroom*