

ON THE EDGE

Humor in the Hard Places



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

Featured Keynotes

- ★ **8:30 am**
Friday, May 15 **Dead Serious: Finding Light in the Darkest Times** with Dr. Melissa Mork, CHP
- ★ **4:15 pm**
Friday, May 15 **Ed Talks: AATH Tasks in a Politically Charged Environment**
with Dr. Ed Dunkelblau, Karyn Buxman, CHP, Paul Osincup, CHP, and Steve Sultanoff, PhD, CHP
- ★ **8:30 am**
Friday, May 15 **Humor, Laughter, & Religion: Does God Laugh?** with Dr. Michael K. Cundall, Jr., CHP
- ★ **1:15 pm**
Saturday, May 16 **Humor Intelligence: Engaging Communication for Serious Contexts** with Andrew Tarvin
- ★ **9:30 am**
Sunday, May 17 **Humor, Incorporated: How Humor Healed My Life, Love, & Business** with Dr. Heidi Hanna, CHP
- ★ **10:45 am**
Sunday, May 17 **Keep Your EDGE** with Sporty King, CHP

Wednesday, May 13: Welcome Humor Academy

6:30 - 8:00 pm **Humor Academy Check-In**

Thursday, May 14: Humor Academy Day

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

8:30 - 11:30 am **Humor Academy Instruction:**
HA Level 1 Instruction with Tabatha Mauldin, CHP, Heather Walker, CHP, & Holly Anderson, CHP

HA Level 2 Instruction with Michael Cundall CHP

HA Level 3 Instruction with Karyn Buxman CHP

CHP Professional Growth with Mary Laskin, CHP

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

All Conference Attendees Invited to Attend the Afternoon HA Program

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

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

4:30 - 6:00 pm **Humor Academy Graduation**

6:00 - 7:30 pm **AATH Welcome Reception**

7:30 - 9:00 pm **Talent Show** | Emcee: Jim-Bob Williams, CHP

Friday, May 15: Conference Day 1

8:00 - 8:30 am	Conference Opening
8:30 - 9:30 am	★ Keynote: Dead Serious: Finding Light in the Darkest Times with Dr. Melissa Mork CHP
9:30 - 9:45 am	15-MINUTE BREAK
9:45 - 10:45 am	Breakout Sessions – Choose One: <i>That’s NOT All Folks: If You Have to Leave Them, Why Not Leave Them Laughing?</i> with Don Baird <i>Start Strong with AATH: First-Year Roadmap to Connection, Growth, and Impact</i> with Roberta Gold, CHP & Todd Hart, CHP <i>Humorbreaking: Breaking the Ice with Humor and Play, Peacefully</i> with Jaypee Oliva, Aravilla Tan, & Oshan Gunathilake
10:45 - 11:00 am	15-MINUTE BREAK
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	Breakout Sessions – Choose One: <i>POWERPOINT®: The Musical!</i> with Ronald Berk & Jocelyn Jones <i>A Comic’s Lived Experience with MS: Balancing a Sense of Humor While Trying to Balance at All</i> with Shari Short <i>Good Humor Helps Us Thrive!</i> with David Fessell
12:00 - 12:30 pm	Humor Academy Poster Walk
12:30 - 1:30 pm	LUNCH BREAK
1:30 - 2:45 pm	Research Showcase
2:45 - 3:00 pm	15-MINUTE BREAK
3:00 - 4:00 pm	Breakout Sessions – Choose One: <i>Gelotophobia: The Fear of Being Laughed At</i> with Louis Franzini <i>Understanding the Psychology Behind Failed Laughter and Repairing Ruptures</i> with Patrick Harris <i>Are You Serious? Humour and Conflict Resolution, Really?</i> with Dr. Anita Dorczak
4:00 - 4:15 pm	15-MINUTE BREAK
4:15 - 5:15 pm	★ Keynote: Ed Talks: AATH Tasks in a Politically Charged Environment with Dr. Ed Dunkelblau, Karyn Buxman, CHP, Paul Osincup, CHP, and Steve Sultanoff, PhD, CHP
5:15 - 7:30 pm	BREAK - Dinner on Your Own
7:30 - 9:00 pm	The Jollytologist® Sneak-Preview Documentary with Allen Klein

Saturday, May 16: Conference Day 2

8:00 - 8:30 am	Grins & Gratitude: Honoring our Scholarship and Fellowship Recipients and Sponsors
8:30 - 9:30 am	★ Humor, Laughter, & Religion: Does God Laugh? with Dr. Michael K. Cundall, Jr., CHP
9:30 - 9:45 am	15-MINUTE BREAK
9:45 - 10:45 am	Breakout Sessions – Choose One: <i>The Ballad of Uncle G: Laughing Through the Darkness</i> with Greg Langford <i>Humor As a Psychotherapeutic Tool in Collective and Cumulative Grief</i> with Joseph M Hepburn <i>Between Tears and Laughter: Humor As a Path Through Loss</i> with Mary Jo Neil, CHP
11:00 - 12:00 pm	Breakout Sessions – Choose One: <i>Laughter & Tears: Expressive Meditation</i> with Pragito Dove <i>Laughing in the Dark: Finding Light, Connection, and Courage Through Edge-of-Crisis Humor</i> with Karyn Buxman, CHP <i>Playful Power: Using Humor to Build Trust and Inclusion – No Clown Nose Required</i> with Dr Renee Cohn Jones
12:00 - 1:15 pm	Lunch & Board Elections
1:15 - 2:15 pm	★ Humor Intelligence: Engaging Communication for Serious Contexts with Andrew Tarvin
2:15 - 2:30 pm	Say Cheese! AATH Group Picture
2:45 - 3:45 pm	Breakout Sessions – Choose One: <i>Your Humor Intelligence Profile: A Personal Assessment Workshop</i> with Andrew Tarvin <i>A Journey Through Decades of Therapeutic Humor</i> with Steve Sultanoff, PhD, CHP <i>Finding the Light in the Darkness of Chronic Pain</i> with Mary Laskin, CHP
4:00 - 5:00 pm	Breakout Sessions – Choose One: <i>Peace Fellow Stories of Humor in Hard Places</i> with Stephanie Knox Steiner, Ajmal Ramyar, Oshan Gunathilake, Kaamela Barvin, Rolando Pelicot <i>Bringing lightness into the heavy: The power of music and humor to transform hard situations</i> with Amy Standridge, CHP <i>Cancer: Balancing the Deadly Serious with Absurd Humor</i> with CJ Grace
6:30 - 11:00 pm	AATH Reception & Awards Banquet

Sunday, May 17: Conference Day 3

8:00 - 9:00 am	Laughter Yoga/Morning Stretch
9:00 - 9:30 am	Smiles Before Goodbyes
9:30 - 10:30 am	★ Keynote: Humor, Incorporated: How Humor Healed My Life, Love, & Business with Dr. Heidi Hanna, CHP
10:45 - 11:45 am	★ Wrap-Up Keynote: Keep Your EDGE with Sporty King, CHP
12:00 pm	Until We Laugh Again...