



2026 AATH Annual Conference & Humor Academy

May 14–17, 2026 • DoubleTree by Hilton San Diego Bayside

Featured Keynotes

★ 8:30 am Friday, May 15	Humor Intelligence: Engaging Communication for Serious Contexts with Andrew Tarvin
★ 4:00 pm Friday, May 15	Ed Talks: AATH Tasks in a Politically Charged Environment w/Dr. Ed Dunkelblau, Karyn Buxman, Paul Osincup, and Steve Sultanoff, PhD
★ 8:30 am Saturday, May 16	Dead Serious: Finding Light in the Darkest Times with Dr. Melissa Mork
★ 1:15 pm Saturday, May 16	Humor, Laughter, & Religion: Does God Laugh? with Dr. Michael K. Cundall, Jr.
★ 9:00 am Sunday, May 17	Humor, Incorporated: How Humor Healed My Life, Love, & Business with Dr. Heidi Hanna
★ 10:00 am Sunday, May 17	Keep Your EDGE with Sporty King

Wednesday, May 13 - Welcome Humor Academy

6:30 - 8:00 p | Humor Academy Check-In

Thursday, May 14 - Humor Academy Day

8:00 - 8:30 a | Welcome

8:30 - 11:30 a | Humor Academy Instruction

12:00 - 1:00 p | HA Peace Luncheon: Humor, Peace & Good Will - Something to Chew On

All Conference Attendees Invited to Attend the afternoon HA Program

1:30 - 2:30 p | Competency Review

2:45 - 4:00 p | Humor Academy Project Presentations

4:30 - 6:00 p | Humor Academy Graduation

Thursday, May 14 - AATH Conference Kick-Off

6:00 - 7:30 p | AATH Welcome Reception

7:30 - 9:00 p | Talent Show

Friday, May 15 - Conference Day 1

8:00 - 8:30 a | Conference Opening

8:30 - 9:30 a | ★ **Keynote: Humor Intelligence: Engaging Communication for Serious Contexts with Andrew Tarvin**

9:45 - 10:45 a | Breakout Sessions - Choose One

That's NOT All Folks: If You Have to Leave Them, Why Not Leave Them Laughing? with Don Baird

Bringing lightness into the heavy: The power of music and humor to transform hard situations with Amy Standridge

Humorbreaking: Breaking the Ice with Humor and Play, Peacefully with Jaypee Oliva, Aravilla Tan, & Oshan Gunathilake

11:00 a - 12:00 p | Breakout Sessions - Choose One

POWERPOINT®: The Musical! with Ronald Berk & Jocelyn Jones

A Comic's Lived Experience with MS: Balancing a Sense of Humor While Trying to Balance at All with Shari Short

Good Humor Helps Us Thrive! with David Fessell

12:00 - 12:30 p | Humor Academy Poster Walk

12:30 - 1:30 p | LUNCH

1:30 - 2:45 p | Research Showcase

3:00 - 4:00 p | Breakout Sessions - Choose One

Gelotophobia: The Fear of Being Laughed At with Louis Franzini

Understanding the Psychology Behind Failed Laughter and Repairing Ruptures with Patrick Harris

Are You Serious? Humour and Conflict Resolution, Really? With Dr. Anita Dorczak

4:15 - 5:15 p | ★ **Keynote: Ed Talks: AATH Tasks in a Politically Charged Environment w/Dr. Ed Dunkelblau, Karyn Buxman, Paul Osincup, and Steve Sultanoff, PhD**

5:15 - 7:30 p | BREAK - Dinner on Your Own

7:30 - 9:00 p | The Jollytologist® Sneak-Preview Documentary w/Allen Klein

Saturday, May 16 - Conference Day 2

8:00 - 8:30 a Grins & Gratitude: Honoring our Scholarship and Fellowship Recipients and Sponsors

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

9:45 - 10:45 a Breakout Sessions - Choose One

The Ballad of Uncle G: Laughing Through the Darkness with Greg Langford

Humor as a psychotherapeutic tool in Collective and Cumulative Grief with Joseph M Hepburn

Between Tears and Laughter: Humor as a Path through Loss with Mary Jo Neil

11:00 a - 12:00 p Breakout Sessions - Choose One

Laughter & Tears: Expressive Meditation with Pragito Dove

Laughing in the Dark: Finding Light, Connection, and Courage Through Edge-of-Crisis Humor with Karyn Buxman

Playful Power: Using Humor to Build Trust and Inclusion – No Clown Nose Required with Dr Renee Cohn Jones

12:00 - 1:15 p LUNCH & AATH BOARD ELECTIONS

1:15 - 2:15 p ★ **Keynote: Humor, Laughter, & Religion: Does God Laugh? with Dr. Mike Cundall**

2:15 - 2:30 p Say Cheese! AATH Group Picture

2:45 - 3:45 p Breakout Sessions - Choose One

Are You Still Wearing that Medical/Patient Gown? with Dr. Wieslaw Rocki

A Journey Through Decades of Therapeutic Humor with Steve Sultanoff

Finding the Light in the Darkness of Chronic Pain with Mary Laskin

4:00 - 5:00 p Breakout Sessions - Choose One

Peace Fellow Stories of Humor in Hard Places with Stephanie Knox Steiner, Ajmal Ramyar, Oshan Gunathilake, Kaamela Barvin, Rolando Pelicot

Laugh It Off: Using Humor to Defuse Tension and Build Connection with Matthew Sharpe

Cancer: Balancing the Deadly Serious with Absurd Humor with CJ Grace

6:30 - 11:00 p AATH Reception & Awards Banquet

Sunday, May 17 - Conference Day 3

8:00 - 9:00 a Laugter Yoga/Morning Stretch

9:00 - 9:30 a Smiles Before Goodbyes

9:30 - 10:30 a ★ **Keynote: Humor, Incorporated: How Humor Healed My Life, Love, & Business with Dr. Heidi Hanna**

10:45 - 11:45 a ★ **Wrap Up Keynote: Keep Your EDGE with Sporty King**

12:00 p Until We Laugh Again...