



SERVICE LEARNING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION

SUSAN CONRADSEN | BERRY COLLEGE

**COMMUNITY AND COMPASSION: IMMERSIVE
LEARNING THROUGH SERVICE WITH FAMILIES
EXPERIENCING CHILDHOOD CANCER**

ABSTRACT:

How deeply can students be impacted by a one-week service-learning experience? This presentation analyzes a qualitative survey of students from a Psychology and Pediatric Oncology course held off-site, where they volunteered with families affected by childhood cancer at a beach retreat. Students share insights on resilience, personal growth, and the community's role in healing. Emphasizing these experiences, the presentation provides recommendations for cultivating compassion and uncertainty tolerance, fostering a stronger sense of belonging through immersive service-learning.

**THEMATIC FOCUS: RESONANCE | PLAYING AROUND |
DISSONANCE & RESILIENCE**

BIO(S):

SUSAN CONRADSEN

Dr. Susan Conradsen is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Berry College, where she also directs the Women's and Gender Studies program and The Signature Experience program. A licensed clinical psychologist, Dr. Conradsen specializes in gender, intersectionality, social justice, and student mental health. Her academic journey includes a residency at the Medical College of Georgia and a postdoctoral fellowship at Emory University. Dr. Conradsen's research and publications span a wide array of topics related to gender, pedagogy, student mental health, and activism. She has authored over two dozen publications and presented at more than 40 conferences, alongside conducting over 30 invited workshops and panels and serving as a board member to non-profit organizations. She regularly teaches service-learning summer courses, teaching at least one a year for over 15 years.

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