

# 2024 SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM | MAY 4, 2024

TIME	SESSION	LOCATION
9:00 AM	<b>Welcome and Overview of Dysphonia International</b> Charlie Reavis, President	Westshore
9:20 AM	<b>Understanding Voice and Speech</b> Megan Urbano, BM, MS, CCC-SLP	Westshore
9:40 AM	<b>Evaluating and Treating Voice Disorders: Role of the SLP</b> Darla Freeman, SLPD, CCC-SLP	Westshore
10:00 AM	<b>Botulinum Toxin Injections for the Treatment of Voice Disorders</b> Yassmeen Abdel-Aty, MD	Westshore
10:30 AM	<b>BREAK</b>	Atrium
10:45 AM	<b>Challenges and Successes in Laryngology</b> Yaël Bensoussan, MD, MSc, FRCSC	Westshore
11:15 AM	<b>Dysphonia in the Digital Age</b> Elijah Moothedan	Westshore
11:35 AM	<b>Empowering Voices: Deciphering Relevant Brain Networks in Spasmodic Dysphonia Research</b> Scott Norris, MD	Westshore
12:05 PM	<b>Question and Answer Session</b>	Westshore
12:30 PM	<b>LUNCH</b>	Atrium
1:30 PM	<b>Neuropsychological Considerations in Dysphonia: Identity, Adaptive Coping, and Family Systems Dynamics</b> Yolanda C. Leon, PsyD, ABPdN and K. Brianalyse Nicolena Cedeño, BA	Westshore
2:30 PM	<b>Spotlight on Communication Devices</b> <i>Sorenson</i>   Tyler Kropf and Lara Bruce <i>Whispp</i>   Joris Castermans and Akash Raj Komarlu	Westshore
3:15 PM	<b>Roundtable Discussions</b> <i>Living with a Voice Condition</i> <i>Family and Friends</i>	Florida I & II Florida III
4:15 PM	<b>Walk for Talk   Honoring the First Step</b> Kimberly Kuman and Mary Bifaro	Westshore
4:30 PM	<b>Closing Comments</b>   Charlie Reavis	Westshore

## 2024 SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM

Welcome to the 2024 Symposium, marking the 35th anniversary of Dysphonia International. Our Mission has been clear and unwavering from the start – to improve the lives of people affected by spasmodic dysphonia and related voice conditions through research, education, awareness, and support. From humble beginnings, our organization continues to expand, committed to advancing knowledge and support for those facing voice-related challenges while striving to find answers. The evolution of our identity reflects our continuous adaptation to better serve the global community and ensure everyone's voice is heard.

### BREAKOUT SESSIONS

These roundtable discussions led by our Support Network Volunteers offer an opportunity to explore different topics that impact people with vocal conditions in small groups.

### WALK FOR TALK

No matter where you live, you can participate in the 5th Annual Walk for Talk, held October 17-20, 2024. Every step gets us closer to a cure!

### INFORMATION ON OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Saturday Dinner is at 6:30 PM in the Cypress Room. The Tampa City Tour on Sunday will depart at 9:00 AM, so please meet in the lobby at 8:45 AM.

### SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- Our speakers who generously share their knowledge, experience, and time.
- The Tampa Dysphonia Support Group, co-led by Ron Langdon and James Anderson, for serving as the local host for this Symposium.
- Our volunteer Board of Directors and Support Network Leaders who drive our mission and support our community.
- YOU for joining us and sharing your journey of living with a voice condition.

### COMMUNICATION RESOURCES

There has been an increase in the number of tools designed to aid individuals with vocal conditions. Representatives from some of these options are available to speak with, helping you determine if these solutions could meet your specific needs.

#### Augmentative and Alternative

**Communication Devices** | Carol Doles, Eastern Regional Representative, is passionate about researching and resourcing communication tools that could be helpful to people living with vocal disorders. She has curated a wealth of information on various options, complete with a list of key considerations. Carol has also gathered a range of technologies for participants to test and evaluate firsthand.

**Sorenson** is a leading language service provider specializing in communication for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. They are currently investigating the challenges faced by individuals with voice or speech disorders to explore how their services could support during phone conversations and are interested in connecting with individuals that could benefit from having utilizing a communication assistant while making calls. <https://sorenson.com/>

**Whispp** is an app that provides assistive voice technology for people with a voice disability. Its language-independent AI technology and calling app convert whispered speech and vocal cord-impaired speech into a clear and natural voice of your choice without any delay. You can try out the app and see if might work for you. <https://whispp.com/>

## 2024 SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER BIOS

**Yassmeen Abdel-Aty, MD** is an Assistant Professor at the College of Medicine Otolaryngology and Assistant Professor of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at the University of South Florida/Tampa General Hospital. With specialized training in voice, airway, and swallowing disorders from her Fellowship at Columbia/Cornell and Residency at Mayo Clinic, she champions an academic philosophy centered on the integration of education, patient care, and research. Dr. Abdel-Aty's research interests focus on medical education and patient outcomes, complementing her extensive experience in resident and medical student education, mentorship in research projects, and contributions to the AAO HNS's Laryngology Education Committee. Her instructional roles span anatomy for medical students, surgical and simulation courses for residents, and airway courses for critical care providers, respiratory therapists, nurses, and military professionals.

**Yaël Bensoussan, MD, MSc, FRCSC** is an Assistant Professor of Otolaryngology at the USF Health Morsani College of Medicine and a fellowship-trained laryngologist with advanced expertise in voice, swallowing and upper airway evaluation and treatment. She is also an avid proponent of multidisciplinary care and has led multiple patient education initiatives around tracheostomy care. Prior to joining USF Health, Dr. Bensoussan completed her medical school at the University of Montreal and her surgical residency training at the University of Toronto, Canada. She subsequently completed a fellowship in Laryngology at the University of Southern California. Her background also includes a degree in Speech Pathology, and a

a prior career in music, which has led Dr. Bensoussan to her passion for the voice and for laryngeal disorders. She is a co-principal investigator for the NIH's Bridge2AI, a multi-institution project to integrate the use of voice as biomarker of health in clinical care. Passionate about optimization of health systems efficiency and algorithms of care, she is building bridges with to integrate technology to optimize the quality of care provided to her patients.

**K. Brianalyse Nicolena Cedeño, BA** is a published researcher and bilingual Psychometrist in the field of Clinical and Forensic Neuropsychology. Currently, she is the Lead Psychometrist in the Neuropsychology Division of the USF Department of Neurosurgery, Morsani College of Medicine. She holds nearly ten years of experience and expertise in research, clinical, and specialized pre-surgical neuropsychological assessments for a diverse pool of compromised patients, including those who suffer from spasmodic dysphonia. Under the guidance and supervision of her mentors, she continues to develop and define her knowledge about the robust impact of neurological disorders on family systems dynamics and other related neuropsychological manifestations.

**Darla Freeman, SLPD, CCC-SLP** is a Speech-Language Pathologist who's been treating voice disorders for over twenty-five years. Currently, she treats patients with voice, airway, and swallowing disorders at the Florida Center for Voice and Swallowing in Tampa, FL, where she is a scope specialist offering state-of-the-art voice and swallowing evaluations and evidence-based treatment. *continued*

## 2024 SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER BIOS

**Darla Freeman** is also an adjunct professor for ELMS College and serves on the executive committee for the Tampa Bay Medical Speech Pathology Association. She earned her doctorate degree from Northwestern University with a research focus on factors influencing successful behavior changes in adult interventions. While working as a clinical instructor at the University of South Florida, Darla started their first Spasmodic Dysphonia support group, and she continues to be actively involved with the Tampa Dysphonia Group.

**Yolanda C. Leon, PsyD, ABPdN** is a Clinical and Forensic Neuropsychologist who holds a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology and Board Certification in Neuropsychology. She has an appointment as Assistant Professor at the USF Morsani College of Medicine, Department of Neurosurgery and Brain Repair. She is also the Co-Director of the Neuropsychology Fellowship training program. Assessment of individuals with Movement disorders is a long-time interest of Dr. Leon and she has been a guest speaker at many Dysphonia conferences. She also incorporates Family System's dynamics in her core practice in providing care to patients as well as in her training of the next generation of neuropsychologists.

**Elijah Moothedan** is a third-year medical student at Florida Atlantic University. Currently, he serves as a research assistant to Dr. Watts and Dr. Bensoussan, contributing to various projects at the USF Health Voice Center, including the Dysphonia International funded initiative. He graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in Nutritional Sciences and has special medical interests related to otolaryngology and voice disorders, health disparities and public health, and disabilities.

**Scott Norris, MD** serves as the Head of the Movement Disorders Section at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, MO, where he holds the position of Associate Professor in both Neurology and Radiology. He is a dedicated clinician, researcher, and educator. Dr. Norris earned his medical degree from the University of Missouri in Columbia and completed his residency and fellowship at Washington University School of Medicine. He utilizes advanced neuroimaging techniques to explore the connections between brain dysfunction and movement disorders, particularly focal forms of dystonia, including spasmodic dysphonia. Dr. Norris serves on the Scientific Advisory Board for Dysphonia International.

**Megan Urbano, BM, MS, CCC-SLP** is a Voice-Specialized Speech Pathologist at the USF Health Voice Center at the University of South Florida, specializing in assessing and treating voice and upper airway disorders. Before coming to USF, she completed a fellowship at USC Voice Center in Los Angeles, specializing in the assessment and treatment of voice and upper airway disorders. Megan holds a Bachelor of Music (Voice Performance in Opera) from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, NY. She is a classically trained singer and voice actress and has performed at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. She is currently a member of the Master Chorale of Tampa Bay. She seamlessly integrates her scientific knowledge with performance techniques, ensuring that her sung and spoken voices are not only dynamic but also well-supported and healthy.