

2026 SMI Schedule at a Glance

Decision-Maker and Appeals Track – Level 1 Certificate

Note: All times listed are Eastern Time.

Wednesday, November 11, 2026

2:30-3:30 PM	Check-In	
3:30-4:00 PM	Welcome and Opening	Welcome to the 2026 Sexual Misconduct Institute!
4:00-5:15 PM	“Danger! Understanding and Accounting for Dangerousness and Lethality in Sexual Misconduct Cases” Micaela Deming Policy Director DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence	Join us for a keynote that explores how professionals charged with assessing reports and making decisions can better identify escalating risk, understand the dynamics of abuse, and contribute to violence prevention.
5:15-6:00 PM	Pathway Breakouts	Participants will be introduced to the institute and pathway goals, connect with colleagues, review pre-read materials, and prepare for two days of thoughtful dialogue, practical skill-building, and professional development.
6:00 PM	Dinner on your own	

Thursday, November 12, 2026

8:30-9:30 AM	Role of the Decision-Maker	This session explores the distinct role and responsibilities of the decision-maker, including assessing evidence, evaluating credibility, applying policy standards, and articulating findings and rationale. Participants will discuss the importance of ensuring fair and impartial decision-making and avoiding common pitfalls in evaluating complex cases.
9:30-11:00 AM	Case Assignment and Preliminary Considerations	This session will explore how decision makers are chosen, the necessary procedural steps that accompany case assignment, and an exploration of the variety of methods institutions may employ to meet these needs. Participants will discuss bias and conflict of interest, common preliminary issues that may arise early in the hearing process, and the logistical and procedural steps that need to be addressed during this time.

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Thursday, November 12, 2026		
11:00 AM- 12:00 PM	Case study introduction	Throughout SMI, participants will engage with an evolving case study designed to highlight the complexities and challenges encountered in sexual misconduct adjudication. This hands-on learning experience will allow participants to apply concepts from each session and practice decision-making skills in an interactive environment. During this session, participants will receive case materials, review the foundational facts, and learn how additional information and developments will be introduced throughout the sessions.
12:00-1:00 PM	Lunch on Your Own	
1:00-2:30 PM	"It Keeps Me Up at Night: Understanding the Trauma Symptoms of Title IX Professionals in the United States" Dr. Kate Watson President & Founder Advocacy Academy	This session explores the emotional, cognitive, physical, and relational impact of working closely with sexual misconduct cases, with a focus on how vicarious trauma can shape decision-making, empathy, boundaries, workplace culture, and personal well-being. Participants will be invited to move beyond simplistic "self-care" messages and toward a deeper understanding of trauma exposure, nervous system stress, ethical responsibility, and sustainable practice. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of how vicarious trauma shows up in this work, why it matters, and how individuals and institutions can rediscover joy and purpose in their work.
2:30-2:45 PM	Afternoon Break	
2:45 - 4:00 PM	Pre-hearing Considerations	This session examines key pre-hearing responsibilities, including conducting pre-hearing conferences, clarifying hearing procedures, and addressing procedural questions from parties and their advisors.

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Thursday, November 12, 2026		
4:00-6:00 PM	Prepping and Questioning During the Live Hearing	This session explores the decision-maker's role in preparing for a live hearing, including reviewing case materials, identifying key issues in dispute, and developing a framework for questioning parties and witnesses. Participants will examine techniques for asking clear, relevant, and impartial questions that elicit meaningful information while maintaining appropriate hearing decorum.
6:00 PM	Dinner on Your Own	
Friday, November 13, 2026		
8:30 - 10:30 AM	The Live Hearing	This session explores various hearing modalities, highlighting the unique opportunities and challenges associated with each approach. Participants will examine best practices for managing hearing logistics, facilitating participation, and maintaining procedural fairness regardless of the format. The session will also address strategies for managing difficult situations that may arise during a hearing, including disruptive behavior, emotional participants, technological challenges, and complex evidentiary issues.
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Appeals	This session examines the purpose of the appeals process, regulatory and other common grounds for appeal, and the distinct responsibilities of appeal officers and reviewing bodies. Participants will explore how to evaluate claims related to procedural error, new information, conflicts of interest, bias, and other bases for appeal while remaining within the appropriate scope of appellate review.

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Friday, November 13, 2026		
12:00 - 1:00 PM	Lunch Break	
1:00-2:30 PM	Drafting the Outcome Notice or Appeals Notice	This session reviews the necessary elements of outcome notices (following a live hearing) and appeal notices. Participants will have an opportunity to talk through and practice drafting these notices.
2:30-3:30 PM	Hearing Questions	Participants will have the opportunity to practice asking or answering questions during the live hearing format.
3:30-4:00 PM	Institute Closing and Wrap-Up	