



# 2022 TENNESSEE CASA VIRTUAL CONFERENCE



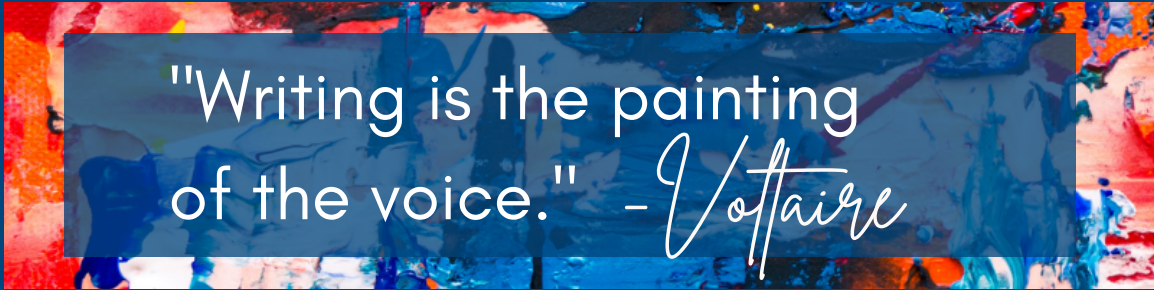
Be  
For  
The  
*Child*

*Painting the Picture*

## THE ART OF ADVOCACY

APRIL 6-8, 2022

# WELCOME TO THE 2022 TENNESSEE CASA CONFERENCE



*Writing is like painting with words, the paper is the canvas, the pen is the brush, the words are the colors and the verbs, nouns and adjectives are the blending of the hues that add depth to the picture you are creating.*

*Reed Abbitt Moore-" Aug 31, 2016*

As Court Appointed Special Advocates, we have the job of "Painting the Picture" of the child and family so the juvenile court will understand the whole picture. We have many colors and mediums at our fingertips because of our training and knowledge. This conference will increase our tools so we can paint a more detailed picture for the court.

The "art lessons" provided by the Tennessee CASA Conference will include expertise about infant mental health, older youth, mitigating placement changes, and the intersection between domestic violence and child abuse. This knowledge will better equip us as we advocate for children by understanding their needs and ensuring they have the necessary services. We will also gain more wisdom about the grounds for Termination of Parental Rights and how to determine the best interests of children. Finally, we will hear from a panel of juvenile judges who will teach us what the court needs from CASA volunteers.

All of these "art lessons" will give us more colors to paint an accurate picture of a child in a CASA court report. Painting may look easy, but we know that it is a very exacting art. Just like elements of a painting, every detail, sentence, and word of a court report is carefully chosen and purposeful.

As always, it is our hope that the Tennessee CASA Conference will inspire you! All good artists must feed their inspiration. Likewise, all of us in this work must seek opportunities to fill our hearts and to restore our energy! Be the painter you are! Exercise the Art of Advocacy!

*-Lynne Farrar*

Lynne Farrar, Executive Director

# CONFERENCE AGENDA



**9:00 AM - 10:15 AM**

**INFANT & EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH IN CHILD WELFARE:  
WHAT TO KNOW AND WHEN TO ACT**

Alison D. Peak, LCSW, IMH-E, Executive Director  
Allied Behavioral Health Solutions

**10:45 AM - 12:00 PM**

**TRAUMA- INFORMED PRACTICES TO NAVIGATE PLACEMENT MOVES AND DISRUPTIONS**

Karisa Johns Smith, PsyD, Licensed Clinical Psychologist & Assistant Professor,  
Center for Excellence for Children in State Custody, Vanderbilt University Medical Center



**9:00 AM - 10:15 AM**

**TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS—GROUNDS & BEST INTEREST FACTORS**

Sammi S. Maifair, Senior Associate Counsel, Department of Children's Services  
Matthew R. Muenzen, Attorney, Muenzen Law, PLLC

**10:45 AM - 12:00 PM**

**THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & CHILD ABUSE**

Karen L. Lakin, MD, MSPH, FAAP  
Department of Pediatrics, Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt



**9:00 AM - 10:15 AM**

**SUPPORTING TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH IN THE PANDEMIC AND BEYOND**

Jenny Pokempner, Policy Director, Youth Law Center  
Cara Suvall, J.D., Associate Clinical Professor of Law and Director of the Youth  
Opportunity Clinic, Vanderbilt University Law School

**10:45 AM - 12:00 PM**

**JUVENILE COURT JUDGES PANEL**

The Honorable Andy Brigham, Stewart County General Sessions/Juvenile Court Judge  
The Honorable Sheila Calloway, Davidson County Juvenile Court Judge  
The Honorable Robert Philyaw, Hamilton County Juvenile Court Judge  
The Honorable Vicki Snyder, Henry County General Sessions/Juvenile Court Judge

Panel Moderator:

Stephanie Etheridge, Juvenile Court Manager/Statewide Judicial Safe Baby Court Coordinator,  
Administrative Office of the Court

# ART LESSON #1

Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health in Child Welfare:  
What to Know and When to Act

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health is best defined as the “ability to grow well and love well.” Early childhood well-being is impacted through the events that lead to child welfare involvement and is a critical area for intervention when infants and young children come to the awareness of the state. This presentation will provide foundational education about IECMH, potential symptomology for young children who have experienced trauma, and options for supportive interventions. The presentation will equip CASA and child welfare

workers to advocate for necessary IECMH supports, interventions, and developmentally appropriate visitation schedules. The presentation will also allow time for questions and answers.

## Learning Objectives

- 1.) Participants will increase knowledge and understanding of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health as it relates to child welfare.
- 2.) Participants will increase awareness of symptoms of early childhood trauma and early relational well-being.
- 3.) Participants will increase their ability to advocate for IECMH services and interventions through education of IECMH evidence-based practices.



**Alison D. Peak LCSW** (Nashville, TN) has spent the majority of her career dedicated to two primary passions: integrated behavioral health services in primary care settings and Infant Mental Health. Alison has an MSW from the University of Michigan with an emphasis in Interpersonal Practice with Children and Youth. Alison is also privileged to be a member of the 2020-2022 class of ZERO TO THREE Fellows and a Founding Board member of the Association of Infant Mental Health in Tennessee (AIMHiTN). Alison collaborates across Tennessee and nationally to build programs that are responsive to gaps within the infant and early childhood mental health service delivery system and to support the workforce that supports our nation's children and caregivers.

# ART LESSON #2

Trauma-Informed Practices to Navigate Placement  
Moves and Disruptions

According to 2019 Children's Bureau data, 31.1% of Tennessee children in foster care less than a year had **more than three placements** during their time in custody. While concerted systemic efforts are needed to reduce the frequency of placement moves, children currently facing disruptions need support now. This webinar will review the impact of placement moves, identify risk and protective factors for disruptions, and provide methods to reduce the impact of disruptions on children. The goal will be to equip CASA volunteers and child

welfare team members to actively contribute to trauma reduction in the midst of disruptions.

## Learning Objectives

- 1.) Participants will be able to describe the impact of placement disruptions on children.
- 2.) Participants will identify individual, caregiver, and systemic supports to decrease disruptions.
- 3.) Based on the five trauma-informed principles to guide placement disruptions, participants will identify 3 or more ways they can help reduce the impact of disruptions.



**Karisa Johns Smith** is a licensed clinical psychologist and an assistant professor with the Center of Excellence for Children in State Custody at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Her interest in complex trauma and child welfare began during her work as a foster care caseworker. This experience launched her into doctoral studies and clinical training focused on developmental trauma and the child welfare system. Dr. Smith has clinically worked with traumatized individuals and families within community mental health centers, intensive in-home services, detention centers, the Center of Excellence, Vanderbilt Medical Center, and the Tennessee Department of Children's services. She is committed to supporting children, caregivers, and child-welfare teams through evidence-based practices.

# ART LESSON #3

## Termination of Parental Rights — Grounds & Best Interest Factors

This presentation will cover the grounds for termination of parental rights and the factors that are used in determining whether a termination of parental rights is in the best interests of the child. While only one ground for termination is needed in Tennessee, there are multiple grounds that are typically alleged when the Department of Children's Services files petitions to terminate the parental rights of a child in foster care. If a court finds that there is at least one ground to terminate a parent's rights to a child, a determination is then made if the termination of parental rights is in the best interests of the child.

There are many statutory factors that the court must

consider in addition to a number of non-statutory factors. Additionally, the statutory factors for the best interest determination were recently updated.

### Learning Objectives

- 1.) To allow CASA volunteers and staff the opportunity to learn more about the statutory grounds for the termination of a parent's rights to a child.
- 2.) To allow CASA volunteers and staff the opportunity to learn more about the court process for a termination of parental rights case and alternatives to termination of parental rights.
- 3.) To update CASA volunteers and staff regarding the new statutory factors for the best interests determination in a termination of parental rights matter.



**Matthew R. Muenzen** is the attorney at Muenzen Law, PLLC and has been practicing law since 2008. Prior to starting his law firm, Mr. Muenzen worked in city government and at a law firm in Nashville. Additionally, Mr. Muenzen was previously employed by the Tennessee Department of Children's Services for nine years. He left the Department as the Special Advisor to the Deputy Commissioner and Director of Community Partnerships in the Office of Child Safety. He previously served as Regional General Counsel and Supervising Attorney in Davidson County and as Assistant General Counsel in Wilson County and Montgomery County.

Prior to practicing law, Mr. Muenzen was employed as a police officer in New Jersey for six years. While working as a full-time police officer, Mr. Muenzen received a M.A in Human Resources Management and Training from Seton Hall University in New Jersey and a J.D. from Pace University in New York. Mr. Muenzen is certified as a specialist in Tennessee for Juvenile Law - Child Welfare Law through the National Association of Counsel for Children.



**Sammi Maifair** is a senior associate counsel with the Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS). She received her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in 2003 from Alfred University in Alfred, NY, and her Juris Doctor from the University of Tennessee College of Law in 2006. Prior to starting at DCS in 2011, Sammi's legal practice primarily focused on family law, both as an associate at Lockridge & Valone in Knoxville, TN, and in private practice. As a solo practitioner, Sammi represented children and parents in juvenile court proceedings. While at DCS, Sammi has served in a variety of roles, including a field attorney in East Tennessee, a regional general counsel for the Mid-Cumberland region, and her current role in central office legal. Sammi also serves as the DCS statewide director for Tennessee Safe Baby Courts.

# ART LESSON #4

The Intersection Between Domestic Violence & Child Abuse

The overlap of domestic violence and child abuse has been previously described, often from the perspective of children as “witnesses”. Less attention has been given to children injured during domestic violence incidents and the cyclical nature of the effects of domestic violence increasing the risk of children to be abused. This workshop will present a case study involving the intersection of domestic violence and child abuse.

## Learning Objectives

- 1.) Define Domestic Violence and the various forms of Child Abuse.
- 2.) Recognize the Intersection of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse.
- 3.) Advocate for screening for victims for DV/CA prevention and services.



**Karen Lakin, MD, MSPH, FAAP** joined Vanderbilt University School of Medicine as the Medical Director and Section Head for the Child Maltreatment Program at Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt in February, 2022. Prior to joining Vanderbilt, Dr. Lakin founded the Le Bonheur Child Advocacy Resource and Evaluation Services (CARES) Team at Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital in Memphis, TN in 2006 and served as the Medical Director until 2022. Dr. Lakin received her undergraduate degree at Duke University and a Master’s in Public Health from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She received her medical degree at East Carolina University in Greenville, NC. She is board certified by the American Board of Pediatrics in General Pediatrics and Child Abuse Pediatrics. Dr. Lakin provides patient care and education in the field of Child

Maltreatment and also provides assistance for investigations and legal expert witness testimony for cases involving child abuse.

# ART LESSON #5

Supporting Transition-Age Youth in the Pandemic and Beyond

This workshop will provide an overview of the challenges and opportunities facing teenagers and young adults in foster care who are in the period of transition to adulthood, as well as how advocates like CASA volunteers can support them in this transition. The workshop will include context about this young-adult population as well as a closer look at specific ways CASA volunteers and others can support young adults during this pivotal developmental time to set themselves up for success.

## Learning Objectives

- 1.) Understand the landscape of challenges and opportunities facing teens and young adults transitioning to adulthood.
- 2.) Apply context and information about transition-age youth to identify goals for and strengthen relationships with the teenagers and young adults they work with.
- 3.) Identify specific action steps they can take to support teens and young adults achieve their goals as they transition to adulthood and increased independence.



**Jenny Pokempner** is the Policy Director for the Youth Law Center. In this role, Jenny will work on child welfare and juvenile justice issues. Prior to joining YLC, Jenny worked at the Juvenile Law Center as a senior attorney and has played a large role in state and national reform work related to older youth in foster care, with areas of focus on: older youth permanency, extended foster care, eliminated group care, and improving educational and employment outcomes and opportunities. Jenny values using legal strategies that are informed by and done in partnership with young people with experience in foster care. Jenny is based in Philadelphia, PA.



**Professor Cara Suvall** directs the Vanderbilt Law School Youth Opportunity Clinic. The clinic represents teenagers and young adults in education advocacy and advocacy related to collateral consequences of criminal legal system contact. Her scholarship focuses on collateral consequences, administrative barriers to reentry and reintegration, and the young adult experience of the criminal legal system.

After earning her J.D. cum laude at Harvard Law School, Suvall began her legal career as an attorney at The Bronx Defenders where she created a pilot program representing young clients in school discipline and other education matters in addition to their criminal cases. Suvall then co-founded The Bronx Defenders' Adolescent Defense Project, to provide holistic, individualized representation to clients aged 14 to 17 who are charged in adult criminal proceedings. She served as a law clerk for Judge Jeffrey R. Howard of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit and for Judge Douglas P. Woodlock of the U.S. District

Court for the District of Massachusetts as well as a staff attorney in the Nashville office of A Better Balance: The Work and Family Legal Center, a nonprofit that promotes policies and legal protections to support working families.

# ART LESSON #6

Juvenile Court Judges Panel

Juvenile Court Judges Panel discussion  
moderated by Stephanie Etheridge



**Stephanie Etheridge** is the Juvenile Court Manager and Statewide Judicial Safe Baby Court Coordinator for the Administrative Office of the Courts. She has led in the development and implementation of 14 Safe Baby Courts throughout Tennessee. She is a member of the Statewide Safe Baby Court Leadership Team comprised of leaders from the Departments of Children's Services, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and the Administrative Office of the Courts. She has led in the development and implementation of the Family Preservation Initiative, which seeks to identify and provide wraparound services to youth and families before a petition is filed in juvenile court. This program is the only one of its kind nationally. She is also responsible for coordinating conference and trainings for Juvenile Court Judges, Court Administrators, Youth Services Officers, and other Juvenile Court personnel. She represents the Tennessee Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges in a number of statewide initiatives, task forces, advisory councils, and work groups. She previously served

as conference coordinator. Prior to the Administrative Office of the Courts, her work experience includes two years as a foster care case manager for the Tennessee Department of Children's Services and almost six years as a Child Protective Services Investigator.

Stephanie received her Bachelor of Science degree from Tennessee Technological University with concentrations in early childhood education, special education, and child and family development/relations.



**G. Andrew Brigham (Andy)** (B.S., University of Tennessee, 1982, Highest Honors; J.D., University of Tennessee, 1985, Order of the Coif), General Sessions and Juvenile Court Judge, Stewart County, Tennessee. Judge Brigham is co-author of The Tennessee General Sessions Handbook (M. Lee Smith, Publishers), and received the McCain-Abernathy Memorial Award in 2015 from the Tennessee Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and the Judge Leon Rubin Award in 2015 from the Tennessee General Sessions Judges Conference. He serves as a member of the Court Improvement Program, Work Group Law Committee, and was co-chair of the Delinquency and Unruly subgroup of the Work Committee charged with the rewrite of the Tennessee Rules of Juvenile Practice and Procedure, completed in 2016. He currently serves on the D/N Data and Juvenile Court Appeals subcommittees. He is a member of the Executive Council of the Tennessee Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, currently serving as its Vice-President, and the Education Committee of the General Sessions Judges Conference. He also serves on the Tennessee Board of Judicial Conduct as its Vice-Chairman

and head of its Legislative Committee, a member of the Child Support Advisory Committee, a member of the E Filing Standards Committee, a member of the Safe Baby Court Advisory Council, and is a member of the Juvenile Justice Data Review Team created in 2017. He is a member of the Juvenile Justice Reform Implementation Council appointed by the Governor in 2019, and was chosen by Tennessee Supreme Court Chief Justice Jeff Bevens to participate in the ECHO judicial education program. He was the chair of the Tennessee General Sessions Judges Conference, ad hoc Committee on Bail Best Practices, and is a frequent presenter to both Conferences. A part time judge, he also is active in his family's hardware and building materials business in Dover, and is a licensed federal firearms dealer. He has a fondness for Italian bicycles, German automobiles, Irish folk music, Winchester pump shotguns, Model 1911 handguns, Tennessee whiskey, Crossfit, big mountains, real newspapers, and most outdoor activities.



**Sheila Calloway**, a native of Louisville, KY, came to Nashville, Tennessee in 1987 to attend Vanderbilt University Law School. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications in 1991 and her Doctor of Jurisprudence in 1994. After graduating from law school, Sheila Calloway worked at the Metropolitan Defender's Office in the adult system as well as the juvenile system. In January 2004, she was appointed by Judge Betty Adams Green to the position of Juvenile Court Magistrate and served in that position until November 2013, when she announced her intention to run for the position of Juvenile Court Judge.

Sheila was elected Davidson County's Juvenile Court Judge in 2014 and was sworn into office for her eight year term on August 28, 2014. Judge Calloway also serves as an Adjunct Professor at Vanderbilt University Law School where she teaches Trial Advocacy, and an Adjunct Professor at Belmont College of Law where she teaches Juvenile Law.

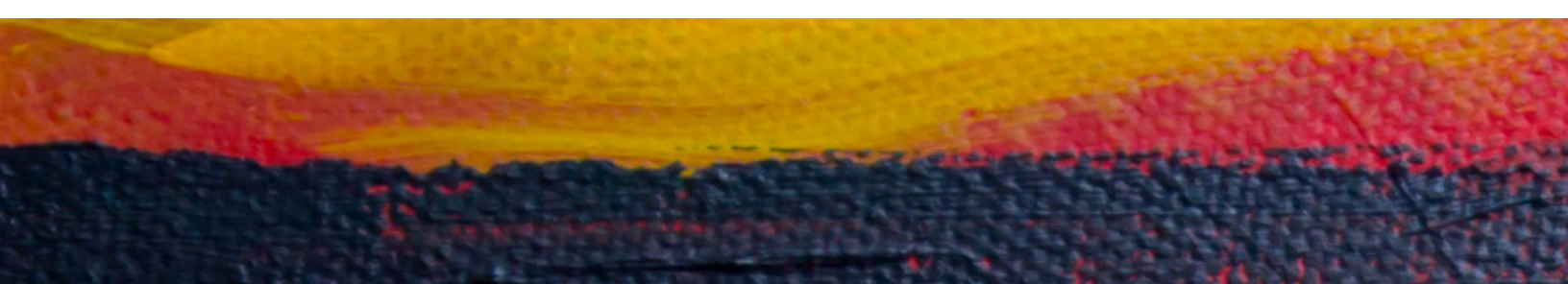
Judge Calloway uses her unique combination of humor, passion, and judicial wisdom to change the way we look at justice in the United States.



**Rob Philyaw** is the Hamilton County Juvenile Court Judge where he has served since 2013. Judge Philyaw obtained his B.S. and M.B.A. degrees from Christian Brothers University and his J.D. degree from the Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law at the University of Memphis where he served as the Editor-in-Chief of the Tennessee Journal of Practice & Procedure and where he received the Dean's Award for Academic Excellence and the Dean's Distinguished Service Award. He formerly served as a municipal judge, as an adjunct professor of the Fogelman College of Business and Economics at the University of Memphis, on the Tennessee Bar Association's Access to Justice Committee, and on the boards of the Chattanooga Chapter of the Federal Bar Association and several non-profit organizations. Judge Philyaw founded the Hamilton County Youth Court in 2013 and the Hamilton County Juvenile Recovery Court in 2014. He currently serves

as Chair of the Tennessee Commission for Children and Youth, as Secretary/Treasurer of the Tennessee Council of Juvenile and Family Law Judges, and is president-elect of the Chattanooga Bar Association.

In 2015, Judge Philyaw was awarded the Chief Justice William M. Barker Equal Access to Justice Award by Legal Aid of East Tennessee. In 2019, he received the prestigious McCain-Abernathy Memorial Award from the Tennessee Council of Juvenile and Family Law Judges. On the weekends he enjoys tractor time on his family's small Hereford cattle farm.





**Judge Vicki Snyder** graduated from the University of Tennessee at Martin with a BS in Criminal Justice in 1980 and The University of Memphis School of Law in 1985. She has been in the private practice of law, served as an Assistant District Attorney General and Assistant District Public Defender of the 24th Judicial District of Tennessee before being elected the Henry County General Sessions and Juvenile Court Judge in 2006. Judge Snyder was selected as one of the 20 most influential women in West Tennessee and awarded the Sterling Award in 2020; is a member of the Paris Henry County Kiwanis Club -Kiwanian of the Year in 2009; Founding member of REAL Hope Youth Center; Past Board member of Plus Endowment; Henry County Literacy Board; Past Board Member Paris Henry County Chamber of Commerce; Henry County Bar Association member; Tennessee Bar Association member; Tennessee Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges-past President and current Executive Board member; National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges member;

Tennessee General Sessions Conference member and Education Committee member; Board member of the Tennessee Lawyer's Assistance Program Commission; Member of the Anne Schneider Chapter of the Lawyer's Association for Women; Howell Edmunds Jackson Inns of court member; Tennessee Bar Foundation member; Court Interpreter Grievance Committee member-Administrative Office of the Courts; Supreme Court of Tennessee Indigent Representation Task Force member; Tennessee Domestic Violence State Coordinating Council member; Member of the Joint Ad-Hoc Tennessee Blue Ribbon Task Force on Juvenile Justice; Three Branches Institute of West Tennessee member; Member of the Backlog Elimination Workgroup.

Judge Snyder was awarded the McCain-Abernathy Memorial by the Tennessee Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, which is bestowed upon a Juvenile Court Judge every year for outstanding service and dedication to the children of Tennessee. Further, she received the Judge Leon Ruben Award from the Tennessee General Sessions Judges Conference which is given in recognition of outstanding service and devotion to the State of Tennessee in the pursuit of justice for all.

Judge Snyder has mental health jurisdiction as well.

Judge Snyder started a CASA program in Henry County which has grown beyond imagination with a wonderful Board of Directors and staff which train new volunteers on a regular basis. Due to all the hard work of the team, many children who have suffered from abuse and neglect, are now in safe and loving homes. In addition, Henry County is blessed with a Safe Baby Court. The CASA volunteers and the SBC Team work hand-in-hand to achieve permanency for children in homes where love and safety are normal and given to every child. With the help of two therapy dogs, Tessa and Maise, children come to court in Henry County and have less fear and anxiety. No more fear nor tears, only smiles and joy.

In 2022, Judge Snyder received the TCJFCJ Presidential Leadership Award. As President of TCJFCJ, she led the Council through important and significant changes to our state's juvenile justice system including the creation and enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018. Judge Snyder is a champion of children and families, always leading with incredible professionalism, integrity, and grace.

**Every child has a chance.  
It starts with you.**

# TENNESSEE CASA STAFF

Lynne Farrar  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Jassmyn Alexander  
**OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR**

Deandra Green  
**DIRECTOR OF MARKETING**

Caitlin Vasser  
**TECHNICAL SERVICES COORDINATOR**

Wendy Spence  
**DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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# THANK YOU!



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**AIMHiTN**



**RISK**  
strategies



CENTERSTONE

