

# 2024 RESILIENCE SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER



## SHENANDOAH CHEFALO

### *About Our Speaker*

Shenandoah Chefalo is a sought-after speaker, award-winning author, and expert trauma-informed specialist with over 20 years of leadership consulting experience with governmental, public, and private organizations across various sectors, including health care, human services, education, and nonprofits. As the Founder and Lead Trainer of Chefalo Consulting, Shenandoah provides organizational change management and workforce development services.

Shenandoah's expert training programs empower individuals and whole organizations to transform the way they approach, respond to, and reflect on trauma. Through her signature evidence-based methods, professionals learn effective trauma-informed skills and practices, which become embedded into how they operate at work and at home.

At its core, trauma-informed work is about healing, and Shenandoah came to this work through her own healing journey after realizing the immense impact that trauma has on our lives.

A nomadic childhood rife with abuse and neglect defined Shenandoah's youth. Her 2016 memoir, "Garbage Bag Suitcase," details her young life in the foster care system, where the reality of foster care wasn't the better life she dreamed of. It was just another nightmare.

Shenandoah's experience wasn't an exception. Instead, it reflects the tragic reality of most children's experience of child welfare agencies.

There are over 400,000 children in foster care each day, and 61% of kids age out of the system with nowhere to live. Within two years, 50% of them are incarcerated, and 80% of people on death row are former foster kids. Less than 5% of foster kids graduate from college.

Shen wrote Garbage Bag Suitcase after spending nearly 20 years as a Law Office Administrator. She was unsettled by the ever-revolving door of people stuck in the criminal justice system—and she knew she needed to change it.

While Shen's memoir details the tragedy of the foster care system from a first-person perspective, it also explores her healing journey alongside grass-roots solutions to the United States' broken foster care system.

Now, Shenandoah is devoted to creating lasting systemic changes that will forever alter the landscape of the country.

In addition to her multiple-award-winning memoir, Garbage Bag Suitcase, she has authored several best-selling e-books that teach trauma-informed leaders how to navigate organizational change management, leadership development, the journey to mental wellness, and much more. Shenandoah is currently working on her next manuscript, Hiking for Stillness.

Shenandoah Chefalo is a graduate of Michigan State University (holding a Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Interdisciplinary Studies in Social Science), a Core Essentials Graduate from Coach U, a Certified Law of Attraction Advanced Practitioner, a member of the National Speakers Association, a volunteer who works with several organizations locally, nationally, and internationally, and the co-founder of #4600 and Counting, a grass-roots movement to bring awareness and change to the missing youth of foster care.