

# Jennifer B. Varela, MSW, LCSW-S

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[www.jennifervarela.net](http://www.jennifervarela.net) | Texas Social Work License: 27934 | NPI: 1639708902 | CAQH Provider ID: 2793427934

Dedicated client-centered therapist specializing in social work and clinical services, including assessment, counseling, treatment, and service linkage with people experiencing a variety of issues (trauma; grief, abuse; issues related to environment and limited access to resources; and cognitive, illness, disability, mental health, and/or substance abuse issues). Skilled licensed clinical social worker and board-approved clinical social work supervisor specializing in the trauma-informed design, implementation, and management of client care strategies. Social Work graduate program adjunct professor. Strong history of exercising independent discretion and judgment and utilizing deep knowledge and expertise gained through prolonged, specialized intellectual instruction to manage and oversee social service programs.

- EMDR Psychotherapy
- Forensic Social Work
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Animal Related Bereavement
- Client Rapport and Engagement
- Community Engagement
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy
- Assessment and DSM-5 Diagnosis
- Grief Group Facilitator
- Criminal Case Expert Witness Testimony
- Program Development/Management
- Clinical Social Work Supervision
- Staff Training and Development
- Embedded Criminal Justice Programs
- Macro / Political Social Work
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
- Social Work Field Supervisor
- Workplace Trauma / Grief Debriefing
- Intimate and Sexual Violence
- Mental Health Issues
- Grant Writing/Management
- Solution Focused Therapy
- Grief and Trauma Treatment
- Community Empowerment
- Motivational Interviewing
- Adjunct Graduate Professor
- Anxiety and Depression

## EDUCATION

**Master of Social Work – Political Social Work Concentration - 1995** | University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work  
*Member, Phi Kappa Phi Academic Honor Society*

*Graduate field placement, Houston City Council Member Felix Fraga, MSW—Collaborated with various constituents, community groups, and government agencies to address regional issues.*

*Graduate field placement, Harris County Dispute Resolution Center—Trained and worked as a community and family mediator.*

**Bachelor of Arts, Sociology – English Minor – 1993** | University of Houston

*Research Assistant, Sociology Department*

*Research Assistant, The Tomás Rivera Center*

*Co-Organizer, Monetary Donations and Medical Equipment Procurement and Transportation to San Cristóbal, Guatemala*

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### **Private Practice Clinical Social Work (Psychotherapy) / Social Work Clinical Supervision | Houston, TX | 2019 – Present**

Providing psychotherapy (assessment, diagnosis, and treatment) and service linkage to clients experiencing trauma, grief, and related issues (including substance use). Utilize CBT, DBT, EMDR, MI, and other modalities to assist clients in increasing well-being and reducing trauma-related symptoms. Working with clients remotely.

Contract therapist with *Grief Recovery Center* (July 2020 to August 2022) providing individual and group psychotherapy and support (assessment, diagnosis, treatment) and service linkage with clients experiencing grief, trauma, loss, substance use, companion animal-related bereavement, or a variety of mental / emotional health related issues. On-sight workplace crisis debriefing and support. Utilize CBT, DBT, EMDR, SFT, MI, and other modalities to assist clients in increasing well-being and reducing trauma-related symptoms. Working with clients in-person and remotely.

Providing social work clinical supervision to LMSW social workers.

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## University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work | Houston, TX | 2012 – 2022

Adjunct professor, taught courses on *Human Diversity and Development*; *Trauma and Social Work*; and *Domestic Violence*. Previously provided graduate field supervision. Work with the school on an as-needed basis to support their vision and work.

## Harris County District Attorney's Office (HCDAO) | Houston, TX | 6/1995 – 06/2020 (Retirement)

### **Director of Social Services – Sex Crimes Division (SCD) | 1/2017 – 06/2020 (Retirement)**

Responsible for the development, implementation, and maintenance of the program that offered support, recovery, and hope to children and adults suffering from trauma due to sex crimes committed against them. Consulted with criminal case prosecutors, and drafted/presented training curriculum for prosecutors, police officers, and other professionals. Consulted on mental health and trauma-related issues during serious criminal cases. Linked clients to community resources through close collaboration with community services and agencies. Hired and trained new staff members, and coordinated workflows, and supported the social work staff. Wrote and awarded grants to fund the entire sex crimes social work staff and fund a variety of projects. Gathered and utilized data in the development of programs and social services, which included interviews to study individual needs and assist with data-driven policies and programming. Participated in administrative responsibilities and provided clinical supervision to agency LMSW staff. Provided social work and clinical services to clients, including assessment, counseling, treatment, and service linkage with people experiencing a variety of issues (trauma; grief, abuse; issues related to environment and limited access to resources; and cognitive, illness, disability, mental health, and/or substance abuse issues).

#### **Key Achievements:**

- Developed an ethical, trauma-informed, and embedded social work program that provided short-term clinical and supportive services as part of a comprehensive and integrated approach to treatment.
- Streamlined and standardized social work job descriptions, FLSA status, and salary structure.
- Wrote a 40-page policy and procedure manual which incorporated information about the social work program's mission, values, and goals, job descriptions, tasks, procedures, work process flowcharts, case assignments, self-care, and protocols for general and crisis situations.
- Successfully petitioned and secured \$2M in grant funding to support the entire sex crimes social work program for four years.
- Served as an integral member of the team and primary grant writer that won an additional \$3.8M in grant funding to pay for staff in HCDAO's Victim Services Division and Human Trafficking Divisions.
- Partnered with a variety of community providers to establish a referral/connection system that ensured victims of sex crimes received effective and coordinated service linkage.
- Developed research-based evaluation components for the program in partnership with the University of Houston – Downtown.
- Assessed the HCDAO Elder Abuse Program. Obtained, coded, and analyzed data from case records to inform possible data-driven programming decisions. Produced a detailed report with graphs, tables, observations, and recommendations to improve social work functionality and efficacy within the program.
- Procured, curated, and distributed clinical training curriculum for the HCDAO social work staff members.
- Provided clinical supervision to HCDAO LMSW social workers.

### **Director of Family Violence Services – Family Criminal Law Division (FCLD) | 6/1995 – 12/2016**

Managed a 14-member staff of social service professionals which included degreed caseworkers and licensed master/clinical social workers to provide direct social services to 6k+ domestic violence victims throughout Harris County each year. Testified as a domestic violence expert witness in 200+ criminal and family court cases. Wrote procedures for the HCDAO-FCLD Social Service program and trained colleagues on expert witness testimony. Provided social work and clinical services to clients, including assessment, counseling, treatment, and service linkage with people experiencing a variety of issues (trauma; grief, abuse; issues related to environment and limited access to resources; and cognitive, illness, disability, mental health, and/or substance abuse issues).

#### **Key Achievements:**

- Developed and implemented HCDAO internal guidelines and spearheaded training opportunities for staff working with victims with crisis mental health issues.
- Requested and awarded \$6M in grant funding to provide social service and legal staff for domestic violence and sex crimes, including a grant to fund the first-ever HCDAO-dedicated Adult Sex Crimes Assistant District Attorney.

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- Innovated a data-driven and evidence-informed method for evaluating criminal cases involving serious violence in which the female severely injured and/or killed a male partner and claimed self-defense.
- Collaborated with IT professionals to develop and implement a computer-based database and processing program for social services and protective order processes that would replace the outdated paper-based model. Successfully petitioned for and awarded a grant to fund the project.

## ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

**University of Houston—Downtown | Houston, TX | 2011 – 2021**  
**College of Public Service Advisory Council Member | 2020 – 2021**  
**Guest Lecturer | 2011 – 2019**  
**Field Supervisor, Social Work Program | 2011 – 2019**

**University of Houston—Graduate College of Social Work | Houston, TX | 1995 – Present**  
**Consultant and Contributor | 1995 – Present**  
**50 for 50 Award Recipient | 2019**  
**Adjunct Professor | 2012 – 2022**  
**Guest Lecturer | 1995 - Present**  
**Field Supervisor | 1997 – 2014**

**ABC 20/20 | Houston, TX | 2004 – 2005**  
**Domestic Violence Consultant**

**Texas Southern University | Houston, TX | 1997 – 2003**  
**Field Supervisor, Social Work Department**

**Texas Woman’s University | Denton, TX | 2000 – 2002**  
**Project Advisor**

Provided guidance and direction to students participating in Dr. Judith McFarlane et al.’s studies, *Increasing Victim Safety and System Accountability: Evaluating a Collaborative Intervention between Healthcare and Criminal Justice* and *Do Civil Protection Orders Protect? Reports of Intimate Partner Violence by Women With and Without an Order*.

## LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATIONS

Licensed Clinical Social Worker #27934  
Board-Approved Clinical Social Work Supervisor  
NPI: 1639708902  
CAQH Provider ID: 14925892  
Certified Community and Family Mediator

## AWARDS/NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Recipient, *2019 50 for 50 Award* | University of Houston—Graduate College of Social Work  
*Earned recognition at the school’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as one of 50 honored graduates who embodied the school’s social justice vision.*  
<https://uh.edu/socialwork/news/news-releases/50-for-50-alumni-celebration/jennifervarelabio.pdf>

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## TRAINING

DBT Skills, Psychwire | 2022  
Polyvagal Theory & Mindfulness in Clinical Practice | 2021  
CBT for Prolonged Grief, Beck Institute | 2020  
CBT for Insomnia, Beck Institute | 2020  
Animal Related Bereavement: Implications for Social Work Practice,  
University of Tennessee College of Social Work and College of Veterinary Medicine | 2020  
SimplePractice Therapy Management Software | 2020  
Solution Focused Therapy, PESI | 2020  
Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) Training, PESI | 2020  
Technology Assisted Services Training (Virtual Psychotherapy), HGI, | 2020  
Virtual Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) Therapy, CompassionWorks | 2020  
Motivational Interviewing (MI) and the Transtheoretical Model, University of Houston GCSW | 2020  
Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) Therapy, CompassionWorks | 2019  
Seeking Safety Training | 2019  
Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Training, PESI | 2019  
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Training, Beck Institute | 2019  
*Essentials of CBT—The Beck Approach, CBT for Depression, CBT for Anxiety, & CBT for Personality Disorders*  
Psychopathy Checklist – Revised (PCL-R), Hare | 2015  
Mental Health First Aid, The Harris Center | 2013  
MMPI-2 Basic Interpretation | 2010  
Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory (SASSI) | 2007  
NEO Personality Inventory Training | 2007  
Clinical Social Work Supervisor Training | 2007  
Clinical Social Worker Supervision, Kay Schiller, LCSW-s | 2005 – 2007  
Critical Incident Stress Management Basic Group Crisis Intervention | 2005  
Crisis Debriefing When Responding to Crisis & Trauma | 2002  
Basic Crisis Response Training | 1997

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Advisory Council Member, UTHealth/McGovern Medical School, Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI)  
Diabetes/Depression Medication Adherence Research | 2020  
Advisory Council Member, University of Houston Downtown College of Public Service | 2020 – 2022  
Volunteer Psychotherapist and Program Consultant, The Landing | 2019 – 2022  
*Provide one-on-one treatment to clients dealing with trauma and provide consultation regarding program planning issues.*  
Volunteer Psychotherapist and Grant Writing Consultant, Free the Captives | 2018 – 2022  
Volunteer Social Work Clinical Supervisor, Yes Prep | 2016 – 2018  
*Volunteered to provide social work clinical supervision to an LMSW school social worker.*  
Emergency Mental Health Volunteer, Hurricane Harvey Relief | 2017  
*Recruited as a “trusted volunteer” to assist in organizing mental health care at NRG.*  
HCDAO Wellness Champion | 2011 – 2016  
*Volunteered to promote healthy living activities for staff members.*  
Volunteer Grant Consultant/Mentor, Local Non-Profits, and Police Agencies | 2005 – Present  
*Have assisted several police agencies and local non-profits in grant-writing.*  
Emergency Mental Health Volunteer, Hurricane Katrina Relief | 2005

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## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Member, National Association of Social Workers (NASW) | 1995 – Present  
Houston Chapter Co-Chair, National Association of Social Workers (NASW) | 2009 – 2011

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL WRITING

Varela, Jennifer B. HCDAO Sex Crimes Division Social Work Policies and Procedures Manual. Harris County District Attorney's Office (2019).

Varela, Jennifer B. HCDAO Family Criminal Law Social Service Staff Policies and Procedures Manual. Harris County District Attorney's Office (2016).

Varela, Jennifer B., Jane Waters, and Lisa Porter. Domestic Violence Training for Police Officers Curriculum (2016).

Varela, Jennifer B. 'Social Work Intervention in IPV.' Eileen Giardino, RN, MSN, Ph.D. and Angelo Giardino, MD, Ph.D., MPH. *Intimate Partner Violence: A Resource for Professionals Working with Children and Families*. GW Medical Publishing (2010).

Varela, Jennifer B., et al. TDCAA Protective Orders. (2010).

Varela, Jennifer B. "From the Experts." Website article for GW Medical Publishing (2009).

Varela, Jennifer B. "A Primer on Mental Health for Prosecutors." Texas District and County Attorneys Association Magazine. Spring 2008 issue.

Varela, Jennifer B. "Mental Health Treatment and Treatment Providers." Texas District and County Attorneys Association Magazine. Spring 2008 issue.

## SELECTED PRESENTATIONS AND TRAINING

Varela, J. (2021). *Trauma, Grief, Loss, and Transitions: Finding Hope and Peace in Times of Uncertainty and Disconnection*. Presentation for clinical practitioners.

Varela, J. (2020). *Trauma informed aspects of working with clients during COVID-19*. Texas Governor's Office. Webinar.

Varela, J. (2019). *Biopsychosocial aspects of trauma*. Presented to the Children's Assessment Center forensic staff members.

Varela, J. (2019). *Embedded social workers in criminal justice agencies*. Invited as a guest lecturer at the University of Houston's Graduate College of Social Work.

Varela, J. (2018 & 2019). *Working with people exposed to trauma*. Conducted a presentation for service providers, police officers, and attorneys.

Varela, J. (2016 & 2017). *Working with DV victims: Assessment and communication strategies for TDCAA (Texas District & County Attorneys Association)*. This presentation was co-developed with TDCAA Victim Services Director, Jalayne Robinson, LMSW and presented at two conferences in Texas.

Varela, J. (2015 & 2016). *Protective orders for TDCAA*. This training curriculum was co-developed with assistant district attorneys Jane Waters, Lisa Porter, and Beth Barron alongside Jalayne Robinson, LMSW and presented at six TDCAA workshops across Texas.

Varela, J and Floyd Jennings, Ph.D., J.D. (2012). *Mental health basics for prosecutors*. Developed and co-presented training curriculum with a forensic psychologist and attorney.

Varela, J. (2005 – 2010) *Domestic violence in mediation*. Provided multiple presentations at the AA White Dispute Resolution Center – University of Houston.

Varela, Jennifer B., and ADA Jane Waters. What Every Judge Needs to Know About Domestic Violence: Training Curriculum for Judges. Harris County District Attorney's Office (2005).

Varela, Jennifer B. Domestic Violence Training – Criminal Justice Agencies. Multiple organizations (1995 – 2016).

Varela, Jennifer B. Domestic Violence Training – Social Service Agencies and Community. Multiple organizations (1995 – 2016).