**Session: Minnesota School Behavioral Health Conference**

**Wednesday, November 5, 2025**

**Sara Polley, MD, FAPA, FASAM** is a triple board-certified psychiatrist in adult, child and adolescent psychiatry, and addiction medicine. She provides integrated care for youth and families at Vantage Mental Health, a nonprofit clinic serving both Minnesota and Wisconsin. In addition to her clinical work, Dr. Polley is a medical director for Horowitz Health and a national consultant and speaker. She serves on Minnesota’s Cannabis Advisory Council and is active with the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) as a member of the organization’s Steering Committee, Adolescent Volume Writing Committee, and an editor for the Behavioral Addictions Volume. Dr. Polley is also a passionate educator and advocate for trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate, and family-centered care, drawing on both her clinical experience and personal story as the child of a parent with addiction.

**Youth Substance Use and the Developing Brain**

Adolescence is a period of rapid brain development, heightened risk-taking, and increased exposure to substances. This presentation will review current trends in adolescent substance use; the unique vulnerabilities of the developing brain; and a brief review of approaches for screening and brief intervention. Attendees will leave with evidence-based strategies to identify early signs of problematic use, engage youth and families in harm reduction, and support pathways to effective treatment.