

MARIA JOHNSON, MA, CCC-SLP

DIRECTOR, YOUTH & FAMILY INNOVATIONS
LEAD RESEARCH CLINICIAN, CHARISMA VIRTUAL SOCIAL COACHING



Maria Johnson, MA, CCC-SLP, Director of Youth & Family Innovations at [Center for BrainHealth](#), advocates for socialemotional brain health and science-backed innovation in the delivery of education and healthcare. She is a dynamic leader and speaker at the forefront of leveraging technology to engage with individuals in creative, meaningful ways. A core focus is on understanding the impact of technology on the developing brain and the neurodiverse mind, and the multi-faceted effect of social media on resilience and emotional connectedness.

Maria has dedicated more than two decades of research and clinical expertise to developing technology tools and training programs that provide support and enhancement of social, emotional and cognitive brain health, working with youth, teachers, clinicians, families and organizations to implement these evidence-based protocols and technologies.

She leads the development and delivery of the center's award-winning [Charisma™ Virtual Social Coaching](#), a personalized, avatar-driven social skills training program. Charisma combines live, strategy-focused social coaching with unscripted, in-the-moment practice in a realistic virtual environment. The training is conducted entirely online and has been shown to increase confidence, communication and perspective.

She has also developed two strengths-based programs, [Kind Minds](#) and [Parenting Minds™](#), based on her research into the neuroscience of kindness and compassionate communication.

Maria proudly serves as a founding member of the strategic planning committee for the Mental Health/Wellness Committee for the Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas. In 2021, she oversaw the creation of the [BrainHealth Patch](#) program, focused on empowering Girl Scouts of all levels to explore how the social brain works to promote curiosity, creativity and courage.

She has established partnerships with multiple organizations at a national level. With the [National Charity League](#), Maria has developed self-care leadership programming to strengthen brain health and wellness among the members of its 282 chapters.

Maria brings an additional lens as a mom of both a neurodiverse tween and teen, which informs her work and feeds her passion for expanding awareness of and access to better brain health to all people.