Here we are in 2021. We still have a pandemic and many of us are working virtually. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, I used to say that “I am in Zoom jail.” I could not get used to mostly being on Zoom for many of my meetings and interactions with other colleagues around the country and the world. I am well into hitting a year mark on Zoom and I have found that there are few interesting and fun things I like about Zoom. Just recently, I know we all watched disbelief as a lawyer in Texas showed up to a court hearing as a computer filter-generated cat. [https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/09/us/cat-filter-lawyer-zoom-court-trnd/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/09/us/cat-filter-lawyer-zoom-court-trnd/index.html). While I understand this was an embarrassing moment for the lawyer it did make me smile and realize that we as humans are always looking for a familiar way of relating to each other. This brings me back to thinking about the things I love about Zoom, which are mostly when I see babies/children or pets show up on individual’s Zoom boxes. I also like being able to see where individuals decide to set up their

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Zoom space or what type of filters they choose or what they are eating. I am also always on the lookout for when people talk to others in their space and they thought they were on mute and they were not. Why are all these things so interesting? I go back to the point that it provides us a way to relate to others in ways that we cannot do in person right now. Maybe you have some favorite Zoom moments too. I invite you to think of why these moments resonate with you? I thought about all these things as we were planning our annual SCRA Mid-Winter Executive Committee Meeting (SCRA MWM).

It is safe to say that SCRA has never had to have a totally virtual MWM until this past Thursday, February 4 through Saturday, February 6, 2021. The virtual meeting took place over three days and 13 hours. Why do we have to have this meeting and who needs to attend this meeting was my first question in the planning. I wanted to make sure that the time we spent together made a meaningful contribution to our Society and that each person that attended did not feel like they had wasted time. The MWM is usually an in-person 2 ½ day meeting where the attendees will travel to reach the appointed destination. This convening is a time for the attendees to get to know each other and share time, meals and ideas about what priorities SCRA can move forward for the following year. This year we did all this virtually. The individuals who attend are the officers that include the presidential trio which includes the current president, the president elect, and the past president (note this position has remained vacant since September of 2020), our secretary and treasurer. In addition to the officers, the other members of the executive committee are representatives from our committees, councils and interest groups. Finally, our executive director attends. Please see our website for all our current EC members at https://www.scra27.org/who-we-are/leadership/. In total we had 19 members of the EC attend spanning from Alaska to Greece and crossing four different time zones. One of the most important things we undertake as a group is to share accomplishments and make plans for the future of the Society. This is also a time for the executive committee to share reports and set the budget for the following year. Unfortunately, no one showed up as a kitty, however there were some children and pets that did make appearances. We did find ways to connect and be in community across time zones and virtual space. I want to thank the entire EC for representing their committees, councils and interest groups with much diligence and dedication. It is important to note that we had challenging and essential conversations related to where we intend to go this next year and how the Call to Action on Anti-Blackness has influenced the types of initiatives we undertake and fund.

I think it is essential to highlight some of the things that occurred during our meeting. One of the tasks that we began our meeting with was to review the SCRA Call to Action on Anti-Blackness. We felt it was important to review the demands placed on us as a Society by our Black and African descent members and allies. It is important to mention that many EC members signed the Call to Action and some were authors. Our goal as a body is to remain a source of accountability – we continue to examine questions like: Where is the work toward change in our Society being taken up? Where has it not been assigned? Where are we stumbling? Where are we finding positive early steps? As a reminder, the EC of SCRA identified 10 areas of action in response to the demands presented in the Call to Action. The following list below is the primary areas that we identified.

1. Leveraging Conference Space: Training, Scholarship, and Climate
2. Investing in Sustainable Anti-Racist, Anti-Oppression Organizational Change
3. Promoting Dialogue on Racism and White Supremacy Outside of Conferences
4. Revising Community Psychology Research and Practice Core Competencies
5. Developing Anti-Racist Curriculum and Training Practice Guidelines
6. Promoting Black, Non-Black POC, and Anti-Racist Scholarship and Practice
9. Increasing Organizational Transparency
10. Taking action Beyond SCRA

When looking at our response to the Call to Action it is clear that the EC and our councils, committees, and interest groups have begun to do a lot of work to address many of the issues described in the Call to Action. Some of the initiatives that we had undertaken as a response to the Call to Action are in process and some are completed. We recognize that this work is unfolding in a pandemic, where many of our members may have additional time and responsibility constraints and frankly have a more limited capacity for completing additional work. I offer this observation as a way to acknowledge the challenges that we are all facing during this time and also for our need for self-agency and for preserving our physical and mental health. I do not intend for this observation to be an excuse to absolve responsibility or justify inaction. As a Society, we are taking the incremental steps we can access. I also choose to believe that everyone is doing the best that they can. The projects we are doing will require continuous care and attention. Although we were unable to review the entire 10 areas that we prioritized we will have additional time to do so as we continue to meet as an EC throughout our monthly meetings in the coming year.

The other major task of the MWM was to finalize our 2021 budget. We sought to focus on how each of the 2021 proposals could continue to support our response to the Call to Action. Below are some highlights from the approved budget for the 2021 year.

- The Committee for Ethnic and Racial Affairs (CERA) was funded in full to continue to implement a mini-grant program.
- The Research Scholars program received additional funding to dedicate 2 spots for Black and non-Black members of color in the program.
- The Council on Education proposed and was funded in part to pursue a brand-new effort called the Racial Justice Inquiry, Discourse, and Action (RJIDA) Initiative to nationally evaluate graduate community psychology programs.
- The Awards Task Force and CERA brought proposals to improve our awards, and the EC responded by increasing funding for graduate students engaged in racial and social justice praxis, funding a new award on Outstanding Racial Justice and Liberation Work, and renaming several other awards (more details coming soon).

This list does not reflect all the financial commitments the EC has committed to this work. Previously, we voted to dedicate dollars to hire an organizational consultant plus modest stipends for hiring committee members to participate in the process. In sum, we protected $135,000 in unexpected royalties to move forward initiatives inspired by the Call to Action on Anti-Blackness.

As a final note, I want to make the point that most of this work is on-going and likely to change and certainly be imperfect. We will need to keep coming back to the Call to Action and our response to the Call to Action and keep shifting things as we move forward. One thing is for certain as a Society we remain committed to continually improving our organization and our practices. We want to do the right thing. One of the next steps we need to develop is a shared theory of change to guide our actions, a strategic plan, and an implementation plan that centers on the experience of our members especially our Black and non-Black members of color. I see a future where many of us as members participate in projects that continue to transform our Society into a place that we have pride and appreciation for. I know there will eventually be a time where we will gather and celebrate our successes in person without any of us trying to find what we like best about Zoom. Until then may you be safe, happy, healthy and have abundance.
From the Editors
Written by Dominique Thomas, Independent Scholar and Allana Zuckerman, Mesa Community College

Hello everyone! We are excited to bring you another issue of The Community Psychologist! There is another fantastic set of articles focusing on projects and work across the field. We want to provide you with a preview of this spring’s issue.

- As you may have just read in the President’s Column, SCRA President Bianca Guzman provides updates from the Executive Committee Mid-Winter Meeting and progress made in response to the call to action against anti-blackness.
- After a hiatus we have the return of Living Community Psychology. Gloria Levin features professor Christopher Beasley.
- We also have several submissions From Members including a duo of articles from Pacifica Graduate Institute.
- In the Education Connection, the Council of Education outlines their recently funded Racial Justice Inquiry, Discourse, Action (RJIDA) Initiative.
- We recorded the first episode of TCP podcast and Real Talk will be a preview of the discussions and topics we covered. This issue’s Reading Circle includes citations from our podcast episode.
- We want to send a congratulations to our new Executive Director Amber Kelly!

We hope you enjoy this issue of The Community Psychologist! If you want to submit for the upcoming Summer issue, submissions are due May 15. We are also open to proposed special features on important topics.

Dominique and Allana
TCP Editor and TCP Associate Editor

Community Psychology Practice in Undergraduate Settings
Edited by Mayra Guerrero and Olya Glantsman, DePaul University

A Community Engagement Course Goes Virtual
Written by Elizabeth Thomas, Rhodes College

This brief report describes a partnership between my Community Psychology classes at Rhodes College and BRIDGES, USA, a youth leadership organization located close to our campus in Memphis, Tennessee. I was able to share insights about this partnership at the Undergraduate Interest Group virtual meeting in fall 2020, and was invited to provide a brief report about it here, which I was glad to do!

I teach Community Psychology to undergraduate psychology, urban studies, and health equity majors each fall semester. Over the last three years, my students have provided research support for youth organizers who serve as fellows for CHANGE, the most intensive program at the BRIDGES organization, which is focused on youth-led community transformation. This last fall, we all moved to virtual learning, including my students as well as the 20 youth fellows who attend middle and high schools all over the city and surrounding region.

The youth fellows at BRIDGES reflect the demographics of our majority Black city, and they come from public schools, private schools, wealthy suburban communities, and under-resourced neighborhoods in the city and surrounding counties. They are paid to work 10 hours per week, and they
engage with the issues that impact young people in Memphis. Committees include youth justice, racial and educational justice, sexual harassment and violence in schools, and safe and brave spaces for LGBTQ+ youth. Youth fellows work within and across issue areas in intersectional justice work. They have had a number of tangible successes, most recently realizing a sexual harassment policy for our largest metro school district and a Mayor's county-wide youth council.

As my students get to know the youth fellows and their work in committees at the beginning of the fall semester, they choose the issue areas to which they want to contribute. Then, they partner with youth fellows by listening to their definition of the problem, the cultural and policy changes they believe are needed to address these problems, and their research needs. At mid-semester, my students meet with the fellows, offer a presentation of their findings, and provide a focused literature review. Youth fellows then provide feedback and suggest next steps for the research. At the end of the course, my students provide updated research to the youth fellows and complete a final academic reflection and analysis of the experience utilizing course concepts for me.

Over the last three years, staff at Bridges and I have learned a great deal together about how to best facilitate and structure this partnership, while enabling youth organizers and college students to take the lead. One of the biggest AHA! moments has been the realization that the research “deliverables” do not need to be academic research papers. We have become much more creative (and I cannot take any of the credit for that) with infographics, charts, one-page fact sheets, animations, and other more engaging, effective, and accessible ways to share information with our youth partners and community leaders.

Moving to remote learning has felt like a loss in many ways. Before this year, we met on site at BRIDGES, a space that is so intentionally welcoming and embodies the principles and values of their inclusive, equity-oriented work. My students come to know their partners through games, exercises, and meaningful sharing. But I have been incredibly impressed with how this has still been possible in Zoom virtual spaces -- spaces in which youth have the support and skills they need to take the lead. They lead the meetings, each fellow taking responsibility for various portions of the agenda. They model inclusive pedagogies, beginning the meetings with grounding and centering practices, then sharing updates. They use the annotations feature of zoom to take votes, and create fun, meaningful tasks for large and small groups. My students and I have learned so much from the youth organizers about creating community in these virtual meetings.

I have also learned that there are silver linings for my students in a virtual information sharing climate. My students and I now have access to national and international resources and forms of expertise that have emerged in virtual conferences, webinars, and live streaming of talks. We can learn about youth organizing in other parts of the country around common issues and experiences.

We look forward to continuing our partnership this coming fall. And I long for a time when we are physically in the same space. But I am grateful for the opportunities that this difficult time has brought us to engage in meaningful change. One of the CHANGE committees, for example, is working on reallocating funds currently used for school resource (police) officers towards counselors and other mental health resources. The pandemic and realities of virtual learning have made the need for these policy shifts clearer than ever. Youth fellows are meeting with county commissioners, prepared with overwhelming empirical evidence collected by my students. My students have reported that they found meaningful work with the youth fellows a much-needed motivation and singularly rewarding experience in the difficulties of the current context. I am grateful to have the opportunity to share this ongoing community engagement course with you – stay tuned for Fall 2021.
Disrupting the Cinderella Premise: Transforming our Classrooms, Communities, and Global Spaces

Written by Geraldine (Geri) Palmer, Community Wellness Institute (CWI), Adler University and National Louis University

“I’m no longer accepting the things I cannot change…
I’m changing the things I cannot accept.”

Angela Davis

Myers & Twenge (2019) introduce social psychology in their most current textbook using the well-known folktale of Cinderella, who must contend with oppressive living conditions to make a point that on a deeper level the story demands that we accept the power of the situation. The authors construe that Jean-Paul Sartre, the French philosopher would have no problem accepting this “Cinderella premise” (p. 2) and included one of his quotes to substantiate their deduction. Sartre’s (1946) quote offers, “We humans are first of all beings in a situation. We cannot be distinguished from our situations, for they form us and decide our possibilities” (p. 59). In class I asked my students if they thought Sartre’s quote was indeed true and some replied that yes, our situations form us and decide our possibilities. I thought about this for a minute and determined they had a point. But at the same time, I am bound not to leave them in this space, which is a set-up to reproduce oppression and domination, and so I added to the discussion, “oppressive conditions can form us and decide our possibilities, but we have the power to transform situations---and ultimately open up new formations and possibilities.” They nodded their heads in assent---because they were given a different lens to see through, to navigate life. I am intentional to try and not reproduce colonialism ideologies in the classroom. This is important because our classrooms, communities, and global world sit on the precipice of either engaging in transforming our learning and living spaces or accepting Sartre’s Cinderella premise, the power of the situation---and we are facing the results of this acceptance right now. Eddie Glaude Jr. (2020) in Begin Again: James Baldwin’s America and Its Urgent Lessons for our Own has much to say about the stories we tell and live out. He contends “we have told ourselves a story that secures our virtues and protects us from our vices (p. xxvii)….now we find ourselves facing a moral reckoning of the same magnitude” (p. 202). Glaude’s answer to this malaise:

“ours should be a story that begins with those who sought to make real the promise of democracy. Put aside the fairy tale of America as ‘the shining city on the hill’ or the ‘redeemer nation’ and recast the idea of perfecting the Union not as a guarantee of our goodness but a declaration of the ongoing work to address injustice in our midst” (p. 203).

Glaude calls for us to think outside of the story, and he does just this by thinking with James Baldwin, who called attention to the stories and symbols, the lie being told decades ago and to not just accept the power of the situation. Glaude’s thinking with James Baldwin is a model to watch, to ponder and pick-up. Why? BIPOC scholar-activists, practitioners, writers, poets, artists, educators, Black and Latinx feminists, liberation psychologists, and others---have lived through the pain, the anguish, and many have died trying not to just accept the power of the situation. They have much to say for our current times, from the academe to
the global world. White America must start to think with those whom they never imagined had something to offer, something to say. Yet, those on the front lines of a war living or dead always have something to say, particularly about justice. In this article I call you to pick up Glaude’s model for effecting change and think with two other Black scholars, activists, and feminists, Angela Davis and bell hooks. Let us be clear, to think with anyone is not to imitate or replicate their thoughts or works, but to grapple with “the ghosts of history that got us here, that continue to haunt us, and to muster all we can” (p. xxvii) to disrupt and transform the power of the situation.

We do not have to ascribe to Sartre’s viewpoint. For example, Angela Davis, uses the power of language to transform as she sheds part of the mantra of the well-known Serenity Prayer, accepting things one cannot change (Niebuhr, 1927) by framing her philosophy in this way, “I’m no longer accepting the things I cannot change…I’m changing the things I cannot accept” (Davis, n.d.). hooks give us a new lens in this statement: “Dominator culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity. Moving through that fear, finding out what connects us, reveling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community” (p. 197).

Voices such as Davis’ and hooks may just have the language, framing, and strategies we are looking for to effect transformation. Their voices, among so many other BIPOC deserve our attention if we are to transform. This article, then, seeks to raise the voices of Davis and hooks, who I believe are particularly relevant for this current time and in this space. I provide two frameworks that are by no means exhaustive or complete in what they wrote about. However, I give you a lens that might intrigue you to look further. You should note that both Davis and hooks have written books that encapsulate the concept of “freedom”. Let us now think with them on what freedom means for our classrooms, our communities, and our global world.

Framework One: Teaching to Transgress—Education and the Practice of Freedom

In the classroom we might look to bell hooks and think with her for answers to transformation. In 1994 bell hooks wrote Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom. Many of you may have read hooks’ work in this space, but I encourage you to pull it out again. In hooks’ unveiling of her work in the university she begins with her awakening where she realized that her past teachers, particularly Black teachers were “enacting a revolutionary pedagogy of resistance that was profoundly anticolonial” and in essence, her teachers were on a mission. For black folks, she proclaimed, teaching, educating—was fundamentally political because it was rooted in antiracist struggle. Learning to hooks was revolutionary (p.11). However, as times changed with racial integration, schools to hooks were no longer about transforming minds and beings, but more about amassing knowledge only as information. It had no connection to real life—rather being bussed to white schools—students learning obedience was what was expected (p. 12). Further, bell explains integrated schools illustrated “the difference between education as the practice of freedom and education that merely strives to reinforce domination” (p. 13). The bedrock that education was the practice of freedom stayed with hooks and she gives us essays that we can draw on now, in our times of needing to transform situations. I have identified several themes from hooks’ work where we can possibly find guidance and new lenses:

1. Education should be the practice of freedom, not the reproduction of domination.

To enter classroom spaces in colleges and universities with the will to share excitement, desire, and pleasure, is to transgress. This requires movement beyond accepted boundaries, movement beyond the status quo, movement beyond accepting the power of the situation. hooks argues that there can never be an absolute set agenda governing teaching practices. Rather, there must be an ongoing recognition that everyone
influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes. These contributions are resources and used positively, they enhance the capacity of any class to create an open learning community (p.7).

2. Theorizing as liberatory practice
Using the story of how she came to theory because she was in pain, hooks used theory to make sense of her inner and outer life. The lived experience of critical thinking, reflection, and analysis was cathartic for hooks. What if theory could be used as a healing space? If this is to be, then those theories must resonate with everyone in the classroom, not just White students. The process of theorizing should lead to rethinking and new theories that speak to the prevailing social issues of our day. Theory must enable practice—so it becomes praxis—there should be this reciprocal dance—not a tension of push and pull. Overall, hooks pointed out, theory is not inherently healing. It only fulfills this function when we ask it to do so, and we direct our theorizing to this end (p. 70). When our lived experience of theorizing is fundamentally linked to processes of self-recovery, of collective liberation, no gap exists between theory and practice (p. 69).

3. On language and power
hooks shared, “I know that it is not the English language that hurts me, but what the oppressors do with it, how they shape it to become a territory that limits and defines, how they make it a weapon that can shame, humiliate, colonize.” Gloria Anzaldua reminds us of this pain in Borderlands/ La Frontera when she asserts, “So, if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language” (p. 167).

4. The classroom as a location of possibility
The academy is not paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility, we could labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress (p. 204).

Framework Two: The Meaning of Freedom

In the landscapes of our community and social worlds, we might look to Angela Davis and think with her for answers to addressing the crisis Eddie Glaude (2020) refers to as a time of moral reckoning. Davis argues that America is in a ‘crisis of historical consciousness’. Such a consciousness Davis purports in The Meaning of Freedom (2012) points to a recognition that our victories attained by freedom movements are never etched in stone: …what we view under one set of historical conditions as triumphs of mass struggle can later come back to haunt us if we do not continually reconfigure the terms and transform the terrain of our struggle. The struggle must go on. Transformed circumstances require new theories and practices” (p. 19).

I propose that this is the type of framing that is needed in the classroom, our communities and global world. The circumstances within our socio-political environment have seriously shifted and thus our theories and practices must align with this new space. Davis gives us a range of considerations which I have included here that are part of a much larger framework. For more of her thoughts, I implore you to read her book. Forget about what you think you know about her and think with her.

1. The complexities of social constructs
One of the major challenges Davis points out occurring in BIPOC communities is the need to develop a more popular consciousness of the complexities of racism, class, gender, and sexuality. In both scholarly and activist circles, for more than a decade, we have engaged in public discourse around the interrelatedness of these methods of oppression, but the policies facing BIPOC continues to be driven by outmoded discourses and conceptions (p. 31).

2. What does freedom, democracy, and multiculturalism mean?
Davis proposes we should ask ourselves the question of why have the official meanings of freedom and democracy and multiculturalism become increasingly restrictive? Why have these terms become so restrictive, she asks, that it is so difficult to disentangle their official meanings from
the meaning of capitalism? Increasingly freedom and democracy are envisioned by the government as exportable commodities, commodities that can be sold or imposed on entire populations whose resistances are aggressively suppressed by the military (p. 89).

3. Social meanings and the perils of individualism

Social meanings are always socially constructed, but we cannot leave it up to the state to produce these meanings, because we are always encouraged to conceptualize change only as it affects individuals. This individualism can be dangerous in that it is not unrelated to the possessive individualism of capitalism. This moves us into a space where we forget about structural change (p. 132).

4. On the production of knowledge

Importantly, Davis offers, we should be thinking about producing knowledge that makes a difference. We should be interested not in race and gender, class, sexuality, and disability or any other socially constructed identification in and by themselves, but primarily that they have been acknowledged as conditions for hierarchies of power. Instead, these concepts must be transformed into interwoven paths of struggles for freedom. When we discuss concepts such as feminism, we are looking at new epistemologies, new ways of producing knowledge and transforming social relations. As scholar-activists and activists we realize that categorical labels always fall short of the social realities they attempt to represent, and social realities always supersede the categories that attempt to contain them. Herein is why we pay attention to language (p. 197).

These highlights included in this article may be redundant to others you have read. Davis notes that yes, we fight the same battles repeatedly, but this is perfectly okay. She argues, battles are never won for eternity, but in the process of struggling together, in community, we learn how to glimpse new possibilities that otherwise we might miss. It is this process that we expand and enlarge our conceptions of freedom (p. 198). We do not have to accept the power of the situation.

Conclusion

A standing project in my diversity course I have students complete early in class is a 1-2 page paper on reflecting and identifying their worldviews. I do this so they know how they navigate life—so they know whether they act from accepting the power of the situation, or whether the situation can be transformed by their power—their voices. Our worldviews, Dr. Kellerman (2007) shares, make a world of difference in our lives, especially when our fallen world falls on us (p. 213). When our spaces from our classrooms to our global world are struggling, we all face a crisis. Yet, the answer should not come in the form of philosophies that ask us to “accept the power of the situation." I argue that this way of life is the same as reproducing colonialism. It is parallel to silence, which is complicity. No, the answer rests in engaging in spaces we have never thought to do so before. For some of us, it might be picking up a book and reading the thoughts, ideas and lived experiences of BIPOC. This makes perfect sense when who better to offer strategies for change than those who have suffered and died for freedom? Let us not let these voices go silent if freedom and justice is our real goal. Glaude (2020) speaks to this moment with clarity:

This requires an imaginative leap beyond the limits of our present lives. We cannot let the current political moment strangle our imaginations. We hear politicians and pundits recoiling from bold visions: “No big ideas about healthcare, no revolutionary ideas about education or about living wage for workers”. They say: “Don’t press the issue of white supremacy…You’ll alienate white voters. Don’t overreach” (p. 209). Accept the power of the situation.

As community psychologists, allies, and co-conspirators, I believe we have a responsibility to not accept the power of the situation. Isn’t that the reason community psychology was established, to counter the status quo in psychology? If this is so, then let us, together, disrupt and dismantle the lies. Our time is now. Sartre’s time is past. The horse and carriage are gone.
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The Criminal Justice Interest Group
Edited by Candalyn B. Rade, Penn State Harrisburg

The Criminal Justice Interest Group Column features the work and ideas of our members. We encourage readers to reach out to the column authors if they are interested in learning more or exploring possible collaboration. We invite readers to join one of our upcoming Learning Community Series presentations during which Criminal Justice Interest Group members share their work virtually to foster a learning community. More information and recording of prior presentations can be viewed at http://scra27.org/who-we-are/interest-groups/criminal-justice-interest-group/. We also invite readers to check out the upcoming special issue of the American Journal of Community Psychology titled Criminal Justice and Community Psychology: Our Values and Our Work, guest edited by interest group members: Carolyn Tompsett, Jessica Shaw, Candalyn Rade, Benjamin Fisher, and Nicole Freund. This special issue was developed out of conversations and collaborations within the interest group with the intention of exploring how community psychologists engaged in value-driven criminal justice research, practice, and policy.

Helping First Responders Cope During COVID
Written by Jeanette Kyle, National Louis University

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First Responder is a term that refers to a person with personalized training who is among the first to arrive and provide assistance at the scene of an emergency, such as an accident, natural disaster, or terrorist attack. Some examples of first responders are doctors, nurses, police officers, corrections officers, firefighters and paramedics. The COVID-19 pandemic created much social upheaval, and while it altered norms for all members of society, its effects on first responders have been particularly profound (Stoner et al., 2020). Frequent exposure to traumatic events can lead to vicarious trauma and other stress-related illnesses. There are factors that contribute to the increased possibility of first responders being affected. Lack of support, lack of resources, and inability to process and cope with daily stressors may make first responders struggle and unable to change their situation or how they perceive the situation. These struggles, unaddressed, compile and compound and can eventually become overwhelming. The negative stigma attached to first responders (the helpers, superheroes) often keep them from asking for help. Too often they feel their work has become dehumanized, that they are scrutinized within their workplace when they have asked for help, all of which can escalate their feelings of shame and guilt. Law enforcement officers suffer from mental health problems at rates greater than the general population. This was true even before they had to deal with the added stress and uncertainty of the pandemic (Hartley et al., 2011). As a result, too many prevent themselves from seeking help and end up, for long periods of time, suffering in silence.

First responders have been faced with frequent exposure to traumatic events and now are inherently confronted with new stressors and challenges associated with COVID-19. Their psychological abilities are often impaired and the number of distractions that pull their attention away have increased. As a result of the continued and increased traumatic events, their overall wellness is in jeopardy. They also struggle with evolving regulations, ever-changing departmental policies,
enforcing unpopular shutdowns, and fear of contacting COVID-19 and stress proliferation. Stress proliferation, primary and secondary, can be applied to COVID-19. An example of primary proliferation would include adapting to shift schedule and work rotation. Secondary stress proliferation occurs where COVID-19 precautions affect family life. First Responders working in the public may choose to avoid extended contact with family in case they contracted COVID-19 (Stogner et al., 2020). Stress proliferation also depends on support and mental health resources. The lack of support, lack of mental health resources, and feeling dehumanized all continue to compound each other leading to stress-related illnesses. Lack of education, training, and sometimes not knowing that they are struggling may lead first responders to utilize negative coping skills or none at all.

Unfortunately, dealing in a negative manner may look like similar psychological outcomes of the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 where, for instance, a third of officers of the Arlington County Police Department reported significant PTSD symptoms years after responding to the Pentagon (Robbers & Jenkins, 200). Over 20% of first responders in New York reported PTSD symptoms, with 5.4% reaching diagnostic thresholds over four years after the attack (Pietrzak et al., 2012). Suicidal ideation among officers also increased (Violate et al., 2006). The struggles experienced by law enforcement include depression, familial strife, misuse of alcohol, and suicidal ideation (Wang et al., 2010; Rees & Smith, 2008; Menard & Arter, 2013).

As community psychologists we can advocate, educate, and promote positive changes for mental wellness and continuum of care for first responders. First responders are visually able to recognize signs and symptoms of physical ailments. However, one may not know what psychological signs and symptoms look like or that they are suffering. Sattler, Boyd, & Kirsh (2014) found that the severity of trauma-related symptoms was positively associated with years of firefighting, burnout, occupational effort, and disengagement coping. They were negatively associated with critical incident stress debriefing attendance, posttraumatic growth, social support, internal locus control, personal characteristic resources, energy resources, and condition resources. Promotion of mandatory debriefing, resources, support and training can help facilitate First Responders’ overall well-being. We, as community psychologists, can start by helping them to understand basic key terms about positive and effective coping skills. Here are some coping skill examples. For people experiencing anxiety, they could consider taking time out for a break and a deep breath, getting 7-8 hours of restful sleep each night, and engaging in regular exercise. For depression, positive coping skills include talking to someone about it, journaling, limiting alcohol intake, getting a routine, setting goals, eating healthy foods, challenging negative thoughts, and having fun. And for first responders experiencing PTSD, some positive coping skills are: exploring, expressing, and processing feelings; expressing needs; and eliminating/reducing negative impact of trauma-related symptoms on social, occupational, and family functioning.

First responders are faced with frequent exposure to traumatic events on a daily basis. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased their experience of vicarious trauma, burnout, compassion fatigue, inappropriate behaviors, substance abuse, and other stress-related illnesses. Left untreated, first responders continue to suffer in silence. Proper trainings, debriefings, support, self-care, positive–effective coping skills, and learning to explore, express, and process their feelings are ways for first responders to be more productive and sustain their overall well-being.

References


**Early Career Interest Group**

*Edited by Vernita Perkins, Omnigi*

**Meet the Early Career Members**

Each quarter, we will continue to introduce members of the Early Career Interest Group. Learn more about our members and explore possibilities for research collaboration and community practice.

**Jordan Tackett**

My journey begins with learning to go with the flow when opportunities present themselves. During my Bachelors degree at California State University, Chico, the final semester required me to complete a specialized writing course; and the only open seat was in CP. This was the most empowering and grueling semester of my senior year, which also fostered my innate passion for human well-being. On the last day of this degree, with no future ideas of how to explore this field, I successfully applied to a Master's program.

With the support of my peers, I made another immediate decision to submit my research proposal to SCRA. While presenting my project on adolescent relationships around school gardens in 2019, I felt the surrounding camaraderie and encouragement of these diverse members, realizing I found my home base. During the pandemic, I have been a “sponge” blessed with opportunities to learn from others, network with multiple organizations, and heighten my skills as a researcher. Currently, I’m still searching for career opportunities to utilize my skills as a community-focused researcher. So in the meantime, I will excitedly continue the adventure exploring with ECIG!

Photo credit: Wokandapix/Pixabay

**Part One: Internet Insufficiency in Rural and Underserved Communities**

*Written by Jordan Tackett, Student; Christopher Nettles, Tendai Buddhist Institute; Vernita Perkins, Omnigi Research*

When it comes to using the internet at home, not all communities have equal access. Nine in ten adults used the internet in 2019; with 97% of adults ages 18 to 49 and 98% of college graduates using the internet. A usage breakdown by community types reveals 91% of urban dwellers, 94% of suburban residents, and 85% of those living in rural areas require internet service (Pew Research Center, 2019). This data indicates despite the high percentage of usage across community types, internet insufficiency in rural and underserved communities reveals significant disparities.

There is much debate over the efficiency of the FCC (Federal Communications Commission), whose sole purpose is to calculate, initiate and regulate the efficacy of broadband in the United States (FCC, 2020). Their reports forecast the attention and financial allocations given to our communities in order to provide the most appropriate broadband speeds for current internet use. Currently, this use is experiencing a massive increase due to the pandemic.

In total, 46 million Americans live in rural areas which face difficulties accessing broadband
networks for medical and mental health services (Andrilla et al., 2018; Fullen et al., 2020; Summers-Gabr, 2020), remote education and work (Benda et al., 2020; Gurung & Stone, 2020), social bonding and recreation during a pandemic, safe distance shopping (Benda et al., 2020), or any other reason people utilize the internet.

The authors of this article all live in California and have some direct experience with these issues within their own communities. We will refer to California in this piece, yet understand that these internet disparities, and the associated cascading effects apply to many other rural and/or underrepresented communities, and to those in the wildland/urban interface. Access to telehealth services, the remote economy, and to online shopping represent just a few of the disparities exacerbated by lack of internet and broadband access.

**Telehealth.** Telehealth would provide medical attention, mental health access, as well as aiding emergency medical personnel in assisting people who live more than 15 minutes away from medical treatment (CDC, 2020). The average distance rural residents live from a hospital is 10.5 miles and an average of 17 minutes (up to an average of 34 minutes depending on location), almost double that of suburban and urban areas (Pew Research Center, 2018). This is not including possible prohibitive or unsafe travel conditions due to inclement weather.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) uses telehealth to provide medical attention through mobile devices or computers (CDC, 2020). This Telehealth access requires an internet connection, and the digital knowledge to navigate online systems, which may present a learning curve for inexperienced users; and could prohibit low income Americans, unable to attain technological devices and internet connections from accessing necessary care. Some rural communities lack a mental health facility in their vicinity, creating an opportunity for telehealth providers to establish first contact between psychologists and rural clients (Fullen et al., 2020; Summers-Gabr, 2020). The additional telehealth services, destined for areas without mental healthcare providers, would be support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, and social support services, e.g. food pantries, psychologists, and career services (Benda et al, 2020). In northern rural areas of California, a telehealth system would be beneficial when residents are unable to access a healthcare facility in a timely manner due to inclement weather and natural disasters, i.e. snow storms, wildfires, high winds, and power outages. With the recent radical weather conditions across the globe, rural and underserved communities are at high risk for losing accessibility to the internet and other technological services that are often the sole connection to prompt healthcare and essential daily services.

**Remote Economy.** Second, many schools and non-essential jobs are moving, have already moved and/or are continuing to remain in remote work settings, including multigenerational family homes, which could pose a problem for those in rural areas without internet access. Along with the established workforce, millions of new graduates are attempting to start their careers in already impacted job markets (Benda et al., 2020). The remote economy consists not only of those who work for larger enterprises with jobs amenable to remote work, but extends to micro-enterprises, freelance workers, and the online gig-economy.

**Online Shopping.** Lastly, broadband access would aid vulnerable individuals observing physical distancing guidelines with access to online shopping for essential groceries, household products, and even entertainment among other purchases. For many in self-quarantine situations with only one to two individuals in the home, social connections and forms of digital entertainment can represent a lifeline from feelings of social isolation and depression.

**California’s Digital Divide.** In a report on California’s digital divide, the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) published a fact sheet showing that one in four Californians lack broadband at home. The situation is worse for several key demographic groups. For Black and Latinx communities, about one-third of households do not have high-speed internet. Further, for those in rural
communities, with low incomes and no college education, the situation is even worse with greater than 40% of people in these demographic groups without broadband services.

Recent wildfires have taken a huge economic toll on vast swaths of rural California. The top five largest fires in California history, have all occurred in the last two years. These fires have devastated rural economies in Northern California; exacerbated through 2020 and now 2021 with the COVID-19 pandemic heaping further economic pain on these communities. Lack of inexpensive and reliable high-speed internet options have made economic recovery efforts in these communities difficult; and it is well known that the combined effects of disasters and economic distress have important mental health consequences likely to endure without the economic, health, and educational opportunities afforded by reliable broadband. Additionally, banking institutions are pushing consumers to digitize all their remaining banking services, just as the initial shift over a decade ago to direct deposit, making simple banking transactions like transferring funds to pay bills impossible when internet access is intermittent, temporarily unavailable or non-existent. For users worldwide with robust internet access, these inequities may be inconceivable, assuming everyone has access to what is now an essential service: reliable internet access. (Side note, while editing this article, internet service went out two times during a high windstorm.)

In these underserved communities, addressing the digital divide is likely to improve already existing disparities in health, occupational, and educational opportunities. Attention to these specific areas are also likely to create a virtuous cycle. That is, improvements in educational opportunities, give rise to more economic prosperity, and better health outcomes, which creates an overall positive feedback loop, driving more gains in each of these areas over time.

Conclusion. At the intersection of the COVID-19 pandemic, deeper revelations of systemic racism, political division, global self-quarantines, increasingly inclement weather conditions, and the essential and remote workforces, home internet service and digital devices are no longer solely for recreational or occasional business use, these services and devices are now absolutely essential.

References

**Education Connection**
*Edited by Mason Haber, Independent Community Psychologist*

The Council on Education (COE): Continuity and Change in Unusual Times
*Written by Mason Haber, Independent Community Psychologist*

In the Winter Issue of The Community Psychologist, the Education Connection provided an overview of the goals and activities of the Council on Education and how these have changed over time in pursuit of our mission to support, advocate and advance the excellence, growth, diversity, and social justice impact of education in community psychology and community research and action. Also discussed were the planned efforts of the COE for the year to promote racial justice prior to and following the Call to Action on Anti-Blackness. These included developing a resource page, developing a statement on the use of the Graduate Records Examination (GRE) in graduate community psychology training programs, engaging in outreach and discussions related to racial justice, and producing tools for training programs to advance their racial justice goals including a self-assessment and curriculum guidelines. This column now turns to the COEs new initiative to advance several of these racial justice-related activities and others during the current year and beyond: the Racial Justice Inquiry, Discourse, and Action (RJIDA) Initiative. Although the shape of the RJIDA Initiative is still emerging, I am delighted to be able to share our first steps to date and some of the intentions for the work moving forward. I am also excited to introduce new members of the RJIDA team, three RJIDA practicum students, whose work on the initiative is being supported as one part of SCRA’s broader efforts toward diversity, equity, and inclusion in the CP. These students have already made meaningful contributions to racial justice work in multiple spheres relevant to RJIDA objectives. We are honored that they and their mentors have agreed to assist us and in so doing, we hope, acquire valuable experience in furthering racial justice pedagogy in their own and other programs and throughout the CP field.

**Scope of the RJIDA Initiative**

Although the work of the RJIDA is just beginning, based on discussions of our COE to date, we have already moved somewhat beyond the initial focus, confined to tasks assigned to the COE in the SCRA Executive Committee Response to the Call to Action on Anti-Blackness (Society for Community Research and Action :: Call to Action (scra27.org)). The three types of activities of RJIDA as it is currently conceptualized and specific examples of these activities are shown in Table 1. Note that these are merely examples – we expect that the activities ultimately pursued will be selected.
and shaped with the guidance of a broader group of stakeholders than the COE RJIDA Working Group coordinating the initiative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practicum Student Roles for RJIDA Initiative &amp; Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harshen Kabadayi/ E. S. Daniel (U of Alaska Anchorage, US)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamilah Shabazz/ Nura Cofawis (Pacific University)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramon Calonge-Aguilar/ Christopher Brown (Victoria University, Aust)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Group (other applicants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RJIDA Dimension</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic or cultural identity of student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asian (Filipino)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Balinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regions of origin and training experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asia, Alaska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa, Caribbean, Continental US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SKILLS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CP Program</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-racist competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants in literature scan (Research on racial climate and strategies for enhancing climate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-development of self-study (essential)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discourse</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizes broad dialogue (field-wide program director and student)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participates in literature scan (Research on anti-racist pedagogy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitates action planning among CP programs for curriculum development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shares RJIDA Advisory Group that oversees RJIDA project and helps guide RJIDA methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participates in literature scan (Research on anti-racist pedagogy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitates implementation of RJIDA project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets 5x to piloting project and provide feedback on products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example tasks to lead/execute for the RJIDA Initiative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Executive Committee Response to the Call to Action on Anti-Blackness directed the COE to develop a “self-assessment” of existing practices, through which to identify products to further advance anti-racist practice, including curriculum and other education program guidelines as well as “new skills, tools, and resources to support transformation.” These goals constitute the **Inquiry** dimension of the initiative—i.e., an inquiry into needs of educational programs and the field to grow to achieve racial justice goals and the resources required to address those needs (Table 1, second column from the left). In our initial discussions, we decided to center this inquiry in a hybrid survey and self-assessment, building on the practice of field-wide surveys of CP education programs conducted by the COE since the 70s (for details of the most recent surveys and their findings, see Haber, Kohn-Wood, and the COE, 2018; Haber, Neal, Christens, Faust, and Scott, 2017). The self-assessment component will guide programs and their stakeholders in exploration of their racial justice goals, efforts to date to achieve these goals, and challenges at multiple levels (e.g., program, department, college). Ideally, the self-assessment will be informed through broad dialogue among including students and faculty within the programs, and potentially, representatives of the broader communities that CP education programs serve. The survey component will likely include qualitative data derived from the program self-assessment (e.g., types of racial justice goals, activities, challenges) as well as metrics that might help capture status of these efforts and barriers (e.g., representation of people of color among program students and faculty). A concern raised in Working Group discussions for designing and interpreting data for the survey is avoiding “up or down” comparisons of programs that could be used to identify some programs as being more or less “racially just” than others, in the absence of a clear consensus in the field regarding the bases for such evaluative judgments and their potential for shaming.

The second, **Discourse** dimension (Table 1, third column from the left), emerged in part in response to these concerns about the potential for deficit-focused use of inquiry findings. It was reasoned that to the extent that the initiative promoted dialogue and co-learning opportunities, not only among stakeholders within programs but also among program stakeholder groups, tendencies for evaluative comparison would be lessened and programs would be more easily learn from one another. The hope was also that dialogue among programs would be helpful in ensuring that RJIDA products would be useful to a diverse range of programs, through identification of the shared racial justice goals and activities. It was also believed that inter-program dialogue would promote dissemination of ideas and help programs learn from other programs’ examples how to tailor RJIDA tools and the implementation of the tools to their own racial justice curriculum and guideline development needs.

The final, **Action** dimension (Table 1, fourth column) arose from a recognition of the limitations of many diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in college and university settings and needs for
broader, systemic and structural change to achieve racial justice goals in education (for numerous examples, see http://thedemands.org, n.d.; and also Tatum, 2017, Prologue, pp. 40-46). In order for the RJIDA Initiative to be impactful at this level, action extending beyond the initial year of primarily program-level inquiry and work will be needed. Thus, this aspect of the initiative will be grounded in but likely need to continue beyond the initial term of the initiative.

**RJIDA Students and Other Stakeholders**

Members of the COE’s RJIDA Working Group recognized early on that meaningful progress toward racial justice goals would require sustained, ongoing involvement and support. Further, we knew that to be consistent with the commitment of SCRA to provide funded as well as volunteer assistance for these efforts, some financial support would need to be secured. We began our efforts to seek this support with the modest goal of providing support for a single, quarter-time practicum student, through repurposing our budget from the 2020 Academic Year from our prior priorities to the RJIDA initiative. Recruiting using a general call through several SCRA listserves (e.g., Interest Group, Council, and Committee, SCRA general, SCRA student, and Program Director listerves) as well as through outreach to colleagues and specific programs with a track record of racial justice related pedagogy and research, we received 13 applications from across the Continental U.S. and Australia for the student practicum position. Applicants were invited to identify one to two supervisors to help guide their training experience and ensure this experience was consistent with students’ training goals (program supervisor) or provide additional content expertise, in cases in which this was desired (in cases in which such supervision might be unavailable, efforts to identify supervisors on student’s behalf were offered as well). The applications that we received were extremely strong, in terms of alignment of the applicants’ interests and goals, and their depth and breadth of experiences in racial justice-related practice, pedagogy, and research skills. In fact, we were so impressed with the applications that despite our attempts to differentiate quality using structured rating and ranking procedures and multiple meetings to discuss options, the Working Group had difficulty coming to a resolution regarding its top choice.

Given the wealth of talent available, as well as the range of pressing goals that had been identified for the RJIDA work, in the end, we decided to propose that SCRA fund three students to support the initiative, including the originally funded student and two additional students. Students were to be assigned for each of the three RJIDA areas (Inquiry, Discourse, and Action) based on their individual interests and skills as shown in the first three columns in Table 1. Funding would also be provided for honoraria for the supervisors that the students had selected, all of whom had considerable depth of expertise in racial justice pedagogy and research. In addition, as shown in the last column of Table 1, remaining applicants were asked to participate in a student Advisory Group to meet three times over the course of the funded period from February through August 13 in order to help design and oversee the funded work and plan next steps. We also hoped that Advisory Group students can serve as local champions at their programs to promote dissemination and implementation of RJIDA tools such as the self-assessment. The Executive Committee funded all of these requests.

**Student Introductions**

Introductions for each of the three RJIDA Practicum students are provided below along with their advisors and home universities. We are proud to share their diverse backgrounds and strengths with TCP readers and expect that you will see more of them as the initiative proceeds!
Hannah Lintag
Rebadulla (Supervisor: E.J.R. David, University of Alaska-Anchorage)

Mabuhay and hello, everyone! My name is Hannah Lintag Rebadulla (she/her). My family is from Pampanga and Visayas, Philippines. I was born in Pohnpei and raised in the Chamoru lands of Guam. I currently live and work on the land of the Dena’ina (Anchorage, AK). I am a second-year doctoral student at the Clinical-Community Psychology Program at the University of Alaska-Anchorage. Our program has an emphasis on Indigenous and rural issues. Broadly, my academic interests include decolonization, oppression, settler colonialism, militarization, and liberation psychology. My people’s history of colonization and resistance is a source of great inspiration to me. I hope to continue to draw inspiration from them as we work on the Racial Justice Inquiry, Discourse, and Action (RJIDA) initiative. I am very honored and humbled to be part of RJIDA. I am also grateful to Dr. E.J.R. David for his support as my practicum supervisor for RJIDA. I look forward to the collaboration, learning, and growth that is to come from this initiative!

Jamilah Iman Shabazz
(Supervisor: Nuria Ciafalo)

Hello! My name is Jamilah Iman Shabazz. I am a California native with much experience traveling the globe. I am 34 years young and currently live in Los Angeles. I am a 3rd year doctoral student studying Depth Psychologies of Communities, Liberation, and Indigenous Ecologies. As a scholar, educator, world traveler, and transformational leader, I am committed to empowering Black and Brown youth and adults to heal from trauma and embrace radical Black joy in order to live out their wildest, most authentic dreams and lives. My life’s work is filled with joy, service, community, liberation, and exciting Afro-Adventures globally. My passions are travel, experiential education, interconnection, Africana cultures, African Indigeneity, and the various modes in which communities coexist. Personally and professionally, I strive to live a life which is free flowing, authentic, artistic, guided by spirit, and closely connected to beautiful energies. I am very grateful for the transformative opportunities of personal and professional development which the Racial Justice Inquiry, Discourse, and Action (RJIDA) initiative will offer. I am also honored to have been referred by my Supervisor, Dr. Nuria Ciofalo and selected by the RJIDA selection committee. Using this experience as a framework and launching pad, I hope to successfully create meaningful relationships, make a powerful impact, work with many BIPOC communities, and grow tremendously.

Rama Agung-Igusti
(Supervisor: Christopher Sonn, University of Victoria)

Hi folks! My name is Rama Agung-Igusti (he/him) and I was born on the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation in Naarm (Melbourne), Australia, to white settler and Balinese migrant parents. I’m currently a third year PhD student at Victoria University and my thesis project sits within the area of Critical Community Psychology, and further draws from decolonial, post-colonial, black feminist, and critical race and whiteness theories. I have been interested in the ways individuals and communities respond to and resist racialisation and structural and institutional racisms, how identity and belonging is negotiated in
the context of Australia as a settler colonial nation, and ways creative practices are mobilised for social change and the radical imagining of new ways of being and doing. I, alongside my supervisor Dr. Christopher Sonn, am extremely excited to get to work with and learn from a group of amazing and passionate people, sharing in valuable knowledges and experiences, and creating important spaces for change and racial justice.

**Next Steps for the RJIDA Initiative**

The COE and RJIDA Working Group have been reaching out to other interest groups, committees, and councils throughout SCRA for feedback and, where there is interest, soliciting representation on the RJIDA Working Group. We are also very interested in partnering with community psychologists at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other Minority-serving Institutions (MSI), as these settings are important drivers of racial justice pedagogy and can also serve as pipelines for more racially diverse and just community psychology students and faculty in CP and aligned graduate programs. Our RJIDA Working Group members, the practicum students, and other interested volunteers will help lead this outreach work. In addition, we encourage colleagues at these programs to reach out to us if they want to participate in informing and guiding our efforts or simply learn more about the initiative. Our COE meetings on the third Monday of every month are open to anyone with an interest in CP education and we especially encourage participation from anyone with specific interests in the RJIDA Initiative. Our schedule and connection information are available at the following link ([SCRA Conference Line Schedule (scra27.org)](http://scra27.org)).

Our Working Group meetings are mostly open as well, and we will be communicating the schedule and arrangements for the meetings at the monthly COE meetings and on the SCRA listserve. A racially and socially just SCRA is in the interests of everyone. The success of the initiative will be determined by the extent to which our efforts reach beyond the COE, RJIDA students, and Advisory group members and every CP academic, practitioner, or student has a potential role in that outcome. We hope you will join us! If you are interested in finding out more, please contact mason.haber@gmail.com (Chair, Council on Education).

**References**


From Our Members
Edited by Dominique Thomas, Independent Scholar

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Two Spirit Peoples (MMIW2S): Deconstructing Colonial Ties to Domestic and Sexual Violence
Written by Sarah María Acosta Ahmad, Pacifica Graduate Institute, Centro Multicultural La Familia

“Domination and colonization attempt to destroy our capacity to know the self, to know who we are. We oppose this violation, this dehumanization, when we seek self-recovery, when we work to reunite fragments of being, to recover our history. This process of self-recovery enables us to see ourselves as if for the first time, for our field of vision is no longer shaped and determined solely by the condition of domination.”
- hooks (2014), p.31

Although Western medical practices often view histories of colonization as separate from public mental health and safety concerns, colonization persists as both a psychic and material wound. A wound that cuts across communities of color and serves to uphold the colonial project; to erase and eliminate marginalized bodies and force them into submission. Black, Latinx, and Indigenous feminisms have long argued that psychological healing is linked to colonization: self-healing requires healing from histories of racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia (Anzaldúa, 2015; Levins-Morales, 1998; Walker, 2004;). Focusing on the lineages of women of color feminisms, queer Indigenous theory and critical community inquiry, this article explores the ties between colonization and the systematization of domestic violence and sexual assault (DV/SA). Offering the coloniality of gender as an alternative framing to the history of sexual violence, this article traces how the disappearance, genocide, and cultural repression of Indigenous ways of life is central to colonization’s systematization of abuse. I uncover these histories to advance a trauma-informed, decolonial approach to anti-violence work.

Power and Control: A Brief Historico-Theoretical Analysis of Colonial and Contemporary Sexual Violence

Colonization and settler contact with Indigenous peoples often involved the same tactics of power and control as we see in domestic violence households and/or relationships. Coloniality creates circumstances, which, when coupled with internalized colonization, result in relational violence. Referring to the accompanying Power and Control Wheels, there are clear connections between the one I have created on colonization and the Duluth Model that DV/SA centers use to educate advocates and survivors. Whether it happens at a micro or at a macro level, the violence of colonization is pervasive and methodological.

In Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System, Maria
Lugones (2007) traces the unique gendered and sexual oppression experienced by women of color under colonization. Lugones argues that colonizers violently forced Black and Brown Indigenous bodies into the dimorphic, Western gender-binary as a method of control. The binary itself was a product of conquest. In order to complete a wholesale restructuring of Native life, colonization necessitated the implementation of the gender-sex binary, which devastated traditional matriarchal and Two-Spirit (2S) traditions. In the Colonial Modern [Cis]Gender System and Trans World Traveling, Brooklyn Leo (2020) argues that Lugones’s theory should be properly augmented with histories of 2S violence. Queer Indigenous theorists have also shown that 2S survivance and resurgence helped craft methods of resistance (Driskill 2004; Leo 2020) in the face of colonization and genocide. In Sovereign Bodies, Two Spirit Cherokee writer, Qwo-Li Driskill (2004) states, “while homophobia, transphobia, and sexism are problems in Native communities, in many of our tribal realities these forms of oppression are the result of colonization and genocide that cannot accept women as leaders, or people with extra-ordinary genders and sexualities” (p.52).

While domestic violence and assault cuts across gender, race, and class identity, my focus is on violence against Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Two Spirit bodies (MMIW2S). My claim is that we must include the legacy of coloniality into discussions of healing. When DV/SA occurs in BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities, they are produced as a result of internalized colonization that is systematically maintained through policing, capitalism, oppression and land theft. Indigenous women are six times more likely to be murdered in comparison to their non-Indigenous counterparts and almost three times more likely to experience violence in their lifetime (Klingspohn, 2018). “To look forward is also to look backward so as to trace lines of continuity and to harvest insights from histories of both subjugation and survivance,” notes Vizenor (cited in Gone, 2016, p.315). This, I argue, exemplifies Vizenor’s methodology of temporal ambiguity--looking both forward and back. In doing so, this methodology highlights both the multi-faceted forms of resistance to and oppression under colonization by BIPOC communities today.

Gender Diverse Survivors of Color: The Medical Industrial Complex and Intergenerational Trauma

Settler colonial tools are insufficient to combat violence. White saviorhood (1) perpetuates harm, (2) creates situations that exacerbate the marginalization and mental health crisis of those they are attempting to serve, and (3) offers no liberatory potential. In the face of these limitations, I propose a decolonial turn toward holistic approaches to healing a broken home, heart, and the otherwise wounded psyche. This is what Reyes Cruz and Sonn (2011) would name a decolonial standpoint—an epistemological standpoint which deepens the liberatory potential of community psychology practices.

There are many systems at play that uphold power structures that BIPOC survivors are forced to depend on despite their inadequacy. “Services were originally designed by and for the mainstream population. First Nations women who manage to access these programs often find staff with limited cultural competence and program supports that have little cultural safety or relevance for them,” notes Klingspohn (2018, p.1). This lack of support and competence has concerning implications. Denying access to a safe home for survivors in crisis can have a detrimental impact on their likelihood of successfully leaving a violent relationship or surviving the violence. This is another way that these systems unfairly ask marginalized bodies — especially gender and racial minorities — to run away from one type of harm and into the arms of another. As Lugones (2007) and Leo (2020) argue, structures of power are meant to reproduce this harm; the medical industrial complex is another legacy of colonization’s gendered violence.

Furthermore, the lack of culturally-informed support systems perpetuate the fragmentation of the Indigenous psyche and increase the likelihood that future generations will remain stuck in the
same cycle. “As a direct result of colonization, the vast majority of Indigenous people have lived, or are living, in trauma, in most cases, this trauma is multigenerational,” says Renee Linklater in Decolonizing Trauma Work (2014, p.21). The mistreatment by law enforcement is pervasive in communities of color and amongst the LGBTQ community, due to a history of racialized policing, pathologization, and criminalization (Addington, 2020). Survivors often cite previous negative experiences or the knowledge that police intervention will only escalate the situation and be ineffective as the main reasons why they do not call the police (Lorenz, Kirkner, & Ullman, 2019). In Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha (2018) speaks to the barriers in place for survivors and their stories, saying “it’s the way the colonial prison-industrial complex invades our ways of thinking about abuse, survivorhood, and what counts as “‘real.’” When marginalized identities intersect, what institutions are set up to fully care for the individual who has been harmed? How do we (advocates and community psychologists) make sure to not re-traumatize these individuals? Where do we go from here?

Decolonizing Trauma Work: Towards an Indigenous Critical Community Psychology

Current trauma informed praxis still utilizes colonial tools that perpetuate violence against survivors and victims. DV/SA emerge through colonization; our work cannot be ‘trauma-informed’ or ‘culturally-competent’ without understanding this weaving together.

Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) must include a critique of colonization and a perspective on healing from historical trauma. A decolonial approach can help us break down positivist research paradigms that uphold coloniality and maintain the White/Western patriarchal gaze. White supremacy culture has created a sense of urgency that causes us to bypass accountability and intentionality in creating procedures, training, or infrastructure that actually benefit the people we try to serve (Okun, 2011). It is time to move past only hearing and seeing survivors through a personal protection order, a victim’s impact statement, in a police report or an obituary.

We must work towards buen vivir, a bottom up approach that takes the time to sit with communities and meet them where they are at, rather than attempting to save them (Ruttenberg, 2013, p.70). This starts with the way we approach healing and recovery. The main tenets of TIC are trust, choice, co-creation, empowerment, consciousness, and competence (Profitt, 2010). We build trust by separating ourselves from harmful institutions; we create choice by taking the lead of the survivors we work with; we empower by listening; we must let go of the Western logics we have been taught in our profession and schooling that do a disservice to survivors of color of all genders. We must recognize the power we hold in our field in recognizing that the systems set up to address violence are the very same that create the cycle of abuse in which we are wrapped up in. We cannot truly be trauma-informed if we do not work towards dismantling these systems of oppression and the ways they show up in our work.

I write this as a Two Spirit mixed-Indigenous person who works in DV/SA prevention. If you would like to connect, please email me at sarahmaria@centromulticultural.org.

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**Peer Support for Young Women with Scoliosis**

*Written by Olivia Barbieri, Harvard University & Belle Liang, Boston College*

Scoliosis, the three-dimensional curvature of the spine, is the most common deformity of the spine. The likelihood of progression is higher in girls and in patients who are still physically developing and who have a large curve (Hresko, 2013). The main treatment options include observation of the curve, bracing, and surgery (Choudhry et al., 2015). During the adolescent years, scoliosis is associated with low self-esteem, body image issues, feelings of embarrassment, and a lower quality of life for patients (Beka et al., 2006; Glowacki et al., 2012; Konieczny et al., 2017).

Although there is scant research on the impact of peer support for youth with scoliosis, a related study demonstrated the importance of such support among older women with disabilities in general (Mejias et al., 2014). Many reported a history of being bullied, but supportive peers buffered the negative effects of such social challenges and enabled them to become confident and proud of their membership in the disability community. They reported feeling less alone and a greater sense of
acceptance and belonging due to peer support (Mejias et al., 2014).

The present study aimed to extend the literature on this understudied population by examining how young women view their scoliosis, with a specific focus on the role of peer support, and whether and how peer support buffered negative experiences such as bullying.

All participants of this study were part of Curvy Girls Scoliosis Support Groups--an international teen-run peer support group. The first group originated in Long Island, New York in 2006, and has since expanded to include over 100 locally run groups across 22 countries (Curvy Girls Scoliosis, 2021). All 14 participants in the current study self-identified as young women, ranging in age from 18 to 24 years old, living in eight states in the United States (New York, Massachusetts, California, Georgia, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Wyoming, and Kansas), as well as in Canada, Ireland, Sweden, and Guyana. Their treatments ranged from physical therapy to bracing to surgery to hybrid treatments, with varying combinations of these solutions. Participants volunteered for this study by responding to an invitation posted on two Curvy Girls Scoliosis Support Groups social media pages.

Once the study was approved by the Institutional Review Board, and interested respondents consented, an open-ended questionnaire was conducted among them. The questionnaire queried participants about their general experiences with scoliosis, bullying, the peer support program, and treatment. All participants were given pseudonyms to ensure that their responses remained anonymous.

An approach adapted from grounded theory was used to analyze the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). This entailed several rounds of open and axial coding to organize the data into themes. From this qualitative data analysis, several themes emerged. Specifically, many respondents described the salience of bullying and the positive influence of the peer support program on their outlook on bullying and scoliosis in general. The majority of participants reported a more positive outlook of their scoliosis than they did upon diagnosis, and attributed this to their receipt of peer support. Even when participants currently held a negative view of their scoliosis, they recognized that peer support from the program improved their outlook to some degree. Additionally, respondents stated that peer support was the most influential aspect of their scoliosis journey.

More specifically, many of the participants reported that they were upset, sad, confused, and had a negative view of scoliosis when they were first diagnosed. Due to peer support through the program, however, they described feeling increasingly confident, proud of, and even positively towards their condition. Daisy, one participant, explained that when first diagnosed with scoliosis, she felt “scared and definitely had a negative view.” As a direct result of encouragement received from peers in the program, she described reframing scoliosis into something positive. She and other respondents expressed gratitude to peers in the program, describing them as role models (“just so grateful to have met these amazing and strong girls”). She described a journey from despair to hopefulness, and attributed this shift in perspective to the friendships and inspiration she received from peers over the course of her two years in the program.

Alice also expressed how she initially felt “confused” by her scoliosis diagnosis, but that Curvy Girls “has helped me to see the power of peer support and the impact it can have on the confidence and happiness of a person.” She added that “without the support, I wouldn’t be as confident as I am today.” Peer support was linked to promoting self-confidence and a more optimistic view of scoliosis. Aurora expressed a similar shift from confusion to positivity as a result of peer support: “so glad to be a part of an organization that changes girls’ lives for the better.” Cindy explained that, “the Curvy Girls strengthened me mentally and prepared me for handling the physical aspects that had already occurred and were to come. They were with me every step of the way.” For these young women, peer support provided
role modeling, friendship, and encouragement in the face of adversity.

Even among the few participants who still held a negative view of their scoliosis and their bodies, there was a clear recognition of the importance of peer support in their lives. For example, Violet explained that she currently has a mix of positive and negative emotions toward her scoliosis. However, she explained that the other girls in the program have “made me see my scoliosis as a beautiful opportunity rather than an ugly condition.” Anna shared similar sentiments when she remarked that, “my emotions never completely ceased however they did become easier to deal with once I became regularly involved with the Curvy Girls.”

About half of the participants reported having experienced bullying due to their scoliosis that led to questioning their personal value, feeling like a “freak,” and feeling that their scoliosis was a “curse.” They described initially perceiving themselves as different from others in a negative way, until peer support enabled them to overcome hardships and negative emotions caused by bullying.

For example, Anna said, “I just embraced the loneliness and searched within myself and the Curvy Girls to find the confidence I needed to be able to ignore the stares and ignorant questions about my condition.” Anna drew on the encouragement and wisdom of peers in the program to bolster her self-confidence and overcome judgmental, mean comments directed towards her from peers at school. This access to peer support, coupled with her inner strength, provided just the strength Anna needed to overcome the effects of bullying on her sense of self.

Another salient theme that emerged from the data was that young women shifted from a negative or ambivalent view of their scoliosis to feeling positively and even proud of their membership in the scoliosis community, largely due to peer relationships in the support program. The young women referred to peer support in the program with words such as grateful, love, growth, confidence, happiness, encouragement, and strength. Peer support helped them cultivate a positive mindset and enabled them to grow psychologically self-aware. Moreover, these relationships had an overwhelmingly positive effect on how they viewed their scoliosis, and on a larger scale, how they viewed themselves. These findings are consistent with the limited research that has suggested the importance of peer support among scoliosis patients (Brigham & Armstrong, 2016; Hinrichsen et al., 1985).

Our findings suggest that bullying is a salient theme among women with scoliosis. However, while Horner et al. (2015) explain that bullying can often lead to negative emotions, the current study highlights how peer support groups can have a buffering effect, giving these young women renewed self-confidence. For example, peer support enabled participants to reframe experiences of adversity in a way that led to a sense of purpose, such as a desire to raise scoliosis awareness and provide healing support to others.

In sum, findings from the current study are consistent with existing limited research that suggests that peer support for women with scoliosis can play a key role in self-image and mental health (Brigham & Armstrong, 2016; Hinrichsen et al., 1985). Moreover, this study suggests that peer support for young women with scoliosis may help them cultivate a more positive outlook toward their scoliosis, and can even help them overcome the effects of bullying. Thus, an important implication of these findings is that the treatment of scoliosis among young women should include helping them connect to support groups and other sources of peer support that may play a vital role in their mental health and sense of purpose. In particular, supportive peer relationships would do well to engage participants in sharing freely about bullying experiences, and in the reframing of scoliosis such that a positive outlook may be cultivated over time.

The authors of this study would like to thank the 14 young women who volunteered to participate in this study, as well as the organization Curvy Girls Scoliosis Support Groups for allowing participant
recruitment via their social media pages. We invite readers to contact the authors with any questions, comments, or concerns. Olivia Barbieri can be reached via oliviabarbieri@gse.harvard.edu, and Dr. Belle Liang can be reached via belle.liang@bc.edu.

References


Decolonial Approaches to Prevention and Promotion

Written by Nuria Ciofalo, Pacifica Graduate Institute

In the United States (US), the complicity of Community Psychology (CP) with modernity explains why in the analysis of social ailments there is rarely mention of racism which originated in colonialism and slavery and continues to exist in modern times as coloniality (Quijano, 2000). To dismantle coloniality, I will revisit selected historical and current applications of prevention and promotion and conclude envisioning decolonial possibilities to co-create a world where many worlds fit, and it is easier to love (EZLN, 2016; Freire, 1972).

Traditional models of health promotion and illness prevention in US-centric community psychology have focused on addressing health problems, particularly, related to mental health. In spite of the claims that CP in the US has made a commitment to move away from individualizing psychological issues, the prevention and health promotion models have taken an individual
orientation (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010; Reimer et al., 2020). In large scale, these strategies and interventions were learned from public health to move away from individual toward population health, including community competencies and institutions as systems change. Modeling public health approaches, mental health prevention is designed and implemented by assessing incidents, prevalence of social issues, and number of cases. Primary prevention has been associated with US-CP’s ideology of systems change and education. Secondary prevention has targeted specific populations that are determined to be “at-risk” based on norms of adjustment and fit as well as race, given that Black, Latinx, and Native American populations are disproportionately most frequently assigned to this category compared to Whites. Tertiary prevention strategies are designed to lock these populations in hospitals, prisons, or to receive diagnosis and treatment. Programs, strategies, and initiatives to reduce poverty and its associated social determinants of health, emerged from a range of disciplines and have been implemented and evaluated in multiple sites to validate the effectiveness of universal practices for replication everywhere. This is an evidence-based practice of coloniality.

Using a predominantly bellicose language, prevention programs in the 1960s such as Head Start were designed and implemented to respond to the so-called “war on poverty” declared by the Johnson administration. Interventions focused on remediating income, educational, and health disparities between the well-off and the poor populations. However, deeper causes of inequality caused by entrenched racism that originated in colonization have not yet been sufficiently addressed. To date, Head Start continues to target school readiness in marginalized preschoolers by enhancing language acquisition resembling White middle-class standards and linguistic competencies. Intelligence tests continue to assess skills, cognitive competencies, and abilities praised as superior by a white supremacist culture. For instance, the Wechsler Intelligence Test for Children (WISC-IV) and the Wechsler Preschool & Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI-IV) continues to be applied everywhere in the world to assess the increase in intellectual ability of the Head Start children who are mostly Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Native American, (Gibbons & Warne, 2019). Such strategies are exported across the US and abroad as if these were universal solutions to the ongoing coloniality existing around the globe (Marsella, 2009). It is not relevant if these were colonized or colonizing countries. What was and continues to be relevant is that populations and societies exhibit competencies and intellectual ability determined by white supremacy to achieve global capitalism in the name of progress and civilization. For this reason, the effectiveness of prevention and promotion programs continues to be assessed by means of economic return calculations. For instance, positive outcomes are expected to be evidenced in higher incomes and reduced incarceration rates of disenfranchised populations (Bailey et al., 2020; Garces et al., 2000). However, incarceration is a colonial strategy used to exclude and seclude the undesirables who do not abide by the rules of the capitalist state prescriptions and become confined, cheap, and superfluous labor force (Davis, 2003). Here again, the incarcerated population is in its majority Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Native American.

Large scale drug use prevention also included war as the pivotal strategy that continues to be carried on nationally and internationally. This is one of the most powerful tools the imperial power of a country can apply to control neighborhoods of undesirable races and entire countries to promote population health applying military might for the sake of democracy and the global economy (Marsella, 2011; McGuire, 2020; Valenzuela, 2010). Furthermore, science has played a key role in the well-functioning of the capitalist machinery (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Santos, 2016). National and globally exported research selects populations at random under experimental and control group designs to create and archive so-called evidenced-based (best) practices emerging from positivist paradigms that are deeply rooted in coloniality. In this way, prevention and intervention programming
is destined to correct early signs of capitalist maladjustment or to cure its late symptoms under secondary and tertiary prevention approaches.

Another violent example is what we are experiencing in current pandemic times. The number of COVID-19 cases causing serious illness and death is dramatically the highest among Black and Native Americans and higher among Latinx compared to Whites (CDC, 2021). This same pattern is replicated in the multiple consequences of the pandemic effects on the economy causing a rapid and exponential increase in unemployment and poverty rates in these communities compared to the White population. A microscopic virus amplified the existing racial disparities into such higher proportions that it is no longer possible to deny them. Likewise, it is no longer possible to deny the entrenched pandemic of racism manifested in police brutality—among many others—that has existed for centuries since the Native American genocide, the slave patrols, and the immigration persecutions against Latinx and Asians. Actions are performed as if it were now that racism miraculously raised into national consciousness, whereas it has been deeply entrenched in the collective unconscious maintaining the white supremacist empire for centuries. What kind of preventive measures need to be applied to stop this kind of violence? One aspect appears to be clear, pandemic prevention measures can no longer be universal assuming equal outreach to an entire population and expecting equal outcomes.

So, what needs to be done? Let’s begin by naming the main root cause of human suffering as coloniality (Reyes & Sonn, 2011; Serrano-Garcia, 2020). The focus needs to be on dismantling its still existing structures that cause the very issues we want to address under decolonial prevention and promotion approaches that have also been proposed in recent public health scholarship (Chandanabhumma & Narasiahm, 2019). Solidarizing with communities requires the promotion of reciprocal critical awareness—in Freire’s terms, conscientization—on how health, educational, economic, social, cultural, and ecological issues have been and continue to be caused by coloniality manifesting in racism and its resulting inequities and disparities. The actions that communities decide to take would not target individuals but governments, institutions, and their mechanisms for just resource distribution promoting social, economic, political, epistemic, racial, and ecological justice. Policies would dismantle coloniality and promote community sovereignty to apply locally proposed strategies, in contrast to the expectation that the individual case be managed by providing governmental assistance such as temporary income, housing, and job skills (Ortiz-Torres, 2020). These are ameliorative interventions to adjust the individual to what the Zapatistas in Mexico call the “capitalist hydra” (Sixth Commission of the EZLN, 2016). We need to learn from Indigenous knowledge and health systems that have been erased and silenced within hegemonic scholarship to crack this aggressive catastrophe with multiple heads (Almeida, 2019; Ciofalo et al., 2019; Dudgeon, 2017; Duran et al., 2008; Dutta, 2016; 2018; Gone, 2016; Sonn, 2016; Tuck & Young, 2012).

As scholars of the Global South have asserted, the prevention of social and ecological ailments and promotion of transformative wellbeing—in Spanish *buen vivir* and Quechua *sumac kawsay*—is about centering local knowledges and praxes that embrace non-Western, non-hegemonic conceptions based on Indigenous cosmovisions that include the rights of the Earth and go beyond ethnocentrism and anthropocentrism (Gudynas, 2014). US-CP needs to dismantle its entrenched, westernized, and supremacist ethnocentrism to prevent its complicity with coloniality and learn from epistemologies, ontologies, and praxes that radically promote international solidarity for decolonial systems change.

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References


Catalytic Framework: Intersectional Analysis for Community Engagement

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The Community Engagement Centre (CEC) – a joint-venture of Interactive Research and Development (IRD), Pakistan and the Indus Hospital and Health Network’s Global Health Directorate (GHD-IHNN) – works closely with communities in Pakistan to create the bridge necessary for public health programmes to understand the contexts and existing resources of their target population, which helps inform strategies for implementation, innovation, and meaningful engagement. The CEC enables this through local agents for change, such as Community Health Workers or Mental Health Lay-Counsellors. As part of this work, community workers and researchers at the CEC collect stories that amplify community voices, and therein recognised a need for a unique framework that could explain the role of a ‘catalyst’ in the intersecting identities of a collective experience. This concept came about after CEC practitioners made observations that communities and individuals are often catalysed into action, by either other community members, Community Health Workers, or by themselves through self-realization or circumstantial shift. We hypothesize that these catalysts begin actions that may take place across one, multiple, or all layers of their ecological environment.

One of the greatest challenges faced by CEC, that is relevant to most development work, lies in gaining an intrinsic understanding of the target populations, their unique perspectives and contexts, and the specific situations that foster or stifle change, agency, and action. By attempting to construct the reality of these groups through basic demographics and limited statistics, programmes risk ‘symptomizing’ them, i.e., over-simplifying their situation, stereotyping, and minimizing their traits onto a negative or hopeless spectrum; for example, symptomizing the poor as ‘non-agentic,’ ‘lazy,’ and ‘un-resourceful’ (Toro & Yoshikawa, 2016). The norm is often to organise findings from communities
into digestible statistics, reducing rich and valuable information into a number that does not expand upon the contexts or the circumstances it represents. Such statistics, although valuable, do not answer fundamental questions about communities' experiences or dynamics which inform development work.

This may also contribute to the illusion of organizations ‘saving’ communities by providing an intervention or product that is ‘much needed,’ though that may not be the case. CEC has aimed to counter this by building equitable partnerships between themselves and local communities to facilitate shared goals and collaboration. It does so by adapting the values of community psychology, which takes a multi-level ecological perspective and recognizes the need to concentrate on individuals, their communities, and their relationships (Fox, Prilleltensky, & Austin, 2009).

Regarding research in the community, a potent criticism of community psychology is that it operates under a positivist epistemology, wherein quantitative research and experimental designs are privileged over other forms of enquiry. This can be amended by utilising research approaches that are critical in their epistemic, ontological, and methodological underpinning that can oppose the enduring hegemony of positivism (Prilleltensky, 2001; Breen & Darlaston-Jones, 2010). These values are what CEC attempts to bring into practice; community engagement has transformative potential - attention to context and transcending of positivist epistemologies can provide us a pathway to understand how social injustice is manifested and how systems, including that of research, perpetuate inequality. This can be utilized to engage in second-order change: change of the system’s values, structures, power arrangements, and allocation of resources.

We posit that one way to identify and understand existing inequalities is by incorporating an intersectional methodology into qualitative analysis. This would help arrive at a contextualized understanding of collective experiences, rather than viewing differing experiences as deviating from norms based on dominant groups.

**Applying intersectionality to community engagement**

Intersectionality was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, who described it using the metaphor of ‘intersecting roads’ (Dhamoon, 2010). Originally, it considered the meaning and consequences of multiple categories of social group membership (Cole, 2009). It was characterized as a “matrix of domination” which explored intersecting patterns pertaining to structures of power and position (Christensen & Jensen, 2012). Early articulations focused on the experiences of groups holding multiple disadvantaged statuses and highlighted the ways that analyses considering categories independently (such as race, gender) may be limited because in reality, power positions associated with these categories are experienced simultaneously.

The concept of intersectionality goes beyond reducing group experiences to a single dimension. It can also dispel misconceptions about marginalised populations perpetuated by quantitative measures originally developed with mainstream samples and narrow research focuses, with the potential for misrepresentation that this brings (Stein & Makowski, 2004). It can inform strategies for engagement and service provision by recognizing the multiple identity categories occupied by every individual (Cole, 2009) and how intersecting identities shape relationships and outcomes (Warner, Settles, & Shields, 2016).

Congruent with the interests of community engagement, intersectionality can help us arrive at a contextualized understanding of social representations; how people live and work in organic social groups. This enables researchers and other professionals to adapt approaches to innovate with communities based on their specific dynamics.

In this light, the CEC is developing a framework for intersectional analysis that can assist in tracking the actions of a catalyst and understanding the evolution of change within communities. It considers: (i) the existence and interdependence of social categories, (ii) their ecological value and influence, (iii) the existence of injustices and
inequalities in said ecology, and (iv) presence of an acting force (catalyst) across multiple identities (Simpson, 2009).

Figure 1. The catalyst amidst intersecting roads of collective experience; adapted from ICRAW’s intersectionality wheel (2009)

The foundations of this framework lie in the observations that agency and actions observed within communities have a catalysing force - this could be a health worker, a purposeful community member, or a collective acting together. We expect to see that the intersections of identity, circumstances, structures of power and discrimination play a fundamental role in the success or failure of catalysts. If we picture communities’ stories, narratives, and case studies as where the people ‘play lead roles and write the script’, then the catalyst is the fundamental ‘plot-twist’ (Bruner, 1990). Being able to develop a deeper and intrinsic understanding of the role of the catalyst within and without communities’ intersecting identities can bring into fruition the development of appropriately targeted innovations and collaborative interventions in the public health, education, and other development sectors, such as via newer participatory community engagement strategies, effective programmatic design, and integrated service delivery.

References


Seeding Change: Overcoming Economic Dependency and Social Stigma Within the Food System
Written by Lukas Loggins, Pacifica Graduate Institute

Modern industrial agriculture has come to view the traditional practices of Indigenous subsistence farmers as non-productive, and their epistemologies as invalid. In India, Indigenous female farmers are subject to stigma within
contexts of caste, ethnicity, race, and gender, all of which are compounded by poverty. A critical intersectional approach to the issue of stigma must then reflect on these various identities in their relation to power. Multinational corporations send thousands of Indigenous farmers into financial debt by monopolizing the seed market, as activist Vandana Shiva claims that “150,000 farmers in India have committed suicide in areas where seed has been destroyed” (Shiva, 2008, 1:10). A critical and decolonial praxis in this context should work towards revaluing Indigenous knowledge, re-centering the voices of female land stewards, and conserving culturally diverse subjectivities that are intimately connected to the land. In doing so, critical community psychology may support efforts striving to overcome the stigma faced by these communities.

Public policies hoping to resolve global food system problems are currently limited in scope, and focus solely on symptomatic issues such as malnutrition. Proposed solutions to these issues are short-term fixes and further the industrial-capitalist standard of increased production. This is an intentional maintenance of the hegemonic status quo by ignoring the complexities of issues such as land displacement, which reflect the colonial roots of rural poverty in the global South. Backed by neoliberal policies that subsidize genetically engineered cash-crops, large monoculture farms diminish soil fertility and remove biodiversity. By engineering, patenting, and marketing seeds as intellectual property, multinational agribusiness corporations make it illegal to plant unlicensed varieties (Shiva, 2005). Farmers then enter into economic dependency, as they are forced by poverty to go under contract with these corporations.

Centralized power in a global food system devalues Indigenous knowledge and prohibits Indigenous ways of being such as participation in local subsistence economies. By imposing a capitalist narrative of scarcity and crisis onto the natural world, fear then gets projected onto marginalized out-groups in order to distance oneself from any threat (Campbell & Deacon, 2006). Monocultures of colonial knowledge then propagate neoliberal narratives and patriarchal assumptions that stigmatize female farmers as non-valuable economic actors. Hetero-normative stigmas reject the agency of Indigenous female farmers, effectively “othering” them. This exclusionary othering is then compounded through an association with other marginalized, socially-constructed identities such as race. When the projected stigma is internalized, “the social becomes sedimented in the individual psyche,” which can adversely affect self-esteem, and decrease groups’ ability to resist the devalued status and socially mobilize (Campbell & Deacon, 2006, p.413). Even within stigmatized groups themselves there exists complex status hierarchies based on the intersections of ethnicity, skin color, class, and gender.

Despite the “blaming the victim” narrative that has been widely critiqued by the field, US-centric community psychology still tends to pathologize and further silence the voices of those facing social stigma by describing their experiences under “damaged-based narratives” (Tuck, 2009). This misrepresentation and stigmatization of the victim’s experience is a product of the history of colonization and continues to occur by a refusal to turn towards present-day coloniality. In an effort to move away from this rhetoric and other individualistic analyses, a shift towards socio-structural change has made its way into community psychology discourse, albeit consciously pursuing the opposite (i.e. blaming the system of coloniality rather than the individual). This situates an analysis of power at the core of critical community psychology praxis, and inherently addresses coloniality as a root cause of globalization and its numerous oppressive forces. This is a notable difference from hegemonic community psychology where power dynamics within global systems and within the culture of the field itself are barely addressed.

Numerous scholars within the discipline have already critiqued anti-stigma interventions that focus solely on coping with social stressors through methods of adaptation, which are only
ameliorative responses to an unchallenged status quo (Philips, 2015). It is thus necessary to contextualize stigma in the neoliberal-colonial system that leads to exclusion, othering, and inequity. In their critical analysis of wealth disparities in India, Jayshree Mangbhai and Chiara Capraro (2018) claim that current legislation “fails to respond to the intersectional nature of inequalities faced by single Dalit women in India” (p. 263). This shows that policies that address systemic racism and serve to decrease poverty are necessary for the reduction of social stigma. Because of the intersectional and multi-dimensional nature of discriminatory “othering,” community psychologists should engage in “multi-level stigma-reduction interventions” that allow for individual “renegotiation of previously stigmatizing representations in a more positive light” (Campbell & Deacon, 2006, p. 415). In other words, we must also bridge larger systems to the individual level of analysis when attempting to understand the internalization of social stigma and its impacts.

Within the margins of society lives powerful resistance forces promoting collective action and changes to the identity of devalued citizens. Justice for Dalit Women, a transnational campaign organized by Dalit women activists to resist caste-based violence in India, has successfully done just that (Dutta, 2016). Miya activists in Northeast India have demonstrated an ability to reclaim their Muslim identity through protest poetry that fights against exclusion from the National Registry of Citizens (Karwan E Mohabbat, 2019). The Sonagachi Project is yet another anti-stigma movement that addresses ways in which poverty and gender discrimination intersect to be particularly harmful against Indian sex workers. Because stigma partly exists in a symbolic context, creating alternative representations of women’s rights has proven to be a catalyst for redefining a specific stigmatized occupation (Cornish, 2006; Campbell & Beacon, 2016). It is evident that when met with real-world change, altering the symbolic meaning a socially-constructed identity is a strong force against oppression. Whereas colonial narratives create an egocentric understanding of the self as different or even superior to the Other, a critical discourse holds the potential to deconstruct the power dynamics held up by the dominant culture.

Along with these anti-stigma projects is Vandana Shiva’s Earth Democracy, which promotes sustainable agroecology and seed saving practices that are the foundation of the reclamation of the commons, biological diversity, and food sovereignty. This work intentionally includes those stigmatized groups in bio-cultural revitalization within the context of the local food system. These movements illustrate how collective modes of resistance can arise from bottom-up interventions outside the hegemony. They also illustrate “the important role a well-networked NGO can play in challenging stigma in conditions of poverty and exclusion” (Cornish, 2006; Campbell & Beacon, 2016, p. 414). Diverse networks of organization between groups of artists, community organizers, environmental activists, and policy makers offer new open spaces where bottom-up change can emerge from the margins. These open spaces or “structural holes” are gaps in social networks that are potential boundary-spanning opportunities (Hughes & Speer, 2002; Fisher, 2013, p. 74). Structural holes shift the focus beyond internal social support as a coping mechanism to stress, which creates dense or homogenous social networks, and towards building diverse networks across social borders.

Increasing diversity between social networks will help to reduce epistemic homogeneity and remove top-down relationship hierarchies between academy and community. Urmitapa Dutta (2016) believes that we can begin to decentralize the hegemonic system of knowledge-production and meaning-making by recognizing the agency already existing within marginalized spaces, or “cartographies of contemporary struggle” (Dutta, 2016, p. 335). Indigenous peoples' cosmologies, epistemologies, and ontologies have all bioculturally co-evolved with the flora and fauna of the land to exist within an autopoietic ecological-niche unity (Maturana, 2016). Alternative to the mechanistic systems of modernity that depend on external inputs such as fossil fuels, autopoietic
systems are self-sustaining and self-regulating. Agroecological systems do not require external controls, and instead draw energy from the diverse networks of interconnection between human and more-than-human agents. In the Earth Democracy paradigm, division is alchemized into diversity. Nature is abundant through its biological diversity which is in itself manifested from unity. This unified symbiotic, intersubjective human-nature relationship “requires the understanding that the Other is also an autopoietic system” (Shiva, 2018, 1:33). With an understanding of our autopoietic, mutually-nurturing nature, shared meanings born from shared experiences have important implications for reframing dominant cultural narratives around stigma and its effects on Indigenous subjectivities.

The South American political-economic movement of Buen Vivir similarly has the potential to actualize these paradigmatic shifts. In this Indigenous-led political movement for social-ecological wellbeing, nature is no longer objectified because when “intrinsic values are recognized...Nature becomes a subject” (Gudynas, 2011, p.445). Eco-centric movements such as this transition away from individualism and towards interconnectedness, deconstructing capitalist assumptions of what human wellbeing means, and the notion of humans as inherently competitive individuals within mechanistic systems. In both the Earth Democracy and Buen Vivir projects, the inherent rights of nature and the vastness of ancient wisdom is recognized. This may allow for a disillusionment to take place in the dualistic modern mind which affirms the false separation between nature and society.

The shift towards a relational ontology is critical for the decolonial turn because of the ethical implications it holds for academia, public policy, and human (and more-than-human) beings. It is here that dualisms between body, mind, and soul are resolved via the critical eco-feminist work of rematriation; a spiritual and experiential reconnection to Mother Earth through conscientious land stewardship. The field of community psychology may, through a methodology of diffraction and well-networked interventions, oppose the harmful narratives of crisis and stigma that global capitalism imposes on Indigenous peoples, women, and nature. Furthermore, by privileging Indigenous cosmologies, epistemologies, and ontologies, community psychologists can serve to increase bio-cultural diversity, oppose the utilitarian exploitation of nature, and defend leaders such as Vandana Shiva who head this ever important rematrination movement.

References
Community Psychology (CP) started late in China, but has developed rapidly in recent years. In its early stages, Chinese CP absorbed concepts, theories and experience from Western CP. Chinese psychologists then carried out an innovation and a theoretical reconstruction. Chinese CP has now been “Sinicized,” or formally established on its own Chinese terms.

**Development of Community Psychology in China**

**Germination of Chinese Community Psychology.** CP in China began in the late 1980s. In 1989, Feng Zengjun at South China Normal University published “Overview of American Community Psychology”, which was the first paper written about CP in Chinese. That same year, the first mainland Chinese article was published in English (Dewei, 1989). In the 1990s, Chinese psychologists may not have published their own CP work, but were aware of American CP (Zuo, 2001; Cheng, & Mou, 2007). But by the 2000s Chinese psychologists began publishing a series of CP studies. In 2007, Deng Shiying and American community psychologist Mark Roosa published an article on family influences on delinquent behaviors and the social development of middle-school adolescents in Beijing. In 2010, Dalton et al was the first Western CP textbook to be translated and published in China. In 2012, Yang and Perkins published a quantitative analysis of the literature and of opportunities and obstacles for the development of Chinese CP. In 2013, Liu Shixiang at Beijing Union University published *Community Psychology*, the first Chinese CP textbook, but it largely referred to the frameworks of Western CP.
Establishment of CP Branch of the Chinese Psychological Society. In 2013, initiated by senior professor Huang Xiting from Southwest University in Chongqing, a group of psychologists concerned about social realities advocated the establishment of a Chinese CP professional organization. In September 2014, an “Advanced Seminar on Research and Practice of Chinese CP” was held at Southwest University. One month later, the Standing Council of the Chinese Psychological Society approved a preparatory committee for the establishment of a CP Branch. After a year, in October 2015, at the eighth meeting of the 11th Standing Council of Chinese Psychological Society, the CP Branch was officially established and affiliated with the Department of Psychology, Southwest University. The Branch is a public welfare academic organization composed of Chinese mainland professionals engaged in basic and applied CP research. At present, it has 44 members from 36 universities and scientific institutions in China, consisting of influential senior experts and younger academics in the field of CP. The CP Branch is now chaired by Professor Chen Hong from Southwest University.

Development of Chinese Community Psychology in Recent Years. The establishment of the CP Branch marks the legitimacy of CP as a discipline in China. Under the leadership and promotion of the CP Branch, Chinese CP has developed rapidly in recent years. The following progress has been made: (1) organizing an annual national academic meeting to present and discuss new research achievements in the field, and promote exchanges between theoretical researchers and professionals; (2) publishing Research of CP as the journal of the CP Branch since 2015. Nine volumes have been published so far. This is the first and only CP journal in the Chinese mainland at present; (3) translating and introducing Western CP research results in an organized and planned way. Since 2017, Southwest Normal University Press has translated and published a Translation Collection of CP, including 10 volumes, six of which have already been published. In 2018 and 2020, Shanghai Education Press translated and published Principles of Community Psychology: Perspectives and Applications (3rd ed.) by Murray Levine, Douglas D. Perkins and David V. Perkins, and then Community Psychology (4th ed.) by John Moritsugu, Frank Y. Wong and Karen G. Duffy. These are the most important reference books for CP teaching in China; (4) carrying out indigenous CP research (with Chinese characteristics), including the compilation and publication of Chinese CP textbooks and a book series about community mental health services. In the near future, an important textbook, Introduction to Community Psychology, edited by Professor Huang and co-edited by 20 experts from 16 Chinese universities, will be published by People’s Education Press. That is a milestone for the development of Chinese CP, marking its formal establishment as a mature field in China.

Situation and tasks faced by Chinese community psychologists

China began its reforms and opening-up in 1978 and has made remarkable achievements in economic development. In 1978, China’s economy ranked 11th in the world; in 2010, it surpassed Japan to become the world’s second largest economy. The psychological and behavioral effects produced by economic development, and its inequalities, are varied and complex. People with different demographic profiles or different social status have different psychological and behavioral changes.

Prevalence of mental health problems. With rapid development of the economy, the pressures of social competition increased, resulting in a variety of psychological and stress-related mental health problems, psychosomatic and chronic diseases, which have become serious public health problems in China. According to government data in 2016, of the population over age 15 in China, there were more than 100 million people with various mental illnesses, of which 16 million suffered from major mental disorders. Depression outpatients increased by 20% per year. More than 30 million children have psycho-behavioral disorders.
Children and the elderly are the two highest-risk groups for mental health problems. The National College Entrance Examination has placed tremendous pressure on children in K-12 education, leading to a variety of psychological and behavioral problems. At the same time, China is accelerating into an aging society. The increasing number of disabled elderly people, coupled with the one-child policy in effect from 1979-2015, weakened the ability of working-age family members to support their elders, especially for seniors without adult children’s proximal social and economic support, and led to increased family stress and neglect.

**People’s Demands for a Better Life.** As living standards improve, people’s expectations grew for a better life, such as travel and leisure entertainment, physical exercise and care, home improvements, and so on. The number of community psychologists and social service workers is far from enough to meet the needs of community residents. Mental Health Education and Psychological Consultation and Service, as two traditional disciplines, mainly work in mental health centers of universities or hospital-based psychological clinics. How to provide community-based psychological services for individuals and groups, including prevention and rehabilitation, requires consultation, planning and implementation from community psychologists.

With the process of urbanization in China, a large number of migrants moving from rural areas to find work in cities is another focus of CP work. Their adaptation to urban life, the pressure they bear, their children’s education, and their relationship with native urbanites are all practical issues in Chinese CP. For those who stay in the countryside, the rural revitalization plan provides them with development opportunities. Although material living standards have improved, social problems caused by relative poverty are more difficult to solve.

The construction of smart communities is a new phenomenon, and an innovative mode of urban community management in China. How to make full use of the Internet, Internet of things, cloud property and other technical means, integrated human-machine systems, and how to deal with community security monitoring, garbage management, express services and other issues in the same platform are also under consideration.

**Lack of Residents’ Sense of Community.**

*Community* is not the same concept in China and the West. In China, community is strictly geographic and local rather than based on shared interest, affiliation, religion, etc. It is equivalent to a rural village or housing block within an urban neighborhood. Before the reform and opening-up, the form of ownership in Chinese society was state or collective ownership. In cities, most people in the same danwei (a place of work, for example, a company) live in the same block of housing. Property rights belonged to the danwei, which allocated housing uniformly to employees’ families. From property maintenance and children’s education to retirement care, the logistics department of the danwei provided comprehensive services and management. As long as urban residents had a job in a state-owned danwei, they only needed to work hard, and there was no need to worry about any basic services. In 1998, China launched a nationwide housing reform. Danweis no longer provided housing for employees. Public housing was made private and the residents had to purchase and now owned their home. Although property was privatized, it took a long time for residents to reduce their dependence on their danwei and government. That dependence reduced residents’ support for each other and sense of community.

**Institutions and rules in community life need to be improved.** Many important laws have been established, such as the *Laws on the Organization of Urban Neighborhood Committees and Village Residents Committees*, to provide guidance and protection, management systems and behavioral norms to adjust the relationship between individuals and groups inside and outside the community. Yet there is still a need to establish more and better rules of daily life to help guide community residents to avoid or resolve conflicts within the community,
which is also a key task for Chinese community psychologists.

Addressing such complex problems often requires multidisciplinary efforts. For psychologists who are used to doing research in the laboratory, they have to overcome great psychological barriers—of knowledge, professional identity and comfort—to go into communities to carry out research and provide psychological services. Cooperating with researchers in other disciplines to work together is definitely another big challenge.

**Government policies: Driving force of Chinese community psychology**

*The concept of grassroots community autonomy with Chinese characteristics.* In 2007, President Hu Jintao first brought “grassroots self-government” into the political system “with Chinese characteristics” in the Report to the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC). He proposed “turning urban and rural neighborhoods into communities of social life that are well managed, supported by complete services, and filled with civility and harmony”, which was of great political significance.

*Grassroots community autonomy incorporated into basic state policy.* On October 18, 2017, President Xi Jinping told the 19th CPC National Congress: “We should strengthen community governance systems, push the center of social governance down to the grassroots level, improve social organization, and realize the supportive interaction between government, social regulation and residents' autonomy.” Since then, strengthening and improving the social governance of grassroots communities and the construction of social and psychological service systems have become China’s long-term development strategy.

*Government policies and funding.* As CP research contributes to the autonomy of grassroots communities and improves national governance, the government supports CP through positive policies, as substantial funding has been injected into community research projects and psychological services in recent years. For example, the previously-mentioned *Community Mental Health Services* book series was just funded by China National Publication Foundation.

**The Sinicization of community psychology and its significance to international community psychology**

Based on China’s unique history, culture, current conditions and social and political system, Chinese CP must follow a path “with Chinese characteristics.” This is a theoretical and practical system based on the reality of Chinese community, inheriting Chinese culture and values, reasonably absorbing and adapting the achievements of Western CP, and serving the planning, organization, and development of Chinese communities.

**Rooted in the Chinese community.** In the past 40 years, China has been carrying out the reform of the socialist political system with Chinese characteristics. During this process, public administration has focused on the local level, making the community the basic unit of government and services. Grassroots community autonomy was thus incorporated into political system reform. However, there are contradictions between residents’ indifferent sense of community and lack of participation and community self-governance. Different from the bottom-up community management mode of American civil society, China uses a top-down local administrative system. Residents have developed the habit of passive obedience and relying on the government, lacking enthusiasm for participating in community actions generally. How to be rooted in the community, and effectively enhance residents’ consciousness of community, mutual aid, and stimulate their enthusiasm to participate is a key problem for Chinese CP.

**Embodying Chinese culture and values.**

Community culture includes a traditional part and modern part. Different from individualistic Western culture, Chinese traditional culture is collectivist and relational, which values obligation more than individual rights and harmony more than conflict. Studies show that as China reforms and opens up, traditional collectivist culture is weakening in Chinese society, and Western individualism is
becoming more popular. Chinese community psychologists believe that self-centered individualistic values are one of the important reasons for the growing inner struggles of individuals and families and social contradictions of communities. The revival of Chinese traditional culture, such as patriotism and Hehe (和合思维·和合·和·谐) thinking may be an effective way for modern people to heal mental illness and solve social conflicts.

In 2012 President Hu advanced 12 common Chinese values on three levels in the report of the 18th CPC National Congress. Prosperity, democracy, civility and harmony are advocated at the national level, freedom, equality, justice and the rule of law are advocated at the regional or community level, and patriotism, dedication, integrity and friendship are advocated at the individual citizen level, which forms a set of systematic values, known as the “core socialist values.”

**Participating in international dialogue.** As early as 1989, Chinese psychologists began to introduce Western CP to China. Learning and absorbing the achievements of Western CP was the main feature of Chinese CP research at its early stage, and some of this will continue in the future. However, in view of the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, Chinese CP must adapt to its own national and local conditions. It is expected that Chinese CP will be different than in the rest of the world, as it should be. With the establishment and development of Chinese CP, Chinese community psychologists will participate more in international dialogue and share Chinese perspectives and experiences with the world.

This research is supported by Jiangsu Provincial Social Science Foundation, China (19SHB007). Correspondence re the Community Psychology Branch of the Chinese Psychological Society: Prof. Huang Xiting xthuang@swu.edu.cn. Correspondence re the TCP International column: cunhaolgaoliveira@gmail.com and d.perkins@vanderbilt.edu

**References**


“Living Community Psychology” highlights a community psychologist through an in-depth interview that is intended to depict both personal and professional aspects of the featured individual. The intent is to personalize Community Psychology as it is lived by its diverse practitioners. Prior columns (which date from the late 1980s) are available online at http://www.scra27.org/publications/tcp/tcp-past-issues These past columns contain a wealth of life advice gleaned from over 65 profiled community psychologists, from graduate students to retirees, representing an invaluable resource for community psychologists.

For this installment, we feature Chris Beasley, whose personal background was the antithesis of his current role as a scholar. And yet his experiences as an incarcerated law breaker form the basis of his current scholarship and advocacy. His academic history was all earned post prison, proceeding from community college through a Ph.D. from DePaul University. He conducts research on formerly incarcerated persons who seek and achieve academic success but also is an active leader in the formation of social networks for these persons, encouraging a strong sense of community and possibilities for their futures.

Christopher R. Beasley, Ph.D.,
Assistant Professor, University of Washington Tacoma

Chris can be reached at Beasley2@uw.edu and you can find more information at https://www.prisontocollege.org

Chris Beasley has described himself as an “academic, advocate and community organizer.” Yet one would not have ever predicted those descriptors for him in his youth. He was raised in Casey, a rural town in southern Illinois with a population of 2,000, all White, mostly poor. The area is characterized by “cornfields, factories and service jobs.” His parents were both intelligent, although both had few educational opportunities. His father worked in the oil fields until, when Chris was a pre-teen, he went on disability as schizo-affectively disordered, complicated by alcoholism, depression and a bad back. His father “suffered a lot,” often secluded in his bedroom. His mother worked 2 full-time service-related jobs, putting food on the table for the family, including four children – 3 boys and a girl. Says Chris, “I was definitely from the wrong side of the tracks, even in a small rural town.” The family moved from one rundown house to another throughout his childhood. Chris was educated, K-12, in Casey schools, his native intelligence (rather than any work ethic) getting him through.

Chris slowly gained an awareness that he was gay, but “rural gayness” was something one struggled to hide. He had enough awareness of the stigma against gays that he knew he could not pursue his dream of becoming an Air Force pilot (because at that time, the military did not admit homosexuals), and he avoided sports because of the anti-gay locker room culture. For him, sex with other males was emotionally disconnected; most of his exposure to gay culture came from gay chatrooms.

In high school (around 1992, in the days of MS-DOS and Netscape but before firewalls), he found that he had an aptitude for computers, advanced for his peers. His computer teacher encouraged
him to teach himself about executable files. While exploring files, he strayed into the school's account; he was accused of hacking into the school's computer system, and he was sentenced to detention, which he refused. His punishment was a short suspension and being barred from any computer use in school.

Hanging around with a group that was considered “wayward,” he began racking up offenses, such as breaking into vehicles to steal, for which he was charged with his first felony. He was regularly drinking and smoking cigarettes and pot (which he was also selling). Fortunately, his native intelligence allowed him to pass his high school courses, without much effort. After graduating high school, he began using, manufacturing and selling methamphetamine, “not for income but to keep everyone supplied in and to earn respect from my peer community,” he says. His loving parents tolerated this misbehavior in their son. After high school, he began working as manual labor at a printing factory. After his parents moved, Chris continued living in their old house which became his group’s party house. Meth was prevalent in his community, in part because of the easy availability of fertilizer used in the cornfields which was also a base ingredient for meth’s manufacturing process – made in basements, sheds and the woods in his community.

Chris was constantly stopped and searched by the local police, who found illegal substances on him, including Ecstasy and cocaine. He cycled through short jail stays and probations, meanwhile earning enough income from his factory job and from dealing drugs, that he was able to hire attorneys to fight charges against him. Eventually, he was fired by his employer because of frequent absences for court and jail. Meanwhile, his health suffered, being chemically dependent and undernourished. “I slept with a meth pipe next to me.” He did not take advantage of treatment or criminal justice reform opportunities. Yet, he realized his life was out of control and his distress from paranoia was overwhelming. However, he could not stop … until he was sentenced to an 18-month prison sentence.

Although he was incarcerated in minimum security, he was nevertheless fearful of what faced him as a gay man in prison. He stayed to himself and focused on his eventual release. With good time and other sentence reductions, he only served 4 months in prison plus an 8-month post-prison jail sentence. “By then, I was sober and began to think about making something of my life.” His uncle, president of a local community college, encouraged him to enroll for an associate degree at Lincoln Trail College (a small community college in eastern Illinois) where he studied psychology, intending to become an addiction counselor. “Attending college was, in large part, an effort to regain a sense of success and the social status I had in the drug world.” He received considerable support from the TRiO Student Support Services program at the community college. But his most avid supporter was his father who, despite a degenerative spine, chauffeured Chris (whose driver’s license was revoked) to/from school – a 3-hour journey. “This effort on his part made it apparent how much my attending college meant to him.” Through his work/study assignment in the computer lab and mentoring other students, Chris, for the first time, realized that you could be paid for your mind. In other words, “work was no longer about payment for labor performed but about being valued for having knowledge and being able to share this knowledge with others.” He obtained his associate degree in 2004 with a major in psychology.

Having met someone from Duluth, MN on a gay chatroom, he began visiting Duluth on weekends via Greyhound bus trips. That relationship was his first emotionally connected gay connection. After it ended, he established another relationship, carried out long distance for a year. At that time, he was enrolled in a 4-year college in Illinois but transferred after a year to the University of Minnesota, Duluth (majoring in psychology) to pursue yet another relationship. Chris had relapsed into substance abuse several times post-prison until his move to Duluth, at which time he entered recovery (a journey he continues to this day).

In 2005, he met (Philippine-born) Ev, a fellow student at UMD at a gay pride event. Finding the
university and Duluth an affirming environment, he came out as gay, and the UMD Queer and Allied Student Union became an important center of his life. Ev was a stabilizing influence, always a good student without behavioral issues. (Chris and Ev married in 2013 in Minnesota, a state that was an early adopter of same sex marriage.)

In Chris' final year of college (2007), a professor inquired if he was applying to graduate school – a thought that had never occurred to him. Having obtained reasonable scores on the GRE, he applied for a master’s program at Roosevelt University in Chicago “mostly because it did not require a research thesis, since I had done terribly in statistics classes in college.”

At a Psi Chi mixer at Roosevelt, he met Dr. Susan Torres-Harding who became an important mentor for him. She put him in touch with Lenny Jason, her mentor and a professor at nearby DePaul University, who had an active research program in addiction recovery. Chris volunteered on Lenny’s research team. Needing paid work, Chris eventually took a paid position on the same team. Ironically, despite Chris’ earlier aversion to statistics, he discovered he had a talent for research methods so began working on data management exclusively. He opted to write a research thesis at Roosevelt after all! (Adding to the irony, he later employed advanced statistical methods in his doctoral dissertation.)

He planned to obtain a Psy.D. and become a clinical psychologist, specializing in substance abuse treatment. However, due to the influence of Susan (from whom he had taken a community course) and from Lenny and his colleagues in DePaul’s research lab, he switched to a community focus because of its macro orientation. Chris joined SCRA as a student member; he attended SCRA biennial conferences, where he participated on panels and organized social events for gay students and special interest meet-ups.

Along his journey, he had an epiphany: He wanted an academic career. “Reflecting back on my academic mentors, I realized that I could become what I looked up to.” Before obtaining his 2010 master’s from Roosevelt in clinical psychology, he applied to 3 community-oriented doctoral programs, accepting DePaul’s offer. He assumes DePaul’s acceptance of him was due to his much-improved GRE scores and from having proved his ability to operate as an independent researcher, after obtaining and completing a SPSSI research grant. Lenny not only accepted Chris’ past history of substance abuse and incarceration (“valuing learned experience”) but actually mentored 3 students with similar histories simultaneously in his research lab – a world’s record, Chris claims. While at DePaul, he was awarded a NIDA F31 grant that allowed him to carve out his own, independent, area of research, apart from the research lab.

Nearing his 2013 graduation from DePaul, he dove into the academic job market. He and Ev were willing to move anywhere, except “south of the Mason Dixon line because of that region’s attitudes to gay couples,” later amended to also exclude very cold, snowy climates. For his first year post-PhD, he did not land an academic appointment, but was kept on for another year at the DePaul research lab. The next year, he accepted an offer from Washington College in Chestertown, a Chesapeake Bay town on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. It is the first college chartered in the U.S. (1782) with a student population of 1,400. He was attracted to the college because it claimed to be research and community oriented. However, upon arrival, he realized that the college’s emphasis was decidedly more on teaching than independent research, nor were there many opportunities for community work. He also came to realize that a better fit for him would be a setting with a more diverse student population.

A classroom incident (in which he used his criminal background as an example of lived history) led to a student complaining to his department; his supervisor advised him to hide that part of his background in the future. This felt stigmatizing and led to an “existential crisis because I did not want to be silenced. Also, I was being energized by my active involvement in post-prison networks at that time.” He did not want to sublimate such a critical part of his persona. At the same time, Ev, who was
then self-employed, desired an urban environment that would offer him better career opportunities. Discouraged, Chris considered relinquishing his dream of an academic research career so began monitoring ads for administrative positions in higher education.

During this search, Chris learned of a position at the University of Washington Tacoma (UWT) that seemed perfect, emphasizing social justice values across the whole campus. The social demographics of UWT’s student population are lower income, ethnically diverse and first-generation college. Nontraditional (older) and transfer students are heavily represented also. Chris’ cover letter for his application did not mention his criminal background, and he was shortlisted for the position. However, in his telephone interview, Chris informed UWT about his past. He was offered the job and readily accepted.

After 3 years in Chestertown (2014-2017), Chris moved to UWT, where he was welcomed with open arms. “Here, my background is valued rather than silenced, and I can be open about my life experience.” UWT has more than lived up to its stated values and has ample supportive systems in place for its diverse student population. His current position, in UWT’s School for Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, is not in a community psychology degree program but nonetheless shares many of community psychology’s values. A UWT colleague, Rachel Hershberg, is a community and developmental psychologist. In view of the large, unmet need in the local area for direct mental health services, including for opioid addictions, an eventual aspiration is to launch a master’s degree program that would train clinicians with a community orientation.

Now in his fourth year as an assistant professor at UWT, he is steadily working toward tenure. There, he founded and leads the Post-Prison Education Research Lab (PERL) that studies social and psychological influences involved in transitioning from prison to college. The university’s research expectation for faculty is broad. While a solid publication record is valued, so too are acts of public scholarship, such as educating the public. Chris has been very active, both in leadership of advocacy organizations related to criminal justice and in delivering keynote addresses around the topic of formerly incarcerated persons who then obtain college degrees.

A critical part of his emergence as a scholar has been his immersion in post-prison higher education networks, constituting his life’s mission and giving his life a sense of purpose. Chris is now (and has been since community college) engaged in a number of reform-minded advocacy groups. In an earlier effort to develop a mutual-help program for this population, it was difficult to identify potential peer-mentors. So he co-founded the Formerly Incarcerated College Graduates Network (FICGN) – a national organization of college-degreed persons who have been imprisoned. The core mission of this network is to promote the education and empowerment of formerly incarcerated people through a collective community. At this time, he is a board director for both FICGN and for From Prison Cells to PhD. He also is spearheading the development of the Husky Post-Prison Pathways (HP3) initiative, which seeks to provide support to formerly incarcerated students entering and progressing through UWT. Also at UWT, he is the advisor for the Formerly Incarcerated Student Association (FISA) and regularly mentors and advises formerly incarcerated students through his work with these organizations.

Through these network-building activities, he aims to “broaden the narrative about formerly incarcerated people to make it more inclusive of professional careers and lives of service to the community.” In so doing, stigma (and external barriers) may be reduced and formerly incarcerated persons’ vision of possibilities for themselves may be broadened. Chris explains: “Prisons are meant to strip away antisocial identities and replace them with prosocial ones, but without a new prosocial choice, incarcerated persons are only left with a sense of being further marginalized and part of a deviant group. The period of incarceration is a prime opportunity to encourage scholarly pursuits and an
academic identity. However, federal funding is not available to support efforts to promote scholarship among incarcerated persons.” Chris’ work aims to develop a collective capacity for personal and structural change for formerly incarcerated persons, through academic achievement and a broader vision for their possibilities in life.

Prevention and Promotion Interest Group
Edited by Susana Helm, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

Prevention & Promotion IG Co-Chairs: Toshi Sasao, Kayla DeCant, Susana Helm.

The Prevention & Promotion IG column of The Community Psychologist highlights P&P resources as well as the P&P work of community psychologists and allied professionals. Please email me if you would like to submit a brief report or if you have resources we may list.

This quarter, Professor Toshi Sasao has provided an overview of recent work from the Peace Research Institute of International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan where he serves as the current Director of the Institute, as well as Chair in the Department of Education and Language Education. In addition to a brief report, Toshi has added this memoriam:

As I was writing this [brief report that follows], the news of Brian Flay’s passing came in my inbox. It was Brian who introduced me to the field of prevention in my graduate and postdoctoral years in California, providing mentoring even after he moved to UIC in the 80s. I remember his research staff was sending him electronic files via a phone modem [at the dawn] of the internet age. I appreciated his research caliber and acumen with my own dissertation, and later at the USC Institute for Prevention Research. I thank him for sticking to the rigor in methodology and conceptualization, and his sense of humor with a wry smile.

Brief Report: Prevention & Promotion in Global Scene
Written by Toshi Sasao, International Christian University, Tokyo, Japan

In response to the viral COVID-19 worldwide, much of our daily living has been unwillingly compromised regardless of geographical location. Despite its biomedical nature, the spreading appears to be largely a function of social distancing, i.e., the extent to which individuals maintain physical distance from others in everyday contexts. Hence, it is assumed that limiting social connections through temporary school and business closure and infrequent visits to friends and restaurants should lead to the eventual (if not medical) resolution of the pandemic. Concurrently, preventive efforts have been expended in promoting healthy social ties or support by use of internet technology so as to deter unhealthy behaviors (e.g., excessive alcohol use, gambling) and to encourage wellbeing at the individual or organizational level. It can be argued, however, that community psychologists’ responsibility to promote wellbeing during the global crisis is not necessarily to restore what it used to be, but to look for alternative designs and avenues to optimize people’s level of social connectedness that balances externally-imposed social distancing.

Peace and COVID-19 Symposium. Started under the zeitgeist for the past year, I initiated a series of events including this Symposium Series at the Peace Research Institute through which the three main themes listed below were addressed. The overall goal of the series was to shed light on the impact of COVID-19 in Japan and beyond from interdisciplinary perspectives with an eye toward developing interventions.

Foreign Residents and Migrants. Three panelists addressed the extent of the pandemic in three different foreign communities. First, Dr. Miloš Debnár (Ryukoku University, Kyoto) identified various ways in which middle-class European migrants responded to the pandemic and the strict travel restrictions adopted by the Japanese
government and how they incorporated these factors in their future plans. Second, Dr. Ramesh Sunam (Waseda University) examined the precariousness faced by Nepali migrant workers in Japan during the pandemic and their coping mechanisms. Last, in an ethnographic work, Dr. Megha Wadhwa (Sophia University) reflected on the impact of COVID-19 on the cooks who, having lost work hours and income, hardly have any opportunities outside of Indian restaurant industry in Japan due to limited education and language skills. Consensus among panelists was that the pandemic indeed has constrained short-term mobility and daily routines for many foreign residents and migrant workers with some short-lived optimism.

**Digital Human Rights.** Three anthropologists argued that the COVID pandemic has amplified the structural inequalities that contribute to inequality in society, by examining their ethnographic fieldwork through the lens of digital activism. The changes to travel and global communication have brought into relief the need for analysis of activism and digital platforms. Drawing from research in Bolivia, Dr. Amy Kennemore (University of California, San Diego), discussed how ethnographic fieldwork provided localized counter-narratives that enter into conversation with different sites of intervention (human rights practitioners, NGOs, general public) through digital platforms. Dr. Eli Elinoff (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand) explored the relationship between digital and urban activism. Sharing examples from groups engaged in urban forestry, infrastructural critique, and pro-democracy organizing, Dr. Elinoff considered how these different groups generate relationships between cyberspace and urban space, mobilizing new publics online and on the street. Revisiting his work on the peace process in Northern Ireland, Dr. Candler Hallman (The University of Tokyo and International Christian University) described local discourses of reconciliation to motivate and shape digital networking among reactionary populists as they developed solidarity networks and sought sympathy for ethno-nationalist demands.

**Human Rights and Peacebuilding.** Theoretical and critical analyses on recent peacebuilding studies and initiatives conducted in Rwanda, Nepal, and Bosnia-Herzegovina were presented, while providing deeper insights into the connection between the state of global crises, behavior, and nationalism. Drawing on research on women impacted by war in Rwanda, Bosnia, Nepal, Dr. Marie E. Berry argued that in moments of such crises, including pandemics, the possibilities for upending inequitable and unjust systems of the past clearly exist alongside a profound risk that such inequities can become even more entrenched. It was further noted what moments of crisis could offer for building more gender equitable and peaceful societies. Next, political scientist Dr. Dirk Moses (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), maintained that to the extent that the Holocaust functions as genocide’s archetype, a challenge for humanitarian agencies and activists has been to shock public conscience in cases of non-genocidal mass atrocity or catastrophe as in COVID-19 pandemics, natural disasters, and conventional armed conflict. How this challenge arose and has been confronted since World War II was examined, while focusing on the construction of the “exemplary” victim as innocent and apolitical. Finally, social psychologist Ms. Alma Jeftić (University of Belgrade and International Christian University) noted the collective narrative of a society provides a basis for common understanding, good communication, interdependence, and coordination of social activities, all of which widely contribute to the functioning of the social system. These also contribute to forming and maintaining conflict, especially in divided societies such as Bosnia-Herzegovina. Two studies were presented - the impact of bias in memories on peacebuilding in contemporary Bosnia-Herzegovina; and the connection between war trauma reminders and behavior during pandemics.

**More Opportunities at Peace Research Institute.** What I have shared above is only a fraction of Institute activities. With generous support through a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research from
the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (2020-2023), our Institute, together with the Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition, initiated joint research to formulate and implement peace and disarmament education, as well as evaluate evidence-based program evaluation in collaboration with Japanese and South Korean universities and research institutes. The Japan-Korea Collaborative for Peace and Disarmament Education & Research is planned by a diverse team of experts assembled from several countries - in the fields of international relations, international politics, social & community psychology, education, educational sociology, and educational engineering.

Given the current pandemic with unpredictable future even in the next few months, the tasks of community psychologists are loud and clear since COVID-19 is a function of social connectedness as noted earlier, and as such, that the field needs to develop multidisciplinary perspectives on the prevention of disorders and promotion of well-being in diverse sectors across the world.

Real Talk

*Edited by Dominique Thomas, Independent Scholar and Allana Zuckerman, Mesa Community College*

We are excited to debut the first ever *The Community Psychologist* (TCP) podcast!

**TCP Podcast Episode 1**

For our first episode, we discuss relevant issues to the field of community psychology including key areas we feel are important to consider for community psychology moving forward. We discuss topics such as mentoring in graduate programs, colonialism in the US education system, the increased need for critical discussion of concrete social issues, the role of the intellectual, and recommendations for the future. Specific citations from readings referenced in this podcast are in the reading circle for the current issue.

We are always looking for additional topics and guests for future episodes. If there is a topic you would like to be featured in a future episode or if you would like to be a guest, please email tcp@scra27.org

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**Regional News**

*Submitted by Regional Coordinators*

**News from the Western Region U.S.**

*WESTERN REGIONAL COORDINATORS*

Rachel Hershberg, University of Washington Tacoma; Erin Rose Ellison, California State University-Sacramento

The SCRA west region coordinators do not have any regional announcements to share but would like to circulate information about the Early Career Interest Group, which is open to early career SCRA affiliated scholars and practitioners everywhere. Please see details below. If you would like to contact us with questions or announcements to share pertaining to the west region in particular, please reach out to Rachel M. Hershberg, Ph.D., University of Washington Tacoma, rmhersh@uw.edu, or Erin Rose Ellison, Ph.D., ellison@csus.edu.

**Self-Help and Mutual Support Interest Group**

*Edited by Thomasina Borkman, George Mason University and Ronald Harvey, American University in Bulgaria*

**Organizing and Expanding the Self-Help Support Group, “New Beginnings”: Part 2 of 3**

*Written by Carol Randolph, New Beginnings*
Carol Randolph, founder of New Beginnings (NB) continues her narrative (story) of how the group became organized, grew and evolved in functions over the last 41 years in this second installment. The third and final installment will discuss how the internet affected New Beginnings as well as other self-help support groups and relate New Beginnings’ journey to that of other similar groups. Contact: NewBCarol@verizon.net and www.newbeginningsusa.org

In selecting a name, we wanted it to be positive. Our first thought was “Fresh Start,” but we rejected that because it was already being used for a laundry detergent. We settled on New Beginnings. In the summer of 1980, I asked my aunt—an accomplished graphic artist who taught at Hood College for many years—to design a logo.

New Beginnings® It is the one we have today, based on the Chinese symbol of yin/yang: Each only exists in relationship to the other. Without dark, there can be no light. Without pain, there can be no joy. Our slogan became an end is also a new beginning. By 1980, about a year after NB began, we realized we needed a membership and fee structure. Newsletters with meeting announcements were being printed and mailed to anyone who was interested, but many of them never attended. Membership was a way to identify those who were serious about participating and create the income to cover the newsletter costs. A member/non-member fee structure for meetings was an additional “a la carte” income stream that covered refreshments and meeting supplies (name tags, handouts) and allowed us to keep membership low.

Initial membership dues were $15 ($5 for renewal); meeting fees were $3 for members, $5 for non-members. Today, members and non-members both paid $10 for in-person meetings; online meeting fees are $5 for members and $8 for non-members. Membership dues were increased in 1982, 1984, 1996, 2004 and lastly in 2011 to $35 for 6 months, $59/year or $99 for two years. Membership, event fees and donations are our only form of financial support.

Now, when someone wants to start a support group, I tell them to create a fee structure from the very beginning. It is always easier to raise a fee already in place than to create a fee where none was before. There will always be costs. Once money was involved, we needed to incorporate. An attorney for whom I was working at the time suggested we do so as a nonprofit instead of a for-profit, so that we would have access to free or discounted resources like space and advertising. He helped us with the paperwork, and in September 1980, NB was incorporated as a charitable organization. We got our federal tax-exempt status in November 1981 and our bulk mail permit in October 1983. Our name and logo became a registered trademark in October 1985. Eventually, we registered as a charity in both Maryland and Virginia. At each big step, I was lucky to have mentors to guide me because the business of a growing nonprofit organization, operating in three jurisdictions, was new and scary territory.

The DC metro area is unique in that any organization, no matter where it is based, really operates in the equivalent of three states: Maryland, DC (District of Columbia) and Virginia. In each one, we had to register to do business, obtain exemption from sales tax, and register also as a charitable organization for fundraising purposes. All of these are renewable on some regular basis. Keeping up with the paperwork is a challenge.

A clear mission statement is critical and an important part of the incorporation process. What
are you trying to do and for whom? And then, how are you going to do it? NB’s mission is to provide education and support to people coping with marital separation and divorce through facilitated discussion meetings, expert speakers and structured social programs. We have never wavered from that in spite of well-meaning pressure to do so: open membership to widows and widowers, allow both partners to join, promote a dating service, or accept outside advertising in our newsletter. Any one of these has the potential to alter the essential character and integrity of the organization as it was intended to be. To explain in more detail, we actually did allow widows/widowers in the very beginning but quickly realized their experience was fundamentally different from that of people coping with divorce. For the most part, their marriages were happy, and the loss of their partner was a tragic event that had nothing to do with them. Family and friends rallied around them with support, meals, offers to help, inclusion in social events—whereas people coping with divorce often experienced quite the opposite as friends who knew both partners retreated. Even now, with the increased incidence of divorce, I believe there remains a lurking suspicion that somehow someone could’ve done something to prevent it—and that diminishes how much support is merited.

The decision to allow only one partner to join was an easy one—an issue for both the individual and the group. Our goal was to create a safe place for members to talk about strong feelings. That would not be possible if there was any chance of their ex showing up at the same meeting. Even if we were able to implement procedures to prevent that, it becomes a group issue similar to that faced by friends of both people. Group members might hear one partner’s version of what happened at one meeting and then hear a potentially conflicting version at another meeting. One partner might talk about wanting to reconcile while the other talks about starting to date. It is important for both the individual member and the group as a whole that full support is afforded everyone. I have often mused that we could have a concurrent meeting of all the exes in another room, and the tone would be much the same with “good guys” in both rooms. Few of us craft a view of the world in which we are the bad guy. Limiting membership to only one partner ensures there are no conflicting views of the world.

It can be very tempting to try to help everyone, and especially in the beginning, it’s hard to turn anyone away. Knowing your audience and what you offer that no one else does, as reflected in your mission statement, are key.

Turning back to the issue of how NB developed as an organization, in 1982, I had a table at a county self-help fair to promote NB. I came home with 150 names of people wanting to come to a meeting. I panicked and assembled a group of our most active members to create a committee structure—Programming, Membership, Publicity, Social Events. My biggest mistake was not delegating earlier. Delegating spreads the ownership of the group and creates a stronger foundation that isn’t dependent on one person.

NB is essentially a volunteer organization that relies on members to host and facilitate meetings, to plan and develop topics for discussion, to plan and implement social events. There is a ladder of responsibility that encourages and celebrates leadership. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, hosting a meeting was sometimes the first time a member welcomed people into their new home as a newly single person. They had to take RSVPs on the phone and talk to people they didn’t know. They had to plan and shop for refreshments. They had to prepare the space and greet people. These are all social skills that may not come easily but are essential to moving forward.

Members who aspire to become facilitators complete a written application and commit to a weekend of 16 hours of training. They are evaluated, and not all pass. Subjecting themselves to such a rigorous endeavor, in such a visible forum among peers, requires courage and a level of self-esteem indicative of moving past the early trauma. As they continue to facilitate, they refine.
their communication and listening skills and—as we tell them the first day of training—more than anything else, they confront themselves, their personal strengths and challenges.

Volunteering for these leadership roles can be a huge statement of entry into a new life. Serving on a committee or becoming a facilitator offer key leadership roles that help perpetuate the organization and demonstrate tangible progress in personal recovery. Time and money are the magical ingredients that make anything work—volunteer time to make things happen and money to pay for things that can’t be accomplished or acquired through volunteers. If you have a lot of one, you need less of the other, but you always need both.

I turned the walk-in closet in my one-bedroom apartment into an “office,” with an IBM typewriter and a 12-foot cord on my kitchen phone. When I remarried and moved to a house, we made space in the basement. When we sold that house, top criteria for a new house was space for NB parties and an office for two people. I have always worked from home.

It was five years before there was enough money to pay me anything, and even then it was merely a stipend. In our boom years, there was money to pay me a salary AND support a near-full-time assistant. My mother also worked for NB one day/week for 16 years. We made good use of volunteers—high school students, job programs, even court-ordered community service.

As income has declined, I have voluntarily reduced what I am paid. Grant money is not readily available for people coping with divorce unless they are low-income or victims of domestic violence. I think that even today divorce is seen as someone’s fault and preventable. Applying for grants is labor-intensive, and I gave up trying after disappointing results. Ironically, the one exception has been during the COVID-19 pandemic when we have been able to get support because all of our in-person programs were shut down.

People tend to join NB for 1-3 years. Most statistics support a 2-year recovery period from a divorce, which can vary if there is a protracted or acrimonious court battle. Many stick around beyond that because by then they have developed a strong social community within the group. Others maintain their membership as financial support even though they no longer participate as members. Several facilitators are long-time members; one has been a volunteer for 17 years.

At any given time, at any meeting, newly separated people see others at various stages ahead of—and behind—them. They SEE that it is possible to survive this crisis even though it may not feel that way right then. Eventually, they can offer wisdom and encouragement to someone else, and that in itself speeds their process. Help yourself by helping others. This is really the foundation of self-help and mutual support.

For most of its history, NB has operated as a founder-based nonprofit with me as sole staff and primary decision-maker. The small Board of Directors, drawn from members and former members, helps shape our direction, determine dues and fees, and approve my salary. In 2009, our 30th year, I realized I could not run NB forever and that we would need a serious infusion of money to pay anyone else a competitive salary. I expanded the Board and launched our “Transition to the Future” fundraising campaign. My hope for a “working” Board, one that actively shared responsibility for and engagement in the organization, has never been realized. No one could be compelled to fundraise. It is possible that I had been identified synonymously with NB for too long.

Looking back, I admit that in the beginning—typical of a Founder—I needed control of my creation. The idea that a group of people appointed by me could have the power to kick me out, was terrifying. Had I been able to recruit and sustain an active Board from the beginning, the organization might be in a better place today. Then again, it might not have lasted as long as it has. I know that much of our longevity is due to my dedication and determination to keep NB going. I would love for NB to continue beyond my tenure, but that now appears unlikely—both because of diminished demand and because the money isn’t
there to pay a sufficient salary. When I expressed regret about this to a former member, she said, “You already have a legacy.” Among other impacts:

- Thousands of people turned to NB at a time of crisis in their lives and found hope and solace.
- Many of those people gained leadership skills participating as trained facilitators, hosting meetings in their homes and/or organizing social events and weekend retreats.
- Even more made close, lifelong friends. Eight of them retired to the same community.
- Several facilitators turned to careers as therapists.
- 204 couples met in NB and married; some had children. There are people on the planet because of NB!

Again and again through 41 years, I have been told, “NB saved my life.” There is, of course, no way to gauge what might have happened without NB or how much what did happen is attributable to NB. Still, the strength and frequency of such assertions is subjective proof of its impact on many lives.

Learning you are not alone, that you are not crazy, that others share your experience—these are powerful benefits, and they apply to any support group. Add to that the knowledge base that can only come from lived experience, from people who have grappled with the same challenges and triumphed over the same obstacles to find real solutions. Support groups are an integral part of our mental health service delivery system, yet their impact is best measured anecdotally by the people whose lives are made better by their existence. It is immensely gratifying to me to have contributed to that effort.

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**“Un Solo Pie Adentro”: Sense of Community of Puerto Ricans in Miami**

*Written by Andrea C. Ruiz-Sorretini, University of Miami*

Transnational migrants’ identities are configured in relationship to more than one place and are continuously pulled in different directions as old and new members of multiple communities are wrapped in a single experience (Aranda, Hughes, & Sabogal, 2014). Broadly defined, transnationalism refers to the maintenance of identity claims and practices that connect people living in different geographical spaces to a specific territory that they see as their homeland (Duany, 2003; Glick Schiller, 2005). As the patterns of relationships between immigrants and hosts are changing dramatically in the global era (Van Oudenhoven & Ward, 2013), scholars (Duany, 2003; Aranda 2007) have argued that the Puerto Rican experience should be understood within the transnational paradigm. Due to Puerto Rico’s status as a U.S. Commonwealth, and therefore lack of national boundaries, functional or symbolic ties might put Puerto Rican migrants in a position of manifesting a partial membership in both countries. This requires us to expand traditional notions of sense of community as a process and as an enactment of connections among people, settings, and social spaces (Li, Hodgetts, & Sonn, 2014).

Psychological sense of community was first described by Sarason (1974, p. 41), as the feeling of belonging and as being a meaningful part of a larger collectivity that strengthens relationships and participation in the community. Scholars in the field of Community Psychology have worked on understanding the sense of community with a strong emphasis on the individuals’ local and neighborhood communities (Lenzi, Vieno, Santinello, & Perkins, 2013; Li et al., 2014; Zhang, Zhang, Zhouz, & Yu, 2017). However, the sense of belonging to a transnational community has not been thoroughly examined.
Particularly for Puerto Ricans living in the U.S., they are not only part of communities in Puerto Rico, but are also part of the diasporic communities formed in the U.S. Especially during the past three decades, there has been a significant increase in the Puerto Rican population in Florida settling in three main regions: Central Florida (Orange, Osceola, Volusia, Seminole, and Polk counties); South Florida, especially in Miami-Dade and Broward counties; and Tampa Bay (Duany & Matos, 2006). Recent research on Puerto Rican transnationalism has focused on an established community of Puerto Ricans in Orlando, which has been characterized for the maintenance of transnational connections, especially kinship ties, with the Island (Duany, 2010; Aranda, 2007). Nevertheless, long before Orlando’s emergence as a major Puerto Rican niche in the 1990s, Miami’s Wynwood area was named “Little San Juan” and is where many Puerto Ricans settled (Feldman, 2011). While Wynwood’s Puerto Rican heritage remains visible in some of the street art and local businesses in the area, there is still an open space for exploring the Puerto Rican diaspora in South Florida, specifically in Miami, a location without a large co-ethnic community of Puerto Ricans. Furthermore, this document was written during an unprecedented crisis in the aftermath of hurricanes Irma and Maria making landfall in Puerto Rico. Consequently, studying the transnational sense of community in this historical moment provides an additional opportunity to explore the civic participation and activism of Puerto Ricans living stateside. Guided by transnationalism and the values of Community Psychology, this master’s thesis aims to answer the following question: how do Puerto Ricans living in Miami interpret the definition of community and construct their sense of community based on the connections they have to their communities in Puerto Rico and the U.S. This qualitative methodology allowed me to reflect on my position as a member of the Puerto Rican diaspora in Miami and approach the participants with knowledge of the experiences, but not enough to anticipate their answers.

Conceptual Framework

In this study, transnationalism served as a lens to display how Puerto Ricans living in different parts of Miami, Florida constructed their sense of community in relation to the communities they belong to. It has been argued that transnationalism is mostly a first-generation phenomenon (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004). However, second-generation immigrants can exhibit transnational practices and emotional attachments to their parents and grandparents’ homeland that influence their concept of “home” (Wolf, 2002). Additionally, McMillan and Chavis’ (1986) elements to define sense of community—membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs and emotional connection—were utilized as sensitizing concepts (Patton, 2015). They were fundamental to probe the psychological term from a transnational standpoint.

METHOD

Participants

The study sample consisted of fourteen (F=11; M=3) Puerto Ricans in between the ages of 25 and 77 years old. In order to participate in the study, the individuals had to self-identify as Puerto Rican, live in Miami, and speak and understand English or Spanish. Participants were recruited by snowball sampling techniques and sampled for maximum variation (Miles & Huberman, 1994) with respect to location within Miami, age of arrival in the U.S., time living in Miami, sex, marital status, and employment. Thirteen participants were born in different cities of Puerto Rico and only one was born in Miami. Most of them were relatively well educated.

Instruments

To collect the data, I developed a semi-structured interview guide to inquire about the
participants’ interpretation of the concept of community and their involvement with the community/ies they belong to. At the end of the interview, I provided a brief questionnaire to the participants to self-report their sociodemographic characteristics such as age, occupation, migration history, and civil status.

Procedures
Once I obtained approval from the University of Miami’s International Review Board, I distributed a flyer in different locations in Miami and reached out to Puerto Rican-based networks, including local businesses in the Wynwood area and people I connected with during the hurricane relief events. Colleagues on the Island collaborated in referring the study to their contacts living in Miami. All interviews were conducted in Spanish and audio recorded.

Data Analysis
All recorded interviews, written notes, and debriefing recordings were transcribed. Thematic analysis was used to engage in the process of line by line coding, following with focusing on recurrent features or patterns across the dataset and developing different themes that arose from the participants’ experiences (Braune, Clarke, and Rance, 2014). After the themes and sub-themes were created, I reviewed that they represented the data accurately and created a “thematic map” (see Figure 1) to contextualize the findings in relation to the research question.

RESULTS

Figure 1 Components of Transnational Sense of Community
The study findings suggest that transnational sense of community was created through the participants’ emotional connections to their communities both on the Island and the U.S. These were expressed by 1) territorial connections to the Island, 2) cultural connections, 2) social connections, and 3) civic participation with their communities. Participants’ feelings of belonging to their transnational community were tied to recreating cultural practices in the diaspora, participating in Puerto Rican-based events, and sharing symbols that connect them to Puerto Rico, such as the Puerto Rican flag and the coqui (Puerto Rican-native frog). The impact of hurricane Maria intensified participants’ transnational sense of...
community. Experiencing the catastrophic event from the distance drove participants to support the recovery of the Island and help their fellow Puerto Ricans who forcefully migrated to Florida seeking for aid after losing their homes and employment.

Participants defined a community as a group of people that share things in common, like types of music and Spanish language, engage in activities together, and protect each other during challenging situations. This group of people can consist of friends, family members, a fraternity, a dance team, or a religious group.

DISCUSSION

This research study intends to fill a gap in understanding psychological constructs across different levels of analysis in the increasingly global world (Birman, 2011). For Puerto Ricans living in Miami, their communities are not only geographical but ideological and emotional as well. A transnational approach to understanding the sense of community serves to exhibit a plurality of cultural codes and symbols that expand territories and multiple locations of “home” (Wolf, 2002). Moreover, the data gathered support the idea that altruistic behaviors can stem from that sense of belonging and solidarity with fellow members of one’s community, even when they are not in the same location (Itzhaky et al., 2015). Future research could explore the sense of community and activism among Puerto Ricans who experienced the hurricane on the Island.

Author Information

If you have any questions or are interested in following up on more specific details about the study, please reach out via email at acruizsorrentini@gmail.com.

References


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**Reading Circle**

*Edited by Dominique Thomas, Independent Scholar and Allana Zuckerman, Mesa Community College*

To encourage ongoing dialogue with each other about what we are reading and how those readings are influencing our work, we are starting a reading circle and recommended reading list. Each issue we will share 5-6 readings that have influenced our work and provide a space for additional submissions. This is a space for people to share what they are reading so we can get an idea of the different knowledge bases people are exposed to and what is influencing their research and practice. This is also a way for us to share information and knowledge across a variety of topics to showcase and enhance richness of thought within the field.

For this issue, we have included citations for the reading circle that were referenced in our first ever TCP podcast! If you want to hear more about the research below, please listen to our podcast TCP podcast episode 1 in the Real Talk column.


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**SCRA News**

*Edited by Dominique Thomas, Independent Scholar*

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55  THE COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGIST  SPRING 2021
Welcome our new ED Dr. Amber Kelly!

Dr. Amber E. Kelly is a community psychologist and Founder of Community Engagement Collective (CEC), a community-based nonprofit organization serving Cincinnati communities. The mission of CEC is to foster human-centered connections through community-engaged events and research. She has lived in major metropolitan cities working on initiatives that strived to eliminate inequities among disenfranchised populations. Her experiences in nonprofit leadership, inclusion, community outreach, program evaluation, research, and education make her an asset to the role of Executive Director of SCRA.

Her dedication to SCRA has been demonstrated through serving as Midwest Regional Coordinator and Co-Chair and Mini-Grant Administrator for the Public Policy Council. In addition, through her nonprofit organization she partnered with SCRA to host the first Midwestern Psychological Association Society for Community Research and Action Virtual Conference.

Dr. Kelly is an Adjunct Faculty member at the University of Cincinnati and National Louis University. At UC, she teaches the first Community Involvement Course, and at NLU, she teaches Strategies for Community Interventions, Intro to Human Services, Research Methods and Dissertation Proposal Seminar. She aspires to help students understand the importance of understanding community assets and community voice in promoting inclusion.

Dr. Kelly completed her doctoral studies in community psychology at National Louis University. She holds a Master of Public Service Management from DePaul University and a Master of Public Mental Health and Certificate in Health Disparities and Health Inequality from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She completed her undergraduate studies at Clark Atlanta University with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Minor in Spanish.

SCRA 18th Biennial Call for Proposals

The Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA, Division 27 of the American Psychological Association) invites you to our 18th Biennial Conference!

This year, for Covid-19 safety precautions, the conference will be held virtually. Sessions may be designed in three ways:

- Live, with all presenters and attendees present at the same time
- Pre-recorded, with pre-recorded presentations shown to the attendees during the session time, with some or all presenters attending to answer questions and facilitate discussion
- Hybrid, with parts of the session pre-recorded and others live, and some or all the presenters attending the session

Note that Ignite sessions are all pre-recorded, with the presenters attending the session.

All sessions will be recorded and will be available for attendee viewing for a full year after the conference.

Call for Proposals

The conference theme is “Uprooting White Supremacy”. White supremacy is the belief that white people make up the superior race and that because of this, they should dominate society to the detriment of other races- often in an exclusionary manner. This conference seeks to uproot racist ideologies, and promote equity and healing. We seek to create community to share information that can be used to eliminate systemic racism embedded in policies, practices, and systems, and reduce the spread of hate and injustice.

The omnipresent and systemic nature of white supremacy is manifested throughout the work of community psychology, regardless of the specific
focus of that work. For that reason, all proposals should include a discussion of the relevance of the proposal to the theme of the conference. We encourage proposals in a variety of topic areas, particularly those related to impactful and transformative community research and action, including:

- Social change, social innovation
- Participatory Action Research (PAR) and other mixed, multi-method and empowering approaches to research and evaluation
- Multiculturalism, Indigenous rights, and racial justice
- Economic equality for women and reproductive justice
- LGBTQ2/Gender and Sexual Minorities (GSM) human rights and advocacy
- Migration/immigration, displacement, and Globalization
- Social determinants of health (including COVID-19)
- Global climate change and sustainability
- Community organizing, coalition-building, and civic engagement, community activism
- Community-campus partnerships, collaborations, and networks
- Grassroots change efforts, creative economy and arts-based community action
- Collaboratively advancing well-being of vulnerable communities through Innovative prevention and wellness programs
- Values and Ethics
- Critical perspectives, liberation, and applications of critical theory in the community
- Technological and social media innovations in promoting community health and well-being

**Instructions for Preparing Program Submissions**

To submit a proposal, please visit the Biennial web page and select the proposal submission link. The system will be ready to accept proposals on or about March 23rd, 2021. Make sure to check specific instructions early as certain restrictions may apply. The deadline for receipt of program proposals is Monday, April 19th, 2021, 11:55 PM (EST). Proposal submission guidelines will be available online.

**Program Formats**

Priority will be given to proposals that explicitly address one or more of the following expectations: (a) high quality, (b) congruence with the general conference theme and the topic areas listed above, (c) exemplars of community-academic engagement, (d) clear articulation of lessons learned from the session, and (d) collaboration. Proposals should include a description of formats and activities that will maximize audience participation. Innovative, creative, and art-based approaches toward this goal are encouraged. Please note that we will accept only one first-author submission per individual, and the first author on a submission will be the individual who submits the proposal to the system. Also, we ask that any single individual be listed in any role in no more than 5 separate proposals (not including poster presentations). Submissions should fall under one of the following seven categories:

1. **Poster Presentations** facilitate individual and small group conversations through the use of a visual aid. Posters that highlight innovative methods for conference participant interaction are preferred. Poster presentations can emphasize research, practice, action, or other initiatives. Posters will be organized in thematic groups and be presented during designated poster sessions.

2. **Symposia** provide a forum for discussion, debate, and explication of diverse perspectives as they pertain to the conference themes and/or tracks. Symposia may be used to present practice and/or research topics. Submissions that explicitly describe the process or method that will be used to facilitate audience interaction and dialogue will be preferred. Symposia typically include 3-4 related papers, a moderator, and a discussant.

3. **Ignite Presentations** provide an opportunity to share research and ideas in a brief 5-
minute format (20 slides at 15 seconds each) to ignite conversations and discussions between the presenters and the audience. Several speakers will follow each other in rapid transition followed by a time to engage in conversation. This format is ideal for presenting findings from smaller studies (e.g., student thesis projects), a new tool or method, or research that is still in progress. Examples of this type of format can be found at http://p2i.eval.org/index.php/ignite/ and https://www.pechakucha.org/faq.

4. **Town Hall Meetings** feature participant discussions of critical and current issues or important future directions pertaining to community research, values, and action and the field of community psychology. This format is most appropriate for exploring the broad issues that cut across the conference theme, subthemes, and related topics. One or more facilitators may lead a town hall meeting.

5. **Workshops** provide a means to teach new skills of relevance to the field (e.g., specific methods, analytical techniques, community outreach strategies).

6. **‘The Innovative Other’** session provides an opportunity to submit sessions that do not fit within any of the other categories. This format is especially suitable for arts-based, technology-based, and practice-based presentations.

Additional program components will include mentoring sessions, panel sessions with keynote speakers, and social events.

**Additional Conference Information**

The conference will take place virtually. It will begin on Tuesday June 22nd and conclude on Saturday afternoon, June 26th. There will be two, 3-hour session blocks each day, one from 11am-2pm EDT and the other from 6pm-9pm EDT. Presenters will be able to indicate their preferred time block when they submit their proposals, but these are not guaranteed.

Details about conference registration, including descriptions of the online platforms and links for training materials for presenters, will be provided on the [SCRA website](http://www.scra27.org). All presenters must register for the conference and pay registration fees.

**Conference Fees:** Information about registration fees will be posted on the conference website. Questions related to the program can be sent to [biennialprogram@scra27.org](mailto:biennialprogram@scra27.org).

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**Convocatoria de propuestas**

¡Gracias! – Irma Serrano García y Fabricio Balcazar.

**Convocatoria de propuestas**

18ª Conferencia Bienal de la iSociedad para la Investigación y la Acción Comunitaria

Del 22 al 26 de junio de 2021

**Desarragando la supremacía blanca**

¡La Sociedad para la Investigación y la Acción Comunitaria (SCRA, División 27 de la Asociación Americana de Psicología) le invita a nuestra 18ª Conferencia Bienal! Este año, dadas las precauciones de seguridad por el COVID-19, la conferencia se llevará a cabo virtualmente. Las sesiones pueden diseñarse de tres maneras:

- **Sincrónicas con todos los presentadores, presentadoras y asistentes al mismo tiempo.**
- **Pregrabadas - con presentaciones pregrabadas mostradas a las personas asistentes durante el tiempo de la sesión, con algunas o todas las personas ponentes asistiendo para responder preguntas y facilitar el debate.**
- **Híbridas, con partes de la sesión pregrabadas y otras sincrónicas, con algunas o todas las personas presentadoras asistiendo a la sesión.**
Debe tener en cuenta que todas las sesiones de “Ignite” serán pregrabadas, con sus ponentes asistiendo a la sesión.

Todas las sesiones, no importa el diseño, serán grabadas y estarán disponibles a quienes asistan para que las vean durante un año después de la conferencia.

**Convocatoria de propuestas**

El tema de la conferencia es “Desarraigando la supremacía blanca”. La supremacía blanca es la creencia de que las personas blancas constituyen la raza superior y que debido a esto, deben dominar la sociedad en detrimento de otras razas, a menudo de manera excluyente. La conferencia busca desarraigar las ideologías racistas y promover la equidad y la sanación. Crearemos una comunidad para compartir información que pueda utilizarse para eliminar el racismo sistémico integrado en políticas, prácticas y sistemas, y para reducir la propagación del odio y la injusticia.

La naturaleza omnipresente y sistémica de la supremacía blanca se manifiesta a lo largo del trabajo de la psicología comunitaria, independientemente del enfoque específico de esa obra. Por esa razón, todas las propuestas deben incluir un debate sobre la pertinencia de la propuesta para el tema de la conferencia.

Alentamos propuestas en una variedad de temas, en particular aquellos relacionados con la investigación y la acción comunitaria impactante y transformadora, incluyendo:

- Cambio social, innovación social
- Investigación Acción Participativa (PAR) y otros métodos mixtos, multi-métodos y enfoques de empoderamiento de la investigación
- Multiculturalismo, derechos indígenas y justicia racial
- Igualdad económica para las mujeres y justicia reproductiva
- LGBTQ2/Género y Minorías Sexuales (GSM) derechos humanos y lucha por los derechos
- Migración/inmigración, desplazamiento y globalización
- Determinantes sociales de la salud, incluso en relación con la pandemia actual
- Cambio climático global y sostenibilidad
- Organización comunitaria, creación de coaliciones y compromiso cívico, activismo comunitario
- Colaboración entre asociaciones comunitarias, universidades, y redes
- Esfuerzos de cambio de base, economía creativa y acción comunitaria basada en las artes
- Colaboraciones para el bienestar de las comunidades vulnerables a través de programas innovadores de prevención y bienestar
- Valores y ética
- Perspectivas críticas, de liberación y aplicaciones de la teoría crítica en la comunidad
- Innovaciones tecnológicas y de redes sociales en la promoción de la salud y el bienestar de la comunidad

**Instrucciones para preparar las presentaciones del programa**

Para presentar una propuesta, visite la página web de la Bienal y seleccione el enlace de presentación de propuestas. **El sistema estará listo para aceptar propuestas el 22 de marzo de 2021 aproximadamente. SE PUEDEN SOMETER PROPUESTAS EN ESPAÑOL.** Asegúrese de consultar instrucciones específicas ya que puede haber algunas restricciones. **La fecha límite para recibir las propuestas del programa es el lunes 19 de Abril de 2021, 11:55 PM (EST).** Las directrices de presentación de propuestas estarán disponibles en línea.

**Formatos de programa**

Se dará prioridad a las propuestas que aborden explícitamente una o más de las siguientes expectativas: a) alta calidad, b) congruencia con el tema de la conferencia general y las áreas temáticas enumeradas anteriormente, c) ejemplos de participación comunitaria-académica, d)
articulación clara de las lecciones aprendidas de la sesión y (d) colaboración. Las propuestas deben incluir una descripción de formatos y actividades que maximicen la participación del público. Se fomentan enfoques innovadores, creativos y basados en el arte para lograr este objetivo. Tenga en cuenta que aceptaremos solo una presentación de primera autoría por persona, y la primera autoría en una presentación será la de la persona que envíe la propuesta al sistema. Además, pedimos que cualquier individuo se incluya en cualquier rol en no más de 5 propuestas separadas (sin incluir las presentaciones de carteles [poster]). Las presentaciones deben corresponder a una de las siete categorías siguientes:

1. **Las presentaciones de carteles** - facilitan las conversaciones individuales y de grupos pequeños mediante el uso de una ayuda visual. Se prefieren carteles que resalten métodos innovadores para la interacción de las personas participantes en la conferencia. Las presentaciones de carteles pueden enfatizar la investigación, la práctica, la acción u otras iniciativas. Los carteles se organizarán en grupos temáticos y se presentarán durante las sesiones de cartel designadas.

2. **Simposio** - proporciona un foro de discusión, debate y explicación de diversas perspectivas en lo que respecta a los temas y/o áreas de la conferencia. Los simposios se pueden utilizar para presentar temas de práctica y/o investigación. Se preferirán los envíos que describan explícitamente el proceso o método que se utilizará para facilitar la interacción y el diálogo del público. Los simposios normalmente incluyen 3-4 trabajos relacionados, un moderador y un ponente.


4. **Reuniones comunitarias [Town hall]** enfocan debates de participantes sobre temas críticos y actuales o direcciones futuras importantes relacionadas con la investigación, los valores, la acción comunitaria y la disciplina de la psicología comunitaria. Este formato es más apropiado para explorar los temas generales que atraviesan el tema de la conferencia, los subtemas y los temas relacionados. Uno o más facilitadores o facilitadoras pueden dirigir una reunión de este tipo.

5. **Los talleres** proporcionan un medio para enseñar nuevas destrezas de relevancia para el campo (por ejemplo, métodos específicos, técnicas analíticas, estrategias de alcance comunitario).

6. **Otras sesiones innovadoras** ofrecen la oportunidad de presentar sesiones que no se ajusten a ninguna de las demás categorías. Este formato es especialmente adecuado para presentaciones basadas en las artes, basadas en la tecnología y en la práctica.

Los componentes adicionales del programa incluirán sesiones de tutoría, sesiones de panel con oradores y oradoras principales y eventos sociales.

**Información adicional de la conferencia**

La conferencia tendrá lugar virtualmente. Comenzará el martes 22 de junio ycluirá el sábado por la tarde, 26 de junio. Habrá dos bloques de sesiones de 3 horas cada día, uno de 11am-2pm EDT y el otro de 6pm-9pm EDT. Habrá traducción simultánea de algunas de las
presentaciones del inglés a español y vice-versa. Los presentadores y presentadoras podrán indicar su bloque de tiempo preferido cuando presenten sus propuestas, pero su preferencia no está garantizada.

Los detalles sobre el registro de la conferencia, incluyendo descripciones de las plataformas en línea y enlaces de materiales de capacitación para los presentadores y presentadoras, se proporcionarán en el sitio web del SCRA. Todas las personas que presenten deben inscribirse para la conferencia pagando las cuotas de inscripción.

Tarifas de conferencia: La información sobre las cuotas de inscripción se publicará en el sitio web de la conferencia. Las preguntas relacionadas con el programa se pueden enviar a biennialprogram@scra27.org

SCRA Membership

If you are not currently a member of the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA) and would like to be, please visit http://scra27.org/ to learn more about the organization. If you would like to become a member, the membership form can be accessed at: http://scra27.org/members1/membership/

If you would like to learn more about community psychology, visit www.communitypsychology.com.

TCP Submission Guidelines

TCP is published four times a year. Articles, columns, features, and announcements should be submitted as Word attachments in an e-mail message to Dominique Thomas and Allana Zuckerman at TCP@scra27.org Submission deadlines are:

- February 15th – Spring issue
- May 15th – Summer issue
- August 15th – Fall issue
- November 15th – Winter issue

Authors should adhere to the following guidelines when submitting materials:

- Length: Five pages, double-spaced
- No cover sheet or title page. Please be sure to put the article title and author names and organizational affiliations at the top of the article.
- Graphs & Tables: These should be converted and saved as pictures in JPEG files. Please note where they should be placed in the article.
- Images: Images are highly recommended, but please limit to two images per article. Images should be higher than 300 dpi. If images need to be scanned, please scan them at 300 dpi and save them as JPEGs. Submit the image(s) as a separate file.
- Margins: 1” margins on all four sides
- Text: Times New Roman, 12-point font – this includes headings and titles and subheadings.
- Alignment: All text should be aligned to the left (including titles) with a .5” paragraph indentation.
- Punctuation Spacing: Per APA guidelines, make sure that there is only one space after periods, question marks, etc.
- Do NOT include footnotes or endnotes.
- References: Follow APA guidelines. These should also be justified to the left with a hanging indent of .25”.
- Headers/Footers: Do not use headers and footers.
- Please put your email information and an invitation to contact you into the article.
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