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From the President

Notes from the President

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Susan Torres-Harding

Currently as of this writing, the executive committee (EC) and I have acknowledged and taken up the challenge of responding to the open letter calling for changes to the organizational leadership and structure of SCRA to address white supremacy and integrate anti-racist action into our organization. This comes as part of the challenge and long overdue work in the U.S. to undo systemic and institutionalized racism and racial violence that has long jeopardized the lives and well-being of Black people. The murders of George Floyd and many others in recent days is, unfortunately, part of our continuing legacy of pain and oppression that everyone in our society needs to take responsibility to change. In particular, the call in both the letter and also in general in our society is for all people, especially non-Black people of color and White people, to engage in deep self-reflection regarding our part in enduring systems of oppression, and to take up the responsibility for change, both now and into the future. The many communications

Contents

From the President.....	1
From the Editors.....	3
Special Feature: COVID 19 and Its Impact on SCRA Members	4
The Community Practitioner	34
Critical Community Psychology	36
Environment and Justice	39
International Committee	42
Prevention and Promotion	45
Regional Network News	49
Rural Interests.....	51
Student Issues.....	55
SCRA Member Spotlight	57
From Our Members	58
SCRA News	69
SCRA Membership.....	71
TCP Submission Guidelines.....	71

occurring on the listserv, including the calls for action, and organizing with our own communities, demonstrate that our members care deeply about working for real change, both with and external to SCRA. Many of our members are actively engaged

in doing so not only within SCRA but also within our own communities and within our professional and personal lives. As painful and difficult as this work is, I am glad to see the ideas and calling in amongst each other to do this work, and to also figure out how to effectively take collective action.

Unfortunately, the lack of responsiveness that has been observed by our members lays bare some of the existing structural problems within SCRA. Over the years, the organization has developed using a participatory, voluntary model—this means that the organization and the leadership, including the EC, consists almost completely entirely of volunteers, with almost no paid (less than 5 at any given time) positions anywhere in the entire organization to allow for protected time and energy. Our leadership structure has been developed to maintain the continuing operation of SCRA, with the majority of the work, initiatives, innovation, advocacy, and policy work coming from the membership, predominantly through the work of individual committees, interest groups, and councils, and from individual members.

This past year, on the EC, we ourselves questioned whether the leadership itself was functioning in a way that best served the needs of the organization, and whether the leadership group itself had grown in a way that was itself inefficient and/or slow to implement the agendas that we had set for ourselves in the past year. We questioned whether our structure impeded our desire to integrate diversity and inclusion broadly into the organization to a greater extent, as well as our desire to improve transparency and accountability for our members around how decision-making operated within SCRA. It is telling that even those on the EC questioned and did not fully understand what their roles were as leaders and as being part of the EC. Thus, in recent months, we embarked on a self-assessment of the EC using outside consultation. We hope to engage in 'right-sizing' of the leadership structure and to make changes that would improve our functioning and decision-making processes. We have discussed and continue to recognize the need for examining whether resources allocation, funded initiatives, and

budgeting processing decisions were being made with critically important diversity and equity concerns across our organization.

The open letter to the EC brings into sharp relief these existing problems and resulting slow responsiveness. This call to action provides an additional and much-needed challenge to our organization to increasingly center Black scholarship and the voices and contributions of our Black and non-Black people of color, and to address past and existing wrongs and ongoing institutional practices that have been harmful to our Black members.

It is painful and extremely saddening to recognize how SCRA has continued to let our members down, and the ways in which I as president have also let people down and engaged in missteps and mistakes. However, it is very important to recognize these mistakes and to get a clear sense of the reality of the situation, and not engage in explaining things away by just saying, 'well, that's how it always has been done', 'it wasn't intended that way', 'that's just our history', 'we can't change because of x, y, and z', and keep going about business as usual. The reality is that we CAN change as an organization, and our members have told us that they want the structures and practices of SCRA to change in this way, to be a truly anti-racist organization, and not just one that sees this as one competing view among many within SCRA. This will take time, as with any structural change, but the leadership's agenda for the coming year will be to institutionalize these changes. This will involve both using existing resources and carefully thinking our real current limitations in terms of both funding and the current leadership structure. We can prioritize what we can do now by moving around existing resources, and creatively working through how we can build resources and capacities to be able to transform the organization the way that want and build long-term sustainability.

Most importantly, the open letter challenged us to think through who will make through these decisions—SCRA has never had a formal process of examining representation in our leadership

structures, in our nominations for positions, for awards, or for resource distributions, and so strategies to more fully reach out and invite participation from all members while paying attention to diversity of representation is very important and will be implemented. I am very hopeful that we as an organization will be able to institute these long overdue changes and work towards these critically important goals in the coming months.

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From the Editors

Written by Dominique Thomas, University of Michigan

We are in a time of significant social, economic, and political upheaval. Members of the Society have been wondering how community psychology can serve as a force for positive social change during this time. How can SCRA serve the number of marginalized communities most affected by the both COVID-19 and racial capitalism manifesting as anti-Blackness and police brutality?



Dominique Thomas

A group of members drafted a letter to SCRA members and leadership calling for action to address anti-Blackness. In the midst of protests and rebellions across the world in response to police killings of Black people, we have seen the national conversation shift. Calls to defund

the police, once considered fringe, are now serious political options with Minneapolis City Council voting to disband the Minneapolis Police Department. We have seen other symbols fall as the state of Mississippi voted to remove the

Confederate symbol from the state flag and create a new flag. Are we seeing meaningful progress? If so, we can keep the momentum happening here as well. Our next issue/special issue will be devoted to answering these questions and moving towards progress.

A number of initiatives are under way in the Society to combat many of these issues both within and outside the organization. Several of the articles in this issue refer to the reality of COVID that many people are facing at this moment. The global response to the pandemic has varied with countries who responded more quickly seeing more beneficial results and those who delayed their responses seeing rising numbers of cases. What is clear is that we are in a time of change and that we are also seeing cultural traumas play out in front of us. How do we heal in a time of physical and social illness? We all have cultural resources we can draw from and share with one another. We can find different ways to work with our communities that take advantage of technology and democratizes the process. In CERA, we have hosted healing circles the last few months for members to come together in a space to process and find community. What are other practices that help with healing communities? It is a good question to keep in mind when we decide on what projects and initiatives we sign up for as community psychologists. How can we help facilitate healing with communities in a way that respects their autonomy and self-determination? How will community psychology rise to the occasion during this time?

Susan and Dominique
TCP Editors



Special Feature: COVID 19 and Its Impact on SCRA Members

Edited by Susan M. Wolfe, Susan Wolfe and Associates, LLC

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all SCRA members throughout the world. At best, it kept some of us home for a time. At worst, some of us have lost friends, colleagues, and family members. It has disrupted our work and our social relationships. The health and economic impact will be felt for a long time. It has highlighted the holes in some of our safety nets. In the U.S. and other countries, the disparities regarding who is affected and how they are affected has clearly displayed racial, ethnic, and economic inequities. Those of us who have been privileged to safely work from home while our refrigerators and cupboards are full can certainly no longer deny just how privileged we are. And this is not over yet.

This special feature includes a collection of articles from SCRA members sharing their experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic, personally and professionally.

Introduction: A Community Psychologist's Grassroots COVID-19 Intervention: Albany, NY

Written by Christopher Corbett, Albany, NY

The following Op-Ed by Christopher Corbett is a Community Psychologist's effort to educate and empower nonprofits at the grassroots level in Albany, N.Y. to research evolving CARES Act funding opportunities. It also applies to other state and national charitable nonprofits. This Op-Ed illustrates the power of designing interventions by combining Community Psychology Core Competencies especially including: # 2, Empowerment; # 10, Resource Development; # 15, Public Policy and # 16, Community Education and Dissemination, as described by J. Dalton and S. Wolfe in *The Community Psychologist*, 45(4), Fall

2012 (p. 8-14), and as applied at the Sector level of intervention. The implementation agents are nonprofit staff, leadership, and all members of a nonprofit's board of directors responsible for its governance and fulfillment of Mission. The Op-Ed is also designed to increase awareness of the field of community psychology which is noted in the author's biography. Reprinted with Permission from www.dailygazette.net. Daily Gazette 4/19/2020, Albany, New York [p.D-1]

Nonprofits must understand options with CARES Act

In response to the coronavirus pandemic crisis, our elected leaders approved the \$2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). This Act will help our country survive the devastating effects of the coronavirus spreading across the world.

The human consequences are profound, and no financial support can address the human tragedy this pandemic has wreaked upon us. Yet to our elected officials' credit, they approved substantial financial relief to support employment of many, providing funding not only to for-profit organizations, but also for nonprofits that provide critical community services.

Nonprofits provide many essential services neither government nor the for-profit sector can remotely duplicate. While the CARES Act funds opportunities to for-profits, it also supports charitable nonprofit organizations, the primary focus here. While the Act exceeds 800 pages, some provisions apply to charitable nonprofit organizations.

Many Capital District nonprofits, large and small, qualify for funding. The act is generous and designed for very small to large nonprofits. Yet this requires significant effort by nonprofits, many understaffed and under-resourced, to fully assess CARE Act opportunities.

One goal: Provide cash to charitable nonprofits to retain or re-hire staff, pay operating costs and advance their missions. While some provisions enable low interest loans, if job retention conditions are met, partial or full loan forgiveness

applies. The following briefly summarizes three opportunities:

Emergency Support (500 Employees or less). This provision, the Emergency Small Business Loan Program, applies to organizations with 500 or fewer employees existing by March 1, 2020. This program has forgiveness provisions, which requires retention of employees for a certain timeframe. This essentially converts a loan into a grant used for general operating purposes. Such forgivable loans could reach \$10 million and be used for payroll, health insurance, facilities and debt service. Charitable nonprofits receiving Medicaid funding also qualify.

Loan support for mid-size organizations (500-10,000 employees). This provision guarantees loans for qualifying organizations of 500 to 10,000 employees. No loan forgiveness applies, but interest is capped at 2 percent. This provision has staff retention and compensation requirements to qualify.

Loan Support (Any Size). This loan has a fixed rate of 2.75 percent, with a \$2 million maximum, and can be used for fixed debts, payroll and bills that cannot be paid due to the disaster. Small organizations (500 employees or fewer) may qualify for checks of up to \$10,000 within three days.

Given this crisis, many nonprofits, board members and the public might be distracted from discovering CARES Act opportunities. Also, many nonprofits lack resources, administrative support and awareness of this landmark legislation. For details and filing information see: www.sba.gov.

The purpose here is to expand awareness and encourage further examination of implications for local charitable nonprofits that could enable or contribute to their survival. For small and other resource-strapped nonprofits, one solution is for small nonprofits to partner with other nonprofits to jointly assess the potential implications, particularly relating to the three primary programs noted above. Also, board members are ideally suited to explore CARE Act opportunities in service of their governance responsibilities. This legislation has the

potential to avoid the failure of nonprofits in the Capital Region and beyond.

There is both urgency and opportunity to explore CARE Act provisions—action that could make the difference between failure and survival of nonprofits that deliver many essential services, upon which communities depend.

Christopher Corbett, who has a master's degree in community psychology, is a nonprofit researcher and author of "Advancing Nonprofit Stewardship Through Self-Regulation: Translating Principles into Practice". Reprinted with Permission from www.dailygazette.net. Any questions may be directed to the author at: chris_corbett1994@hotmail.com.

The Pandemic as an Eye-Opener: Five Lessons for a Better World

Written by Serdar M. Değirmencioğlu

Cleaner air. Cleaner seas. No car noise. Safe streets, safe bicycle paths. Dolphins entering canals in Venice or the Golden Horn in Istanbul. The ongoing pandemic has allowed the entire world to see that a better world is possible. All the arguments against change have been proven wrong. The deadly pandemic has, very ironically, ushered in new hope for those who believe in change.

The pandemic paralyzed much of the economy primarily because the economic model that has been promoted over the world for decades was a bad one. Many scientists have long pointed out that a model demanding an ever-growing circulation of goods and people generates ecological disasters and growing inequalities. The pandemic exposed the fragility of the neoliberal growth model. Once exaggerated consumption slows down, large companies start pleading for immediate public support. Precarious jobs are lost or are frozen. Underfunded healthcare services start falling apart under a big demand. And those working in services that have been portrayed as inefficient and not productive, those who are not

paid decent salaries have suddenly become “essential workers”, thanks to the pandemic.

The ongoing pandemic has also provided the context for renewed focus on the loss of biodiversity and various ecosystem functions, and the opportunity for viruses to spread across the world. What is called “global economy” comes at the expense of a sustainable environment. According to WHO estimates, 4.2 million people die each year from outdoor air pollution. Climate change is expected to cause 250,000 additional deaths per year between 2030 and 2050. Further severe degradation of ecosystems are a likely scenario with the growth model and so are even stronger virus outbreaks.

Militarism and the pandemic

The pandemic has also made it possible to see strong arguments against militarism to appear (finally!) in mainstream media outlets in the US. Relying on figures provided by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), Impelli (2020) argued that the \$35.1 billion the US Government spent on nuclear weapons in 2019 could have provided 300,000 ICU intensive care unit beds, 35,000 ventilators, salaries of 150,000 U.S. nurses and of 75,000 doctors.

Another opinion piece nailed the argument. Barber and Bennis (2020) argued that the public needed to take over the military's resources to counter the pandemic: Military spending, \$738 billion in 2020, is a distortion of priorities. The Pentagon receives 53 cents of every discretionary tax dollar and there is no money to pay for Medicare for All, a Green New Deal, and so on. The solution is obvious: Bring military resources under civilian medical and public health control.

In April, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) released a fact sheet regarding military spending worldwide. Total global military expenditure rose to \$1917 billion in 2019, the largest annual increase in spending since 2010. The biggest spender was, as always, the US. But a careful look exposes another painful fact related to the pandemic. Military spending is very high in countries where the response to the pandemic was inadequate and the death rate was very high.

Italy, which was hit very hard by the pandemic, ranked 12th in military spending. Italy is also one of the countries littered with nuclear weapons. Spain, which also had a very high death toll, ranked 17th. The trouble with militarism becomes more obvious if one looks at the countries with highest death rates. The four countries leading in death rate, adjusted for population size, are Belgium, United Kingdom, Spain, and Italy. These are all NATO countries and United Kingdom ranks 8th in military spending. Add France and the US: Six of the eight countries leading in death rate, are NATO members with high military spending.

Healthcare, not warfare

Not surprisingly, many organizations across the world raised their voices and released statements explicating how militarism robs societies of the services they need in difficult times. The Independent and Peaceful Australia Network's statement, titled “*A People's Call for Healthcare not Warfare*”, was released on May 18. It is worth reading:

We the undersigned, call on the Australian Government to stop funneling billions of dollars into offensive weapons for unjust US led wars, and invest instead in the health and safety of people and the environment.

On 23 March 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic ravaging the world, the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres called for a global ceasefire. The UN call highlights the disparity between the huge financial and technological resources invested in wars, and the under-funded and under-resourced public health systems desperately trying to control this deadly virus.

We call on the Australian Government to support the UN Secretary General's call.

COVID-19 has sharply exposed the dangerous and unsustainable priorities of our society. On the other hand, the vast majority of Australians are cooperating to control the virus. World-wide, there are desperate shortages in the supply of most basic safety and life-saving equipment – ICU beds, ventilators, virus testing kits and personal protective equipment for front line health workers.

At the same time there are vast stockpiles of technologically advanced military weaponry worth trillions of dollars, waiting to be used in endless profit-making wars.

Redirect military spending

The UN call for a worldwide ceasefire means little unless foreign military forces are sent back to their home countries. To that end we call on the Australian government to bring home our military forces from battle zones in the Middle East, Afghanistan and the Philippines, and to close the Pine Gap function that supports US drone warfare. Hundreds of billions of our tax dollars are used to buy military equipment largely to support the U.S. military agenda around the world.

Instead, huge expenditure is urgently needed here in Australia, for health and medical services and to address the climate crisis.

Australia's immediate priorities should be providing support for millions of people facing unemployment, homelessness and poverty during the national disasters of coronavirus, the climate crisis, drought and bushfires – rather than supporting unjust U.S. led wars.

Prioritise people and environment

In spite of this difficult period of physical distancing, people are organising and helping each other and building social unity. We need to make sure we come out of these crises with a more humane, just, and democratic society.

We need a society that prioritises the health, education and safety of people and the environment over war.

We need a society that builds Australia's self-reliant and diverse industries to manufacture and produce for the needs of the people, and an economy that is not based on multinational profit making.

We need a society that invests in our research scientists, the CSIRO and other public research institutions, not globalised corporations in search of profit.

We need a society that prioritises peace, justice and the health of people and the environment – an independent and peaceful Australia.

Militarism will not go easily

Militarism has not declined since the end of the Cold War. Instead it has grown stronger.

Conservatives across the world demand more and more spending on weapons and argue that producing weapons is good for the economy. In a very recent statement, Le Mouvement de la Paix shed light on how the Macron government, in the midst of an ongoing pandemic and the associated health crisis in France, is persisting in favor of useless and costly military expenditures, all to the detriment of health and environmental priorities.

Instead of announcing an emergency plan for the public health service, new and better jobs for medical staff and a plan to rebuild the domestic industrial medical sector in order to provide sufficient autonomy to ensure the health safety of people living in France, Macron's government announced the construction of a second aircraft carrier using nuclear energy. The cost? More than 5 billion euros.

Another announcement had to do with the resumption of tests of the M51 nuclear missile. These announcements are part of the "White Paper on Defence", which stipulates that EUR 100 billion will be spent over 15 years on the only nuclear submarine fleet renewal programme, which is as such a violation of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). Thus, the government in France has declared its commitment to militarism at the expense of health, environmental security and a sustainable world.

Take home message

The year 2020 will be remembered for the pandemic and how it demonstrated that security cannot be made possible by militarism. Perhaps it will also be remembered for a big move toward de-growth. For that to happen, it is time for all of us to take heed of five key lessons, like those in the manifesto put forth in April by 170 scholars from five universities in the Netherlands:

- 1) A move away from development focused on aggregate GDP growth to differentiate among sectors that can grow and need investment (the so-called critical

public sectors, and clean energy, education, health and more) and sectors that need to radically degrow due to their fundamental unsustainability or their role in driving continuous and excessive consumption (especially private sector oil, gas, mining, advertising, and so forth);

2) an economic framework focused on redistribution, which establishes a universal basic income rooted in a universal social policy system, a strong progressive taxation of income, profits and wealth, reduced working hours and job sharing, and recognizes care work and essential public services such as health and education for their intrinsic value;

3) agricultural transformation towards regenerative agriculture based on biodiversity conservation, sustainable and mostly local and vegetarian food production, as well as fair agricultural employment conditions and wages;

4) reduction of consumption and travel, with a drastic shift from luxury and wasteful consumption and travel to basic, necessary, sustainable and satisfying consumption and travel;

5) debt cancellation, especially for workers and small business owners and for countries in the global south (both from richer countries and international financial institutions).

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How to Get a Thesis Done During a Pandemic: Use Your Community!

Written by Azza Osman, Carie Forden, Dina Elbawab, Hajar Khalil, Manar Nada, Nashwa Rashad, Salma Elsaedy, and Yomna Eltaweel, The American University in Cairo

While it is challenging to write a thesis at any time, there are special challenges to writing a thesis during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here in Egypt, the infection numbers have been growing slowly but steadily; as of the end of May, we have had over 20,000 recorded cases with about 875 deaths, and it does not appear that the number will decline any time soon. The government has worked to control the outbreak with strategies such as a curfew, the closure of schools, universities, coffee shops and restaurants, requiring the wearing of masks, and encouraging social isolation. Our campus went online in March and shortly thereafter, we (seven master's thesis students and one faculty member) started a support group in order to get through this difficult time. We found that our understanding of the value of community deepened as we built this group and came to rely on each other while sharing our common struggles.

Challenges and Benefits of Writing a Thesis during COVID-19

There is a certain amount of stress that comes to everyone who is writing a thesis, but we found that the pandemic added to the normal thesis stress in several ways. For example, the sense of isolation, the worry, and the loss of normal daily routines made it especially difficult to maintain our motivation. In addition, the lockdown meant that we were at home with our families full-time, and this blurring of work and home was very challenging. Most of us were not used to working from home, so it was difficult to set up a work routine. Campus was an escape from home in order to work, one

with better resources and better internet, and spending limited hours there made us efficient. Now, the campus was not available. At the same time, home was no longer a haven from work, so we had no place to wind down. Furthermore, our family demands interfered with work, and our families didn't always understand why we needed to work. And of course, some of our theses were stalled or had to be re-envisioned when the possibility of community data collection was put on hold.

Along with these challenges, there were some benefits to the lockdown. For some of us, there was actually more time for work as there were fewer outside distractions and we no longer had long commutes taking hours out of our days. In some cases, time became more flexible due to fewer scheduled activities, or family demands that limited work time led to greater efficiency. Another unexpected positive outcome of COVID-19 was that access to some normally restricted online resources was eased. And finally, like other types of crisis, the pandemic forced us to change; it required us to adapt to new situations, to be flexible, and to try to think outside of the box. One of the gifts of this crisis has been our thesis support group.

Building Community Through a Thesis Support Group

In response to the challenges we faced during COVID-19, we formed a virtual support group, meeting once a week over Zoom. This support group grew out of a graduate student WhatsApp group, and it now includes a faculty member who serves as a facilitator and mentor. During the weekly meetings, each of us reports on our thesis progress and sets goals for the following week. We address self-care issues and discuss mental blocks and other barriers to working. We've also started to meet for Zoom work sessions, where we each read and write individually for short blocks of time and take breaks together. Across all three of these formats, our support group has made us feel less alone. It has helped us better understand and live "sense of community" as we deepen our connections and build a system of mutual support.



Weekly Meetings. The weekly support group meetings are motivating and have helped us to work for a number of reasons. First, it has been very useful to identify weekly goals because they give us specific, achievable targets to aim for and that makes things less overwhelming. Setting these goals in the presence of others is especially helpful because hearing others figure out their goals has helped us set more reasonable targets for ourselves. We can also relate to each other's struggles with achieving goals and provide each other with a safe environment where we can confess to lack of progress without shame. We feel less alone in our low moments of annoyance and frustration. Second, the support group is an available and responsive source of information. The questions and answers that come up during each person's time are sometimes very important to our own research, and we learn a lot from the group. Third, we not only address issues directly related to the thesis in the support group, we also address our overall well-being, which indirectly helps our thesis progress. We share strategies for overcoming COVID-19 stressors, check in on self-care practices and support each other in setting physical and mental health goals. Sometimes the discussion veers to topics unrelated to the thesis or COVID-19, and that provides a welcome relief from the intensity of the current situation. Finally, the group has made us more accountable. It gives us something to look forward to each week, motivating us to keep going until we meet next, encouraging us to pick ourselves up more quickly when we fall, and to stay committed. What we learn from the

group every time is to not give up on our theses and on ourselves.

WhatsApp Support and Zoom Work

Sessions. In addition to the weekly support group meetings, our WhatsApp group has also been a great source of support where we can get immediate help and encouragement whenever we need it. We also use it to share information that we think will be useful to the group members. Our Zoom work meetings are especially helpful for getting into a work mode. These are not necessarily regularly scheduled; if someone wants to have company while working, she'll text the group on WhatsApp and whoever is available may join. It's really nice to have company while working, a virtual study partner, and most times we don't speak much at all, but knowing that there is someone on the other end working with you is comforting and motivating.

Recommendations

We have learned that it is vital to have support while doing a thesis, especially from people that understand what you are going through. The positive impact of a thesis support group by far outweighs the time commitment. Here are our recommendations if you are thinking of starting one:

- We definitely recommend setting up weekly supportive meetings and using those meeting to set short-term and realistic goals to work toward.
- Everyone must commit to attending. We have learned that a support group will only work if there is sufficient consistency to build safety and trust. We discovered that we needed to show up even if we felt bad or had not accomplished our goals.
- The presence of an experienced professor as a facilitator in the support group meetings was motivating and strengthened our commitment. The professor knows what it is like to do a thesis and can empathize but can also be objective and push you when you need it.
- It's also important to have a safe space that is not open to faculty members; in our case the WhatsApp group made this possible. This allows students room to discuss issues that they would rather not share with their professors.

- Discuss challenges and concerns openly. Remember that if everything was always going well, you wouldn't need a support group!
- Recognize that your support is helpful to others even if you don't believe it yourself.
- Commit to a regular routine with a specific time each day to work on the thesis (even if just for an hour).
- As part of your routine, self-care, including exercising, meditation, recreational reading, music, and limited watching of movies or shows, is helpful. Connecting with family and friends through texts and video calls, and cleaning so as to have a pleasant work environment is also valuable.
- Co-working online, both scheduled and unscheduled, will lessen isolation and increase work time.

Conclusion

We believe that everyone who does a thesis has to be resilient; they must be prepared for obstacles to appear from nowhere, to adapt to difficult situations, and to be flexible. As community psychologists, we know that resilience is a skill that is facilitated by social support; we don't learn resilience in isolation. A thesis support group can provide that social support and build individual resilience. Being part of this support group has made us grateful for our community of practice. We have benefited not only from each member's experiences and knowledge, but also have been inspired by how each person has embodied the community psychology values of humility, compassion, empathy, and respect of diversity. We now understand in a deeper way that reaching out to others to give and receive support is essential to human well-being. Going through this experience of writing a thesis during a pandemic has strengthened our resolve to build and sustain community both in our own lives and in the lives of others.

For further information or support for developing your own thesis group, contact us by emailing Carie Forden at cforden@aucegypt.edu.

Online Photovoice Workshop during COVID-19 Lockdown: New Experience for Professors and Students

Written by Massimo Santinello, Marta Gaboardi, Michela Lenzi, Rosario Papale, and Giulia Turetta, University of Padova, Padova, Italy

The COVID-19 pandemic revolutionized our daily lives from endless points of view. In the academia this meant adapting all the teaching activities to an online format, which represented a very big challenge, especially for courses with interactive and practical activities. However, this challenge represented an amazing opportunity to cope with this emergency together and support each other, by sharing emotions, thoughts, and experiences while conducting academic activities. This was the case for the Photovoice workshop “Photovoice as action research”.

The Department of Developmental and Social Psychology (University of Padua) organizes practical workshops for students in Masters’ degree courses, called “laboratories”. Within the Community Psychology master’s degree, a Photovoice laboratory has been included in the curriculum.

Photovoice is a method of community-based participatory research that captures aspects of a context from the perspective of people involved (Wang et al., 2000). Participants take photos that reflect meaningful features of their context, and then discuss the photos in groups. By shooting photos, participants document the reality of their lives; sharing and discussing about their photos, they use the power of the visual image to communicate their life experiences (Wang et al., 2000). As part of the curriculum of the Masters’ degree in community Psychology, students can take part in a “Laboratory of Photovoice”, during which they attend a practical course on the photovoice technique and then are directly involved in a photovoice project as participants.

Due to the COVID-19 health emergency, this year the workshop was transformed into an online Photovoice workshop; both the discussions among participants and the final exhibition have been transformed in an online format (Volpe, 2019). Considering the dramatic changes that the COVID-19 pandemic brought in our everyday life, we chose to focus the photovoice projects on the students’ subjective experience of this difficult time.

Below we present the process and the main results that emerged during the group discussions. In addition, we present the experience from the point of view of those who led the workshop and students’ experience.

Process

The weekly workshops lasted two months. During seven workshops, students attended online classes on how to implement a Photovoice project, learning about: participatory action research; Photovoice phases; ethical issues of photography; photographic techniques; and how to organize an exhibition.

The workshop included four operational phases for the students.

Step 1: ANALYZING AND DISCUSSING EXISTING LITERATURE. Students working in pairs analyzed two scientific papers about Photovoice projects (one chosen by the professor and one chosen by them). One day was dedicated to the presentation of the different papers, followed by group discussions about how the photovoice method can be applied to different social contexts.

Step 2: CHOOSING A SPECIFIC FOCUS. The professor and academic tutor for the course proposed four potential topics related to the COVID-19 emergency. Students voted and selected two of them and then were divided into two working groups. The topics chosen were interpersonal relationships and sources of fun during lockdown.

Step 3: SELECTING THE MOST REPRESENTATIVE PHOTOS. Students took three to five photos representing one of the two topics of the project. Then, they uploaded the photos (with a short caption and title) in an online platform. Two weeks later, the professor and the tutor coordinated

the discussion about the photos in two separate groups. After the discussion, students identified more specific thematic categories within the main topics. In the subsequent step, the five most representative photos for each thematic category were selected by the students.

Step 4: THE ONLINE EXHIBITION. A website was created to host a virtual exhibition of the Photovoice project. The website is organized in two sections: one with all the photos and one with the themes that emerged during the two group discussions. Together with the students we created a flyer and an online event to be shared on social networks (i.e. Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook).

Results

For each topic, three main themes emerged during the discussions.

In relation to interpersonal relationships, students mostly talked about:

- The role of food in family relationships;
- The importance of technology in supporting social relationships;
- The relation with their own self.

Regarding fun and entertainment during lockdown, students underlined:

- The importance of finding time to take care of one's own self and others;
- The importance to discover new pleasures or routines;
- The importance of being connected with others.

Food and family

Students noted that food is a component of everyday life, which is common to everyone. As such, food has the power to make people more alike. In this period, even more than usual, food became a very important symbol of sharing and allowed students to enjoy family relationships. The act of cooking was experienced with more joy and gained the power to gather the whole family around the table. During this emergency, food allowed students to regain some normality even in this extraordinary.

Technology: a life saver for social relationships!

Students discussed the extreme relevance and advantages of technological tools in this pandemic. They defined technology as a “social glue”. Thanks to the daily use of technology it was possible to not lose contact with loved ones. Also, technology facilitated the sharing of emotions and mutual support, thus helping everyone to deal with this challenging time.

Me, myself, and I

The Coronavirus emergency has forced students to adapt their relationships with others, but also with the relationship they have with themselves. The photos described the importance to take some time for reflection, have a closer look to our thoughts and feelings, which is an almost impossible challenge in our “normal”, hectic routines. Finding moments to nurture the relationship with themselves and cultivate their own passions emerged as critical issues in this situation. The quarantine was also an opportunity to find the courage to deal with problems neglected or put aside for a long time and feel in harmony with themselves.

Creating time for ourselves and social connections

The students discussed the “rediscovery of time”. They realized that the days preceding the emergency were very busy and hectic. Suddenly, they found themselves with more time to dedicate to what they like and to loved ones. This unexpected, additional time was mostly dedicated to take care of themselves, their well-being and loved ones, as shown in Photo 1.



Photo 1: Alone together.

weeks (see exam sessions), I put them aside to dedicate more time to study or other more important matters. This moment of quarantine has allowed me and Maria (girlfriend) to watch them at the speed of light” [Rosario]



Photo 2: Friends.

“I had the opportunity to read all those books that I’ve been promising to myself to read for years, in this case the complete version of Don Quixote. I try to dedicate some time to reading every day. This makes me feel really “full”... and I can share this passion with someone I love; it’s really a special gift that this peculiar time has given me” [Giulia]

Students’ experience in the Photovoice project

The students also talked about the importance to feeling connected with their loved ones. The extra time “given” by this emergency was largely used to nurture the relationships with their family, friends, and people living far away to whom they lost contact. Again, thanks to the daily use of technology it was possible to stay connected with their loved ones.

During the last meeting, students told us their experiences as workshop participants. Using the words of one of the students: “I was lucky to spend these months with a loved one: days were filled with happy moments, and this Photovoice project became part of our daily life together, and portrayed us while cooking, reading, playing the ukulele or taking care of a seedling. The workshop has been an interactive way to learn and gave me the opportunity to become more aware of the situation and how I was living it. I found it exciting that all the participants became protagonists, working together for a common aim. We joined strengths and diversities, giving importance to each single person and point of view, working together. I am happy that our dedication resulted in an online exhibition, although I would have preferred being physically together. During this project I learned that we are all different persons, living in different cities, with different hobbies and routines, but we lived this peculiar moment in a very similar way. I felt linked to others and photographs overcame the limits of words”.

Discovering new and old passions

During the lockdown, students noticed that in “normal” times the rhythm of daily life did not allow them to nurture their passions or experiments new activities. This lockdown gave them the time and the chance to discover new and old passions, enjoy the art of cooking or watching TV series, as shown in Photo 2.

“TV shows are one of my countless passions. It’s never easy to find the time to watch them and often, in the hardest

Another student underlined the importance of sharing his daily life with others: “When I included the Photovoice workshop in my academic curriculum, I didn’t know what to expect, but I felt it would stimulate me. Being stuck at home and with zero social contacts forced us to adapt our needs, our habits, and our academic duties to this alternative daily life. The Photovoice workshop gave me the precious opportunity to reflect about how I was experiencing relationships and fun during this emergency. Thinking and shooting photos made me feel amused and excited, and I involved my girlfriend in this activity; it wasn’t a simple photographic task. Listening and discussing in a group about the stories and the experiences behind each shot made me feel closer to others, despite the physical distance. It helped me feeling part of other students’ lives, of the joys and the absences that characterized our days in this special historical moment. I felt understood, I saw in the other participants’ stories some experiences similar to mine. I remembered that happiness is real only when shared”.

Conclusion

From the point of view of the professor and tutor, this workshop was a challenge. Re-adapting a participatory methodology workshop in online format changed the relationship with the group and the use of the technique. Despite the challenge, we found that the workshop was useful not only for learning the Photovoice technique. Indeed, students had the opportunity to reflect on their lives and support each other through photographs and discussions during the lockdown. So far, the online exhibition has been quite successful, as shown by the 431 views in five days. This result is very satisfying and allowed to find an easy and effective tool to disseminate the findings of Photovoice projects.

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A Disorienting Dilemma: The Impact of COVID-19 on a Peer-led Community-based Service-Learning Intervention Study

Written by Benjamin C. Graham, Zofi Laube, and Kristen Ketterman, Humboldt State University

“How do I coach my kindergarten teachers to Zoom with 30 kids?” the vice-principal said. A few weeks ago, this engaged community partner for the undergraduates in my service-learning course was all in. Now, she might as well have been saying “Welcome to COVID-19.”

In late March 2020, things were not looking good. The minor relief that spring break bestows—the chance to get caught up on grading and design minor mid-semester classroom tweaks—had vaporized only a week before. I (BG) found myself, like many, staring at a Zoom window attempting to restore a sense of purpose, direction, and community. It seemed the very existence of the project, a community-based service learning (CbSL) intervention study, hung in a balance that was rapidly recalibrating itself. To add to the weightiness, I was sharing the call with a student peer facilitator on the project who had so adeptly led her team in the first half of the semester. Now, her eyes bolted a question from the corner of the screen: “What now?”

Yes, what now? What came next was not as bleak as it felt at the time. True, the community

partner, peer facilitator, and I decided after the Zoom meeting to step away from our original intention. But for the research team (BG, KK, & ZL), the student and her fellow nine peer facilitators, the 85 student service learners, and 10 community partner sites what happened afterward was an experience of redirection, reimagining, and resilience that not only allowed us to persevere in the early months of COVID-19 but also provided new meaning for our intervention and the study anchored to it.

In this article, we describe our experience as a research team conducting a semester-long community-based service-learning intervention study that occurred in Spring 2020 between February and May. The intervention involved two undergraduate courses and 10 community partner sites, each with a student team led by a trained peer facilitator. The study began before the onset of COVID-19 in the U.S. and took challenging but rewarding twists as a result of the changes brought on by the pandemic. We provide a project overview, share our personal narratives as team members, describe how the project was reimagined following the shelter-in-place ordinances, and reflect on lessons learned.

Project Overview

Community-based Service Learning (CbSL) enacts community psychology pedagogy by transforming ivory tower walls into bridges that link campuses to communities (Bringle & Duffy, 1998; Hofman & Rosing, 2007). This praxis between real-world experience and traditional academics can positively impact student development in academic, civic, and personal domains (Bringle, Hatcher, & Hahn, 2017), and its benefits are well-documented (e.g., Bernacki & Jaeger, 2008; DePrince, Priebe, & Newton, 2011; Einfeld & Collins, 2008). While the research on CbSL is primarily positive, some studies have underscored unintended negative effects when models are implemented poorly (Jones, 2002).

Transformational learning theory derives from Mezirow (1991; 2000) and Paulo Friere (1970) and offers a framework for understanding student experience across cultural, intellectual, personal,

and other domains (Bamber & Hankin, 2011). The theory includes the notion of “disorienting dilemmas” in the learning process which create in the learner fundamental shifts in how concepts are understood (Mezirow, 1991; 2000). Community psychology’s focus on applied settings may not seem disorienting for experienced practitioners, but to an undergraduate student beginning another semester of lectures and class discussions on campus, working at an actual community organization while exploring course concepts has the potential to enact this core ingredient of transformational learning theory.

Enter COVID-19. For our project, if we chose to keep going the stakes for ensuring the work (whatever that would be) gets done well were high. Concern over changes in implementation was magnified by the question the project was trying to answer in our original IRB-approved study: How might a novel, tier-based model for CbSL involving small teams led by peer facilitators increase capacity for service-learning? In terms of implementation, the training module for the peer facilitators had been completed, ten sites had been secured, and site teams of 5-11 students were eagerly looking forward to physically working at their sites. While the model being tested was built for scalability and sustainability, it had not been designed for a sudden mid-semester shift like this!

What the model was designed to address was the reality that large class sizes create challenges to effective CbSL implementation. Scaling up opportunities for CbSL is thus a potentially high-impact area of innovation. Some precedent exists for similar models. For example, Hudson & Hunter (2014) evaluated the specific component of reflection utilizing peer facilitators, and courses at Southern Georgia University utilize a highly developed, multi-semester training program for student leaders (Kropp, McBride-Arrington, & Shankar, 2015). The focus of the current model is to streamline the structure into a single semester while providing a useable, out-of-the-box model that others can use for teaching CbSL in classes of 35-50+ students.

Specifically, our study sought to address a gap in prior models by developing, implementing, and researching a model for incorporating CbSL through a tiered, small group design. In this model, students gain the benefits of CbSL while more senior peer facilitators acquire leadership, project management, and group facilitation skills. If the model could be successful with large classes across an array of site placements, benefits to community agencies and those served by them could also be increased.

The model, however, assumes that students are able to physically engage with the community and learn in brick and mortar classrooms. Would it work in the COVID-19 era? Transformational learning theory's concept of a "disorienting dilemma" (Mezirow, 1991; 2000) is typically focused on how the student experiences a crisis. What the coronavirus challenged us to reflect on is how we as a research team must accept this dilemma and the disorientation it created for us across social, structural, and psychological domains.

Our first set of hypotheses stated that students assigned to the CbSL module will demonstrate increased community service self-efficacy (H1), civic-mindedness (H2), and activist orientation (H3) pre- to post- semester, while students assigned to the standard group project condition will not. Our second set of hypotheses predicted no differences in campus sense of community between students assigned to the CbSL module and students assigned to the group project (H4a), but CbSL students would show increased sense of community off-campus while students in the standard group project course (H4b) would not. Finally, we hypothesized that for students assigned to the CbSL module the relationship between pre-post increases in community service self-efficacy (H5a) and civic-mindedness (H5b) will be moderated by the self-reported quality of team functioning.

Study Overview

In this section, we briefly share our original study design before describing how we modified it to adapt to COVID-19. Currently, all pre- and post-

semester data has been collected, and analyses will begin Summer 2020.

Participants

Participants were recruited from three upper-division psychology courses: two sections of a dynamics of abnormal behavior course and one section of a community psychology course. Class enrollment was 49 and 50 for the two sections of abnormal and 36 for community psychology. Data were collected in Spring 2020 at a mid-sized public university in Northern California. All participants signed consent forms at the start of the study. The pre-semester data was collected in February and the post-semester data in May.

In total, 119 students participated in the pre-test survey, and 105 students participated in post-test surveys. Seventy-five participants identified as female (63%) and 40 as male (33.6%). No participants identified as transgender. Two participants (1.7%) reported not identifying as female, male, or transgender. One participant preferred not to answer the question (0.8%). Ages ranged from 19-57 years ($M = 23.8$, $SD = 5.68$). Participants identified as African American ($n = 7$; 5.9%), American Indian ($n = 10$; 11.8%), Asian American ($n = 6$; 5.0%), Latinx ($n = 39$; 33.1%), White ($n = 70$; 60.0%), and prefer not to answer ($n = 3$; 2.5%) (27% reported multiracial/multiethnic identities, so percentages exceed 100%). Thirty six percent of participants identified as other than heterosexual/straight across a range of identities, including bisexual ($n = 19$; 16%), pansexual ($n = 5$; %), queer ($n = 4$; 3.4%), asexual ($n = 4$; 3.4%), questioning ($n = 4$; 3.4%), lesbian ($n = 2$; 1.7%), gay ($n = 1$; 17%), or other/prefer not to answer ($n = 3$; 2.5%).

Measures

Student participants completed surveys before and after the service-learning period ('pre-semester' and 'post-semester'). The four major outcome measures assessed dimensions of civic engagement as well as psychological sense of community (PSOC) on and off-campus. Our specific measures included the: 1) Community Service Self-efficacy Scale (Reeb et al., 2008); 2) Sense of Community Scale (Jason, Stevens, &

Ram, 2015); 3) Activism Orientation Scale (Corning & Myers, 2002); and 4) Civic-Minded Graduate Scale (Steinberg, Hatcher, & Bringle, 2011). The Sense of Community Scale (SOCS) included two versions: one for the PSOC felt as a university member and the other as a member of the broader community in which the university is situated. The SOCS (Jason, Stevens, & Ram, 2015) measure offers the versatility of applying to any community; this flexibility also allows for measuring SOC across logistical features such as predominantly in-person interactions vs. predominantly interactions online.

Our original secondary measures also captured variables pertaining to nonacademic stressors that may be impacted by changes brought on by COVID-19. We asked about current employment and weekly hours, as well as parental status. At the time of the pre-semester survey, 58% ($n = 69$) of students reported being employed, working on average 19.3 hours per week ($SD = 10.78$). Among this sample, 7.6% ($n = 9$) reported having children. These important life domains outside of academics will now serve as valuable variables in exploratory analyses in how students were impacted in their CbSL and general academic experience during COVID-19.

Procedures

Research Procedure. The pre-semester survey was administered for the three courses in the third week of the semester by one undergraduate and one graduate research team members and took 12-15 minutes to complete. Consent was secured for each participant, who were assigned a unique identifier.

The post-survey needed to take a different form given the shelter-in-place ordinances in force in week 15 of the data collection. The surveys were recreated in a Google form which included the additional new items (see below). One undergraduate and one undergraduate research team members attended a Zoom class lecture to remind students of the study and encourage them to take part. Extra credit was offered as compensation to students who participated in both the pre and post-surveys.

CbSL Model and Implementation

Procedure. As mentioned above, the CbSL model under study removes barriers typical of classes this size by using a site-based team design. Two teams of 5 peer facilitators (one for each CbSL class) were trained to guide service teams for each site. Each peer facilitator team went through a 4-hour training in the first 5 weeks of the semester to acquire skills for group facilitation, project management, and a social justice lens in understanding community service.

This semester, the community psychology course and the CbSL section of dynamics of abnormal behavior had a total of 10 teams (5 per course) based at sites addressing issues of community mediation, immigration, socioemotional learning, acting to end sexual violence, American Indian Health, harm reduction programming, and a community garden. Students within each class were given options of the 5 available sites and assigned by preference. Before their planned first visit to their sites, students met in class the week before spring break. This would turn out to be the only in-person meeting, as courses went online following spring break.

Perspectives from the Team: As it happened

We were impacted by the coronavirus on multiple levels as research team members. Self-reflection is a central component of both social-justice oriented CbSL (Bamber & Hankin, 2011) and critical community psychology (Evans, 2015). In this section, we [KK, ZL, BG] discuss how the coronavirus reshaped our experiences personally and professionally. Also, at this point we wish to recognize our teammates Danielle Siegel and Cassandra Wages, who have contributed greatly to the project and have been compatriots on our journey.

The authors in both “Perspectives from the Team” sections are:

KK - I have served on the team as a research assistant for the past two semesters. In Spring 2018, I took the same community psychology CbSL course involved in the current study. From my

CbSL experience, I secured a paying job at my site, where I continue to work today.

ZL - I have served as a research assistant on the team for the past two semesters. I was a full-time student in Spring 2020 and before COVID-19 was employed at 3 part-time jobs.

BG - I am the principal investigator and member of the research team. I taught the Spring 2020 courses involved in the study and supervised the two teams of peer facilitators before and after the onset of COVID-19.

Personal Narratives

On March 20th, 2020, our county in northern California (U.S.) enacted a countywide shelter-in-place order, sending my life [KK] and countless others to a screeching standstill. Simply halting from such a frantic pace left a physically uncomfortable void in my life, and despite never having had more time and desire to see family and friends, such an act was now forbidden. As the shelter-in-place was issued, the gravity of everything that was no-more began to sink in and that is when I realized – *Our project is over!* I could not imagine how we could recover from such a blow to the structure of our study. Two years earlier, in the Spring of 2018, I was enrolled in the same community psychology course that many of our participants took part in. Reflecting on my own experience with service-learning, one with an engaged community partner and peers, I cannot help but think about how disparate that experience could have been had I faced similar circumstances to this semester's students.

Because of COVID-19, my [ZL] intended living arrangements were compromised, and I saw my plans for life post-graduation change overnight. My original idea of community engagement was solely through in-person, face-to-face interactions, and discovering that a sense of community is possible through online face-to-face calls was incredibly surprising. The connectedness I still felt to the research team and its weekly meetings helped me find some normalcy in such a consistently inconsistent time. I am incredibly grateful to have had that kind of normalcy to help me.

The scenario at the beginning of this article captures the emotional tone I felt in reappraising my [BG] role as both instructor and researcher. At that point, all 10 of the trained peer facilitators had bonded with their teams and were ready to go, as were the students in both classes. The community partner sites each had unique dynamics in relation to the project and were now being impacted by an emerging pandemic, each in an equally singular way. As a community psychologist, I strive to be an agent for university-community bridging, so I was especially worried about the new community sites that I had convinced to give CbSL a try.

I remember Harvey Milk's resounding quote, "You gotta give 'em hope" (*The Advocate*, 2012) floating into my office, a converted living room whose transformation I'd recently negotiated with my friend-turned-COVID-19 bunkermate. But I was no Milk, and what's more this project wasn't mine; in the spirit of CbSL, I knew it was only as powerful as the people who comprised it. In that same 1978 speech Milk spoke of hope "to a nation that had given up", almost as if to remind us we are each conduits for either hope or despair, whether the pandemic be homophobia as in Milk's case, systemic racism currently at a necessary flashpoint in this county, a novel coronavirus, or any other social sickness. I began wondering how we could harness hope, let go of what we thought we were about to do, and reimagine the work of the teams as a space to give support to each other while still making a difference at their sites.

As a full-time student working two jobs, my [KK] life was incredibly full before the pandemic. I was fortunate enough to keep one of my jobs after our shelter-in-place was issued and thus began working and studying from home. At that point, my busy and full life seemed to shrink to the size of my kitchen table. Work became both a thread that connected me to the world and one more thing that kept me tied to the table. I work as a case manager for a nonprofit that provides community mediation through a dedicated team of volunteer mediators. Following the shut-down, there was an eerie calm that gave us just enough time to set up and make vital changes to our operations, but I feared that we

would no longer be able to provide services at a time when our community needed them more than ever. Ultimately, my position as both a former community psychology CbSL student and a worker in a community organization allowed me to see how our participants and our community partners were affected and burdened by COVID-19.

Prior to the shut-down, I [ZL] was a full-time student working two jobs and had just secured my third. As a result of COVID-19, I saw that my time and income were disturbed quite significantly; I lost all three opportunities. Through my own experience, when it came time to modify our protocol, I knew it was important to add questions about changes to work and income to the post-semester survey. Understanding people's changing situations and how they can relate to their feelings of community and service-learning are important to consider. However, community was not entirely lost because I still had a good connection with my professors who would email us daily. I felt that definitely boosted my morale while attending online lectures. A professor even included jokes at the beginning of quizzes and exams to help connect with us.

I [BG] felt incredibly privileged to have (and have kept) my job during the onset of COVID-19, when so many had lost theirs or already been struggling without one; especially those impacted by intersectional marginalization. I began speaking with our community sites, having conversation after conversation about how their organizations and efforts were being impacted and how our teams could help. Simultaneously, I started to aggressively fumble my way through Zoom and other online platforms that could create small group interfaces for teams to meet on a weekly basis, and considered how I might coach the peer facilitators to become leaders in establishing a new normality for students struggling with shock and disappointment.

Methodological changes in response to COVID-19

What could we do given the impacts we were grappling with in March and April? As we generated solutions for enduring the impact of shelter-in-

place, we realized it might be possible to reimagine the situation, in a way that could support students and sites while deepening our understanding of the model's strengths, vulnerabilities, and broader potential. It wouldn't be easy, and nowhere in the vicinity of perfect. But we would try. In this section, we describe how both the implementation and the study were altered in an effort to adapt to a transforming reality.

Implementation

As the instructor and PI on the study, I (BG) was ultimately responsible for the decisions about how we would alter the design. The first question is how to work with our ten community partners? The answer to each site was different. For a nonprofit mediation center, the leadership asked our students to train volunteer mediators in video conferencing and to create new promotional materials for people in conflict with those now living in close quarters during shelter-in-place. For the Take Back the Night march, we reimagined ways the teams could create online resources for people experiencing increases in domestic violence and online stalking during COVID-19. Our immigrant rights organization asked the team to translate an arsenal of local outreach materials to educate people about tenant rights, food insecurity resources, and general local COVID-19 guidelines. Our partner at a harm reduction center spoke of a need for researching grant opportunities; team members were trained in grants research and helped create a portfolio of opportunities. For a campus counseling center, students remotely edited a library of online student resources to make them ADA compliant. Our school site at the start of the paper was reimagined entirely, the team deciding to create a professional website where students at the university could share resources and support to one another across a range of student needs.

It had become abundantly clear that any meetings, were they to occur at all, would be online. Many questions remained: How often would the classes meet? What about the teams? While weekly in-person meetings were not in the original design, we recognized that regular weekly

meetings via Zoom might offer a powerful sense of community for students whose classes had largely become asynchronistic, or if done live amounted to a wall of 40+ attendees and limited opportunities to be heard. The peer facilitators would become essential to this process, and in the peer facilitator team meetings I began coaching them to allow space not simply for reimagining the projects, but to let students check in on how COVID-19 was impacting them personally.

Research

In the weekly research team meetings during late March and early April 2020, conversations were held to explore the various ways team members had been impacted by COVID-19, to generate a list of possible domains for new post-semester survey items. From these conversations a set of items pertaining to the impact of the weekly meetings during COVID-19 were generated including its role in: providing structure, linkage to course material, a space for personal issues, overall satisfaction, and general connection to the university. Two items were negatively scaled and involved whether students felt like the weekly meetings were burdensome and whether they felt the project could have been completed without the meetings.

In the demographic section, new items were added to include assessment of changes in work and housing status. For housing, we included options for moving within the county or moving outside of the county. We also included a set of 5-items appraising the overall impact of a sudden shift to online learning on academic motivation (e.g., completing general coursework, intention to graduate).

Perspectives from the Team: As the semester ended

I [KK] learned a lot this semester about resilience and adaptability in research and the commitment of our community partners. When I discovered that the study would survive, I also learned a lot about the plasticity of our model and the dedication of our team. I was continually impressed by my team members this semester and incredibly grateful that I was a part of this project.

As a student, I cannot recommend getting involved in research enough. Throughout the shelter-in-place, this lab and research project remained consistent, offering a small but meaningful connection to my life before the shutdown. Seeing my team members faces each week added some normalcy to my altered world. Having previous experience as a CbSL student, I knew the beneficial and lasting impact that it could have on our students, so even when I felt overwhelmed, my desire to stay involved and see the results kept me engaged and committed.

On May 15th, 2020 I [ZL] graduated with my Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. Attending my final exam, my last classes of the year and my own graduation online definitely hindered my experiences of community at the university since it was all done from my desk at home. Working on this project truly helped support me through these changes. On the research team, I experienced a sense of community and consistency that provided me with a sense of belonging. Our decision to continue the study and not lose hope by using certain impacts of COVID-19 to our advantage helped us as a team to persevere in continuing and finishing our research.

Despite the ups and downs, I [BG] was encouraged by hearing in the final team class presentations that students had found a sense of completion and purpose in the reimagining of their projects. It was not perfect; keeping all team members engaged, ensuring strong lines of communication with sites, and ceding leadership to peer facilitators who were struggling with their own COVID-19-related issues were all areas of concern. I am grateful that our team now has a complete dataset that will help us better understand the diverse student experiences of the model, and we look forward to charting out those strengths and limitations in a future publication. Perhaps the greatest personal lesson I took from this semester was that no one person can lay claim to Milk's concept of hope. But with the right infrastructure of setting and intentionality in how we approach relationships, hope can manifest as a natural resource that can pass back and forth as needed,

and harness in meaningful ways to help one another get through difficult times while fueling innovation.

Conclusion

Our experiences adapting to the COVID-19 era amidst a multifaceted service-learning project taught us valuable lessons in resilience. It also resulted in a deeper awareness of how the concept of reciprocity in CbSL pertains not only to who benefits from CbSL but also in how we can respond to “disorienting dilemmas” collectively. By learning to embrace the challenge brought on by COVID-19, we were able to find hope and create space for our personal and professional adaptation processes, and in the end better ground the development of our model.

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Prepare for Action

Written by Kyle Hucke and Leonard A. Jason, DePaul University

During this pandemic almost everyone is asking what *can* I do? The pain and challenge we face is a dizzying mix of the intensely personal and

the dauntingly abstract and societal. The carnage and fear are evident in the prejudice that has been unleashed as when we see a person of Asian descent be accused of causing the epidemic at a supermarket. Then we return to our homes and read the headlines. Thousands have died. Millions have lost their jobs. The fragile safety net for so many has been shredded. For many our sense of community has been shattered when we walk on streets with face masks and people avoid us as if we had the plague, and worse, we do not know if we have been infected because of a lack of testing. Here is a challenge for us all including mental health professionals. Certainly, we can extend services to those in need via telemedicine, but the field of Community Psychology suggests alternative ways of helping. The field was founded on the principles of prevention and social justice. As we all feel the pain of having failed to adequately prevent the harm of the current crisis, we must prepare to seek structural changes that better prepare our society for the next challenge. Changes that ensure a more just society and ameliorate the suffering of millions every day.

Rampant economic and racial inequalities have once again caused disproportionate suffering and death for African Americans and Latinx Americans. Once the virus spreads to low income rural Whites, their death rates will be far higher than their wealthier counterparts in the suburbs and the cities due to similar structural inequalities that leave rural hospital and other infrastructure woefully under-resourced. It does not matter if it is a natural disaster like a hurricane, a pandemic, or a fully man-made financial crisis as in '08, our society is structured such that during disasters those of low Socio Economic Status (SES) die or suffer severe economic hardship while those at the top profit, and, within SES, communities of color are further devastated by racism. However, while disasters put these disparities on full dramatic display it is the quiet and relentless poisoning effects of poverty, fear of poverty, and racism that cause significant suffering in the USA. We must address the structural shortcomings of our society that the pandemic has once again laid bare.

As a field Community Psychology has identified how structural inequities and lack of resources yield systemic wellbeing disparities (Jason et al., 2019). Our colleagues in other areas of Psychology as well as the fields of Public Health, Sociology, Criminology, Medicine, and Social Work have all reached similar conclusions. We have spent decades creating and evaluating many very well thought out and well-managed programs that have failed to overcome these large structural flaws. For instance, the Gates Foundation spent a great deal of time and money looking for a way to improve student academic outcomes by focusing on teachers, but the results were negative because they did not address the root cause of the students' challenges: poverty.

We, as a society, have spent decades trying to think our way out of facing a simple truth that many of our social problems are directly caused by or greatly exasperated by lack of money, food, healthcare, and shelter. More than that we are trying to avoid the simple solution; give people these basic needs. Opposition to this idea is many things; political, philosophical, or, at times, driven by fear and hate. It is not scientific, and, despite very clever rhetoric, it is not moral. It is not even fiscally sound as preventative medicine is less expensive than treatment, addiction treatment is less expensive than incarceration, and providing housing for the homeless is less expensive than treating their emergency health needs. It is also not due to scarcity. There are more empty housing units than homeless. Today we have food rotting in the fields or being deliberately destroyed because the pandemic has caused demand to crash, but this practice happens every year to a lesser extent. All while children go hungry. Why? Because of the failings of our economic system that places profit motive over humanitarianism. Farmers destroy crops not because they want to, but because it makes good economic sense. The pandemic just makes that more widespread than ever. Our healthcare system was as unprepared as our business sector to deal with the pandemic because it is part of the business sector and places profit under the guise of "efficiency" over adequate

preparedness. It also makes the whole system fragile. We should no longer accept the instability and suffering that the relentless drive for cost cutting and profit maximization has wrought.

The work of second order change is long and multifaceted requiring a combination of efforts in research, advocacy, and direct action. The former Mayor of Chicago, Rham Emmanuel famously said "Never let a serious crisis go to waste. And what I mean by that it's an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before." Community Psychologists and researchers from related fields have developed a great many ideas that have had scientific, moral, and, in many cases, even fiscal validity. For instance, Oxford House is a self-help housing program that has demonstrated great success in helping people overcome substance abuse through affordable housing and social support (Jason & Ferrari, 2010). Over 20,000 people today live in these democratic houses across the nation, and each is self-supporting and run without any help from professionals. Placing people in a safe community settings that foster the development of social networks of friends and associates who work and are abstinent is of great value for their specific substance use needs, and many of the practices developed by Oxford House to foster a health environment could benefit those who might be most vulnerable to the corona virus.

Yet, the simple and powerful effect of having the basic need of housing cannot be overstated. We do not lack the ability to expand programs like this and many others, just the political will. Here are some of the ways we can help create that political will. First, through our partnerships we have access to a sprawling network of organizations that work directly with the communities most affected by the pandemic. What we can provide is coordination between these networks to craft a common message for letter writing campaigns and, later, collective demonstrations. We can also take on the work of researching the legal and logistical responsibilities to hold demonstrations when the time comes. And when it does our partners will be ready to mobilize. We should join these networks to larger organizing

networks already engaged in this process. For instance, The Rising Majority is a diverse coalition of organizations that is continuing to coalesce and build a cohesive movement through shared information, tools, and strategies for fighting for social justice. Likewise, the Poor People's Campaign had already been planning a significant rally for June of 2020 in Washington D.C. which is now digital due to the pandemic. Both organizations have a commitment to grassroots actions as well as coalition building, and we should embrace both strategies.

In addition, this is an opportunity to identify new potential grassroots leaders. Research by Campbell (1997) suggests that grassroots leaders are driven by passion for justice in their community. The present situation has highlighted many systemic injustices that may have previously been perceived by some soon- to- be grassroots leaders as personal challenges or traumas. For others, this may have been the turning point contemplation to action. The communication networks described above could also reinforce these feeling of collective experience stemming from systemic issues and the sense that the time to act is now. We should be prepared to listen to such leaders when they express their desire for change and action, and we should be prepared to help them find ways to translate that desire into direct action as well as take their advice on what actions will work in their communities.

We have opportunities to speak as experts to present the science in an unbiased fashion with proper scientific caution. As speculative cures and promising results from vaccine tests are presented, we must maintain rigorous discipline to demand adequate evidence before using words like "miracle". However, it may be time to set clear distinctions between settled science and continued inquiry. It is settled that a comprehensive public health strategy must involve identifying the infected through widespread testing, tracing those who test positive, temporary quarantining of those who test positive. Which test is ideal is not yet clear, nor is how to best implement some of these strategies or how to promote them to the public. Here is where

continued study is appropriate. In contrast, the negative effects of poverty and racism on almost every outcome we can measure that matters is settled science. That the contribution of systemic forces and outweighs individual choices and behaviors is settled science. High economic inequality is bad for both individual and social health and that is settled science. Now we must demand the changes that the science justifies.

One final important lesson from the past few weeks that Community Psychologists and activists should take to heart is that the objection “how do we pay for it” is a diversionary tactic. We have never lacked money only the political will to do it. Now is the time to marshal that will. Now we must prepare to bring our networks together as never before and demand an economy that serves the people not the other way around. We must build a society where we value the lives of people we do not know and trust that they will do the same. Universal Basic Income (UBI) has been championed by Martin Luther King Jr. and former presidential candidate Andrew Yang among others and the time to push for it and other changes has come.

Change is occurring, a month ago, we noticed few grocery store employees and customers in Chicago wore masks, but three weeks ago that began to change with about 30% wearing them, and two weeks ago that increase to about 60% and today, it is rare to see anyone without a mask. What a public health victory has been achieved in such a short period of time. At its core this is recognition of our interconnectedness. Our health care heroes are being publicly applauded and praised by homebound citizens appreciative of their efforts. This is our society coming together to recognize that we depend on others and that they deserve our thanks. One neighbor walking outside with a good 6 feet of social distance gives a nod that says, “you might not know me, but I live directly behind you and we are in this together.” Yes, a sense of community can be enriched in even these difficult times. It is important to continue to extend that consciousness to include all members of our community, make the sentiment of connectedness

permanent, and have public policy that reflects that sentiment.

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The World at My Gloved Fingertips: Discovering the Power of Community Psychology

*Written by Monique Mahabir and edited by
Ali Cunningham Abbott, Lynn University*



Monique Mahabir graduating via Zoom

As a new decade, and, quite possibly, a new era emerges, we must grapple with the changes that 2020 demands of us. The demand for change was abrupt for me. It uprooted all the expectations I had for my last semester of undergraduate studies. The research projects I planned to conduct and present as a last hoorah for my Bachelor of Science in psychology were suddenly canceled. Opportunities for proper farewells to my peers and the residents I looked after, in my Resident Assistant position at Lynn University, were taken away. However, as my former plans and expectations dissolved, a devotion to priorities and a focus on genuine interests manifested. The

routine of college life and obligations shifted to not quarantine boredom, but quarantine enlightenment. An enlightenment guided by my discovery of the power of community psychology.

Some community psychology (CP) research focuses on the importance of connection and its positive effects in the coping process. As I delved into CP, I found that an important practice in this field is the sharing of experiences among colleagues and community members. A study by Arewasikporn and colleagues found that shared positive experiences may lead to an increased level of cognitive resilience and positive emotions (Arewasikporn et al., 2018). Amid a pandemic, CP served as a tool for me to absorb positive experiences and alleviate the negative effects COVID-19 had on my mental health. Through the process of connecting with the CP community and learning about how I could get involved in this work, community psychology healed me. It proved to me how powerful connections are in healing society from the impacts of COVID-19. This period of exploration also led me to explore and learn more about the areas of racial inequities in healthcare and the educational challenges communities are facing; issues I hope to get involved in from a CP approach.

The Power of Connection

Although I've been interested in community psychology for a year, my abundance of spare time in quarantine enabled me to truly delve into the easily accessible resources CP has to offer. Eager to become linked with the CP community and network, I decided to take a deeper look into the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA) website. There I discovered the listservs and swiftly signed up for the ones that were of interest to me. The Council on Cultural, Ethnic and Racial Affairs (CERA) and Council on Education (COE) both piqued my interest. There, within those listservs, was my gateway to connection. By promptly emailing me much needed assistance and advice, Executive Director of SCRA, Dr. Jean Hill, encouraged me to reach out to the active researchers and changemakers within the CP community. From this recommendation, I joined in

on a CERA call. I decided to join incognito and phone in, too nervous to show my face. As I joined in on the call, I heard Dr. Dominique Thomas beginning introductions.

Dr. Thomas mentioned my number, saying he did not recognize it. I unmuted myself, face flushed on the other end, “Hi, my name is Monique. I am actually an undergraduate, but I am interested in community psychology and would like to gain some knowledge from you all”. To my surprise, the meeting was a Healing Circle, far different than their normal general meetings. In response to COVID-19, the interest group decided it was not appropriate to carry on this meeting “business as usual”. A time like this means that an emphasis on personal well-being and self-care is imperative (Dattilio, 2015), especially for active change-makers who aim to make a difference in society. Although working as a psychologist demands caring for others, it is important that psychologists do not neglect their own need for self-care. Self-care can lead to a greater sense of well-being that can promote greater health and increase positive emotions (Dattilio, 2015). Much like the safety instructions suggest before a plane lifts off, in the event of a malfunction one must put on their oxygen mask before assisting anyone else. The same can be said for practicing psychologists experiencing the stress and trauma of a pandemic. Discussing these perspectives with the CERA group demonstrated to me how important well-being is in the field. They welcomed me warmly, listened to my experiences, and included me in the conversation.

This experience allowed me to realize how open people within the SCRA community are to give you advice and steer you in the right direction. With that experience, I gained the confidence to contact more people within the field. I was delighted that Dr. Scotney Evans proposed an informative Zoom call for my CP inquiries. The same was true for multiple CP students I contacted, who were all willing to set time aside from their busy schedules and offer me valuable insight and advice. It was through these meetings, I learned more about the great focus CP has on social justice and reform.

The Power of Fighting Against Racial Inequities

As a black woman, and quite frankly a human being, it pains me to see black communities disproportionately suffering from COVID-19. It also pains me to see Asians around the world facing increased discrimination due to a surge in xenophobia and sinophobia, often exacerbated by media outlets (Arañez Litam, 2020). People of color (POCs) are facing the brunt of COVID-19’s destruction, as the pandemic acts as an additional obstacle to the already disproportionate access to healthcare these groups face. Racial residential segregation increases the likelihood of Black communities to be more significantly impacted by COVID-19 (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). Black people in the United States have an increased mortality rate due to cardiovascular disease compared to their white counterparts (Go et al., 2014), lowering their chances of recovery from COVID-19 (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). As a result, the death rate for Blacks and African Americans in the U.S. is at 92.3 deaths per 100,000 population, significantly higher than Whites in the U.S. at 45.2 per 100,000 population (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). POCs are in desperate need of CP’s support and advocacy. These are not numbers. These are people who need policy reform to ensure their and their posterity’s survival. I hope to join with CP in fighting for these rights as we elevate the voices of marginalized individuals, ensuring they do not remain a figure in the dataset.

The Power of Student Advocacy

As a student just having completed my first degree, and continuing on to graduate school, I value CP’s involvement in school intervention. Education post COVID-19 has undergone infrastructural changes. With 107 countries implementing national school closures around the globe (Viner et al., 2020), teachers and instructors have quickly adapted their in-person curriculum to an online platform. It is important that students have advocates, including community psychologists on their side. Psychologists are conducting participatory action research, ensuring voices are

heard and that community stakeholders are involved in this effort. After attending a virtual symposium entitled *Contributions of Community Psychology to Urban Research and Policy* and listening to Dr. Mariah Kornbluh's presentation, "Untold student stories: Examining educational budget cuts within urban school settings", I learned about the value of participatory research in policy reform and school intervention. Work like Kornbluh's, and so many other action-based researchers are needed to strengthen our communities and recover from the toll of COVID-19. These valuable efforts within the field, as well as the field itself, must become more visible.

Unfortunately, I did not learn about community psychology in my undergraduate curriculum. However, by tapping into my semi-autodidactic traits, I researched and obtained numerous resources to both discover and learn what this field is about. I appreciate the efforts of the SCRA community for attempting to make CP more visible and accessible. I appreciate the adaptability of the field and how it is utilizing the digital space to create great new projects, such as The New Bank for Community Ideas in collaboration with the European Community Psychology Association. This project will serve as a collection of responses and experiences that communities face amidst COVID-19. I see the value -and I am inspired- by projects such as these.

These last few months have certainly been unprecedented. But when faced with times of adversity, we have adapted. During a recent Zoom graduation celebration with the wonderful psychology faculty at Lynn University, I was honored with the "Most Prosocial Award". They described me as, "Exemplifying what it means to be a member of the Lynn community. Always willing to lend a helping hand..., supported her fellow leaders in Psi Chi and her professors in conducting research on several different projects. She is considering a career in community psychology, where she will continue giving back to her community." Receiving this award affirmed to me how much community psychology aligns with my values and aspirations. CP looks at the bigger

picture because we are all connected. We are individuals, but we collectively build up a community. We are interdependent. These are the tenets of community psychology I have discovered, whole-heartedly agree with, and excite me to immerse myself in a vehicle of like-minded people motivated to drive institutional and societal reform.

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My COVID-19 Experience

*Written by Julie Pellman, New York City
College of Technology*

I believe the first word that I would say about my COVID 19 experience was shock. On Wednesdays, I was teaching three consecutive classes which run from 1-5:15PM. On March 11, 2020, after my second class, a student showed me an email that she had received that due to the corona virus, that this was the last day of in-person classes and that classes would be online for the rest of the semester. I was flabbergasted. I somehow finished my last class, said good-bye to my students as I would not be seeing them again in person, and went to speak to my department chair. There was also another faculty member in the office. The department chair said that this was the hardest day he had ever experienced at the school and explained as much as he could.

When I got home, my school email listed Blackboard workshops for faculty. I signed up for one on Thursday and two on Friday. The Blackboard sessions were somewhat useful. I was familiar with Blackboard but wanted to sharpen my skills. When I got to the sessions, I realized that there were many faculty members who had never used Blackboard. They were in a state of chaos. We were advised not to try to be too innovative this semester, but to concentrate on skills that we already had.

The college was closed for five days to enable faculty to prepare their classes. This was a stressful period because I suddenly had to restructure all of my classes. I also did not know how many of my students knew Blackboard and whether they would participate if the class was online. Spring Break was moved slightly and shortened. Then the college had a recalibration period. The students had another half a week off. During that time, faculty was asked to send an email to students asking if anyone needed to borrow a computer as some students did not have computers at home. I do not know if any of my students received a

computer because the email response was not directed to me.

Finally, the courses have gained momentum. I am happy to report that the majority of my students have been participating. During the Spring, 2020 semester, the students will be given the opportunity to choose a credit/no credit option in lieu of their letter grade. They will be able to exercise this option for a month after the final grades have been recorded. The deadline to make up an incomplete has also been extended.

Many school activities are taking place online. I participated in an Earth Day conference via zoom and an online presentation from the Social Science Department congratulating the Class of 2020 on graduation. There will be an online ceremony for graduation. All summer classes will be online. In the fall, my in-person classes will be hybrid with the possibility that they may again be online classes.

With regards to my other experiences with COVID 19, one of my earliest experiences was buying hand sanitizer. The stores had none! Eventually CVS started selling hand sanitizer. The grocery stores had no toilet paper or paper towels. We have since obtained these items. I started buying masks and gradually accumulated quite a collection. My husband has also been making some for us. There are lines at many of the grocery stores. One has to go early to avoid the crowds.

I live at the northwest end of Brooklyn Heights on the border on DUMBO. It is an affluent neighborhood with historical significance. With the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge Park, my neighborhood acquired more tourists than ever before. Normally, there are crowds of people who got off the train to go to the park, walk, and eat in the restaurants. There is also ferry service which docks at the park and takes people to various destinations in the city. My neighborhood also houses the Brooklyn Supreme Court. Now my neighborhood is quite quiet. The traffic has decreased, the nonlocals are gone, and there are very few people on the streets.

All New York City's cultural attractions are shut down and may be providing online programming. The subways are running, but service is limited.

Now, in preparation for a very gradual reopening, Governor Cuomo has closed the subways from 1AM to 5AM in order for the trains and stations to be cleaned and sanitized. I have not been on the subway since March. My activities have been neighborhood focused and include grocery shopping and going out for a walk. Governor Cuomo has required that people wear masks in public when social distancing is not an option. I miss the vibrancy of the city and all of my usual activities and am adjusting to wearing a mask and seeing other people walking around in masks.

With reference to the community response, in some neighborhoods, people have been applauding the essential workers every night at 7PM. Religious institutions have reached out to the needy and schools have been providing breakfasts and lunches to the less fortunate. More testing centers are opening to accommodate increasing need. My apartment building has taken up a collection for the workers. In addition, tenants were asked if they wished to help fellow tenants in time of need.

I have retained social connections with family and friends. I am glad that I have a loving husband with whom I have an excellent relationship and two children whom I speak to regularly. I have met with family members on Zoom for holiday celebrations, attended a 90th Zoom birthday party, and look forward to other such events. I look anticipate the day when we can all be together in person and of course, we will all be discussing our experiences with COVID 19.

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What We Agreed: The Community Vision

Written by Vernita Perkins, Omnigi Research

We are living through the worst time in our modern history. Strong statement? Not strong enough. For the first time in the history of these current generations, we are watching the components of the American Dream experiment

crumble before our eyes at a time when our social foundation is disintegrating underneath our feet. We are at a crossroads, an intersection of fear, re-traumatization, panic, anger, helplessness, hopelessness, uncertainty, utter mental and physical exhaustion, and a way forward, the community vision. Some of us cannot even remember what day it is. And still so many of us just want to quickly get out of this situation and go back to...what? Most of what we were doing, thinking, and saying before the pandemic is the reason we ended up in the pandemic. We allowed people to move into decision making roles for us, determining every aspect of our lives, from the items we purchase, to vehicles we transport ourselves in, the way we treat our bodies, the way we treat others, the way we feel we need to secure our spaces and things, and how we choose to live with each other. We continued a long civilizational history of lazily doing what they did before with slight modifications, and only innovating or ideating when we could see some profit, power, or personal gain. Many positioned themselves in lives where income and material wealth was plenty, and labor for it was little. Many of these, found ways to separate themselves in places where shared resources belonging to all were hoarded for the few, only allowing the many into these conclaves long enough to labor for free or little compensation, but not permitted to stay and enjoy the stolen shared resources. And these many few soon forgot, in their fragile residences with the false sense of community, they forgot what we agreed.

What Have We Done

So not surprising we find ourselves here, at this moment in time, with the civilization invoice of a thousand plus years fiercely stamped past due, and not surprisingly with mounting interest attached. An invoice with increasing interest at a time when our social structure is so dented, damaged, and broken that we not only have no resources to pay the massive debt, but no more excuses left to delay payment. Then the final blow, the enemy we vigorously fought internally, actually came externally. A tiny little, intelligent messenger with indescribable capabilities that will not be stopped,

silenced, or understood. No matter how intelligent we thought or think we are, our industrialized tools are ineffective. A tiny little reminder of how a self-described great people with limited problem-solving skills when we work against each other, can be paralyzed and destroyed in an instant. Our only way out of this nightmare is to remember what we agreed.



We are witnessing the result of thousands of years of neglect from the moment when our civilization turned against itself. That moment when some of us decided that they should dominate and control the shared resources by manipulation and violent force, while realizing they would also need lots of submissive, free labor to do so. When a few unworthy humans decided only they and their kind, should keep the shared resources in their familial groups. That they should be the only ones who deserve to live labor-free, while other dominated and domesticated beings, should spend their short lives in all-consuming service; failure of which was punishable by torture, trauma, bondage, dehumanization, and violent deaths. That moment when those unworthy individuals betrayed the living being contract we all signed with our essence at birth.

Conceived by individuals we have come to learn, who did not even love or honor their own familial groups, this one horrible, selfish, self-serving decision, that went viral over days, weeks, months, and years. This thought spread, fueled by fear, panic and an unwillingness to face and relinquish the fear. A co-conspired plan to unhinge the community vision, the agreed human contract.

Little did they know, the dream seeded from the exhaustion of this devastating viral thought would spark in the souls of many, but due to their inferior status in society, would be theorized and mildly implemented by those beneficiaries of the original viral thought, and ultimately imposed on a people in a land far away. There, the dream would take on a new life, with the hope of finally healing the wrongful, viral outcome.

The Vision Forward

A dream of a meaningful, purposeful life lived in collaboration, education and understanding, and unlimited opportunity. A dream of a new space, and in this space, a cohesive government where the three branches of leadership, community representatives, and mediation advocates collaborate and make decisions solely on behalf of the inhabitants of this space, as well as what benefits inhabitants in the greater space. The dream of a widely diverse group of inhabitants, celebrating and honoring various ancestries, with a passion to exist and collaborate together for daily survival, for liberty in thought, beliefs, words and actions, knowing and agreeing that those four elements would each be expressed by every inhabitant no matter the age, ability, sex, gender or lifestyle with courage, kindness and compliance towards a society that empowers all to be their very best, while supporting us in healthy competition to meaningfully improve ourselves and the lives of others. The pledge, while occupying spaces previously occupied by other ancestral residents, that this space and its resources would be respected, shared equally, honored, and used gently, so there would be identical, plentiful resources for generations to come. The commitment to be loving supporters of those innocents that newly entered this space, not yet capable of fully existing in this space; and to honor all living beings that roamed the greater spaces inherent and free as we learned from them, appreciated them and honored them, especially in consumption that nurtures human life. A commitment to recognize our human existence is a mere moment in the universal span of existence and agree to make valid and valuable each and

every moment. To appreciate the sun, wind, and water elements in all their manifestations, and not to contest these natural actions, but to learn to live within them. And most important, to value everything, find meaning and purpose in everything and everyone, and collectively celebrate the most phenomenal, yet simple moments and majesty about our world and our place in this magnificent existence.

We each took a solemn oath the minute our tiny eyes opened at the inhale of our birth. Remember?

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Upheaval, Perseverance, and Hope: Documenting Student Life and Building Community During the COVID-19 Pandemic through Photovoice

Written by Rahamim McCarter-Ribakoff, Jessica A. Lawrence, Sarah R. Zhou, Audrey J. Nunez, Delayna J. Reeve, and Erin Rose Ellison, California State University, Sacramento

We are a group of undergraduate students and one professor from California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) who participated, among 40 classmates, in a Photovoice Project on COVID-19. CSUS is a diverse institution, recognized as an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI), and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). CSUS is committed to providing accessible, high quality education for all, serving many students from communities historically underrepresented in higher education (“Sacramento State demographics & diversity”, n.d.). Over half of the CSUS student population is considered low-income/Pell eligible. Health disparities based on race and class persist

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2020), and thus are a concern at CSUS, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moreover, COVID-19 was at the forefront of city and regional news. In February, a patient transferred to UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento and became the first case of COVID-19 in the U.S. with an unknown origin (“Sacramento State demographics & diversity”, 2020). California Governor Gavin Newsom mandated a temporary statewide shelter-in-place directive in March, so in-person lectures at schools were moved to virtual lectures (CSUS, 2020). Students and professors were required adjust plans to accommodate the changes.

When CSUS suspended in-person activities, existing projects of our research team (the COLLAB), as well as the final projects for both the Community Psychology (CP) class and the Qualitative Methods class, needed to be replaced. Therefore, our faculty mentor offered the option of a Photovoice project to document and examine experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Photovoice aligns with COLLAB goals and approaches, including to promote social justice and healing by using a *desire-based framework*: an alternative to trends in social science research of depicting marginalized communities only in terms of damages sustained by an unjust society (Tuck, 2009). A desire-based framework orients researchers to understand oppression as one of many aspects of a community’s collective experience.

Students were prompted to document their experiences and desires using Photovoice, drawing upon participants’ imagination to craft a vision for the future that instills hope, promotes healing, and honors our collective histories and agency. We aim to present our stories of lived experience to expose the role that power asymmetries have contributed to our struggles, yet, we also include more positive aspects of our experiences, and our desires (i.e., hopes and dreams), to represent our lives in a way that is multifaceted, true-to-life, and affirming of our collective identity. In this way, we hope to avoid the psychological damage and social stigmatization

that can be inflicted by well-meaning researchers who solely focus on oppression (Tuck, 2009).

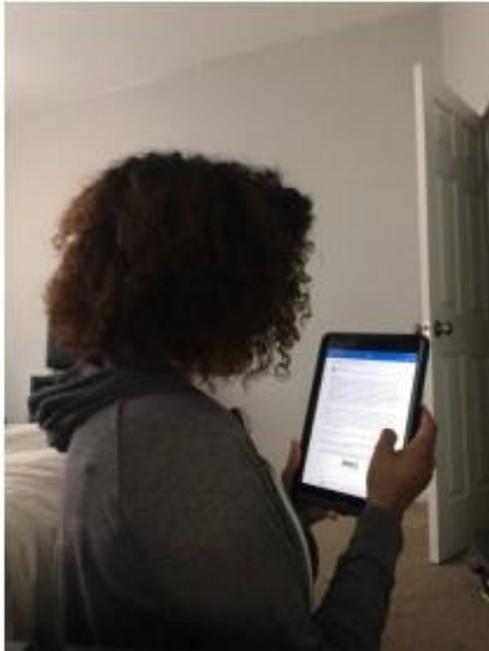
You may have noticed that we are communicating about this project as both participants and researchers, because this is a Participatory Action Research (PAR) project, using Photovoice. Photovoice is a participatory approach to knowledge construction in which participants photograph and reflect upon their experiences according to one or more prompts (Wang & Burris, 1997). After taking photos, participants take part in group discussions focused on identifying commonalities and differences among the respective experiences of individual group members, and how these experiences are linked to structural causes (Langhout et al., 2016). The intended outcome is for participants to develop social bonds and a common understanding of structural issues facing a community (Wang et. al, 2000). For this project, participants undertook an additional step of reflecting on their experience by writing expository essays to accompany their photos.

Photovoice builds upon the idea that the people living an experience know what is best for themselves and their community. In this process, people can identify, represent and enhance their community through photography along with three primary goals: (a) to enable people to reflect their community's strengths and concerns, (b) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important community issues through group discussions of photographs, and (c) to reach policymakers (Wang & Burris, 1997). Photovoice also serves as a window into people's lives through their own perspectives.

The faculty member leading our research team chose to offer Photovoice as a final project option largely due to its ability to promote collective empowerment and healing, because students (and faculty) were struggling in the COVID-19 context. Students were experiencing the impacts of the pandemic, ranging from unemployment to illness and loss. This assignment was offered to the CP class because it related to course concepts, such as conscientization. Conscientization, the process

through which groups learn to connect their experiences to societal structures, allows individuals to make sense of their struggles without self-blame (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010, p. 29). This can create an atmosphere of mutual support. Through critical dialogue and shared knowledge production, it can also support the start of collective action to redress injustices faced by the group (Wang & Burris, 1997). Additionally, the Qualitative Methods class could no longer conduct their community-based research as planned, and thus needed a way to generate some textual data to analyze using a Social Constructivist paradigm in order to meet course goals.

Students took photos in response to the following prompts: (a) What is your experience of life during the COVID-19 pandemic? What is your life like in this context? (b) How is your experience shaped by your social location/the social groups you belong to (i.e., based on gender, race, class, migration, sexuality, religion, ability, etc...)? (c) What are your hopes and dreams for life during, and after, COVID-19? Once photos were taken, students participated in facilitated discussions, and wrote essays. In the CP class, participants incorporated understandings of their choice of 3 community psychology concepts to fulfill course requirements (i.e., students should apply CP frameworks and approaches to real world problems). In the Qualitative Research Methods class, students shared their essays with a small group of students so they could conduct qualitative data analysis using Thematic Analysis, fulfilling the course learning goals (Braun & Clarke, 2012). In the following section, we briefly highlight some of the work presented by participants. There were 40 participants, resulting in a total of approximately 200 essays. We identified a few photos to share, along with excerpts from the essays, and then sought permission to share them in this article. The first of our two photos is a self-portrait by student Chrystal Wilhight, depicting her from behind, holding an electronic tablet. Chrystal writes:



"I have been really struggling recently with a lot that has been going on in my life. lot of my motivation to do the things that make me happy...So we set out and discovered a new hobby. Now whenever I am feeling down, my husband and I look up a random campground that we can go drive to and check out for another date. We started this a few weeks ago and it has really lifted my spirit. I don't just feel trapped in one place for a month. It makes me feel like things are normal again, even just for a little while....I am grateful for this time to give me a new perspective at life, as well as an avenue to discover what really brings joy into my life."

"It is no shock that many people have been laid off from work since the beginning of this pandemic...this is my final paper of my senior year. I have a lot of different feelings about being educated and unemployed. I feel upset and mad that I put so much hard work into my education and now there is no work for me within my field because I am not considered an essential worker. I know many people around the country are frustrated because of the same reason and yet I feel guilty for complaining when there is something way bigger than my two years at Sacramento State, [it] couldn't compare to me being educated and unemployed. I do however feel glad that our country is finally starting value [sic] minimum wage workers and to help people who cannot afford an education see that there is value in their work."



In the coming semester, we plan to follow-up with all former student participants for an opportunity to join our research team, and/or for permission to display their work on our COLLAB website. We may continue with the Photovoice process with CP students in the Fall, as instruction will be online again. Many students reflected on how supportive and positive the experience with their Photovoice group was in their final presentations. We plan to undergo human subjects ethics review to conduct an interview study to understand student experiences of collective and deep engagement with their life under COVID-19. Finally, we plan to complete a Thematic Analysis of all Photovoice essays (Braun & Clarke, 2012). We look forward to continuing this work, and hopefully

Student Delayna Reeve captured the second image we present. It depicts her husband in the foreground, taking in a beautiful outdoor scene in front of him. Delayna writes:

to disseminating our research to the broader community, at conferences, and in an academic journal. For more information about our process, please feel free to contact us at ellison@csus.edu.

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The Community Practitioner

Edited by Olya Glantsman and Mayra Guerero, DePaul University

Supporting the Empowerment of Communities

Written by Olya Glantman and Mariajosé Paton, DePaul University

History

Dominica McBride, the founder and CEO of BECOME, has a PhD in Counseling Psychology with a specialization in Consultation from Arizona State University. Dr. McBride is an award-winning evaluator and champion of Culturally Responsive

Evaluation. Drawing on her own experience growing up surrounded by injustice and oppression, Dr. McBride founded BECOME to support the empowerment of communities and their members.

Mission

Located in the heart of Chicago, BECOME is a center for community engagement and social change. It is a nonprofit organization whose main goal is to nourish communities affected by poverty and injustice to make their vision of a thriving community a reality. The organization operates under the belief that communities which face great hardships show the greatest resilience. BECOME believes that every community has the answers to its own problems and thus, must be at the heart of identifying their strengths and capabilities to address their challenges to create positive changes in their own community. The organization specializes in culturally responsive evaluation, research, and community development. They partner with concerned citizens, organizations, and decision makers and work at the intersection of: *Research, Relationship, and Restoration*. BECOME is proud to be a pioneer in culturally responsive research and has its science-based methods rooted in community-driven practices. In their view, research, science, individual experiences, and collective wisdom have the ability to support community and culture as key determinants to social change.

Culture as a Core Philosophy

“Culture is how people in a group relate to themselves, things, and others, as influenced by shared norms, values, language, beliefs, practices, rituals, and traditions. It often guides behaviors, cognitions, decisions, institutions, and governances. Taking into account the culture of the people, institutions and communities involved in the evaluation or project is essential to understanding the people and context for change.”

Culture lies at the core of BECOME’s philosophy of community empowerment. The BECOME team utilizes Culturally Responsive Practice (CRP), a collaborative process of reflection

and action, to enact shared goals developed with and by the community. In their search for sustainable solutions for positive social change, the team incorporates each community’s unique culture into every step from planning to development to evaluation. Using this process, BECOME aims to understand communities as people with shared lived experiences and uplift the culture of the community. Additionally, BECOME positions people as experts on their own experiences and is committed to centering their voices throughout each phase of the work.

Their approach to community transformation is called Culturally Responsive Community Development (CRCD). CRCD includes a four-step approach to community engagement. First is appreciative inquiry and community organizing, which involves listening, learning, and connecting with residents and groups (e.g., block clubs), institutions (e.g., schools, churches, community centers, hospitals, police), and leaders (e.g., alderman, mayor, state representatives). Second comes innovation and strategy development, which is based on community knowledge and strengths. Third is community capacity building, which includes training community members to equip themselves with the tools necessary for social change. Finally, ensuring success with evaluation and research includes utilizing evidence-based practices to assess outcomes and impact. Through this model, BECOME concentrates their services in a neighborhood and creates a long-term partnership that lasts until their shared vision of a thriving community is realized.

Services

BECOME offers a variety of services including program evaluation, community organizing and engagement, community development, training, facilitation, community-driven strategic planning, and coalition building and collaboration. The organization’s projects range from peace-making and violence prevention and health, to community and economic development, youth development and education. Current projects that the program is working on include: *Black Men and Boys Success*, a project that focuses on eradicating barriers such

as racism, police brutality, incarceration and other obstacles to quality education that prevent African American men's and boys' success; *21st Century Learning*, a partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of Chicago; and *Courage to Love*, a collaboration with The Center for Faith and Community Health Transformation aiming to understand factors determining the high infant mortality rate in Auburn Gresham, a predominantly African American neighborhood of Chicago. Additionally, BECOME provides training for facilitating learning and action circles with residents who want to make a difference on their blocks and in their neighborhood.

Maximizing Impact during Covid-19: Serving more people and saving more lives

In these unprecedented times, BECOME continues to serve and support its community partners by deeply listening to what folks are experiencing during this emergent crisis and ever-changing context. In the recent months, the organization has hosted three conversations with their partners including clients, funders, nonprofits, and community organizations, to explore how they can ensure that no one should fall through the cracks during the COVID-19 crisis. *"We are exploring ways we can build on the vital work happening to make sure EVERYONE who needs resources and connection has it."*

BECOME is currently launching a new initiative called Maximizing Impact to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. They are uniquely positioned to create positive change now while working toward the longer-term goal of creating a more socially just world. BECOME will engage with communities to positively impact the immediate critical needs that have arisen from the crisis. We will work with Chicago's three most severely affected neighborhoods: South Shore, Greater Auburn Gresham and Austin. We will build capacity of frontline organizations and work side by side with their service delivery teams by:

- 1) Maximizing impact on the frontlines: We will hear from folks on the ground about the help they are receiving and any other needs they have that are going unmet, as well as connect them with further resources. We can also facilitate connections between community members to increase mutual support.
- 2) Increasing the number of people served through strategic outreach: We will ask those who have been served if they know of anyone else in the community who has a need related to the crisis and ask them to connect us with them. We will then reach out to those folks to see what needs they have and how the lead organizations or other community resources can assist.
- 3) Shaping leaders' decisions: We will listen attentively to the people affected by the crisis, those receiving services as well as those who haven't, and will bring their voices into the conversation about how they are served and how they can serve each other.



Critical Community Psychology

Edited by Natalie Kivell, Wilfred Laurier University

Announcing the Critical Community Psychology (CCP) Interest Group Column

Written by Natalie Kivell, Wilfrid Laurier University; Chris Sonn, Victoria University; and Scot Evans, University of Miami

Hello SCRA Community!

We are excited to launch our Critical Community Psychology (CCP) Interest Group Column in this edition of the TCP! The CCP Interest Group, launched in early 2019, came to be after the meeting of global Critical CP minds; led by our beloved Tod Sloan. As a precursor to creating our group, we - Natalie Kivell, Christopher Sonn, Scot

Evans, and Louis-Phillipe Côté - joined Tod for many intellectually stimulating and generally earth shaking video conversations, and we started to articulate the benefits of bringing together globally situated and critically oriented scholars in CP to connect and grow our collective critical scholarship and practice. It is our hope that as we collectively nurture and develop this network of scholar-activists, that we will be positioned to build a strong and connected foundation of critical scholarship within the field of Community Psychology. Our use of the term “critical” is intentionally broad and inclusive of liberation psychology as well as decolonial, queer, radical, feminist, antiracist, and intersectional approaches in our research, teaching, and practice.

Overview of CCP Interest Group (adapted from the SCRA website)

The Critical Community Psychology interest group seeks to build a community of scholars who are involved in various forms of CCP with the purpose of engaging in collective knowledge building, knowledge translation, and critical praxis. Our goal as an interest group is to create the conditions and collective capacity to move our research and action towards more actionable social transformation projects and a deeper engagement with progressive social movements and activists.

What is Critical Community Psychology? (published on the SCRA website)

Critical community psychology can be thought of as an umbrella term that covers a number of politically radical responses to, and differences from, traditional CP. It is a particular kind of orientation to community psychological theory and practice. Critical CP—as with other forms of critical scholarship—takes as its starting point a commitment to “bring about a radically better society” (D. Fox, 2000, p. 21). It demands that we be acutely aware of the pervasive influence of power in creating and maintaining unjust social conditions (Teo, 2015). In solidarity and close partnership with groups—oppressed through violence, exploitation, marginalization,

powerlessness, or cultural imperialism—critical community psychology seeks to draw attention to the socially divisive and ecologically destructive broader patterns and structures—such as capitalism, neoliberal globalization, patriarchy, colonialism, hegemony, and white supremacy—that condition the scope of social problems, and to engage in collective action to dismantle oppressive social arrangements. (Evans, Duckett, Lawthom, & Kivell, 2017).

History of the Critical Community Psychology interest group

The conversations that led us to the development of a SCRA Interest Group have been ongoing for many years, however, we caught some energy after coming together for a presentation at the SCRA Biennial in Ottawa in 2017 and so many rich discussions throughout the conference. Our presentation was entitled - *Community Psychologists and the Public Sphere: Articulating the Politics behind Community Psychology Practice* pulled together by Louis-Phillipe Côté and Tod Sloan with panelists Thomas Saias and Natalie Kivell, (with Monique Guishard and Ignacio Dobles who helped to co-create the panel but who were not able to attend). It was an active session with participation from SCRA members from around the world discussing the question “What political roles should community psychologists play in the public sphere?” where we interrogated the role of power and our critical orientation in Community Psychology. We left feeling energized about the need and importance of building connections between folks who are actively engaging in this type of research and practice in the field. So, at the beginning of 2019, we invited SCRA members with passions, interests, curiosities, and practical experiences with critical theory, critical methodologies, and critical community practice to join us. To start an interest group in SCRA, you require 25 members of SCRA to indicate their interest in actively participating in the group. Within a week of sharing our proposal with the SCRA listserve we had 67 interested members and our interest group was born!

What we did in our first year

In our first year, we established our group within SCRA, developed a list of resources in our Google Drive, and held our first face-to-face meeting at the 2019 Biennial in Chicago. We created a basic [Critical CP landing page](#) for the SCRA website and we organized three Zoom gatherings where we discussed our identity and goals. During these 'gatherings', we worked to disrupt normative institutional introductions, so rather than beginning with simply naming where we work and/or our research/practice focus, we created space to engage in a dialogue about our passions; what drives us. Each person shared what drives them in their life and work, and they shared what brought them to this space. We created a thematic overview of this dialogue and identified the following themes as the driving force towards our interest group:

Lived Experience Drives Me: Many people discussed their own lived experience as colonized, displaced, and racialized groups as driving their passion, connection, and participation in critical (and decolonial) Community Psychology.

Decolonization and the Fight for justice: People identified the need to fight for a better world, and to think about the ways in which power is used, distributed and limited.

Thirsting for knowledge. Some shared that they are interested in learning more about CCP as what they had learned so far is in line with their values. Others identified that they had previously had to go outside of CP (political science, etc.) to gain mastery over critical theory and theories of power

Wanting to move from theoretical musings to concrete actions: People also kept coming back to the idea that much of CCP has so far been theoretical - we have much to learn about adapting critical CP into everyday action. We want to better understand how Critical CP research is *applied* and *effective*.

Centering the need to unsettle assumptions about what is "normal, good, healthy, and valuable": People discussed the idea that CCP is about unsettling the assumptions of normative or

taken for granted phenomena and structures in our communities/society.

Importance of a safe (and a brave) space - This space allows for us to feel comfortable not knowing everything. We are creating space to ask questions, admit we don't know a concept, author, or theorist. And that we are learning together. Creating an inclusive, transparent space where we can hold each other accountable and nurture our collective learning process.

Creating space to question what it is we are trying to do in Community Psychology. People had many questions on their mind: Why is it that we do what we do as CP's? What is it that we are really trying to do? What is our end goal? Do our practices align with our values? *Are we just using the language of agents of social change and appropriating the work of people doing the work?* Are we centering the experience, knowledge(s), and needs of racialized folks in CP and communities? Are we engaging in the work to address structures of oppression? How does this Interest Group fit into these big questions/critiques about the field?

Future Plans: What is over the Horizon for CCP?

We have big dreams as we continue to develop this network of critical scholars in CP. We also have tangible short-term and long-term plans that we hope will contribute meaningfully to the development of a globally connected and theoretically and empirically rich critical dimension of Community Psychology.

Short-term Plans:

- Continue to hold zoom gatherings to build our global connections and relationships;
- Develop our theoretical and action-oriented praxis by sharing and building knowledge together;
- Continue to populate the Critical CP page on the SCRA website with information and resources to engage the broader field;
- Submit regular interest group columns here to share our work and remain connected to our members;

- And finally - we had big plans to connect in person at the International Community Psychology Conference in Melbourne this June - we plan to redirect that energy to exploring how CCP can help shape the future of our field during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Long(er)-term Plans:

- Plan a Critical CP special issue in an open access journal.
- Develop Critical CP teaching materials for availability on SCRA website.
- Promote critically-oriented graduate CP programs.
- Continue to build and engage the interest group membership as we navigate the development of CCP together

Conclusion

Through our work we continue to reflect on the teachings and values that Tod Sloan sparked in each of us, and we are forever grateful for the intention that he took with nurturing our critical spirits and our activist orientations. Looking forward, with each meeting and each new step we take, we continue to build our network of globally situated and critically oriented scholars and grow our collective critical scholarship and methods for action. We continue to channel Tod with our commitment to dialogue and a deep relationality. We thank and honour Tod for helping to get us to where we are. It is now up to us to keep this vision alive.

If you are interested in joining us, or would like to know more about who we are and what we are doing, please reach out to Natalie Kivell at nkivell@wlu.ca. We look forward to continuing to connect with our members as we nurture and develop this network of scholar-activists. In solidarity.

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Environment and Justice

Edited by Manuel Riemer, Wilfrid Laurier University

Making our Biennial More Green and Socially Just by Going Hybrid – Not Just During COVID-19 Times

Written by Kai Reimer-Watts and Manuel Riemer, Wilfrid Laurier University and Carlie D. Trott, University of Cincinnati

There are times when reality gets ahead of even the most well-planned intentions. This is a story much like that. Back in Fall 2019 (a world ago now) a small group of SCRA members began work on what we were then calling a ‘Virtual Conference Attendance Toolkit’, one of several action projects led by SCRA’s Environment and Justice Interest Group (EJIG). Our early reasons for initiating this project were fairly straightforward: academic conferences often include a significant ecological footprint, which is made up in part by the significant emissions impact of people traveling to get to them. A virtual attendance option could help to reduce these emissions, while offering the added benefit of making the conference more accessible to those otherwise unable to attend in person. Despite these benefits, many virtual options for conferences continue to be experienced (and perceived) as second-rate compared to physically being there, making them unappealing to many. We wanted to explore if there were ways to offer virtual attendance that could augment and perhaps even expand on the on-site, physical experience –

nurturing more equitable processes, experiences and access – rather than being treated as a sub-par substitute. These questions were being explored, slowly and methodically, by a few members of our broader Interest Group, with the intention of proposing a hybrid conference with a strong virtual option for the 2021 SCRA Biennial - when all of a sudden, COVID-19 happened.

The COVID-19 global pandemic and resulting restrictions on in-person social contact (aka ‘physical distancing’) has accelerated a wide range of significant changes, many of which have happened in a remarkably short period of time. This includes a general move towards widespread online / virtual work and social connection to maintain physical distancing - not just in one country, but across many around the world. Such moves have been necessary to slow the spread of the pandemic and ‘flatten the curve’ yet have also raised profound questions about the future of large-scale in-person gatherings in the near future - such as conferences. While there was already a growing trend towards experimentation with virtual conferencing options before COVID-19, the current moment has accelerated interest immeasurably. Once the pandemic hit, our research group realized that we were working on something with much more immediate value than we had realized. Discussions that we thought would take place much later on a hybrid SCRA Biennial began happening in earnest with the SCRA Biennial planning team. To add to this, just as we had agreed with the Vanderbilt team about trying out a true hybrid conference, we learned that the original plans for hosting the 2021 SCRA Biennial in Tennessee had changed, and the Biennial was suddenly without a clear physical home to take place in, at least temporarily. Everything was changing.

In this difficult, disorienting context we wanted to take a step back and reflect more deeply on why we had begun exploring a virtual conference attendance option in the first place, including both its challenges and many potential benefits. What is the real attraction (or not) to virtual conferencing? What are some best practices we can consider? Who else is taking this approach that we can learn

from? Why this? Why now? These are some of the questions we have been considering.

Why consider a virtual conference attendance option for the 2021 SCRA Biennial, and not just stick with an in-person conference?

This guiding question has a wide range of plausible answers, extending far beyond the current context of COVID-19. To start, we want to emphasize that we as authors of this article have all experienced the SCRA Biennial in person and wish to recognize and celebrate the significant value that in-person attendance to a Biennial can hold. As such, we are not advocating for the SCRA Biennial to go fully online and lose this valuable in-person experience for those interested and able to participate in it, but rather for it to become a ‘hybrid’ conference that includes both a physical and virtual (online) option for attendance. Among the goals of our Interest Group work is to ensure that the virtual option be designed as an equally attractive alternative for those for whom attending in-person may not be a viable option. To achieve this, it must include some of the features that make an in-person conference so special - such as its social interactions - along with additional new features. Here are some benefits, as we see them, to investing in a virtual conference attendance option (and the list keeps growing):

1) Reduced emissions: Providing a virtual option can help reduce emissions associated with flights and other forms of travel that would otherwise add significantly to a conference’s overall ecological footprint. For instance, for conferences that attract international attendance such as SCRA, flight emissions can add up to a significant part of this footprint. Scholars at the University of California, Santa Barbara, estimate that air travel for academic conferences, meetings and talks accounts for about a third of the campus’s carbon footprint, “equal to the total annual carbon footprint of a city of 27,500 people in the Philippines” (Hiltner, 2020). In the context of global climate change and localized air pollution concerns, reducing such emissions is not unimportant: the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has

suggested we have until just 2030 to achieve a global 45% reduction in emissions below 2010 levels to avoid truly catastrophic climatic changes, and stay below a 1.5°C global average temperature rise (IPCC, 2018). All sectors of society must help by each doing our part.

2) Social justice: There are also significant social justice benefits to considering a virtual, hybrid option to conference attendance. To start, by reducing emissions and doing our part to fight climate change, we are participating in climate justice by slowing the rate of change - helping to ensure that the most vulnerable communities on the frontlines, young people, and generations not yet born are not forced to bear the worst extremes of a rapidly changing climate. Yet beyond this, an attractive virtual option can also expand the scope for who is able to attend a conference, and hence increase the diversity of participation. Meeting in-person at a conference is a privilege, and one that's not evenly distributed. Providing a virtual option is another way for the SCRA Biennial to demonstrate its commitment to addressing valid concerns over access to this space, from a lens of increasing representation, diversity, and equity.

3) Virtual spaces can augment the physical, in-person experience: A virtual option can expand the scope of ways to participate in and interact at a conference, while increasing the ability for many more people to be able to access programming and participate. This is similar to the thinking that led to the volunteer community Virtually Connecting (VC), founded in 2015 - a group of scholars passionate about creating accessible, equitable virtual spaces at conferences (see www.virtuallyconnecting.org). Early in our research, we connected with VC to provide their insights into how we can best host equitable virtual spaces at the SCRA Biennial. This conversation is ongoing, and VC's insights have been invaluable to better understanding key planning and facilitation processes for creating truly equitable and welcoming virtual spaces, with 'virtual buddies' on-site. As VC has emphasized, the technology - while important - is far less important than these intentionally equitable processes. They have also demonstrated how it is possible to

recreate and expand on many of the social aspects of attending a conference (e.g. hallway and dinner conversations) in virtual spaces, as one of the key reasons for attendance.

4) We have the tools we need and can afford it: The increased availability and reduced cost of necessary technologies to host a virtual option makes this a much more accessible option than it used to be. While there are some costs associated with integrating a strong virtual attendance option to the SCRA Biennial, these can generally be offset by the cost of registration for virtual attendees, which would still be less than on-site registration. This then also offers a more affordable tier of access to the conference, for those who might otherwise not be able to attend. As we price out the likely costs, the SCRA Biennial planning team is currently considering a range of options for pricing virtual attendance. Stay tuned for more information.

In these uncertain times, it's clearly anyone's guess what the world will look like in about one year's time, the timing of the next SCRA Biennial. If anything is certain, it is that we will not be returning to a pre-COVID sense of 'normal' – one that we know was not serving the best needs of our communities to begin with. Planning a virtual option for the next Biennial is a wise move to help mitigate this uncertainty and provide greater access and equity, while reducing the conference's overall ecological footprint. Outcomes of a Biennial Attendance Survey recently shared with SCRA members (304 responded) clearly indicate that members are open to attending virtually (82.6%) however in the absence of funding and travel restrictions there remains a strong preference for in-person attendance (68.4%). This makes the work of this Interest Group all the more essential, to ensure that any virtual options developed are appealing to SCRA members. In-person attendance will continue to have an important place, and our message is, it's time to take the leap into virtual also! We invite you to provide us with questions or suggestions and will do our best to incorporate those in the further development of this virtual option. You can contact us at:

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International Committee

Edited by Douglas D. Perkins, Vanderbilt University

Researching the Global Development of Community Psychology and Other Community Development-Related Fields

Written by Douglas D. Perkins, M. Reha Ozgurur, and Dominique A. Lyew, Vanderbilt University; Nikolay Mihaylov, Medical University Varna, Bulgaria; Akhenaten Benjamin Siankam Tankwanchi, University of Washington-Seattle & Global Health Consultant, Cape Town, South Africa; Liping Yang, Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing, China; and Yong Zhang, East China Normal University, Shanghai, China

The mission of SCRA's International Committee is "to support and promote communication and interaction among community psychologists and practitioners from all nations,

facilitate the dissemination of research and programs developed outside the United States, and foster involvement of community psychologists from around the world in SCRA" (SCRA27.org). The Committee is a good resource for international members of SCRA and Biennial Conference attendees, but how do we promote the above goals without full knowledge of where in the world community psychologists are trained and working? To passively assume all community psychologists in every country have already engaged with SCRA would be, not only insular and hubristic, but contrary to fundamental community psychology principles!

Books, special issues, and international conferences have highlighted the wide variety of exciting community psychology research in many countries and every continent. Less common are cross-cultural, international comparative collaborations and, especially, any attention to where community psychology has not yet developed or struggled to develop and why. Our field is present on all continents, but it is mostly or entirely missing in many places where needs are greatest, and it could have the most impact.

The Global Development of Applied Community Studies (GDACS) Project (<https://www.researchgate.net/project/Global-Development-of-Applied-Community-Studies>) is an ambitious program of collaborative mixed-methods research to comprehensively track the global development of 12 community-based applied social research disciplines in 105 countries, representing over 95% of the world's population. The project aims to identify both the conditions and barriers for the emergence and growth of each indigenous field of community-based research and action, and to support the development of those fields where they are most needed.

We began by analyzing the international growth of Community Psychology (CP), but we soon realized that countries with limited or no community psychologists may simply address local social (physical and mental health, education), economic, and physical development challenges through other disciplines, such as Community

Development (CD), Community Sociology, Community Social Work, Development Economics, Applied Anthropology, Public Health, Urban Planning, Geography, Public Administration and Policy Studies, Popular Education, Liberation Theology, or interdisciplinary Community Research and Action. So, we conducted thousands of hours of systematic internet searches to identify indigenous professional associations or conferences, undergraduate and graduate courses and programs, articles, books, and journals in each of the above fields in each country. (An ongoing GDACS pilot study examines the validity of our admittedly formal-academic measure through comparative qualitative interviews of academic researchers, professionals, and nonprofessional community volunteers in multiple countries.) We also accessed a variety of social, political, and economic indicators as predictor variables, such as a database of past nonviolent grassroots activism, Freedom House's political rights and civil liberties indicators, civic engagement, life satisfaction and well-being, government decentralization, and foreign aid received for most of those countries; plus UN Human Development Index (HDI: GDP, life expectancy and education), income inequality, educational infrastructure, and population size for almost all countries, with an eye toward exploring conditions for the local development of each of the various fields and doing comparative qualitative case studies of particular countries or regions.

The conditions for growth of CP in a given country included three that Montero (1996) identified: (1) limitations of mainstream scientific and applied psychology; (2) a liberalizing social climate in society; and (3) either a supportive progressive government or the opposite-- an authoritarian government creating problems to solve. To those "fertile ground" conditions, we initially added: (4) a liberal education system that encourages critical reflection; (5) a public that engages in activism/questions authority; and (6) a strong civil society; and we have continued to seek, identify, and test additional conditions as well as examples and specifications of each. For example, we have considered how the form and prevalence

of applied community studies in a country relates to its history of colonization, civil liberties, and grassroots organizing and the current level of inequality and human development.

Country-level Global Quantitative Studies and Comparative Qualitative Case Studies

One of the project's first studies used mixed methods to test a new model predicting the global growth of both CP and CD as two applied community-based research disciplines aiming to link local knowledge generation with social change (Hanitio & Perkins, 2017). Across 91 countries we found that civil liberties and historical nonviolent grassroots activism predict the emergence and growth of CP and CD, controlling for socio-economic development (HDI) and population. Another critical finding was that CP is clearly weakest in countries with more severe health, education, and economic problems—precisely where CP is most needed. The relationship of HDI and CD is more complex, but CD is weakest in both moderately high and low-HDI countries, again (in the latter case) where CD is most desperately needed. To examine these patterns in more depth, we reported two brief qualitative case studies of CP and CD in Chile and Ghana, finding that as a more applied practice-oriented field, CD has been more strongly promoted by government and international organizational resources and policies in Ghana, which also has more severe development challenges to address. Colonial and postcolonial history also played a role in fostering the different fields in each country. In Chile, civil society and the history of grassroots activism helped establish norms of collective community action as well as CP, which supports our theoretically proposed conditions for the development of our field.

A recent article by Lyew, Perkins and Sohn (2020) analyzes how receiving foreign aid and other factors influence the presence and strength of CP in 67 low-and-moderate-income countries (LMICs). Although professional human resources capacity is a major focus of international development donor agencies, we are the first to study the relationship of aid to the strength of

applied social research training in recipient countries. As predicted by dependency theory, aid significantly explains the strength of community psychology at the country level over and above the influence of GDP per capita, income inequality, the number of universities, civil liberties, and historical grassroots activity. Also, the less aid received, the more strongly political activism predicts the strength of community psychology. Our findings support the observation that aid is provided in ways that exclude locally trained researchers and practitioners. We are working on a paper modelling aid and other predictors of *all* applied community studies disciplines in LMICs. We aim to explore problems with foreign aid systems and how to change them to support the development of CP and other community disciplines.

Another study by Ozgurer and Perkins uses data on 105 countries and GIS to map and analyze the global growth of CP based on geographic proximity and socioeconomic and political indicators. Our theoretical framings were knowledge transfer and knowledge spillover. The results of hot spot analysis and cluster and outlier analysis spatially confirmed our hypothesis, revealing statistically significant hot spots of CP in countries sharing borders. The strength of CP in neighboring countries significantly predicted the growth of CP beyond the influence of population size, HDI, freedom score, and a history of grassroots activism. We explored implications for theory, research, and international professional and student exchanges.

A new study by the same authors investigates the relationship between government decentralization and the development of urban and regional planning in a country. Fiscal, administrative, and political decentralization are key determinants of the delegation of power to local communities (Falleti, 2005), which is required for the development and effectiveness of local planning. This project employs GDACS data to examine whether government decentralization and localization predict the development of urban and regional planning in a country beyond the influences of grassroots activism, political rights,

civil liberties, higher education infrastructure, and social and economic indicators in that country. Social movements and political theory will be used to analyze conditions for the development of the field.

We have two papers in progress using China as a case study. One builds on a Chinese-language article (Yang & Perkins, 2012) and analyzes the prospects for CP development in China based on the six societal conditions identified above. But it may become moot as there is already a Chinese CP scientific/professional association and other signs of growth. The other paper by Zhang, Perkins, and Huang is on the recent development of (adult) Community Education in China, but as always creating it “with Chinese characteristics.” We propose a new empowerment model of community education and examine two case examples in Shanghai.

Finally, student theses from the project provide examples of the kinds of research one can do by analyzing country-level data or doing an in-depth qualitative case study of a single country. For example A.S. Tankwanchi (2018; et al. 2015) systematically and, from a liberatory and ecological perspective, analyzed a serious human resource capacity problem—“brain drain,” or recruitment and migration of healthcare workers from sub-Saharan African to the West. Nikolay Mihaylov and Ronald Harvey are attempting to introduce community psychology to Bulgaria, a former Soviet-bloc country that is simultaneously experiencing both capitalist oligarchy and grassroots community-level resistance and intervention. Dominique Lyew’s thesis analyzed the concept of epistemic justice in various applied community disciplines in the post-colonial context of Jamaica. She is completing a dissertation on the connection between epistemic justice and political participation in Jamaica, the Caribbean and Latin America. Eunice Sohn expanded the prediction model for community psychology and community development to also include community sociology, social work, development economics, and liberation theology and found grassroots activism to partially but significantly mediate the relationship of both HDI

and civil liberties with the strength of those community-based research disciplines in 94 countries. Hannah Haecker examined the strength of development economics as a field and again found grassroots activism to be a positive predictor and foreign aid received a negative predictor and traced the historical development of the field in brief case studies of Niger and Ethiopia. Hans Braunfisch compared Northern and Southern European differences in development as an empirical test of Max Weber's classic *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* theory.

Conclusions

Some of the broader contributions of the GDACS Project are: 1. They are the first empirical studies of conditions for establishing and growth of community-based applied research disciplines internationally, beyond just one country, region, or continent. 2. It is also the first to quantitatively measure the strength of community studies disciplines at the national and global levels. 3. We proposed and confirmed a new model for the development of CP and community-based research in general. 4. We found multiple pathways to the development of community studies disciplines, but a history of civil liberties and grassroots activism are especially important conditions. 5. We must support countries with the greatest poverty and human development needs to develop their own applied community studies resources in order to use aid in a less dependent way; that is the only just and viable way to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

(<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>).

International comparative research helps collaborators from each country learn from each other, develop indigenous human resource capacity and remove barriers of mutual ignorance and misunderstanding.

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Prevention and Promotion

Edited by Susana Helm, University of Hawai'i at Manoa

The Prevention & Promotion IG column of *The Community Psychologist* highlights P&P resources as well as the P&P work of community psychologist and allied professionals. We invite submissions

from SCRA members, from people who present on P&P topics during SCRA and other conferences; and from leading and emergent scholars, including students. Please refer your colleagues and friends in academia and beyond to our interest group and column. Please [email me](#) if you would like to submit a brief report or if you have resources we may list here.

Mahalo to [Crystal Steltenpohl from the University of Southern Indiana](#) for celebrating on the SCRA listserve last November 2019 about the work of her CP undergrads. In my role as column editor, I inquired about her interest in submitting a co-authored piece with her students to share more about the evolution of their mental health promotion project, as well as their reflections on the experience.

Prevention & Promotion IG Co-Chairs:
[Toshi Sasao](#), [Kayla DeCant](#), [Susana Helm](#).

Advocating for Mental Health Resources on Campus

Written by Claire Ellis, Riley Laffoon, and Crystal N. Steltenpohl, University of Southern Indiana.

Community Psychology Undergraduate Course

As undergraduates, enrolling in the introductory “Community Psychology” (CP) course can lead to meaningful action around issues we care about. The University of Southern Indiana (USI) has been hosting townhalls where we can ask questions of our administration, in response to discussions that faculty, staff, and students have wanted around the university’s future. Our class attended a townhall in October 2019 with our Vice-President of Finance. Several of us asked questions about topics like housing and financial aid. We learned a lot about how universities operate from attending the townhall and by talking about it as a class afterward. Many students, especially those of us who are psychology majors, have been concerned about the difficulty students

have had in accessing mental health resources on campus. Around 35% of full-time students have at least one common lifetime mental health disorder (Auerbach et al., 2018). Mental health outcomes are one of the many factors related to student retention (e.g. O’Keeffe, 2013), and several students in our class know at least one person who dropped out of USI for mental health reasons. Our Counseling Center has been working hard to alleviate these issues - offering a variety of group therapy sessions and reorganizing intake procedures. Still, there is a lot of demand, and USI has been slow to provide the Counseling Center with appropriate resources to tackle these issues head on.

Midwest Eco Conference

In October 2019, our CP professor, Dr. Steltenpohl, obtained funding from our College of Liberal Arts and the Provost’s Office to bring seven of us to the Midwest Eco Conference (MEC) at National Louis University in Chicago. The conference theme was “Strengthening the Village: The Global Implications of Social Solidarity.” Our student-faculty group led a session called “Understanding Community Psychology at Primarily Undergraduate Institutions,” where we related what we were learning about CP to our experiences at a small school in southwestern Indiana (see Figure 1). We also attended several sessions on our own, e.g. citizen participation, grassroots community interventions, and the sharing of power. We were



Figure 1 Midwest Eco Group. Pictured left to right: Claire Ellis, Caleb Kamplain, Favene Billa, Crystal Steltenpohl, Mia Jackson, Bradie Gray, Amanda Smock, Sarah Martin

inspired by the conversations during these sessions and at the post-conference celebration. We had not seen research and advocacy come together in the ways we saw at the conference before, and it was fascinating to see the possibilities available to us, if we chose to explore them. On the drive back from MEC (7-hour carpool), we discussed mental health and the long wait times at our Counseling Center, which at times would reach four to six weeks. Our frustration turned to motivation once we considered how a community psychologist might approach the issue. We asked ourselves how we could address our community's needs. The Counseling Center's long wait times could be remedied, in part, by the addition of more staff, specifically more counselors, which would provide more capacity. However, convincing the administration to make these changes seemed to be a lofty goal. We eventually reached the conclusion that we needed to show the administration that we had both research and people backing the cause.

Mental Health Advocacy

We proposed a group advocacy project to Dr. Steltenpohl instead of writing individual final papers. We offered to complete an action and write a group report highlighting our research and suggested solutions. Dr. Steltenpohl thought it was a great idea and suggested we pitch the idea to our classmates, though students who preferred to do the individual paper would be allowed to do so. Ultimately, eight students opted to do the group advocacy project, including two students who did not attend MEC. We immediately went to work on our final project, making posters and social media posts, researching the topic, and asking people to join our cause (see Figure 2). Dr. Steltenpohl urged us to consider various stakeholders on campus, so we spoke to other students, faculty, the Dean of Students, and Counseling Center staff. Most of us were new to almost everything involved in this ambitious plan, but together, we had the skills to pull it off. It was cold on November 13 – the date of our campus social action event, but we walked around the campus with students in our class and others who believed in our cause. A student in last year's CP class brought his megaphone, which we

used while outdoors. Our student newspaper, *The Shield*, [interviewed people at the march](#) and one of their photographers walked with us for a while to capture important moments (refer to article for photos). Near the end of the walk, we entered the administration building where we had a brief conversation with the Provost. We then hosted a sit-in at the library, where we gave a short speech about our fight for more mental health resources at USI.

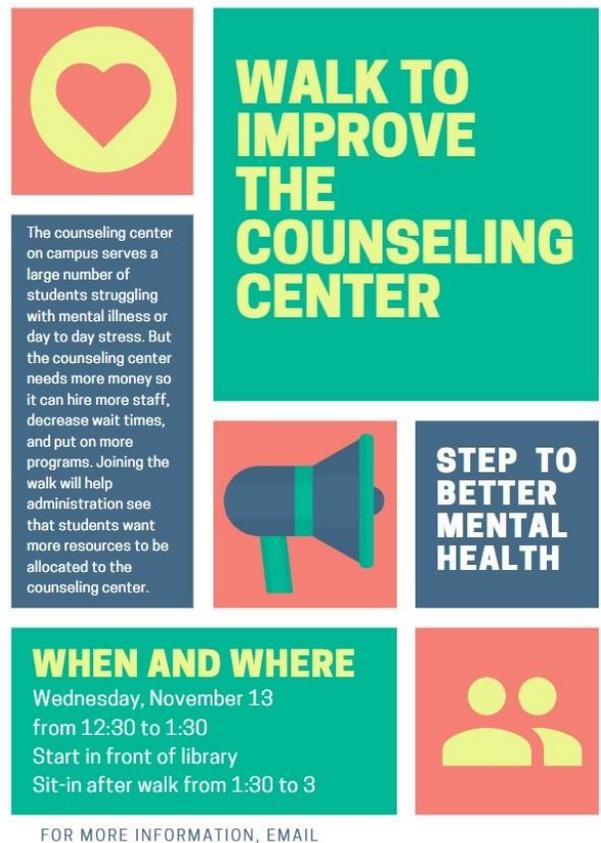


Figure 2. Poster

After the mental health advocacy walk, we attended another townhall, this time with our Vice President for Student Affairs. We sat together in a row in the middle of the auditorium and asked about the university's strategies for helping our Counseling Center. We were a bit frustrated that one of the responses was that USI "can't give everyone a personal counselor," which was an exaggeration of our request. Dr. Steltenpohl later told us about the positive responses she got from SCRA members and faculty on our campus regarding our advocacy. A few days after the townhall, we met with the USI President, who had

invited the VPs of Finance and Student Affairs. We made our concerns known and got the same answer that students have always gotten: there is not enough money in the budget. The university administrators also seemed confused as to why we were coming to them. When we explained that they had the power to make change on our campus, they seemed surprised we understood that.

Reflections

Since our actions during the Fall 2019 semester, discussions around mental health resources have come up numerous times in other townhalls and the student newspaper has published news and opinion pieces on mental health on campus. We hope we can continue to work on these issues and push for more resources to support our Counseling Center.

Claire Ellis, BA 2020 (Expected). From the first day of this class, I knew this type of work interested me. However, I was hesitant because the world just had too many problems. I could never fix all of them, so why even try? Then I went to Midwest Eco. I did not need to solve all the world's problems; other, more qualified people are working on all kinds of issues all around the world, ways to better humanity I had not even considered. I had been far too self-centered. I decided to put my efforts to a few causes that were most important to me, putting my trust in others to share the burden of trying to make the world a little bit better. Throughout the semester, Dr. Steltenpohl expressed that she wants to leave the world better than how she found it. Even though I have learned more than I could express in this short essay, this is the idea that means the most to me, the one I will carry with me for life.

Riley Laffoon, BA 2020 (Expected). Coming into this class, I had little knowledge about CP. My interests were mainly in clinical work, so learning about and working with whole communities was new and interesting to me. I had interest in advocacy, but lacked confidence. Throughout this course, I grew not only academically, but also personally. I learned how CP works and its importance when advocating for change. Attending the townhalls and having the opportunity to meet

with the university President, CFO, and VP of Student Affairs allowed me to see my voice matters in this university and I can make a difference. Through the counseling center advocacy project, I gained confidence in speaking up for what I believe in and fighting for higher-level changes. This experience not only sparked my interest in furthering advocacy work, but allowed me to see my potential as an advocate. I am thankful for the valuable experiences I have gained, and I am confident that the qualities and knowledge I obtained from this course will allow me to prosper in my academic life and beyond.

Crystal Steltenpohl, Faculty. This was an amazing class to teach. I struggle with how much I should encourage students to engage in advocacy. I think it is important for everyone to contribute to their communities in meaningful ways; however, I often worry *forcing* students to engage in advocacy can have negative consequences, particularly for the affected communities. This was a best-case scenario! I credit my students' success not only to their own abilities and traits, but to the open access textbook which allowed students to access course material from day one (Jason, Glantsman, O'Brien & Ramian, 2019), and the welcoming and inclusive atmosphere at Midwest Eco. For most, if not all my students, this was their first conference, and seeing them engaging in deep conversations about my field—and then taking it home to enact change—filled my heart in ways I still can't describe. Thank you, to my students and to the community psychologists who engaged with them during and after the conference.

Dr. Crystal N. Steltenpohl cnsteltenp@usi.edu

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Regional Network News

Edited by Christina Smith, University of Chicago and National Louis University – Regional Network Coordinator

News from the Midwest Region U.S.

MIDWEST REGIONAL COORDINATORS

Melissa Ponce Rodas, Andrews University; and Tonya Hall, Chicago State University

When One Door Closes New Opportunity Opens: The First Virtual MPA Conference

Amber Kelly, Community Engagement Collective

On an annual basis students and professionals in the field of community psychology present their work at the Midwestern Psychological Association; however, due to COVID-19, the in-person meeting was canceled.

A passionate team decided to take on moving the conference to an online format as opposed to accepting the cancellation. Community Engagement Collective, Society for Community Research and Action, and Midwestern Psychological Association collaborated to create the first MPA SCRA Virtual Conference. The endeavor required consistent planning and swift movement because other conferences could potentially conflict. Timing was of the essence. The dedication of the planning team Amber Kelly, Tonya Hall, Chris Smith, Moshood Olanrewaju, Jean Hill, Susan Torres-Harding, and Michael Bernstein helped to steer the conference in the right direction.

Although our movements had to be prompt, we had to make sure that confirmed conference accepted presentations shared our enthusiasm. After multiple confirmations, we drafted a schedule that would allow for attendees to share their work virtually. With a majority of events transitioning to online, the options for platforms were not slim. Zoom was the best fit for our program. Although, in theory, this appeared to be simple, there were more logistics to consider (e.g., team coverage during each session, zoom features to use, and prevention of zoom bombing).

Our biggest questions included: How could we create a sense of community online? Will attendees feel like they were able to share their work in a professional format? Our weekly meetings strived to develop responses to these questions that were positive, then our cultural climate drastically changed.

The death of George Floyd caused our committee to consider how we can leverage our field during this time of uncertainty. We shifted our program to include a panel and community discussion "Race Matters: Even During COVID-19". The diverse panel included multiple community psychologists who could share insight on the issues. Many thanks to Leonard Jason, Johnny Mullins, Ericka Mingo, Geri Palmer, Rafael Rivera, Dominique Thomas, La'Shawn Littrice, Gina Curry, Judah Viola, Brad Olson, and Psychologists for Social Responsibility for your support.

Panelists sharing their wisdom was not enough; there was a time needed for reflection and connection. The small group discussions offered an opportunity for engaging virtually. The last session was a reception filled with poetry and live music, giving attendees a chance to relax after our first MPA SCRA Virtual Conference.

How did we do?

Throughout the day, 94 people attended the conference participating in six roundtables, 14 posters, one-panel discussion, one community discussion, and one reception.

Forty-three percent (43%) of attendees shared their feedback. Here are the highlights

- 95% of attendees rated the conference as excellent or very good
- 51% of attendees shared this was their first time participating in MPA SCRA
- 95% of attendees indicated they would attend a virtual MPA SCRA in the future

"Since I am not in the US, this online conference allowed me to connect with community action researchers in the US very easily, which helped me a lot. Thank you very much for this wonderful opportunity."

"I applaud MPA SCRA for presenting this conference in such a challenging time of global health, fear, and unrest. It was fascinating to see how fluid it is to use a virtual medium for a conference and inspires me to share this virtual platform delivery with others. People from all over the world, from most economic backgrounds and on crazy personal schedules, can participate. Huge asset. I attend a lot of conferences, and this virtual one had the same feel. Thank you for being one of the many groups that are pioneering pandemic versions of this medium."

Check out videos from the conference posted on SCRA's YouTube page.

What's next?

As a field, as a community, let's continue to find ways to engage with others. Now is not the time to be silent or still but find ways to use your strengths to be an asset during one of the most challenging times in history.

Amber E. Kelly, PhD, MS, MHS
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2019 Annual Report



Fostering Community Engagement Through Innovative Strategies

News from the Western Region U.S.

WESTERN REGIONAL COODINATORS

Greg Townley, Portland State University; Mariah Kornbluh, California State Chico; Rachel Hershberg, University of Washington Tacoma

Building a Post-Prison Higher Education Community in Washington

Christopher Beasley, University of Washington Tacoma



Christopher Beasley

Of higher education inequities in the U.S., formerly imprisoned students are among the greatest. In fact, only about 4% of these individuals complete a bachelor's degree compared to about 30% of the general population. The only other similarly inequitable demographic is former foster care youth, of whom just under 2% obtain bachelor's degrees (Pecora et al., 2007). Other higher education inequities tend to be in the range of 12-16% for this degree (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017; Ingels et al., 2012; McFarland et al., 2018).

While there appears to be a marked higher education inequity for formerly incarcerated people, the vast majority of states and universities neither have programs to address this disparity nor plans for developing them or even discussion about the need to develop such plans. This work appears to be concentrated primarily in four states—California,

New York, Washington, and New Jersey, (Lampe-Martin & Beasley, 2019). These programs have developed through a variety of frameworks ranging from grassroots student organizing to professional non-profit programs and bureaucratic initiatives.

Some of the post-prison higher education work in Washington I have been involved in over the past three years include co-founding the national Formerly Incarcerated College Graduates Network, organizing a regional subgroup of this network for the Northwest, establishing the Post-Prison Education Research Lab, spearheading the development of an emerging Husky Post-Prison Pathways initiative at the University of Washington Tacoma and helping students establish a Formerly Incarcerated Student Association on this campus, supporting planning for similar pathways initiatives across the University of Washington system, and helping students across the three campuses become better connected with one-another as well as with other formerly incarcerated college students and community members. This work has already contributed to policy change such as the Fair Chance to Education act and institutional barriers to formerly incarcerated students. Going forward, I hope and expect these communities will continue to grow, strengthen, create even greater change in our state, and contribute to similar work in other states.

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Rural Interests

Edited by Susana Helm, University of Hawai'i at Manoa

The Rural IG column of *The Community Psychologist* highlights rural resources as well as the work of community psychologist and allied professionals in their rural environments. We invite submissions from Rural IG members, from people who present on rural topics during SCRA and other conferences; and from leading and emergent rural scholars. Please refer your colleagues and friends in academia and beyond to our interest group and column. Please [email me](#) if you would like to submit a brief report or if you have resources we may list here.

Mahalo to Rural IG Co-Chair Suzanne Philips for recommending the work of her New Hampshire colleague. Jessica Carson is a Sociologist and Assistant Professor in the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University Of New Hampshire. She currently is “working on a long-term project around the challenges and opportunities facing people who live and work in rural communities, with the goal of highlighting the strategies that work best to support them.”

COVID-19 Pandemic Arrives Unevenly in Rural America

Written by Jessica A. Carson, University of New Hampshire



Jessica A. Carson

The COVID-19 pandemic was initially slow to arrive in rural counties across the United States. According to public health data aggregated by the New York Times, the first confirmed rural case was in California’s Humboldt County on February 20, 2020 followed by a case in Grafton County, New Hampshire almost two weeks later. By mid-March, cases emerged in Colorado ski country, and this clustering of cases in rural “destinations” continued to unfold in March and early April, representing the virus’s first real foothold into rural America. This column draws upon and updates research published by the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire (Carson, 2020) in early April tracking the initial spread in rural “destinations” and notes implications for rural residents both during and after the pandemic.

Rural Places with High Seasonal Housing Initially Linked to Higher COVID-19 Caseloads

In late March and early April, local news from popular rural vacation destination areas, including the White Mountains National Forest in New Hampshire and the Berkshires in Massachusetts,

described residents’ fears of visitors fleeing more densely populated urban areas to hunker down in rural second homes and short-term rentals (Jones, 2020; Ropeik, 2020). Residents worried about contracting the virus, but also had concerns about their communities’ food and health infrastructure to keep pace with potentially increasing demand. Some communities debated restricting short-term rentals (e.g., Airbnbs) and encouraged second homeowners to stay home (“Great Barrington implores”, 2020; Jones, 2020). To help inform these decision-making processes, I explored COVID-19 diagnoses per 100,000 residents with a focus on rural counties’ seasonal housing stock, treating this as a proxy for rural “destinations.”

Specifically, using data from the US Census Bureau for population estimates and housing unit details, the US Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service for designating counties as rural, and the New York Times for county-level COVID-19 detail, I examined COVID-19 caseloads in rural counties where at least 25 percent of housing units are identified as for “seasonal or occasional” use, versus those with less seasonal housing. Note that the publication uses 25% as a threshold, but identified relationships held true whether “high” seasonal housing thresholds were placed at the rural mean (about 9%), 25%, or 50%.

I found that as of April 5, rural counties with high shares of seasonally vacant housing had higher rates of COVID-19 cases than either urban or other rural areas. In the nation’s 199 rural counties with high seasonal housing, average cases per 100,000 were more than twice as high as in other rural counties and 15% higher than in urban areas (Figure 1).

This work identified a relationship between rural communities’ housing characteristics and concentrations of diagnosed cases but could not indicate a causal link. There are several possible explanations for the patterns seen as of April 5: for instance, rural areas are older than urban areas (Crommartie, 2018), and places with lots of seasonal housing often overlap with retirement destinations (Mattingly & Carson, 2019). Perhaps, because

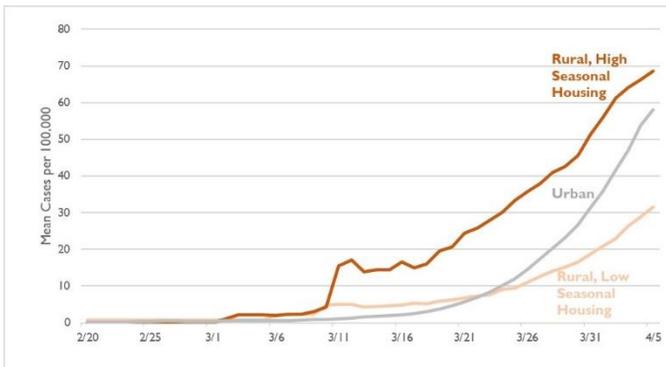


Figure 1: COVID 19 Rates in Urban and Rural Counties

residents there are older, they are more likely to have been infected, or to have been diagnosed. These communities also have higher incomes than other rural places (ibid.): maybe residents there are more likely to have had access to testing capacity through health insurance and usual care providers than in other kinds of rural places. It also is possible that both high caseloads and high seasonal housing are linked to a third factor - beautiful natural amenities - and as usual recreation opportunities shuttered, day trippers came into these regions not for the housing, but for the hiking, biking, rock climbing, and other outdoor recreation opportunities, perhaps unwittingly bringing the virus with them. It's possible that each of these factors contributed to the initial spread in rural areas with high seasonal housing.

Rural Places with High Caseloads Change Over Time

Whatever the driver of the relationship in Figure 1, this pattern was specific to a moment in time. By April 9, 2020, rates in urban counties had eclipsed those in rural places with high seasonal housing. By the end of April, the gap between rural counties with higher and lower shares of seasonal housing had closed. Critically, the shrinking gap was due to increasing spread in rural places more broadly, as the virus left fewer communities untouched.

Analysis from [The Daily Yonder](#), published by the [Center for Rural Strategies](#), indicates that the initial spread in rural counties classified as recreation-dependent (which has major overlap with communities with high shares of seasonal housing) has been eclipsed by rising infection rates

in other kinds of rural counties, particularly those dependent on manufacturing or government employment. Marema (2020) concludes that rural counties with meatpacking plants and prisons are the new virus “hotspots.” Because “rural” is not a monolith, the spread, short-term outcomes, and long-term implications of the pandemic are likely to remain uneven within and across rural places.

Rural America Not Exempt from the COVID-19 Pandemic’s Magnification of Inequality

In rural America, this pandemic is both highlighting and exacerbating deeply entrenched inequalities. The initial spread into rural “destination” counties, whether due to out-of-town visitors or not, refreshes questions around intra-community inequality. Broadly, there are those who can afford travel, to work remotely or not at all, and to obtain testing and related health care, and those who meet that group’s needs by working as cashiers, health aides, and delivery drivers. Even in usual times, places with beautiful natural amenities bring in tourists, retirees, and second homeowners, without whom local jobs would diminish. But, for those who live in these places year-round, the quality of resulting jobs, often clustered in the service sector, and the pressure on local housing markets, complicate locals’ capacity to thrive (Mattingly & Carson, 2019).

Spread into rural counties dependent on meatpacking highlights many of these same income inequalities but adds an especially important layer of racial and ethnic stratification. Meatpacking plants long have been staffed disproportionately by immigrant workers, often Hispanic and/or Latino (Gouveia & Stull, 1997; Barrón-López, 2020; Ura, 2020). With federal pressure to keep open meat processing plants (Wilkie, 2020), workers must navigate potentially tenuous immigration status, fewer financial cushions against job loss, and higher risks of infection and death from the virus (Farrell et al., 2020; Mays & Newman, 2020; Ura, 2020).

In short, rural America is far from exempt from COVID-19, and as is true nationwide, risks of exposure, patterns of spread, and outcomes of

infection are uneven and intersect with existing inequalities. Poor people, people of color, people with chronic health conditions, without health insurance, without savings - all populations for whom entrenched systemic inequities predate the pandemic - are disproportionately vulnerable to the pandemic's health and economic effects. Mortality risks posed by rural America's older age structure added to the lack of specialized health care, and the long-term trend of rural hospital closures exacerbate rural risks (Johnson, 2020; Healy et al., 2020). Continuing policy supports for those at most risk, including dedicating funding for rural challenges, will shape outcomes for rural residents in the months ahead.

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Student Issues

Edited by Joy Agner, University of Hawai'i at Manoa; Camilla Cummings, DePaul University

Examining Processes of Resilience among Black Youth: A Youth Participatory Action Research Approach

Written by Nickholas Grant and Helen Neville, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

As a recipient of the SCRA Student Research Grant award, I have made significant progress on my dissertation research that is focused on

examining processes of resilience among Black youth who face violence in their communities. Black youth and communities continuously show strength despite various adversities, such as violence, and can sustain their well-being and adapt. Researchers often refer to this phenomenon as resilience. Most resilience studies on Black youth who face violence, however, adopt an outcome-based approach that focuses primarily on reduced psychological outcomes in the face of risk. This approach decontextualizes Black youths' experiences and perspective and provides little understanding of community strengths and resources as indicators of resilience (i.e., community resilience). Given the lack of youth perspective in resilience research, there is also little theoretical guidance on resilience processes that Black youth view as important in their communities.

To address these gaps, my dissertation work has been focused on developing a youth-centered model of resilience that reflects the lived experiences and perspectives of Black youth. Specifically, I want to capture which community and structural level resources Black youth perceive as important to promote community resilience. To do so, I prioritize: (a) centering Black youths' perspectives throughout the research process, (b) exploring how Black youth construct meaning around feeling well, satisfied or accomplished the context of communities with high reported shootings, (c) identifying community resilience processes that Black youth perceive in their communities, and (d) contextualizing the social and cultural relevance of perceived processes. In doing so, I can highlight unique pathways by which Black communities seek and receive support to combat issues such as gun violence. Unlike previous studies that used broad, outcome-based measures of protective resources, I can illustrate context-specific ways these variables may serve to promote resilience within communities impacted by gun violence.

By way of accomplishing these research aims, I have been utilizing grounded theory and participatory action research methodologies. Specifically, I am employing constructivist grounded

theory methods throughout a youth participatory action research project (YPAR) to explore how Black youth construct meaning of resilience in their communities. Over the course of three-years, I co-constructed a research investigation alongside Black youth by actively engaging them as co-researchers in a YPAR project called #PowerUp to address gun violence. PowerUp was designed to help adolescents (ages 13 – 19 years old) engage youth in social issues in their community and to find ways to contribute to the health and development of those communities, using a youth centered approach. During this project, youth reflected and engaged in interactive discussions of project related tasks to further their knowledge of and create meaningful solutions to address gun violence. While doing so, this offered an opportunity to inquire about and continuously collect and analyze data regarding resilience as youths' ideas developed and expanded with each phase. By using both methodologies in tandem with one another, I can centralize and contextualize Black youths' perspectives, while simultaneously developing a model of resilience processes. With the support of the SCRA Student Research Grant, I have completed the last two phases of the #PowerUp project, which, in turn, helped me develop a preliminary youth-centered model of community resilience.

In terms of project related activities, #PowerUp has completed the data analysis and action and dissemination phases. For the data analysis phase, youth learned and applied photovoice methods as a means of data collection and analysis. Youth took over 187 photos in communities with high reported shootings to identify and discuss what contributes to gun violence, potential assets within these communities, community needs, and potential recommendations for addressing gun violence. During these discussions of photographs, we also inquired more directly about resilience, requesting the youth to code, free write, and discuss three prompts related to phase one: (a) What were the major themes that characterize the neighborhoods with high gun violence?; (b) What represents spaces in which keep community members safe

from gun violence?; and (c) What is needed/missing in order to keep the community safe from gun violence? Once complete, youth conducted a thematic analysis to create themes related to each of these prompts. The final list of themes was used to inform the last phase: action and dissemination.

For the last phase of #PowerUp, youth presented their project findings to a larger public audience with the overarching goal of fostering awareness and creating change. Youth translated their photovoice findings and analysis into digital stories, which are 2-4-minute narratives told in a digital format. In fact, funds have helped support youth researchers and members of the #PowerUp team (including youth researchers) attend two national conferences, including the Society for the Psychological Study of Culture, Ethnicity and Race Research Conference held at the University of Texas at Austin and the American Psychological Association Annual Convention in 2019. After both conferences, youth were struck by how much others wanted to hear their stories, which fueled their interest and motivation to talk to their own community violence trauma task force. Youth then identified key stakeholders with whom they would like to discuss their findings, including, the local community coalition and trauma and resilience initiative, family and peers, and city officials. Youth presented their findings to community stakeholders to advocate for resources/recommendations to address gun violence and are now coordinating with community-based organizations to host a teen summit and create a public mural. Youth mentioned how often they are overlooked and silenced, so they wanted to cultivate a teen summit that will provide opportunities that focus on the needs of teens, including professional development, social support services, job attainment, and additional space to discuss issues Black youth face. Issues surrounding gun violence are often off the radar of the broader college community, and for this reason, youth wanted to spread awareness, acknowledge, and celebrate the lives lost to gun violence through a public mural.

Completing these phases of the project has had great implications for my dissertation research. Each phase of the project allowed for a more in-depth investigation of resilience processes, especially during the photovoice analysis and the action and dissemination phase in which there was more analysis, reflection, and discussion of their own lived experiences in communities with high reported shootings. Consistent with constructivist grounded theory methods, I continuously collected and analyzed data throughout using inductive logic, comparative analysis, theoretical sampling, and theory construction strategies. In doing so, I was able to (a) understand how Black youth constructed meaning of resilience in their communities; (b) identify which community resilience factors were salient for Black youth and how these factors promoted a sense of well-being within Black communities; and ultimately (c) co-construct a preliminary model of community resilience processes.

Based on three years of continuous data collection and analysis in the #PowerUp project, preliminary results showed that there are multiple community processes that help people navigate and cope with the challenges related to gun violence. Ultimately, there was one core process that emerged within this model: Power through Black Community and Unity. This core process suggests that there are perceived sources of power, care, and positive representation when Black people from the community became involved and were united to support others (including youth) through adversity. In relation to this core process, there were three main processes, including Collective Care, Shared Racial Understanding, and Supportive Teen Services. Collective Care are actions taken on behalf of the community to protect and care for others to create trust and connection (e.g., neighborhood gatherings). Shared Racial Understanding are actions that provide a sense of shared understanding of one's racial experiences. Specifically, having shared understanding from other positive Black adult figures (e.g., mentor) provides solace on behalf of youth who live in violent context and require support and guidance

among those who identify as Black. Lastly, Supportive Teen Services are interpersonal and community resources that are dedicated toward engaging and supporting the needs of teens. Youth stressed the importance of dedicated spaces (e.g., after school programs) for teens where they could vent their feelings and/or engage in fun activities, so they can avoid the "bad things" like gun violence.

In conclusion, the support of the SCRA Student Research Grant has been key to the progression of my dissertation research and the #PowerUp project as a whole. Currently, I am finalizing my youth-centered model of resilience, and I am optimistic that I will defend before the end of the academic school year. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside amazing youth co-researchers and provide an empowering experience that, according to the youth, "gave me a sense pride and purpose in our work."



SCRA Member Spotlight

Edited by Dominique Thomas, University of Michigan

The SCRA Member Spotlight lets us engage our members and highlight great work! Each issue we solicit submissions of accomplishments. We especially would like students, early career scholars, and practitioners to submit their accomplishments and work. Submissions can include but are certainly not limited to:

- New jobs
- Post-docs
- Promotions
- Thesis/Dissertation Defenses
- Newly published journal articles, books, chapters
- Podcasts, blogs, news items that are by or about you
- Certifications or other credentials
- Retirement

- Grants
- Awards
- Successful/ongoing projects
- New projects or community initiatives

If you are interested in submitting for the next issue, please click this [link](#) and fill out the form. We hope to hear from you!

Corbin J. Standley, Michigan State University was recently appointed by Governor Gretchen Whitmer to serve on Michigan's State Suicide Prevention Commission. The Commission is the first of its kind in the state and will work with state departments and non-profit organizations to (1) research the causes and possible underlying factors of suicide in the state, (2) determine the demographic disparities for suicide in the state, (3) research and collect best practices from other states and Michigan counties, and (4) provide recommendations to the legislature to develop and coordinate statewide suicide prevention efforts.

Jennifer Lawlor, University of Michigan completed the University of Michigan's Certificate in Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion!

In January 2020 **Natalie Kivell, Wilfrid Laurier University** started a position as an Assistant Professor in the Community Psychology Department at Wilfrid Laurier University.



From Our Members

Edited by Susan M. Wolfe, Susan Wolfe and Associates

“Walk the Talk:” Bringing Community Psychology to Life in the American Evaluation Association

Written by Michelle Abraczinskas, University of Florida; Brittany Cook, The

Wandersman Center; Ijeoma Izeofor, TCC Group; Jonathan Scaccia, The Wandersman Center, and the CP TIG Leadership Team



Michelle Abraczinskas

The purpose of this article is to share information with SCRA members about the American Evaluation Association's (AEA) Topical Interest Group (TIG) in Community Psychology (CP), and their annual “Walk the Talk” (WTT) event at the AEA conference. In providing this information, we hope we will attract more CP-evaluators to the TIG and WTT.

AEA

[AEA's mission](#) is to improve evaluation practices/methods, increase evaluation use, promote the evaluation profession, and support evaluation's contribution to theory and effective human action. AEA has 60 TIGs that span a variety of fields and topics, one of them being CP.

History of CP TIG

The CP TIG was created in 2012 to: 1) introduce CP to an audience that, at the time, was known more for its methodological than values focus; 2) connect evaluation practitioners, who used CP values but were unaware of the connection, to CP; 3) expose evaluation practitioners who did not use CP values in their work, even though their work would benefit, to CP; and 4) create a home for CP within AEA (Sheldon & Wolfe, 2015). The TIG includes CP-evaluator practitioners, psychologists from related, but non-CP disciplines, academics, applied researchers, social scientists, activists, participant-conceptualizers, and agents of social change.

The vision of the CP TIG is to promote the values of CP in the evaluation field, and to use the methods, practice, theory, and research on evaluation to enhance the field of CP. Its initial aims were to create training opportunities for CPs about evaluation and vice versa, and to collaborate

with similar TIGs to advance shared understanding and collaboration.

History of “Walk the Talk”

Over the past seven years, the CP TIG has organized “Walk the Talk,” a community partnership tour. WTT provides opportunities to learn about the social ecology of the conference locale and apply CP principles to evaluation practice. After a document review and discussion with the founding TIG leadership, we learned WTT was created because CP-evaluators noticed they were in a conference context discussing social change, with cultural events and initiatives happening around them, yet were not learning from the context. They developed WTT to respect, learn from, and give back to communities that host AEA. We have visited neighborhoods and community organizations, learned from communities and each other, and provided host organizations with evaluation support. We highlight the sites that opened their doors to us below.

Themes

Themes related to CP values and practice competencies are evident across these sites. Organizations focus on addressing homelessness and economic mobility, criminal justice reform, prevention, environmental justice, and equity, topics important to CP. They take a multi-level, often grassroots approach to social issues. Many promote empowerment of vulnerable groups or use empowerment approaches. CP practice competencies, such as advocacy, organizing, and participatory strategies are employed. We look forward to continuing this tradition of visiting, learning from, and giving back to organizations that embody CP values. Our next WTT was planned for the conference in Portland, Oregon in October 2020, but the conference has since been changed to a virtual format.

2020 TIG Activities

In addition to WTT, the CP TIG is focusing on three initiatives in 2020, with the overarching goal to expand the reach of information about CP evaluation. We will develop a mechanism to increase undergraduate students’ exposure to CP-

Year	Organization	Mission	WTT Activities
2013	One DC Washington, DC	build sustainable community capacity & leadership through organizing & alternative economic development	Neighborhood walk with a community organizer discussed use of appreciative inquiry in evaluation
2014	Women’s Bean Project Denver, CO	provide transitional employment in food/jewelry manufacturing for chronically unemployed women	Toured the facility learned about the program and its evaluation helped draft logic model
2015	Little Village Environmental Justice Organization Chicago, IL	use participatory tactics to promote environmental justice & speak out about criminalization & gentrification	“Toxic Tour” – community leaders showed where they reclaimed toxic industrial sites into green space Discussed how CP evaluation supports grassroots action
2016	Georgia Justice Project Atlanta, GA	Supports people involved in criminal justice system via legal representation, policy advocacy, education, & coalition building.	Walked to site Learned about policy, advocacy, evaluation Heard lived experiences
2017	Casa Ruby Washington, DC	grassroots, multicultural LGBT drop-in center that provides necessities and career/social services.	Toured the center met the founder discussed assessing outcomes
2018	Providence House Cleveland, OH	protects at-risk children, supports families through crisis, & strengthens communities to end child abuse/neglect	Toured the home learned about operations & programming from the CEO brainstormed how to evaluate evidence-based practices
2019	Project for Pride in Living Minneapolis, MN	Build the hope, assets, and self-reliance of people with lower incomes by providing affordable housing & career readiness services	Heard from staff & students about programming & the community brainstormed ways to document growth from their yearly training & coaching in diversity, equity & inclusion

History of Walk the Talk

evaluation as a career path. We are spotlighting CP-evaluators to showcase careers and linkages between CP and evaluation. Finally, we hope to collaborate with SCRA, especially around undergraduate exposure to CP.

Personal perspective on AEA and WTT

If you have read this far, we have probably piqued your interest. However, you may be thinking, all this sounds great, but why should I join another organization or interest group, choose AEA in addition to other conferences, and/or attend WTT versus other conference programming? It can be overwhelming to consider “one more thing.” I will share the benefits of AEA I experienced as a graduate student and why I look forward to the WTT, in the hopes that it may help you answer some of those questions.

So why join AEA? As a graduate student, I remember attending AEA for the first time and being blown away by the non-academic career

opportunities for community psychologists and evaluators. Though faculty had told me they existed, seeing presenters' non-academic affiliations and the various firms and non-profits at the conference brought the faculty's words to life. I ultimately chose an academic path, but I am grateful that I was exposed to this early on. I learned that there were great options outside of academia if I chose to go that route and knowing this ultimately gave me mental flexibility in career planning. I encourage graduate students interested in a career as a CP-evaluator and/or practitioner to attend AEA when brainstorming about future career options and again when networking for a job.

As for why you should attend WTT? Personally, I was drawn to WTT right away. I am always inspired by examples of best evaluation practices in "on the ground" community programming from exemplary organizations that "walk the talk." Attending WTT is always a great reminder that there are many organizations that are "bright spots," doing good for their participants and the broader community. After attending WTT, I always feel renewed hope and excitement to press forward as a CP-evaluator. As CP-evaluators, we find ways to accurately measure outcomes, which includes obtaining multiple stakeholder perspectives, bringing the perspectives of the people meant to benefit to the forefront, and understanding how the program/organization fits within the broader context. Yes, we seek to understand how people experience programs and how outcomes are achieved. But at our best, we also use evaluation as advocacy to bring to the forefront the needs of those who are most vulnerable, and work towards social justice and multiple forms of equity. Please reach out to the TIG chairs Michelle Abraczinskas at michelle.abraczinskas@gmail.com and Jonathan Scaccia at jonathan.p.scaccia@wandersmancenter.org for more information and/or with suggestions. We welcome feedback, especially related to the TIG, activities for the year, new ideas, and WTT.

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Living with Life: Psychological Empowerment in Buddhism

Written by Daniel Ahearn, Antioch University, Los Angeles

I became friends with Michael meditating in prison. I was visiting the prison bimonthly through a Buddhist organization bringing meditation practice to the incarcerated. It's a scary environment and people with a sense of inner and hope light shined brightly beyond the circumstances they lived in; no one shines more brightly than Michael. Over the course of our relationship, I realized his story needed to be told. I suggested we work on a documentary to tell his story. It was then that he told me he was going to be released from prison. After 24 years, he was getting released. For the past four months, a documentarian and I have been filming Michael every week. He told us his story and explored the relationship his incarceration brought him to with Buddhist practices. Hearing this story, having sat with him for over a year in incarceration and seeing the man he was working on becoming in the world clearly expressed Zimmerman's (2000) theory of Psychological Empowerment with its intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioral dimensions.

The Buddhist's refer to the endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth as *Samsara*: a ceaseless journey fraught with suffering. Life, itself, for the Buddhists is an endless death sentence until you recognize this cycle for what it is and begin to train your behavior and mind to see beyond your suffering. It takes rigorous training to work towards detaching from the unsatisfactory nature of life. This is the process that leads to liberation, or Nirvana. Michael discovered suffering early on; his whole life was with struggle and trauma. Family, abuse, death, abandonment: there was trauma,

suffering, pain at every turn. He didn't know this. He just saw it as life. What Michael didn't know about was how to work towards liberation. He learned the path to liberation when he was serving a life sentence in California State Prison.

Raised in violence, he knew violence as a language of resolution. The cycle ensnared him completely and before his 19th birthday he committed the crime of first-degree murder. On the eve of his 19th birthday, he was walked towards his cell as an LWOP: a sentence of life without the possibility of parole.

Michael has grown up fast: he lost his father at a young age and found himself abandoned to the streets as a young teen without guidance or support. He was angry, enraged, lost. His view of himself and the world propelled him into violence. He felt violent, so he saw violence. Michael was fueled by an internal rage and a self-hatred projecting back out into the world; he was caught in a terrible seemingly inescapable cycle. He knew on some level he wanted to break free, but he didn't know what that meant, or how to do it. When he began to experience life in prison without the possibility of being released, Michael started to feel hopeless. He was now a number. He was now a sentence. Dehumanized and lost, he discovered in his hopelessness a sense of *What if?* What if there is more to this? What if I could see this differently?

By coincidence, fate, or Karma, he found himself pursuing the religious services in prison, he went to church, he sat in sweat lodge ceremonies, he talked to Imams, and then he stumbled upon Buddhism. Quite quickly he began to understand and learn about the struggles he had early on in his life: death, abandonment, cycle of violence in the community. He began to discover the language of his life through Buddhism, and he began to reorient his view of life, and understand the psychology of his own existence in Samsara. It was his first step in becoming free.

Michael saw how to influence his life by dealing with his environment, his self-perception was reflected by his social system and he saw in the structural dynamics of the violence around him both a mirror and an opportunity. We know from

Zimmerman that intrapersonal factors reflect a person's experience of themselves, more specifically it is the view of their own competence, perceived control and self-efficacy (Zimmerman, 2000). The intrapersonal dimension focuses on how people think about their capacity to influence systems through self-efficacy, motivation, and perceived competence (Zimmerman, 2000). Michael learned very quickly that changing the environment could only happen through changing his experience of his environment. He discovered mediation as a tool to deal with his suffering. His suffering was all around him, it was inside him: a blueprint he needed to learn to read in its totality. Meditation was the activation of this intrapersonal skill that gave him the ability to see clearly. The more he explored the nature of suffering beyond his circumstance and practiced mediation as a way to watch the arising and passing of emotional experiences, the more it became an interactional engagement of his empowerment both as a resource mobilization and a skill development. It is the interactional aspect of psychological empowerment that involves the person-environment interface which includes analyzing one's environment to develop a critical understanding of the social and material resources needed to take action and achieve one's goals (Zimmerman, 2011). Michael's interactional experience was using meditation and studying Buddhism to begin to change his experience of LWOP. Another aspect of the interactional dimension that Michael came to is what Zimmerman defined "as an understanding that social connections, support, and collectivity may be necessary to achieve goals" (Zimmerman & Eisman, 2017, p.174). Previously a loner, lone wolf who distrusted the world, Michael learned through Buddhism that not only was suffering a shared experience but moving through suffering is a shared experience.

The practice of meditation and the consistent pursuit of his studies in Buddhism brought him closer to the pervasive and ubiquitous nature of his suffering, but it also allowed for development of an agency to do something with the suffering. He had

a place to go with it; a practice for it. The skill development of meditation was a skill that transferred across his many life domains: not just an incarcerated person, but a man, a son, a child who needed to grow. Learning and returning to meditation practice helped his critical awareness about the system he was in, the system he had built. Meditation became an interactional tool of his empowerment. It helped Michael to mobilize his skills, it gave him a sense of autonomy and mobility as more than just a prisoner, just a number. He carried the skills he worked on: insight, compassion, impermanence. He was able to bring these developments into his life and share them; they became him. Through the dimensions of empowerment, he became a free man though he remained incarcerated.

The final aspect of empowerment is the behavioral component: participation in collective action, involvement in voluntary or mutual help organizations (Zimmerman, 2000). It is the behavioral aspect empowerment where Michael began to shine so brightly. Michael stayed committed to his own studies and his own practice, by helping to organize group meditations, distribution of Buddhist literature, and ultimately arranging for two-day retreats for some of the more dedicated practitioners. Michael became known as an organizer for the Buddhist groups that came to the prison. He always arrived at the Meditation hall early, he took pride and enthusiasm in the job of cleaning the temple, and he even went on to make meditation cushions for all those who came to the sit. Michael helped build the Sangha (community) and shared his resources becoming a person of safety and authority for others seeking the truth of suffering (Dharma). Through the intensity of his suffering he found himself desirous of deep meditation practice, and the deep practice led him towards service and the orientation of helping others find refuge in the desire for awakening (Buddha). The three dimensions of psychological empowerment: interactional, interpersonal, and behavioral mirrored the three jewels of Buddhism - Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. It was a complete experience, full actualization, and in this complete

system of empowerment Michael found himself experiencing feelings of liberation.

The decades of consistent rigor of practice helped create a real change in his view of the world and in his expression of being; he moved like a new man, he spoke like a new man, he organized his world like a new man. All of this was compelling to his incarcerated brothers. He found he was asked about what he was doing, how he was doing it, he found he learned more about his practice by sharing it and teaching it. As his behavior changed, he was capable of navigating the complexities of the prison system with less friction and with more freedom. The more he was exploring and building a meditation practice, the more he became helpful to his community; a radical positivity became the foundation of his coping skills. He discovered true empowerment.

After 25 years, Michael was granted parole. He didn't think he deserved it: he took a life and he felt he didn't deserve freedom because of this. He accepted his actions and the consequences of his actions (Karma) even as he began to understand his developmental trauma as a child. He still only blames himself for the murder he committed: he owns the crime. This view and acceptance is ironically one of the main reasons he was released. He lives today a new man in a strange world made stranger by the recent pandemic. He still practices mindfulness daily with compassion for all sentient beings. His developed skills of psychological empowerment allowed him to see his world and begin to change it. He is working on expanding that view every day of his new life. When asked about the recent civil unrest built from the murdering of George Floyd, Michael says he sees a potential for change. However, he knows the issues are both entrenched and systemic; the state and federal systems of policing and imprisonment need to change significantly. His experience with incarceration informs the view that there is an interconnection amongst many levels in society, and many have gone unchecked, been unseen. Michael is hopeful, but clear that unless we make real change at every level, we're bound to stay trapped in this cycle for a long time to come.

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A Community Psychologist in the Making: Why is Love Not Enough?

Written by Lina Allam, The American University in Cairo Egypt



Lina Allam

“Why do you like working with communities?” was a question I was once asked in a job interview. I always knew the answer, it is because I grew up wanting to help everyone I meet, support all those in need and be there for the exhausted souls in life. Those were the same reasons for which I spent my college years volunteering in community service in the slums of Dewiqqa and later joining the Community Psychology Master’s Program at The American University in Cairo (AUC). Were my motives enough to make it through? No. I thought my passion and intentions were enough to change the world but with community practice and studying, I realized that there is more to be learned to become a community psychologist; like understanding diversities, cultural identities and the dynamics between communities and the organizations intervening. All community psychologists care about the wellbeing of the community, but since emotions are a driver and not a tool, we all have to

understand and practice cultural diversity, humility and community engagement to make ourselves competent for our work.

First, we need to know that understanding communities and bridging diversities is a multidimensional thing and an important pillar in all community work. Personally, I used to think that all diversities can be bridged under mottos like “we are all equal” with the intention of promoting equality and social justice. However, I now understand that admitting diversities, confessing discrimination and the inequalities taking place, is part of cultural acceptance and a milestone in change.

Understanding cultural diversity and the difference between being friendly and being friends, was a lesson I had to learn the hard way. By the time I used to volunteer in Dewiqqa, I set unprofessional frames for communication with people who live there. I thought bridging was being humble and acting like we are friends to show them my genuine interest in making them happy. Then when they started treating me like one of them, I felt uncomfortable due to their very informal way and I could not deny the fact that they are not really my friends. I believe I was lost in how bridging the difference should be, and I think what I missed here was the community culture. Their relations to each other and rhythms of life were different than mine, and although I wanted to bridge the difference; I could not tolerate being treated like an insider.

Second, cultural humility is an attitude that we all have to develop before dealing with people in other cultures. Understanding community culture is important because it covers the multilayered cultural characteristics and diversity dynamics that we all need to comprehend before working with other communities. An example of a tension that I faced as an outsider and specifically due to the social and financial differences was when I was invited to a very warm dinner at one of the family houses we worked with in Dewiqqa. What happens in such gatherings is that they cook a lot of food that they don’t usually cook for themselves, and accordingly I feel shy and don’t want to eat much, to keep some food for them to eat later. Then they notice that I am not eating and start assuring me

that they wash their dishes well, ask me why I am not eating and insist that I have to eat from the chicken or the meat. From here I knew that although relationship building adds to cultural sensitivity, yet cultural miscommunication can still take place in the process.

Also, from the articles and case studies I read in university as part of my courses, I realized how cultural humility can be a preventive factor from stigmatizing a whole community. I learned that researchers and community psychologists can make mistakes too, even if initial intentions were to provide help. Thus, we should not think of ourselves as experts who tell the community what to do, belittling their personal experiences or blaming their victims. Usually our specialization gives us confidence in conducting credible assessments; which sometimes leads us to judging others and speaking for them without listening to their stories or considering the social determinants. Another reason for blaming victims is to relieve our conscience and free ourselves from the responsibility that we all carry as part of society. I learned that to avoid that mistake, we always have to do reflexive bias, and assess our tendencies to aside towards our own values, beliefs and priorities.

For example, I used to use my own value system and hierarchy of needs in blaming Egyptian women who go to jail due to failure in paying back money they borrowed to buy appliances and home accessories for their daughters' marriages. Now, after my reflections, I currently understand the social context and pressure that led those women to take that risk than to be shamed by their community. Also, I can consider the socioeconomic conditions where the woman is the only provider; and the laws that deal with their debt cases and imprisonment by punishing them without solving the root cause.

The third thing we should all acknowledge in working with communities is the importance of community engagement. In my case, I believe that applying the community based participatory approach rather than the "community placed" approach would have been very doable and a channel for bridging diversities in my community

work in Dewiqā, as I already was in close contact with different people there.

For example, when conducting events with my colleagues, instead of planning out trips for the kids by ourselves and choosing the activities and lunch, we could have included the kids in the planning phase and asked them where they prefer to go and the food they wish to eat. I remember we once took the kids on a trip to AUC Campus and we brought them McDonald's for lunch, and one girl said that she didn't like the food and preferred it if we got oriental pies. Reflecting on this today, I find it classist to assume that what we eat tastes better to everyone and we chose to feed them what we like. This also reminds me of a class discussion I had about "The myth of the We", thinking that we all like McDonald's.

Having said all of this, I believe my next steps in shaping my character as a community psychologist, are to start with my daily interactions with family, friends, classmates, and work colleagues. Differences are not only between communities, because as individuals, we are all different from each other in a way or another. That's why, I should start reflecting more on my background and acknowledge the privileges I have, which without me deciding, are taking part of my day to day conversations. Also, I will be more observant of microaggressions in my behavior and thinking; and continuously work on reflexivity and stating biases. Still, I will regularly remind myself that the development of positive and negative biases is inevitable in human experiences. Add to that, I should give myself time to understand the culture and value system of any community I am working with. I need to let go of the expert role in any of the topics I go over and adapt a more humble sensibility to my knowledge and actions, without forcing my values on anyone. Moreover, I believe collaboration does not have to be an activity that two or more organizations take part of. It can still be applied in our everyday arguments and presentation of points of view. Finally, I will commit to a lifelong self-evaluation and self-critique.

I expect more challenges as long as I meet new people in different communities. I expect I get

to know myself better along the journey, improve myself and before all, help. The more I learn, the more responsibilities I behold. By the end of my MA program, I am positive that I will not only be able to answer why I like working with communities, but why I am ready to work with them. You can love what you do, but you have to learn to do it right, because by now I am sure that love is not enough.

To further discuss the content, feel free to contact me at linaallam@aucegypt.edu

Lessons from Migration

Written by Azza Osman, The American University in Cairo Egypt



Azza Osman

I was 7 months old and living in Sudan when my life shifted. My father needed to seek political asylum, so our family moved to Egypt. Because I was so young, I didn't feel the impact of this move right away, but as I grew up, it was impossible to ignore the challenges of living in a culture different from that of my family. Looking back, I

can see how much the process of melding with Egyptian culture, dealing with prejudices and misconceptions, and leading me to my current field of study would shape my passions and interests over the course of more than 20 years.

During my 24 years of residence in Egypt, my highest priority and most rewarding challenge has been concentrating on my studies while trying to adapt to Egyptian culture. Over time, these two priorities have come together. What I've experienced and noticed about how community and belonging affect us has influenced my desire for change in Sudan, Egypt, and Africa.

Being an African migrant and a woman living in Egypt has not always been easy; I face a lot of society's prejudices, misconceptions, and discrimination. My dark skin, for example, invites a lot of judgment. This has made me a more resilient person and has pushed me to reach for more, not

just in my own life, but for the lives of vulnerable communities everywhere.

I have a bachelor's degree in psychology and am currently pursuing my master's in community psychology, because I want to use my academic knowledge and personal experience to support migrant and refugee communities in having equal access to opportunities and resources, to feel empowered, and to reach for more.

The Community Psychology program has been everything I hoped it would be. The facilities and faculty mentors available in the Department of Psychology are unparalleled in Egypt. I get the opportunity to apply my studies through practical experiences and internships parallel to my courses — all leading to a hands-on experience that is efficient in developing my skills and knowledge. My hope is that studying Community Psychology will equip me to provide the best possible services upon my return to Sudan. The first step to that has already been happening through the opportunity my thesis advisor encouraged me to take, which was to do my thesis research about my country Sudan. My research is focused on the impact of community-based learning on students in Sudan, and it allowed me to learn more about my country, and more importantly to provide more information about the circumstances there through this research.

I am a firm believer in social responsibility. One of my ultimate dreams is to start a community-based organization in Sudan that would support and empower vulnerable groups with no regard to race, color, or ethnicity. I want to offer a safe space for members of a community to get together and receive support, skills and education, while sharing their own gifts, talents and knowledge, to learn that they are not just recipients, but that they have so much to offer as well.

When I look back at the ways being a migrant have shaped me — offering lessons in patience, empathy, resilience, and determination — I am proud that I've navigated my education to reflect this experience. I am a culmination of communities: the larger community of two countries, that of my parents' culture and surroundings, and the life I've discovered and created for myself here in Egypt.

This has made me a strong, open-minded, tolerant and, above all, grateful person. I truly believe that I have been lucky to live and experience all that and to appreciate things like being a part of a connected, loving family. These rich experiences led me to where I am today and will continue to guide me to a place where I can give back. Azza Osman is pursuing a Master of Arts in community psychology at the American University in Cairo AUC. aaosman@aucegypt.edu

Grassroots Efforts to Respond to Domestic Violence in India

Written by Suvarna Menon, Northern Illinois University

Gender-based violence, in its various forms, has been a pervasive social issue in India. Of the reported cases of violence, domestic violence, accounts for over half of the cases. As a graduate researcher, my interest in understanding grassroots efforts to respond to domestic violence in India and support survivors of violence led me to a non-governmental organization in New Delhi, India. This agency declared its aim as creating a violence-free and gender-just society through social action and advocacy. My initial interactions with staff from the agency kindled my interest in their work, which included grassroots programming with marginalized and impoverished communities, capacity building with a focus on creating community leaders, and crisis intervention and advocacy with survivors. My desire to learn more about the agency's work and identify potential markers for successful community-based interventions for domestic violence, led me to work on building a collaborative relationship with the agency. My summer and winter breaks from graduate school soon transitioned into visits to India where I volunteered at the agency and was struck by the warmth of staff towards each other, their passion for gender-based issues, and their openness towards newcomers, interns, and temporary volunteers. Over the course of 4 years, my relationship with the agency led to

my dissertation project, envisioned in collaboration with staff from the organization.

Current Research

My dissertation sought to examine the role of a women's organization in empowering survivors of domestic violence and facilitating institutional and community change in the response to domestic violence in India. My data drew on a) semi-structured interviews with staff members (n = 12), survivors (n = 22), and community members involved with the agency (n = 37); b) observational data where I functioned as a participant-observer for 2 months at the agency, spending an average of 7-8 hours, 5 days a week, in the setting; and c) archival data, which included case files (n=100), annual reports (n=14, year 2004-2017), newsletters (n=21, year 2012-2017), and meeting notes for inter-agency (n=15) and community meetings (n=15) conducted by the agency.

The organization runs domestic violence centers for families experiencing violence. Through these centers, providers offer counseling services, mediation services with family members and/or the perpetrator(s), and advocacy services including assistance with obtaining community resources, and providing vocational skills training to survivors. The agency's centers are physically located in the same local community. This is illustrated in the following observation notes from my first visit to one of the centers and describes the community that the agency is engaged with,

After getting out from the subway, I took a rickshaw to the center and we were driving through extremely narrow lanes. There were no roads, the "roads" were ruined with the rains, and were full of ditches, puddles and bumps. It was like riding on a roller-coaster without a seatbelt. I watched as the rickshaw driver navigated through narrow lanes, avoiding bumping into water coolers, people sitting outside their houses, cars, cycles, and tractors. The houses were built so close to each other that the "roads" often went in between rows of houses facing in each other, such that it felt like we were driving through people's

front “yards”. The center had two rooms and a kitchen and was in the center of the village. The electricity kept going off constantly and the counselor and co-counselor were using plastic fans to keep themselves cool. The counselor reported that this was a slum area a few years back, and conditions were even worse than they were currently. She said, “You must have seen while coming, there are no roads also to get here – it used to be worse”. She reported that it used to be less developed and that the village where the center is located is marked with obvious disparity in social status and backgrounds. The co-counselor reaffirmed this by saying “Half of the village is developed and half is poor. So half of the people have big *kothis* [mansions], but then there are migrant workers that come here and live in *chawls*.” The majority of people here, according to the counselor, work in factories. The village is surrounded by plastic factories, where women also form a major part of the labor force. The counselor reported that women may be illiterate, but they still work in the factories. In many families, the women reportedly are the only earning members. The men use country liquor leading to many problems with alcohol and domestic violence. Many women travel further to neighboring towns to work as house-help to make ends meet.

Results from the study showed that the agency’s adoption of a survivor-centered approach; an emphasis on building collaborative, trusting relationships with staff; and a focus on meeting women where they are at were associated with empowering outcomes. Further, the agency emphasized fostering independence of survivors. A wide range of empowerment related outcomes were reported by survivors and staff members, which varied depending on the goals that women approached the agency with. Consistent with their initial goals, many women reported continuing their relationship with their partner and experiencing an

improved and positive home environment following their engagement with the agency (as a result of mediation efforts by counselors from the agency). Others reported successfully separating from their abusive husbands or in-laws and reported receiving regular spousal support to support their children or themselves (following advocacy and help with access to legal resources through the agency). Many women had sought and were successfully pursuing employment opportunities, and reported being financially independent regardless of whether they were with their partners. For example, one survivor stated, “*I have my own money now. He can’t keep my kids hungry. In my house, I can carry my own expenses. I get courage from that*”. Another reported, “*It’s been one year since my case closed, and now I am making my own money, and raising my kids by myself*”. In all interviews, women reported seeing positive changes in themselves, referring to these changes by varied terms like confidence, courage and determination. One survivor described her new-found courage as follows:

“I see courage in myself– that there is someone for me, I have some rights, no one can say anything to me, no one can do anything to me. I feel like I have my neighborhood – these are all my sisters – they are there – they will care about me, will look after me – nothing can happen to me. I feel like I am not alone”.

Results from this study also highlighted the centrality of the relationship between the survivor and staff member, which has been supported in literature in the U.S. context (e.g. Bell & Goodman, 2001). This kind of relationship may be especially important for domestic violence survivors who experience eroded social support networks over the course of their victimization (Sullivan, Basta, et al., 1992; Trotter & Allen, 2009), and is likely to provide an important route to healing from interpersonal trauma.

In addition to working with survivors on an individual basis, the organization facilitates local community meetings and women’s support groups aimed at generating awareness about women’s

legal rights. Through their engagement with the agency, women and their partners (along with other community members) have the opportunity to become part of local leadership and action groups. Members of these groups conduct regular meetings to discuss community problems and address the problem of gender-based violence in their community through awareness raising exercises and workshops. Our results suggested that the agency's community engagement efforts provide opportunities for community participation and leadership and increase individual members' knowledge, skills, and resources. This process of fostering critical consciousness among community members appears to be key in facilitating their empowerment to be agents of social change in the response to domestic violence.

Community-based participants and survivors were able to reflect on different ways in which the agency had facilitated their personal growth and development. The agency's community actions and the processes at the community level appear to facilitate a sense of community trust in the agency and promote social cohesion among community members. The agency's emphasis on building capacity within communities, together with opportunities for participation and leadership, promote the community's capacity for informal social control and intervention. For example, one community member shared that when the crisis center is closed, *"I tell them about what they can do and try and help. So, whoever comes, I listen to them, write down their complaint, take their phone number, and have them talk to madam [counselor]"*. Another youth member shared, *"I try to talk to my friends about their role if they see violence. So if there was violence happening in your home or your neighbor's home, you should make noise. Go and make noise, so that they don't concentrate on them [the women]. Like ask for something, an excuse, so that the violence is lessened a bit, and they know you saw or heard them."* Thus, rather than institutionalizing the response to domestic violence, which comes with its own barriers, the agency's work facilitates informal community-based interventions.

Reflections on the work

It was important for me to take on a reflexive role as a researcher while conducting this study, and to engage with my own philosophical assumptions, values and personal histories. I was born and raised in India, and spent 10 years living in New Delhi, before moving to the United States for my graduate studies. Thus, it was important for me as a researcher to locate myself in the research and be reflexive about how my positionality plays a role in my work. My interest in studying violence against women stems largely from my own experiences of growing up in India and witnessing violence of varying degrees around me. As an Indian woman, I am aware of and have experienced concerns of safety, hesitation to use public transport and lack of agency in specific spaces and settings. These experiences have made me invested in studying the problem and exposing its complex, multilayered dimensions.

In terms of my positionality, it was important that I was aware of the multiple identities that I could take on in the field - for example, that of a woman, an Indian, a researcher and a student now living in the United States. As a woman, it may be easier for me to identify with the struggles of my female participants, and, likewise, they may find it easier to trust me, given my identity. This is especially true for a country like India where many women are socialized into being subservient to men and may not speak out as openly about issues like violence if they were being interviewed by a male interviewer. A related struggle is how my identities may make me an insider or outsider. For example, in some cases, my identity as an Indian woman may have helped facilitate trust and rapport building with participants. However, my position as an "insider" also forced me to be cautious and examine my own views and experiences to be conscious of how these may affect the research I engaged in. It was important that I be sensitive to diversity and individual differences and not assume that participants will have a shared cultural understanding with me.

Conclusion

While much of the agency's work aligned with best practices demonstrated in the United States, the agency's approach also retains some key distinctions through its adoption of cultural values in order to be relevant and sustainable in the Indian context. Overall, this agency's work highlights a model of social change in the response to domestic violence that targets individual and community level change in the hope for broader social change by emphasizing citizen participation, community mobilization and capacity for informal social control.

For additional information about this project, please feel free to contact Suvarna Menon at smenon@niu.edu

SCRA News

Edited by Susan M. Wolfe, Susan Wolfe and Associates

SCRA Election Results

President-Elect: SUSAN M. WOLFE



Susan Wolfe

Susan brings a breadth of experience in community psychology and SCRA governance; leadership skills, energy, and time; working relationships with a broad range of members; and skills to operationalize good ideas. Her goal is to increase and broaden membership and activate many now-inactive members to lend their talents and viewpoints (including dissident ones) to our organization.

Her professional background spans practice and academic research roles, giving her a perspective on both. She has been an active SCRA member for over 30 years, held several leadership positions, including six years membership on SCRA's Executive Committee. She has received multiple SCRA awards, recognizing her

contributions to SCRA and community psychology. She has also held leadership positions in other professional associations, giving her additional insights to lend to this position.

She will increase the visibility of our field, having done so already by creating and leading the American Evaluation Association's Community Psychology topical interest group.

SCRA will benefit from the strategic and operational skills she has mastered consulting to many organizations, most of whom contract for her services to confront seemingly intractable problems. Her consulting work focuses on equity and justice, which will help to inform her efforts to support SCRA's continuing work toward a more diverse and inclusive organization. She has mentored diverse professionals within and outside of SCRA and is committed to support the development of SCRA members' untapped leadership potential.

You can learn more about her and her work and download her CV at www.susanwolfeandassociates.com.

Member-at-Large: SERDAR M. DEĞIRMENCIOĞLU



Serdar M. Degirmencioğlu

Serdar joined SCRA when he was a post-doctoral fellow at Northwestern's Institute for Policy Research. He chaired the International Committee twice, contributed to interest groups (Environmental, Indigenous, Policy), biennial review panels and the Mentoring Program. He also served in the *European Community Psychology Association* as board member and later as president.

Inspired by critical and action-oriented approaches in psychology and education, he has produced several ground-breaking books and also an award-winning documentary focused on neglected yet burning issues (e.g., personal indebtedness, militarism, decline of universities).

On Sundays he writes for a newspaper in Turkey to promote children's rights and well-being.

Serdar's 20-year academic career in Turkey was terminated in 2016 for having signed a peace manifesto: He was fired and banned from public service for life. Forced to go in exile, he held visiting positions in Egypt, Italy, Belgium, and Germany. In 2021-2023, he will be a Philipp Schwartz Fellow at Goethe University Frankfurt.

He is deeply committed to social justice, human rights and peace. He was the only psychologist from Turkey joining those organizing to stop psychologists' involvement in torture and the collusion. He served two terms on PsySR Steering Committee and recently as president of *Div.48: Peace Psychology*. He is currently associate editor of *Education, Citizenship & Social Justice* and book editor for the *Journal of Community Psychology*. As member-at-large, he will work to strengthen SCRA's engagement with public health policy and advocacy, including immigration, refugees, and pandemics, and its collaborative connections outside of N. America.

primarily affiliated with their Clinical-Community Psychology PhD Program. A number of experiences have prepared her for this role. I previously worked as a Policy Scholar in the APA's Public Interest Government Relations Office, focused primarily on immigration and socioeconomic policies. Within SCRA, she co-chair the Immigrant Justice Interest Group with Dr. Ferreira van Leer. She also serves as a regional coordinator for a non-profit grassroots advocacy organization, RESULTS, aimed at creating public and political will to end poverty. Through these experiences, she has come to appreciate the importance of both first-order and second-order change, strong relationships and clear communication, urgent responses to emergent issues and steadfastness in vision, and garnering input from all stakeholders while always acting in value-driven ways. Sara will honored to represent SCRA on the APA Council.

APA Council Representative: SARA BUCKINGHAM



Sara desired to serve as SCRA's Representative on the APA Council because she believes our division plays a critical role in shaping the APA's priorities. As community psychologists, we seek to address the roots of problems

ecologically as opposed to solely treating their consequences. Due to advocacy from SCRA and like-minded divisions, the APA has moved towards addressing these underlying causes and drivers, taking stronger stances on social justice issues and allowing for deeper social justice advocacy from divisions. She aims to help SCRA continue that trend within the APA.

Sara deeply resonates with SCRA's values, mission, principles, and strategies. She joined SCRA as an undergraduate student and is now on faculty at the University of Alaska Anchorage,

James Gordon Kelly

December 21, 1929 – May 16, 2020

Jim died peacefully of natural causes on May 16, 2020 in the Skilled Nursing Unit of Mirabella Seattle. He and his wife of 30 years, Seeley Dole Chandler, had moved to Mirabella, Seattle 10 years before his death. He was very active at Mirabella Seattle both within the Mirabella Community and in Seattle and played tennis and took vibraphone lessons until the last week of his life.

Jim grew up in Cincinnati and graduated with honors from the University of Cincinnati in 1953. He received his PhD in Clinical Psychology in 1958 from the University of Texas in Austin. He spent 2 years in a post-doctoral fellowship at Massachusetts General Hospital under Erich Lindemann, PhD/MD, after which he completed a Master's Degree in Public Health at the Harvard School of Public Health. He went on to be one of the developers of a new field of psychology: Community Psychology.

Jim was recognized and appreciated most for his huge contribution to the field of Community

Psychology. His early and longstanding leadership included being the first president of the Division of Community Psychology within the American Psychological Association. Along with his empirical research and exemplary authored publications, he established principles for the field and theoretical points of view. His work both formed and influenced Community Psychology for more than 50 years. Over his professional life, he held positions in Community Psychology at Ohio State University, U. of Michigan, the U. of Oregon, and finally, at the University of Illinois in Chicago. He was an active researcher, contributing books and articles to the field of Community Psychology, receiving multiple professional awards, all the while training and mentoring many graduate students in the field, some of which became his good friends and co-authors.

In addition to his wife, he leaves behind 5 children and their spouses, 5 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild; also his ex-wife, Sue Rombach Kelly.



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 Susan Wolfe and Dominique Thomas 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.
- 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 space paragraph indentation.
- Punctuation Spacing: Per APA guidelines, make sure that there is only one space after periods, question marks, etc.
- Graphs & Tables: These should be **converted and saved as pictures** in JPEG files. Please note where they should be placed in the article.
- 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.
- Long quotes: Follow APA guidelines for quoted materials.
- Please put your email information and an invitation to contact you into the article.

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