

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

October 2023

In this newsletter, we aim to provide you with the latest updates related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in our Department of Psychiatry.

Message from the Department Head

At Wash U's Public Health conference this week, a keynote speaker addressed health equity. His words struck me: "If you say you are not for health equity...are you for health INEQUITY?"

In Wash U Psychiatry, we battle two types of mental health inequity. The familiar is that certain less privileged groups – often racial and ethnic minorities, and poorer and rural patients – have less access to high-quality mental health care. We must find solutions, and Wash U Psychiatry is a huge part of those solutions, including our longstanding safety net mission (we see more Medicaid, as a percentage of our overall care, than the rest of Wash U Med – which is itself one of the major safety net mission providers). Our new initiatives such as Collaborative Care are helping.

But the other inequity is that against mentally ill individuals. People with schizophrenia die more than 20 years younger than their healthy counterparts, a gap that is widening and is larger than the inequity between the richest and poorest zip codes in the St Louis area. Our patients with depression frequently get denied essential treatments which cost a fraction of oncological or surgical care. And, despite the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity act of 2008, insurers (including Medicare) routinely discriminate against mental illness coverage in violation of this law. Wash U Psychiatry will continue to lead and advocate, for high-quality care for our patients, and towards equity in care for all suffering from mental illness.

“At WashU, we stand against antisemitism. We stand against Islamophobia. We condemn rhetoric that supports either of these or any type of discrimination. This type of language is divisive, it stokes fear, and it stifles constructive dialogue. We must call it out when we see it if we want our campus to be a place where all can express themselves without fearing for their own safety or security.”

Read Dr. Andrew D. Martin's full commentary on "Condemnation of antisemitism and Islamophobia" in the complete letter available [here](#).

Amidst the ongoing crisis in Israel and Gaza, Wash U provides mental health resources for both [students](#) and [staff](#). Please don't hesitate to seek support. Take care of yourselves and one another.

Coming to Psychiatry in January 2024:

Understanding Systemic Racism Training

Please accept the calendar invites that are attached to this newsletter!

In our continuing effort to uphold our commitment to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Racial Justice, we are offering Psych-wide virtual training on Understanding Systemic Racism. Attendance is strongly encouraged for all faculty and staff. Trainees are welcome to attend although you are receiving this training in your curriculum.

Trainings will be delivered in a **Zoom only format**.

Your input matters!

We invite you to share your suggestions on enhancing DEI in our department. Email us your thoughts and any DEI-related recommendations, such as podcasts, books, articles, or events. Your feedback is invaluable.

Missed DEI 1.0, 2.0, 3.0 or 4.0 trainings?

We understand that it might have been difficult for everyone to attend the recent DEI training sessions. If you could not attend a session, please contact Tina Hoffman (tina.hoffman@wustl.edu) to be directed to online and in-person DEI 1.0-4.0 open sessions held by the WUSM Office of DEI.

WashU International Medical Graduate Wellness Initiative



WashU International Medical Graduate Wellness Initiative hosted their second wellness event on Wednesday, October 26. Immigration lawyer Melanie Keeney gave a speech on physician visas. The session was well attended and received a lot of positive feedback.

**Department of Psychiatry Resident Invitational Guest Lecturer
Ayana Jordan, M.D., Ph.D.
Barbara Wilson Associate Professor of Psychiatry New York University Grossman School of Medicine**

On October 10, 2023, Dr. Ayana Jordan came to the Department of Psychiatry as our Resident Invitational guest speaker. She had engaging discussions with our respected residents and numerous faculty members. Additionally, she delivered a compelling lecture at Grand Rounds titled, "Cultural Considerations for Addiction Treatment & Research: Looking to the Past to Forge a Brighter Future."

Residents, a big thanks to all of you for making Dr. Jordan's visit to

Submitted our DEI Grant application! Hoping for the best!

2024 Catalyst Award for Transformation in Graduate Medical Education

Dr. Patty Cavazos, our Vice Chair for DEI, recently applied for the 2024 Catalyst Award for Transformation in Graduate Medical Education. This collaborative application was submitted in partnership with Dr. Angela Brown, the Vice Chair for Health Equity in the WUSM Department of Medicine. If successful, this endeavor could elevate our DEI efforts with residents.

Notably, two psychiatry residents, **Drs. Jessica Williams and Olivia Hinder**, are integral members of this leadership team. We eagerly await the funding decision in December for the grant titled "Elevating Equity at Washington University School of Medicine – Enhancing the Systemic Racism Curriculum for Resident Training." **Congratulations** to the entire team on the submission, and best wishes for a positive outcome!

Financial assistance for under-resourced communities

Are you aware that the government offers funding to aid under-resourced communities in staying warm during winter and cool throughout the summer? The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), announced \$3.7 billion in Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds on October 25, 2023, to help lower heating costs for American families this winter.

Please join a seminar on Wednesday, Nov. 1 at Noon ET to learn more this federally funded assistance to reduce the costs associated with home energy bills, energy crises, weatherization, and minor energy-related home repairs

DATE/TIME: Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2023 at Noon ET
[Register here](#)

Column: Psychologists must embrace decolonial psychology

By Thema S. Bryant, PhD



"Decolonial psychology asks us to consider not just the life history of the individual we are working with but also the history of the various collective groups they are a part of, whether that is their nationality, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, or disability. The past informs the present. It is necessary to acknowledge and honor the past if we are to truly see people as whole beings."

Read more about decolonial psychology [here](#).

Recommended Podcast:

The Psychology of Your 20s, Episode 109. Why Are We So Hard on Ourselves?

the
psychology
of your
20s

WITH JEMMA SBEG

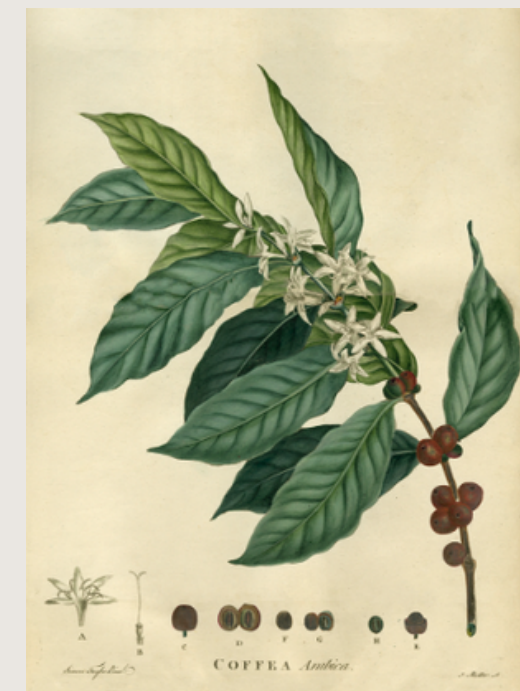


We break down the psychological underpinnings behind our inner critic, from the proposed evolutionary role of negative self-talk to the influence of our upbringing including the distinction between conditional and unconditional positive regard, parental expectations and childhood bullying. We examine how social comparison and overthinking can contribute to a poor self-perception but, also, how we can adopt methods of racial self-compassion and cognitive diffusion to silence that inner voice and be free from self judgement.

Podcast is recommended by **Kavya Singh (she/her)**, our WUSM Psychiatry DEI Project/Program Coordinator

Fire & Freedom: 'Food and Enslavement in Early America'

A traveling exhibition in Bernard Becker Medical Library



The traveling exhibition explores ways in which meals can tell us how power is exchanged between and among different peoples, races, genders, and classes. In the Chesapeake region during the colonial era, European settlers relied upon indentured servants, Native Americans, and enslaved Africans for labor, life-saving knowledge of farming and food acquisition, and to gain economic prosperity. Fire and Freedom looks into life at George Washington's Mount Vernon plantation and the labor of enslaved workers to learn about the ways that meals transcend taste and sustenance.

The National Library of Medicine produced this exhibition and [companion website](#).

Bernard Becker Medical Library - First Floor
660 S. Euclid Ave.
Saint Louis, MO 63110
November 4th, 2023 11:59 PM

A step toward culturally informed forensic mental health assessments: Improving justice and equity for legal-system-involved people

by Drs. Fanniff, York, and Gutierrez

Mental health professionals conduct forensic mental health assessments (FMHAs) of examinees who reflect a full spectrum of sociodemographic identities and experiences, but people with marginalized and oppressed identities are more likely to be involved in the legal system than are people with privileged identities. Therefore, forensic psychologists more be prepared to address how the discrimination and systemic oppression experienced by many examinees affects their presentation and the evaluation process.

Read more about the guidance that authors' have [here](#).