

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

May 2024

Content compiled by Department of Psychiatry DEI Leaders: Drs. Cavazos and Navsaria and Kavya Singh

Message from the Department Head, Eric Lenze, MD

Thank you for attending this year's State of the Department! The bottom line: thanks to each of you, the department is doing well across all missions! As I shared, we remain committed to elevating DEI principles by building a diverse and inclusive department. We plan to:

- Develop strategies to increase URiM faculty, staff, and trainees.
- Understand the impact of the DEI funding program and continue it to support faculty, staff, and trainees committed to creating positive change and addressing systemic barriers to equality.
- Share the results of the Wellbeing/Climate & Culture Survey AND
- Implement DEI-educational programs

Stay tuned for more information throughout the year!

DEI speaker Sessions: Coming Soon to the Department of Psychiatry

A new initiative that our department's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion team will be starting is DEI Speaker Sessions. We will be inviting various folks throughout the year to come and speak to us about their research and passions in DEI. To start us off, Dr. Jen Heemstra, Chair and Professor of Chemistry, Charles Allen Thomas Professor at Washington University in St. Louis, will be speaking with us at 9:00 AM on Tuesday, June 4, 2024.

The title of her talk is "Fostering a culture of equity and inclusion that cultivates diversity through positive mentoring practices." This event will be hosted on Zoom only. You can register for the event [here](#). If you have any questions regarding Dr. Heemstra's session, future DEI Speaker Sessions, or anything else DEI related, please don't hesitate to contact kavyas@wustl.edu.

Mental Health Equity

"If there are to be greater gains in prevention, early intervention, self-help and support of others in the community, then we need a 'mental health literate' society in which basic knowledge and skills are more widely distributed" (Jorm, 2000).

Mental health literacy is another component to advancing equity in mental health. It is the ability to gain access to, understand, and use information in ways which promote and maintain good mental health (Jorm, 2000; Jorm, 2011; Sequiera et al, 2022). This involves intentional efforts to make information accessible to communities in a way that is practical and understood by many audiences. The goal would be to empower individuals with knowledge and skills. These efforts must also be aligned with specific community conceptualizations and needs around mental health as some initiatives promoting mental health literacy assume the superiority of experts over lay beliefs. Next month we will share examples of various initiatives that promote mental health literacy.

Resources:

[Mental health literacy: Public knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders](#)

[Mental health literacy: Empowering the community to take action for better mental health](#)

[Mental health literacy: how to obtain and maintain positive mental health](#)

Unity in Wellness

Fostering respect and kindness for all around us can significantly enhance mental health, a concept supported by many notable figures.

Lady Gaga, for example, has emphasized the therapeutic power of kindness, stating, "I've been searching for ways to heal myself, and I've found that kindness is the best way". This highlights how engaging in respectful and kind behavior towards others not only benefits those around us but also has a profound impact on our own mental well-being.

Similarly, the Dalai Lama has linked kindness to a simplified philosophy of life, saying, "There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness". This underscores the idea that fostering respect and kindness within ourselves and our communities can lead to greater peace and mental clarity.

Martin Luther King Jr. often emphasized the transformative power of love and kindness, which can have profound impacts on both individual well-being and societal health. One of his most famous quotes, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that," encapsulates the idea that embracing love and kindness is essential for personal and communal healing (Mindful) (MLK Jr.). This perspective aligns with modern understandings of mental health, which suggest that acts of kindness and compassion can significantly improve one's mental well-being.

Incorporating respect into daily interactions can create a more supportive environment, reduce stress, and build stronger social connections, all of which contribute to improved mental health. By being committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), individuals can foster a sense of belonging and respect in diverse settings, which is crucial for collective and personal well-being.

Adverse social determinants of health linked to treatment-resistant hypertension in Black Americans

People were more likely to develop a type of treatment-resistant hypertension when they experienced adverse effects of economic and social conditions that influence individual and group differences in health status, known as social determinants of health. Additionally, this risk was higher among Black American adults than white American adults, according to a study funded by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Read more [here](#).



**WUSM Psychiatry
Diversity Advisor
Spotlight: Vivia
McCutcheon, PhD**

"I was invited to participate in the development/pilot phase of the program by Dr. Cavazos-Rehg. Her enthusiasm was contagious, and I liked the idea. The program is truly focused on how we can achieve a broad representation of individuals involved in supporting and advancing science, and does not fit the critiques of DEI initiatives that say they are simply "window dressing" with no measurable results. I believe the DA program is most helpful in broadening the lens a bit to encourage managers to think more carefully about how they phrase job descriptions and where they advertise in order to be accessible to as broad a group of candidates as possible, to pull folks into the WUSM community who might not otherwise consider a position here. Most of my work in the DA program so far has been to help craft job descriptions that are free of terms that are not commonly used or understood by people outside of the university. We spend so much time in our chosen fields that it is easy to forget that terms we bandy about without thinking about it are not broadly understood, and a potential candidate might be discouraged from applying if they encounter such words in a job description."

Thanks for sharing, Dr. McCutcheon!

**The Power of Asian American Native Hawaiian, and Pacific
Islander Cultural Practices in Healing**

Wednesday May 29, 2024 at 2:00 PM-3:30 PM
Zoom

The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's \(SAMHSA\) Office of Behavioral Health Equity](#) invites you to join in celebrating the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month event, The Power of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Cultural Practices in Healing. This webinar is presented in collaboration with the [AANHPI 'Ohana Center of Excellence \(CoE\)](#), [Hawai'i Department of Health](#), [Papa Ola Lōkahi](#), [Ho'aka Mana](#), [Waiānae Coast Comprehensive Health Center](#), and [California State University East Bay](#). Read more and register [here](#).

Advancing Disability Inclusion Training

Friday June 7, 2024 at 11:30 – 1:00 PM
Mid Campus Center, 4590 Nash Way

One in four adults in the United States are living with some kind of disability. This diverse community is made up of unique individuals whose knowledge, skills, talents and experiences add important perspective, resourcefulness, and creative energy to our society. This 90-minute education session will define disability, introduce inclusive practices for language, etiquette and bias management. Lunch will be provided. Read more about and register for the event hosted by the WUSM Office of DEI [here](#).

ASL Tour of Special Exhibitions

Saturday June 8, 2024 at 2:00 PM
Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum

Join Deaf educator Angela Botz for an American Sign Language tour of this season's special exhibitions [Kahlil Robert Irving: Archaeology of the Present](#) and [Santiago Sierra: 52 Canvases Exposed to Mexico City's Air](#). The tour will be conducted in ASL with interpreters available. This program is offered in collaboration with DEAF Inc. to celebrate Deaf culture and to promote accessibility to the arts. Read more [here](#).

**The only tribal medical school in the U.S.
graduates its first Native American doctors.**

There are so few Indigenous physicians in the United States – just 0.3% of doctors – that their numbers barely show up in the charts and graphs in the diversity of the medical workforce. Now, there will be at least nine more. Stated in 2020, the Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine at the Cherokee Nation is the only tribally affiliated medical school. Read more [here](#).

St. Louis African Arts Festival

Sunday May 26, 2025 at 11:00 AM- 8:00 PM
Worlds Fair Pavilion, 1904 Concourse Drive

The St. Louis African Arts Festival is held in Forest Park and draws the community together in celebration of the rich contributors of Africa and the African Diaspora (diaspora – people settled far from their ancestral homelands). The annual event enjoys partnerships with major local cultural institutions such as the Saint Louis Art Museum, the Saint Louis Zoo, the Missouri History Museum, the St. Louis Public Library, the Muny, and Washington University in St. Louis. Find more information [here](#).

**Be the #SourceForBetterHealth for AA and NHPI
Communities X Chat**

Wednesday May 29, 2024 at 1:00-2:00 PM
X Chat (Virtual)

In honor of American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AA and NHPI) Heritage Month 2024, the HHS Office of Minority Health (OMH) invites you to join an X (previously known as Twitter) Chat to discuss how social determinants of health (SDOH) impact the wellbeing of AA and NHPI communities, the role of data segregation in addressing SDOH, and the efforts of our partners advancing health equity for AAs and NHPs. Use the hashtag #SourceForBetterHealth to engage and answer questions about AA and NHPI health.

University Juneteenth Celebration 2024

Tuesday June 18, 2024 at 12:00 PM-2:30 PM
Emerson Hall Auditorium, and Fick Forum

Join the university wide Juneteenth Celebration. There will be a Black-Owned Vendor Fair (food and drinks will be provided to all attendees). Welcome remarks will be delivered by [Kia Caldwell, PhD](#), Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Diversity. Keynote Speakers are [Dineo Khabele, MD](#), Mitchell and Elaine Yanow Professor and Chair of the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology and [Raven Maragh-Lloyd, PhD](#), Assistant Professor of African and African American Studies and Film and Media Studies. RSVP [here](#).

Fostering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: A Comprehensive Approach

Tuesday June 18, 2024

St. Louis County Library – Thornhill Branch 12863 Willowick Drive

This course empowers participants to foster DEI in their practice. Participants will explore a variety of topics and gain practical tools. Buy tickets [here](#).

JuneteenthSTL 2024: City of Dellwood, Parade & more

Wednesday June 19, 2024 at 12:00 PM-9:00 PM

Dellwood Rec Center, 10266 West Florissant Avenue

The mission of JuneteenthSTL is centered around strengthening our community by connecting people to businesses, community organizations, services and employment opportunities while we share information, celebrate our culture and create Black Joy!

Find more information [here](#).

A Celebration of Black Composers

Thursday June 20, 2024 at 7:30 PM-9:30 PM

St. Louis Community College – Florissant Valley, 3400 Pershall Road

The Gateway Festival Orchestra led by Guest Conductor Terrence Abernathy celebrates Juneteenth with a cultural and musical feast that pays homage to the enduring contributions of Black composers. Read more [here](#).

2024 BLK Family Reunion Festival

Wednesday June 19, 2024 at 11:00 AM-7:00 PM

Harris Stowe State University, 3026 Laclede Avenue

This Juneteenth Weekend extravaganza will attract residents from Kansas City, Chicago, Memphis, and neighboring cities into St. Louis, setting the stage for an unforgettable celebration. Find more information [here](#).

3rd Annual Juneteenth “FREE-DOME” Celebration

Wednesday June 19, 2024 at 11:00 PM-7:00 PM

Fairground Park, 3715 Natural Bridge Road

The mission is to create a movement that will serve to uplift Black communities and to celebrate and reignite annually on Juneteenth an endeavor to control, define and benefit socially and economically from all that is under the power and command of Black folks henceforth and forevermore moreover. Read more [here](#).

WUSM Juneteenth Jubilee

Friday June 21, 2024 at 11:00-2:00 PM

Farrell Learning and Teaching Center (FLTC) – Hearth

The WUSM Office of DEI is hosting The Juneteenth Jubilee is an opportunity to connect with members of the WashU School of Medicine community, and learn more about Juneteenth. The event will feature food from Black-owned businesses, games, informational material about Juneteenth and local organizations. We encourage individuals and teams to stop by for a plate of food, community, and connections!

Find more information [here](#).