

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

August 2024

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

Message from Eric Lenze, MD, Head of Department

Our department is viewed as an exemplar in leading impactful DEI initiatives; this is due to the commitment demonstrated by our DEI leadership (Patty Cavazos-Rehg, PhD, Neha Navsaria, PhD, Kavya Singh) and each of you. Thank you for making a difference! In addition to our departmental DEI initiatives, there are several university-wide programs and initiatives focused on creating positive change and addressing systemic barriers to equality. I encourage you to learn more by exploring these websites:

• [Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the School of Medicine](#)

• [Diversity and Inclusion at Washington University](#)

• [Examples of Faculty Activities related to DEI](#)

• [About diversity, equity, and inclusion at the School of Medicine](#)

• [Program for Underrepresented in Medicine for Equity and Diversity \(PROUD-MED\)](#)

• [LGBTQ Med](#)

• [OUTmed](#)

• [Center for Diversity and Inclusion](#)

• [Academy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)

DEI Speaker Sessions

Join us for our next DEI Speaker Session on August 28, 2024 at 11:00 AM with Dr. Jessica Williams (Psychiatry Resident, PGY-4) on “From Stigma to Support: Ableism in Medicine.” This session will be held on Zoom only. Register for the session [here](#). If you have any questions about this session or suggestions for future topics or speakers, please contact Kavya Singh (kavyas@wustl.edu). View attached flyer.

Beyond Exceptionalism and Area Studies: Transnational Feminist Perspectives on Anti- Gender/Feminist Discourses and Politics

Friday, September 27, 2024 | 1:00 PM - 2:15 PM

McMillan Cafe

WGSS Decentering the West Lecture Series Presents: Nadje Al-Ali Robert Family Professor of International Studies and Professor of Anthropology and Middle East Studies, Brown University. Find more information [here](#).

Unity in Wellness with Jennifer Holzhauer, MSW, LCSW

As we step into September, National Suicide Prevention Month, it's the perfect time to reflect on how diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) play a crucial role in our overall wellness. Suicidal ideation is a common and sometimes deadly consequence of folks struggling with their mental health. This month, we're highlighting the profound connection between mental health and DEI, reminding ourselves that true wellness is achieved when everyone feels seen, heard, and valued. Suicide is indeed a significant concern among healthcare workers who have higher rates of suicide than the general population. If you or someone you know are struggling, please reach out for help by texting or calling 988. Or click this link: <https://988lifeline.org/chat/>

Why DEI Matters for Wellness:

1. **Inclusive Environments:** Spaces that prioritize DEI foster a sense of belonging, which is essential for mental well-being. When individuals feel included and accepted, they are more likely to thrive personally and professionally.
2. **Equitable Access:** Ensuring that mental health resources and support are accessible to all, regardless of background or identity, is fundamental. Equity in mental health means addressing barriers and providing tailored support that meets diverse needs.
3. **Celebrating Diversity:** Embracing and celebrating diverse perspectives enriches our understanding and approaches to wellness. It encourages a holistic view of mental health that respects and incorporates various cultural, social, and personal experiences.

Action Steps for September:

1. **Educate Yourself:** Take time to learn about the unique mental health challenges faced by different communities. Understanding these can help foster empathy and support.
2. **Promote Inclusivity:** Advocate for and participate in initiatives that create inclusive environments in your workplace or community.
3. **Seek Resources:** Ensure that mental health resources are diverse and accessible to everyone. If you're in a position to influence resource availability, make inclusivity a priority.

This September, let's commit to integrating DEI principles into our wellness practices, creating spaces where everyone can achieve their best mental health. Together, we can build a more inclusive and supportive community for all.

Mental Health Equity: Community Engagement with Neha Navsaria, PhD

Last month the importance of community engagement and its role in mental health equity was introduced. WUSM's [Institute of Clinical and Translational Sciences \(ICTS\)](#) is a good resource for community engagement methods. ICTS has a [Community Advisory Board](#) and also has [tools and resources for community-engaged research](#). Here are some examples of different forms of community engagement happening in the Department of Psychiatry:

The Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry (CAP) is working on the development of a Community Advisory Board (CAB) engaging in deliberate and intentional steps in its creation. The CAP CAB seeks to be made up of members of the communities they serve, including those who have experience with mental health services. The goal is to guide the efforts of CAP in understanding and working to meet the mental health needs of children, their families, and community. The initial CAP CAB working group was convened by [Nancy Spargo, LCSW](#). Four facilitators were chosen to create the CAP CAB ([Rob Fitzgerald, PhD, MPH](#), [Jaime Hook, MD](#), [Pamela Madden, PhD](#) and [Angel Mortensen, MSN, APRN, PMHNP-C](#)). They attended a CAB workshop with other CABs at the university that was facilitated by the ICTS. Next steps for CAP CAB include formalizing member responsibilities and sending a request for nominations.

In case you missed it, [Devin Banks, PhD](#) recently spoke about this topic at our last DEI Speaker Series. Her talk, "Developing reciprocal partnerships with communities traditionally harmed by and excluded from research" talked about the spectrum of community engagement methods, and the critical relationship between community-engaged research and principles of social justice. From her work, she identified key lessons on trust, intention, genuine collaboration, structure and sustaining relationships that are critical to community partnerships. Listen to her talk [here](#).

[Li-Shiun Chen, MD](#), Nina Smock, and James Reddy have launched a pilot trial ([Implementation Science to Reduce the Disparity in Tobacco Treatment among Individuals with Serious Mental Illness; IS-RAISE](#)) incorporates the use of community-based programs and active engagement of community and clinical stakeholders to increase treatment adherence for smoking cessation. In an earlier study across four community mental health centers, they identified a gap in the implementation of evidence-based smoking cessation treatments (Chen 2016). While 51% of smokers were interested in medication, and 29% in counseling—only 5% received either form of treatment (Chen 2016). Their pilot trial aims to assess the feasibility and preliminary effectiveness of a multilevel intervention, low-burden, "Nudges to Quit". "Nudges to Quit" seeks to enhance engagement with tobacco treatment options, including medications and community-based programs by nudging both the patient and providers to promote the use of evidence-based treatments to address this gap in care.

Rural Communities of Color Across the US Find New Ways to Get the Health Care They Need

By Associated Press

"It's more common for people in rural areas to die earlier than urban residents from things like heart disease, cancer and stroke, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But hospitals have closed throughout rural America in the last decade, leaving some of the 46 million people who live in these areas fewer options to get [the care they need when they need it](#).

Advocates, hospital and health clinic administrators and rural residents say changing disparities in [health outcomes](#) and [health care services in rural America](#) needs to start at the local level – especially in communities of color that may lack trust in the medical field." Read more on US News & World Report [here](#).

Smartphone Data May Not Reliably Predict Depression Risk in Diverse Groups

Research Highlight

"Drawing from recent studies, researchers developed AI models that analyzed the smartphone data to produce a depression risk score for each participant, indicating the likelihood of clinically significant depression. ... Overall, the best-performing AI model proved to be only moderately accurate in predicting who had clinically significant depression (as measured by the PHQ-8).

While the model identified some patterns, it consistently underperformed for specific groups of people. For instance, the researchers found that the model was skewed toward identifying people as having a higher risk of depression if they were older, female, Black or African American, low income, unemployed, or on disability. On the other hand, the model was skewed toward identifying people as having a lower risk of depression if they were younger, male, White, high income, insured, or employed. To better understand these results, the researchers examined how the AI model associated different behaviors with depression risk." Read more on National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH) [here](#).

Collaborative Care Could Help Reduce Disparities in Mental Health Treatment

Research Highlight

“Mental health care after trauma is critical, especially for people in racial and ethnic minority groups who are at higher risk for developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD can be impairing, leading to stress or fear in everyday situations that harms a person’s health and well-being. Finding effective PTSD care is challenging in general, but systemic disparities and limited access make it even harder for people from racial and ethnic minority groups. “A new study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health marks a step toward reducing disparities in mental health care. It found that a collaborative care intervention delivered in real-world settings significantly reduced PTSD symptoms among patients from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds.” Read more on NIMH [here](#).

Amplifying Voices and Building Bridges: NIMH Symposium Calls for Action Towards an Inclusive Path Forward

Institute Update

“As an institute, we have much to be proud of, but we also need to reflect on our failures, particularly those related to racism and discrimination,” said Dr. Gordon. “Understanding the past and present will enable us to continue deconstructing systemic racism within biomedical research and pave the way for a brighter future.’ ... ‘Maya Angelou said, ‘History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.’ That's our hope when thinking about NIMH in the future: We have the courage not to repeat the mistakes of the past,” said Dr. Shim.” Read more about the NIMH Symposium [here](#).

HEAL Webinar: Techquity

Webinar

In this recorded webinar on Techquity, speakers from Stanford Medicine highlight efforts exploring the interplay between health equity and technology. Join us to increase awareness about research addressing health disparities in technology and to explore why some researchers have chosen to focus their careers in this space. Attendees gain valuable insights into how research can begin to address inequities in this rapidly evolving field. This recording features a series of brief presentations followed by a Q&A session. View [here](#).

Engage EDI Community Space

September 3 & 19, 2024 | Virtual

This 60-minute session is designed to support participants along their journey through the Engage EDI series. The session is facilitated to foster conversation among participants about how they're processing and applying the content of Engage EDI to their job roles. It can be repeated many times in support of achieving University's EDI-related mission and vision, and is designed to support a growth mindset as we all build a culture of trying together. View eligibility and register [here](#).

Stress, Aging, Disparities and Cancer: a Multi-Level Approach

Wednesday, September 11 | 3:30 PM - 5:30 PM

Eric P. Newman Education Center, Seminar Room B

Please join us for a talk by Electra D. Paskett as part of the Siteman Cancer Center Seminar Series followed by a social hour reception.

Electra Paskett is the Marion N. Rowley Professor of Cancer Research at The Ohio State University, Director of the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control in the College of Medicine, a professor in the Division of Epidemiology in the College of Public Health and the Deputy Director for Population Sciences and Community Outreach in the Comprehensive Cancer Center of the Ohio State University and Founding Director of the Center for Cancer Health Equity in the James Cancer Hospital. Find more information about this event [here](#).

A Warm Welcome: Immigrant Inclusion in Divisive Times

September 12, 2024 | 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

Bryan Cave Moot Courtroom, 310

This event will bring together academics and practitioners to discuss efforts to promote the inclusion of immigrants in St. Louis and across the country. Expert panelists including those from the fields of sociology, law, and journalism, will share their perspectives and field questions from the moderator and the audience. The event will run from 12:00-12:45 pm, immediately followed by a reception with light refreshments. Find more information on the event [here](#).

Change Your Mind, Change Your World: Recognizing Innate Wellbeing

Wednesday, September 25, 2024 | 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Umrath Lounge

Join us for what is sure to be a highlight of Mindfulness Week, the keynote address given by the Venerable Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche, live from Nepal.

Our minds are constantly at work creating a reality that takes us on a roller coaster of thoughts and emotions. This becomes magnified during difficult times. Bringing together ancient Buddhist wisdom and scientific research, meditation provides a path leading to greater resilience and wellbeing. Working with awareness, compassion and wisdom, we open our hearts and minds, rippling out towards a more joyful and peaceable world. Watch party at Umrath Lounge, 10 - 11 a.m. where we will raffle 10 copies of his book "The Joy of Living: Unlocking the Secret and Science of Happiness" Register [here](#).

The Recovery Coalition of Greater St. Louis

September 14, 2024

Forest Park

The Recovery Coalition of Greater St. Louis is hosting their annual Recovery Fest on Saturday, September 14th to celebrate National Recovery Month. Join for a day of free fun, food, and fellowship in Forest Park, no RSVP required. For anyone interested in becoming a sponsor or hosting an information booth at the event, please see the attached Tabling and Sponsors information sheet.

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WashU Mindfulness Week

September 24-27, 2024

With all the pressures in the world this season – the contentious election in the US, the numerous wars, and conflicts around the world, tragically too many to name, the rapid devastation of our ecosystems, and the usual stresses of life – it's important to pause and remember that inner wellbeing and interconnectedness is still available to us. Mindfulness is a tool that precisely helps us do this and we're pleased to let you know that we have a week of activities to help you do just that. Find more information on Mindfulness Week [here](#).

Hear the Rolling Thunder of Race

Friday, September 27 | 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Brown Hall

As the closing event in [Mindfulness Week](#), join us for the 8th installation of the Mindfulness and Anti-Racism Speaker Series with Dr. Larry Ward, live from Asheville, North Carolina.

In his talk, based on Ward's book [America's Racial Karma: An Invitation to Heal](#), we will explore the origins of race as a social psychology, our consciousness of shared trauma, the iceberg and duality of race conditioning, and the antidotes of spiritual and social repair. Watch party at [Brown Loungue](#), Brown Hall, 2 - 3 p.m., where we will raffle 10 autographed copies of his [book](#). Register [here](#).