

**Fourth Annual  
Rocky Mountain Humanistic  
Counseling & Psychological  
Association Conference**



**Virtual Conference  
October 7, 2020**

The Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling and Psychological Association (RMHCPA) was founded in 2016 to promote and develop humanistic psychology in the Rocky Mountain Area.

### **Our Mission**

The Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling and Psychological Association's mission is to support and promote existential, humanistic, and transpersonal psychology and counseling, especially in contributing to psychotherapy, education, theory, philosophy of psychology, research methodology, organization and management, and social responsibility and change in the Rocky Mountain Area.

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# **First Annual Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling and Psychological Association Conference**

## **Table of Contents**

Continuing Education Information	4
About the Live and Asynchronous Programs	4
Conference Schedule	5
About the Presenters	7
Invited Speakers	7
Award Recipients	10
Other Presenters	12
Poster Presenters	15
Presentation Abstracts	19
Keynote Address	19
Invited & Award Presentations	20
Poster Presentations	27
Conference Sponsors	32
Why Join RMHPCA	33
Getting involved with RMHCPA	33
Why Support RMHCPA	33

## **Continuing Education**

Continuing Education Credits need to be purchased separately from the conference. In order to receive CE credits, you must be present for the entire live version of presentation and complete an evaluation form. We cannot offer CEs for viewing the archived asynchronous versions of these presentations. *You cannot miss more than 5-minutes of a live presentation and receive credit.* We have CE volunteer who will monitor attendance. She will check to see to see if individuals who register for the conference are present in the zoom room for the duration of each presentation. If you have any questions or concerns about the CE process, please direct them to Dr. Louis Hoffman. Within 5-7 days of the end of the conference, you will receive your CE certificates by Email. CEs are only available for the live portion of the workshop.

The Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling and Psychological Association (RMHCPA) has a collaborative agreement with the Society for Humanistic Psychology to provide Continuing Education Certificates for approved training events. Division 32 (Society for Humanistic Psychology) of the American Psychological Association is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. Division 32 (Society for Humanistic Psychology) of the American Psychological Association maintains responsibility for this program and its content.

## **About the Live and Asynchronous Programs**

The Fourth Annual RMHCPA Conference will have a live portion of programming available through Zoom and an asynchronous portion of the program that will be available through Doki.io ([rmhcpa.doki.io](http://rmhcpa.doki.io)) beginning the day of the conference. The live portion of the program will be recorded and made available on Doki.io within 7-10 days of the live conference. The asynchronous portion of the workshop includes pre-recorded presentations and poster presentations.

## Conference Schedule

Live Schedule (All Times are listed in Mountain Standard Time (Add 2-hours for EST; add 1-hour for CST; subtract 1 hour for PST))

8:30-8:40 AM	Conference Opening
8:40-8:45 AM	Poetic Introduction: "1619" by Aliya J'anai
8:45-9:45 AM	"Social Justice, Advocacy, and Psychology" Apryl Alexander, PsyD (1 CE)
9:45-10:45	"Towards Holism in Psychology: Examining the Need for a Socioecological Justice Praxis as a Seventh Force" Derrick Sebree, Jr., PsyD (1 CE)
10:45-11:45	"Reflect...Revise...Relate and Respond...." Terri Davis, PhD
11:45-12:15	Lunch Break
12:15 PM-1:30 PM	Keynote Address: "So What Woke You Up? Critical Conversations about Anti-Racism with Humanistic Practitioners" Theopia Jackson, PhD (1 CE)
1:30-2:30 PM	"A Humanistic-Examination of the Intersection of Race and Universal Suffering: The Impact of COVID-19" Nathaniel Granger, Jr., PsyD (1 CE)
2:30-3:30 PM	"Existential Psychology, White Privilege, and Racial Gaslighting" Louis Hoffman, PhD (1 CE)
3:30-3:45	Afternoon Break
3:45-4:45 PM	Award Presentation: Lisa Xochitl Vallejos, PhD – Early Career Award Presentation: "8 Things Graduate School Didn't Teach You About Anti-Racist Therapy that You Need to Know" (1 CE)
4:45-5:30 PM	Award Presentation: Thomas Pyszczynski – Lifetime Achievement Award Presentation: "A Terror Management Theory Perspective on Prejudice, Hatred, and Intergroup Conflict and Strategies for Reducing the Hate"

5:30-6:15	Award Presentation: Sandy Sela-Smith – Humanistic Exemplar Award Presentation: “Following the Beat of a Different Drum: The Embodied Humanistic Path That Transformed My Life and Work”
6:15-6:20	Announcement of Student Paper Awards
6:20-6:30	Closing of the Conference

### Asynchronous Presentations (Available Online)

- The Unequal Economics of Meaning in Life: Addressing Discrimination and Implicit Racism in Our Mind-Manipulating System (Invited Presentation) *by Joel Vos, PhD*
- Black: More or Less than Human. The Compensation Resulting from The Invalidation of Black Humanity *by Nathaniel Granger, Jr., PsyD*
- “In the Wake”: Centering Black Studies and Existential Themes to Guide Anti-Racism in Humanistic Psychology *by Zenobia Morrill*
- What is it Like to Live as a Black Woman in Brazil? A Phenomenological Study *by Elizabeth Brown V. Brisola, PhD, Guilherme Wykrota Tostes, MS, & Gabrielle Silva, BS*
- Using Nature Poetry for Psychological and Social Healing *by Michael Moats, PsyD, Derrick Seabee, Jr., PsyD, Gina Subia Belton, PhD, & Louis Hoffman, PhD*
- Multiracial People and Racism *by Richard Talley, PhD*

### Poster Presentations (Available Online)

- Experimental Effects of Location and Trash on Person Attractiveness *by Colin D. M. Adams, Daniela G. Catarino, Tylor Ghaffari, & Alekxandria Schneeback*
- Wellbeing, Sense of Life, and Academic Motivation of University Students in Conditions of Distant Learning and Pandemic *by Lada Alexandrova*
- The Portrayal of Drugs in Rap Music *by Daniela G. Catarino, Tylor Ghaffari, & Colin D. M. Adams*
- On Humanistic Psychology and Revolutionary Praxis *by Rivers Flemming, MA, and Benjamin Ramey, MA*
- A Better World Is Possible: Psychology’s Responsibility to Abolition *by Haleh Kanani, BA, & Hannah Klukoff, BA*
- The Myth of Lockstep Progression: Maslow’s Misconstrued Theory *by Christopher Latourrette, Johanna Guz Montgomery, Kelly Rios Santos, William Purrington, Rachel Creed, Alan Lankford, & Richard Bargdill*
- Coping with COVID-19: Investigating COVID-19-Related Functional Impairment, Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms, and Coping Self-Efficacy in an Online Sample of Trauma-Exposed Adults *by McKenzie Lockett, MA, Sander Koole, PhD, & Tom Pyszczynski, PhD*
- Privilege and Oppression in Gender and Class *by Kathryn Palm*
- Healing Social Cultural Wounds within the Black Community *by Adeola Quintero*

## About the Presenters

### Invited Speakers



**Apryl Alexander, PsyD**, is an Associate Professor in the Graduate School of Professional Psychology at the University of Denver. Dr. Alexander's research and clinical work focus on violence and victimization, human sexuality, and trauma-informed and culturally informed practice. She is an award-winning researcher and her work has been published in leading journals. Dr. Alexander has been featured in numerous media outlets, including The New York Times, USA Today, and NBC Nightly News, for her research and advocacy work. Recently, she received the 2019 APA Early Career Award for Outstanding Contributions to Benefit Children, Youth, and Families and the 2019 Michele Alexander Early Career Award for Scholarship and Service from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI).



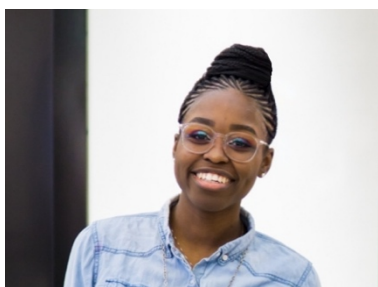
**Terri Davis, PhD**, is associate professor and program director for the University of Denver PsyD program in clinical psychology in the Graduate School of Professional Psychology. Her current administrative and research interests focus on the educational needs of graduate students with salient intersecting cultural identities and their clients. She also works to identify and challenge the systems and policies within psychology that can hinder the development of future psychologists. She is an active member of APA Div. 17, Society of Counseling Psychology, and a delegate to the National Council of Schools in Professional Psychology (NCSPP). She is also a member of the APA Leadership Institute of Women in Psychology. She served as lead coordinator for the 2017 National Multicultural Conference and Summit. She earned the MA and PhD degrees in counseling psychology from Ohio State University and the BA degree in psychology from Virginia Union University, a historically black institution in Richmond, Virginia.



**Nathaniel Granger, Jr., PsyD** is a past president of the Society for Humanistic Psychology (APA Division 32) and the recipient of the Hari Camari Early Career Award. He is an adjunct professor at Saybrook University and Pikes Peak Community College. Additionally, he serves as the Treasurer of the Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling and Psychological Association and is the Chief of Staff of Pikes Peak Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Dr. Granger is also the founder and director of Be REAL Ministries, Inc., where he serves the community by working closely with marginalized groups as a pastor and registered psychotherapist.



**Louis Hoffman, PhD**, is the Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling and Psychological Association. He has been recognized as a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and six of its divisions (1, 10, 32, 36, 48, and 52) for his contributions to professional psychology. An avid writer, Dr. Hoffman has published 16 edited books and over 100 journal article and book chapters, including *Humanistic Approaches to Multiculturalism and Diversity: Perspectives on Existence and Difference* (Routledge 2019) and *Existential Psychology East-West* (Volumes 1 & 2; University Professors Press, 2019). Additionally, he serves on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* (Senior International Editor), *The Humanistic Psychologist*, the *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, and *Janus Head*. He is a co-founder of the International Institute for Existential-Humanistic Psychology and serves on the board of The Humanitarian Alliance. In addition to his academic work, Dr. Hoffman is a licensed psychologist in private practice. He lives in Colorado Springs with his wife, three sons, and two dogs.



**Aliya J'anai, BA**, was born and raised in Colorado Springs, CO and moved to Chicago away from her parents at the tender age of 18. She has had her poetry published in four books so far and has earned a BA degree in English Literature from Chicago State University. She is currently working toward a Master's of Fine Arts degree with a concentration in Creative Writing while simultaneously working to build her brand, Two Plus Two, which is a Christian based blog, YouTube channel, and t-shirt line.

Aliya is an outstanding writer who strongly intends to publish her own books in the near future. She hopes to be an advocate for minorities, women, and rape and molestation victims. When she is not engaged in her schoolwork, her job, or poetry, Aliya J'anai practices the piano and the guitar, sings, paints, draws, and is very heavily involved in church. With God by her side, she seeks to make a difference in the world one piece at a time.





**Theopia Jackson, PhD**, is a licensed clinical psychologist who received her Master's Degree in clinical psychology from Howard University, Washington DC, and her Doctorate from the Wright Institute in Berkeley, California. Dr. Jackson is the 2019-2021 President for The Association of Black Psychologists, Inc. (ABPsi) and past president for the Bay Area chapter. She has held several leadership roles in higher education and is currently the Co-Chair of the Department of Humanistic & Clinical Psychology and Chair of the Clinical Psychology degree program at Saybrook University in Pasadena, California. She recently relocated to Maryland after 30+ years of practice in the Bay Area, where she held medical privileges at the University of California San Francisco Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland; she practiced in the Healthy Hearts program, Department of Psychiatry, and Comprehensive Sickle

Cell Center. Her other professional affiliations include membership in the Association of Family Therapists of Northern California (co-founding member of the Cultural Accountability Committee), American Psychological Association (Division 32, Society for Humanistic Psychology: Member-at-Large), California Psychological Association, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She serves on the medical advisory council the Sickle Cell Community Advisory Council (SCCAC). Dr. Jackson has a long history of providing child, adolescent, and family therapy services; specializing in serving populations coping with chronic illness and complex trauma. She is an accomplished scholar-practitioner and educator who provides multicultural/cultural equity workshops, seminars, and/or consultation. Dr. Jackson is a co-founder for the Therapist-in-Residency Program (TnRP) in Oakland, CA; an African-centered program dedicated to supervising Black clinicians-in-training in providing services grounded in Black psychology for persons of African ancestry. Additionally, she provides training for persons of African ancestry in Emotional Emancipation Circles<sup>SM</sup>—a community-defined practice that is a collaboration between the Community Healing Network, Inc., and ABPsi. Dr. Jackson has been invited to participate in national and local California initiatives intended to establish integrative health care that is culturally-affirming and linguistically responsive. She is a life-learner who believes that professional knowledge both shapes and is shaped by community wisdom. Honoring culturally-centered spiritual healing, creativity, and resilience, Dr. Jackson espouses: *"What you help a child to love can be more important than what you help [them] to learn."* ~African proverb



**Derrick Sebree, Jr., PsyD**, is a core faculty member of the MA program at the Michigan School of Psychology. He graduated with his doctorate degree in clinical psychology from the Michigan School of Psychology in 2016. He has since conducted his clinical work in the Ann Arbor area, working with a variety of populations, with a focus on young college students and adults within the University of Michigan system. Dr. Sebree also works with the United Methodist Church as a Ministerial Assessment Specialist, where he conducts psychological

assessments for pastoral candidates going for licensure. Dr. Sebree received his MECCA Certificate in Multicultural Counseling from MSU. He specializes in multicultural identity theory and counseling; alongside this is Dr. Sebree's specialty in ecopsychology/ecotherapy. Dr. Sebree's dissertation focused on the relationship between racial identity development and connection to nature. In his time during graduate training and prior, Dr. Sebree has worked with various social justice organizations in Detroit around food security and other environmental justice issues. Coupled with organizing group social justice community gardening events, Dr. Sebree has an extensive background in community-oriented social justice work.

Dr. Sebree's community-oriented social justice praxis is emphasized in his teaching and mentorship. Dr. Sebree has been an active member of the Society for Humanistic Psychology, APA Division 32, since joining as a student in 2007. He has undertaken different leadership positions within the division, serving as a Member-at-Large, chair of the EcoJustice Task Force and co-chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and Membership chair for the organization. Dr. Sebree has served as a mentor for BIPOC students, promoting inclusivity, hospitality, and scholarly diversity. Dr. Sebree serves as a board member for the 501c3 non-profit, The Humanitarian Alliance, which works to promote psychological, social, and ecological justice.

## Award Recipients



**Tom Pyszczynski, PhD**, is Distinguished Professor of Psychology at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. He received his PhD in psychology from the University of Kansas in 1980. With his colleagues Jeff Greenberg of the University of Arizona and Sheldon Solomon of Skidmore College, he developed *Terror Management Theory*, which explores the role of death in life and suggests that cultural worldviews, self-esteem, and close personal relationships function to manage the potential for existential terror that results from the uniquely human awareness of the inevitability of death. Terror management theory has inspired thousands of empirical studies. This research

has explored the implications of the theory for a wide range of issues, including self-esteem, meaning in life, close relationships, self-deception, disgust, aging, prosocial behavior, love, sexual ambivalence, prejudice, conflict, political divisiveness, aggression, war, and terrorism. Professor Pyszczynski also has conducted research on clinical problems such as anxiety, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder. His work has also explored how people control information so they can construe their biased beliefs as following logically from available information, and the role that disruptions of self-regulatory processes and anxiety-control mechanisms play in depression and posttraumatic stress disorder. He is currently conducting research focused on understanding diverse reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic and the emergence of psychological disorders in response to it. He has published over 250 articles in peer-reviewed journals and is co-author or co-editor of several books, including

*Hanging on and Letting Go: Understanding the Onset, Progression, and Remission of Depression* (1994, Springer-Verlag), *In the Wake of 9/11: The Psychology of Terror* (2003, American Psychological Association Books), the *Handbook of Experimental Existential Psychology* (2003; Guilford Press), and *The Worm at the Core: The Role of Death in Life* (2015, Random House). He was one of the organizers of the first *International Conference on Experimental Existential Psychology* in Amsterdam, July, 2001, which played a major role in launching this new sub-discipline of social psychology. He and his colleagues received a lifetime achievement award from the *International Society for Self and Identity* for their work on terror management theory.



**Sandy Sela-Smith, PhD** was born in Alaska on October 14, 1944, third daughter, middle child in a family of five children. She attended the University of Washington where she received her BA in political science and history while earning a certificate for teaching K-12 in Washington state. She taught English and philosophy in China for 2 years and upon returning to the United States, became certified as a clinical hypnotherapist. In June of 1994, she began studies at Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center towards earning a Master's Degree in psychology in 1999 and a doctorate in psychology with an emphasis on clinical psychology in 2001. Sela-Smith began her professional life as a mental health counselor in 2001, and with the encouragement of Drs. Ruth Richards, Tom Greening, and Stanley Krippner, she began teaching at Saybrook in the fall of that year.

Dr. Sandy continued counseling and teaching, until March 8<sup>th</sup> of 2020, 4 days after she received a diagnosis of 4<sup>th</sup> stage pancreas cancer, which is generally considered a death sentence by the medical world since only a very small percentage of patients with this diagnosis survive a few months beyond treatment. Their prognosis was in contradiction to a series of non-ordinary experiences she had in 1996, while taking a powerful course at Saybrook, Psychology of Shamanism, which caused her to believe she would be leaving the planet on March 8, 2037. Convinced that she was not going to die in the few months she was told she had left, she resigned from Saybrook to focus on her healing and on moving her life in another direction. Instead of feeling frightened or disappointed with having contracted cancer, Sela-Smith believed the diagnosis was directing her toward a different path, a call she had been impatiently waiting to discover for the previous decade.

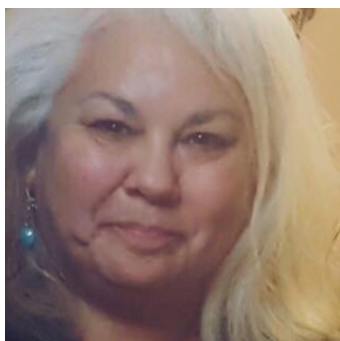
Currently, Dr. Sela-Smith, as a Spiritual Counselor works with clients to support their integration of *Mind-Body~Spirit* by holding the space for healing of the blocks to permit emergence of the Authentic Self. She holds that the dis-integration of the person is caused by unresolved conflict or unreleased trauma from life experiences, from genetic learning, and from past life experiences, which she sees as being reflected in the oppositional conflict and trauma that currently has overtaken the human species globally, something she sees as more of a threatening pandemic than COVID -19.





Lisa Xochitl Vallejos, PhD, Xochtil Lisa Vallejos is the author of *Shattered: How Everything Came Together When it All Fell Apart* and is known for her body of writing both academic and in popular media. Her primary interests are spirituality, anti-oppressive frameworks, and cultivating anti-racist spaces. Dr. Vallejos is known for her leadership within the Society for Humanistic psychology, as well as her service as a board member in organizations. Dr. Vallejos is the current board chair of the Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling and Psychological Association, and is the co-founder of The Humanitarian Alliance, a Washington, D.C. based organization created to create psychological and social justice.

## Other Presenters



**Gina Subia Belton, PhD.** An ethnothanatologist, Dr. Gina Subia Belton is a psychology professor, Indigenous scholar-activist, community educator and end of life/grief specialist practicing Existential Medicine in her work in Palliative Psychology. She also is a published poet and author.

A social scientist located in decolonial praxis and cultural humility, her multidisciplinary research activities reach across the continuum of care of the end of life relationship centering the health and well-being of BIPOC communities.

Dr. Belton is especially uplifted in her commitment to the mental health and wellness of Indigenous and Aboriginal populations by working in a Good Way to achieve balance and sustainability with culturally based interventions that promote holistic wellness and respectful collaboration.



**Elizabeth B. V. Brisola, PhD,** is a humanistic psychologist currently researching and counseling in Austin, Texas. She was born and raised in Brazil, where she acquired her Master's and Doctorate degrees at Pontifical Catholic University of Campinas, having completed her internship at Yale's Program for Recovery and Community Health under Dr. Larry Davidson's supervision (2015). She specialized in Humanistic Psychology (1990's Vera Cury and John K. Wood) and in Phenomenological research (1999). Her topics of interests are phenomenological research, lived experience, music, creativity, mental health, Person Centered Approach, discrimination, and immigrants in the

United States.

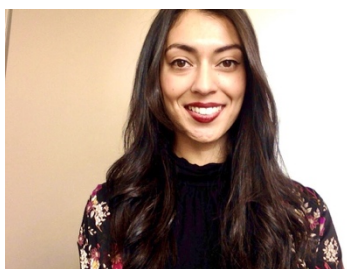


First and foremost, Dr. Michael Moats describes himself as a father, a husband, and a friend. His passion as a clinical psychologist lies in working with clients who are learning to redefine their lives and create new meaning, especially those dealing with grief and loss in its many forms (i.e., death, divorce, job loss, recent move, natural disaster, war.) Michael frequently utilizes nature and stories from his hikes, hunts, walks, skiing, and general sense of awe and intrigue in the therapeutic setting.

Having been raised in rural Illinois, he saw his father frequently wander through the woods with no agenda beyond experiencing whatever came. His grandmother fished with a cane pole and with the enthusiasm of a child, while his brother taught him to hunt and to better read the woods and the wind. It was Michael's own sense of embracing the silence of nature that offered a symphony of sounds and opportunities.

Through struggles in nature, insights from engagement, and the paradoxical realization of how small yet significant each person is as it relates to nature, it has shaped how he embraces life, his perspective of relationships, and his therapeutic work with clients. He would not negate the importance of intellectual knowledge concerning nature, but he would argue that no amount of knowledge can match the experience of being in and having a relationship with nature. He believes that there are not enough days in a life to learn all that nature has to offer.

Dr. Moats recognizes that every experience creates an opportunity to learn, to grow, and to heal. And, nature is large enough to hold whatever one is carrying. However, as one grows to see the immense giving power of nature the resulting relationship also demands that one has a responsibility to return these gifts through stewardship and sharing. He believes that it is important to see nature through the eyes of a child and care for it as a parent of that child.



**Zenobia Morrill, EdM, MA** is a doctoral candidate in Counseling Psychology at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Her research interests include critical and liberation psychology, psychotherapy, qualitative methods, and decolonial approaches to global mental health. Zenobia is currently a Psychology Fellow training in Clinical and Community Psychology at the Yale School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry. Additionally, she serves a student

board member for the Society for Humanistic Psychology (SHP) and the Society for Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology (SQIP), and she writes for the mental health webzine Mad in America. Recently, she joined as an Editorial Board Member for the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*.



**Gabrielle Silva, BS**, is a humanistic psychologist (Minas Gerais Federal University, Brazil) specializing in clinical processes, individual, family, and group psychotherapy. She is a supervising psychologist at the Spiritist Psychiatric Hospital André Luiz. This Research was part of her graduate studies in Phenomenology and Mental Health at the University of Medical Sciences in Minas Gerais, Brazil.



**Richard Talley, PhD**, received a BS in Biology from Emporia State Teachers College and a BA in Medical Technology from University of Kansas. He was an ordained as Unity Minister, Unity School of Religious Studies. Dr. Talley received a MA in Creativity Studies and PhD in Psychology from Saybrook University. He worked ten years as a medical technologist, twelve years as Owner/artist at Talley's Stained Glass and Talley's Wholesale Supply, and fifteen years as Ordained Unity Minister in various cities and churches. Dr. Talley has presented workshops, sermons, and lectures to churches, organizations, and civic groups on inclusivity and diversity, anti-racism approaches, and healing through expressive art workshops. His passion is researching and writing on multiracial identity development in

people with multiple streams of racial ancestry. He is currently exploring the differences between people of two races and people with multiple racial lineages through the lens of his personal experience and research amid the limited amount of literature currently available in this field.



**Guilherme W. Tostes, MS**, is a doctoral student in Psychology at the Pontifical Catholic University in Campinas (Brazil), a humanistic clinical psychologist since 2007, and representative of Experiential Psychology in Brazil through The International Focusing Institute as Focusing Coordinator (CiT) and Focusing Trainer (2012). He specialized in Jungian Analytical Psychology, Elementary Experience, Humanistic Psychology, and Gestalt Therapy. He is a professor, internship supervisor, and member of the Structuring Teaching Nucleus (NDE) at the Medical School in Minas Gerais, coordinator of the Graduate Course in Phenomenology, Psychopathology, and Mental Health there, as well as at the Existential Humanist Psychotherapy Center. He

was director and coordinator of Clinical Psychology and at the Spiritist Psychiatric Hospital André Luiz (2012-2018). Mr. Tostes worked as clinical psychologist at the Italian mental health service in Milan at Unità di Psichiatria G. Salvini (2011). Topics of interest in research



and teaching are clinical psychology, existential humanistic psychology, phenomenology, person-centered approach, experiential psychology, emotional suffering, contemporary suffering, self-suffering, and phenomenology.



**Joel Vos, PhD, MSc, MA, Cpsychol**, is a psychologist, philosopher, researcher, and psychological counsellor in the United Kingdom, specialised in existential psychology and psychotherapies. He is researcher at the Metanoia Institute and leads the Professional Doctorate in Existential Psychotherapy and Counselling at the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling. He is the organiser of the IMEC International Meaning Conferences and the London Critical University. He has over 70 research publications. Recent books include *Mental Health in Crisis* (SAGE) and *Meaning in Life: An Evidence-Based Handbook for Practitioners* (Palgrave MacMillan).

## Poster Presenters

**Colin Douglas Mackenzie Adams** is a clinical psychology graduate student. I completed my undergraduate degree at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs in August of 2019. During those years, I worked as a research assistant in an evolutionary psychology lab and received a departmental award for undergraduate students. I also gained membership in Phi Theta Kappa and Psi Chi. As a graduate student, I work as a teaching assistant for various undergraduate psychology courses. My research interests include cognition, neuropsychology, anosmia, drugs, personality, and social justice. After earning my MA in clinical psychology, I plan to obtain my PhD. My career goals include being a clinician in both the public and private sectors, becoming a faculty at a university, and working with minority groups, specifically, Native Americans. I also want to do some work as a data analyst because I enjoy statistics in all forms. To avoid burnout and increase my overall well-being, I enjoy reading, playing piano, gaming, and going out with friends.

**Aleksandrova Lada, PhD**, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology and Pedagogy of Distance Education at the faculty of Distance learning at Moscow State University of Psychology and Education. She participates in inclusive education at the university level, working with students with disabilities in an inclusive online learning environment and organizing research projects on the topic. She began to study students' personality development in inclusive education in 2009 in a senior researcher position in laboratory of personality development in students with disabilities of the same university and, later at the Kuzbass Regional Institute for Teachers Training and Retraining where she developed inclusive school education working with schoolteachers. Dr. Aleksandrova regularly takes part in various international conferences (on Positive psychology, Self-determination theory). She is the scientific manager of a series of projects aimed at personality development studies. Dr. Aleksandrova is the author of more than 80 articles (mostly in Russian).

**Richard Bargdill** received his PhD in Clinical Psychology from the Existential Psychology program at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA. He is currently an Associate Professor of Psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University. Rich has held several leadership positions in The Society for Humanistic Psychology—Division 32 of the American Psychological Association including: Secretary and Membership Chair. Dr. Bargdill is the author of *An Artist's Thought Book: Intriguing Thoughts about the Artistic Process*. He is also editor *Living the Good Life: A Psychological History* and co-editor of *Humanistic Contributions to Psychology 101-Growth, Choice and Responsibility*. He researches boredom, meaning, and creativity.

**Daniela Catarino** graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso with a BS in Psychology and a minor in Biological Sciences in 2019. She is currently in the MA Psychological Sciences program at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. Daniela is a lab manager for the Cognitive Development Lab and she is also a Social Science Statistics Tutor for the Math Center. Her research interests encompass drug use, trauma, personality, cognition, development, and emotions. Aside from academics, Daniela spends her free time reading scientific articles, playing volleyball, and working out. After graduating, Daniela hopes to become a Data Scientist and work for business corporations.

**Rivers Fleming, MA**, (pronouns: they/them/theirs) is a PhD candidate at Saybrook University. Their dissertation research is a descriptive phenomenological study investigating the spiritual experiences of queer Buddhist practitioners. They previously completed an MA in contemplative psychotherapy and Buddhist psychology at Naropa University. Rivers believes in the necessity of striving for revolutionary social justice that extends past liberal “inclusion” and “diversity” schemes, which they believe ultimately serve capital at the expense of working and oppressed people. They hope to contribute to the field of existential-humanistic psychology in part by passionately critiquing it from the left.

**Tylor Ghaffari**. My education started at a community college where I earned an associate degree in communications. Once I received my AA, I transferred to California State University (CSU), Stanislaus; a college I have lived by for a good amount of my life. The initial plan of continuing my communications degree at CSU Stanislaus changed during my last year at community college, when I took my first psychology course. Since that moment, I went on to receive a bachelor's degree in psychology, while also working in two laboratories in the psychology department related to perception and cognitive aging. During my undergraduate schooling, I decided to extend my time at CSU Stanislaus by a year to take additional biology and chemistry courses. My mentor and I thought this would be invaluable knowledge for me to obtain since I had interests in continuing my study within the cognitive and neuroscience realm. This led to me working in a third lab within the biology department on campus. I am currently at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS), where I am working towards a master's degree in Psychological Science with a subplan in Cognition. At UCCS, I am also employed by the Language and Memory Processing (LAMP) lab where I am one of the lead graduate RA's. Once I earn my MA degree in Psychological Science, I plan to continue to a PhD program staying within the realm of cognition and neuroscience.

**Haleh Kanani, BA**, is a second-year graduate student in the master's in forensic psychology program at the University of Denver. Her research interests include alternatives to



incarceration, interventions for treatment resistant psychosis, and ways to reduce both criminal and hospital recidivism.

**Hannah Klukoff, BA**, is a second-year graduate student in the master's in forensic psychology program at the University of Denver. Her research interests include alternatives to incarceration and the effectiveness of social programs in mitigating early risk factors for criminal justice involvement and other adverse life experiences. Her other interests include advocacy and the ways in which psychologists can utilize their expertise to inform and affect policy change.

**Sander L. Koole** (PhD, 2000, Radboud University Nijmegen) is Professor of Psychology at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Director of the Amsterdam Emotion Regulation Lab. His research focuses on the broad question how people self-regulate their thoughts, feelings, and actions. His research has been supported by grants from the European Research Council, the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, and the American National Science Foundation.

**Alan Lankford** is Senior psychology undergraduate at Virginia Commonwealth University. A native of Virginia Beach, VA, Alan is the son of two veteran English teachers and holds a BA in English from the College of William and Mary. A firm believer in the eternal relevance of literature and philosophy, he hopes to bring a humanities-based perspective to the science of clinical psychology. As a fifth-grade teacher for the Henrico Education Association, he tries—not always successfully—to impart this same love of the humanities to his students. In his free time, he is a tenants' rights advocate and radical community organizer in his home of Richmond, VA. In his free time from his free time, he enjoys playing obscenely intricate board games with his wife Lindsey, going on adventures with his dog Sinclair, being unexpectedly swatted by his cat Virginia, and being regarded with benign indifference by his turtle, Horace.

**Christopher Latourrette** is a senior year undergraduate currently on track to obtain a bachelor's in psychology and a minor in sociology at Virginia Commonwealth University. At the time of publication, Christopher is the President of the Psychology Club, Vice President of the stem fraternity Beta Psi Omega, and student leader for Doctor Richard Bargdill's Eco-Martyrdom lab. He currently plans to graduate with his bachelor's and pursues higher education in a master's degree in counseling psychology. Christopher also has recently published a poster at the American Psychological Association virtual conference and completed two presentations at said conference. Christopher is hoping to continue his research into environmental issues and apply his knowledge of psychological theory to other pressing issues.

**McKenzie Lockett, MA**, is a doctoral student in clinical psychology at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs and the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. McKenzie's research endeavors focus on the social and emotional outcomes of trauma exposure. In particular, McKenzie often applies social psychological theories, including Terror Management Theory and Objectification Theory, to understanding how trauma exposure relates to social and motivational processes that are typically only studied in nonclinical samples.

**Johanna Guz-Montgomery** recently graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology. She spent a year as Dr. Richard Bargdill's student leader in his Ecomartyrdom lab, even staying on after her graduation to aid the group in their projects. During her time as student leader she assisted in submitting two papers for publication, as well as presenting at several conferences, including the American Psychological Association's virtual conference. She hopes to pursue higher education by way of a PhD in Clinical Psychology.

**Kathryn Palm** a senior in the psychology program at UCCS. The inspiration for her poster presentation came from an introduction to social justice class and a western civilization history class.

**William Purrington** is a psychology major and history minor attending Virginia Commonwealth University in his senior year. Born in Fairfax, Virginia in 1999, William has had an avid interest in science for much of his life, with this general interest evolving into a more specific one directed towards psychology that guides his current educational path. Upon finishing his Bachelor's degree he intends to move on towards a Master's and PhD, with the eventual goal of becoming a practicing psychologist. In this role he hopes to help people like him who have struggled with mental disorders throughout their life. Aside from his university related pursuits, he also focuses on learning about political and social justice issues in both the United States and the rest of the world, currently with a focus on South America. In his free time, William hangs out with family and friends, and often goes on walks around a nearby pond with his dog, though less so in the current times due to the ongoing pandemic. He is currently working under Dr. Richard Bargdill of Virginia Commonwealth University on his eco martyr project and has assisted in the creation of two papers related to the research.

**Adeola Quintero** is a graduate student at Regis University completing a master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. She is currently working with couples, young adolescents, and children at a Private Practice in Colorado Springs. Adeola is a writer, relationship-care enthusiast, racial healing researcher, and Women of Color advocate passionate about destigmatizing mental health for minorities and people of color.

**Benjamin Ramey, MA**, is a Lacanian psychoanalyst in private practice in Denver, CO. He holds a Master's degree in clinical psychology and is a PhD student in existential-humanistic psychology at Saybrook University. His research interests lie within the field of psychoanalysis, social liberation, and spirituality. He is a member of the Colorado Analytic Forum of the Lacanian Field and a student member of the Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling and Psychology Association.

**Kelly Rios Santos** is an undergraduate researcher at Virginia Commonwealth University. After graduating with a Bachelors in Psychology, she plans to get her PhD in Clinical Psychology. In her time as a research assistant, she has helped co-author two papers discussing Maslow's Theory of Self-Actualization as it relates to non-white non-western individuals and the notion of positive self-sacrifice. Kelly has presented the findings to the American Psychological Association and the Society for Humanistic Psychology. She has also

furthered developmental psychology research surrounding the functioning of family units when affected by COVID-19 and cancer. Broadly, Kelly's research interests involve pediatric psychology and looking into how non-white, especially Latin, people exist within and outside of the scope of established psychology. Kelly is motivated to broaden the scope of research to make psychology more applicable and accessible to all individuals. Outside of being a researcher, Kelly currently works as a Direct Support Professional to assist people with mental disabilities in reaching their personal goals and living their daily lives. In her personal time, she tutors children, cooks, bakes, and exercises so she can keep enjoying what she cooks and bakes.

**Alexx Schneebeck** is a graduate student of clinical psychology at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs. Alexx is a first-generation student and first generation American who is passionate about mental health and social justice. They are interested in research that investigates the intersections of psychology, marginalization, prejudice, and cognition. Once graduated, Alexx hopes to use their clinical skills in service of underserved populations and to give back to their community. They are currently working on a research study which examines the effects of stigmatization on neurocognitive functioning in houseless individuals.

## **Presentations Abstracts**

### **Keynote Address**

#### **Keynote Address: "So What Woke You Up? Critical Conversations about Anti-Racism with Humanistic Practitioners"**

*Theopia Jackson, PhD*

The purpose of this keynote talk is to critically engage the attendees in considering the positionality of humanistic psychology in this historical moment of our country; the nexus of the COVID-19 and racism pandemics. The increased exposure to and awareness of police brutality is a symptom of a greater dis-ease, a manifestation of the racism pandemic that has infected many institutions and fields, including psychology. Arthur C. Evans, Jr. (2020), APA CEO, stated, "We have to look at our role as a discipline in perpetuating some of the things that are being protested. That has to be a part of our commitment." In the spirit of the Afrikan concept of Sankofa, it is imperative that HP 'fetch' from its past in order to inform its responsibility in this moment and position its future. Inquiries to be explored are how 1) the dis-ease of systemic racism may manifest in humanistic psychology (we mirror the society we serve), 2) humanistic principles may (or may not) inform the anti-racism movement/charge (the medicine), and 3) to shore up future generations of humanistic practitioners to sustain them in this *woke state* and accountability in the face of humanity's psychospiritual threats?

## **Invited & Award Presentations**

### **Social Justice, Advocacy, and Psychology in Today's Climate**

*Apryl Alexander, PsyD*

Psychologists have been at the forefront of social justice and advocacy efforts. Through acknowledging of the importance of advocating for our clients (and ourselves), who often come from oppressed, marginalized, and vulnerable populations, the presence of advocacy and social justice efforts in psychology have increased and widely expanded. Further, recent national and global issues, such as the Black Lives Matter movement, protests at Standing Rock, and supporting Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), have pushed psychologists and psychology trainees to find spaces to engage in both advocacy and activism. The field of psychology has acknowledged the importance of advocating for communities and clients—often from marginalized and vulnerable populations—and the presence of advocacy and social justice efforts in psychology have grown and widely expanded. The APA's Benchmarks for clinical training defines advocacy as "actions targeting the impact of social, political, economic or cultural factors to promote change at the individual (client), institutional, and/or systems level" (American Psychological Association, 2011). Despite being identified as a benchmark, advocacy is not universally taught in graduate programs in psychology. Public impact scholarship is becoming a growing focus area. The presentation primarily centers on psychological practice, education, and research in advocacy, social justice, and public impact scholarship.

The presenter will discuss and share her experiences in client-based, legislative, and professional advocacy, as well as in public impact scholarship. She also has written op-eds for major publications, conducted interviews for local news affiliates, participated in a TEDx talk, and provided expert witness or legislative testimony. Further, the presenter will also discuss how they have modeled engagement in legislative advocacy and social justice to her students based on the current literature, which has led to student involvement in advocacy efforts. The aim of the presentation is to provide a research-informed model for incorporating advocacy and public engagement for student trainees and professionals.

### **What is it Like to Live as a Black Woman in Brazil? A Phenomenological Study**

*Elizabeth Brown V. Brisola, PhD, Guilherme Wykrota Tostes, MS, & Gabrielle Silva, BS*

This qualitative research aims to understand the impacts of racism on Black women's experiences in Brazil. It comprises a phenomenological analysis of material on websites and internet blogs written by women who identify as Black. A narrative synthesis was written, condensing the essential elements of these women's experiences. Results of this research describe how Black women in Brazil undergo a process of ongoing consciousness and acceptance of their blackness, gradually building a new identity as a Black woman. Elements include a dissatisfaction with their hair and skin color, turning down their Black identity, developing self-awareness, the process of recognition and acceptance of their blackness, and the building of a new identity incorporating their "blackhood." This later process happens especially through contact with other Black people and through the

exchange of experiences. Counseling services are not mentioned as support for their mental health. This is a sign for mental health professionals to be aware of the urgency of preparing professionals and of including discussions about concrete experiences of living daily with racism in order to offer adequate and truly empathic interventions.

### **Reflect...Revise...Relate and Respond....**

*Terri M. Davis, PhD*

The purpose of this invited presentation is to guide participants through a simple process of self-reflection and meaningful next steps connecting their experiences and stressors to the health and social injustice pandemics of 2020. I will focus on my experiences and decisions as an African American woman and invite participants to relate and contrast our lived experiences.

### **A Humanistic Examination of the Intersection of Race and Universal Suffering: The Impact of COVID-19**

*Nathaniel Granger, Jr., PsyD*

This presentation explores in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic the existential-humanistic perspectives of two relatively recent current events and the intersection of the two: Race and Universal Suffering. When looking at the issue of race, which has plagued America since her inception, we first would surmise that it is and has always been an issue of “Black” and “White.” Furthermore, recognizing there are different degrees of suffering and most are relevant to our individual plights, the grappling with the notion of suffering as a universal concept by reconciling an analysis of COVID-19 and its impact globally supports the idea that there is a degree of suffering that is universal. Since its inception in Wuhan, China late last year, the novel SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus that has caused the COVID-19 pandemic globally has both caused humans to come together in a type of shared suffering and also has paradoxically exacerbated divisions between People of Color and Whites as individuals have had to confront the existential givens of *Death, Freedom, Isolation and Meaninglessness*. Notwithstanding, when the *modus operandi* of a political system is divisive in its handling of both the pandemic and race relations, there is a suffering in which everyone must manage and sets a sense of precedence to foster further dialogue and inquiry into the many nuances of race and racism within our political system and speaks to the phenomenon of universal suffering relative to various races but most importantly the human race.

### **Black: More or Less than Human. The Compensation Resulting from the Invalidation of Black Humanity**

*Nathaniel Granger, Jr., PsyD*

This presentation explores the existential-humanistic perspectives of historical trauma and the long-term effects of oppression on Blacks. “Slavery” is this same woman born in a world that loudly proclaims its love of freedom and inscribes this love in its essential texts, a world

in which these same professors hold this woman a slave, hold her mother a slave, her father a slave, her daughter a slave, can when this woman peers back into the generations all she see is the enslaved. She can hope for more. She can imagine some future for her grandchildren. But when she dies, the world—which is really the only world she can ever know—ends. For this woman, enslavement is not a parable. It is damnation. It is the never-ending night. And the length of that night is most of our history. Never forget that we were in slave in this country longer than we have been free. Never forget that for 250 years Black people were born into chains—whole generations follow by more generations who knew nothing but chains (Coates, p.70). Because of the continued oppression imposed by systemic racism, Blacks have had to work twice as hard to get half as far than his White counterparts in obtaining his basic masculine privilege. Black humanity is invalidated and thus forces Blacks to be something other than ‘human’ (Black Lives Matter). This need for consistently getting it right is overcompensation for Post-traumatic Slave Syndrome resulting from generations of subjugation from structural racism. Here, we explore the consequences of invalidating the Black humanity and the ways Blacks must be something more or less than human.

### **Existential Psychology, White Privilege, and Racial Gaslighting**

*Louis Hoffman, PhD*

Privilege, including White privilege, is a pervasive reality in contemporary culture that has implications for therapists and clients as well as the social systems in which they live and function. Discussions of privilege often quickly become polarized. For example, teachers mentioning White privilege in their courses creates the likelihood of receiving lower course evaluations as compared to when this topic is not mentioned (Boatright-Horowitz & Soeung, 2009). Similarly, discussions of privilege tend to evoke defensiveness, anger, and guilt, which is increasingly associated with the concept of *White fragility*. Individuals who confront White privilege often are blamed or pathologized, which can be termed as *racial gaslighting*. This pathologizing of anything challenging White privilege is an aspect of White privilege itself. Therefore, various factors ranging from racial gaslighting to polarization make this a difficult topic to discuss, let alone address in a clinical context. This leads to this topic often being misunderstood and, at times, misused. In training settings, professors and supervisors may be likely to avoid this topic because of its sensitivity and the potential repercussions of discussing privilege, leaving many trainees and therapists unprepared when White privilege emerges in the therapy setting.

Given the pervasive reality of White privilege, it is important for therapists to develop a framework for understanding and working with it in clinical contexts. This presentation begins with a discussion of important topics, including White fragility, White guilt, and racial gaslighting. Next, the presentation considers existential contributions to the understanding of White privilege, including the importance of facing directly, genuineness, and polarization. Last, the presentation shifts to discussing applications in therapy for therapists and clients. For therapists, the presentation considers the therapists own White privilege and the implications of the client’s White privilege on the therapist. With regard to the client, considerations are given to working with clients impacted by White privilege and clients who have White privilege.

## **Using Nature Poetry for Psychological and Social Healing**

*Michael Moats, PsyD, Gina Subia Belton, PhD, Derrick Sebree, Jr., PsyD, & Louis Hoffman, PhD*

Nature poetry is a type of poetry that engages nature and the natural environment. In contemporary culture, many people are less engaged with nature. However, there is evidence that spending time in nature and connecting with the natural environment can be psychologically beneficial and healing. Similarly, research has demonstrated that poetry and other forms of expressive writing can be healing. This workshop examines the intersection of these forms of healing. We build from themes explored in *A Walk with Nature: Poetic Encounters that Nourish the Soul*, with applications to therapy and other healing contexts. In particular, we will consider how poetry can be beneficial for personal and social healing. With regard to personal healing, the use of nature poetry can be incorporated into therapy or therapists can encourage clients in writing and/or reading nature poetry as therapy homework or an encouraged reflective activity. For example, therapists may consider activities such as reading a nature poem a day or finding something beautiful in nature that can inspire a poem.

Nature poetry also can be used to engage social healing. Nature poetry seeks a connection with something beyond oneself, which can be an avenue to explore social and environmental healing. Additionally, nature poetry can be used to engage racial disparities in environmental justice as well as ways to use poetry for advocacy and activism.

## **“In the Wake”: Centering Black Studies and Existential Themes to Guide Anti-Racism in Humanistic Psychology**

*Zenobia Morrill, EdM, MA*

Black Studies scholar, Christina Sharpe (2016), describes “wake work” as a state of consciousness that allows for imagining new ways to live and rupturing a hegemonic episteme. This presentation highlights how this concept of being “in the wake” embodies core existential tenets and is uniquely positioned to inform anti-racism in Humanistic Psychology. Both Existential-Humanistic theory and Sharpe’s contributions to Black Studies coalesce around themes of contending with death (Becker, 1973) and constraints to freedom and subjectivities (de Beauvoir, 1962). However, concepts of liberation and questions about what it means to exist have been explored across different locations. For instance, Sharpe underscored symbolic death, referring to chattel slavery as “the wake” that has constituted Black life as proximate to death through commodification and “abjection from the realm of the human” (p. 14). Therefore, meaning making can be understood as brought about by enacting grief processes that allow for exposing and resisting injustice through “wake work.” These processes awaken, or bring about consciousness, but also take shape in stories that serve to counter the violence of abstraction and ontological negation of Black life. This presentation applies these concepts to consider that anti-racism involves being in relationship that is neither contingent upon states of subjection nor confounded by *mitwelt* (Tillich, 1957), driven by systems that excise and neglect holistic understandings of personhood. Taken together, this presentation is meant to engage with the field of Humanistic Psychology and its vision of anti-racism by centering Black Studies scholarship and the inherently existential themes that buttress its epistemological stance. Sharpe’s

“wake work” invites us to imagine not just possible ways-of-being and the awe that accompanies existence (Schneider, 2004), but the futures that make available collective liberation and the marveling of our interconnected humanity.

### **A Terror Management Theory Perspective on Prejudice, Hatred, and Intergroup Conflict and Strategies for Reducing the Hate (Lifetime Achievement Award Presentation)**

*Thomas Pyszczynski, PhD*

From the perspective of terror management theory (TMT), prejudice, hatred, and intergroup conflict are rooted in existential fear and the threats to the psychological structures that people use to protect themselves from these fears posed by people who are different from themselves. TMT posits that people manage anxiety associated with the inevitability of death by maintaining faith in their cultural worldviews, self-esteem, and close interpersonal attachments. Hostility toward those who are different results from threats to people’s worldviews posed by those whose worldviews are different from their own and the boost to self-esteem provided by viewing those who are different as inferior. Three decades of psychological research has supported these general ideas about the roots of prejudice by showing that prejudice is increased when thoughts of death are salient and that a lack of consensus for one’s worldview increases the accessibility of death-related thoughts. Such thoughts are especially salient this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the high levels of political divisiveness in our country. Research suggests that prejudice and hostility toward those who are different can be reduced by activating aspects of people’s worldviews that encourage compassion, a sense of shared humanity, and interdependence with all human beings.

### **Towards Holism in Psychology: Examining the Need for a Socioecological Justice Praxis as a Seventh Force**

*Derrick Seabee, Jr., PsyD*

The world of psychology is in a critical period, as we see the world engulfed in crises of climate and race. As critical theories emerge, the paradigm of psychology’s role within racial justice has been examined, with the overwhelming conclusion that racism is a public health crisis. As the coronavirus pandemic has revealed, racism plays a critical role in the survivability of the disease. The reasons for this are recognized as the products of systemic racism for generations, with particular emphasis on the impact of environmental racism, pollution, and injustice. Within this presentation, the presenter will emphasize a socioecological critical lens for psychologists. The links between systemic racism, environmental injustices, and the psychological ramifications will be explored. Climate change continues to be a pervasive, world-altering phenomenon. Understanding how climate racism plays a role in systemic oppression is critical for social justice and mental health. Social justice has become akin to a sixth force in psychological theory and practice. It is time for a socioecological justice praxis in psychology, a seventh force.



## **Title: Following the Beat of a Different Drum: The Embodied Humanistic Path That Transformed My Life and Work**

*Sandy Sela-Smith, PhD*

On March 3, 2020, Dr. Sandy Sela-Smith was about to begin a new path, one she had been sure for several years *would be coming soon*, but it had been illusive for far too long. She was convinced she would recognize the inner knowing that would lead to the next phase of her life; however, she had no idea a revelation of the new path, which was to dramatically change her life and her work, would come in the form that it did.

In early March, she went to the University of Colorado Anschutz hospital for a CT scan to see if her new doctor could determine what might be causing physical challenges that had also been going on for several years, and its cause was illusive as well. However, the results of the scan indicated she needed to enter the hospital for immediate surgery. On March 4<sup>th</sup>, while she was recovering in her hospital room, her surgeon told her he had removed a portion of her left lung that hosted a cancerous metastatic tumor. Sandy was informed she had 4<sup>th</sup>-stage pancreatic cancer, an almost certain death sentence in the medical world.

Dr. Sandy will present life transforming experiences over the next 8 months that could not have happened in a more mystical way. As she began walking this new path, her discoveries led to expansive learning that supported deepening, widening, and elevating her consciousness, as nothing else could have done to enhance her understanding of herself and of our world in disarray because of human separation from Self and others; Sela-Smith received the message that she had to learn about cancer “...from the inside out.” It led her to making a choice to follow a far more deeply embodied humanistic path despite her own resistance and fear of it, as she considered the meanings experts attached to that choice.

## **Multiracial People and Racism**

*Richard Talley, PhD*

This paper explores the effect of racial classifications on monoracial, multiracial individuals and the challenges and confusion caused by such racial classifications. Racism is the effect of racial classification and categorizations, separating people into categories by physical characteristics such as skin color, hair texture, and facial features into groups of superior and inferior groups of people. The effect of such racial classifications for individuals in the groups labeled as “inferior” can include traumatic stress resulting or affecting the health of individuals.

Information on race, racism, and traumatic stress was obtained through a literature review. The effect of the institutional, cultural, and individual application of the term race influences acts of racism on selected groups of individuals. Data for the paper was derived from the dissertation of the author (Richard Talley, PhD) and a workshop created to facilitate the healing of individuals affected or traumatized by racism. Humanistic psychology principles, including holding each person in positive regard, seeing them as whole, and creating a safe space for the workshop activity, were instrumental in facilitating the healing process. Expressive art therapy principles allowed each individual to freely express deeply held feelings in art, color, or design. Participants reported release of long held traumatic

feelings in the art process and a greater realization of their wounds which they were able to release through both art and conversation in a safe environment.

### **8 Things Graduate School Didn't Teach You About Anti-Racist Therapy that You Need to Know (Early Career Award Presentation)**

*Lisa Xochitl Vallejos, PhD*

Anti-racism is a commitment to actively oppose the multiple ways in which racism is enacted, including both personally and systemically. While the counseling and psychology professions have worked toward multiculturalism, there is a need for explicit work toward developing anti-racist systems. This foundational presentation will introduce participants to the 8 things they need to know to begin to build an anti-racist framework, practice and ways of being which are: identify development, socialization, decolonization, systems of oppression, how to identify systems using the 4 I's, white supremacism culture, intersectionality, and how to be a proper advocate.

### **The Unequal Economics of Meaning in Life: Addressing Discrimination and Implicit Racism in Our Mind-Manipulating System (Asynchronous Invited Presentation)**

*Joel Vos PhD MSc MA Cpsychol FHEA*

The COVID-19 pandemic has undermined some of the myths that we have been told for a long time about the economy and politics. That is, while in lock-down, many individuals seem to have started to realize that there is not such a thing as value-free politics. Each major decision during the pandemic seems to have been influenced by the meanings of the politicians and the economic forces behind them. In this lecture, I will explore which meanings are hidden in the dominant economic theories and political decisions, and how politicians have been able to hide how they impose their personal meanings onto society. Many people seem to have been taken hostage by the dominant economic-political perspectives while simultaneously defending its meanings. This is the Capitalist Life Syndrome, named after the Stockholm Syndrome, where hostages defend their hostage-takers and develop a psychological alliance with them. The consequences of this Capitalist Life Syndrome during the COVID-19 pandemic are poignant: A small group of individuals seems to be benefitting from the pandemic at the cost of many less powerful individuals. For example, individuals with a black or ethnic minority background seem to be disproportionately suffering, with more than double mortality rates and large-scale unemployment. How is it possible that most citizens seem to accept this situation, and that they do not go onto the streets to demand equal and fair treatment of all? The people seem to be taken hostage by the economic-political system: Individuals have internalized the meanings of the powerholders—their materialism, hedonism, and selfishness—and they seem to have lost their sense of self and their social and larger types of meaning in life. This mind-manipulation by powerholders is subtle, and this often only shows its true face implicitly, in implicit discrimination and implicit racism; it goes under-the-skin, pre-verbally—we intuit something is wrong, but words may fail. COVID-19 seems to have reinforced the Stockholm Syndrome, resulting in large-scale public support for fake news

and authoritarian actions for example by the federal police and army during the so-called Portland Riots. Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic and the societal uprisings in the summer of 2020 had the potential to enforce structural societal change, the mind manipulation techniques by powerholders seem to have undermined any hope for change. Or are there some simmers of hope? Yes, there are! Society is also gradually changing, albeit subtly, and beyond the control of powerholders. Research shows how, particularly in the pressure cooker of COVID-19, increasingly larger and larger numbers of individuals choose for a more meaningful society. People search for new meanings within, outside, against, and beyond our economic-political system. The mind-manipulation during COVID-19 is not the last answer! We can create a more meaningful society. Because everyone deserves a meaningful life. This lecture will be based on the book recently published by the University Professor's Press: Vos, J. (2020). *The Economics of Meaning in Life: From Capitalist Life Syndrome to Meaning-Oriented Society*.

## **Poster Presentations**

### **Experimental Effects of Location and Trash on Person Attractiveness**

*Colin D. M. Adams, Daniela G. Catarino, Tylor Ghaffari, & Alekxandria Schneeback*

Specific environmental contexts were manipulated to discover whether or not an effect existed on an observer's perceived attractiveness of a target individual. On Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk), 143 men and 159 women were randomly assigned to view one of four conditions in a 2 (city vs. nature) x 2 (trash vs. no trash) factorial design. The stimuli viewed by participants were digitally manipulated images displayed on Qualtrics. Likert-scale questionnaires were administered to measure perceived physical attractiveness of a woman in each image. A factorial ANOVA was conducted on the collected data to determine if there was a significant difference on perceived attraction between the conditions. No main effects for location or presence of trash were found. A significant interaction effect ( $p < .05$ ) was found, such that the woman in nature without the presence of trash was perceived as more attractive than with trash. Conversely, the woman in the city with trash was perceived as more attractive than without trash. Implications drawn from this study suggest that physical attraction of an individual may be affected by both location and the surrounding stimuli; it is also possible that the concepts of familiarity and comfort may have an effect on perceived attraction.

### **Wellbeing, Sense of Life, and Academic Motivation of University Students in Conditions of Distant Learning and Pandemic**

*Lada Alexandrova*

The study was designed to clarify the matter of wellbeing, meaning, and academic motivation in university students with and without disabilities who study psychology online in times of pandemic. The study was supported by the Russian Foundation for basic research project

#19-013-00904 “Development of personality in students with disability in conditions of inclusive distance learning”.

We based our study on ideas of Frankl (search for meaning), E. Deci and Ryan (motivation theory), Diener (wellbeing), and ideas of positive psychology in disability studies of Wehmeyer. We also took into account Lazarus and Folkman’s ideas of stress and cognitive appraisal. Our study was conducted among university students using Ika.si online resources for data collecting. We used the following measures: Subjective Vitality Scale (Vt-d) (Ryan&Frederich), SWLS Scale (Diener et al.), Noetic orientations test (Leontiev, 1992), Feelings of Uncertainty and Threat Scale adapted from Chen et al. (2015), Academic Motivation Questionnaire, based on self-determination theory. Seventy-six students participated in two diagnostic series, in the spring of 2019 and 2020, e.g., before and in the middle of the pandemic. 35 – students with various physical disabilities, 41- without disabilities.

We compared data of two groups (disabled and nondisabled students) at both stages of study using Mann–Whitney U-test and also compared them with themselves in 2019 and 2020 using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. We found no differences in wellbeing, subjective vitality, meaning, and academic motivation between them at the first stage (2019), but at the second stage, the differences arise as nondisabled students appeared to be more wounded by pandemic conditions than disabled ones. Using Spearman’s correlational analysis, we found strong interconnections between wellbeing, sense of life, and academic motivation at the first and second stages separately, and between these variables in both stages too. Moreover, feelings of uncertainty and threat were strongly interconnected with “today” (2020) and previous (2019) scores of students’ wellbeing, sense of life, and academic motivation. The data supports that sense of life, wellbeing, and academic motivation are relatively stable, do not significantly differ depending on students’ health conditions, and may be seen as protective factors against the distress caused by the pandemic.

## **The Portrayal of Drugs in Rap Music**

*Daniela G. Catarino*

In the present study, the top popular rap songs of every year were examined to understand the portrayal of drugs and how it has changed within rap music throughout the years. Extensive research has analyzed patterns of substance use at the population level, but less research has analyzed the prevalence of drugs and changes in drug portrayal on music, an important cultural factor that influences social interactions. A sample of top 105 rap song lyrics released from 1985 to 2019 were selected using Google. Lyrics were coded for presence of drugs, number of drug mentions, and the portrayal of drugs. A Pearson correlation showed that when examining drug portrayal and song year, song year was significantly positively correlated with drug portrayal ( $p < .05$ ). The regression model showed that when examining marijuana count, alcohol count, and year of the song, song year was the only predictor to uniquely predict the outcome variable of drug portrayal ( $p < .05$ ). The results from the current study show that drugs are being portrayed in a more positive light than earlier years, which may have an increased effect on drug use rates in the population. The drug attitudes displayed in popular media may be influencing attitudes and behaviors. Instead of focusing on changing individual negative attitudes, psychologists may

benefit from focusing on promoting healthy behaviors in popular media to change negative attitudes at the community level.

### **On Humanistic Psychology and Revolutionary Praxis**

*Rivers Fleming & Benjamin Ramey*

In response to growing national dialogue and conversations within the existential-humanistic (EH) psychology community about Black Lives Matter, racism, and systems of Western democracy, the presenters revisit a seminal article by Hoffman, Granger, Vallejos, & Moats (2016), published within the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, and use it as a framework to discuss developments and pitfalls in the movement for social liberation. In brief, we find Hoffman et al. (2016) and the wider EH community to be lacking insight into current social conditions and for their recommendations to therefore be flawed. In addition, we highlight that EH psychology as a whole is a set of attitudes and viewpoints which were developed in the context of the European Enlightenment; to put it bluntly, EH psychology was developed by straight white men for straight white men.

Hoffman et al. (2016) warn us that “it is important to channel the powerful emotions toward change instead of destruction” (p. 606). We ask: what is it that they and others in the EH community are afraid of being destroyed, if not a system founded on anti-Blackness and perpetuated by capitalist exploitation? We argue that destruction is the goal: destruction of white supremacy, of patriarchy, of capitalism, of queerphobia, of oppression and exploitation of all kinds. Exploitation is inherent to capitalist production, which feeds on labor and adopts sexual or racial difference as a tool for economic gain, as well as to the maintenance of Enlightenment humanism, that which is based in the foreclosure of Black subjectivity. We therefore argue that capitalism will continue to co-opt and commodify reformist movements that emerge from its milieu, and we offer an alternative, radical lens through which to view social liberation.

### **A Better World Is Possible: Psychology’s Responsibility to Abolition**

*Haleh Kanani, BA, & Hannah Klukoff, BA*

As the field of psychology begins to embrace its role in social justice efforts, we must ask if the changes for which we advocate are likely to move us towards the creation of long-lasting healing for individuals and communities or if they maintain a status quo of inequity. Many recent conversations surrounding racial justice have explicitly focused on mental health care and how it can be divorced from its current entanglement with policing, incarceration, and confinement. In this paper, we discuss the history of psychology’s relationship to confinement and explore the ways in which an abolitionist lens can help us achieve our greater goals as a helping profession. We recognize that the discipline of psychology undoubtedly has an important role to play in making our society safer, and we argue that that role is not in reforming the current system, but in abolishing it. By centering life-affirming practices, which are at the core of this work, psychology can utilize an abolitionist framework as a tool that can help us fulfill several of psychology’s core ethical standards: beneficence, non-maleficence, and respect for people’s rights and dignity.

## **The Myth of Lockstep Progression: Maslow's Misconstrued Theory**

*Christopher Latourrette, Johanna Guz Montgomery, Kelly Rios Santos, William Purrington, Rachel Creed, Alan Lankford, & Richard Bargdill*

Abraham Maslow's theory of Self-Actualizing individuals and the Hierarchy of Needs has often been misinterpreted in psychological research as being a pyramidal lockstep progression rather than holistic and dynamic. Maslow (1999) explains that each step only has to be partially fulfilled to move upward. We suggest that several of our eco-martyrs exhibit self-actualizing qualities while working to protect the environment. They self-actualize despite currently having many of their lower needs (basic and safety) threatened. We assert that our selected eco martyrs could be classified as self-actualizing individuals due to the fact that they miss or lack various portions of their lower needs but still represent multiple characteristics of Maslow's proposed Self-Actualizing individuals theory and exhibit both a full use of their potential talents and capacities.

## **Coping with COVID-19: Investigating COVID-19-Related Functional Impairment, Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms, and Coping Self-Efficacy in an Online Sample of Trauma-Exposed Adults**

*McKenzie Lockett, MA, Sander Koole, PhD, & Tom Pyszczynski, PhD*

Since President Trump declared a national emergency on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has been an unsettling disruption to feelings of safety and meaningfulness for many people. The stressors associated with the pandemic are difficult to avoid, as it is nearly impossible to watch the news, browse social media, or have a conversation without the pandemic being mentioned. However, it is unclear how these frequent reminders of the pandemic affect well-being, particularly among individuals who may be especially vulnerable to psychological stressors. Vulnerable individuals include individuals who are experiencing posttraumatic stress symptoms (PTSS) from a prior trauma, or individuals who are experiencing difficulties in functioning due to anxiety related to COVID-19. In a sample of 230 US-based, trauma-exposed adults, we investigate how PTSS and COVID-related functional impairment influence the effect of pandemic reminders on existential anxiety and coping self-efficacy (CSE). Although PTSS and COVID-related functional impairment were both strongly, positively associated with existential anxiety ( $\beta$ 's = .48 - .54), PTSS nor COVID-related functional impairment interacted with pandemic reminders to affect levels of existential anxiety. However, individuals high in PTSS reported significantly lower CSE for stopping unpleasant thoughts and social support seeking ( $p$ 's < .005), whereas individuals low in PTSS were not affected by pandemic reminders on CSE,  $p$ 's > .29. Similarly, individuals high in COVID-related functional impairment reported significantly lower CSE for problem-solving and stopping unpleasant thoughts ( $p$ 's < .04), whereas individuals low in COVID-related functional impairment did not respond to pandemic reminders with changes in CSE,  $p$ 's > .16. These findings suggest that individuals with mental health concerns such as PTSS and COVID-related functional impairment are likely to experience reductions in CSE when reminded of the pandemic. Our findings are some of the first to study how reminders of the pandemic can affect psychosocial functioning for individuals experiencing psychological symptoms.

## **Privilege and Oppression in Gender and Class**

*Kathryn Palm*

This poster briefly explains the ways that people are divided into five socially constructed categories and how they are then either oppressed or able to oppress others from a position of privilege according to how they identify themselves in these five categories. The five categories are class, race, gender, ability, and sexuality. People can generally be identified as high, middle, or low class, as the majority race or a minority race in a population, as male or female, as able-bodied or handicapped, and as having a heterosexual or homosexual orientation. According to the “matrix of domination,” the most privileged people in society are white, educated, Christian, male, wealthy, and heterosexual, and the most oppressed people in society are racial minorities, lower classes, nonreligious or religious minorities, female, low income, and homosexual. This poster focuses particularly on the socially constructed categories of gender and class, and examines both women and men as well as lower, middle, and upper classes. This poster examines gender and class oppression and privilege through the lens of contemporary society, a female college student’s life, and historically. This poster is titled “Privilege and Oppression in Gender and Class” and is relevant to the conference’s theme of anti-racism because it explores topics of equality, injustice, and discrimination.

## **Healing Social Cultural Wounds within the Black Community**

*Adeola Quintero*

This study examines the multigenerational transmission process of healing social cultural wounds within the black community. A comprehensive research analysis of slavery, racial trauma and racism along with the events surrounding their existence in our contemporary society are explored. Revealed throughout this framework are the theories literature has posited as solutions to racial wounds such as the ‘black self-concept’, ‘Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome,’ ‘Bowen’s Multigenerational Transmission Process,’ ‘racialized disease narrative,’ and the introduction of the “social cultural wounds’ concept. Fifteen recommendations are suggested for addressing the racial healing work within individual, institutional, and systemic healing. Current theory, models, scales assessment and guides that address the treatment of racial trauma are given as guides for clinicians to engage in deep cultural competence work.

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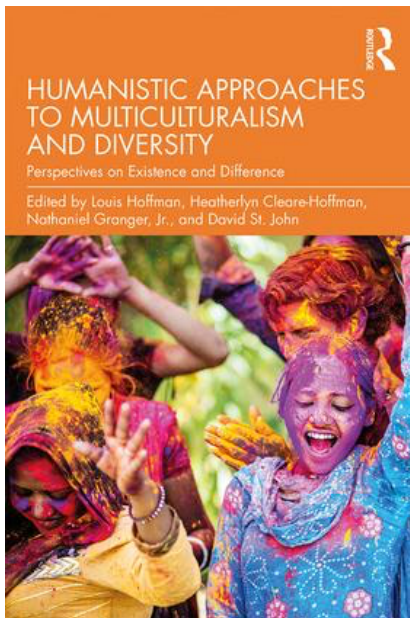


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- RMHCPA Listserv (with announcement of local events) and Facebook page
- Mentoring Network for students and early career counselors and therapists
- Coming Soon: The Rocky Mountain Humanistic Archives & Library

## **Getting Involved with the Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling and Psychological Association**

The Rocky Mountain Humanistic Counseling and Psychological Association is a growing organization and we are looking for individuals looking to get involved and help us grow. We have openings for people to serve on the board and many of our committees. We have opportunities for students to serve on the board and many committees as well. If you are interested in becoming involved with RMHCPA, please email the RMHCPA Executive Director, Dr. Louis Hoffman, at [lhoffman@rmhcpa.org](mailto:lhoffman@rmhcpa.org).

## **Why Support RMHCPA**

RMHCPA is in the process of developing the Rocky Mountain Humanistic and Existential Institute (RMHEI), which will include an archive, library, training center, and clinic with practicum sites. RMHEI will provide many additional membership benefits while serving the local community and the field of humanistic and existential psychology.

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