

# **DEI Developments in Mental Health Ethics, Law and Policy**

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*DEI Developments in Mental Health Ethics, Law and Policy* is a Bulletin published by the DEI Ethics and Legislation Workgroup of the UNC Department of Psychiatry. The articles, information, and opinions included are not the endorsements of either the DEI Ethics and Legislation Workgroup or the UNC Department of Psychiatry. The purpose of this Bulletin is to raise awareness of pressing DEI issues in mental health services and research. Please direct any comments, suggestions, future news items, or questions to [daniel\\_moseley@med.unc.edu](mailto:daniel_moseley@med.unc.edu).

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## **CODES OF ETHICS IN THE MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONS**

As a reminder of the professional commitment to DEI initiatives that are shared across mental health profession, and a resource to those who would like to revisit the shared professional norms that govern their professions, here is a list of the Codes of Ethics across mental health care professions. These Codes of Ethics provide explicit endorsements of DEI efforts and anti-racist values and standards of practice.

- Social Work: [National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics](#)
- Nursing: [American Nursing Association Code of Ethics](#)
- Psychological Counseling: [ACA Code of Ethics](#) and the [NBCC Code of Ethics](#)
- Child and Adolescent Psychiatry: [AACAP Code of Ethics](#)
- Psychiatry: [APA Medical Ethics Resources](#)

## **APA AND AACAP EFFORTS TO PROMOTE DEI**

Members of the American Psychiatric Association and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry can promote their DEI efforts by serving on active committees, working groups and task forces.

AACAP Committees include: Advocacy, Autism and Intellectual Disability, Diversity and Culture, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Ethics, Global Mental Health and International Relations, HIV, Indigenous Native Child and Adolescent, Religion and Spirituality, Rural Psychiatry, and Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The AACAP also has a listserv for the following groups to allow for exchange of thought and networking: Climate Change and Mental Health, College Mental Health, Complementary and Integrative Medicine, Correctional Psychiatrists, Disaster Mental Health, Early Career

Psychiatrists, Global Mental Health, MOC Issues, Psychiatric Leadership and Entrepreneurship, Psychotherapy, Religion Spirituality and Psychiatry, Resident-Fellow Members, Rural Psychiatrists, State Hospital Psychiatrists, Treating Persons with MR/Dev Disabilities, VA Psychiatrists.

The APA has an Underrepresented Minorities Caucus that consists of the following groups: American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian, Asian-American, Black, Hispanic, IMG International Medical Graduates, LGBTQ+, and Women

The APA also has a structural racism task force: The APA Board of Trustees **Structural Racism Accountability Committee** (SRAC) was formed in 2021 to ensure the recommendations of the 2020-2021 APA Presidential Task Force to Address Structural Racism Throughout Psychiatry (TFSR) are carried out.

The Charge of the Task Force: focusing on organized psychiatry, psychiatrists, psychiatric trainees, psychiatric patients, and others who work to serve psychiatric patients, the Task Force is initially charged with:

1. Providing education and resources on the APA's and psychiatry's history regarding structural racism;
2. Explaining the current impact of structural racism on the mental health of our patients and colleagues;
3. Developing achievable and actionable recommendations for change to eliminate structural racism in the APA and psychiatry now and in the future;
4. Providing reports with specific recommendations for achievable actions to the APA Board of Trustees at each of its meetings through May 2021; and
5. Monitoring the implementation of tasks 1-4.

The Task Force will initially focus on anti-Black racism. They also have a section on Diversity and Health Equity:

Vision: APA members represent a diverse and culturally responsive community of psychiatrists that promote mental health equity through the provision of quality mental health care to all persons regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religious orientation, and/or disability status.

Core Values: equity, inclusion, respect, mentorship, and collaboration.

Mission: Developing programs and resources to bring awareness to and support the needs of evolving, diverse, underrepresented, and underserved patient populations. Implementing strategies to enrich the diverse representation of psychiatrists within the APA. Collaborating across multiple medical and non-medical sectors to end disparities in mental health care

## DEVELOPMENTS IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

*Psychiatric Services* introduces new columns on “Lived Experience Inclusion and Leadership” and “Racism and Mental Health Equity”.

“Racial Disparities in Clinical Outcomes of Veterans Affairs Residential PTSD Treatment Between Black and White Veterans” Georgina Gross, Noelle Smith, et. al., *Psychiatric Services* 9 Aug 2021

<https://ps.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ps.202000783>

Results and Conclusions: “Black veterans experienced attenuated PTSD symptom reduction during treatment as well as greater depression symptom recurrence 4 months after discharge, relative to White veterans.... This study adds to the body of literature that has documented poorer treatment outcomes for Black compared with White veterans with PTSD. Although both Black and White veterans had an overall reduction in symptoms, future research should focus on understanding the causes, mechanisms, and potential solutions to reduce racial disparities in mental health treatment.”

“Accountability in Promoting Representation of Historically Marginalized Racial and Ethnic Populations in the Eating Disorders Field: A Call to Action” Neha Goel, Karen Jennings Mathis, et al., *The International Journal of Eating Disorders*. First published: 29 January 2022

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/eat.23682>

Abstract: Promoting representation of historically marginalized racial and ethnic populations in the eating disorders (EDs) field among professionals and the populations studied and served has long been discussed, with limited progress. This may be due to a reinforcing feedback loop in which individuals from dominant cultures conduct research and deliver treatment, participate in research, and receive diagnoses and treatment. This insularity maintains underrepresentation: EDs in historically marginalized populations are understudied, undetected, and undertreated. An Early Career Investigators Workshop generated recommendations for change that were not inherently novel but made apparent that *accountability* is missing. This paper serves as a call to action to spearhead a paradigm shift from equality to *equity* in the ED field. We provide a theoretical framework, suggest ways to disrupt the feedback loop, and summarize actionable steps to increase accountability in ED leadership and research toward enhancing racial/ethnic justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI). These actionable steps are outlined in the service of challenging our field to reflect the diversity of our global community. We must develop and implement measurable metrics to assess our progress toward increasing diversity of underrepresented racial/ethnic groups and to address JEDI issues in our providers, patients, and research participants.

## BOMB THREATS TO NCCU AND OTHER HBCUS

NCCU was the target of a bomb threat along with other Historically Black Colleges and Universities. These threats are discussed in the following articles.

“‘You’re Not Safe as a Black Person’: New Round of Bomb Threats Rattle HBCUs.” Oyin Adedoyin, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 31, 2022.

Update: multiple bomb threats have occurred against HBCUs.

“‘It is Scary, It is Horrifying’: Bomb Threats Made to More than a Dozen HBCUs Over 2 Days” Ryan Miller and Claire Thorton, *USA Today*, Published Feb. 1., 2022; Updated Feb. 2, 2022.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2022/02/01/hbcu-bomb-threats-howard-morgan-state/9295960002/>

## **TRANSGENDER AND LGBTQ ISSUES**

Lt. Gov. Robinson attempts to ban LGBTQ books in Orange County Public Schools:

“Lt. Gov. Robinson Wants ‘Sexually Explicit’ LGBTQ-Themed Books Removed from NC Schools” Bryan Mims, *WRAL*, First Posted Oct. 10, 2021; Updated Oct. 12, 2021.

<https://www.wral.com/you-deserve-better-lawmakers-speak-out-against-lt-gov-robinson-s-homophobic-comments/19919282/>

However, the Orange County Board of Education voted to keep the LGBTQ books:

“Despite Complaint, 3 LGBTQ Books to Remain at Libraries Across Orange County High Schools” *WRAL* Posted Jan. 31, 2022 9:42pm EST; Updated January 31, 2022 11:00pm EST

<https://www.wral.com/despite-complaint-3-lgbtq-books-to-remain-at-libraries-across-orange-county-high-schools/20109333/>

The controversy over how to provide the best care for transgender adolescents is discussed here:

“In Arkansas, Trans Teens Await an Uncertain Future”, Sabrina Imbler, *The New York Times*, Jan. 18, 2022.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/18/health/transgender-adolescents-arkansas.html>

LGBTQ Students at Brigham Young University Welcome Federal Action on Discrimination:

“‘I Want to Believe’: At BYU, Opponents of Rules on Same-Sex Couples Welcome Federal Action” Sahalie Donaldson, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Jan. 27, 2022.

## **DEI AWARDS**

Professor Nate Thomas earns the 2022 Unsung Hero Award for his commitment and contributions to DEI. Congratulations, Dr. Thomas!!

<https://www.med.unc.edu/psych/dr-nate-thomas-recipient-of-the-2022-unsung-hero-award-for-his-commitment-to-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/>

The nominations for 2022 UNC Diversity Awards are underway!

<https://diversity.unc.edu/programs/awards/>

## DEI OFFICE HOURS

The DEI Training and Education Subcommittee is excited to bring in 2022 with DEI virtual office hours. Have you wondered how to integrate DEI topics into your teaching? research? supervision? mentoring? interpersonal interactions? clinical work? lab meetings? personal growth? other? If so, then we would like to support your efforts by providing a safe space to discuss, help you identify potential resources, and develop a plan to build the changes that you are seeking.

We currently have two times per week: Mondays from 9 - 10 with Dr. Scott Schwartz ([scott\\_schwartz@med.unc.edu](mailto:scott_schwartz@med.unc.edu)) and Fridays from 3 to 4 with Dr. Zoe McElligott ([zoemce@email.unc.edu](mailto:zoemce@email.unc.edu)). For scheduling, please email Dr. Schwartz or Dr. McElligott to secure your slot and receive a link for the meeting. If these times are not convenient, we will make every effort to answer questions offline or schedule another time to meet.

Although you are welcome to attend either office hour, Dr. Schwartz and Dr. McElligott each have unique experiences which may fit your needs best. Dr. Schwartz is a professor in the Department of Psychiatry with experience in both academic and applied settings integrating DEI into teaching, supervision, and clinical work. He has taught classes on multicultural issues in psychology and facilitated workshops on increasing awareness. Dr. McElligott is an assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry (with a secondary appointment in the Department of Pharmacology) and at the Bowles Center for Alcohol Studies where she leads a lab conducting basic science research. She teaches in the graduate programs in Neuroscience, Pharmacology, and Cell Biology and Physiology. She has a passion for building strong, diverse teams and creating learning environments where everyone feels supported and encouraged. She has completed mentoring courses and training with an emphasis towards increasing diversity, visibility, and equity.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

February is Black History Month! In honor of Black History, UNC-CH Digital and Lifelong Learning presents: Mike Wiley Productions – Blood Done Sign My Name. Sunday, February 27, 2022, 3:00-5:00pm at the Friday Conference Center. Information and registration available below:

[https://dll.unc.edu/community-programs/black-history-month-2022/?utm\\_source=UNC+Friday+Center&utm\\_campaign=0f91531cb9-Daytime+Class+Fall+2017+Email+1\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_688ecff170-0f91531cb9-237421085](https://dll.unc.edu/community-programs/black-history-month-2022/?utm_source=UNC+Friday+Center&utm_campaign=0f91531cb9-Daytime+Class+Fall+2017+Email+1_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_688ecff170-0f91531cb9-237421085)

The Carolina Seminar on Philosophy, Ethics and Mental Health is meeting on Zoom on the following dates, from 6:00-7:30pm. See the links below for information and about registration.

- Professor Tom Dougherty (UNC, Department of Philosophy) will discuss “The Virtue of Being Non-Judgmental” on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. <https://bioethics.unc.edu/talk/the-virtue-of-being-nonjudgmental/>

- Professor Felipe DeBrigard (Duke, Department of Philosophy) will discuss “Moral Memories and the Self” on March 16<sup>th</sup>. <https://bioethics.unc.edu/talk/moral-memories-and-the-self/>

The American Society for Bioethics and Humanities is now accepting proposals for inclusion in the ASBH 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. Submissions are due on March 4, 2022.  
<https://asbh.org/annual-meeting/bioethics-humanities-meeting>