

PSI CHI NEWSLETTER: A FOCUS ON DIVERSITY



The annual publication of the UW - Madison Chapter of Psi Chi, the international Honor Society in Psychology

*Celebrating the 80th Year
of Psi Chi at the
University of Wisconsin-
Madison*

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LETTER FROM PSI CHI

Dear readers,

Over the past few years, throughout the United States there has been a great acknowledgement of disparities in public policy and social justice. The education of all individuals on these disparities not only in the field of Psychology, but outside can greatly improve the quality of life for all citizens. This edition will focus on diversity within the Psychology field and the Department of Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

On behalf of the UW-Madison Chapter of Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology, I am honored to present the 9th edition of our Newsletter. We hope that you take the knowledge learned in this newsletter and go out into the World with a knack for change and an acknowledgement of all of that we can accomplish through research.

On, Wisconsin!

Elizabeth Scott

Newsletter Chair of Psi Chi, UW-Madison Chapter



Acknowledgement

We would like to express our sincerest gratitude for Newsletter Committee members for their hard work and thoughtful articles. We would also like to thank all of the professors and research assistants that shared their professional experience in our interviews. This year marks the 80th anniversary of the founding of the University of Wisconsin-Madison chapter of the Psi Chi Honor Society.

Mental Health Disparities

By Elizabeth Scott

Introduction

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Psychology Department is molding the minds of the future of the psychology profession. It is imperative that we learn about disparities in mental health in diagnosis and treatment, so when we are in the position to be diagnosing and treating we are able to look out for others and fight poor mental health outcomes. As the next generation of mental health professionals, it is imperative that not only the past, but the present are equally examined for disparities in order to increase treatment outcomes in the future. Through this delve into the history and the current causes of disparities, a positive outlook on the future of psychology can be achieved.

The History of Mental Health Disparities

In the United States, there has been a long tradition of using minority groups as experimental pawns instead of the basis of research for real care and treatment. We look to famous studies such as the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, in which 600 Black men were told they were being treated for syphilis and other ailments, but instead were not offered treatment. In total, 128 participants died and 40 wives and 19 children were then infected with syphilis. It created a great stigma for not only the Tuskegee community, but also for all Black Americans. This study caused a great lack of trust between minorities and research conducted by the medical field.

Another study demonstrating unethical measures on a vulnerable population is a famous study that tortured orphans. In 1907, using a St. Vincent's Home for orphans, children were injected with tuberculin in their eyes. Almost all of the children went blind with extremely painful side effects. Their vulnerability as children and having low socioeconomic status was preyed upon, further pointing towards the exploitation of minority groups throughout the history of the United States by medical professionals.

These two studies are just a few of the many unethical federally funded research projects that should not be forgotten when examining the current disparities in mental health services. Racial minorities and those of low socioeconomic status are historically vulnerable to poor treatment outcomes. A focus on these disparities can help inform decisions in mental health care moving forward.

Where do these deficits exist?

Even today we see the effects of these studies because minority groups continue to participate in federally funded research less than whites. The main cause of this disparity is mistrust. Unfortunately, this can cause major lapses in health care for minorities including the fact that in the treatment of COVID-19 we have seen poorer health outcomes for Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian and Alaska Native individuals throughout America.

The historical context of mental health care and health care guides us into the disparities we see today in mental health status among Americans. There are discrepancies in access, use and quality of care. Based on the history of minorities being treated poorly in the healthcare system, it is not uncommon for individuals to not want to seek treatment or if they do seek treatment, receive poor quality of care. There is even evidence that minority groups are overrepresented in certain disorders. For example, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and Black Americans are less likely to have official diagnoses for mental disorders than do white Americans. Yet, American Indians are more likely than others to be diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and alcohol dependence. Further, Black Americans are more likely than white Americans to be diagnosed with schizophrenia. These deficits across a wide range of individuals must be examined in order to improve these treatment differences.

Why do these discrepancies still exist?

There is still a presence of lower access to quality care in areas that are overrepresented by minorities. This could be causing individuals to not get treated in a timely manner. Mental health care is an important aspect for all individuals and care should be evenly distributed throughout the country. Also, minorities are underrepresented throughout the psychology field. This could be contributing to underlying beliefs in treatment. This is evidenced by clinicians inability to read severity of disorders in minorities. The differences in diagnoses of certain disorders, like schizophrenia in Black Americans could be caused by the underrepresentation of Black Americans in the field of psychiatry.

Looking To The Future

Studies recognized in the American Journal of Psychiatry have found no significant progress decreasing the disparities recognized in psychiatric care. Fortunately, the future of mental health care rests in the hands of the current students in the field. The change needed in the future can be brought about by the current generation. There is low representation of minority populations in the mental health care workforce, even lower than in healthcare. In the future, if we are able to see more representation of minority populations in mental health care, we can see significant improvement in mental health services because of an increase in focused treatment and decreases of issues of trust as well as cultural and language barriers. In addition, research is key to good treatment outcomes. Moving forward, an increase in research on how treatments affect people differently, could greatly improve treatment outcomes for all. Most importantly, mental health care workers' increased awareness of these disparities can help the profession as a whole move in a positive direction that has not been seen in the past.



An Interview with Markus Brauer

By Jassia Ahmad

I sat down with Professor Markus Brauer, director of the Brauer Group Lab: a social psychology lab that focuses on group phenomena and issues of diversity, inclusion, and group norms. Our interview discussed topics such as Professor Brauer's background, diversity and inclusion, and advice Professor Brauer has for undergraduate students,

Note: this interview has been edited for concision and clarity.

Jassia Ahmad: What is your educational background?

Markus Brauer: I got my undergraduate degree in psychology in France, and then realized I wanted to get high-quality graduate training, which would actually be in the United States. I then got a full ride to the University of Colorado Boulder, which is where I got my Ph.D. After that, I moved back to France for 16 years, and now I'm here at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Ahmad: What experiences and interests led you to this specific field?

Brauer: I would say there were multiple. I grew up in a household where trusting everyone in a tolerant, respectful, and Inclusive way was the absolute norm. That's how I saw my parents always treat other people. That's why I was so incredibly surprised when I grew up and saw discrimination happening out in the world.

Ahmad: So you were in your own bubble before?

Brauer: Yes, exactly. I couldn't even understand it. You assume that a person has a certain trait just because they belong to a specific group? I found this outrageous and fundamentally unfair. So, I wanted to study the psychological mechanisms that contribute to this kind of prejudice and discrimination with the hopes to be able to reduce it. The second thing is growing up in Germany, and the history of how 6 million Jews died in the Holocaust. This was present and taught to me, so again I wanted to understand why people do these kinds of horrible things.

Ahmad: So what type of research does your lab do, and what's your favorite part?

Brauer: We do basic research on fundamental psychological processes related to stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, etc. We try to understand basic processes related to the human mind and how that then translates to perceptions of other people, members of other social groups then behaviors towards them. We also have applied research to help solve societal problems. We try to figure out how can we use all the knowledge we have acquired about these basic processes and use it to reduce discrimination and make the world a better place.

My favorite part is probably designing experiments, basically coming up with new ideas to promote inclusion and reduce discrimination. I like the creative aspect of the job; it's not a routine job. I also really enjoy working with students, being surrounded by all these young people who have great new ideas and ask questions. I am permanently intellectually challenged. It is incredibly gratifying and always new.

Ahmad: What was the most challenging part of getting to where you are today?

Brauer: Two things. One was getting through grad school. You work on primarily one topic, and you do not have many things to say. It's really an exercise of endurance. You have to hang in there and not give up on the way. The second tough part was getting grants. In order to get work done, you need to get grants. There were several years where I just wrote one grant proposal after another and none of them got funded, and it was very frustrating.

Ahmad: Do you have any advice for undergraduates in general and also those looking to pursue social psychology?

Brauer: So many people in my life advised against me pursuing social psychology, but I did it anyway and now I'm a university professor. Persist and follow your passion, but also be willing to put in the hours to be successful. If you really feel passionate about something you should be able to put in the hours to be successful.

Also, take a lot of time to really figure out what you want to do in life. I have many friends who realized in their 30s and 40s that they really did not enjoy what they were doing in life. When I hear these people's life stories, the common theme is that when they were younger, they did not really think about what they wanted to do. Do as many internships as you can and talk to as many people as you can. Ask people how they spend their day and then ask yourself are these the kinds of activities I enjoy doing?

Ahmad: Regarding diversity and inclusion, what do diversity, equality, and inclusion specifically mean to you?

Brauer: To me, they mean creating an environment where everybody, regardless of their background, can strive and succeed. Creating an environment where everybody feels welcomed, accepted and respected.

Ahmad: What advice would you give students that are struggling with diversity and inclusion on campus or even in research labs?

Brauer: Making expectations about how members of the lab should be treating one another explicitly is very important. Also, labs should be talking about this topic every now and then; they should have an open conversation maybe once or twice a year to see if all members feel respected.

Regarding students in general, first of all, speaking up is okay when things make you feel uncomfortable; letting things go often means they perpetuate and become the norm. Secondly, with the "sense of belonging" piece for students, it is incredibly tough. However, most students do not make friends in the classroom, and it is important to be aware of that. To me, it seems that the places you do make friends are in areas of common interests like clubs. In these kinds of settings, you end up doing things like driving together for two hours to do a volunteer project, and then these group memberships and identities begin to play less of a role.

WEIRD Populations and Cross-Cultural Mental Health Services

By Lauren Smith

It is no secret that mental health services tend to be designed with a focus on a particular population. Psychological Research, and thus the data we use in designing mental health treatments, is disproportionately conducted with participants from WEIRD societies (societies that are western, educated, industrialized, rich and demographic). The American Psychological Association reports that approximately 80% of participants in psychological studies are from WEIRD societies, although people from WEIRD societies only represent about 12% of the world's population (Azar, 2010).

Further, a disproportionate amount of those WEIRD participants are college undergraduate students. For example, it has been reported that 67% of American participants in psychological studies are undergraduate college students that are studying psychology (Grohol, 2010). Previous research has also identified that there is cross-cultural variability in the results of psychological experiments. For example, culture even affects a mental phenomenon as universal as memory (Kupferschmidt, 2019). Further, participants from the WEIRD societies that are oversampled in research are particularly unrepresentative of other cultures and populations (Henrich et al., 2010). In other words, much of what we know about psychology cannot necessarily be generalized to non-WEIRD populations.

This lack of cross-cultural research impacts mental health professionals' abilities to effectively treat patients. Although this knowledge gap is becoming more recognized within the psychology field, there is still a gap in research and thus understanding of non-WEIRD societies. For example, it has been reported that about 92% of papers on developmental psychology highlighted participants from Europe or English-speaking countries in both 2015 and 2008 (Kupferschmidt, 2019).

In today's increasingly globalized world, even mental health professionals in WEIRD societies have an increasing proportion of patients that are from different ethnocultural backgrounds (Marsella, 2011). Thus, it is increasingly important that research aims to improve our understanding of cross-cultural variations in psychological experience. Further, this must be applied to understanding how professionals can more effectively provide treatment to patients with varying ethnocultural backgrounds.

Beyond the research that has been done up to this point mainly focusing on WEIRD populations (and thus mainly finding WEIRD results), another factor of importance is the competence of mental health providers to treat diverse populations. According to the APA, cultural competency is one of the most critical issues for mental health providers that work with a culturally diverse patient base (Marsella, 2011). Cultural competency requires that providers do not assume Western culture or psychology to be the norm. Instead, they must remain aware that what is considered normality is culturally dependent. In their practices, especially when making diagnoses or deciding on a course of treatment, practitioners must have a sufficient understanding of a patient's background to understand how it may impact their treatment. In summary, the psychology field needs more cross-cultural research and can benefit from an emphasis on promoting cultural competency in education for providers.

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An Interview with Megan Haas

By Amruthaa Jayakumar

What was the motivation for psi chi to start this new position?

Megan: Many clubs on campus have been encouraged to enact a position dedicated to promoting diversity & inclusion on campus. Diversity & inclusion is especially relevant in psychology, as psychology aims to understand human behavior. It is crucial to include diversity issues in psychology research and practices because different identities in race and culture shape individuals' worldview and human behavior overall. It was about time Psi Chi created this position. I am so honored to be the first person to serve as the Diversity & Inclusion Chair in Psi Chi, an organization dedicated to mental health and the psychology field.



What does this position entail? What matters does the chair cover? What type of events does this chair organize?

Megan: The Diversity & Inclusion Chair actively promotes an open and inclusive atmosphere of all members, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that BIPOC students are welcomed and valued. The Chair is also tasked with increasing the diversity of Psi Chi's membership and leadership through outreach and collaboration with other campus clubs. The core values promoted by this Chair are equity, diversity, and inclusion.

If there is ever a matter regarding inclusion within Psi Chi, I serve as the individual that members can voice any concern or issues they may be feeling. I work to create a safe and welcoming environment, so every member knows they can come to me with any problems they may be having regarding diversity, feeling included, or anything else they might be struggling with.

In regard to events, I help organize at least one event a semester centered around issues of diversity and inclusion. I work with other student organizations, such as the Multicultural Student Center and LGBTCC, to create outreach events for the rest of the campus to promote an inclusive atmosphere at UW.

What is your view on the importance of a diversity and inclusion position for the organization?

Megan: Personally, I was surprised to hear that many of the UW campus orgs were just starting to enact a diversity and inclusion chair position within their exec boards. I believe this position is highly crucial for the success of any organization, as every member should feel welcomed and included regardless of the background they come from. Especially when the majority of our events are centered around discussing issues within the mental health field, it is crucial to have different perspectives present and people from every background to share their views, so we can learn and grow from one another.

Do you see any difference this position has brought about thus far within the organization?

Megan: I see a difference. Already, we have had events dedicated to discussing diversity and inclusion this year, and it has sparked some of the most exciting and vital discussions we have had as a club. Last semester, one of our Psych Talks was with the UWPD and University Health Services Mental Health team. We talked about the disparities within mental health, and the lack of resources minority groups have when they struggle with mental health. It was imperative to talk about, and I am thrilled we are incorporating these types of conversations within our Psych Talks and organization as a whole. I also feel like many members, especially new members, are greeted with a warm welcome of inclusion regardless of if they identify with the BIPOC community or not because they know that if there were ever any issues at all, there is a designated person who is there to listen and be there.

What has been accomplished so far in this position.

Megan: As I mentioned earlier, I helped incorporate discussing the topic of diversity and inclusion on campus within our UWPD and UHS Mental Health Service Team Psych Talk, which was super interesting and influential. I have posted various Instagram posts on the Psi Chi Instagram account regarding diversity and inclusion. For example, on Thanksgiving, I posted content including some facts about how 1.3% of the US population identifies as Native American or Alaskan Native. Of that group, over 19% reported having a mental illness in the past year. That's close to a million people. So I help shine a light on these critical issues within the mental health field and the world in general. This semester, I am collaborating with another campus org, it's still in the works, but I have reached out to the MannMukti South Asian mental health org on campus and the QTPOC org. We are going to create a joint event dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusion on campus. I am excited because it'll bring so many different people together to talk about such vital issues.

Looking forward, what do you hope this position and/or future chairs will help to fulfill?

Megan: Looking forward, I hope this position continues to shed light on important issues such as the disparities within the mental health field. It is a prominent issue, and we should always have had a position dedicated to discussing equity, diversity, and inclusion at UW. I hope this position also creates a set event every semester where we continue to collaborate with other orgs and help contribute to a welcoming atmosphere at UW.

What does such a position mean for the organization moving forward

Megan: I believe this position means that Psi Chi will make a concerted effort now and in the future, to assure every member feels valued and welcomed regardless of their background. It means that Psi Chi is an ally with the BIPOC community and every minority group. We welcome everyone to join our club regardless of their background or how they identify.

Diversity Resources

The Department of Psychology offers a list of resources within the department and around campus. The resources presented here can be found on the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Psychology website.

Campus Resources:

- Multicultural Student Center
- Office for Equity and Diversity
- International Student Services
- McBurney Disability Resource Center
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Center for Cultural Enrichment (UW Housing)
- Transfer Transition Program
- University Health Services
- Dean of Student Office
- University Police
- Accessible Circulator Shuttle Pilot
- Office of Childcare and Family Resources

"We believe that the pursuit of equity, diversity and inclusion is a moral obligation and is essential to living our values, achieving our goals and building a stronger Department. We are committed to diversity both as an end in itself, and also because we are convinced that it helps us achieve our main goals, namely maximizing student learning, generating cutting-edge research, training the next generation of scientists, and serving our communities." — Chair of the Department of Psychology

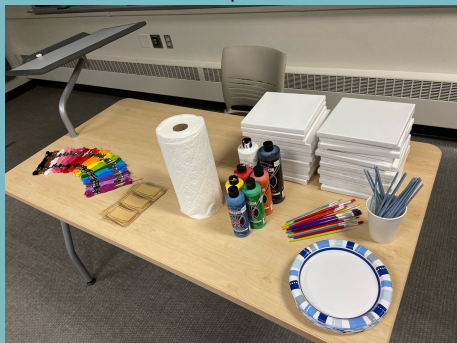


Highlights From the Year

Psych Talks

This year we heard talks from Mark Koranda, Paula Niedenthal, the UWPD, Katherine Schaumberg, Ed Hubbard, and Tara Wilhelmi.

We introduced new topics of diversity through our psych talks in learning about mental health disparities on Campus.



Fundraising NAMI walk

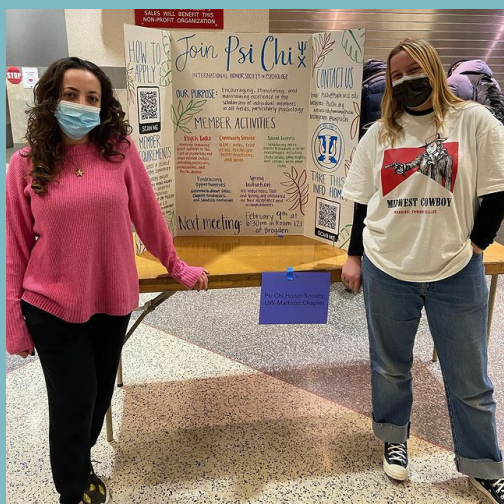
Salads Up Fundraiser

Greenbush Donuts

Porchlight Drive

Match Madness Food Drive

Out of the Darkness Walk



Social Events

We played games and ate lots of snacks. We studied together for finals and we watched movies while making art.



Professional Series

This year we introduced a professionalism series that offered a resume and cover letter workshop for our members.



Newsletter Committee

We would like to express our sincerest gratitude for Newsletter Committee members for their hard work and perseverance throughout the year. Everyone was very determined to make the 9th edition of the Psi Chi newsletter a success. Thank you to all those that contributed to the 2022 Psi Chi Newsletter. This issue would not have been possible without your help. Your continued hard work and commitment to creating a safe space on our campus for all students is truly inspiring.

Amruthaa Jayakumar



AMRUTHAA IS A JUNIOR FROM ABU DHABI, UAE. HER MAJORS ARE PSYCHOLOGY AND LEGAL STUDIES WITH A CERTIFICATE IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Jassia Ahmad



JASSIA'S MAJOR IS PSYCHOLOGY WITH A CERTIFICATE IN DISABILITY RIGHTS AND SERVICE AND AN ART STUDIO CERTIFICATE

Lauren Smith



LAUREN SMITH IS A JUNIOR DOUBLE MAJORING IN PSYCHOLOGY AND ECONOMICS. SHE HAS BEEN A RESEARCH ASSISTANT IN PROFESSOR MARTHA ALIBALI'S COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION LAB SINCE HER SOPHOMORE YEAR AND IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON DESIGNING HER SENIOR THESIS. HER RESEARCH INVESTIGATES CHILDREN'S LEARNING OF MATHEMATICS.

About Psi Chi

Psi Chi is the international Honor Society in Psychology, founded in 1929 for the purpose of encouraging, stimulating, and maintaining excellence in scholarship, and advancing the science of psychology. The mission of Psi Chi is to produce a well-educated, ethical and socially responsible member committed to contributing to the science and profession of psychology and to society in general.

The UW-Madison Chapter offers practical experience to members through events designed to enhance the regular curriculum. At monthly member meetings, we discuss chapter affairs and service opportunities, and hear from guest speakers in the field.

What to expect as a member of Psi Chi...

- Opportunities to network with faculty and other students interested in psychology during Psych Talks
- Inclusion into a close-knit group of students who share common interests
- International recognition for academic excellence in psychology
- Access to numerous scholarship opportunities
- Ability to gain leadership skills as a Psi Chi Board Member
- New: Professional help with resumes and cover letters

Apply...

Psi Chi accepts applications for new members bi-annually in the fall and spring semesters. Membership is open to students that meet the qualifications and are making the study of psychology one of their major interests. Please see our website and social media for more details!

Social Media

Instagram: UWPsiChi

PSI CHI EXECUTIVE BOARD



HALLE HUTCHINSON

Halle Hutchinson is the President of Psi Chi for 2021-2022. Her pronouns are She/her/hers and she will be graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2022 with a degree in Psychology.

ISABEL VAYSER

Isabel Vayser is the Vice President of Psi Chi for 2021-2022. Her pronouns are she/her/hers and she will be graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2022 with a degree in Psychology and a degree in Communication Science and Rhetoric.



MAYA ALVARADO

Maya Alvarado is the Fundraising Chair of Psi Chi for 2021-2022. Her pronouns are she/her/hers and she will be graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2022 with a degree in Psychology.

PSI CHI EXECUTIVE BOARD



JOSIE HINTZKE

Josie Hintzke is the Community Service Chair and Speaker Coordinator. Her pronouns are She/her/hers and she will be graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2022 with a degree in Psychology.

ELLA REDMORE

Ella Redmore is the Communications Chair for Psi Chi. Her pronouns are She/her/hers. She will be graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2022 with a degree in Psychology and a degree in Dance.



ELIZABETH SCOTT

Elizabeth Scott is the Newsletter Chair of Psi Chi. Her pronouns are She/her/hers and she will be graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2022 with a degree in Psychology and a degree in Political Science and a certificate in Criminal Justice, and a certificate in Professional Chinese.



PSI CHI EXECUTIVE BOARD



MEGAN HAAS

Megan Haas is the Diversity and Inclusion Chair for Psi Chi. Her pronouns are She/her/hers and she will be graduating in 2022 from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a degree in Human Development and Family Studies and a degree in Psychology with a certificate in Criminal Justice

MEGAN THOMASON

Megan Thomason is the Initiation Chair for Psi Chi. Her pronouns are She/her/hers. She will be graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2023 with a degree in Psychology and a certificate in Criminal Justice.



ALEXA SAVARD

Alexa Savard is the Newsletter Chair of Psi Chi. Her pronouns are She/her/hers and she will be graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2022 with a degree in Psychology and a degree in Human Development and Family Studies.