



# Psychology Department

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
COLORADO SPRINGS

## Diversity Committee E-Blast

April 2023

By: Kelly Dixon and Paige Klein

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### Committee Members

**Chairs:** Dr. Sara Qualls and Dr. Leilani Feliciano

**Faculty:** Dr. Diana Selmeczy, Dr. Steven Bistricky, Dr. Rachel Weiskittle

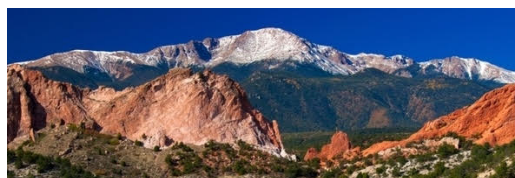
**Staff:** Dr. Magdalene Lim

**Graduate Student Members:** Kelly Dixon, Marcus Chur

**Communications Subcommittee:** Kelly Dixon, Paige Klein

**Education Subcommittee:** Marcus Chur, Sophie Brickman, Molly Higgins, Christine Mason

If you are interested in contributing to this newsletter or having your work featured, please email us at [psychdiv@uccs.edu](mailto:psychdiv@uccs.edu)



### Upcoming Events

# EVENTS

**April 14:** [Decolonizing Teachings in Psychology: How to Make the College Classroom an Inclusive, Equitable and Empowering Space for All Students?](#)

The SPSP Student Committee's April Diversity Space provides a forum for any students who are part of a marginalized group to come together and use a private space for discussion on celebrations, as well as identity-based issues in their academic journeys.

**April 28:** [Here and Queer \(HQ\): Providing Space for LGBTQ+ Students and Early-Career Researchers](#)

Here and Queer (HQ) provides community-building and social support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ) students and early-career SPSP members. To meet the growing demands of our ever-changing and expansive community, HQ aims to host a monthly, recurring drop-in space for the queer community to come together, share ideas, and explore topics of importance (e.g., navigating the job market as a queer person).

**May 5:** [Down to the Struts: Getting Wise About Disability](#)

Dr. Arielle Silverman, disabled activist and social scientist, speaks on her own disability journey, the road to disability rights with the ADA, and how much needs to be done to reach full inclusion beyond the limits of law.



## **Feature: Student(s) Spotlight**

### Suicides in India: A Content Analysis

***Britta Beck, Zara Kenigsberg, Paige Klein, Heidi Martinez and Troy Sanders***

Globally, India accounts for the most individuals dying by suicide compared to any other country, and in 2021, a total of 164,033 suicides were reported occurring in India (Singh, 2022). The media has shown to have an influential impact on public perception and may be able to sway opinions and attitudes by understanding this public health crisis (Armstrong et al., 2018). Thus, graduate students Britta Beck, Zara Kenigsberg, Paige Klein, Heidi Martinez, and Troy Sanders sought to investigate how prominent Indian newspaper outlets report on Indian citizens who die by suicide. This ongoing project entails a content analysis including numerous manifest variables assessing the type of information included in each article (e.g., method of death, demographic factors, number of individuals who died by the suicide). According to Ramesh et al. (2022), common methods of dying by suicide in India include self-immolation (setting oneself on fire), poisoning, jumping, hanging, and drowning. More recently it has been reported that multiple people have died by suicide at the same time such that families or romantic partners will die by suicide as part of a suicide pact (Ramesh et al., 2022). Latent factors of interest include whether the article perpetuates or dispels myths of suicide, if the author of the article displays bias towards the suicide (e.g., sensationalizing, glorifying, disdain, and/or negative judgement), and whether the interpersonal theory of suicide, comprised of perceived loneliness and thwarted belongingness, contributed to the reasoning behind why the individual(s) took their own life. As the project progresses, this group of researchers hopes to uncover patterns as to why people are dying by suicide, and how this public health crisis is being portrayed in the media.

# Editorial: Navigating Inclusive Language in Research

By: Kelly Dixon, M.A. and Paige Klein

In 2021, the American Psychological Association (APA) called upon psychological professionals to join forces in a movement to reexamine and reshape the fabric of systemic bias, marginalization, and stereotyping in psychology through language. As written by APA in the foreword to their newly developed inclusive language guide, *“for the first time, APA is systematically and institutionally examining, acknowledging, and charting a path forward to address its role in racism and other forms of destructive social hierarchies including, but not limited to, sexism, ableism, ageism, heterosexism, classism, and religious bigotry. The organization is assessing the harms and is committing to true change. This requires avoiding language that perpetuates harm or offense toward members of marginalized communities through our communications.”*

In a study conducted by Patev and colleagues (2019), bidirectional associations were found between language use (e.g., willingness to use preferred pronouns) and attitudes toward transgender/non-conforming gender minority individuals. Editorials published in [prior versions of this newsletter](#) have further detailed how [pronoun use can also impact depressive and suicidal outcomes in gender minority youth](#) (November 2021 newsletter), and reported on the [growing number of individuals in the United States who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community and desire more expansive identity-reporting options in research](#) (May 2021 newsletter).

It is because language holds such significance in influencing attitudes, biases, perception, and meaning that the American Psychological Association (APA) constructed the [Inclusive Language Reference Guide](#) to encourage readers to adopt a more progressive writing style to foster sensitivity, openness and empowerment. Quantitative and qualitative research in this area has also expanded exponentially in recent years, with the [US Census Bureau](#) funding large-scale projects to improve race and ethnicity data capture. A particularly contentious issue is the differentiation of MENA – Middle Eastern and North African – as a distinct entity from the racial categorization of ‘White.’ Historically, standard practice in the United States has been to collapse these categories. This is significant, in that it means both that MENA individuals do not have any avenue for accurate self-identification; and that any culturally meaningful differences as a function of race are obfuscated. Scholars have argued that this essentially amounts to erasure of the entire MENA American population (Jonny, 2020; Maghbouleh et al., 2022).

Recently, the Psychology Department’s DEI education subcommittee held a “brown bag” talk hosted by Ph.D. student Sophie Brickman during which faculty and students engaged in critical dialogue of best practices for inclusive language in research – and admitted our own shortcomings in this arena. Attendees discussed the challenges of language as a constantly moving target, requiring researchers to frequently reinform

their conceptualization of what is deemed appropriate to report. Events such as these emphasize the essentiality of remaining open-minded and amenable to revision as a researcher.

To this end, we (Kelly Dixon, with the support of the Psychology Department Diversity Committee) set out to collate the expertise and thoughtful contributions of attendees at the brown bag talk, the APA inclusive language guidelines, and cutting-edge research in psychology and identity to create a viable and practical starting point for researchers committed to implementing DEI in their research. As detailed in the next newsletter section below, this constitutes a brief demographic measure template available for public use that can be modified to suit the needs of researchers carrying out in-person or online research (i.e., via platforms such as Qualtrics). Demographics assessed include assigned sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, educational attainment, employment status, income, and relationship status. Each question provides expansive options for appropriate self-identification, including mechanisms for participants to identify outside provided categories through text entry. While the categorizations in this template are highly inclusive and reflective of best practices in DEI, categories can also be collapsed during data analysis to suit more conservative reporting needs (e.g., in alignment with NIH reporting requirements for funding).

### References

- American Psychological Association. (2021). Inclusive language guidelines. <https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/language-guidelines.pdf>
- Bureau, U. S. C. (2022, June 9). *Research to improve data on race and ethnicity*. Census.gov. Retrieved March 31, 2023, from <https://www.census.gov/about/our-research/race-ethnicity.html>
- Jonny, S. (2020). The Erasure of Middle Eastern and North African Immigrants from the American Narrative: A Case for Adding a Mena Category to the United States. *Geo. Immigr. LJ*, 35, 1009.
- Maghbouleh, N., Schachter, A., & Flores, R. D. (2022). Middle Eastern and North African Americans may not be perceived, nor perceive themselves, to be White. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 119(7), e2117940119.
- Patev, A. J., Dunn, C. E., Hood, K. B., & Barber, J. M. (2019). College students' perceptions of gender-inclusive language use predict attitudes toward transgender and gender nonconforming individuals. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 38(3), 329-352.

# Resource: A Template Demographic Battery for Psychological Research

By: Kelly Dixon, M.A.



UCCS Psychology Diversity Committee member Kelly Dixon has developed a DEI identity demographics template for research. This brief battery was designed in alignment with current psychosocial research, APA guidelines, and best-practice recommendations. Care was also taken to utilize findings of the OMB Census Bureau's research on identity-based demographic assessment, and to ensure that the categories encapsulated by each demographic question fulfill reporting requirements as specified by NIH, NIMH, and other major funding entities.

This DEI identity demographics template is available for use [here](#). Please feel free to download, modify, and use this template as you build out research studies!

## Recap: Recent Education Subcommittee Events

The Psychology Diversity Education subcommittee held their first Podcast Club meeting on March 10th and discussed the NPR Code Switch podcast episode "A Whiteness That's Only Skin Deep." The episode highlighted the unique experiences of people of color with albinism and their relationship to race in the US. During the meeting, we had a constructive conversation about broadening the discussions on race to include people who may not fit into conventional racial categories, such as people with albinism and multicultural/multiracial individuals. We also discussed

other marginalized identities frequently left out of broader conversation, including non-binary and genderfluid individuals, intersex individuals, and categories commonly excluded on racial demographic questions, such as Middle Eastern, North African, and Jewish identities. You can listen to or read the transcript for the episode [here!](#)

We hosted a brown-bag lunch on March 10<sup>th</sup> to discuss using inclusive language in research and clinical practice. We reviewed the American Psychological Society's Inclusive Language Guidelines, as well as other resources that provide sample questions for collecting demographic information using inclusive language. Faculty and students in attendance reflected on their experiences incorporating inclusive language into research and practice, and more broadly on the evolving nature of inclusive language. You can view the slides from this meeting [here!](#)

We hosted our first DEI movie night on March 16<sup>th</sup> where we watched *The Swimmers*. Based on a true story, *The Swimmers* follows two Syrian sisters as they flee their war-torn home to reach Greece as asylum seekers before competing at the Rio Olympic Games. Following the movie, we shared our thoughts and some important lessons we learned from the movie.

## Learn: Featured Articles

**Statement of Significance:** *"This article highlights the need for a new model in health service psychology (HSP) education and training that centers social responsiveness and offers a detailed description of the recent working conference by the Council of Chairs of Training Councils that was designed to develop tools and new approaches to socially responsive training."*

Ponce, A. N., Cavell, T. A., Flores, L. Y., Gillens, A. B., Grus, C. L., Hagstrom, S. L., Maynard-Pemba, N., Nadkarni, L., Reynolds, A. L., Schmitt, A. J., Stiers, W., Zimmerman, M., & Çiftçi, A. (2023). CCTC 2020: Addressing social responsiveness in health service psychology education and training. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*, 17(1), 4–13. <https://doi-org.libproxy.uccs.edu/10.1037/tep0000421>

**Statement of Significance:** *"There have been wide calls for decolonizing and liberating the curriculum within health service psychology training programs to better train future psychologists to work with diverse populations and engage in social justice-oriented work, but how to accomplish this is ill-defined and not well understood. This article calls on the field to engage in a deep and difficult process of liberating training by both challenging oppressive systems/structures and working*

*individually as training programs. The article aims to provide a framework and tools to think about how to engage in this work as a discipline."*

Wright, A. J., Williams, N. J., Starling, T., Reynolds, A., & Garcia-Lavin, B. (2023). Deep-structure curriculum liberation for social responsiveness in graduate health service psychology training. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*, 17(1), 22–30. <https://doi-org.libproxy.uccs.edu/10.1037/tep0000434>

## **Featured Blog**

In the wake of the devastating Club Q shooting, Emmeline Taylor, and Sophie Brickman, both UCCS Clinical Trauma PhD candidates, advocate for psychology graduate programs to support their students' health and well-being as they work with trauma populations.

Full Link to Article

Here: <https://istss.org/public-resources/trauma-blog/2023-february/student-perspectives-supporting-clinical-students>

