

ANNUAL REPORT|2020

CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
BARRY UNIVERSITY



WELCOME

In 2020, the Barry University School of Social Work's Center for Human Rights and Social Justice (CHRSJ), like all other institutions across the globe, was confronted with the unprecedented challenge of determining how to best serve the community in the face of uncertainty, fear, and isolation associated with the Global COVID 19 Pandemic, as well as mounting incidences of systemic violence locally and nationally. This past year was indeed transformative. In the face of health and human rights challenges, individuals and communities responded with innovation, compassion, and unparalleled resilience. A report by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and Council of Social Work Education (CSWE, 2020) noted that those populations already suffering from systemic oppression and marginalization were hardest hit by the increased challenges and stressors faced during 2020, including food insecurity, loss of family income, interruptions in schooling and access to health care, which have particularly been impacted. Indeed, many of the CHRSJ's target populations were hardest hit by the effects of COVID- 19 and many of these individuals and families continue to struggle. Emerging research suggests that mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and traumatic reactions will likely linger. In addition, high profile examples of state-based violence, including the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor rocked the nation calling attention to centuries-old systemic and institutionalized racism and inequality in this country. These stressors result in immediate as well as long-lasting threats to well-being for some of our most underserved communities. However, these events have also mobilized social justice and human rights warriors to engage in urgent self-reflection, critical conversations and collective action aimed at dismantling systems of oppression and creating a more equitable, just, and compassionate society

Barry University's CHRSJ work focuses on improving community well-being through strategic partnerships with community-based organizations serving at-risk populations impacted by poverty, discrimination & violence. This past year, the CHRSJ team was especially committed to responding to the COVID 19 crisis by intentionally meeting the social justice obligation of the social work profession in timely, creative and intentional ways. We flexibly adapted our programming and delivery in ways to best meet the emergent and evolving needs of our target communities.

In the upcoming year, as individuals and communities across the globe continue to recover and heal from the collective traumas we have all endured, we pledge to strengthen our efforts to advance the individual and collective well-being of the most marginalized populations. We will do this through the expansion of inclusive, culturally relevant, trauma-responsive contemplative interventions for community healing. The challenges of the past year have only strengthened our commitment to do our part to mitigate threats to social justice and human rights by working closely with our trusted community partners to address pressing educational, training, research, and advocacy needs.

In Community,

ASHLEY AUSTIN, PHD, LCSW
Distinguished Professor CHRSJ
Professor, Social Work

CAROLINA RIOS M.A
Director IHTC / CHRSJ

CROSS CULTURAL CONVERSATIONS:

Drawing Out the Conversation Through Expressive Arts

The most recent confluence of discriminative and racist events towards minoritized BIPOC communities in America has demanded both active action and opportunities for community healing. By exploring events from a contemplative perspective and recognizing the internal work needed to move toward a more just and equitable society, we can take a concrete stand against injustices leading to oppression, discrimination and marginalization.

Cross-Cultural Conversations (CCC) is a six-week program that invites participants into reflection through embodied experience using multi-modal expressive arts and mindfulness. Guided by CHRSJ Faculty Affiliate -Dr. Heidi LaPorte-, and CHRSJ Graduate Assistants, students meet (currently via zoom) for 90 mins each week to explore their ancestral roots, discuss misconceptions about "othering," and talk about historical privilege among other relevant topics.

The primary goals for the cross-cultural conversations are to:

- *Encourage vulnerability*
- *Talk about the large societal wound of historical trauma for society*
- *Engage in discussions about individual historical trajectory and personal wounds of implicit bias and racial injustice*
- *Engage in personal and collective "wound care" in support, compassionate and nonjudgmental setting using a variety of modalities to express what words might not capture*

This past year, 24 Barry University undergraduate and graduate students completed the CCC program in a virtual capacity. In the upcoming year, trained program facilitators will implement the program with community organizations working with at-risk, trauma-exposed youth.

ABOUT THE CURRICULUM:

Week One: "The Conversation Begins"

Week Two: "Introducing ourselves to ourselves and encountering one another"

Week Three: "Crossroads of Culture - A reflection"

Week Four: "Collective consciousness, social justice, and the art of listening"

Week Five: "Diversity of identities in the contemporary world"

Week Six: "Bringing it all together/Assessment"

SUPPORTING ANTI-TRAFFICKING WORK THROUGH COLLABORATIVE IMPACT

1 Human Trafficking Coalition (1HTC) Project

Since 2019, the CHRSJ is home to the 1 Human Trafficking Coalition (1HTC) Project, a multi-county collaborative project created to support anti-human trafficking efforts in the tri-county area by aligning resources and serving as a comprehensive information, education, and training center for survivors and organizations. 1HTC's approach to social change has a primary mission of advancing trauma-informed prevention and intervention approaches across all aspects of service delivery. Since its adoption, 1HTC's Project Director- Ms. Carolina Rios- has worked closely with the South Florida Human Trafficking Taskforce (SFHTTF) by serving as the Co-Chair of the Education, Outreach and Training Committee.

This past year, we- like many other organizations supporting anti-trafficking efforts- had to re-imagine and re-configure our efforts to ensure our work as the SFHTTF continued in the face of COVID-19 and social distancing.

TaskForce Talks Podcast Series



By mobilizing community partners and leaders in the anti-trafficking movement across South Florida, the SFHTTF Education, Outreach and Training Committee created a Podcast Series called "TaskForce Talks" to ensure that -even with social distancing-, we were able to successfully engage victims of human trafficking and those who work directly with them. Episodes topics are recorded in English and Spanish, and include:

- **The Trauma-Informed court model in Miami-Dade County, GRACE Court** with Yinay Ruiz, Miami Cares Project Manager, with Citrus Family Care Network.
- **Vulnerabilities children are exposed to when engaging in everyday use of the internet from the safety of their own homes** with Maria Clara Harrington, Outreach Coordinator at Chance Program, and Officer Tomas Tundidor, veteran of the Miami-Dade Police Department.
- **The impact of HIV/AIDS infection on Victims of Sex Trafficking during the COVID-19 Pandemic** with Dr. Francesco Duberli, founder and Chief Executive of Survivor's Pathway.
- **The use of mindfulness in providing direct services to survivors of human trafficking** with Executive Director of Mindful Kids Miami, Sandy Skelaney.
- **Impact of Local Coalitions in South Florida** with representatives of the Miami-Dade County Human Trafficking Coalition, the Broward Human Trafficking Coalition, and the Human Trafficking Coalition of the Palm Beaches
- **Housing Options for Adult Survivors in Miami** with Zunamy Marques, Project Phoenix Case Manager, and Maria Santa Maria, Director of Embrace House.
- **U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS)** with Assistant Special Agent in Charge (ASAC) Andrew Parker from the U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service (DSS)
- **The Woman's Fund Miami-Dade: Working in our community to make an impact in combating human trafficking** with Interim Executive Director Marya Meyers
- **International Rescue Committee in Miami-** Providing trauma-informed, survivor lead services during the pandemic

"Juntos Somos Mas" Outreach Event

The CHRSJ (through IHTC Project) joined more than 15 partner organizations to hold the first Annual "Juntos Somos Mas" Outreach Event at a Homestead Labor Camp. We brought more than 350 bags of food, groceries, hygiene products, toys, coloring books and supplies to very vulnerable families while providing them with information and education about Human Trafficking and exploitation, signs, worker's rights, ways to report it, and resources for services and support.



Four-day Human Trafficking Trauma Informed Certificate

This past March, the CHRSJ collaborated with Professor Samba Zaoui- as we have done for the previous four years- in implementing two modules of the Human Trafficking Trauma-Informed Certificate. The first two days were reserved for non-clinical professionals, teachers, clergy, community members, and mental health professionals, social workers and medical professionals that have limited knowledge about human trafficking (HT). These two days equipped participants with an understanding of what makes an individual vulnerable to human trafficking, understand the intersectionality of HT, deconstruct the meaning of choice in the context of trafficking, and review the comprehensive and multi-disciplinary wrap-around services this population needs. The second module was much more clinical in nature. These last two days were reserved for upper-level, graduate clinicians who counsel and engage survivors of sex trafficking in therapeutic relationships. Day three (3) and four (4), participants left equipped understanding how a person's neurobiology is their autobiography, and every trauma is downloaded like a blueprint into the nervous system, which leaves individuals further vulnerable to be exploited in the form of trafficking. Innovative techniques such as Sensorimotor Psychotherapy, Somatic Experiencing, Mindfulness, and EMDR were presented and applied both experientially and theoretically.

Outreach Event Partners

included: US Department of Homeland Security (HSI), Miami Dade Police Department (MDPD), US Attorney's Office and International Rescue Committee (IRC), Citrus Health Network CHANCE Program and Citrus Health Family Care Network Miami Cares Project ,Survivors Pathway, Tom Tundidor PO Consulting, Jose Fontánez, Pharos Counseling, Calvary Church & Embrace Program, Glory House of Miami, Jones Day, US Department of State Diplomatic Security Service, Florida Department of Children and Families Refugee Services, Women's Fund of Miami Dade, Florida Department of Health, the Florida Aids Foundation and the office of Hispanic Affairs.

CREATING SAFE SPACES

TRACKS Intergroup Dialogue Program

The TRACKS Intergroup Dialogue is a social justice, dialogue-based program aiming to advance understanding among members of different groups, by reducing prejudice, discrimination and bias. It was established in 2014 within the CHRSJ at Barry University School of Social Work. CHRSJ Faculty Affiliate, Dr. Mitchell Rosenwald, was trained by the University of Michigan's National Intergroup Dialogue Institute.

Since its inception, the CHRSJ has partnered with the Office of Mission Engagement and The Human Resources Department at Barry University to engaged over **30 high school students** and **211 university students**, completed **23 in-person series for students**, and held **four series for university employees**.

In this past year, the CHRSJ held three dialogue series on race, in a virtual capacity, providing **46** students with a virtual safe space by creating a shared meaning of dialogue, exploring identity, social relations, and conflict, dialoguing about issues of social justice pertinent to the group, and Examining Ways in which Communities can Incorporate these Insights.

Participant Quotes:

"I have always been a huge fan of any form of dialogue because I feel that the heart of the human experience tends to come out and be seen when there is a supportive atmosphere that welcomes its expression. TRACKS made very clear how important a safe and supportive environment is for the development of the human mind as dictated by the heart and the emotions."

"I learned more about the beauty of the human resilience, my own and the participants, and what a powerful tool it is in our daily living as we come across so many different and diverse cultures."

"Students taught me the beauty of receiving the gifts of their sharing to shape my own beliefs and understanding of the human spirit. Once again, I was reminded many times and throughout different intervals of the importance of sharing within a group and how significant it is to speak up and be oneself. Though silence is important, speaking brings more clarity and opens up many doors for deepening throughout the experience."

Online Gathering of Voices

This past year, the CHRSJ coordinated a series of online gatherings where participants gained a better appreciation of WHY Black Lives Matter from a social, economic and historical lens, and the impact of the Social Work profession in combatting racism. The Gathering of Voices topics included:

Education and Racial Injustices in Schools and Communities

Speakers: Nadine Greene, MSW, and Ph.D. candidate (Human Services).

Is Immigration a white supremacist issue in America?

Speakers: Martha L. Vallejo, Chair, and Vicki Rosenthal, Vice-Chair of the NASW FL Immigration Justice Task Force.

The intersectionality of race, trauma, and social justice in clinical services

Speakers: Elizabeth Ringler-Jayanthan, LSW and Isabelle Swan-Mae Darling, MSW

ADVOCATING FOR GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE

The Trans Perspectives Project

The Trans Perspectives Research Lab (TPRL)- a research arm of the CHRSJ- is committed to engaging in transgender affirmative research which, centers around the voices and experiences of trans and gender-diverse people. The TPRL is focused on developing knowledge that has the potential to improve the well-being of transgender and gender diverse (TGD) individuals across the life span- including a focus on research which: advances knowledge and understanding of experiences of gender dysphoria, addresses understudied aspects of the trans experience across the life span, and explores contemporary transgender issues through a trauma responsive lens.

Dr. Ashley Austin serves as Research Director and Principal Investigator. Her work has long been geared toward improving mental health care and social services for the TGD community through trans-affirmative practices.

Recognizing a scarcity of transgender perspectives within the current body of research on gender-affirming care, the team wanted to better understand the impact of gender dysphoria by hearing directly from those with lived experience. The result is a study that reinforces the necessity of gender-affirming clinical practices and forwards the research space with rich and evocative testimony from the trans community.

This past year, Dr. Ashley Austin and her student co-authors, Joshua Holzworth and Ryan Papciak, published an article "Beyond Diagnosis: 'Gender Dysphoria Feels Like a Living Hell, a Nightmare One Cannot Ever Wake Up From'" in *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity* which gives voice to the needs and experiences of members of the trans community who suffer from gender dysphoria: For Dr. Austin and her co-authors, who hope to dispel the myth of a monolithic trans experience, the study illuminated the urgency of suffering among gender-dysphoric clients as well as potential pathways for positive interventions, particularly those that leverage metaphor and non-verbal, creative expression.

The TPRL's research will continue to grow in the coming year as graduate students and social work collaborators outside of Barry are added to the research team. Efforts will focus on analyzing and mobilizing research associated with the photo-elicitation phase of their Gender Dysphoria project—innovative and timely research that tunes into both experiences of gender dysphoria as well as gender euphoria among TGD adults.



DELIVERING TRAUMA-INFORMED PROGRAMS TO BUILD CAPACITY WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY

The Barry University School of Social Work continues to dedicate itself to the transformation of individuals through the delivery of a trauma-informed, resiliency focused programs to our alumni, community partners, and university constituents. This past year, the Office of Continuing Education- led by faculty affiliate Dr. Jill Levenson- coordinated a series of online programming that responded to pertinent issues and training needs of our community partners as we all navigated these uncertain times. Topics included:



THANK YOU



The CHRSJ would like to honor and express gratitude to Dr. Phyllis Scott, Dean of Barry University's School of Social Work and a bold defender of human rights, equity, and social and economic justice for decades. As Dean of the School of Social Work since 2010, Dr. Scott's creative vision, passion, and strong leadership were instrumental in the inception and launch of the CHRSJ in 2015. She has been actively involved in CHRSJ activities standing alongside South Florida's most vulnerable communities and providing visible, explicit support for key human rights issues, including Racial Justice, LGBTQ+ Rights, Human Trafficking Survivor needs, and Women's Rights. Dean Scott's allegiance to Barry University's Core Commitments of knowledge and truth, inclusive community, social justice, and collaborative service is evident in her legacy of leadership, which guides the CHRSJ's work, as well as students, faculty, and community partners involved with the CHRSJ. We are eternally grateful for Dean's Scott contributions to the CHRSJ and the community.

The CHRSJ Team.

OUR SPONSORS



The Celia Lipton Farris & Victor W. Farris Foundation

Barry University

School of Social Work
Center for Human Rights and Social Justice

11300 NE 2nd Avenue, Miami, FL 33161
305.899.3900 - barry.edu/chrsj