

Ijeoma Opara, PhD., LMSW, MPH

Assistant Professor
Stony Brook University School of Social Welfare
101 Nicolls Road
Health Sciences Center, Level 2
Stony Brook, NY 11794

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EDUCATION

- | | |
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| 2016-2019 | Montclair State University
Ph.D., Family Science and Human Development
Dissertation: Exploring the role of social support, ethnic identity, and psychological empowerment on drug use and sexual risk behavior among Black and Hispanic female adolescents
Committee: Dr. Robert J. Reid (chair), Dr. Pauline Garcia-Reid, & Dr. Elizabeth Rivera Rodas |
| 2013-2014 | New York University
Master of Social Work, 2013-2014
Concentration: Integrated Primary & Behavioral Health |
| 2011-2012 | University of Pennsylvania
Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Health Program |
| 2009-2011 | New York Medical College
Master of Public Health
Concentration: Epidemiology
Thesis: Is environmental tobacco smoke associated with asthma morbidity in inner city African American children? Results from a randomized controlled trial
Committee: Dr. Howell Sasser (chair) and Dr. Arlene Butz (Johns Hopkins University) |
| 2007-2009 | New Jersey City University
Bachelor of Arts
Major: Psychology
Magna cum Laude |

LICENSES, CERTIFICATES, & PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Licensed Social Worker, New Jersey
Licensed Master of Social Work, New York
Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Certificate, Medical University of South Carolina

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2019- present Assistant Professor of Social Work
School of Social Welfare
State University of New York (SUNY) Stony Brook University, Stony
Brook, NY
- 2019-present Visiting Faculty Fellow
Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS
School of Public Health
Yale University, New Haven, CT
- 2017-2019 Lecturer
School of Social Work
Columbia University, New York, NY

PUBLICATIONS

Peer reviewed publications

**indicates collaboration with a student*

- Opara, I.** & *Santos, N. (2019). A conceptual exploration of social media's role on mental health, body image, and eating disorders in Latina adolescents. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*. doi:10.1177/0739986319860844
- Lardier Jr., D.T., **Opara, I.**, Herrera, A., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R.J. (2019). Perceptions of control and risky behavior on sexual partnerships, HIV knowledge, and risk perception among urban youth of color: A latent class analysis. *Journal of HIV/AIDS & Social Services*. doi: 10.1080/15381501.2019.1632237
- Opara, I.**, Rivera Rodas, E.I., Lardier, Jr. D.T., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R.J. (2019). Validation of the abbreviated Socio-Political Control Scale for Youth among Girls of Color. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1007/s10560019006249
- Opara, I.**, Lardier, Jr. D.T., Reid, R.J., & Garcia-Reid, P. (2019). "It all starts with the parents": A qualitative study on the protective factors for drug use prevention among Black and Hispanic girls. *Affilia: Journal of Women & Social Work*. Advance online publication: doi:10.1177/0886109918822543
- Lardier Jr., D.T., **Opara, I.**, Berguson, C., Herrera, A., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R.J. (2019). A study of neighborhood sense of community as a mediator between supportive social systems, school belongingness, and outcome behaviors among urban youth of color. *Journal of Community Psychology*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1002/jcop.22182

- Beverly, H.K., Castro, Y., & **Opara, I.** (2019). Age of first marijuana use and its impact on education attainment and employment status. *Journal of Drug Issues*. Advance online publication: doi:10.1177/0022042618823007
- Amutah-Onukagha, N., **Opara, I.**, Hammonds, R., & Guthrie, B. (2018). Missed opportunities for HIV prevention: Results of a qualitative study on mother-daughter communication. *Journal of HIV/AIDS & Social Services*. Advance online. doi: 10.1080/15381501.2018.1502708
- Amutah-Onukagha, N., Mahadevan, M., **Opara, I.**, Rodriguez, M., Kelly, J., & Trusdell, M. (2018). Project THANKS: Examining HIV-related barriers and facilitators to care in African American women: A community perspective. *AIDS Patient Care & STDs*, 32(4). doi: 10.1089/apc.2017.0215
- Garcia-Reid, P., Lardier, Jr. D.T, Reid, R.J., & **Opara, I.** (2018). Understanding the influence of sexual risk-taking, ethnic identity, and family and peer support on school importance among Hispanic adolescents. *Education & Urban Society*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1177/0013124518787827
- Opara, I.** (2018). Examining African American parent-daughter HIV risk communication using a Black feminist-ecological lens: Implications for Intervention. *Journal of Black Studies*, 49(2), 134-151. doi: 10.1177/0021934717741900
- Respress, B., Amutah-Onukagha, N., & **Opara, I.** (2018). The effects of school-based discrimination on adolescents of color sexual health outcomes: A social determinants approach. *Social Work in Public Health*, 33 (3), 1-16. doi:10.1080/19371918.2017.1378953
- Amutah-Onukagha, N., Rodriguez, M., **Opara, I.**, Gardner, M., Assan, M., Hammond, R., Plata, J., Pierre, K., & Farran, E. (2017). Progresses and challenges in utilizing traditional birth attendants in maternal and child health in Nigeria. *International Journal of Maternal and Child Health & AIDS*, 6(2), 130-138. doi: 10.21106/ijma.204
- Awosan, C. I., & **Opara, I.** (2016). Socioemotional factor: A missing gap in theorizing and studying Black heterosexual coupling processes and relationships. *Journal of Black Sexuality and Relationships*, 3(2), 25-51. doi: 10.1353/bsr.2016.0027

Book reviews

- Opara, I.** (2018). Black girls and adolescents: Facing the challenges. *Journal of Black Studies*, 49(5). 520-523. doi: 10.1177/0021934718773738

2010-2011 MSW Fellowship
Research Initiatives for Student Enhancement
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

HONORS AND AWARDS

2019 Community Mobilizer of The Year
Paterson Coalition Against Substance Abuse

2019 NIDA Women & Sex/Gender Differences Junior
Investigator Travel Award
College on Problems of Drug Dependence
2019 Annual Meeting

2018 John L. and Harriette P. McAdoo Dissertation Award
National Council on Family Relations

2018 Outstanding Student Poster Award on Drug Use Prevention
Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs section
American Public Health Association Annual Meeting

2018 Summer Workshop Travel Award
Program for Research on Black Americans
Institute of Social Research
University of Michigan School of Social Work

2018 Student Research and Conference Travel Fund
College of Education and Human Services
Montclair State University

2018 Kappa Omicron Nu National Honor Society
Montclair State University chapter

2017 POZ Top 100 Women Committed to Ending the HIV
Epidemic Honoree
POZ Magazine

2017 Student Travel Award
Montclair State University

2017 Student Travel Scholarship
Black Infant Mortality in New Jersey Conference
Partnership of Maternal & Child Health/Rutgers University

2017 Scholarship for Outstanding Doctoral Student
Montclair State University

2017 Population Health Scholar
AcademyHealth

2016 Student Travel Award
Montclair State University

2013-2014 Student Scholarship for Academic Excellence
New York University

2007-2009 Presidential Award Full Scholarship Recipient
New Jersey City University

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2018-2019 Pre-doctoral fellow
5T32 DA07233; National Institute on Drug Abuse
PI: Gregory Falkin, Ph.D.
Behavioral Sciences Training (BST) in Drug Abuse Research
Program
New York University

2016-2019 Doctoral Research Fellow
SPO22157 & SP022-19-01; Substance Abuse and Mental
Health Services Administration
PI: Robert J. Reid, PhD Co-PI: Pauline Garcia-Reid, PhD
Montclair State University

2016-2017 Research Assistant
Project THANKS (Turning HIV/AIDS into New Knowledge
for Sisters): HIV/AIDS intervention for African American
women;
Project DASH (Divas Against the Spread of HIV)
PI: Ndidi Amutah-Onukagha, Ph.D., MPH, CHES
Montclair State University

2010-2011 Research Assistant
NR010546; National Institute on Nursing Research (NINR)

Pediatric Asthma Alert Intervention (PAAL) for Minority Children in Inner City Baltimore
PI: Arlene Butz, Sc.D., RN, CRNP
Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore MD

2010-2011
Research Assistant
Early Autism Intervention Program for African American Children with Developmental Delay
PI: Rebecca Landa, Ph.D., CCC-SLP
Kennedy Krieger Institute, Baltimore, MD

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Fall 2017, Fall 2018, Spring 2019
Lecturer
Columbia University
School of Social Work, New York, NY
Course (s): Adolescent Development: Theoretical and Intervention Perspectives; Human Behavior in the Social Environment I

Summer 2018
Adjunct Professor
City University of New York (CUNY) Hunter College, Silberman School of Social Work
Course: Social Welfare Policy II: Substance Abuse Policy

Fall 2017, Fall 2018
Guest Lecturer
“Marijuana Legalization in New Jersey: Understanding Both Sides”
Community Organizing and Health Advocacy
Montclair State University, Department of Public Health

Fall 2016
Guest Lecturer
“Substance Abuse & HIV in Youth”
Child and Family Studies Senior Seminar
Montclair State University, Department of Family Science & Human Development:

WORK EXPERIENCE

2019
Per Diem Child & Family Therapist
Internal Affairs Child and Family
Therapy Center, Cranford, NJ

2014-2016 Youth & Family Therapist
Esperanza, New York, NY

2014 Assistant Director of Supportive Housing
The Children's Village, Valhalla, NY

2013-2014 SAMHSA/HRSA Master of Social Work
Student Internship
Placement site: Institute of Community Living, Manhattan,
NY

2007-2013 Care Coordinator Supervisor
Griswold Special Care, Westfield, NJ

INVITED TALKS

Opara, I. (upcoming-2019, November). "Marijuana prevention for youth in New Jersey". 6th Annual the Tree of Addiction Conference, The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources, Teaneck, NJ

Opara, I. (2019, May). "Marijuana prevention for youth—in a post-legalization era". New Jersey Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (NJPHA) Education & Celebration 2nd Annual Spring Conference, Monroe Township, NJ

Opara, I., Garcia-Reid, P., Reid, R.J. (2018, December). "Strengths-based approaches to HIV/AIDS, STI, and drug use prevention in the classroom". Paterson Board of Education, Physical Education and Health K-12 Teachers In-Service, Paterson, NJ

Opara, I. (2018, June). "Marijuana legalization and its effects on youth of color". National Association of Social Workers (NASW-NJ) Board, NASW Headquarters, New Brunswick, NJ

SUPERVISION

Master of Public Health Student Internship Preceptor

Student (s): Araba Assan, BS and Matthew McGovern, BA
Montclair State University, Summer 2018

Bachelor of Social work Student Field Supervisor

Student: Evelyn Pena
Community organizing field internship (BSW Course)
Ramapo College, Summer 2017
Student Internship Site: OASIS, Paterson, NJ

REFEREED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Opara, I. (2019, November). "Social and cultural protective factors for drug use and sexual risk behavior among urban Black adolescent girls". Roundtable paper to be presented at American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.

Opara, I., Lardier Jr., D.T., Garcia-Reid, & Reid, R.J. (2019, June). "A qualitative study on protective factors for drug use prevention among Black and Hispanic girls". Paper presented at the 81st College on Problems of Drug Dependence (CPDD) Annual Scientific Meeting, San Antonio, Texas.

Lardier Jr., D.T., **Opara, I.,** Pinto, S., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R.J. (2019, June). "The mediating effects of cognitive empowerment and social justice awareness between sense of community, ethnic identity, community participation and psychological empowerment among queer and non-queer youth of color". Paper to be presented at the Society for Community Research and Action, Chicago, IL

Opara, I. & Brown, T. (2018, November). "The application of strengths-based approaches for training students to work with racial/ethnic minorities through practicums and internships". Invited oral paper symposium presented at the National Council on Family Relations, San Diego, CA

Opara, I., Franklin, L., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R.J. (2018, November). "The normalization of violence and drug use among ethnic minority youth: A qualitative exploration". Poster presented at the National Council on Family Relations, San Diego, CA

Lardier Jr., D., **Opara, I.,** Berguson, C., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R.J. (2018, November). "The mediating role of neighborhood attachment among ecological supports, school importance, risk behaviors, and depression". Poster to be presented at National Council on Family Relations, San Diego, CA

***Opara, I.,** Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R.J. (2018, November). "Adapting a public health framework to reduce racial disparities in recreational marijuana use for urban youth of color in New Jersey". Poster presented at American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting 2018, San Diego, California. ***Outstanding student poster award in the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs section.**

Amutah-Onukagha, N., **Opara, I., & Guthrie, B.** (2018, November). "Addressing health disparities to improve women's health outcomes and achieve health equity". Roundtable oral presentation to be discussed at American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting 2018, San Diego, California.

Opara, I., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R.J. (2018, July). "The role of ethnic identity and psychological empowerment in HIV and drug use prevention for Black and Hispanic female adolescents". Poster to be presented at 22nd International AIDS conference 2018. Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Reid, R.J., Lardier, Jr. D.T, **Opara, I.**, Herrera, A., & Berguson, C. (2018, February). “P-CASA: Policy & advocacy” Poster presented at Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) 26th Annual National Leadership Forum.

Opara, I., Lee, S., Price, D., Allen, W., & James, A. (2017, November). “Improving community-police relations through dialogue: Creating healthier neighborhoods for Black families”. Co-chair and presenter. Invited symposium presented at the National Council on Family Relations Conference. Orlando, FL.

Opara, I. & Butz, A. (2017, November). “Caregiver characteristics of urban African American children living with severe asthma”. Poster presented at the National Council on Family Relations Conference. Orlando, FL.

Opara, I., & Amutah, N. (2017, November). “Project DASH: Analyzing maternal communication processes between African American mothers living with HIV and their daughters”. Poster presented at the National Council on Family Relations Conference. Orlando, FL.

Opara, I. (2017, October). “Examining HIV risk parent-child communication among African American female adolescents through an ecological systems and Black feminist lens”. Paper presentation. 5th Annual Black Doctoral Network Annual Conference. Atlanta, GA.

Opara, I. & Awosan, C. (2016, October). “Residual effects of slavery and its impact on Black male-female heterosexual relationships”, 4th Annual Black Doctoral Network Conference. Paper presentation. Atlanta, GA.

Opara, I. & Awosan, C. (2016, March) “Racism and its effects on Black male-female intimate relationships” at Tulane University, “Social Justice and The City: Implications for race and equity”, Paper presentation. New Orleans, LA.

Opara, I. & Butz, A. (2011, October) “Caregiver characteristics associated with asthma morbidity in inner city African American children” at 139th American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting, Poster presentation. Washington D.C.

COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

Opara, I., Garcia-Reid, P., Reid, R.J. (2018, December). “Strengths-based approaches to HIV/AIDS, STI, and drug use prevention in the classroom”. Paterson Board of Education, Physical Education and Health K-12 Teachers In-Service, Paterson, NJ

[Invited Panelist] **Opara, I.** (2018, October). “Discussion on adult use cannabis”. Hosted by Assemblywoman Angela McKnight, Jersey City, NJ

[Invited Panelist] **Opara, I.** (2018, September). “Impact of marijuana legalization on youth”. Exodus Church, Paterson, NJ.

[Invited Panelist] **Opara, I.** (2018, August). “Marijuana legalization: What we need to know”. Hosted by Mayor Ras Baraka of Newark, Newark, NJ

Opara, I., Garcia-Reid, P., Reid, R.J. (2018, January). “Project COPE steering committee January 2018 presentation”. Paterson Public Library, Project C.O.P.E., Montclair State University

Opara, I., Lardier, Jr. D.T., Reid, R.J., & Garcia-Reid, P. (2017, October). “P-CASA & Project C.O.P.E. 2017 highlights and outcomes”, Ph.D. Research Colloquium, Montclair State University

Opara, I. (2017, October). “Connection between HIV/AIDS, drugs, & violence prevalence rates in New Jersey”. Project C.O.P.E. Community Empowerment Forum, Paterson public library.

Opara, I. (2017, October). Plan for modifying hours of operation ordinance evaluation, Paterson Police Department, P-CASA, Montclair State University

Opara, I., Reid, R.J., & Garcia-Reid, P. (2017, September). “Engaging parents to talk about substance abuse with their children”, Paterson School District K-5th Teacher In-Service, Project C.O.P.E. & P-CASA, Montclair State University

Lardier Jr. D.T. & **Opara I.** (2017, June). P-CASA surveying years data dissemination for 2013-2017, P-CASA Coalition Meeting, Paterson Public Library, Paterson, NJ

Opara, I., Reid, R.J., & Garcia-Reid, P. (2017, February). “Engaging parents to talk about substance abuse with their children”, Paterson School District Teacher In-Service, Project C.O.P.E. & P-CASA, Montclair State University

Opara, I., Reid, R.J., & Garcia-Reid, P. (2017, February). “Data Dissemination”, Paterson Department of Education, Project C.O.P.E & P-CASA, Montclair State University

Opara, I. [Facilitator & Trainer]. (2017, February). Photovoice for high school youth, science and technology Charter High School, Paterson, NJ

Opara, I. (2017, January). “Tobacco retailer training program for Paterson, NJ”, P-CASA, Montclair State University and Paterson Department of Health

Opara, I. (2017, January). “Tobacco retailer programs proposal for Paterson, NJ” Paterson Coalition Against Substance Abuse (P-CASA) monthly meetings part of the Drug Free Communities (DFC) grant program. Paterson Public Library, Paterson, NJ

Opara, I. (2014, July). “Healthy eating options for foster care youth living in transitional housing”, Supportive Housing Program, The Children’s Village, Valhalla NY

Opara, I. (2014, March). [Invited speaker]. “Empowerment through loss”. Workshop on Women’s Empowerment at the United Nations. International Women’s Day 2014, United Nations Plaza, New York, NY

Opara, I. (2011, July). [Invited speaker]. “Nurturing resilience through loss”. 3rd Annual H.E.R Day Conference. Wyndam Princeton Hotel, Princeton, NJ

SERVICE TO THE FIELD

Elected Board Member (2018-2020). Society for the Analysis of African American Public Health (SAAPHI)

Invited Public & Population Health Theme Co-Chair, (2017-2018). AcademyHealth 2018 Annual Research Meeting (ARM) Planning Committee

Organizer and Moderator (2017, October). “HIV, Drugs, & Violence” Community Empowerment Forum & Expert Panel, Project C.O.P.E., Paterson, NJ

Application reviewer (2017, October). Mandela Washington D.C. Fellowship for Young African Leaders

Proposal Reviewer (2017). Feminism Section, National Council of Family Relations

Abstract Reviewer (2017). Ethnic Minorities Section, National Council of Family Relations

Co-chair of Union County Unit (2013-2016). National Association of Social Workers

Student Leader (2009-2011). Epidemiology Section, American Public Health Association (APHA)

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Invited Panelist (2018, February). Spring 2018 Graduate School Open House Student Panel, Montclair State University

Invited Panelist (2017, December). Macro and Mezzo Level Social Work Careers Alumni Session. Silver School of Social Work, New York University

Interviewer & Alumni Representative (2017-present). NYU Torchbearer, New York University Office of Undergraduate Admissions Program

Invited Panelist (2017, October). Fall 2017 Graduate School Open House Student Panel, Montclair State University

Organizer and Moderator (2017, February). Improving Police-Community Relations Through Dialogue Panel, Montclair State University

Invited Panelist (2017, February). Spring 2017 Graduate School Open House Student Panel, Montclair State University

Student Ambassador (2017-present). Ph.D. Program in Family Science & Human Development, Montclair State University

Representative for the 2016 Ph.D. Cohort, (2016-present). Department of Family Science & Human Development, Montclair State University

Invited Panelist (2013, March). Integrating Primary & Behavioral Health MSW Student Panel: Educational Seminar. Institute of Community Living, New York University, Manhattan, NY.

Student Member (2013-2014). New York University Black Social Work Student Collective Association

President (2010-2011). Student Healthcare Executives, New York Medical College

JOURNAL REVIEWER

Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness

Journal of Social and Personal Relationships

International Journal of Maternal and Child Health & AIDS

SAGE Open

MEDIA (SELECTED)

Invited Talk, “Marijuana Legalization: Are we sure?”, with Former Congressman Patrick Kennedy (D-RI), Stockton University. Article retrieved from: <https://stockton.edu/news/2018/marijuana-legislation-conversation.html> Video retrieved from: https://youtu.be/pyLydTK6_jI

Television Appearance and Interview, “Marijuana Legalization in New Jersey”, NJ NOW, My9 NJ Fox News. Video Retrieved from: <http://www.my9nj.com/nj-now/348515262-video>

Interview, “What does it mean to be a woman?”, International Women’s Day, LEDAP Nigeria (Legal Defense and Assistance Project, NGO)

Interview, Spring 2018 Graduate Student Open House, Montclair State University. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EMfR76DbUs>

Interview, “The value of a graduate degree”, Montclair State University
Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_-ILujZzHs

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

International AIDS Society
National Council on Family Relations
American Public Health Association