

MFP

COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION
MINORITY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

2022-2023

Doctoral Fellows CV Booklet



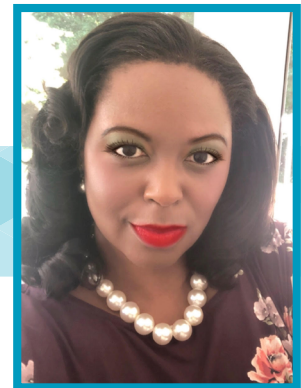
Gabrielle Aquino-Adriatico, MSW
(University of Houston,
Graduate College of Social Work)

[PAGE 1](#)



Mohamad Adam Brooks, LICSW, MSW
(Columbia University)

[PAGE 2](#)



**Denise S. Dawson, LCSW,
LCAS Certified Health Coach, BA, MSW**
(NC A&T State University and
UNC-Greensboro Joint PhD Program)

[PAGE 3](#)



Jessica I. Ramirez MSW, MPH
(University of Washington)

[PAGE 4](#)



Erika A. Salinas, MSW
(University of Southern California)

[PAGE 5](#)



Cortney R. VanHook LSW, MSW, MPH
(University of Pittsburgh)

[PAGE 6](#)

Message from the Director

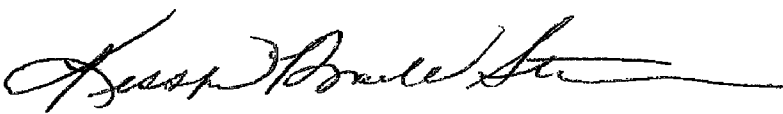
Dear Colleagues:

For almost 48 years, the CSWE Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) has prepared fellows to address mental health and substance disorder issues in minoritized communities. Hundreds of fellows have entered the job market as experts because, in part, of their MFP fellowship experience.

This year we are continuing this important work and supporting our fellows who are on the job market by highlighting their wonderful achievements in this 2022-2023 CV booklet. Within these pages are six amazing MFP doctoral fellows who are on the job market. These experienced professionals are fiercely committed to addressing the behavioral health needs of those who are most often oppressed and marginalized. Because of the financial support that SAMSHA has provided, these fellows have received specialized training that ensures that they are experts in the field.

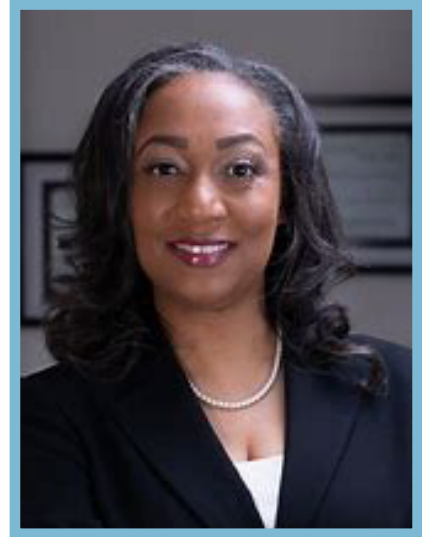
Please take the time to read their biographies, review their curriculum vitae, invite them to apply for available positions and support them as they seek to make a dynamic difference in our profession and beyond.

Sincerely,



Kesslyn Brade Stennis, PhD, MSW, MDiv

Director, Minority Fellowship Program



Gabrielle Aquino-Adriatico, MSW

she/her/siya

gabbieaquino@gmail.com

University of Houston, Graduate College of Social Work

DOCTORAL DEGREE DATE: May 2023

ACCESS CV [HERE](#)



“Gabbie” is a first-generation Filipina student and a doctoral candidate at the University of Houston’s Graduate College of Social Work. Gabbie was also selected twice as a master’s fellow and a doctoral fellow for the Council of Social Work Education’s Minority Fellowship Program. Gabbie received her MSW from the University of Southern California in 2015. Her research interests focus on multilevel factors that shape the mental health and well-being of Filipina/o/x communities. Past research projects include domestic and international issues on human trafficking, gender-based violence, minoritized populations, and multilevel factors that affect communities living with HIV/AIDS. Gabbie’s dissertation, titled “The Impact of COVID-19 on the Mental Health of Filipina Mothers,” is a sequential mixed-methods study that explores what multilevel factors are associated with depression and anxiety among Filipina mothers. The qualitative phase uses the transcendental phenomenological approach to gain a deeper understanding of the mental health experiences of Filipina mothers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Gabbie was a recipient of the dissertation grant funded by the Child and Family Center for Innovative Research. Gabbie serves as a teaching assistant for several MSW courses where she provides guest lectures on public impact scholarship, data dissemination, ethics, and research methods (quantitative and qualitative approaches). Most recently, Gabbie taught a women’s issues MSW course that focused on decolonizing feminism and intersectionality. Gabbie’s teaching approach is guided by the principle of creating an inclusive, safe, and brave space where each individual can speak, be heard, be supported, and be challenged. Gabbie’s long-term goals include (1) contributing to understanding the mental health experiences of Filipina/o/x communities, (2) informing culturally grounded interventions to promote the health and well-being of all communities, and (3) empowering emerging social workers through education and peer support. Gabbie believes her work would not be possible if it weren’t for her community’s love and support. She seeks to give back to her community by mentoring and educating emerging social workers and supporting them in their undergraduate and graduate studies and endeavors.

Mohamad Adam Brooks, LICSW, MSW

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Columbia University

DOCTORAL DEGREE DATE: May 2023

ACCESS CV [HERE](#)



Adam's research focuses on reducing mental health disparities among immigrants and marginalized populations, with a particular focus on stigma, social support, and barriers to culturally appropriate care. Prior to his doctoral studies, Adam worked in both clinical and managerial roles in the behavioral health field and has been a licensed social worker for over a decade. As a patient-oriented clinician-researcher, Adam aims to adapt and implement efficacious and effective mental health interventions among vulnerable populations. At Columbia, Adam's current research has centered on the mental health of forcibly displaced populations. He has supported multiple interdisciplinary and cross-national research projects in Jordan and Turkey. His current dissertation work examines mental health utilization among asylum seekers in Malaysia, suicidal behaviors among Syrian refugees in Jordan, and vicarious posttraumatic growth among service providers working with Syrian refugees. In addition, Adam is an instructor of record who teaches MSW core classes at Columbia University. He is expected to complete his PhD in May 2023.

Research Interests

- ▶ Mental health
- ▶ Immigrants and forcibly displaced persons
- ▶ Intervention and implementation science
- ▶ Well-being of health care professionals

Denise S. Dawson, LCSW, LCAS Certified Health Coach, BA, MSW

she/hers

dsdawson@uncg.edu

NC A&T State University and UNC-Greensboro Joint PhD Program

Former University (for MSW): East Carolina University

DOCTORAL DEGREE DATE: May 2023

ACCESS CV [HERE](#)



Denise seeks to disrupt traditional behavioral health and medical treatments through research-driven integrated health care and technology. Denise has a long-standing history of treating patients with co-occurring behavioral health and medical diagnoses using therapy and technology. This unique background helps her deeply understand the importance of interdisciplinary care and emerging innovative health practices, especially for marginalized groups. As an LCSW, a quantitative researcher, and a professor, Denise collaborates with community partners, administrators, practitioners, and researchers to promote integrated health service delivery for all people and to address health equity issues. Denise received a master of social work degree from East Carolina University and a bachelor of arts degree in psychology from UNC-Chapel Hill. She is a licensed clinical social worker and licensed clinical addiction specialist. She has provided clinical services to children, adults, and military families for more than 20 years. Currently, she is a fourth-year doctoral student in the joint PhD program at A&T State University and UNC-Greensboro. Her dissertation explores the correlation between hypertension and anxiety based on gender and race. Denise's research interests include investigating health equity issues, digital health interventions, social determinants of health, and health disparities of marginalized groups with chronic illnesses and mental health disorders. Denise's long-term career objectives are to teach clinical practice skills and research methods in a university setting; produce scholarship on health equity issues, including the development, implementation, and evaluation of culturally responsive, resilience-focused behavioral health digital interventions; and provide clinical oversight of a behavioral health clinic in a research teaching hospital.

Research Focus

- ▶ Investigating correlations between chronic illness and mental health disorders
- ▶ Health equity issues, social determinants of health, integrated health service delivery, digital health interventions, and culturally adapted digital interventions

Professional Aspirations: Denise endeavors to obtain a dual appointment as a professor teaching clinical practice skills and research methods at a university setting while also providing clinical oversight and innovative research at a teaching and research hospital.

Personal Motto: *"There's no failure, only feedback."*

Jessica I. Ramirez MSW, MPH

she/her

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University of Washington

DOCTORAL DEGREE DATE: June 2023

ACCESS CV [HERE](#)



Jessica is a mother and first-generation Chicana college student from Oxnard, California, and is currently a doctoral candidate in the School of Social Work at the University of Washington. She completed her undergraduate studies in public health at California State University, Northridge, and received a dual master's degree in public health and social work from the University of Michigan. Growing up in Oxnard, a predominantly Latinx city, she personally experienced and witnessed her family, friends, and community be marginalized by a myriad of social injustices, including hyperpolicing, underresourced schools, and underfunded, or nonexistent, mental health support services. Because of these experiences, Jessica became interested in how communities of color heal from trauma inflicted by systems of oppression like racism and White supremacy that directly and indirectly affect their overall well-being. Jessica has many years of experience working with and alongside children, youth, and families of color in various settings—including community centers, public housing communities, and schools. Her lived experiences greatly inform her scholarship, pedagogy, and mentorship. Jessica is committed to mentoring, supporting, and more important, adequately preparing aspiring social workers from all backgrounds to give back to and work alongside historically underrepresented communities.

Research Interests

- ▶ Mental health of communities of color
- ▶ Culturally relevant and culturally sustaining healing practices
- ▶ Mental health intervention development and implementation in and out of educational settings

Erika A. Salinas, MSW

she/hers/her

[easalina@usc.edu](mailto: easalina@usc.edu)

University of Southern California

DOCTORAL DEGREE DATE: May 2024

ACCESS CV [HERE](#)



Erika is a proud member of the Comanche Nation and a PhD candidate in the Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work at the University of Southern California (USC). She is expected to graduate in August 2023. Her research interests are on improving compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act as well as behavioral health outcomes of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) youth. Her educational background consists of receiving her BSW with a minor in Native American studies from California State University, Sacramento, as well as an MSW from Washington University in St. Louis with a concentration on violence and injury prevention. Professionally, she worked in the Financial Abuse Unit at Adult Protective Services in Sacramento County before pursuing her PhD in social work. During her time at USC, she has been involved with various types of research. She has published research on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on child and adolescent mental health policy and practice implementation; the perceptions and attitudes toward commercial tobacco policies and education among tribal communities in California; adaptation resources for and behaviors during heat waves and health outcomes of low-income residents of urban heat islands; and communication and collaboration between tribes and counties as it pertains to the Indian Child Welfare Act. In addition, she has coauthored a book chapter focusing on mixed-methods evaluation in dissemination and implementation science. Erika's teaching experience encompasses undergraduate and graduate courses. For the past 2 years, she has been involved in teaching Policy and Macro Practice in Child, Youth, and Family Services. After graduation, Erika hopes to become involved with tribal policy. In 2020, she was selected to be a Native American congressional intern through the Udall Foundation. For 2 years, she worked with the Indian Health Services' Division of Behavioral Health, Office of Clinical and Preventive Services, to learn about national advocacy, policy development, management, and administration as it pertains to AI/AN communities. She hopes to continue this type of work by engaging in policy efforts that will aim to improve behavioral health outcomes for AI/AN youth.

Research Interests

- ▶ Improving compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act
- ▶ Behavioral health outcomes of American Indian/Alaska Native youth

Cortney R. VanHook LSW, MSW, MPH

he/him/his

cortney.vanhook@pitt.edu

University of Pittsburgh

DOCTORAL DEGREE DATE: May 2023

ACCESS CV [HERE](#)



Cortney is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work and expects to complete PhD program requirements by the summer of 2023. He received his MSW from Pitt in 2020. Cortney’s work centers on individual and community interventions to treat mental illness among young Black men in the adolescent and young adult cohorts (14–25). Young Black men have complex mental health needs as evidenced by their disproportionately high mortality rate, which according to the CDC, is mostly attributed to homicide, suicide, and unintentional fatal injuries (the last category includes drug overdoses). His secondary interest is the prevention and intervention of intracommunity gun violence, a social problem that affects young Black men more than any group in this country. Understanding and treating the conditions that lead to gun violence among young men—adverse childhood events, socioeconomic immobility, community disorganization, harmful gender norms, policy disinvestment, and systemic racism—are all areas that he will address in his early career work. In short, young Black men have complex social determinants of health that require dedicated researchers and practitioners. His dissertation, “A Person-Centered Approach to Increase the Uptake of Mental Health Services Among Young Black Men,” centers on the perspectives of young Black men with current mental health needs in an attempt to understand facilitators and barriers they encounter as they seek mental health services as a young adult. The methodological approach used in his dissertation and other research activities reflects his burgeoning expertise in qualitative and mixed methods, program development, and community-engaged work.

Research/Clinical Interests

- ▶ Mental health of young Black males (adolescent and young adult cohorts)
- ▶ Individual, community, and policy interventions to reduce intracommunity gun violence
- ▶ Qualitative methods, mixed methods, and program evaluation
- ▶ Critical social theories, humanistic psychology, and peace and conflict studies