

# **Ijeoma Opara, PhD., MSW, MPH**

---

Assistant Professor  
Yale University  
School of Public Health  
Department of Social & Behavioral Sciences  
60 George Street  
New Haven, CT 06510

Email: [ijeoma.opara@yale.edu](mailto:ijeoma.opara@yale.edu)

## **EDUCATION**

---

- 2016-2019                      Montclair State University  
Ph.D. in 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)  
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  
Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Certificate, Medical University of South Carolina

## **ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS**

---

2021-present                      Assistant Professor  
Department of Social & Behavioral Sciences  
School of Public Health  
Yale University

2019- 2021                      Assistant Professor  
School of Social Welfare  
SUNY Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY

2017-2019                      Lecturer  
School of Social Work  
Columbia University, New York, NY

## **AFFILIATIONS**

---

2020-present                      Faculty Affiliate  
Vivian A. and James L. Curtis School of Social Work Center for  
Health Equity Research and Training  
School of Social Work  
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

2019-present                      Visiting Research Faculty  
Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS  
School of Public Health  
Yale University, New Haven, CT

2018-present                      Affiliate Investigator  
Center for Drug Use, HIV, & HCV Research  
College of Public Health  
New York University, New York, NY

## **GRANTS & RESEARCH SUPPORT**

---

2020-2021                      SUNY Diversity Initiatives Award  
Office of the President  
(DI-60; PI: Ijeoma Opara, PhD)  
Award amount: \$50,000

- 2020-2025 “Understanding the Role of Neighborhoods on Substance Use and Mental Health Among Urban Youth: A Community Based Substance Use Prevention Project”  
NIH Director’s Early Independence Award  
(1DP5OD029636; PI: Ijeoma Opara, Ph.D.)  
Award amount: \$1,848,275
- 2020 “The Dreamer Girls Project: Adaptation of the SIHLE/SISTA Intervention to Develop an HIV/AIDS, STI, and Drug Use Prevention Intervention for Black Adolescent Girls”  
National Institute of Mental Health (R25-MH087217;  
PI: Dr. Trace Kershaw)  
Role: Pilot Study Principal Investigator  
Award amount: \$20,000
- 2020 “The impact of social distancing during the COVID-19 outbreak on mental health and substance use outcomes: Examining risk and protective factors in young adult populations in New York”  
SUNY COVID-19 Rapid Seed Grant  
Role: Co-Principal Investigator  
Award amount: \$5,000
- 2020 “A Digital Intervention for HIV Prevention in Black Adolescent Girls”  
National Institute of Child Health and Human Development  
(1R21HD098031-01; PI: Dr. Kimberly Hieftje, Yale University School of Medicine)  
Role: Co-Investigator

## **PUBLICATIONS**

---

### **Peer reviewed publications**

*\*indicates collaboration with a student*

*\*\*indicates collaboration with postdoctoral fellow*

42. Lardier, D.T., **Opara, I.**, & Roach, E. [**Accepted**]. A Latent Class Analysis of Psychological Sense of Community and Ethnic Identity among Young Adults of Color from the Southwestern United States. Target Journal: *Journal of Community Psychology*
41. Weser, V., **Opara, I.**, Sands, B., & Hieftje, K. [**Accepted**]. How Black Teen Girls Navigate Social Media to Form Romantic Relationships. *Social Media & Society*

40. **Opara, I.**, Malik, S., Lardier Jr. D.T., \*\*Gamble-George, J., Kelly, R., Okafor, E., Greene, N.R., & \*Parisi, D. [Accepted]. Increased Alcohol Use and Misuse among Young Adults (18-35 years old) in New York during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*
39. Okafor, E., Asare, M., Bautista, K., & **Opara, I.** (2021). Symptoms of distress during the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. *American Journal of Health Studies*. doi: 10.47779/ajhs.2021.638
38. **Opara, I.**, Lardier, D.T., Durkee, M., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R.J. (2021). Ethnic Identity as a Moderator between HIV Knowledge on Viral Hepatitis Knowledge and Psychological Antecedents among Racial-Ethnic Minority Youth. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*. doi: 10.1007/s40615-021-01069-6
37. Boyd, D., **Opara, I.**, Quinn, C.R., Waller, B., Ramos, R.S., & Duncan, D.T. (2021). The Impact of Parent-Child Sex Health Communication on Drug Use and Using Drugs While Having Sex among Urban Black Youth. *International Journal of Environmental Research & Public Health*. doi: 10.3390/ijerph18105170
36. Lardier, D.T., **Opara, I.**, Lin, Y., Roach, E., Herrera, A., Garcia-Reid, P., Reid, R.J. (2021). A Spatial Analysis of Alcohol Outlet Density, Abandoned Properties and Police Call to Service on Non-Fatal Shootings and Aggravated Assaults in a Northeastern United States Urban City. *Substance Use & Misuse*. doi: 10.1080/10826084.2021.1942053
35. **Opara, I.**, Lardier Jr., D.T., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R.J. (2021). Testing the Factor Structure of the Brief Sense of Community Scale among Black Girls and the Relationship with Ethnic Identity, Empowerment and Social Support. *Children & Youth Services Review*. doi: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2021.106095
34. **Opara, I.**, Leonard, N., \*Thorpe, D., & Kershaw, T. (2021). Understanding Neighborhoods' Impact on Youth Substance Use and Mental Health Outcomes in Paterson, New Jersey: Protocol for a Community-Based Participatory Research Study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*. doi: 10.2196/29427.
33. Ramos, S.R., Lardier, D.T., Jr., **Opara, I.**, Williams, C., Turpin, R.E., Boyd, D.T., Gutierrez, J., Nelson, L.E., & Kershaw, T. (2021). Intersectional Effects of Internalized Homophobia, Gender Expression, and Sexual Orientation Concealment on Health Literacy and HIV Risk Among Sexual Minority Men of Color: A Path Analysis. *Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care*. doi: 10.1097/JNC.0000000000000274.
32. Okafor, E., Asare, M., Bautista, K., & **Opara, I.** (2021). Coping in the time of COVID-19: Buffering stressors with coping strategies. *Journal of Loss & Trauma*. doi: 10.1080/15325024.2021.1914987

31. Lardier Jr., D.T., **Opara, I.**, Reid, R.J., Garcia-Reid, P., Herrera, A., & Cantu, I. (2021). Increasing HIV/AIDS knowledge among urban ethnic minority youth: Findings from a community-based prevention intervention program. *Journal of HIV/AIDS & Social Sciences*. doi: 10.1080/15381501.2021.1910097
30. **Opara, I.**, Weissinger, G., Lardier, D.T., Jr., Lanier, Y., Carter, S., & Brawner, B. (2021). Mental Health Burden among Black Adolescents: The Need for Better Assessment, Diagnosis and Treatment Engagement. *Social Work in Mental Health*. doi: 10.1080/15332985.2021.1879345
29. **Opara, I.** & Brown, T. [Accepted]. #BlackGirlsMatter and the Social Work Curriculum: Integrating Intersectionality within Social Work Education. *Journal of Social Work Education*
28. Lardier Jr., D.T., **Opara, I.**, Brammer, M.K., Pinto, S.A., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R.J. (2021). Psychological sense of community, community civic participation, and ethnic identity on social justice orientation and psychological empowerment between LGBQ and Non-LGBQ youth of color. *LGBT Youth*. doi: 10.1080/19361653.2020.1860858
27. Lardier Jr. D. T., **Opara, I.**, Cantu, I., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R.J. (2021). The Brief Sense of Community Scale: Testing Dimensionality and Measurement Invariance by Gender among Hispanic/Latinx Youth. *Journal of Community Psychology*. doi: 10.1002/jcop.22585
26. **Opara, I.**, Lardier Jr., D.T., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R.J. (2020). Measuring Intrapersonal Empowerment and Ethnic Identity: Highlighting Strengths of Urban Black Girls. *Youth & Society*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1177/0044118X20970226
25. **Opara, I.**, Rivera Rodas, E., Garcia-Reid, P. & Reid, R.J. (2020). Ethnic Identity, Empowerment, Social Support, and Sexual Risk Behaviors among Black Adolescent Girls: Examining Drug Use as a Mediator. *Child and Adolescent Social Work*. Advanced online publication. doi: 10.1007/s10560-020-00706-z
24. **Opara, I.**, Lardier Jr. D.T., \*Fernandez, Y., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R.J. (2020). Intrapersonal Psychological Empowerment Profiles on Ethnic Identity, Social Support, and Lifetime Drug Use among Hispanic Adolescent Girls. *Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse*. Advanced online publication. doi: 10.1080/15332640.2020.1803780
23. **Opara, I.**, \*Assan, M.A., \*Pierre, K., Gunn, J III., Metzger, I., \*Hamilton J., & \*Arugu, E. (2020). Suicide among Black children: An integrated model of the interpersonal-psychological theory of suicide and intersectionality theory for researchers & clinicians. *Journal of Black Studies*. Advanced online publication. doi: 10.1177/0021934720935641
22. **Opara, I.**, Lardier Jr., D.T., Metzger, I., Herrera, A., \*Franklin, L., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R.J. (2020). "Bullets have no names": A qualitative exploration of community trauma among Black and Latinx youth. *Journal of Child & Family Studies*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1007/s10826-020-01764-8

21. **Opara, I.**, Chandler, C., Alcena-Stiner, D, Nnawulezi, N., & Kershaw, T. (2020). When Pandemics Call: Community-Based Research Considerations for HIV Scholars. *AIDS and Behavior*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1007/s10461-020-02878-2
20. Amutah-Onukagha, N., Mahadevan, M., **Opara, I.**, Rodriguez, M., Kelly, J., & Trusdell, M. (2020). Commentary: Project THANKS: Examining HIV/AIDS-Related Barriers and Facilitators to Care in African American Women: A Community Perspective. *Journal of International Associations of Providers of AIDS Care*. doi: 10.1177/2325958220936406
19. Doamekpor, L.A., Gleason, J.L., **Opara, I.**, & Amutah-Onukagha N. (2020). Nativity and Cardiovascular Dysregulation: Evidence from the 2001-2016 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Disparities*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1007/s40615-020-00765-z
18. Metzger, I., Cooper, S., Griffin, C. B., Golden, A., **Opara, I.**, & Ritchwood, T. (2020). Parenting profiles of academic and racial socialization: Associations with academic engagement and perception of academic ability of African American adolescents. *Journal of School Psychology*. doi: 10.1016/j.jsp.2020.07.001
17. Lardier Jr., D.T., **Opara, I.**, Reid, R.J., & Garcia-Reid, P. (2020). The role of empowerment-based protective factors on substance use among youth of color. *Child and Adolescent Social Work*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1007/s10560-020-00659-3
16. Lardier Jr., D.T., **Opara, I.**, Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R.J. (2020). The mediating role of ethnic identity and social justice orientation between community civic participation, psychological sense of community and cognitive and psychological empowerment among adolescents of color. *The Urban Review*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1007/s11256-020-00573-z
15. Lardier Jr., D.T., **Opara, I.**, Garcia-Reid, P. & Reid, R.J. (2020). The Cognitive Empowerment Scale: Multigroup Confirmatory Factor Analysis Among Youth of Color. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*. Advance online publication: 10.1007/s10560-019-00647-2
14. **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*. 37, 83-95. doi: 10.1007/s10560019006249
13. **Opara, I.** & \*Santos, N. (2019). A conceptual framework exploring social media, eating disorders, and body dissatisfaction among Latina adolescents. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*. doi:10.1177/0739986319860844
12. **Opara, I.**, Lardier Jr., D.T., Herrera, A., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R.J. (2019). Increasing viral hepatitis knowledge among urban ethnic minority youth: Findings from a community-

based prevention intervention. *Journal of Community Health*. Advance online publication: 10.1007/s10900-019-00740-8

11. Lardier Jr., D.T., **Opara, I.**, Herrera, A., Garcia-Reid, P., & Reid, R.J. (2019). Sexual negotiation skills 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
10. **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
9. 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
8. 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
7. 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*, doi: 10.1080/15381501.2018.1502708
6. 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
5. 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
4. **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
3. 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

2. 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
1. 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 review

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

### Non-refereed publications/Op-eds

- Opara, I.** (2019, January). Marijuana legalization: Is decriminalization a better option? *USA Today*. Retrieved from: <https://www.app.com/story/opinion/columnists/2019/01/25/nj-marijuana-legalization-decriminalization-better-option/2666792002/>
- Opara, I.,** Lee, S., James, A., Allen, W., & Price, L. (2018, April). Improving community-police relations through dialogue: Creating healthier neighborhoods for Black families. *National Council on Family Relations, Ethnic Minorities Section Post Conference Newsletter Spring 2018*, 1(5).
- Opara, I.** (2016, September). Empowering Sierra Leonean girls to change the world. *Applause Africa Magazine*. Retrieved at <http://applauseafrica.com/2016/09/26/empowering-sierra-leonean-girls-to-change-the-world/>

### Selected manuscripts in progress

- Opara, I.,** Scheinfeld, L., Pierre, K., & Assan, A. (in progress) Systematic review of HIV/AIDS, STI, teen pregnancy, and substance use prevention interventions for Black adolescent girls. *The International Prospective Register of Systematic Reviews: Prospero*. [CRD42020184201](https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-2576.14201)

### FELLOWSHIPS

---

2021-2022	<p>Researcher Resiliency Training Program          Washington University in St. Louis          Brown School          Funded by National Institute of Mental Health          (R25MH118935; PI: Mary McKay; Co-PI: Sean Joe &amp; Fred Sswemala)</p>
-----------	--



2019-2021	Research Education Institute for Diverse Scholars (REIDS) Fellowship Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS Yale School of Public Health (R25-MH087217; PI: Dr. Trace Kershaw)
2018-2019	Behavioral Sciences in Drug Abuse Research Training Program Predoctoral Fellowship New York University National Institute on Drug Abuse (5T32 DA07233; PI: Gregory Falkin, Ph.D)
2017	New Writers' Initiative Fellowship Family Process Institute
2016-2019	Doctoral Research Fellowship Montclair State University
2013-2014	Primary and Behavioral Integrated Health Care Fellowship SAMHSA/HRSA MSW Fellowship, New York University
2010-2011	Research Initiatives for Student Enhancement Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## **HONORS & AWARDS**

---

2020	Outstanding Civic Engagement Award, Paterson City Council
2020	NIH Director's Early Independence Award
2020	NIDA Diversity Scholars Network Program (deferred)
2019	NIH/National Research Mentoring Networking Grantsmanship Program
2019	John D. Slade, MD Memorial Advocacy Award Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (ATOD) section American Public Health Association (APHA)
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 New Writers' Initiative Fellowship  
Family Process Institute

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

2013-2014 Primary and Behavioral Integrated Health Care Fellowship  
SAMHSA/HRSA MSW Fellowship, New York University

## **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

---

2020- present Principal Investigator & Director  
DP5OD029636; National Institutes of Health  
The Substance Abuse & Sexual Health (SASH) Lab

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  
PI: Ndidiyama 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 2019-Spring 2020  
Assistant Professor  
Stony Brook University  
School of Social Welfare, Stony Brook, NY  
Course (s): Advanced Practice I & II for Children & Families

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

## **GUEST LECTURES**

---

Spring 2020  
Guest Lecturer  
“Empowering Girls of Color: A review of empowerment  
theory and intersectionality theory”  
PhD Level Human Development and Developmental Science  
Course  
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Wilmington University, DE

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

**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 AND WORKSHOPS**

---

- Opara, I.** (2021, May). Strengths-based strategies to address gendered racism and substance use and mental health in urban youth. NIDA Intramural Seminar Series.
- Opara, I.** (2021, April). Strengths-based approaches to substance use prevention for Black and Hispanic Girls. REACH Program, Yale School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry. (Virtual).
- Opara, I.** (2021, April). Strengths-based approaches to substance use prevention for Black and Hispanic Girls. Grand Rounds, Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine, Children's Hospital of Los Angeles, University of Southern California
- Opara, I.** (2021, February). Where do we go from here? Healing from the previous administration. Columbia University School of Social Work Black Student Caucus (virtual)
- Opara, I.** (2020, December). How to effectively engage with racially diverse communities to prevent substance abuse. COMPASS Unity, Long Island, NY
- Opara, I.** (2020, November). Journey to Success, The National Black Post-Doc Association (co-sponsored jointly by the Harvard and Yale University Black Postdoctoral Associations)

**Opara, I.** (2020, September). Three steps to becoming a youth advocate. NAACP Youth Chapter. Virtual Meeting.

**Opara, I.** (2020, August). “The Journey to Becoming a Black Female College Professor”, Summer Work Experience Program Youth Academy, East Orange, NJ

**Opara, I.** (2020, June). Conducting Research in a Time of Physical Distancing. Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS, Yale University

**Opara, I.** (2020, June). Dealing with Loss during the COVID-19 Pandemic. H.E.R. Day Annual Conference.

**Opara, I.** (2020, April). COVID-19 Pandemic and Black Women. Violent Empowerment Group for Black female survivors of violence, Jersey City, NJ

**Opara, I.** (2020, January). “Strengths-based approaches to drug use and HIV prevention among urban girls of color.” Research Presentation. Program for Research on Black Americans, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

**Opara, I.** (2019, December). [Invited Panelist] “Empowering youth & families involved in the justice system.” Passaic County Youth Services Conference, Passaic, NJ

**Opara, I.** (2019, November). [Workshop Facilitator]. “Marijuana prevention for youth in New Jersey”. 6<sup>th</sup> Annual the Tree of Addiction, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Conference, Teaneck, NJ

**Opara, I.** (2019, October). [Workshop Facilitator] “Black Girl Activist: Empowering Black Girls to Change Communities”. Congressional Caucus on Black Women & Girls Conference, Rider University, Lawrenceville, NJ

**Opara, I.** (2019, May). “Marijuana prevention for youth—in a post-legalization era”. New Jersey Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (NJPHA) Education & Celebration 2<sup>nd</sup> 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, October). [Invited Panelist] “Discussion on adult use cannabis”. Hosted by Assemblywoman Angela McKnight, Jersey City, NJ

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

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

**Opara, I.** (2018, August). “Marijuana legalization, are we ready?” Joint talk with Congressmen Patrick Kennedy, Stockton University, Lawrenceville, 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**

---

*\*Indicates collaboration with student*

\*Thorpe, D., **Opara, I.**, & Lardier, D.T. (June 2021). The effects of neighborhood resources and disparity on public school absenteeism in Passaic County, New Jersey. Society for Prevention Research Annual Conference (Virtual).

**Opara, I.** & Abrams, J. (April 2021). Reframing Sexual Behavior and Sexual Health for Black Girls and Women. HIV & Sexual Health SIG Prioritizing Black Women’s Health: Examining the Roles of Substance Use, PrEP Awareness and Strengths-Based Approaches. Symposium at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Society for Behavioral Medicine 2021 Conference. (Virtual).

Gunn, J., **Opara, I.**, \*Assan, M., & \*Pierre, K. (2020, April). Suicide and Black Children: Implications for Research, Policy & Practice. Poster to be presented at the American Association of Suicidology Annual Conference. Portland, Oregon.

**Opara, I.** (2020, January). Racial differences in protective factors for substance use and sexual risk behavior among Black and Hispanic adolescent females. Accepted for oral presentation. Society for Social Work Research, Washington D.C.

**Opara, I.** (2019, November). Exploring the role of social support, ethnic identity, and psychological empowerment on drug use and sexual risk behavior among Black and Hispanic female adolescents. National Council on Family Relations, Fort Worth, TX **\*\*McAdoo Dissertation Award Winner Address.**

**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 81<sup>st</sup> 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 22<sup>nd</sup> 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) 26<sup>th</sup> 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. 5<sup>th</sup> 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”, 4<sup>th</sup> 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 139<sup>th</sup> American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting, Poster presentation. Washington D.C.

## **COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS**

---

**Opara, I.** (2020, January). [Workshop Facilitator]. “Using media to talk to your kids about drugs, sex, & violence”. City of Paterson, Paterson Youth Services Bureau Family Night, Paterson, 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”. 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual H.E.R Day

Conference. Wyndam Princeton Hotel, Princeton, NJ

## **SERVICE TO THE FIELD**

---

*Board Member, (2021-present).* National Advisory Board for the Family Involvement in Recovery Support and Treatment (FIRST) Research, National Institute on Drug Abuse

*Elected Board Member. 2020-2023.* The Arc of Union County, New Jersey

*Youth Advisor. (2020-present).* NAACP Youth Chapter

*Harriett and John McAdoo Dissertation Awards Committee Member (2020).* Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Families Section, National Council on Family Relations

*Students & New Professional Representative (2020-2022).* Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Families Section, National Council on Family Relations

*Policy Fellow Mentor (2019-2020).* The Network for Social Work Management Policy Fellows Program

*Facilitator. (2019, November).* “Being intentional with your time in graduate school”. Ethnic Minorities Section Roundtable Discussion. National Council on Family Relations. Fort Worth, Texas

*Moderator. (2019, November).* “Community-Engaged Anti-Racism Practice: Community Health Activism from Local to Global”. Society for the Analysis of African American Public Health (SAAPHI) Annual Meeting and Scientific Symposium, Drexel University School of Public Health, Philadelphia, PA.

*Abstract reviewer. (2019).* Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs section, American Public Health Association

*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**

---

*Member*, PhD Program Committee (2020-present), Stony Brook University School of Social Welfare

*Member*, Field Education Committee (2019-2020), Stony Brook University School of Social Welfare

*Member*, Families, Youth, & Transition to Adulthood Specialization Committee (2019-2020), Stony Brook University School of Social Welfare

*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

**MENTORING ACTIVITIES (SELECTED)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Project/Publication</b>	<b>Current Position</b>
2020-present	Amanda Calhoun, MD	The Dreamer Girls Project; Sociopolitical Control on Drug Use among Black Girls	Psychiatry resident at Yale New Haven Health
2020-present	Ria Rodney	The Network for Social Work Management Policy Mentoring Program Project: Black Maternal Health & Racial Disparities	Public Health Nurse
2020-present	Kristina Cross	Black Girls and HIV Prevention	MSW Stony Brook University Student  SASH Lab Research Assistant
2019-current	Deanna Parisi	Marijuana Perception Paper among Youth (Under review); Faith Based Leaders Study (in progress) Systematic Review of Brief Interventions (in progress)	MPH/MSW Stony Brook University Student  SASH Lab Research Assistant
2018-present	Ashley Lizzaraga, LMSW	Foster Care Youth and HIV Prevention (in progress); Systematic Review of Foster Care Youth and Sexual Health Education (in progress)	PhD in Social Welfare Student, University of Washington (2020-2024)  SASH Lab Research Assistant  MSW graduate, Columbia University (2020)
2019-present	Marline Francois, LCSW	Black Girls and Empowerment manuscript (in progress)	PhD Student in Family Science & Human Development, Montclair State University
2017-present	Maame Araba Assan, MPH, CHES	Black Youth Suicide (completed); Systematic Review for Black Girls (in progress; protocol registered); Peer Mentoring Evaluation Project (involved in data collection; data analysis in progress)	Public Health Analyst in Philadelphia, PA  SASH Lab Research Assistant  MPH graduate, Montclair State (2019)

2017-present	Kimberly Pierre, MPH, CHES	Black Youth Suicide (completed and published); Systematic Review for Black Girls (in progress; protocol registered)	Health Educator, Maplewood, NJ  SASH Outreach Manager  MPH Graduate, Rutgers University (2020)
2019-present	Mirinda Morency, LMSW	Provide monthly support on career advancement within the field of social work; providing mentorship on pursuing a PhD in Psychology in 2021	Mental Health Clinician Mount Hope Family Practice; Owner, Resilience Lab PLLC  MSW Graduate, Columbia University (2019)
2019-present	Grace Rudatsikira, LCSW	The Network for Social Work Management Policy Mentoring Program Project: Reducing Recidivism for Adults with Behavioral Health Needs in Washington D.C.  Applying for Law School in 2021	Clinical Director, The Salvation Army, Washington DC
2018-2020	Noemy Santos, LMSW	Intersectionality, Eating Disorders and Body Image among Latina Adolescents (completed and published)	Social Worker, Boston Massachusetts  MSW Graduate, Columbia University (2019)

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

2020	THRIVE Professional Development for Early Career Faculty Role: Participant
2019-2020	Health Equity Investigators Grant Proposal Development Coaching Program NIH National Research Mentoring Network (NRMN) Role: Participant
2019	NIH K Grant Writing Workshop

Office of Sponsored Programs  
Stony Brook University

2019

NIDA Grant Writing Workshop for Early Career  
Investigators  
College of Problems on Drug Dependence

### **JOURNAL REVIEWER**

---

(selected) Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), AIDS & Behavior; Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness; Journal of Social and Personal Relationships; International Journal of Maternal and Child Health & AIDS; SAGE Open; Journal of Urban Health; Youth & Society; Substance Use & Misuse; Behavioral Medicine; Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness; Child & Youth Services Review; Sexuality & Culture; Journal of Racial & Ethnic Health Disparities; Social Work in Mental Health; American Journal of Men's Health

### **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

---

National Council on Family Relations  
American Public Health Association